

# **IBEW LOCAL UNION 965 WINTER 2012 NEWSLETTER**

## **FROM PRESIDENT IRWIN**

It is hard to believe 2012 is here! We have many things to look forward to this New Year. Our Local celebrates its 75th anniversary--more to come on this in the next few months. There will be a Presidential election and possibly several recall elections; this will provide us with many interesting discussion points.

I would like to remind everyone to please stay focused on your job. It is very easy to become distracted with all the changes happening around us. Safety is everyone's responsibility and looking out for our brothers and sisters will help assure that everyone goes home safe. Remember to lookout for the silent killer—*Complacency!* It can and will sneak up on you.

Be safe; enjoy life and **HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!**

Rick Irwin

## **IN MEMORIAM**

The following members of IBEW Local 965 passed away in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2011:

Mike Burns—Retired—Alliant-Verona: November 3  
Roger Retzleff—Retired—Alliant-Fond du Lac: November 20  
Eugene Wagner—Retired—Alliant-Janesville: November 29  
Roy Goodrich—Retired—Alliant-Mineral Point: December 15  
Royce Kolar—Retired—Alliant-Platteville: December 30

## **SAFETY - A MUST FOR SURVIVAL**

By Tony Bartels

The IBEW was established in 1891 by a group of Linemen that wanted a voice in the workplace about safety in the workplace. The issue – one out of every two Lineman died on the job in 1891. At that time, safety was the first reason for organizing into a union, to stand up to employers that were more interested in work getting done than people surviving. Since that time we have seen the establishment of many rules and regulations that protect workers that is enforced through OSHA. With all of that said and with all of the safety related tools and equipment, there is still one line related fatality every 9 days in the United States. When analyzing these fatalities there is generally some rule that is not followed or some mistake that is made. While some fatalities have resulted from no fault of the operator, most if not all fatalities could be prevented.

Various employers continuously share with the Union Office that their first priority is safety and getting workers home each day in the same condition in which they came to work

in the morning. While this goal is achieved by most of us, it is not achieved by everyone. For those that are injured on the job, each of us needs to look back and ask if we could do anything to prevent the injury. If the injury was to ourselves, do we look back and ask if there was anything we could have done to prevent the accident? If the injury was to a coworker do we ask if there is anything we could have done to prevent a coworker from getting injured? If the answer is yes to either question, do we take the time to make the necessary changes to our work or the work of coworkers to make sure we/they do not get injured. The time is now for each of us to take the time to make sure the work is done safely. This is the key to our survival.

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## **WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND THE LOCAL??**

### **UNIT 1**

Greetings from the Great White North. Winter is finally upon us and along with the snow and ice comes slips and falls. Make sure to wear your Company-approved and issued non-slip footwear both on and off the job. Slips and trips are one of the leading causes of injury.

We would like to wish Dick Helbing best wishes for a long and happy retirement. Dick retired on January 1<sup>st</sup> as a Lead Line Tech in Mattoon after 35 years of service. Also congratulations to Randy Hoffman for his promotion to Local Rep in White Lake.

Update to Company Procedure SAF 130 regarding electronic communication devices (i.e. cell phones, company radios) goes into effect January 31<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to make yourself familiar with these changes. They will be shared at your local Safety Days along with the upcoming Workforce Management program being implemented.

That is all from Unit 1. Take the time to stretch and work safely.

In Solidarity,  
Mike Patoka  
Unit 1 Chairperson

### **UNIT 3**

Welcome to a new year; it appears that we are going to see some changes as to how our work will get done in 2012. With new rules coming out on if and when you can answer a phone or talk on the company radio while in a truck or car while driving, or the new standard for safety discipline if you make a mistake. So far we haven't seen any clear direction or explanation as to the rules for either issue the company is taking us in. Just remember, follow all rules and procedures and make sure the company is providing all tools and people necessary to get the job done safely. We are here to look out for each others safety so we all go home healthy to enjoy our free time activities.

The signing of petitions for the recalls is over. We need to get this state back to working together to help the working class.

Our monthly meetings are the 1st Thursday of the month and it would be nice to see more members attend and show a little interest in what is going on with the union and company

issues. We all sacrifice our time to try and keep members informed, more participation would be appreciated. Any questions call or attend a meeting!

Mike Broome  
Unit 3 Chairperson

## **UNIT 5**

As we closed last year, the members of Unit 5 had requested the last of our charitable donations be given to the Sauk Prairie St Vincent De Paul food pantry. Prairie Du Sac Chief Steward Troy Murphy will be delivering the check.

Unit 5 has seen some long time employees retire since the last update: Craig Chapman, Stewart Burns, Jack Smith, and Don Kath. We'll be seeing some new face across the property soon.

The recent cell phone policy change has raised a few questions about when someone is traveling home after work and gets a call for emergency response and is unable to answer the phone due to driving a vehicle and then gets tagged for not being available; One would hope that the policy makers would have taken that into consideration before implementing a policy of this kind. The Cross-state air pollution rules have raised some concerns about the possibility of idling power plants to comply with new EPA guidelines, but so far this hasn't been done yet. The construction for the scrubbers at Columbia should be starting late this spring and will be a 2 year project that will be built separate of the plant and will be connected during a short shutdown sometime in 2014. A recent headline stated that the Prairie Du Sac Hydro will be getting a fish ladder. We'll have to see how this progresses and how it will affect operations of that facility.

Please continue to work safe.

Bruce Giese  
Unit 5 Chairman

## **PROGRESSIVE RAFFLE DRAWING**

Holly Kaiser - Vice President

Below are the names that were drawn for the months of October, November, and December 2011.

### Names Drawn for the October Unit Meetings - \$275.00 Fund

James Brunett (Mineral Point)  
Ken Thome (Fond du Lac)  
Douglas Magee (Janesville)  
Joe White (Platteville)

### Names Drawn for the Nov. Unit Meetings - \$300.00 Fund

Roger Wagner (Fond du Lac)  
Dennis Pace (SA/Beloit)  
Jon Trzesniak (ACEC)  
Cynthia Blair (Beloit)

Names Drawn for the Dec. Unit Meetings - \$325.00 Fund

Sarah Lavery (CSC)

Karen Thorpe (Fond du Lac)

Steve Neitzel (Beaver Dam)

John Nachreiner (Sauk City)

The Progressive Raffle Fund will increase to \$350.00 for January 2012. We hope to see you soon at one of the monthly Unit Meetings and good luck! For meeting information, please check your union bulletin board or with your Chief Steward.

## **UNIT MEETINGS ATTENDANCE**

By Tony Bartels

Every month there are (8) eight Unit meetings held at various location all across our territory. You can go to our Local Union Website <http://www.ibew965.com/Calendar%20of%20Events.htm> if you need to know when, where and who from the Union Office will be attending. On average less than 10% of our members attend these meetings and we would like that to change. If you have any ideas on how to increase meeting attendance please contact the Union Office with your comments. Currently some of the Unit's provide food and beverages in order to encourage participation. One of the ideas we have for trying to help increase participation is a raffle drawing every month that is awarded to the selected member if they attended a meeting that month. Most months the name drawn is not present and the monies move to the next month. Currently the drawing is over \$350 for the February meeting. Another idea began in January 2012 with a 50/50 raffle at Unit meetings where you can buy a raffle ticket for \$5.00. Each month a winner will be selected from all of those tickets purchased. The January winner is Jim Maratik from Edgewater who attended the January meeting and purchased a \$5.00 ticket that paid him over \$60 in winnings.

## **2011-2012 IBEW 965 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Holly Kaiser - Vice President

The IBEW 965 Scholarship Program is open to all dependents of Members of Local 965 who will graduate from high school in the 2011 - 2012 school year. The Member must have been in continuous good standing for at least two (2) years with Local 965 and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. This year two (2) \$500.00 scholarships will be awarded. Please watch for information regarding eligibility and requirements for the Scholarship Program.

## **WIN A GETAWAY TRIP, GUN OR BOW WITH YOUR COPE CONTRIBUTIONS**

By Tony Bartels

Anyone who currently gives or signs up to give \$2.50 or more per pay period through payroll deduction or a voluntary contribution of \$60 or more by March 31, 2012 will be entered in a drawing to win a choice of a gun or bow (up to \$500 value) or 2 nights at the Kalahari in Wisconsin Dells. The prizes are sponsored by Union Financial. If you are

interested in doing payroll deduction, you can contact your Chief Steward or the Union Office to get a payroll deduction authorization card. If you want to make a contribution you can make checks payable to IBEW 965 COPE fund. The drawing is open to all members of IBEW 965 and retirees that worked in an IBEW 965 covered position at the time of retirement. None of our dues monies are used toward COPE.

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## **A TIME TO CELEBRATE**

By Tony Bartels

June 13, 2012 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IBEW Local Union 965. Our Local Union was established on June 13, 1937 in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin by a group of workers that knew they needed to establish a common voice in the workplace. To put this in perspective, this was also the year that what eventually became the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) was introduced as part of the New Deal. FLSA represented the first time that laws dictated work-weeks and employers had minimum standards for workers. Even so, it was not until 1963 that FLSA had the equal pay act added in addition to adjustments to minimum wage standards along the way. The most interesting part of the FLSA rules is that some workers had formed Unions and had already achieved many of these standards that today we just take for granted.

What those workers thought in 1937 when they voted to form a Union, we do not know, but what we do know is that IBEW Local 965 has been a part of changes in wages hours and working conditions dating back to its inception in 1937.

Over the next few months you will hear more about the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. If you have any thoughts or comments, do not hesitate to contact the Union Office or the anniversary committee that is headed by President Rick Irwin, Vice President Holly Kaiser and Treasurer Todd Haakinson.

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## **MANITOWOC CRANE STRIKE**

Mike Pyne—Assistant Business Manager

If you weren't keeping track there was a significant strike going over the whole holiday season in Manitowoc, WI at the Manitowoc Crane Company; a very recognizable product and Company in our State. Starting in about mid-November, at almost the end of their contract talks, the Machinist Union Local 516 and the Manitowoc Company negotiations came to a screeching halt with a new proposal from the Company that they categorized as a "freedom of choice" proposal that basically introduced a kind of "right to work" legislation, although this time through a contract proposal. The first proposal that the Company offered would have given the members the ability to vote monthly to decide whether to be in the Machinist Union as a member or not. Needless to say the members of Local 516 rejected such a proposal with a strong no vote of 183 against and 3 for. After that things got worse at the table and the issue came to a loggerhead between the parties, the Machinist members walked out on strike around November 19, 2011.

There are also 3 other international unions that are represented at the Manitowoc plant that were not in conflict with the Company at the same time nor were they confronted with this new language since they were not in negotiations. Not all of those unions were sure if they were able to walk out with the Machinist or if they could guarantee their

members continued employment status if they did. In the meantime, during the months of December and January, there were great efforts from union organizations across the state to get money to the members who suffering through the Christmas Holiday and being on strike without income. There were drives developed to help set up a food and supply pantry for the members of Local 516 and their families at their union hall to help put food on the table for those affected by this. There was also a large rally, sponsored by the Wisconsin AFL-CIO held in Manitowoc, supported by unions on a Saturday to show solidarity and support for their efforts and struggles. As the work slowed down due to the strike, some of the members of the other unions started to feel the pain also by being laid-off over the holiday season and things were getting tight for all workers involved. Because it looked like both sides were not going to move anytime soon on this one issue and this could turn into a very lengthy strike, many labor organizations began planning around the state and developing committees and support systems to help the strikers. We were part of the South Central Federation of Labor's support committee. Then the members of Local 516 took another vote and again strongly rejected the Company's proposal again. The Wisconsin AFL-CIO started to get officials from the other unions that were represented at the Manitowoc plant and from other unions around the state and began to set up a formal strategy for going forward if this strike should continue on.

Machinist Local 516 and the Company agreed to go back to the table to see if they could work things out; but at the same time the Company had begun to make plans to hire strikebreakers from other areas to fill the positions of the striking members of Local 516. On January 19, 2012 the Company somewhat modified their offer and added a \$250.00 signing bonus and the members of Local 516 voted in favor to accept the language. The new language looks similar to what the Wisconsin public sector unions have in place now from the Governor's Act 10 language; that being they will now vote annually during a certain period of time to see if the workers want to be members of the Local 516 or not, basically an open shop policy. This is not illegal in Wisconsin and there are other workplaces in our state that have such contractual language and have had it for some time. However, in my history in the union, this language has been more common in states like Indiana, where now Unions are fighting a statewide "right to work" assault thanks to their Governor and state legislature. That is where things like this kind of language lead to, a full-blown wall to wall "right to work" fight. Whereas in the Manitowoc case and in "right to work" the Unions will still have to represent the non-member and they will still receive the total benefits of a contract, they just aren't able to participate in any of the decisions of the Union nor do they pay their fair share in dues for being represented. As much as we don't like this outcome in this case, we shouldn't judge the members of Local 516 or for how this ended--you and I were not in their shoes nor were you and I on strike for 9 weeks, suffering and going without. They did fight the fight for as long as they could and agreed to. That is what democracy looks like; the majority of the vote is where the decisions are made, whether we, as an individual, like it or agree with it. It is their contract to deal with and their agreement for their future, but we do not deny that it could affect all of us union workers in this state in some form or fashion. In closing, this action does show large corporations in our state that there is a way to crack open the wall of union security language in contracts that currently a great deal of our contracts possess at Local 965, well at least in the private sector, still has. The old saying, "that an injury to one is an injury to us all" still rings true today and I would ask you, "Who is next?" Which Wisconsin Corporation will mount a similar attack on their unionized workers? I also would ask you, is being a unionized worker important to you and what will you do if it is your turn to face contract language

like the members of Machinist Local 516 did someday? How valuable are your union provided benefits and your standard of living that you have come to know or has the leak in the dike already started? I know where I will stand on this issue and we need to be united before our turn ever comes to be.



Per Section XI of the Working Rules re: Organizing: Local 965 will give a reward to any current member in good standing with the IBEW and Local 965, who secures a person who is working in a non-union work environment at the time, who will be willing to take an active role in assisting Local 965 in organizing said work group. The amount of the reward to be presented shall follow the guidelines of: 1-6 people= Fifty dollars (\$50.00) cash; 7-12 people=One Hundred dollars (\$100.00) cash; 13 or greater=Two Hundred and Fifty dollars (\$250.00) cash. The reward will be paid to a current Local 965 member, (excluding all Constitutional Officers and Business Representatives of Local 965), when the determination is made by the National Labor Relations Board or the WERC to recognize Local 965 as the sole representative bargaining agent of the non-union work environment. The Local 965 Business Manager, along with the Local 965 Organizer, must approve all targets in order to qualify for a reward. The Local 965 Business Manager, along with the Local 965 Organizer, will make the determination that there was sufficient and positive work and/or assistance for the Local Union to warrant a reward to be given to the current Local 965 member.

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Newsletter of IBEW Local Union 965 to be published quarterly. Any articles or suggestions should be sent to Lori Richardson, Office Administrator, or Tony Bartels, Business Manager.

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