



COAST TO COAST UPDATE
AU COURANT D'UN OcéAN À L'AUTRE
 INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
 FRATERNITÉ INTERNATIONALE DES OUVRIERS EN ÉLECTRICITÉ



PHIL FLEMMING

International Vice President / Vice-président international
 First District, CANADA / Premier District, CANADA



January/February 2006

Greetings:

The theme for the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum Conference scheduled to be held in Montreal from June 4 – 6, 2006, is **“Apprenticeship – A Winning Formula”**. This theme is tied to the Grand Prix, which will be running in Montreal the following weekend.

This conference will be revving up more than 450 energized individuals who are stakeholders in the apprenticeship program in one way or another. As in past years, this conference will sell out quickly.

Some of the topics of interest will be:

Return on Training Investment, Essential Skills and Apprenticeship, Promoting Skilled Trades, Mobility of Workers – Journeypersons and Apprentices, Winning Formulas, Leading Edge Initiatives, Government’s Role in Training, Aboriginal Apprenticeship, Skills Shortages, Foreign Workers as part of the Demographic Shift and Recognition of Foreign Workers’ Credentials. This will be an interactive event and as well there will be a variety of presenters.

The objectives of the conference are to provide a meaningful opportunity to gain extensive insight from speakers and delegates, discuss strategic directions and network with others within the apprenticeship community and to showcase CAF initiatives.

As you are aware, a few regions in Canada have chosen to introduce forms of *mini-skilling* which leave the graduate with less than Red Seal Standard and this is reason enough to show interest in this conference and voice the position of the IBEW!! The IBEW must encourage the return to

the Red Seal Standard to those areas that are willing to accept less and continue to promote the Red Seal Standard in the areas that have maintained the status quo.

This conference will take place at the Delta Centre-Ville in Montreal and prior to April 28, 2006 the Early Bird Registration Fee is \$450.00 and after that it is \$495.00. There are interesting off site events planned in conjunction with the Conference. The preliminary program will be released at the end of March and registration will be taken by mail, fax and online through the conference Web site. This site is www.caf-fca.org.

There will be an exhibitor’s show at the conference and if you have any suggestions, please contact the CAF Conference coordinator, Allison Rougeau at 613-235-4004, ext. 202. There are opportunities for Sponsorship Partnership. The IBEW 1st District is a proud Silver Sponsor.

Please consider having someone from your local attend this conference to hear from other stakeholders and to help maintain our high standards in apprenticeship and training.

Phil Flemming, IVP

International President Hill Thanks IBEW Utility Restructuring Committee

“Thank you for your involvement in the IBEW Electric Utility Restructuring Committee. Since its inception in 1996, the committee has been very successful in slowing, and now stopping, the trend toward electric utility deregulation in the states and privatization in Canada. We have now proven our case that deregulation does not work and many states are taking a serious look at revising their deregulation laws. There is compelling evidence to show that the IBEW made a significant contribution to educating the public and lawmak-

ers to the real facts about electric deregulation. The restructuring committee was instrumental in crafting the tools needed to accomplish IBEW's goal.

The committee has provided me with sound advice and invaluable expertise for the past ten years, and the time has now come to disband the group. The entire membership of the IBEW owes you a debt of gratitude for your hard work and commitment. I am pleased with the committee and its accomplishments, and I am personally grateful for the many hours you dedicated to studying and debating the issues. The IBEW would not have made it through this fight without you.

*With best wishes, I am
Fraternally yours,
Edwin D. Hill, International President”*

Representatives from the First District who served on that committee were Brother Doug McKay, Business Manager Local 258-Vancouver, BC; Brother Rick Wacheski, Business Manager Local 636-Toronto, ON; and International Representative Peter Routliff.

Organizing Update

Local 213—Vancouver, BC

Local 213-Vancouver, BC reports that their top-down organizing campaign which was officially launched in November 2005 has resulted in eight non-union electrical contractors signing voluntary recognition agreements thus far. This combined with advertising and stripping journeypersons and apprentices from the non-union sector has caused the non-union to raise their wages to retain manpower.

After a seven month organizing drive, a poly party application to the B.C. Labour Board has resulted in a certification being granted to IBEW, Local 213; Operating Engineers Local 115; and Labourers Local 1611 to represent the workers employed by Bilfinger Berger on the Capilano/Seymour water diversion project which will continue for three more years and is

worth \$99 million. The workers were liberated from C.L.A.C.

Local 625—Halifax, NS

On June 20, 2005, a Voluntary Recognition Agreement was signed with On Site Mechanical of Moncton, NB. On Site did some work on Tufts Cove Generating Station Upgrade. They employed up to six members of Local 625 in 2005.

On August 25, 2005 IBEW Local 625 filed an Application for Certification on Power Electrical Systems. With ten cards (62.5%), it seemed like a good time to file. It was rumoured a layoff was imminent. On a unique twist, the Employer submitted ten names for the bargaining unit; five cards and five non-signers. With fifty percent representation indicated, the Labour Relations Board ordered a vote. Before the vote, two more workers joined the union. A hearing was set for two days in January 2006 to determine the eligibility of the six workers. A meeting was requested by the employer the day before the hearings to work out the differences before the lawyers went to work. The Union agreed to drop two names from the list; one worker who was absent from work on the day of the application and one whose certificate of qualification had expired. The employer agreed to include the four other names. The Board was asked to rule again on the application with the fourteen agreed names. An Order of Certification was issued on January 30, 2006. Ten of the original crew were dispatched to union jobs in the five months it took to get an order. Seven new workers were hired in this time. All twenty three workers were offered membership.

On September 2, 2005, an Application for Certification was filed on New Age Ventilation. They had started an electrical division with two to four workers. When Local 625 filed for Certification it was with two cards out of two employees. With one hundred percent representation, an automatic certification was issued on September 16, 2005.

On September 28, 2005 an Application for Successor rights was filed with the Labour Relations

Board regarding Halifax Electric. Its owner, Clarence Romans, had returned to the contracting business after twenty-one years inactivity. He came back in a big way with a twenty-one storey condominium project. Local 625 had record of both a Certification Order and a Voluntary Recognition Agreement.

On November 28, 2005 a hearing was held and on the 28th of January, 2006, an order was issued binding Halifax Electric to the Collective Agreement. This is a milestone in successor rights cases and will no doubt be used as a precedent in future cases across Canada. The previous benchmarks set for successor rights cases were five and seven years.

On December 23, 2005 an Application for Certification was filed on J.S.M. Electrical Ltd. of St. John's, NL. On the date of filing, IBEW Local 625 represented all of the employees. With one hundred percent of the workers represented, the Labour Relations Board issued an automatic certification. J.S.M. has a year of work left at the Springhill Penitentiary for nine workers.

Note: (J.S.M. or as they are also known, Jim Murray Electrical, has been operating non-union all across Canada for years. The company seems to have ties to the Federal Government and works predominately on Federal projects. They have done jobs at Pearson International Airport, Penitentiaries in Kingston, large Federal projects in Western Canada, etc. Local 625 is the first to get them and unfortunately for the rest of us the Certification order will only apply in Nova Scotia)

In general organizing, Local 625 organized 110 new members in 2005. A particular focus was put on foremen and key people working for non-union shops. Stripping proved effective in that it dried up the availability of workers and raised the wages of the few remaining journeymen. Competition between non-union shops is fierce for the journeymen that are still left out there. Many contractors are employing an excessive number of apprentices and exposing themselves to prosecution. The quality of work is suffering and long hours of straight time pay are wearing thin on the

unorganized worker.

The first objective of the IBEW, "to organize all workers in the electrical industry...." still seems to work well. Only after the vast majority of electrical workers are union members will the majority of electrical work in a jurisdiction be done union. To add to an old adage "There's strength in numbers and the key is to Organize".

Local 1555—Moncton, NB

Local 1555's top down organizing strategy has recently resulted in the signing of SCR Electrical Ltd. As a result of the signing, Local 1555 has welcomed 10 new members to the IBEW.

Eastern Membership Development Conference

The first of two Membership Development Conferences was held in Ottawa on February 15, 16 and 17, 2006, with a 'meet and greet' reception held on the evening of the 14th prior to the conference.

The Conference was opened by International Vice President Phil Flemming who welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance. Vice President Flemming commended and thanked everyone for their tireless efforts on behalf of our Brotherhood. Brother Flemming also mentioned that he knows how difficult it is to organize in today's anti-union/anti-worker climate and how organizing can often seem like a thankless job. However, he reminded us of the importance of organizing and that without the efforts of our Local Union leaders and organizers our great union could not move forward, and in fact, would not likely survive.

Vice President Flemming also introduced and welcomed our guests from the AFL-CIO; Sister Carol Edelson, the Director of the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, Sister Sarah McKenzie, a Senior Instructor with the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute and Brother Sam Luebke, Deputy Director of the AFL-CIO Organizing Department.

At this year's conference, thirty-two registered participants were presented the two and a half day

AFL-CIO Organizing Institute program. This program is widely used by the IBEW and other AFL-CIO affiliate unions to assess potential organizers prior to bringing them on staff and placing them in the field. The program is used to evaluate the participants and recognize whether or not they have the base skills to be an effective organizer.

During the two and one-half day program the participants became involved in a very realistic mock organizing campaign. Participants, through their involvement, helped to assess the campaign and develop strategies based on those assessments. Later in the program the participants were assigned fictional workers and were required to house-call these individuals in an attempt to bring them on board and sign a union card. The participants were continually evaluated throughout the program.

On all accounts those in attendance reported an excellent and very informative two and a half days. The Western Membership Development Conference is scheduled for May 29, 30 and 31, 2006 in Kelowna, BC.

Diane Finley is the New HRSDC Minister

The new Minister for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada is the Honourable Diane Finley, M.P. for Haldimand-Norfolk Ontario. Notably, she has also been appointed Vice-Chair of the Social Affairs Committee of Cabinet. Born in 1957, Ms. Finley was first elected to Parliament in 2004 and has been the Conservative critic for Agriculture and Agri-food. An active volunteer in her community, Ms. Finley's past careers include being a businesswoman, executive, management consultant and a school administrator in various sectors, namely, health care, transportation, agriculture equipment manufacturing, printing and publishing, and aviation. She has a background in universities and standards issues having been the administrator of the French Immersion program at the University of Western Ontario and a member of the National Standards Committee of the Paramedics Association of Canada.

Haldimand-Norfolk is located on Lake Erie between Niagara and London. You will notice from Ms. Finley's title that HRSDC and Social Development have been re-merged in keeping with the smaller cabinet.

Contact information: c/o Honourable Diane Finley, P.C., Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6; Phone: (613) 996-4974; Fax: (613) 996-9749; E-mail: finley.d@parl.gc.ca. She has an informative and active website at www.dianefinley.ca.

You can visit the PMO website for more information on the new administration (www.pm.gc.ca). Some of the other ministers of interest are:
Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Labour
Hon. Monte Solberg, Citizenship and Immigration
Hon. John Baird, Treasury Board
Hon. Maxime Bernier, Industry
Hon. Jim Flaherty, Finance
Hon. Michael Fortier, Public Works and Government Services

Thirteenth National Women's Conference

Fighting the Blues, the Canadian Labour Congress Thirteenth National Women's Conference will be held in Ottawa from June 11 - 14, 2006. This is a very timely Conference for our movement. With the election of a minority Conservative government the challenges for working families and especially for women are greater than ever. The labour and women's movements have made some important gains over the last decades. We must build our movement to ensure that we maintain the advances we have achieved and move our agenda forward in our workplaces, our communities and our legislatures.

Globalization, corporate downsizing, privatization, backlash against equality and conservative governments have combined to create a difficult climate for union women, but we are committed to *Fighting the Blues*. We know that the spirit is strong and the desire to organize, fight back and win a better world is stronger.

At the Conference, women will examine the impact of the current political, economic and social realities, nationally and internationally, on women's lives. They will look at issues such as health care, child care, equal pay for work of equal value, pensions and unemployment insurance in the context of current Canadian political reality. What can our unions do and what can women do for our unions to advance our struggle for economic and social equality? The Conference will feature planarians, community actions and workshops to develop participants' knowledge and skills base.

There will be one workshop for all participants which will also be offered bilingually. They will use the workshop time to focus on sharing knowledge and experience and to build women's organizational skills.

The CLC want to ensure that this Conference is truly representative of the diversity of the movement. They especially want to increase the participation of young women trade unionists – delegates from your organization who are thirty years of age or younger. They are also asking you to make a concerted effort to send women of colour, lesbians, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities.

The Women's Conference will be at the Crowne Plaza Ottawa Hotel and at the Ottawa Marriott Hotel.

The Conference is registered with Air Canada (phone 1.800.361.7585, TTY 1.800.361.8071). Please quote CVO63156 to obtain the discounted airfare.

For more information, please contact:

Women's and Human Rights Department
Canadian Labour Congress
2841 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1V 8X7
Phone: 613.521.3400 ext. 202
Fax: 613.521.4655
Email: women&hrights@clc-ctc.ca

Georgetti Writes Harper

"Dear Prime Minister:

You are probably no doubt aware that, on behalf of the Canadian Labour Congress, I have already written a number of your senior ministers with respect to issues in their portfolios which we were working on with department officials prior to the recent election.

The Executive Committee of the CLC recently met in Ottawa to review these issues and discuss how we can build a working relationship with your administration. The Executive Committee is comprised of the national leaders of the twelve largest unions in Canada and the elected Executive Officers of the Canadian Labour Congress.

I am writing at their request to seek a meeting with you and your senior ministers and the Executive Committee of the CLC to discuss some of the issues which we believe are important and need to be addressed in the upcoming legislative session.

These issues include:

- 1. Pension protection and retirement income security in the event of a company going bankrupt;*
- 2. A national jobs strategy to address the significant loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing and resource jobs in the past few months;*
- 3. Strengthening and expanding the national health care system to deal with wait times and protection from catastrophic prescription drug costs;*
- 4. The relationship between Canada's international trade policies and employment and investment in forestry, manufacturing (particularly automotive and aerospace), telecommunications, media, culture and public services;*
- 5. Expansion of education, training and upgrading programs for Canadian workers including income replacement as part of the Employment Insurance program;*
- 6. Addressing the House of Commons com-*

mittee report on economic equality for women and the introduction of proactive pay equity legislation;

7. *Overhaul of Part III of the Canada Labour Code and the introduction of amendments barring the use of replacement workers (scabs);*
8. *Maintenance of a national early childhood education and child care program and the role of tax credits for those unable to access regulated child care spaces.*

I believe a meeting of our respective senior representatives is necessary if your government is to address those issues that are of importance to working families in Canada.

*Yours truly,
Kenneth V. Georgetti
President"*

Local 213—Vancouver, BC

The IBEW Provincial Council in British Columbia has completed trade table negotiations with the electrical contractors and reached a Memorandum of Agreement, which expires after the 2010 Olympics (April, 2010) and provides for \$8.00 per hour increases during the term. The agreement applies to the four BC construction Locals (213-Vancouver, 230-Victoria, 993-Kamloops, and 1003-Nelson). It is, therefore, important that they continue to force the non-union to increase their rates to keep our contractors competitive.

Local 213 currently has 350 apprentice electricians enrolled in their program and are selecting another 20 in February 2006 from applications received from non-union apprentices.

The "Lights of Hope" project held each Christmas at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver raised \$1.6 million. Fifty-five journeypersons and apprentices from Local 213 were involved in installing the 250,000 Christmas lights and decorations.

Union Membership Statistics from HRSDC Workplace Information Directorate

The Workplace Information Directorate at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has published the results of its most recent survey of labour organizations in Canada, providing data for January 2005. The survey reports union membership totalling 4,381,000 workers, an increase of 120,000 from 2004. The unionization rate reported is 30.7% as of January 1, 2005. The HRSDC report also lists the largest unions and their total membership, and provides data on membership in labour federations, and charts the trend in total membership from 1991 to 2005.

Aging Populations: Canada and Europe

New projections for Canada released by Statistics Canada on December 15, 2005 show that population aging, already underway, will accelerate in 2011 when the first baby-boom cohort reaches the age of 65. By 2031, seniors will account for between 23% and 25% of the total population; almost double the proportion of 13% in 2005. The proportion of the working-age population (ages 15 to 64) is projected to decline steadily, from 70% of the total population in 2005 to 62% by the beginning of the 2030's. The demographic dependency ratio would increase rapidly until 2031, when it is estimated that there will be approximately 61 children and seniors for 100 working-age people. (In 2005, the ratio is 44 children and seniors for 100 working-age people).

Loss of Manufacturing Jobs Contrasts with Growth in Oil and Gas Sector

The national unemployment rate increased from 6.5% to 6.6% in January 2006, and for younger workers, it rose to 12.4%. Across Canada, 42,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in January (33,000 of those were in Ontario), bringing the number to 93,000 of jobs that have been lost in Ontario since the end of 2002.

Ken Georgetti, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, calls the recent loss of manufacturing jobs a signal of crisis. Economist Benjamin Tal of

CIBC World Markets, states that while the Canadian unemployment rate is at a thirty-year low, the quality of the new jobs created is in a decline. Many are in low-paying sectors; the service industry, and retail and wholesale trade. As a result, the employment figures exaggerate the strength of the labour market.

While Ontario's unemployment rate rose to 6.5% in January 2006, Alberta's fell to 3.5%, the lowest level in almost 25 years. Employment in the natural resources sector in Alberta has increased by 35% since the end of 2002.

North American Universities Joining the Campaign Against Coke

The Olympics in Turin, Italy have provided a high-profile venue for anti-globalization protests against Coca-Cola, but momentum is also gathering as student activists across North America pressure university administrations to end contracts with Coca-Cola. A speaking tour called the "Anti-Coke Road Show" travelled across Ontario in February to the universities of Waterloo, Western Ontario, Ryerson, Queen's and Carleton. At McMaster University, a referendum among undergraduate students overwhelmingly opposed the university's exclusive contract with Coke. In the U.S., in December 2005, the University of Michigan and New York University joined approximately 20 other universities that have banned the sale of Coca-Cola products on their campuses.

Student actions are largely a response to the "Killer Coke" campaign that accuses Coke and its bottlers of complicity in the murders of union activists in Columbia in 1996, and for human rights and environmental abuses since. Although the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) has stated that it has no evidence of Coke's involvement in the deaths, a Columbian union of local workers, SINALTRAINAL, launched a law suit against Coke and continues the public relations campaign.

On January 19 and 25, 2006, Coca-Cola re-

leased statements defending its labour policies in Columbia, and on February 7, 2006 they issued a press release stating that it was "greatly disappointed" and offended by "false and inflammatory" allegations made in a press release issued by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, who represent Coke workers in the U.S.

The "Killer Coke" campaign website can be found at www.killercoke.org and the Teamster press release can be found at www.teamster.org.

Working Conditions in Chinese Factories Supplying Wal-Mart

In December 2005, China Labour Watch and the National Labour Communities released reports on working conditions in Wal-Mart factories in Southern China. The documents report that workers at Panyu United Stationary Factory and at Lung Cheong International Toy Factory work up to 13 hours a day, six or seven days a week for .34 and .33 cents an hour respectively. According to the reports, workers at both sites are denied health insurance, maternity leave, paid holiday leave, marital leave or leave to bury family members. At Huangwu No. 2 Toy Factory, the report focuses on safety concerns and an impossible pace of work, claiming that workers are required to complete 1,250 units per hour, 10,000 units per day. For more information you can check the following website, www.chinalaborwatch.org.

First District Convention Fund Early-Bird Draw Held February 14, 2006

The first early-bird draw was held during the reception prior to the Eastern Membership Development Conference on the evening of February 14, 2006. With approximately 35 members of whom most were also ticket holders anxiously watching, Sister Carol Edelson, the Director of the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute picked the lucky number.

The lucky ticket number worth \$5000.00 was 123 and was held by Local 424 member Brother D.A. Handley of Calgary, Alberta. A money order and congratulatory letter from IVP Flemming was sent to Brother Handley on February 17, 2006. Brother Handley's ticket will go back in the draw for the

next early-bird prize draw to be held March 17, 2006 and the grand prize draw to be held June 27, 2006 during the All Canada Progress meeting in Saint John, NB.

The response to this raffle, our first of this magnitude, has been phenomenal. At the time of the February draw there were only approximately 25 tickets of the original 500 left unsold. Currently there are a few tickets (12) available, but they won't last long. Anyone who would like a ticket is encouraged to contact the First District Office immediately as it is expected all tickets will be sold prior to the second early-bird draw on March 17, 2006.

To everyone who has purchased a ticket, and who has helped to sell tickets and make this endeavour a resounding success, **Thank You** and **Good Luck** to all ticket holders.

IBEW Merchandise Available

The highly successful IBEW Cookbook can still be ordered from the First District Office at the reduced price of \$20.00 CDN. We also have a supply of IBEW "Hail to the Chef" denim barbecue aprons at the incredibly low price of \$30.00 CDN, and the ever popular IBEW First District Garment bag is now reduced to \$45.00.

These items would make excellent additions to any Local Union golf tournament prize table, could be raffled off at meetings, or given as awards. To order yours, contact the First District Office today.

Articles in the IBEW Journal

In the latest issue of the IBEW Journal for the months of January/February we have excellent articles from Locals: 37-Fredericton, NB; 424-Edmonton, AB; 586-Ottawa, ON; 625-Halifax, NS; 773-Windsor, ON; 804-Kitchener, ON; 894-Oshawa, ON; 1574-White Horse, YT; and Local 2085-Winnipeg, MB; and in the new retirees section an article from Local 105-Hamilton, ON. As always it is great to see Ca-

nadian content in the IBEW Journal. To all of the Press Secretaries and other contributors out there, thanks and keep up the good work.

Projected Meeting Dates 2006

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| 3/8 – 10/06 | IBEW Telecommunications/
Broadcast/Manufacturing
Conference
Monterey, California |
| 3/31-4/1/06 | IBEW Construction Conference
Washington, DC |
| 5/1 – 5/06 | IBEW Utility Conference
Riviera Hotel
Palm Springs, California |
| 5/22 – 24/06 | Railroad Conference
Jacksonville, Florida |
| 5/29- 5/31/06 | First District Western Membership
Development Conference
The Coast Capri Hotel
Kelowna, British Columbia |
| 6/4 – 6/06 | Canadian Apprenticeship
Forum (CAF) Apprenticeship
Conference
Delta Centre-Ville
Montreal, Quebec |
| 6/11 – 14/06 | CLC National Women's
Conference
Crowne Plaza Ottawa Hotel
Ottawa, Ontario |
| 6/25 – 28/06 | Progress Meeting
Saint John, New Brunswick |
| 7/29 – 8/4/06 | NTI Meeting
Knoxville, Tennessee |
| 9/11 – 15/06 | IBEW Convention
Cleveland, Ohio |