



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



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Greetings:

We have taken another step forward with our Strategic Business Plan project. As you will recall the five committees, Organizing, Officer Training, Technical Training, Political Action and Media Relations and National Funding presented their reports to the delegates to the All Canada Progress Meeting in Ottawa. Not to be repetitive and boring but again my thanks for their hard work!

Following the Progress Meeting Mike Gaffney, our consultant gave us a general synopsis of his sense of where we should go next. In the interest of moving on as expeditiously as possible I convened a conference call meeting with my Staff to discuss the reports and Mike's comments in order that we have a clear focus. We are now in the process of compiling the information to send out to all the Committee Members for their perusal, critique and direction. I have assigned one Representative to each Committee to coordinate their effort and Representative Peter Routliff will act as a liaison from the First District Office with all Committees.

As in all strategies a few of the initiatives are low hanging fruit that we can get at and achieve in a short period of time. I am suggesting that we go after those first. A number of others may take longer and we realize there is still quite a bit of work ahead of us.

It will take all of us working together to make the IBEW in Canada what we want it to be. We need the efforts and cooperation of every member.

Phil Flemming
 International Vice President

Great News for Local 37

For the past three plus years the 700 members employed at the Point LePreau Nuclear generating station in Saint John, their families and the officers of Local 37 had a black cloud of uncertainty hanging over their heads. In a decision made in 2002 the New Brunswick Public Utility Board made a recommendation not to refurbish the Point LePreau plant which was due to reach the end of its life cycle in 2010.

The decision not to refurbish LePreau would have resulted in the loss of 700 direct jobs and an approximate 1100 other related spin off positions. This of course would have had a devastating effect on not only Local 37 and their members but the entire economy of Saint John and the province of New Brunswick.

Of course Local 37 did not agree with the Board's decision and were unwilling to accept the consequences without a fight. Members of Local 37 as well as partners from numerous service groups, Building Trades affiliates, and other partners, contributed monies to a professional media and lobby effort.

Throughout the lobby effort the Local argued that the benefits of clean Nuclear power far exceeded that of the proposed alternatives. These alternative proposals included coal fired, and other fossil fuel plants. During this lobby they debated and were even able to convince high profile environmentalists that nuclear power made the most sense for New Brunswick, and as a result were able to solicit their support and full endorsement. The Local also presented an effective financial argument for the refurbishment.

With lots of public pressure the New Brunswick government was faced with an incredibly tough decision. The fact that they had sought funding from the Federal Government, who later denied

their request, no doubt made their decision that much tougher.

During the course of this lobby a private sector company, Bruce Power made a bid to lease the facility and refurbish the plant. Bruce Power would then sell power back to the New Brunswick Public Utilities Board.

On July 29, Premier Bernard Lord announced to a large audience (approximately 200, many of which were Local Union 37 members) in Saint John that the government of New Brunswick would go ahead with the refurbishment of the Point LePreau facility. As you can imagine this announcement was met with a thunderous standing ovation that lasted ten minutes or longer.

The refurbishment is scheduled to begin in 2008 and including the purchase of replacement power has a projected cost of \$1.4 billion. This is not only good news for Local 37 but will no doubt provide much needed employment for our construction members, and building trades brothers and sisters.

There is no question that without the efforts put forward by Local 37 and their many supporters this would likely have gone the other way.

Bruce Power Writes Local 37

In a related story the President and Chief Executive Officer of Bruce Power sent a congratulatory letter to Local 37 Business Manager Wade Greenlaw and Representative Ross Galbraith which reads as follows:

I was pleased to hear the announcement today that Point LePreau is to be refurbished. As you might expect, I am disappointed that our proposal was not seen as the preferred option as I would have greatly enjoyed playing a role in the future of the facility.

On a personal note, I want to tell you that in my interactions with yourselves and your members on site, I was taken with the professionalism, commitment and business acumen exhibited by all. This positive decision is no doubt due in small measure to the very effective campaign mounted by your own group.

I will watch with interest how this project develops in the months and years to come and I wish you all the very best wishes with this endeavour.

Kind Regards, Duncan Hawthorne

Local 1574 Inks Deal

Local 1574 in Whitehorse have reached a two year agreement with employer Arcrite Northern Ltd. which has been ratified by their membership.

Highlights of the new two year deal are a general wage increase of 4% in each year. Other improvements have been made in the area of short-term medical coverage, an increase in travel mileage rates for personal vehicle transport between sites. They have also negotiated re-confirmations from the employer with respect to proof of insurance for employees riding in helicopters, and cleaned up other important contract language.

Local Hero

Local 1003 member Richard Murphy was awarded the Governor-General's decoration for bravery on June 24th by Governor General Adrienne Clarkson in Ottawa.

Brother Murphy and his friend John Hoar who also received the award were honoured for rescuing a man from a house fire in Nelson, BC on December 24th, 2004. Despite heavy toxic smoke, which stopped two initial attempts, the two men made their way to the second floor of the heritage home in downtown Nelson, where they located the unconscious occupant, dragging him to safety.

Brother Murphy and Mr. Hoar dismissed any heroism on their part, saying that they felt their actions were "what anyone would have done in those circumstances." We are all lucky to have such ordinary heroes among us, and Local 1003 and the entire IBEW salute Brother Murphy for this selfless and courageous act.

Habitat for Humanity

Local 1003 members Heather Wiese, Ray Keen, Tanya Martin, Steve Kennedy, Randy MacKenzie, Tom Clegg, Russ Plant, Ben Portz and Justin Tebulte donated their time and labour June 25-26 to

work on the Habitat for Humanity project on Creek Street in Nelson, B.C. Two Local contractors, A-Plus Electric and DHC Communications contributed permits and materials. These members and contractors should be commended for their efforts on this very worthwhile cause.

IBEW Locals all across the District have a proud tradition of supporting the Habitat for Humanity cause, and worked on numerous projects. This of course helps raise our image in the various communities, and presents the IBEW and organized labour in a positive light. Keep up the good work everyone.

Members Working on Nickel Rim South Mining Project Receive Praise

Business Manager of Local 1687, Bruce McNamara forwarded a copy of a letter sent to Mr. Bob LePage of Comstock Canada by Falconbridge Construction Manager Hugh MacIsaac. Falconbridge had contracted with Comstock to work on one of the first major mining development projects to happen in the Sudbury area in a number of years.

In an excerpt from Mr. MacIsaac's letter he writes; "The strategy on the project is to choose and work with contractors that are aligned with our objective. With Comstock on this project I believe we made the right choice. The Comstock people working on this project demonstrated a safe attitude and delivered good quality work in a timely manner and should be commended for doing so. Organizations are only as good as the people you have doing the work and on the Nickel Rim South Project I believe we had the right people. Thanks to Comstock and their entire workforce who contributed to the successful results on our project".

Mr. MacIsaac states that organizations are only as good as the people they have working for them and of course we in the IBEW are only as good as the members we have. Well done and keep it up; it is always encouraging to hear positive things about our members.

Manitoba Hydro/IBEW Local 2034 - 2005 Lineman's Rodeo

They typically work in blizzards, rainstorms, and

often in the dead of night, so it is no surprise that the participants in the Lineman's Rodeo at the Manitoba Hydro Training Center near Stonewall would describe the cold, windy day that greeted them as a good day. A total of 16 Journeyman teams and 10 apprentices entered the sixth edition of the event, all competing for the chance to represent Manitoba Hydro at the International Lineman's Rodeo in Bonner Springs, Kansas.

Five events, including the egg climb, and pole-top rescue, tested the competitors' skills while judges on the ground watched closely to ensure proper work procedures and safety practices were followed at all times.

The egg climb event calls for the participant to climb a wood pole while holding a small gear bag in their mouth that contains a raw egg. At the top, the lineman drops an empty bag already hanging on the pole and hangs his gear bag in its place. The lineman must then place the egg in his mouth and climb down the pole as quickly as possible without cracking the egg.

Three of the 16 Journeyman teams in this tight competition compiled perfect scores forcing the judges to decide the winners by the stop watch.

This year the team of Rick Warkentin (Customer Service Operations, Winnipeg West), Paul Eramchuk (Suburban Overhead Construction), and Glyn Thomas (West Kildonan District), compiled a perfect score and fastest time over the five events. The two winners of the apprentice event were Wes Jaman (St. Boniface District) and Dan Blahut (West Kildonan District). All five will travel to compete in Bonner Springs later this fall.

Manitoba Linemen Win SaskPower Lineman's Rodeo

A team of Manitoba linemen were invited to compete in the second annual SaskPower Lineman's Rodeo that was held in Regina on the 17th of September.

Through support from IBEW Local 2034 members Glen Goodman of Steinbach, Chris Thomas of St. Norbert and Tim Yaremchuk of Russell travelled to compete in events that were similar to that of the

Manitoba Hydro Lineman Rodeo held this past June.

There were twenty teams participating from Western Canada that included British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Each team had three members and completed six different tasks that were scored by points against for errors and time.

Tasks included speed events such as "hurt man rescue" and the "egg climb" that utilized skill and speed to display accuracy and experience, while putting pressure on the men with strict time constraints. Other events displayed expertise in "hot work" where insulators and wires were changed while the line was energized. These procedures measured expertise in safety and work methods. Safety of course, was the highest priority.

The competition was fierce. Work methods, tools and safety standards differed from Manitoba practices but the Local 2034 members managed to adapt and come out on top.

If the success of an event like this was to be measured by the smiles on all the competitors' faces, then everyone won. The level of excitement throughout the day was amazing. From the local boy scouts eagerly serving pancakes early in the morning to the encouragement we got from SaskPower CEO, Pat Youza who spent the entire day, the event proved to be a great experience for all. The Rodeo Committee should be commended for a job well done as their event was world class.

This competition supports the fact that the IBEW Local 2034 linemen in Manitoba are at a level that is comparable to the best across Canada as far as safety and training are concerned. Fortunately the competitors, as well as the volunteer entourage, managed to find a little time after the competition to support the local businesses and build lasting relationships with other lineman teams from the West.

Local 2034 looks forward to returning next year to defend the title and participate again in a great event.

International Representative Vair Clendenning receives Degree

After five years that included online and on campus classes, International Representative Vair Clendenning has received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Labour Education from the National Labour College (George Meany Center) in Silver Springs, Maryland.

The National Labour College program well suited Vair's busy schedule as an International Representative for the IBEW. The Meany Center program awards up to 30 credits for related life experience. This experience includes union activism, positions held and length of tenure, Certificates of Qualification, and related training programs.

Most of the work is completed by the student online, but does require five weeks of on campus classroom instruction. Vair used his vacation time and covered his own transportation and lodging costs to meet the in class requirement. The program can be completed in less time depending on the student's schedule, and available time.

Underscoring the NLC's commitment to labour's future, Vair's senior paper was entitled, "IBEW Canada-Organize for Survival". Vair said the most valuable part of his experience was the interaction with other students from different unions across North America and the Caribbean.

Congratulations Vair, your commitment to the IBEW and your professionalism is commendable and should serve as an inspiration to us all.

Local 348 Gains 80 New Broadcasting Members at A-Channel in Edmonton

On February 16, 2005 CHUM Television purchased the shares held by minority shareholders at Learning & Skills Television of Alberta, and purchased 100% of the assets of Craig Broadcasting which included A-Channel in Edmonton. The employer promptly filed a Section 18.1 application (federal) for reconsideration of certification seeking a single bargaining agent and collective agreement. This set the stage for a run off vote between IBEW and CEP. Concurrent with the application, 14 Local 348 members received layoff notice effective August 1.

Undaunted by the seemingly lop-sided battle (CEP with 80 members, Local 348 with 60) the members at Learning & Skills set out to ensure Local 348 would be successful. They participated fully in the strategy sessions leading up to the vote respecting the approach to be used, contents of messages and level of aggression with which the message should be conveyed. Communicating the level of input they enjoyed in the operation of the local union, autonomy in collective bargaining and ability to deal directly with the Business Manager at their workplace as needed, were noted as the most likely points to persuade members of the CEP to vote IBEW.

They recognized early that success required every Local 348 member to vote.

Even though the ballots were cast June 20, the count occurred September 6, following objections raised by CEP regarding voter eligibility. They argued new employees hired at A-Channel after the application date should be eligible to vote and further argued IBEW members receiving layoff notice were ineligible, even though they were still employed on the vote date. The Board issued a letter decision in which they stated there was no compelling evidence to persuade them to vary from previous decisions and rulings which provided that eligibility is crystallized on the application date, including those receiving layoff notice and still at work, and those on recall.

Local 348 members at Learning and Skills Television delivered 100% of their vote resulting in 72% of the entire group selecting Local 348 as their bargaining agent.

Business Manager Mike Semeniuk is quoted as saying "It was the hard work of the membership that made this vote a success. I am privileged to represent this group of employees and thank them for their assistance and input. I would also like to thank International Representative Christine Pynaker for her assistance and counsel through this process."

Government and Bruce Power Reach Agreement to Restart Nuclear Units

On October 17, 2005 Energy Minister Donna

Cansfield announced that the government and Bruce Power have reached an agreement to produce another 1,500 megawatts of electricity capacity with the refurbishment of Bruce A Units 1 and 2 at the Bruce Nuclear facility near Kincardine, Ontario. The agreement will bring on line enough generating capacity to power one million homes, or a city the size of Ottawa.

Under the agreement, Bruce Power would receive \$63 per megawatt hour for the electricity produced by Bruce A Units compared with an average price of \$67.65 per megawatt hour for all electricity in Ontario from January 1 to October 4, 2005. Bruce Power will pay all capital cost related to the refurbishment of the units and ensure that much of the risks of cost overruns related to the refurbishment and restart of the units are transferred away from Ontario ratepayers.

Bruce Power will invest approximately \$4.25 billion to refurbish and restart Bruce A Units 1 and 2, refurbish Unit 3 and extend the operating life of Unit 4 once the first two units are in service. Refurbishment will begin immediately, with the first unit expected to be operational in 2009. At the peak of construction, the project will involve more than 1,500 construction jobs.

The four year project will boost total capacity at the Bruce nuclear facility to 6,200 megawatts.

Unions are still our best hope

Following is an article that appeared in the Halifax Chronicle Herald on September 6, 2005. The article is by John Jacobs. Jacobs is director of the Nova Scotia office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (www.policyalternatives.ca), an independent public policy research institute.

"When it comes to workers and unions there is good and bad news. The good news is that polls show that Canadians' approval of unions is increasing. Most Canadians think that unions make a positive contribution to society and overall prosperity and many workers would join a union if given a chance.

These findings don't come as a real surprise. Un-

ions are the most democratic institutions, when it comes to giving workers a say in the economy. They provide workers with some clout when it comes to challenging increasing corporate dominance of our economy and society.

Unions increase earnings but they are also strong promoters of social programs like health care that provides services to all Canadians regardless of their income or where they live. Labour organizations also fight for legislative changes, such as improvements to minimum wages and labour standards that benefit all workers, not just union members. Unions are well ahead of the curve, compared to the corporate sector in taking a stand on the need to move to a more environmentally sustainable economy and to struggle against discrimination. Unions can also make businesses and economics more productive. Unions pressure employers to invest in new technologies and to invest in upgrading skills through education and training. These investments enable workers to create more goods and services with the same amount of labour. In some of the productive economies in the world such as Sweden, 90% of the workers are covered by union negotiated collective agreements.

Unions have an important role to play in making the Nova Scotian economy more productive. The provincial economy is disproportionately creating low wage jobs. Economic productivity in the province is low by Canadian standards. Investment in research and development, a key component in developing a productive economy, is falling behind the rate of investment in the rest of Canada, which is already low by international standards. Too many employers in Nova Scotia are relying on low wages and extracting longer hours from their employees to keep their businesses profitable, rather than investing in research and development and new technologies.

In a recent survey of collective agreements, Statistics Canada has found that agreements between unions and companies are increasingly focusing on making workplaces healthier and safer, on employment security and on education

and training. These measures support workers in adjusting to and taking advantage of technological changes and increase the productivity of companies. Eighty percent of the employers involved in the survey of unionized companies concluded that labour - management relations were good and none felt that the relations were poor.

Here's the bad news. Workers in Nova Scotia are falling behind economically and governments and corporations are trying to undermine efforts by unions to support workers.

The overall picture for workers in Canada is not pretty. Corporate profits are "skyrocketing" according to Statistics Canada. Employers are raking in a record portion of the wealth being created in our economy. On the other hand the creators of this wealth, workers, are being left out in the cold.

Real earnings across the country have barely kept pace with the cost of living and in Nova Scotia earnings are actually declining. The standard workweek is eroding as many income earners are struggling to make ends meet through part time low wage jobs. Meanwhile an increasing number of workers are working more than 40 hours a week from just under 20% in 1976 to almost 30% in 2001. Low income folks are slipping further behind as income inequality increases.

Coinciding with these changes is the decreased ability of workers to influence economic activity and the society around them. The percentage of workers represented by labour unions, the traditional promoters of workers' interests and social programs, has been on the decline. Twenty-five years of attacks by the corporate sector and governments on unions' ability to promote the interests of workers have left their toll. The proportion of the Canadian workers belonging to a union has decreased to 31%, from 38% in 1981. In Nova Scotia the overall number of union members continues to increase but the percent of the overall workforce that is unionized has decreased from 34% to 29%. Nova Scotia has the second lowest rate in Canada of unionization in the private sector (12.4%).

Canadian academic research has concluded that declining unionization is not, as some would have it, due to changes in the economy making unions

out of date or even because workers don't want to join a union. In fact, the popularity of unions has been increasing and the proportion of workers who say they would join a union has not decreased. No, the research shows that the primary reason for declining unionization in Canada is anti-union initiatives by governments and employers.

Rather than support union efforts to improve workers' work lives, most provincial governments have introduced US-style labour legislation that makes it harder for unions to negotiate. Governments have lengthened and complicated the process of organizing a union in a workplace. Management in turn has jumped at the opportunity to intimidate workers and put legal obstacles in the union's way. British Columbia went to a more streamlined union organizing system in the 90's and worker success at unionizing increased.

Unions aren't perfect. But they do offer workers the best opportunity to promote workers' interests in the workplace and they do help make the economy work for all citizens. Indications are that many more workers would join a union if given a chance. The provincial government needs to provide legislation that ensures all workers get that chance."

Winter School held in Charlottetown

The first of two Winter schools was held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island on October 13th and 14th. This year's course, facilitated by International Representatives Mike Power, Brian Matheson and Tom Reid was the Collective Bargaining Process.

Twenty four members including Business Managers, local union representatives, bargaining committee members and rank and file were provided an in depth look at the Collective Bargaining process. The two day program included modules on preparation for bargaining, the dynamics of bargaining and concluded with a mock bargaining session.

The second Winter school will be held in Victo-

ria , B.C. in February 2006. Dates and information regarding hotel location and booking information will be forwarded to all local unions.

A Business Case for Apprenticeship

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce released a report on September 13th outlining the growing shortage of skilled-trades workers in the province. The report titled "Taking Action on Skilled Trades: Establishing the Business Case for Investing in Apprenticeship", notes that Ontario will lose about 100,000 skilled-trades workers in the manufacturing sector over the next 15 years, 52% of the current skilled-trades workers in that sector, and that the current investment in training new apprentices is insufficient. Using the manufacturing sector as an example, the report estimates that for every dollar invested in apprenticeship training, there is a return of \$4.30. The full report can be viewed at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce website.

Flame Retardant Clothing Update

Due to the vast amount of misinformation and claims made by some suppliers, the First District office has for some time now been working to ensure that the best type of FR clothing is made available to our members.

It was important that the best type of Nomex cloth along with proper garment designs and quality manufacturing be established for this program. Some examples of better quality include double stitching, FR Velcro and reflective tape, tapered cuffs to accommodate work, rubber gloves, extra cloth for a comfortable fit and durability.

A letter has been sent out to all local unions with a copy of the IBEW FR Clothing Program Catalogue. The Catalogue provides information about the clothing that is being offered along with directions for ordering.

It should also be noted that this clothing is union made in Canada and has been discounted by 30% for a limited period of time. In addition all orders will be delivered as directed. Nomex clothing lasts up to three times longer than regular cotton making the value of this clothing even greater.

Safety should be the primary consideration in every job and wearing FR clothing is the first step.

2005 Membership Development Conference

The 2005 annual Membership Development Conference was held at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas on October 3rd, 4th, and 5th. This year's conference saw over 1100 delegates registered making it the largest conference to date.

International President Edwin D. Hill once again gave the keynote address. President Hill reminded all in attendance of the importance of organizing and the critical need for an "all" effort by everyone. The theme of this year's conference was "Putting all of the pieces together. The time for action is now".

Delegates were provided workshops on numerous topics related to organizing in the Construction and Professional/Industrial markets.

A first at this year's conference was a Canadian Organizing workshop. The workshop included presentations by Local 625 Organizer Tom Griffiths, Local 353 Organizers Bill Martindale, Rudy Lucchesi, Nino DiGiandomenico, and Lee Caprio, and Local 2085 Organizer Russ Shewchuk. By all accounts this workshop was a success and it is hoped to be expanded and become an annual event.

New Merchandise Available

The next Canadian Comment available in the November IBEW Journal will include a brochure showcasing the new First District rings. The brochure will provide details on the available products along with pricing and ordering information.

In addition to the new rings the First District is pleased to be able to offer for a limited time over 50 hours of training on Windows and Office XP. Go from a beginner or intermediate user to a pro in no time. Learn to confidently develop and deliver professional correspondence and presentations all for \$20.00 per CD

including shipping and handling. For more information, please visit www.ibew1st.org and then click on the 'family training centre web and CD – Based Online Training' link.

Articles in the IBEW Journal

Many thanks to all the Canadian Locals who contributed articles to the IBEW Journal. It is always valuable for your members and other locals to read the current events in your local. For the most recent IBEW Journal, appreciation goes out to Locals 254, 424, 502, 636, 804 and 894.

Future Issues of the Coast to Coast

We would appreciate hearing from you on any topics you would like to have reported in the Coast to Coast. These articles can include but are not limited to such topics as organizing successes, negotiations, fund raisers, sporting events, upcoming projects of note, etc. If you have a story you would like reported please send it to the First District office via fax or preferably email.

Projected Meeting Dates 2006

3/1 – 3/06	IBEW Manufacturing Conference, Hotel Royal Plaza Orlando, Florida
3/8 – 10/06	IBEW Telecommunications/ Broadcast Conference Monterey, California
3/31-4/1/06	IBEW Construction Conference Washington, DC
4/24 – 26/06	Railroad Conference New Orleans, Louisiana
5/1 – 5/06	IBEW Utility Conference Riviera Hotel Palm Springs, California
6/25 – 27/06	Progress Meeting Saint John, NB, Canada
7/29 – 8/4/06	NTI Meeting Knoxville, Tennessee
9/11 – 15/06	IBEW Convention