

# Canadian comment



Spring 2006



INTERNATIONAL  
BROTHERHOOD  
OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS  
FIRST DISTRICT

**PHIL FLEMMING**  
International Vice President

**EDWIN D. HILL**  
International President

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International Executive  
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8th District

## All Canada Progress Meeting

**T**he ACPM was held in Ottawa in August 2005 and was very well attended by 340 delegates and guests.

Mike Duffy, the very well known political news reporter, spoke with the group providing insight into Canada's political system normally unseen by the public along with his humorous commentary. He candidly answered questions and provided some very kind and supportive remarks about his long time friend International Vice-President, Phil Flemming.

DuPont of Canada graciously sponsored a noon forum BBQ and presented

their "Thermo Man" portable testing laboratory which demonstrated the protection of fire retardant clothing and the need for all electrical workers to wear the clothing as adopted by the IBEW's fire retardant clothing program.

The caucuses met on the second day of the Progress Meeting and discussed issues particular to their industry in the construction, utility, railroad, manufacturing, pulp and paper, telecommunications and government sectors. By all accounts the discussions and dialogue were very beneficial and highly productive.



*Pictured above are the delegates who attended the All Canada Progress Meeting in Ottawa last year*



# editorial



**Phil Flemming**  
*International  
Vice President*

## International Convention - 2006 -

**G**reetings:

With the Federal Election behind us and a new minority Parliament in session, we can expect changes that will have an effect on the working families of Canada. Through the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Building Trades, the IBEW will be actively seeking compromises and agreement from the government on issues that affect our members at work and in the daily lives of our members' families.

It would appear from all indications that the Conservatives are motivated to decentralize our social benefits. With the help of the Bloc Quebecois, they will return the responsibility of health care to the provinces; this would be a death knell to Medicare in every sense of the word. Provinces like BC, Alberta and Quebec have already started the process and private health care entrepreneurs are poised to take advantage of the situation.

We must support the efforts of the Canadian Labour Congress, our Provincial Federations of Labour, Labour Councils and the Canadian

Building Trades in their efforts to lobby all levels of government on this important question. We all have to be involved and effective on this issue; talk it up with your family, neighbours and friends. If I haven't gained your attention, let me appeal to your pocketbook. Private health care in the United States cost workers in excess of \$3.00 per hour from their hourly pay package. What do you think happens to the retired folks and those with more serious health problems?

We will make it our business to get fully involved in this issue and even if you have never participated in your Local Union or lobbied ever before, make it your business to get active.

This is a fight for the interest of your family and I can assure you that we are in for a big fight!

Phil Flemming, IVP

**B**y now most Local Unions have already, or are in the process of, electing delegates to attend the International Convention. The International Convention is held every 5 years and is the time when all the officers are elected, constitutional matters debated, and the future of the IBEW determined.

This year the International Convention is being held in Cleveland, OHIO from September 11 - 15, 2006. It is expected that over 7,000 delegates and guests will be in attendance and as in the past, the International Convention will likely be a memorable event for all in attendance. The number of delegates each Local Union is entitled to send, is determined by the number of members in the Local Union as outlined in Article II of the IBEW Constitution.

It is important for all Locals to ensure their delegates attend the International Convention to guarantee their voice is heard. More information will be available in future Canadian Comments and in our bi-monthly Coast-to-Coast newsletters.

## Electrician's Self Assessment Tool

**T**he Electrician's Self Assessment Tool (ESAT) The ESAT CD-ROM is available to you through CSA or your Local Union. It has helped more than 1000 apprentices and journeypersons assess their potential success when writing the Red Seal exam. The ability to prepare yourself in any one of 6 areas as well as

write a mock exam not only assesses your readiness for the Red Seal exam, but also identifies areas that need improvement. This product was written by CSA and is endorsed by the IBEW.

Locals: Please note that bulk discounts are available and would allow you to pass on the discount to your members.

For more information or to order, please go to **www.shopcsa.ca**. To view CSA seminars go to **http://learningcentre.csa.ca**. For all orders or requests for more information, please call **1-800-463-6727**.

# Conference Board Report on Health Care

The on going debate about health care in Canada continues to be one of the most, if not the most important, issue facing Canadians. In a article from the Conference Board of Canada entitled "Healthy Provinces, Healthy Canadians: A Provincial Benchmarking Report", health care spending was estimated to be \$91.1 billion in 2004 and in light of this, Canadians are asking "How well does our system perform?", "How can it improve?" and "Are we getting the full value for our money?" Their analysis shows that there is room for improvement and that "...higher government spending per capita on health care is not necessarily associated with better performance on health indicators..." Examples of benchmarking are as follows:

**BC:** ■ lowest female patient satisfaction rate for overall health-care services, hospital care and physician care.

**AB:** ■ lowest female health-adjusted life expectancy ■ highest proportion of low birth weight babies

■ second highest incidence rate of prostate cancer

**SK:** ■ highest male and female incidence rate for Chlamydia ■ highest male and female potential years of life lost due to unintentional injury

**ON:** ■ 2nd lowest female health-adjusted life expectancy ■ 2nd highest proportion of low birth weight babies ■ 2nd lowest patient satisfaction rates for hospital care

**PQ:** ■ highest male incidence rate for lung cancer, highest female rate, tied with MB ■ highest incidence rate for female breast cancer ■ highest male mortality rate for heart attacks, 3rd highest female rate ■ highest male mortality rate for lung cancer, 2nd highest female rate ■ highest female mortality rate for colorectal cancer, 2nd highest male rate

**NB:** ■ 2nd highest incidence rate for male lung cancer ■ lowest proportion of males and females with self-reported health as good to or excellent ■ 2nd highest female mortality rate for stroke

**PEI:** ■ lowest male life expectancy ■ high male and female incidence rate for lung cancer ■ highest incidence rate for prostate cancer, 2nd highest mortality rate

**NL/LB:** ■ lowest female and second lowest male life expectancy ■ highest rate of invasive meningococcal disease ■ highest female mortality rate for heart attacks, 2nd highest male rate ■ highest mortality rate for prostate cancer ■ highest male mortality rate for colorectal cancer, 2nd highest female rate

**MB:** ■ highest female incidence rate for lung cancer, tied with PQ ■ 2nd highest incidence rate for female breast cancer ■ 2nd highest female incidence rate for Chlamydia

The next step is to examine why there are weaknesses in our system with the final step of having the provincial and federal governments make the needed changes to allow our health care system to be effective. This is more proof that the system is not broken, it just needs an objective evaluation and a little first aid.

## Electricity Sector Council

Last year, HRSDC completed a study outlining the issues facing the utility industry across Canada. This study was completed with the help of a group of individuals in which Local 258 Senior Assistant Business Manager, Jim Greenwell participated. The main concerns centered on human resources issues such as the aging workforce, training, retention of workers and attracting people into the industry.

As a result, an Electricity Sector

Council was created to deal with these issues. International Representative Peter Routliff was involved with the initial set up and structure of this council including the creation of the bylaws, board and governance structure and committee mandates.

International Representative Jerry Wilson is the Vice-Chair of this board and he also is the Chair of the Occupational Standards Committee. The council has a bipartite board and

has recently hired Catherine Cottingham as their CEO.

The council has four strategic directions which are: Career Awareness; Occupational Standards; Foreign Trained Workers and Labour Market Information (Workforce Planning) and each are beginning to work towards their mandate.

For more information, please visit their website at [www.brightfutures.com](http://www.brightfutures.com).

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## BACKGROUND:

The Vision of Excellence program initiative was adopted in 2001 which laid out the framework for the IBEW to grow while better serving its membership. Part of that vision was to adopt a strategic plan, thereby, identifying areas of opportunity for improvement.

In 2004, a group of 40 Business Managers, Assistant Business Managers and International Representatives met in Calgary and through the facilitation of Bernie Flaherty and Mike Gafney, this group was able to identify five

strategic directions; they were in the areas of Organizing, Media and Public Relations, Skills Training, Business Manager and Officer training, and a National Fund. These results were presented to the delegates at the ACPM and were given the support by these delegates as areas of direction to pursue. The original 40 people staffed those committees and presented a report back to the delegates in Ottawa at the 2005 Progress meeting.

The results are found below with a further breakdown of the strategies which will begin to help these committees focus on the actual implementation of these strategies.

## UPDATED STATUS

Committee Name	Members	Next Steps/Committee Goals	Current Activity
Skills Training	<b>Chair</b> – Michelle Laurie, LU 258 <b>IR Lead</b> – Chuck MacKenzie <b>Members:</b> Rick Dowling, LU 213 Jerry Larson, LU 1007 Brian Matheson – IO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine best skills training practices in construction sector</li> <li>Determine how training information can be shared on a national basis</li> <li>Determine how to establish red seal training for line persons</li> <li>Determine how to prevent splintering of work and identify weaknesses that allows splintering to happen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently consolidating data to develop a policy for use in all provinces</li> <li>Next steps to contact HRCSD for policy adoption</li> </ul>
Officer Training for Business Managers and Assistant Business Managers	<b>Chair</b> – John Briegel, LU 254 <b>IR Lead</b> – Vair Clendenning <b>Members:</b> Rick Wacheski, LU 636 Tracy O'Meara, LU 636 Patrick Vlanich, LU 636 Luc Couture – IO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the DACUM Chart designed by the committee and break down the training into modules</li> <li>Seek other sources of training delivery</li> <li>Determine if funding is available for this training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing training curriculum</li> <li>Two proposed programs being reviewed for potential university/college certification</li> </ul>
National Political Action Plan and Media Strategy	<b>Chair</b> – Karen Stoshnof, LU 254 <b>IR Lead</b> – Laird Cronk <b>Members:</b> Wade Greenlaw, LU 37 Christine Pynaker – IO Paul Tremblay – IO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compile a training and education model</li> <li>Evaluate and amend any existing programs</li> <li>Prepare a mandate for Local Union Political Action committees</li> <li>Provide suggestions to increase political activity with the Locals</li> <li>Consider how best to utilize the press to gain positive exposure</li> </ul> <p>Determine if our IBEW Locals are presently involved in programs that we could use to improve our image</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee currently gathering information and developing on-going strategy</li> </ul>
Organizing	<b>Chair</b> – Brian Murdoch, LU 435 <b>IR Lead</b> – Tom Reid <b>Members:</b> Joe Fashion, LU 353 Larry Schell – IO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold organizing conferences in eastern and western Canada</li> <li>Create an independent organizing website</li> <li>Review the 1<sup>st</sup> District organizing policy</li> <li>Focus on the 'BA' membership and provide insights for organizing</li> <li>When available, determine the status of the Washington organizing program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eastern and Western organizing conferences were held</li> <li>International Organizing Website re-launched</li> <li>Canadian website in development</li> </ul>
National Fund	<b>Chair</b> – Brett McKenzie – CCO <b>IR Lead</b> – Mike Power <b>Members:</b> Cordell Cole, LU 625 Wayne de Delley, LU 993 Ray McBride, LU 1432 John Pender – CCO Mike Power – IO Bill Daniels – IO Tom McGreevy – IO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine if Provincial and Federal funding is available for any of our existing or developing programs</li> <li>Provide insight into external support for the development of the programs</li> <li>Develop a funding model</li> <li>Develop a trust agreement</li> <li>Find innovative ways to secure funds and/or resources to support our objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining sources of federal funding for all areas of the strategic plan</li> <li>Identifying corporations, associations and organizations as potential partners or joint delivery of training</li> </ul>

# Are YOU Prepared?

**E**mergency situations occur for any number of reasons such as: floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, black-outs and ice storms.

Today, the threat of the Avian Flu Virus is forcing companies and entire countries to prepare for its potential impact. It is suspected that the extreme results of the Avian Flu will result in significant social disruptions like limited health and banking services, and reduced food supplies. Electrical and water supply distribution functions may also be interrupted. By taking a few easy steps, the impact to your family can be significantly reduced.

## TO PLAN FOR A PANDEMIC:

Store a supply of water and food; during a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and natural disasters.

Have your prescription drugs available and any non-prescription drugs as well as other health supplies on hand, including: pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.

Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them by building emergency/survival kits for your home and/or car.

Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response and get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

## ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND FOR AN EXTENDED STAY AT HOME:

### Examples of food and non-perishables

- Bottled water or purified drinking water packets and water purification tablets
- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups
- Canned or jarred baby food/formula and juices

- Crackers, dry cereal, granola, protein/fruit/chocolate bars and gum
- Peanut butter, nuts, dried fruit
- Pet food and manual can opener

**Note:** *Keep in mind that the saltier or dryer a food source is, the more water you will need to consume, therefore, know your water supply before eating anything that will make you really thirsty, as well, do not store items that may have an impact on any other family members, ie. allergies, etc.*

### Examples of medical, health and emergency supplies

- Medication: prescribed, for fever (ie. acetaminophen or ibuprofen), anti-diarrhea/nausea (ie. Pepto-Bismol)
- First aid kits
- Anti-bacterial hand cleansers (no water required) and regular cleansing agent/soap
- Fluids with electrolytes (ie. Gatorade)
- Flashlight, portable radio (preferably solar), 2-way radios, batteries
- Garbage bags, tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers, feminine hygiene
- Blankets, gloves (work gloves and latex), shoes (NO sandals)
- Whistle, pen/paper, glow sticks, emergency candles/matches
- Duct tape, dust masks, rope/bungy cords and leatherman (ie. Swiss army knife)

There are a number of websites that provide additional information. Visit these sites and learn more about emergency preparedness:

[www.psepc.gc.ca](http://www.psepc.gc.ca)

[www.ccep.ca](http://www.ccep.ca)

[www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab3.html#prepared](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab3.html#prepared)

For more information on the Avian Flu Virus, visit:

[www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian-influenza](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian-influenza)

**W**hen does one and one not add up to two? When an actuary gets hold of it and does pension math.

Pension actuaries perform a number of different calculations to determine both the value of assets, and the size of a pension liability. In a perfect world, the two match: In an ideal world, you're left with a pension surplus, something that has been rare for some years now.

A key calculation on the asset side is an actuarial method called 'Smoothing'. This requires spreading the returns from your assets over a five-year period, to lessen volatility and allow for more consistent contributions. In real terms, this means that the deficits that resulted in 2001-2003 are still being felt, despite the positive returns of the past three years. Another calculation on the asset side is the 'going concern', which is exactly what it sounds like: it determines what your assets are worth today at market values.

## Harley Draw

**A**s you are aware, the 1st District Representatives have a draw for a 2006 35th Anniversary Harley-Davidson Super Glide (EFI) -FXD 135 to raise funds to assist in hosting an afternoon of brotherhood for the Canadian delegates attending the International Convention.

The 500 tickets printed sold in record time and the winners of the two "Early Bird" draws of \$5,000.00 each (on February 14th, 2006 and March 17th, 2006) were the Recording Secretary for Local Union 424, Edmonton, Brother Dave Handley and the Business Manager for Local Union 254, Calgary, Brother John Briegel.

These two winners of the "Early Bird" draws will go back in for the draw for the Harley which will be held at the All Canada Progress Meeting in Saint John, New Brunswick on June 27th, 2006.

Good Luck to all those in the draw for the Harley!

## All Canada Progress Meeting

**O**n June 25 - June 28, 2006 the IBEW First District Office will hold its Eighth Annual All Canada Progress Meeting at the Hilton Saint John, Saint John, NB and will be attended by delegates from across Canada representing approximately 60,000 workers in the various professions.

This meeting is normally held in the month of August, however, due to timing of the International Convention, it was moved to accommodate timetables and schedules. Plans are underway and we look forward to another successful year.

'Solvency' is a key measurement on the liability side. An actuary will review numerous assumptions, such as life expectancy, inflation rates, future income expectations and plan design to determine the assets needed now and in the future to pay the 'pension promise'. It is a science, albeit sensitive to any change in assumptions which can either increase or decrease a plan's liabilities. Should there be a severe solvency liability, provincial legislation requires a series of 'catch-up' contributions over a shortened period of time to erase this deficit.

It is the solvency calculation that is the primary cause of higher rates of contributions. The generally accepted ratio is that a plan is funded 70-30, the 70 being investment returns and the 30 being employee/employer contributions. This demonstrates the importance of getting a proper asset mix, combined with quality management and close oversight, for greater returns, which will lessen the need for contribution rate increases.

Plan trustees continue to struggle with the pressure to increase investment performance while recognizing that higher expectations are often linked to higher risk. With times as they are today, pension plans cannot accept another market crash as previously experienced, which is why many plans are seeking stable investments with guaranteed cash flows. It can be achieved, with the right strategy, proper planning, mixed, of course, with a lot of patience.

## We Have Stuff:

⇒ **IBEW 1st District Rings** are available in men and women's styles in 14K gold with optional diamond.

⇒ **IBEW FR Clothing Program** continues to build; made of Nomex® and can be ordered in small or large quantities.

⇒ Thousands of **on-line or CD based courses** priced as low as \$10.00 for children or adults on topics like business, self-help, personal growth, or education.

Visit [www.ibew1st.org](http://www.ibew1st.org) for more information.