Business Manager’s Report

Unfortunately it is no surprise to many in our Local that the skilled men and women who make up America’s Building Trades Unions have suffered immensely during the past three years. Through no fault of their own, construction workers have been devastated by this unending recession. Savings have been depleted, homes have been lost, and all the while Congress has played political games that benefit no one. It is time they act for the good of the country and not for the good of their particular party.

It is clear that we need jobs to get this country back on track. As of this article, President Obama has three times tried to pass the Rebuild America Jobs Act, S. 1769, with $50 billion in immediate infrastructure investments, and $10 billion in seed money for an Infrastructure Bank, which would create upwards of 1.5 million construction jobs in the short term and far more jobs through the innovations an Infrastructure Bank will eventually bring. But instead, Congress seems to think it is more important to make one side or the other look bad in the eyes of the American public instead of putting the American public back to work.

There is legitimate argument on both sides as to what is the best way to create jobs and I have to agree that both methods have merit and can produce jobs depending on the state of the economy. But with the current state of the economy, there needs to be something drastic done and done immediately to jump start it. Then, after people are back to work and paychecks and revenues to the States and the Country are coming in, then the economic analysts can determine what is needed to sustain growth over the long haul.

If Senators and Congressmen refuse to act to put Americans back to work, they shouldn’t be surprised when Americans refuse to send them back to work next November. Our members and all of America should be watching to see who is looking out for their best interests, and not who is trying to make the other party look bad with no regard as to how it affects the American public, particularly the middle class.

Work Assessment and Dues

I would like to take this opportunity to review the structure of Local 441’s 4% work assessment and also clarify the upcoming January 1, 2012, increase to your monthly dues. Starting with the 4% work assessment, 1% is allocated primarily for the Target Fund with a small portion going to the Building Fund for upkeep and maintenance of Local 441 owned properties. The Target Fund is used to help our signatory contractors secure work and has been successful in doing so. The remaining 3% is allocated directly to the General Fund. This is the only money that goes to the General Fund and is actually the money you pay to support your Local Union. It also provides representation, which strives to improve your working conditions, provide good jobs, and real benefits for you as a Union member. It is basically used to take care of the day-to-day operations of your Local Union. With the lack of work hours, the General Fund has been slowly depleting and some tough administrative decisions have been made to lessen the impact.

[Continued on Page 6]
Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry
Health and Welfare Plan of Kansas
By Joe Pucci, Administrator for the Trustees

The Trustees of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry Health and Welfare Plan of Kansas have scheduled a $20 increase in the hourly H&W Contribution rate for June 1, 2012. Actually, the rate is scheduled to increase $.20 every June, but for the last two years, the Trustees have waived the requirement because the Plan was doing well financially. That means the last increase was effective June 1, 2009. Even though the contribution rate has remained the same for what will be three years, we have had many increases in our benefits. The Plan’s Vision Care benefit, which had not changed for years, has doubled, the dental maximum was increased from $1,000 to $1,500 per year, implants are now covered at 50% and orthodontics are covered in a very limited manner, yet were never covered previously by the Plan at all.

The weekly disability benefit was increased from $185 per week to $300 per week. The Trustees introduced the Retirees Program, which costs $100 less, per month than COBRA and in most cases extends beyond the coverage period for “Termination of Employment COBRA” if you retire early. The premium for COBRA coverage has not increased since March 1, 2009, even though medical costs have of course increased. The yearly limit for Chiropractic Care has doubled. Probably most importantly, the Plan now covers heart, liver and lung transplants.

The Trustees have also made all the changes dictated by Federal Law and have done so well in advance of most deadlines set by the law. We no longer have a lifetime medical benefit limit. Certain limits on benefits for children under age 18 no longer apply and coverage for dependent children was extended from age 21 to age 26. The annual dollar limits on in-patient substance abuse treatment for participants has been eliminated (the 30 day limit for in-patient substance abuse treatment for medical benefit limit. Certain limits on benefits for children deadlines set by the law. We no longer have a lifetime Federal Law and have done so well in advance of most covers heart, liver and lung transplants.

Care has doubled. Probably most importantly, the Plan now have of course increased. The yearly limit for Chiropractic increased since March 1, 2009, even though medical costs increasing since 1965, other insurance companies have made vast changes to their provider networks and the way they service union plans. Nothing is definite at this time, but the Trustees feel that as fiduciaries of your Plan, they are obligated to take a serious look at other options.

The Trustees are planning to look at other claims processors to see if significant amounts can be saved if we use a different network of providers. Though we have been with BCBS since 1965, other insurance companies have made vast changes to their provider networks and the way they service union plans. Nothing is definite at this time, but the Trustees feel that as fiduciaries of your Plan, they are obligated to take a serious look at other options.

If you have any questions, please contact me.
If any of the foregoing conflicts with the rules of the Plan, the Plan Document(s) will govern.

Manhattan/Fort Riley Area

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Numerous Local and Kansas City Contractors have been successful in securing work in the Manhattan/Fort Riley/Topeka Area. Unfortunately, area work did not increase enough this summer to help many unemployed Brothers. The long-awaited construction of the new Army Hospital at Fort Riley got off to a slow start, but has steadily increased manpower during the month of October.

McElroy’s has increased their market share in the KSU/Manhattan area in both construction and service. At the time I am writing this newsletter, contracts have not been formally awarded for the M&M Plant or the NBAF facility. We do have UA Contractors that believe they are in the running for both of these projects.

This fall I enjoyed attending the Apprentice Graduation Banquet, Retiree Banquets, and Local 441 Picnics. All of these occasions were an opportunity to see and visit with Members and families that I’ve known for years along with some that I just met and hope to see more in the future. While sitting in for Bill Uturiz as dispatcher, I had the opportunity to see and speak to numerous Brothers who are unemployed or working away from home. I was happy to help the Brothers I could, and the conversations with the Brothers I could not help immediately have made me work even harder to obtain full employment for Local 441.

Communication is very important for the success of Local Union 441, and I welcome any calls or contact with Local 441 Brothers and Sisters. Kirk Miller and John Shepherd Jr. were the contacts for many Members, Contractors, Clients, Unrepresented Workers, Politicians and others. Thank you Kirk and John for your hard work and I’ll do my best to continue to be here for the contacts you so diligently developed. Everyone be safe and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Fraternally Yours,

Phil Petty (785) 539-8977
Organizer/Business Representative
Responsibilities  By Kerry Stine, Training Director

The second rotation of classes for the apprentices is almost past and I think it’s a good time to talk about responsibilities. We all have responsibilities to uphold if our training program is going to be successful. That includes the training staff, the apprentices, the union, union members, and the contractors. Today we are going to talk about the apprentices and union members.

Apprentices have a responsibility to the program to meet the obligations that are a part of the program. The only monetary obligation to the program is a book and material fee. That fee for those entering the program this year is $350.00. That amount barely covers the cost to the program for books. We spend approximately $60,000.00 a year for books. Most of the books are purchased from the UA bookstore, but a few, such as code books, come from outside sources. If you have a kid in college, you know that books are a large cost of any education.

You may ask why have the apprentices pay for their books when the rest of their education is paid for. Part of the reason is that we regularly have apprentices leave the program after they have received their books for the year. When they leave, we don’t get those books back and are out that cost. It’s important that the book and material fee be paid before the start of the training year so the apprentice and the program can focus on the task at hand, training apprentices.

LU 441 members have a responsibility to the program to provide on the job training of our apprentices. That means taking every opportunity to work with an apprentice to improve their skills. Sometimes an apprentice needs demonstration of a skill. Sometimes an apprentice needs responsibility placed on his shoulders. And, sometimes an old fashion butt chewing is in order. No matter what is needed, we as mentors need to realize that at times they will fail.

Everyone fails at some point, but how we react to their failure is almost as important as how they react. An attitude of ridicule for them making a mistake will make an apprentice reluctant to try something they are not familiar with. But an attitude of here is where you went wrong and this is what we need to do to fix it will help to build that apprentice into a well-rounded journeyman. The Bible says “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

“Buy Union” Week

The AFL-CIO has declared the ten days following Thanksgiving (November 25 through December 4, 2011) as “Buy Union Week.”

The action adopted by the AFL-CIO’s 25th Constitutional Convention also urges affiliated unions to use “all available means” to promote the purchase of union-made gifts during the upcoming holiday season. (See www.UnionLabel.org.)

Given the volatile state of the economy—marked by huge job losses, declines in take-home pay and increased costs—it makes more sense than ever to focus the purchasing power of union families on the goods and services that those families create. Supporting union-made products helps keep good jobs in the community.

Consumer surveys indicate that holiday spending will largely remain flat this year and that most of us will pay cash rather than add to our credit card debt. Still, the National Retail Foundation says that Americans will spend on average $704.18 on Holiday gifts and seasonal merchandise this year. All the more reason to specify “union-made-in-the-USA” gifts for friends and family.

Another responsibility that involves both the apprentices and journeymen is evaluation cards. It is very important that our membership be honest in evaluating the apprentices. The evaluation cards are required by The Department of Labor and do help in understanding where an apprentice is at in his training. The cards are required to be filled out each month. I know we are all busy and it is easy for the apprentice to forget to have the cards filled out. Maybe we as journeymen, foremen, and supervisors can help them out by reminding them at the first of each month. If apprentices don’t turn their cards in on time they risk losing advancement credit for the hours worked for that month. If work is good, one or two months lost will not affect their advancement, but during times of low employment it can delay their advancement.

Remember, we need your input about the abilities, attitudes, and how responsible the apprentices are. When you fill out an evaluation card, don’t just put words on a card, talk to the apprentice about it. Let him be aware of both the good and the bad. Encourage and build up, and if necessary, be critical of those traits that are hindering him from being a good union member.

Someplace to evaluate an apprentice is on the layoff slip. Many times there is no reason given for a layoff of an apprentice when the layoff was due to poor performance, attitude, or attendance. It doesn’t do the apprentice or the program any good if we don’t have feedback at the time a layoff occurs. There should be some kind of comment on the layoff slip every time an apprentice is let go, whether good or bad. We can then address problems that the apprentices are having in a timely manner.

We all have responsibilities and obligations in life. In working together as a union brotherhood, we can help each other by meeting and exceeding those responsibilities and obligations. We can make a better future and life for ourselves.

Employment Dispatch

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

I am very upbeat about our future work outlook! How long has it been since we have been able to say that?

Mechanics Inc. is nearing completion of the first phase arena portion of the casino in Mulvane. Richard Taylor and I visited the job site with Garth Leep (General Foreman) and Cliff Fitzsimmons (Steward). Both reported that the project had gone very smoothly and on schedule. Mechanics Inc. was also awarded the second phase, which will eventually be hiring.

Looking into next year, there is a huge amount of work in Local 441. Sunflower Electric, Jeffrey Energy Center, and Lawrence Energy have outages scheduled in February and March. Waldinger is on site at the BG Products Solvents plant in El Dorado. This project will peak at 25 to 30 and last around eight months. In the last article, I reported we had a pre-job meeting with P1/MMC on the Ft. Riley hospital project. There are currently 30 members on the 22 month project, with a projection of 80 to 90 at peak. The Dairy project in Rexford with Wagner Meinert has also started. That job will peak at around 10 for eight months. Construction Turnaround Services successfully finished the Cat turnaround at the Coffeyville Refinery. Thanks to all of the members that made the job a success. I know it wasn’t easy.

Waldinger is on site at the BG Products Solvents plant in El Dorado. This project will peak at 25 to 30 and last around eight months. In the last article, I reported we had a pre-job meeting with P1/MMC on the Ft. Riley hospital project. There are currently 30 members on the 22 month project, with a projection of 80 to 90 at peak. The Dairy project in Rexford with Wagner Meinert has also started. That job will peak at around 10 for eight months. Construction Turnaround Services successfully finished the Cat turnaround at the Coffeyville Refinery. Thanks to all of the members that made the job a success. I know it wasn’t easy.

Looking into next year, there is a huge amount of work in Local 441. Sunflower Electric, Jeffrey Energy Center, and Lawrence Energy have outages scheduled in February and March. With the three combined, there will be approximately 125 pipefitters for approximately 4 to 6 weeks. Other upcoming projects that Local 441 and our contractors are trying to secure are the Bio Chemist Lab in Manhattan, the Mars plant in Topeka, the ESW piping project at Wolf Creek, and the new airport in Wichita. These are all big projects with duration that I feel our Local has very good chance of getting.

Work on the road is also picking up. There is already a shortage of welders across the country and the predicted boom is just starting. Our General President Billy Hite has stated over and over, whoever has the qualified welders will control the work in this country.

Thanks to all the members who work every day to represent Local 441 to be the best.

Keep up the good work and do it safely!

Fraternally,
Bill Urton (316) 265-4291
Business Representative/Dispatcher

Job Hotline: (316) 269-2472

Frank T. Bollig, 78, died August 21, 2011. Most recently of Manhattan, Ks. Brother in good standing for 54 years.


Albert M. Hearrell, 90, died August 20, 2011. Most recently of Topeka, Ks. Brother in good standing for 36 years.

James F. Higgins, 72, died November 9, 2011. Most recently of Lawrence, Ks. Brother in good standing for 51 years.

Mark A. Mason, 54, died August 14, 2011. Most recently of Wichita, Ks. Brother in good standing for 15 years.

Frank E. Sabala, 93, died November 11, 2011. Most recently of Wichita, Ks. Brother in good standing for 50 years.

Stephen L. Smith, 68, died November 18, 2011. Most recently of Coffeyville, Ks. Brother in good standing for 45 years.

NOTICES OF DEATHS

Fraternally,

Stephen L. Smith
Brother in good standing for 50 years.

Mark A. Mason
Brother in good standing for 45 years.

Brothers in good standing for 36 years.

Brother in good standing for 45 years.

Brother in good standing for 55 years.

Brother in good standing for 50 years.

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Brother in good standing for 45 years.
PICNICS!
Lawrence Area

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Work in the Topeka and Lawrence area continues to be steady. I appreciate all the hard and skilled labor you members are putting forth so our contractors can compete in this tough economy.

Phil Petty and I are working together to cover the Topeka area. If anyone needs anything that we can help with, be sure to give us a call. We will be glad to help out in any way that we can.

Some very important elections will be happening this time next year. Now is the time for everyone to review what the candidates are standing for. Let’s pay close attention to these candidates and then go vote.

Your vote is very important and everyone’s vote is needed to make our economy strong.

In closing I wish everyone to stay safe on and off their jobs. With the holidays approaching I wish everyone a blessed time with family and friends.

Fraternally yours,

Denis Wittman (785) 843-3151
Lawrence Business Representative
930 E. 28th Street, Lawrence, KS 66046

2011 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Thursday, November 24th
Thanksgiving Day Holiday (All Zones)
Friday, November 25th
Day After Thanksgiving Holiday (Zones IB, IIA, IIB)
Saturday, December 24th
Christmas Eve Holiday (Zones IB, IIA, IIB)
Monday, December 26th
Christmas Day Holiday (All Zones)

2012 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Monday, January 2nd
New Year’s Day Holiday (All Zones)
Monday, May 28th
Memorial Day Holiday (All Zones)
Wednesday, July 4th
July 4th Holiday (All Zones)
Monday, September 3rd
Labor Day Holiday (All Zones)
Thursday, November 22nd
Thanksgiving Day Holiday (All Zones)
Friday, November 23rd
Day After Thanksgiving Holiday (Zones IB, IIA, IIB)
Monday December 24th
Christmas Eve Holiday (Zones IB, IIA, IIB)
Tuesday, December 25th
Christmas Day Holiday (All Zones)
Frontenac Area

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Happy Fall! I would like to thank all of you who attended our picnic the weekend of October 22nd. Weather was beautiful and a good time was had by all.

Work in the southeast Kansas Zone looks good. The work at the refinery and CTS should wrap up around the end of October. We are also picking up some extra work at PSU regarding the Energy Savings project with PM Contractors.

I have been working on a few projects as follows:

• The EVONIK project at the former Gulf plant in Galena has many possibilities. We have finally gotten the door opened for some of our contractors and set up meetings to talk with EVONIK on two chemical and water treatment projects. We look forward to begin working with them next year if awarded.

• Via Christi is embarking on an 18 to 20 million dollar project for expansion of their Operating Rooms. It looks as though JE Dunn will be signing on to be the General Contractor. Currently we are trying to discuss a PLA for this project.

• The Allen County Hospital finally decided on a property acquisition. This decision has set this project back five to six months. The Murray Company has been awarded as General Contractor. We have established contact with Murray and hope to hear from them soon. We will be attending some of the meetings set up with County and Hospital in Iola--if members in the area would like to help please contact me. As for the VA Hospital, still working on some of the funding for this project in the Iola area.

• Sugar Creek Packing of Frontenac plans on an expansion sometime beginning late November to the beginning of the New Year. Wagner Meinert is the contractor for this project.

• Spirit Aero-Systems has moved to Chanute, Kansas. I hope to establish contact with them and gain some work as a few of our Contractor’s already do work in the Wichita area for them.

Fraternally Yours,
Mike Wolownik (620) 231-4280
Frontenac Business Representative – Zone 1B

Easy Peanut Butter Cookies

1 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg


* You can also dip one side in melted chocolate and then into chopped nuts. Yum!

UA Local #441 Plumbers & Pipefitters
Monthly Union Meetings

Kansas Local #441 Union Meetings
Second Monday of every month, 7 p.m.
(316) 265-4291/1330 E. 1st Street, Wichita

Next Meeting Dates:
Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13

UA Local #441 Retiree Meetings

Frontenac Area Retirees
Tuesday mornings at Home Café, Cherokee, KS at 8 a.m.

Wichita Area Retirees
Meeting at the Hall, 1330 E. 1st Street N., on the first Wednesday every month at 10 a.m.

Breakfast is the second Wednesday of every month (except December) at 9 a.m. at Spears Restaurant, 4323 W. Maple, Wichita.

Note: All retirees and spouses and former members’ widows are welcome to attend any of the area meetings.

The Retiree’s Christmas Dinner will be at 5 p.m. on Weds., Dec. 14th, at the Olive Garden, 2641 N. Maize Road.

Call Jim Wilbert at (316) 722-6859 to RSVP.

Office Notes

2011 COURTESY TAX INFORMATION
Local #441 office staff will be mailing you information about 2011 dues, work assessment, etc. paid by you to Local #441 for tax purposes.

This is a courtesy provided by your Local Union and is NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT. December 2011 remittance reports must be received from all contractors prior to these documents being prepared. Remittance reports are not due by contractors until mid-January. Office staff will endeavor to process these remittance reports as quickly as received in order to provide this information for 441 members.

EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PPI RETIREMENT FUND
If you wish to begin self-contributing to the PPI Retirement Fund of Kansas, contact either the Plan Administrator or the Union Office and we will send you an Elective Contribution Changes Form.

The Election period is from January 1 through Jan. 15. The change will be effective as of your employer’s first payroll period in February. DO NOT GIVE YOUR ELECTION FORM TO YOUR EMPLOYER.

Changes will not be effective until your Election Form is received in the Plan Administrator’s office, or at the Union office. Elections postmarked after January 15 will not meet this deadline and will be rejected.

You may, at any time, reduce your elective contribution rate to zero by again completing a new Elective Contribution Changes Form. Should any of the foregoing conflict with the actual documents which govern the Plan, the Plan Documents will prevail.

Greetings of the Season and Best Wishes for the New Year.

REFERENCES

 Kansas Direct Pipeline

CONTACTS

Wichita (316) 265-4291 Training (316) 267-8508
Topeka (785) 354-8539 Training (785) 234-2006
Lawrence (785) 843-3151

Frontenac (620) 231-4280 Training (620) 724-6115

Local Union 441 Website: www.ua441.org

The Health & Welfare Office handles your local pension information, KSR (401k), and general questions regarding your health insurance (such as your status in qualifying for insurance benefits.) If you have specific questions regarding your insurance, such as a list of doctors, please refer to the numbers listed below for Blue Cross and Delta Dental.

Health & Welfare Office
www.ppi-fund.org
(316) 264-2339 or (800) 423-6517

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas
www.BCBSKS.com
(800) 432-3990 or (785) 291-4180

Delta Dental of Kansas
www.DeltaDentalKS.com
(800) 234-3375 or (316) 264-4511

If you have a Pension through the United Association, the National Pension office is where you call for any questions related to your pension.

If you are close to retirement and are ready to start the paperwork, please request an application for a retirement packet from National. Also request a work contribution history report from National Pension as this will assist you in the process.

National Pension (800) 638-7442

Local Pension/KS Annuity
(316) 264-2339 or (800) 423-6517

United Association Website: www.UA.org

Ben Newhouse is Local 441’s Independent Financial Advisor.

Members, please feel free to give him a call at 1-866-577-7101, option 5, for assistance and advice with your Mass Mutual investment account.
Retiree Recognition
Years of Service Pins and Certificates

Clarence Brower (65)  George Coyne (65)  Charles Copp (60)  Donald Snook (60)
Douglas Snook, Sr. (60)  Elwin Hinnenkamp (60)  Fred Schoenfeld (60)  Raymond Armstrong (60)  Ross Slagle (60)  Wayne Sage (55)  Dale Miller (50)
Glenn Stehman (50)  James Ford (50)  Larry Schwartz (50)  Leland Herzog (50)  Clyde Smith, Sr. accepted the 45-year pin of his late father Clyde D. Smith.
Dennis Cunningham (45)  Dwayne Shook (45)
Eldon Voth (45)  George Hoffman (45)  Mark Rockers, Jr. (45)  Millard Abbott (45)
Ron Sturgeon (45)  Jerry Jones (40)  James Thompson (40)  Sammy Dowling (35)  Alexander Janulis (35)  Tom Smith (35)

Congratulations to 2011 Graduating Class of New Journeymen

New Journeymen at Completion Banquet.
Back row, l-r: Michael Wannow, Brad Beck, Jerome Schraeder, Jammin Wayne, Ben Fountain, Quenten Heidebrecht, Jason Landers, Jon Bennett, Trenton Cheek, Leo De La Torre, Luke Henwood, Duke Norris
2nd Row, l-r: Cory Ray, Jeremy Biering, Steve Watson, Joel Stahl, Cody Brookshire, Jade Killgore, Joe Schenk, Robert Little Jr., Chris Neel
1st Row, l-r: Damon Steiner, Robert Sharp, Matthew Myers, Anthony Hagar, Logan Kelly
Not pictured: Ron Tunnell, Richard Fleetwood