Having just passed the five-year anniversary of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 441, March 1, 2003 through March 1, 2008, it gives cause to reflect back and review our progress as a newly chartered UA Local Union.

We have arrived today as a local that has survived many difficult obstacles. And because of this, we have gained strength, perseverance, and character as a labor organization and at the same time gained worth and consideration by many in the State of Kansas. We are viewed as a highly qualified and “better-value” work force that is second-to-none in our industry. We have political influence that is respected by both parties so when issues arise, we have an established voice that is sought out and heard. This further indicates the increased market share this local and our contractors have been able to secure and the continued accumulation of additional manhours worked each year as this local has progressed. This is directly related to the attitudes, skills, craftsmanship and dedication illustrated by the membership of Local 441. Thank you for your hard work and support.

With 441’s workload better now than it has been for many years, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate just how skilled and productive our craftsmen really are. This is the time for us to rise to the challenge and demonstrate the highest quality of work possible; and perform it safely and efficiently. We must continue to let owners and end users know that if they need piping or mechanical work of any kind installed at their facility, the best contractors to call are the Union Contractors that utilize Local 441 Craftsmen.

All of this has combined to strengthen us as a Local Union and provide security for our future. Our Benefit Funds have steadily increased year after year. We have been able to make positive changes to the coverage provided through our Health and Welfare Plan. We have added to our Pension Plans to insure that they will be there to provide comfort and peace-of-mind for all when needed.

[Business Manager Report, Continued on Page 10]

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS LOCAL UNION #441
A list of official Election Rules is on page 2. A description of the duties of officers is on page 4.

Robison Receives Recognition

Dicky Robison receiving an award for 40 years of service. We apologize to Brother Robison for neglecting to include his photo in the last issue with other service award recipients.
OFFICIAL NOTICE OF THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS LOCAL UNION #441

The Election of Offices for Plumbers & Pipefitters Local #441 will be by mail ballot. Ballots will be mailed out May 16, 2008. In the event of a tie, a run-off election will take place using mail ballot.

No Member who directly or indirectly owns a plumbing, pipefitting, HVAC, or other related business employing Local 441 Members may hold an Elected office or cast a vote.

The officers to be elected are:

Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer
President
Vice-President
Recording Secretary
Sergeant at Arms
Executive Board (elect 4)
Finance Committee (elect 3)
Examining Board (elect 4)

Rules & Regulations

as established by the Constitution of the United Association, the Election Committee, and the By-Laws of Local Union #441.

1.) No Member shall be eligible to vote unless they have been in “good standing” in Local 441 for a period of at least one (1) continuous year immediately prior to the Election date. UA Constitution Section 124

2.) Candidates desiring to do so have the right to one (1) observer, at the candidates own expense, at the election counting of the ballots; who must also be a member in “good standing” of the Local Union. UA Constitution Section 122b

3.) Ballots will be mailed to members whose name is listed on the “Eligible To Vote List” provided by the United Association. UA Constitution Section 124b

4.) Voting by writing the name of a person not nominated shall not be permitted. UA Constitution Section 122b

5.) Local Union Apprentices are not allowed to vote in an Officer Election. UA Constitution Section 148b

6.) Any tie vote affecting the determination of the winners will require a run-off election involving ONLY the candidates and/or offices affected. UA Constitution Section 122b

7.) Any unresolved protests must be filed with the General President of the United Association within five (5) working days following the election. A copy of the protest must also be simultaneously served on the Local Union. UA Constitution Section 125a

National Pension Letters/Statements

Each year, on or around your birthday, you receive an annual statement of pension status from National Pension showing the hours remitted on your behalf by contractors. It is important to review this information carefully.

Local 441 has received many calls over the past six to nine months regarding problems with National Pension’s member statements. We have spoken with the National Pension office regarding our concerns and we have offered our assistance in helping to get these problems resolved.

It appears from what we’ve encountered, that National Pension had a time period from about April 2007 through October 2007 where they were having some issues with their new system of processing reports. We became aware of these issues by member calls regarding incorrect or missing hours on their statements and have been in close contact with National Pension and have assisted in developing a new electronic method for both 441 contractors to remit and for National Pension to receive the information required and that seems to be working smoothly.

However, National Pension is still working on clearing up their records and correcting issues from the time period mentioned. If you receive a statement and feel it is in error, please contact Local 441 Office Manager Angie Hermann. What we are doing is asking that you fax (316) 265-5731 or email (ahermann@ua441.org) her a copy of the page showing the hours and she is sending this copy on to our contact at National Pension with a copy of our data which shows the accurate information so they can research their records and get these issues corrected.

Local 441 receives the same reports from Local 441 contractors electronically so our information is fortunately correct. We appreciate the memberships understanding that this is a problem with National Pension records and it is quite a process for them to correct so your Local Union is endeavoring to assist in getting this resolved.

Visit YOUR Website: www.UA441.org
Employment Dispatch Introduces Local 441 24-Hour Job Hotline!

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

In an ongoing effort to improve our dispatching and after much feedback from the membership and help from other locals that have a HOTLINE, we have decided to implement our own on a trial basis. As our Local grows, I know it is difficult at times to reach me with phone calls backed up. Most of the calls just want to know what the work situation is and I believe this will help. This is how I anticipate the HOTLINE working.

I will update on an as-needed basis. Some calls will never reach the HOTLINE because after going down the out of work list it will be staffed. Manpower calls that do not get filled after exhausting the out-of-work list will get posted on the HOTLINE.

If you are interested in the job, call me and we can make arrangements. On our bigger jobs, such as outages, I will post the manpower call outs and dates so you can plan ahead and let me know if you are interested.

The procedure to access the JOB HOTLINE is as follows:

**Dial (316) 269-2472 or (316) 269-4352**

**Please wait for the voice mail to answer before going to the next step**

**Press 1 for the Wichita Zone**

**Press 2 for the Topeka Zone**

**Press 3 for the Lawrence Zone**

**Press 4 for the Frontenac Zone**

Once you make a selection and hear the information you may stay on the line to make another Zone selection.

You can call the HOTLINE 24 hours a day. I am excited about the HOTLINE and want your feedback.

Local 441 has been very busy in the first quarter of 2007 with outages at Jeffrey Energy and Wolf Creek. Our Local peaked with roughly 175 travelers in the jurisdiction. As these outages wind down I see our industrial work slowing.

The much-talked-about Concordia ethanol plant and the Emporia Bio Diesel plant are cancelled at this point due to financing and the current economy. Our commercial work is starting to build, especially at Ft. Riley and the Wichita area.

I see work for 441 members all year, but probably not many travelers. The work outlook across the country is excellent with many opportunities. I talk twice a week with Kansas City LU 533 and will be able to send members there as their work develops. If you have any questions or ideas don’t hesitate to call. As always, thank you for your hard work helping to build our Local Union.

Fraternally,

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

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Frontenac Area

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I sit here pondering which direction we are going. The hard-working people of our great state and this great country deserve more! We need your HELP and you can make it happen. Get involved by calling or emailing your State Representative(s) and State Senator(s). Go to www.kslegislature.org to find contact information regarding your local legislators. Believe it or not, your legislators do read your emails and your voice does count. Recently, some of you received a letter inviting you to forward your thoughts regarding the Holcomb Project to your legislators and during my recent visit to Topeka I received numerous comments from your legislators thanking me for your participation. It was a great feeling to know that our voice was heard.

Locally, in southeast Kansas, American Fabricators is still working on the New York project, all the while, losing a second bid but working on a third. If all goes as planned, American Fabricators will soon expand in Columbus.

The Chanute Hospital is going very well now that the weather held off for the General Contractor to enclose the building. Alexander is up to 13 men and should hold to late summer.

Logan and Company in Coffeyville has the fab shop up and running. They are bidding work outside the plant and will continue to build manpower through the spring and summer.

P1 is currently working on projects in Parsons with more work to follow this summer at the Labette College.

Presently, we need more contractors to bid jobs in the Pittsburg area. There are plans for a new hotel, a remodel job for the landmark Besse Hotel Apartments and a new school in Erie. Also, I plan to work on organizing a contractor in the Pittsburg area.

During the month of March, Frontenac hosted the first welding certification with 22 members participating. At this time, I would like to say thank you to Kerry Stine and Huck Parsons for their hard work organizing this certification.

Zone 1B Area accepted 11 applications for Apprenticeship School and interviews are scheduled for April 10th.

Again, thanks to everyone for a great year so far! Don’t forget to contact your legislators.

BE SAFE!

Fraternally Yours,
Mike Wolownik (602) 231-4280
Frontenac Business Representative – Zone 1B
103 Mendicki Dr. Frontenac, KS 66763

Find your legislator through this interactive website: www.ipsr.ku.edu/ksdata/vote/

Visi YOUR Website: www.UA441.org
Duties of the Elected Officers of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union #441

From the Constitution and By-Laws of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union #441 dated 06/11/2007

With the election of Local Union Officers, it is important that the Membership be aware of the duties and responsibilities of each of these positions. They are established by the Local Union Constitution and By-Laws, Section 47 through 63, in accordance with rules and guidelines provided in the United Association Constitution.

Local Officers and Their Duties

Duties of officers shall be as those set forth in appropriate sections of the current Constitution of the United Association.

President: The President shall preside over all regular and special meetings and conduct the same in conformity with the accepted rules of order and common sense. He shall have a general supervisory control over all matters pertaining to the welfare of Local Union 441. The President shall be ex-officio member of all committees.

Vice President: The Vice President shall Chair the Executive Board and have supervision over all members entering the Assembly Room, and upon a member presenting his/her dues book to prove his/her good standing, will give member the password. The Vice President shall also have supervision over all members departing the Assembly Room, assist the President in keeping order at meetings, and in the absence of the President, will assume the Chair. The Vice President shall administer the obligation to all persons becoming a member of Local Union 441.

Recording Secretary: The Recording Secretary will keep a correct and intelligent account of all transactions, resolutions, motions, and the general business of the Local Meetings, and perform any other duties, special or otherwise, that may devolve upon him/her by action of Local Union 441 or the United Association. It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary of Local Union 441, immediately after the election of officers, to forward to the General Secretary-Treasurer, the names and addresses of the officers (upon blanks furnished by the United Association).

Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer: The Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer shall spend such time in the field and business office of the Local Union 441 as is necessary to handle day to day matters for the good and welfare of Local Union 441, and shall perform all duties as outlined in sections of the UA Constitution, except as delegated to clerical help. The Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer shall make a comprehensive report to Local Union 441 membership at each regular monthly membership meeting, and this report is to be given under the “Report of Officers” order of business.

Business Representative/Dispatcher / Organizer: Business Representative/Dispatcher / Organizer shall work under the supervision and direction of the Business Manager. The Business Representatives will be appointed to represent the various zones. For a Member to be eligible to be appointed as a representative of a zone, the Member shall permanently reside within close proximity to the zone he/she is assigned to represent.

Executive Board: The Local Union Executive Board shall, between meetings of Local Union 441, transact such business as may be referred to it by Local Union 441 or the duly elected Local Union officers. All records shall be kept of the number of ballots cast for each Executive Board Member for the purpose of filling a vacancy in the office of the Vice President during the term following each election.

The Executive Board shall meet a minimum of once every month. The Business Manager/Financial Secretary-Treasurer is authorized to call additional meetings of the Executive Board when needed.

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee shall consist of three (3) members who shall serve for the same term of office as the other Local Union 441 officers. The Finance Committee shall examine all financial accounts of Local Union 441 and make a report quarterly. They shall see that the funds of Local Union 441 are audited at least once a year by a Certified Public Accountant and they shall report the results of such audit to the next regular meeting of Local Union 441. During Local Union 441 election of Officers, the Finance Committee shall assist the Election Board in determining eligibility of any member nominated for office.

Local Union Examining Board: The duties of the Examining Board shall be as prescribed in the Constitution of the United Association.

Sergeant of Arms: The Sergeant of Arms shall have charge of the inner door of all Local Union 441 meetings; he/she shall see that no one not entitled shall enter the assembly room during sessions of Local Union 441. He/she shall aid the President in preserving order and shall be under the direction of the Vice President.

Term of Office: All officers shall be elected for a term of three (3) years.

LU 441 Business Agents - Elected or Appointed

With election time nearing for Local 441 officers, the question has been asked many times why the membership is not allowed to elect the Agents.

The decision whether to elect or appoint the Agents is not made by the Business Manager. That decision belongs to the membership. The UA Constitution states that each Local Union may provide in its Constitution and By-Laws that Business Agents may be elected or appointed in the manner set forth in the Local Union’s Constitution and By-Laws. The membership can change this through a simple process as outlined in the current Local 441 By-Laws.

Last year the Local By-Laws were reviewed for possible changes and updates. One change that was submitted was to elect the Agents in lieu of appointment. This change was turned down by the membership primarily for the following reason:

Local Unions must follow all applicable rules and regulations when conducting a Local Union election. This would include the UA Constitution, UA election rules, Local Union By-Laws, and Department of Labor. These documents state that during a Local Union election, any member that meets the eligibility requirements can be nominated for any elected office and further states that any eligible member can vote for those nominated. This is even more critical when the office up for election is one that includes a wage or salary that is paid for with members’ union dues. Therefore, it is in violation of the election rules and regulations to allow only a specific portion of the membership to be nominated for a particular office or to allow only a specific portion of the membership to vote for a particular office. This would nullify the election and declare it invalid.

This is where the membership found fault with a change to allow the Agents to be elected. The intent has always been that an Agent representing a particular area should be a member from that area. The election process does not guarantee that. For example, use the scenario that on the ballot there was an elected officer position for the Agent in the Frontenac Zone. As stated before, any eligible member could be nominated for that position and also any eligible members would be allowed to cast a vote for that position. No doubt, there would be members from the Frontenac Zone nominated for that position, but it is also likely that members from other Zones would run and be nominated for that office.

With the Topeka Zone and Wichita Zone having larger membership bases than Frontenac, it is also possible that a member from a different Zone other than the Frontenac Zone could be elected to that position.

The only way to insure that an Agent representing a Zone is a member from that Zone is to require that they be appointed and indicate in the Local By-Laws that the member appointed must reside in the Zone they are to represent. This is the language that Local 441 currently has in its’ Local By-Laws.

As stated in the beginning, the decision to elect or appoint the Agents is entirely up to the membership.
Busy Spring for Training

March and April have been extremely busy times this year in the training program. Apprentice applications and interviews have taken place and we conducted our first UA weld test at our newest test facility in Frontenac.

The UA weld test in Frontenac is the beginning of monthly weld tests rotating around the test facilities at Frontenac, Topeka and Wichita. Previously the weld tests were held on a 4 or 6 month basis and switched between Wichita and Topeka. The increased demand for welders in Kansas and a nationwide shortage of welders has brought about the need for weld tests on a more frequent basis.

The weld test in Frontenac was a huge success all the way around. First off, let me commend the hard work that Huck Parsons put in readying the Frontenac weld area for UA Certification. If you get the opportunity to drop in at the Frontenac Training Center be sure to take a look at the welding area. And, if you see Huck, thank him for all his hard work.

Not only is the facility a success, we had a very strong turnout — 10 Journeymen and eight apprentices signed up. Twelve tests were conducted in the morning and 10 in the afternoon. That made for a full turnout — 10 Journeymen and eight apprentices signed up. Twelve tests were conducted in the morning and 10 in the afternoon. That made for a full morning as there are only 12 booths and two of those are not currently set up for TIG.

Now for the really good part, out of the 22 tests, 15 were sent off for x-ray and all of those passed. That is the best pass/fail ratio I have seen since I have been involved with the weld tests.

Of course, we can’t take the credit for passed tests. The credit for that lies with you, the members. By the time that you read this, the Topeka test will have taken place. We had a very strong response for that test and were overbooked both morning and afternoon. There are currently only seven booths at the Topeka facility.

The next weld test in Wichita is scheduled for May 17, 2008. Call (316) 267-8508 if interested. That facility has 18 booths available for weld tests, though not all of them are currently set up for TIG.

As indicated earlier, applications and interviews have taken place in all four zones. Applications are taken the first two full weeks in March at various Workforce Centers around the State. The way the standards for the program are set up, we are limited in the way that apprentices are brought into the program. The most common way is through the application process. We rely on the membership, the contractors, newspaper ads, career fairs and word of mouth to get out the word about the program.

A person can be brought directly into the program, apart from the interview process, on a needs basis. If a contractor has a need for someone with welding skills or HVAC background or some other specific skill and the Union is not able to supply someone, then the contractor can hire someone off the street with those skills and if they are not of journeymen ability they can be brought directly into the program. If that happens they will start higher than first year status.

Another way to bring someone directly into the program is if they have completed military service with an honorable discharge. There are several programs across the country that work directly with placing veterans in civilian jobs.

One of those programs is Helmets to Hardhats, which works to place veterans in construction jobs. The UA has supported this program heavily in the past. People brought in under this basis also start at second year or above due to the training and leadership skills learned in the military.

The last way to bring someone directly into the program is if a person has completed a UA approved welding school. Coffeyville Community College has a welding school headed up by retired Local 441 member Dick Robison and is one of the few UA approved schools in the country. Once again, they will be brought in at a level above first year.

To finish things off, some members have inquired about extra welding machines that are in the training facilities. We will be taking sealed bids through May on these machines and also drafting tables that are no longer used. If you would like to take a look at the welding machines or the drafting tables, please call PPATKS at (316) 267-8508 or contact the zone agent for that area and he can get you in to see them.

Zone JAC Committees conduct new first-year apprentice interviews

Wichita Zone JAC: Richard Caywood, Management; Jeff Robertson, Labor; John Shepherd Jr., Labor; Matt Hildreth, Management; and Bill Urton, Labor.

Frontenac Zone JAC: Mike Wolownik, Labor; Bobby Norris, Management; John Feeback, Management; and Roger Krusemark, Labor.

Lawrence Zone JAC: Denis Wittman, Labor; Roy Chaney, Management; Wayne Foster, Labor; Mike Mihalchik, Management; Brent Neis, Labor; and Dwayne Peaslee, Management.

Topeka Zone JAC: Neil Carlson, Management; Dan Beal, Management; John Bishop, Labor; Kirk Miller, Labor; and Richard Taylor, Labor.
Jeffreys Energy Center Outage

LU 441 members and travelers staffing the Jeffreys Energy Center March outage.

Pipefitter Mickey Roudybush and traveler welder (LU178) Mike Harness

Pipefitter Dennis Wells, traveler welder (LU 100) Robert Pennington, and Pipefitter Steve Blair

Pipefitter Matt Gleaves, Welder Dave Pepe and Foreman John Martin

General Foreman Freddy Hart, Superintendent Dan David and Steward Jeff Fergola

Pipefitter Foreman Tony Webster

Pipefitter Dale Gant

Welder John Freeman, Second-year apprentice William McDaniel, Pipefitter Fred Tomasello and Pipefitter Joe Bazin

Visit YOUR Website: www.UA441.org
Fort Riley Projects

Foreman Ted Hitsman and General Foreman Dale Dutton

LU 441 Members Larry Bryant, Dave Pepe, Jim Cox, Phil Thompson, Vernon Todd and Fred Mundel

Welder Duane Jones and Ted Ayon

LU 441 Members Brian Roberts and Job Steward John Bishop

Fourth Year Apprentice Colin Hearrell and traveler (LU 8) Robert Kline

LU 441 Member Jamie Tevis

LU 441 Member Joe Anderson

Steward Robert Lowry and Business Rep Kirk Miller
Under the H-2B program, contractors have increased their hiring of foreign workers to perform skilled labor. The program is often used to create unfair competition for U.S. workers and employers. In Kansas we have encountered some of these workers on a refinery project, power plant, and a water treatment plant. In 2007, over 16,000 foreign welders and fitters were certified to work in the United States. The following is a good explanation of the program and is a part of the Building and Construction Trades Departments recommended Strategy for responding to Employer Petitions for H-2B Visas.

The H-2B Visa Program for Temporary Foreign Workers

At present, the United States has two main programs for temporarily importing foreign workers to perform skilled and unskilled labor.

Foreign agricultural workers enter through the H-2A visa program, and other foreign workers enter through the H-2B visa program.

In addition, there is the H-1B visa program that allows employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in the U.S. in specialty occupations, which require the theoretical and practical application of a body of specialized knowledge and a bachelor’s degree or the equivalent in the specific specialty (e.g., sciences, medicine and health care, education, biotechnology, and business specialties, etc...), or as a fashion model equivalent in the specific specialty (e.g., sciences, medicine and health care, education, biotechnology, and business specialties, etc...), or as a fashion model...

A key limitation on the H-2B visa is the requirement that the work performed by foreign workers must be temporary; i.e., the employer’s need is a one-time occurrence, seasonal need, peak load need, or intermittent need.

In addition, the H-2B visa program is subject to a “soft” statutory numerical cap of 66,000 per year (since mid-2005 H-2B workers who were admitted in any of the three previous years do not count against the numerical cap and petitions for current H-2B workers to extend their stay, change their terms of employment, or change or add employers do not count against the cap).

The number of H-2B visas issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) (which succeeded the Immigration and Naturalization Service (“INS”) in March 2003) has increased steadily since Fiscal Year 1993 reaching or exceeding the numerical cap every year since Fiscal Year 2003.

The occupations for which H-2B visas are most often sought by employers include landscape laborers, forestry workers, maids and housekeeping cleaners, and construction workers.

Employers interested in importing workers under the H-2B visa program must first apply to the U.S. Department of Labor for a certification that U.S. workers capable of performing the work are not available and that the temporary employment of foreign workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers.

The first step in this certification process is submission of a temporary labor certification application (known as ETA Form 750, Part A) to the State Workforce Agency (“SWA”) that serves the area of intended employment of the requested temporary foreign workers, which must include: (1) documentation of the petitioning employer’s efforts to recruit U.S. workers made before filing the application; (2) a statement explaining why the job opportunity or opportunities is temporary and why the employer’s need for work to be done meets the standard of either a one-time occurrence, seasonal need, peak load need, or intermittent need (a labor shortage does not alone establish a “temporary need”); and (3) a wage offer, which is not below the prevailing wage.

The SWA must determine the prevailing wage in accordance with applicable DOL regulations and policy guidelines.

Next, the SWA places a job order in its job bank system for ten (10) calendar days during which the SWA is supposed to refer qualified U.S. workers who walk in and those who are in its active files to the employer that is seeking the H-2B visas.

The same time, the prospective employer is required to: (1) advertise the job opportunity for three (3) consecutive days in a general circulation newspaper, professional trade or ethnic publication, whichever the SWA determines is most likely to bring responses from U.S. workers; and (2) provide documentation that unions and other recruitment sources were notified about the job openings and, nevertheless, were unable to refer qualified U.S. workers to fill the positions.

After the recruitment period ends, the SWA sends the employer’s application for H-2B labor certifications, along with results of recruitment efforts, prevailing wage findings, and all other supporting documentation to one of two DOL National Processing Centers in Chicago or Atlanta, where a Certifying Officer decides whether to grant or deny the employer’s application for one or more temporary labor certifications, or to issue a notice that such certification cannot be made.

There is no provision for requesting reconsideration or seeking an appeal of a finding by the National Processing Center Certifying Officer (“NPCCO”). The DOL labor certification determination, which is advisory, is then forwarded to the USCIS, which makes the final determination whether to issue the H-2B visas requested by the employer.

Employers and foreign workers, but not U.S. workers or their union representatives, may seek review of USCIS decisions denying employer applications for H-2B visas before the Board of Immigration Appeals (“BIA”).

Final decisions concerning applications for H-2B visas are not judicially reviewable.

Consequently, the only window of opportunity for U.S. workers and their union representatives to challenge the validity of an employer application for H-2B visas is when the application for labor certification is pending before the SWA/DOL NPCCO.

While there is no formal administrative procedure available for challenging employer applications for labor certifications; nevertheless, there is opportunity for U.S. workers and their union representatives to raise questions concerning the bone fides of the employer’s application; whether the employer’s asserted need for H-2B workers is “temporary;” and/ or whether there are U.S. workers capable of performing the work available and that the temporary employment of foreign workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers, in which case the SWA, the NPCCO, or DHS may request additional information from the employer that can result in denial of the application for labor certification or at least slow down the process.

According to reports issued by DOL’s Inspector General, fraud has been a perennial problem in the H-2B and other temporary foreign worker visa programs because the process is initiated by employers and grounded in employers’ self-serving representations regarding their inability to find qualified and willing U.S. workers to fill job opportunities.

Notwithstanding, there is no formal role for U.S. workers and their union representatives to challenge employer applications for H-2B labor certifications, even though the labor certification requirement is intended to protect U.S. workers from unfair competition with foreign workers.

Visit YOUR Website: www.UA441.org
Wichita Area

Greetings Brothers and Sisters:

Once again, I would like to thank all of you for the opportunity to serve as your representative for the Wichita area. My appreciation goes out to everyone for their efforts in the field as well as their dedication to Local #441. This local union continues to be a work in progress first for the membership and second for the contractor and customer base we serve. In order to prosper, we must view our relationship with contractor and customer in a businesslike fashion. We are part of a business model. Hard work, craftsmanship, and dedication allow our contractors to be profitable. These three factors also make for satisfied customers. In order to be the premiere workforce in the piping industry we must remain focused. I ask every member to push themselves in these three key areas.

Over the past months we have seen a period stagnation. Contractors have some very good work in the area, however lay-offs seem to equal call-outs. For the months to come, many exciting projects are being reviewed and bid by our contractors. We have met with casino developers, school board members, facility managers, and general contractors, all with projects coming in the summer months. They all want a quality product at the best price. To me that says value and we must be able to produce value. Make no mistake about it, the non-union will take advantage of our shortcomings. That is why we must sell ourselves as the best value. Our future depends on it.

Organizing has slowed a little in the area as we see members on the out of work list. The interest of unorganized craftsmen has not though. It has been difficult to energize a significant number of workers from a non-signatory contractor to stand together. In order to be effective, they must be willing to join collectively in putting pressure on management. My contacts seem to come one or two at a time. The word is out there though. Local #441 is where craftsmen prosper.

Elections for the local are in June. Every member must take the time to fill out your ballot, and mail it back in. Exercise your obligation as a member. Political elections are coming in late summer and fall. All Kansas Congressmen and state legislators will be on the ballot this year. Get registered and vote. It’s the American Way.

In closing, I would like to give a special thanks to all who have been working in the Frontier Refinery at El Dorado. Many hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent at Frontier over the past four or so years. Thousands of manhours not worked by our members. P&E has been in the plant over the past months and I am confident management is recognizing the value of union labor.

Fraternally Yours,
John H. Shepherd Jr. (316) 265-4291
Plumbers & Pipefitters of Kansas Local #441
Wichita Area Business Representative Zone 1A

Lawrence Area

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Greetings from Lawrence! Spring is here along with the month of April. Work is still holding well in the area. Current and jobs in progress in the area are the hospital, fab shops, chemical plant, Berry Plastic, six jobs on KU campus, Castle remodel, American Eagle, Burlington Northern and other small jobs.

Apprentice interviews will be held on April 15th. We are looking forward to getting some good candidates for our program.

Along with the Chamber of Commerce, East Hill Business Park is celebrating its 20th anniversary this month. Some of these businesses were built by our brothers and sisters. Good to see them still thriving in the area.

I have been attending meetings at the Capitol in support of the Holcomb Power plant and on current immigration bills. Neither bill is in our favor as of yet but we will keep working to get them passed.

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

Topeka Area

Brothers and Sisters,

The work at Jeffery Energy Center (spring outage) and Wolf Creek are about through. A few members will move on to Tecumseh Power House and others will fill a few 40 hour welding positions in Topeka.

For the plumbers it looks like Fort Riley will be a good spot with work going on and a lot more being bid on. Work on ethanol has slowed with the higher grain prices, but work is still good and steady.

We are going to be looking for volunteers to help in placing yard signs for the worker-friendly candidates, also help with the Labor Day Parade. If you are interested in helping, please give me a call.

Fraternally yours,
Kirk W. Miller, Sr. (785) 354-8539
Topeka Business Representative
3906 NW 16th St. Topeka, KS 66618
The 2007 financial audit was just completed and your Union Funds have enjoyed substantial increases while keeping expenses down. As reported in the audit, our operating expenses for 2007 were actually less than our operating expenses for 2006. We realized a total increase in Local 441’s net assets of $469,995 with $316,870 of that going to the **General Fund**, which is well over double the amount of $144,604 that was added to the General Fund in 2006. During the past three years, the General Fund has advanced from its lowest amount of $425,000 to its current balance of $1,050,000.

With this steady increase to your General Fund, we are on track in the near future to reach the benchmark that will allow the current **work assessment percentage rate to be lowered** as outlined in ARTICLE VI of our Constitution and By-Laws. Once your Finance Committee has had an opportunity to review the audit in detail, Local 441’s Accountant will give a full report of the audit at the May 12th union meeting.

The **Target Fund** has also showed strong gain. With the amount of work we have enjoyed, there has been less need to utilize the Target Fund, which has allowed it to grow. At some point this work boom will slow. That is when the Target Fund will show its benefit. We will be able to utilize the Fund to help secure work when needed for Local 441’s membership.

With the increased participation in the **Death Benefit Fund**, the Death Benefit Committee has once again recommended to the membership to increase the Benefit Payout from $3,200 to $3,500 while keeping the assessment amount at $3.00 per death. This is a benefit that is much appreciated by the families of our Brothers and Sisters that have passed in allowing them a little less financial worry during this difficult time.

As 2008’s political session wraps up, the primary focus for Local 441 has been the **energy bill (Holcomb Power Plant) debate**. I want to first thank all the members that have helped in contacting their Legislatures to express support and encouragement to vote “YES” for the bill. I also want to extend a thank you to the Greater Kansas City Building Trades Council and specifically to Pipefitters Local 533 and Plumbers Local 8.

Without exception, any time I have contacted them to participate in lobbying efforts at the Capitol, they have responded with support. This has been very effective, especially with the northeast Kansas Legislators. We have worked tirelessly to lobby support for this project and were successful in securing a **Project Labor Agreement (PLA)** with Sunflower Energy that insures all Building Trades will be utilized to build the project. This plant will utilize cutting edge technology for clean coal power production and would be a positive for the environment. Once it goes on line, it will be the cleanest power plant of its kind in the nation and would serve as a prototype and standard for all coal fired plants. The new technology implemented with this plant could then be utilized with other existing plants and drastically lower current emissions.

The experts agree that in Kansas we will be primarily dependent upon fossil fuel plants as our base load source of energy for the time being. It is predicted that at best it will be 30 to 40 years before new technology is developed that can take the place of these existing plants. It would seem to only make sense to lower the emissions on the existing plants as much as possible until this new technology becomes available. Holcomb, in my opinion, would be a great place to start.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all that were nominated for the various Local Union offices. Ballots will be mailed out on May 16th. Please take the time to carefully fill out your ballots and mail them back in before the deadline. Every vote counts and I would encourage each member to exercise your right as a union member. It is up to you to determine the future of your local.

Please continue to work smart, work safe, and may God bless you and your families.
Special Meetings in May

Special Order of Business Meetings will be held in each zone during the month of May 2008 to determine how wage increases will be allocated to the total packages. Please watch your mail for location, dates and times for these votes!

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:
May 12, June 9, July 14

As of the November 2007 union meeting, we are televising our monthly union meeting to the outlying areas over the Internet. This should allow easier access and participation by the members that reside in those areas.

UA Local #441 Retiree Meetings

Frontenac Area Retirees
Meet each Tuesday morning at Home Café, Cherokee, KS at 8 a.m.

Lawrence Area Retirees
No monthly meetings scheduled at this time. We encourage a group to establish meetings and let the Hall in Wichita know date, time, location. You are also welcome to attend other area retiree meetings.

Topeka Area Retirees
Meet every Wednesday morning at Hardee’s at 21st and Wanamaker 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 the second Wednesday of every month (except December) at 9 a.m. at Spears Restaurant, 4323 W. Maple, Wichita, KS.

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

Elections are held every three years. It is important that each member participates in making the decisions that affect their union and their future.

Your Vote is Your Voice.

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

Union Membership Increased In 2007

According to the Bureau Of Labor Statistics, Union Membership in the United States increased by 311,000 to 15.7 million in 2007. This is the largest single year increase since 1979 and shows the workers continuing dissatisfaction with their current job benefit and security situation.

In the construction industry more than 96,000 Members were added last year bumping Union density from 13% in 2006 to nearly 14% in 2008. More than 1/2 of all workers (60 million) say they would join a Union tomorrow, if given the chance.
Efforts to Secure Union-Built Power Plant in 441 Jurisdiction

Business Manager Richard Taylor also serves as Manager and Spokesman for the Central and Western Kansas Building Trades. On behalf of the Plumbers and Pipefitters of Local 441 and all Building Trades, he signed an agreement on Feb. 11 (photo at right) that was negotiated with Sunflower Electric CEO Earl Watkins to insure that Union Building Trades Craftsmen will build the Holcomb Power Plant project.

This project will employ 2,500 plus craftsmen with 600 to 800 of those from the Pipefitting Trade. The project is projected to last five to six years. The Plumbers and Pipefitters and all Building Trades have committed to opening training centers in the area to train the various crafts as the project progresses. The local workforce established during the course of the project could then be utilized by our contractors to secure all types of work in the future — such as hospitals, manufacturing plants, and schools — an opportunity we have not had in the past.

LU 441 Gains Historic Agreement for Union-Built Plant!

At the State Capitol: Sunflower CEO Earl Watkins and LU 441 Business Manager Richard Taylor spoke at a recent rally to gain support for passage of the Holcomb energy bill.

Signing in Senate Chambers with Bipartisan Support

Standing [L-R]: House Minority Whip Eber Phelps; Senate Assistant Minority Leader Janis Lee; House Minority Leader Dennis McKinney. Sitting, starting at the far head of the table and going clockwise, are Senate President Steve Morris; House Speaker Melvin Neufeld; Sunflower CEO Earl Watkins; Plumbers and Pipefitters and Building Trades Manager Richard Taylor; Sheet Metal Workers Manager Kirby Clark; IBEW Manager Paul Lira and AFL-CIO Executive Secretary Treasurer Andy Sanchez.