

The Connector



Iron Workers Local 498 - 5640 Sockness Dr., Rockford, IL 61109 - 815/873-9180

February 2019

From the Business Manager:

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As you know by now, work has slowed down significantly, mostly weather related. As I write this, the Americold Project has brought back most everyone they had, without most of the boomers. As the weather improves the work should pick back up. All the contractors I have spoken to claim to have a good year coming up on their books. I encourage everyone capable to get current on their weld certs and keep them up. It is an avenue for more opportunities to work. Once you get them, it is very easy to keep them up. Wire is another skill request that is happening more and more. If we can't provide them, the contractor brings in their own people, or I must call travelers. I hate having to call boomers when there is a bunch of guys off.

The use of our website has been successful. With that and going cashless, credit card use has significantly increased. This has increased our fees for the transactions. Our fiscal year starts July 1st. We will likely be implementing a nominal credit card fee to help offset some of the cost at that time.

Mark your calendar, the 2019 Iron Workers Local 498 Charity Golf Outing is scheduled for Sunday June 2nd. The Golf Committee will be meeting soon to discuss any changes for this year's outing.

We are due for a Pin Party and we are looking at early fall for that. I will keep you informed.

It has been ten years since the By-Laws have been gone through and updated with any changes that get it more current. The Executive Board will be getting together to go through them, and we will present any changes once that is complete.

Group Administrators (GA) has started the process of taking over the Tristate Health and Welfare plan. There is an informational sheet attached with some of the changes with the move to GA. There may be some snafus along the way but please be patient. Don't hesitate to call me if you are having an issue. I will do what I need to get it fixed. The Pension Education Seminar we had on the 2nd of February was a success. There was a good amount of people here interested in learning how their pensions work. I am hopeful the Pre-retirement Seminar will be happening in June (depending mostly on Tristate H/W and GA). This is designed for members and spouses who are planning for retirement in the near future and want to get an estimate of their earned benefits and understand how the health and welfare plan works at retirement.

We have hired a new Office Manager; her name is Nada Sarkis. She shined far and above the other candidates we interviewed. She is in the process of being trained by Eva. Be patient with her. Union business is vastly different from private sector business. When you stop in or speak to her on the phone, I am sure you will all be welcoming to her.

Stay warm out there and work safe.

In Solidarity,
Mark

From the President/Organizer:

Dear Members,

As we move through this winter, things have slowed down a little for us. That means it has also slowed down for the nonunion as well. They are still out there, and with your help I do what I can to reach out and change the course of action.

I have been working with our District Council Organizer on a few projects as well as working to sign a few contractors. When work starts to break open again, I look forward to any challenges that arise. Work safe and stay strong.

In Solidarity
Ben

From the Apprentice Coordinator:

Dear Members,

From the training center side of things, we put together some weld dates for the rest of 2019. Anyone that needs to renew their Wisconsin certs or their International certs may plan for it. There is a constant need for certified welders, so if you want to make yourself more employable, come and get your welding certifications.

If we can't man the work, there are other trades that are certifying their guys to take our work.

Weld Test Dates:

4/13/19

6/1/19

9/28/19

11/9/19

12/21/19

We also have an OSHA 30 class coming up on the weekends of March 2nd & 3rd, and March 9th & 10th.

You'll have to be present for all four days to get credit.

On May 6th we'll be having a First Aid class, and on May 13th a CPR class.

If you would like to sign up for any of these classes just let me know and I'll put you on the roster.

Paul Kauffman,
Apprentice Coordinator



From the Office Manager:

As an update since the end of the year we were notified that Adolph (Jackson) Thibert had passed away on December 29th, Scott Hildebrand passed on February 4th. They were members of the Death Benefit program and the contribution rate will be \$39.39. Randy Osborne passed away on January 19th. He was not part of the Death Benefit.

As you have read the Death Benefit has increased to JIW hourly rate (currently \$39.39). We have included beneficiary forms with the last newsletter. Please complete and return the forms at your earliest convenience. If you are a new participant, please note the \$39.39 prepay is necessary to start the program. Since the JIW hourly rate will change each year for those who made multiple pre-pays so as not to be in arrears we would request that you refrain from it for record keeping purposes.

Regarding information on tax deductions, with the change in the tax law, the ability to deduct work deductions is limited and potentially not allowable.

Local 498 Calendar

March 19th – Regular Member Meeting
April 16th – Regular Member Meeting
May 21st – Regular Member Meeting
June 2nd – Charity Golf Outing
June 18th – Regular Member Meeting
July 16th – Regular Member Meeting
August 20th - Regular Member Meeting

Reminder, the Executive Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month. The Retirees' meeting is the second Tuesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. at the Alpine View Restaurant (Charles St. and Alpine) in Rockford. Contact Ralph Pedersen – 815/234-8163.



Dear Iron Workers Tri-State Member:

We are pleased to announce that effective March 1, 2019, Group Administrators, Ltd. will become the new Third Party Administrator (TPA) for the Welfare Fund. As we transition the administrative services over to our office, you will notice several changes, which we will address below.

What does this mean to me?

This means that your health care claims will now be processed and paid by Group Administrators, Ltd. In addition, our office will now be the facility for employers to report contribution hours and eligibility. We have installed a new dedicated phone number for Tri-State members to call – **844-395-4467**.

Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO Network?

The BCBS PPO network will remain in place. The claim filing instructions for your providers will remain the same. BCBS will forward your health care claims to us for payment.

Will I receive a new I.D. card?

Yes. New ID cards will be issued by BCBS. This new card is scheduled to be mailed around February 20, 2019. Please be on the lookout for your new card. The ID number that was being used by Zenith will continue to be used by Group Administrators and other vendors.

You will notice that the prescription vendor information is on this new card, so you will not need to carry 2 cards. Please make sure that your pharmacist is using the information on this new card. The prescription vendor is still Express Scripts, and their logo is on the back of the new card.

Will I receive credit for the deductible and co-insurance amounts I have already paid?

Yes, Group Administrators, Ltd. will receive historical claim data on your behalf, and you will receive credit for out of pocket amounts you have paid.

What issues might I encounter?

You may have recently been asked by Zenith to complete verification of other insurance coverage on your dependents. Unfortunately, that information was not provided to us in the transition documents. You may be asked to complete another COB form and return to our office. Please complete the form promptly, so claim processing is not delayed.

Will I be able to view claims on the Internet?

Yes, the Group Administrators web site will allow you to view claim status. Web site instructions are enclosed for your review. There will be a link from the Tri-State Iron Workers website to the Group Administrators website after the transition, but you can always access directly into our web site.
<https://factsweb.groupadministrators.com/FACTSWeb/EStart.asp>

Will I be able to view contribution hours on the Internet?

Yes, the Group Administrators web site will allow you to view contribution hours by employer by month. Web site instructions are enclosed for your review.

Do I still need to pre-certify inpatient medical procedures?

Yes, please call the number for “Pre-cert” on the I. D. card. When in doubt – call.

Will the provider file my claims for me?

Normally providers file claims for the patient. Claim filing instructions are listed on the ID card, but please remember that the ultimate responsibility rests with you. Please confirm with your provider that they will file your claim.

What hours is the Customer Service Department open?

Group Administrators Customer Service Department is open 7:30 – 5:00 central time.

HRA/HFA/Wellness debit card

The debit card that you have been using through WEXHealth will be replaced by a new card issued by the debit card vendor we use. This new vendor will be Alegeus (MBI). Unused balances from your WEXHealth account will be transferred to the new card, so no money will be lost. We need to coordinate this transfer with Zenith and WEXHealth, after the February contributions have been loaded from the Zenith system. There may be a day or two delay, but we will load this data as quickly as possible. Alegeus will send the new card directly to your home address. Instructions on how to activate the card, and access to their website are included in this mailing.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at the above number.

Thank you and we look forward to servicing you!!!

Sincerely,

Group Administrators, Ltd.