

The Connector



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

June 2019

From the Business Manager:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope you all have been enjoying the warmer weather. Work has been kind of slow. There have been regular calls mostly short ones, so the list has been moving. Some good news on the horizon, as it stands, we may have both casinos in our territory going. Illinois finally passed a gaming bill that included Rockford. In Beloit, Ho-Chunk Nation looks like they will be getting an approval by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for their casino. One being approximately \$300M the other being around \$450M for the projects. The Shine Project in Janesville has started to move dirt and Baker Concrete Construction has the project. I have still not found out who has been awarded the rebar or structural, but I will keep pressing. Those are large projects expected in the next year not to mention the normal day to day work. Bridge work on I-90 has been happening lately in Wisconsin. So, it looks to be pretty good going forward in Local 498 this year.

I mentioned at the Union Meeting that we had a conference call with Eric Dean, Lee Worley (Apprenticeship Director), and Ross Templeton (Political Director) of the International along with 250+ other locals regarding a change that the Trump Administration may implement regarding Apprentice Programs. They can do this without the approval of Congress. The changes would make our apprentice program irrelevant to getting work in the public sector. Think Bridges, Schools, WWT Plants, and College's, because ANY company would be able to claim they were part of an apprentice program and there would be NO oversight that they actually were accepted on the word of the company owner. Some construction Trades Local's would not exist if it wasn't for public sector work. Prevailing wage is the last hold unions have on ensuring work sometimes in some not so strong areas. I have heard it myself in our area from non-union owners I have spoken to in the past, "we don't even bid Public Work". Not because they don't want to but because they would have to pay higher wages and be scrutinized by the DOL that they are doing things proper. DOL regulations and audits of our Apprentice Program are not all bad. They insure we are following rules that WE put in place for training our young members and that they are progressing from apprentice to JIW status in a timely manner after proper training. That will go away and there will be no one insuring the 10 "apprentices" making the Federal minimum wage of \$7.25 with one "journeyman" (likely no training) doing the bridges and Water Treatment facilities from "wherever" is legit and you and your brothers and sisters will be watching from the sidelines starving because their apprentice program is just cheaper than yours and the municipalities are looking at bid prices only. This can be done with a stroke of the pen by the President and his Executive Team that hates unions and 41% of union labor elected him.

What I am asking of you is that when the International lets us know that the window of time opens (usually for 60-120 days), that we can flood the DOL with our requests that the construction industry be exempt from the changes. **They will not accept form letters, it must all be done online and submitted.** We will send the link to all the membership and apprentices. These programs are self-funded and have been around for 100 years for some, Local 498 since 1946. It would be a shame to see a bunch of rats that claim to be a qualified and trained as the union construction industry apprentice programs and undermine what YOU have accomplished. Remember "Cheap Labor isn't Skilled and Skilled Labor isn't Cheap" and your elected president may single handedly undermine your whole way of life and some misguided union members in this country put him there. A common theme I've heard was, "He is going to blow up the system." I bet they didn't think it would be their system and way of feeding their family with retirement and health insurance that he was going to blow up, but here we are. Maybe I am off, maybe those union members are just the hitchhikers along for the ride of good wages and benefits and think the company won't get rid of me, I am to valuable and worth every penny. The owner will still pay me this wage because I am worth it. Keep telling yourself that. If they can get work done cheaper, they will. Elections have consequences.

Now for some good news. The Local 498 Golf Outing was a great success! Thanks to all that participated we had 94 golfers come out and it was a good time and we gave out a lot of prizes. Next year lets shoot for maxing the course of 144 golfers. There will be some changes in registration coming we had a little snafu with last minute additions. This meant more steaks. We will have to make the golfer registration deadline one week before the outing to eliminate the problem. It worked out in the end. We will likely be doing a 50/50 raffle or something along those lines. Everything I heard was extremely positive and many said they couldn't wait for next year. That is good to hear. Thanks to everyone who helped make it a success this year. Next year we need pictures.

Coming up soon we will be removing and replacing our parking lot. It is looking rough and Civil will be doing the work. It should have been started already but apparently the city requires a signed engineered drawing to replace an existing parking lot to get a permit. Once that is done Civil can get to work removing and replacing the parking lot. While they are doing this, they will be burying the westside down spouts so we can eliminate the icing of the sidewalks for the future. Hopefully we will be freshening up the exterior of the building later this year as well.

I wanted to end on positive note, because it isn't all bad. It appears that we will have pretty good work coming up. Everything at our local is headed in the right direction I believe, and we will tackle the difficulties as they arise and we will win.

In Solidarity,
Mark Richeson

From the President/Organizer:

Dear Members,

Work is picking up in the local which means the nonunion are out and about as well.

I am still keeping tabs on the Tristar building in Freeport and working on that. The building at the Union Railway Museum in Union is finally getting erected; however, Harvard Crane is the one doing it. I had some talks with the owner, Charlie, and he may do business with us in the future but won't budge on this one.

We finally are starting up a partnership with ACE Concrete. They took 4 of our guys to help tie rods down in the Dixon area. Seeing the skill and determination level our guys produced, he is now taking 4 more for a project in Beloit. He may be ordering more as well for these projects and others. This is in the Agricultural Industry which is new territory. Hopefully, this gets us more work for our members that was never on our books and opens up a new market for our future.

With the heads up from a couple members, we were also able to get 2 guys on with O'Rourke Construction at a metal building in South Beloit.

Thank you everyone for the calls and "heads up" on some of these projects.

Stay safe, stay strong, and keep up the good work!

In Solidarity,
Ben Scroggins

From the Apprentice Coordinator:

Dear Members,

Here are the Weld test dates for the rest of the year – **September 21st, November 9th, December 21st**. Dean has been great about working with guys that need to renew their WI certs so if needed, get ahold of Dean or myself and we'll try to work something out. We are having a summer welding class that is on Tuesday nights from 6:00-9:00 so if you need to brush up come on in.

Even if you do not work in a particular month, I still need a work report filled out. I still have to have records to verify

The Labor Day Parade will be here before you know it and I expect **ALL apprentices** to be in attendance, so put it on your calendars NOW.

Also, For all of the apprentices. Most of you have received the **Starter Tool Kit** when you started the program. The key word being **STARTER**. I've had a few complaints that the apprentices do not have tools. Now I'm not saying that you have to go out and buy everything all at once, but you need to slowly start buying tools to do the job. When you're working with a Journeyman and he is using a personal tool that you don't have make a note of it and go buy it. **You will not be able to make it through the program with one spud, one belt, and one beater!**

In Solidarity,
Paul Kauffman

It's been awhile since the last PIN Party and we are scheduling the next one on **Friday, September 13th**. Invitations will be going out soon so save the date.

We are happy to announce that Nada has had a little boy, Elio Jean Boutros, 8lbs 3oz, 22 in. We are very happy for her and wish them the very best.

Local 498 Calendar

July 16th – Regular Member Meeting

August 20th – Regular Member Meeting

September 2nd – Labor Day Parade & Picnic

September 13th – Pin Party

September 17th – Regular Member Meeting

October 15th – 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 Peterson – 815/234-8163.