

The Connector



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

January 2020

From the Business Manager:

Dear Members,

Winter has hit and the work as you know has slowed down considerably in December and is lingering. There is work on the horizon. Area will be hiring for the 1.2M sq. ft. Amazon building in Beloit with overtime as they have a 10-week window to get it under roof. They will be hiring around February 3rd, initially it was to be 5-10's and an 8 but is suspect it will be more with the aggressive schedule they have. The SHINE project has been very slow to start with some setbacks that they can't seem to shake. I am hopeful that will get rolling along smoothly soon and turn into a good long rod job. We will also be having a Byron Nuclear Plant shut down with hire dates around the 10th of February and pre-outage starting February 17th with completion March 25th. There will also be 2 Auxiliary Transformer moves at Byron with 2 shifts (the night one being a bit shorter). The contractors say they are looking at a pretty good year, similar to what we have had which is good news. We finally have a Capital Plan in the state which will be good for work on our infrastructure in our area. The work at the Mill will likely start closer to Spring. The Rockford Casino is still down state awaiting approval from the gaming board, once that has happened, I am sure Ringland will be ready to go. The Beloit Casino is stalled at the federal level at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

You should have all received a letter from Mid America regarding the plans structural change for benefits. Prior to January 2020 there were multiple different calculations that added up to what your monthly benefits would be when you retired. There was a base credit, a percent of contribution (POC) and a supplemental (used to help the plans funding but no financial benefit to you) it was quite complicated, and the trustees made the change to simplify the plan. They combined all the pieces into a POC at 1% for a cost neutral change to the plan, this change made it so that for every dollar you put in the plan you receive a benefit for it. This doesn't mean that the plan won't need maintenance (like all Pension Plans) but does ensure you get a benefit for every hour worked or dollar contributed. This was a net benefit improvement for every member of Local 498 from the ones that work the least number of hours to the ones that worked the most. For me as one of the trustees of the plan it was easy to support. This does not change the benefits for anyone currently collecting nor is the change retroactive. This change is January 1, 2020 forward. If you have any specific questions, feel free to call me and if I don't have an answer, I will get one.

Politics are a necessary evil in the business we work in. Just about every project you work on has gone through the hands of our local politicians from City Alderman, County Board, State Representatives/Senators, plus all the sub committees for approval. This is why we have to be active in our local politics. For the upcoming election I will be sending out a list of Building Trade supported candidates that have union labor in mind. There will also be an email on the upcoming Primary on March 17th for certain candidates we support that may need some extra help because they have a competitive primary and requests for our supported candidates to have their sign in your yard. Look for that soon. With the Presidential election coming up more and more Americans are tuning in to the 2020 election. The International has conducted polls and focus groups to find out member opinion, but they want every ironworker to have a chance to be heard. Ironworkers can visit the presidential candidate comment page through the link below and tell them your thoughts on the race and the people running. Any union ironworker, regardless of party, is welcome and encouraged to comment.

https://actionnetwork.org/forms/2020-political-comment-box?clear_id=true&source=direct_link

To use the link, go to www.iwlocal498.org under The Connector tab and the latest newsletter.

This year is our last year for the current contract and at Februarys General Meeting we will have nominations for the fourth on the negotiations committee which will be someone from the body in good standing. We will then start negotiations. This year the Electricians, Pipefitters, and Sheetmetal along with us will be negotiating this year. I am hopeful for a good contract.

In Solidarity,

Mark Richeson

From the President/Apprentice Coordinator:

Dear Members,

Hello Brothers and Sisters

As many of you have heard I will be filling the vacancy of President from Ben moving up to District Council Organizer. I'm looking forward to doing my part in this position.

There is going to be a need for certified wire feed welders coming up, so any of you Journeyman that are interested in getting certified please come to the hall and practice.

The next weld test dates will be Feb 1st and Feb. 8th. Get ahold of Dean, or myself so we can put you on the test list.

To the apprentices:

It's that time of year again when the snow will be flying so just like last year, we will be following Rock Valley Colleges lead as far as school cancelations go. If they cancel classes so will we.

Fraternally yours,

Paul Kauffman



Local 498 Calendar

February 1st - Weld Test

February 8th - Weld Test

February 18th – 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.