

# THE CONNECTOR



Iron Workers Local 498 - 5640 Sockness Dr., Rockford, IL 61109 – 815/873-9180 Dec 2022

## From the Business Manager



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I thought we were overdue for a Connector (Dee reminded me 😊), so I thought I better get on it. This will probably be a long one.

The work picture has been very good so far and looks like it will be this way for a while. Currently, there are 13 people on the out of work list and 7 of them are out of town working. As I have mentioned before, if you are off for a couple days and I have work and can put you to work, I will do it. We are in the process of adding some new apprentices and organized members to the mix. We will add some more as long as the work holds. Remember, this is a 4-year program, we lose some to retirement within those 4 years, so we need guys and girls that have some experience. We have changed the Apprentice Application Process. It is all online, we do a smaller aptitude test, and a timed agility test to rank the potential candidates. From my conversations with some of the contractor's work looks good well in to 2023. The Hard Rock Casino has started. The Beloit Casino is likely to start in the spring. A million rumors about Chrysler from closing permanently to a total revamp with a battery plant on site (or within the vicinity). When I know something definitive, I will let you know. Also, this year Byron will be having a Spring (3/6-3/24) and Fall outage (10/9-10/24) with pre-outage. I am not sure what the manpower needs will be at this time. Rods have started on the 1.3M Sq ft. General Mills Warehouse on Irene Rd.

Little by little we are getting more of the contractors to call in when they are in the new area with work, keep in mind it is a process. I have appointed Paul as a part time Business Agent to help keep up the pressure and get everyone wrangled in, it seems to be working. He will be splitting his duties between both the Local and the JATC. This was approved by both the Executive Board and the JATC Board. The new 498 Eastern Zone is a dense area with many nooks and crannies to police. Also, if you are working with travelers in the new area don't hesitate to ask and make sure the travelers have called to clear in or paid travel dues. If you were working in their jurisdiction, they would do the same of you.

Once again, we are anticipating that the IMPACT Drug Program will be changing. We will no longer be doing Annual Drug screening at the local, that will fall on the contractors that participate with IMPACT (not all do). We will also move to a 9-panel saliva test which excludes THC /Cannabis. With that being said, THC / Cannabis is still illegal in WI and may be tested for to work in WI for those contractors that are working there. It is also still illegal at the federal level and could preclude you from working on federal jobs (Nuke plant, Federal Road projects, etc.). We will be doing Saliva tests for all new hires or contractors that accept IMPACT's Drug program to be hired, the tests have been ordered. Also, as part of the IMPACT Program it will include being tested for THC for cause, meaning if there is an accident on the job and you are required to test by the contractor, they may include THC. This IS NOT finalized through IMPACT but should be at the February 2023 IMPACT Conference along with possible other changes. We anticipate letters going out after the conference to the contractors. I encourage everyone to exercise caution before the new rules are finalized.

Last year we tried setting up an opportunity for a long- and short-term disability program through Cornerstone but work at the time was a bit slow so the interest was not there. I am asking for some feed-back on whether you would like me to try and get that going again. For it to be successful it would require 15% of active member participation which would require 35-40 members participating. This is NOT local provided but paid by the member under the type of program they want, so it varies based on the options you choose. Please let me know if you are interested in this type of program. If I don't get enough feedback, I am not wasting their time our ours.

To all of you that came to the Labor Day Parade and Picnic/Pin Party that followed at the Hall, thank you! It was quite a success. We did not know how many people were going to come but WOW, what a turn out. We had families in the shop out in the parking lot and in the grass with the bouncy house. We ran out of food, but the best was seeing all the retirees I haven't seen in a while and watching them talk to the younger ones as well as their old friends they haven't seen in a while. This will be what we do going forward, though we will have to get more food (we planned for 120). I anticipate there will be more next year. The place was packed which was good to see. We will hand out pins at the Labor Day Picnic going forward every year which will be at our Hall. Special thanks to Dee, her husband Jason and the Rusty Nail for the food. They did a great job! The wings were awesome (I didn't get any Italian beef 😞) but I have had it before, and it is delicious too. So, plan on Labor Day Picnic at the Hall after the Parade next year so we can all get together and talk shop and tell stories.

I am hoping come spring we will be able to update the exterior of the building. There are some maintenance issues that needs to be taken care of as well as an update and refresh. I believe the exterior has not been repainted in 21 years.

I want to thank everyone that took the time to vote on election day or early voted. We did well at the local level, on the state level we did awesome, and at the federal level we did far better than everyone anticipated. Also, a big win was the Workers' Rights Amendment which protects our right to bargain regardless of who the Governor is through a constitutional amendment, that is HUGE! Thanks to Keith for continuously beating the drum at every meeting and in every communication during this battle. We are the first state and the only state to protect your right to bargain at the constitutional level. Unbelievable that this did not make national news! You know had it lost, they would have announced that, they announce every time a state chooses Right to Work, but not protecting workers right to collectively bargain.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns my door is always open to you and I will do what I can to help you.

Enjoy and have a Safe Christmas!!

In Solidarity,

Mark Richeson



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With the Holiday's upon us and the year ending soon work continues to be good. This year has been a busy one for me. In the spring I took the Organizer 2 course in Chicago for a week. This summer I attended the annual Ironworkers instructor training in Ann Arbor. I took Comet and Ironworker history, and in August I attended the Ironworkers Tri-Council meetings that were in Chicago. With our local growing we have also joined two more building trades, Dekalb and Fox Valley.

Our International is really building up their Organizing efforts to meet the demand of new construction projects in the auto industry, chip manufacturing, solar and wind projects, and infrastructure projects. I held my first Comet class in October. It was a learning experience teaching the class. Although I will be changing a few things in the future, I think the class went well considering it was my first time teaching the class. We are very fortunate that we have a good market share in our local and our District Council. We have Organized a few nonunion Ironworkers over the past year and I intend to get more any chance I can. Remember, they do the same work we do but are not Organized! I think we have a very good opportunity to grow our local significantly.

I know I have been talking about the "Worker's Rights Amendment" at our meetings since last January. I am glad that the amendment passed and is now part of our state constitution. This is due to the hard work of our members and other union members talking about what the amendment really was about and what it would mean for all workers across our state and for that I thank you. You don't have to go far to see the damage "Right to Work" laws have done to our surrounding states. This amendment will have lasting effects for generations.

As always don't hesitate to call me at 815-721-3058 if you have questions or concerns about jobs around our local. It will take all of us to keep Ironworkers local 498 strong and growing for the years to come.

In Solidarity,

Keith Gahl



As I'm sure most everyone has heard I am now acting as part time B.A. focusing on the eastern zone. I am honored to be asked to step into that roll. There are still quite a few contractors that were signed with 393 and or the other Chicago locals but haven't done work in that area since the merger took place. I have run across a few of these contractors and once they were caught, they signed an Agreement. One thing that I will ask of the membership is to give me a call if you see work being done even if you think it's a good union job. I have heard the excuse of "I didn't know what local I was in" way too many times. I have a running list of Ironworkers that have been caught without clearing in and we're not putting up with that.

On the Apprenticeship side of things this semester has come to an end. We are having a weld test on 12/10/2022 so if you need to certify or recert let Dean Markee or myself know so we can get you on the list. The Winter semester will start up on 1/16/2022 and all Apprentices will be required to be there that night to get their schedule and so there can be some discussion.

Hope to see everyone at the Christmas Party on Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>.

In Solidarity,  
Paul Kauffman

**Local 498 Calendar**

**Dec 20th. – Christmas Union Meeting**  
**Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> – Closed**  
**Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> – Closed for New Year**

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.

**Death Announcements**

**Richard McCaffrey 9/22/22 (Death Benefit Participant)**  
**Patrick Williams 11/23/22 (Death Benefit Participant)**

**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**