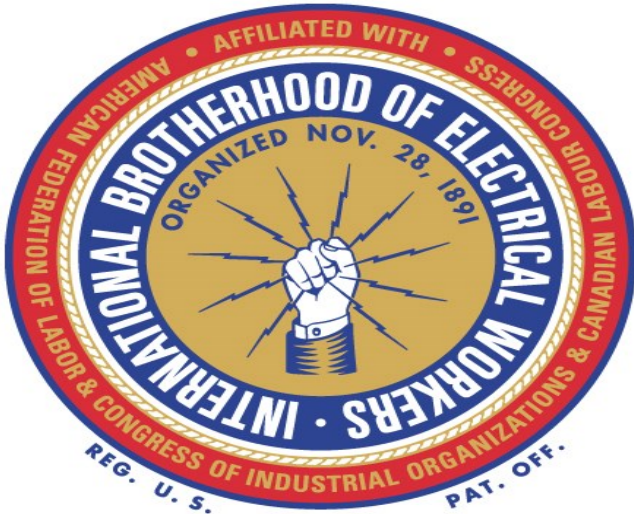


# TAILGATING

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## 2019 11<sup>th</sup> District Progress Meeting

The 2019 IBEW 11<sup>th</sup> District Progress Meeting was held last month down in Lake of the Ozarks, MO. I was very proud of the group we sent down consisting of 5 women and 5 men. We were very well represented at the first ever IBEW 11<sup>th</sup> District Woman's Conference and RENEW Conference. As always there were numerous guest speakers and presentations. One thing that stuck out to me the most was the common theme we hear as union members wherever we go; the constant attack by politicians on organized labor and the middle class. It is scary to hear exactly how manipulative the attack on labor has been and the specific law changes that are pushed through to attack workers across the country.

When it comes time to cast a vote, I strongly encourage everyone to do their homework and support candidates who support our Brothers and Sisters in the public sector, and candidates who will protect our right to organize. Also, please research how candidates vote for Workers Compensation Law changes. Workers across the 11<sup>th</sup> District have slowly had their protection from being injured at work stripped. This attack on workers will continue until we stand up together and vote.

Please look for classes and conferences coming up that you might be interested in and call the hall if you see one you would like to attend. Most fill up fast. Thanks again to all of those who went to the IBEW 11<sup>th</sup> District Progress Meeting with us last month. You represented our Local very well and we were proud to see everyone there.

*Dustin Stumma*

# July 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 <b>Independence Day</b>	5	6
7	8	9	10 <b>Union Meeting Cedar Rapids</b>	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 <b>Union Meeting Creston</b>	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 <b>Union Meeting DAEC 3:00 PM</b>	25 <b>Executive Board</b>	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Thank you to Local 204 and the E-Board for the opportunity to attend the IBEW 11th District Progress Meeting at Lake of the Ozarks, MO. Also to Sarah Faber from Local 499 for the first ever Women's District Conference. The Women's Caucus on Tuesday was also attended by the International President and Vice President of IBEW. They listened intently to the concerns expressed by all the women in attendance and were actively engaged in conversation regarding issues women are experiencing in the workplace. It was great visiting with the President and his wife and the Vice President one on one in the evening to share personal stories that we have experienced in the field. Their support was truly genuine and sincere.

The individuals who will lead the Women's Committee toward our first charter through Local 204 is Amanda Cooling from Cedar Rapids Local 405, Karen VanDusseldorp from Local 204, Mary Sand from Local 204, and Sara Faber from Local 499. The purpose of the committee is to increase the participation of women in the Union from mentoring, community involvement, apprentice training, leadership roles as well as a place for support and encouragement that arise from challenges in the workplace. Our Union sisters in non traditional roles are often spread out in the state, fortunate if another woman works in the area let alone the same town. As it stands, most women must rely on social media sites to communicate with one another or hope to attend a women's conference to feel a sense of solidarity.

We are excited to be part of this committee and look forward to working with all our union sisters and brothers.

In solidarity

Mary Sand and Karen Vandusseldorp and the Women's Committee

## Greener Pastures

In the last year on our Alliant contract we have had a large number of our linemen leaving for “Greener Pastures.” This is becoming a very big problem that we have been trying to convey to the company since it started. Unfortunately just until recently it hasn’t gotten the attention it deserved from the decision makers. To our account we have lost for the entire state of Iowa from all the contracts, 23 linemen. While 23 may not seem like a large number to some, tell them to put it in the thought process of facilities. If you look at our smaller shops you average 4 linemen a shop so with the number let’s just say 20, I’ll use a smaller number to get a point across. That would mean you have lost complete coverage for 5 facilities. To put that more into perspective I will use a certain area as example. You would have lost all the linemen from Fairfield, Centerville, Washington, Chariton and Osceola. I am not pointing this area out specifically this is just for an example. Fortunately the people leaving are from all over the state and just not one area.

Unfortunately we are losing people and a lot of them, the question on the table is obviously why? Three main reasons, Healthcare, Retirement Benefits, and morale. Let’s start with healthcare, we all know our plan is okay but not good compared to what else is out there, it wasn’t that great to begin with and with the whole YSA debacle that just made it a mess. The company claims they can’t afford to pay for the same plans that 55 gets or the plan that our ULCS members get, to that we say YOU ARE! You are paying it indirectly those companies have obviously factored that cost into their billing. The same goes with the retirement benefits, those companies factor in the cost of those employee’s retirement benefits and just pass that cost on to the companies like Alliant that they are working for.

Let’s talk about the third reason, morale. Morale is a huge factor in any place of employment, if morale is good, most generally everything can and will fall into place. Productivity goes up, costs go down and most importantly safety numbers improve. If morale is poor the opposite takes effect in all categories. What is causing the poor morale? Obvious reasons would be dealing with YSA issues, lack of appreciation, and a big one that we hear is “My opinion doesn’t matter.” It’s hard to take a meeting serious that focuses all of its attention on something called a “mood elevator” when you could care less what anyone’s mood really is. The best thing you can get back to is just let the employee’s come do their job and take out all the unneeded extra’s. Their linemen, they just want to build line, do their job and go home.

In order for us to remedy these issues you need to let your managers know and help them understand why people are leaving. I know they will say it’s above my pay grade or that’s out of my hands but we have to stay on them because unfortunately 23 journeyman linemen do not work here anymore and somebody will have to pick up the slack from those that have left and those that are contemplating leaving. We’ve been very fortunate we haven’t had a lot of major storm damage this year. Most importantly folks make sure you are safe out there and if you need help be sure to ask for it!

One last thing we want to mention is don’t forget about all the Meter Readers, CFR’s, Service Mechanics and CSM’s that are losing their jobs. Make sure to speak up if we have someone in house that can fill these jobs that are vacant. We owe it to them to give them a shot at one of the open positions. We are losing a lot of good members/employees that are not getting considerations for vacant jobs. If you are on an interview team make sure to speak up and give them a shot especially if you know they are going to be good at that particular position. Don’t forget a lot of us were once in that position as well and somebody gave us a chance!

# Sick Leave

Sick leave is a topic that comes up quite often in the office. Sick leave is a great benefit to have and one that we shouldn't be taking for granted. Not many contracts still have sick leave and there is a reason for this. If you pay attention to history, especially in Labor and negotiations you will find that in a lot, if not most cases when Labor loses a benefit it can usually be attributed to us abusing it or taking advantage of it. This is not true in all cases, but in a large majority of them it is, we can have a long drawn out conversation on this very topic but we want to focus on Sick Leave.

Sick leave is a benefit that you do not realize how important it is until you really need it. It is not uncommon to see members retire out with 1200 to 1500 hours of sick leave built up and in some cases even higher amounts. Unfortunately the opposite is not uncommon either to have a member retire out with 30 plus years of service, had no major illnesses or injuries and only have a week or less of sick leave. While we completely agree it is your sick leave and your earned benefit, it makes it hard on the Local to maintain a benefit when it is misused as vacation. We would strongly encourage all of our members to reach out and talk to a fellow member that has had a major illness or non-work related injury and ask them how much of a benefit that was they had. Imagine sitting at home after having both hips replaced, or both knees replaced or having major surgeries or even cancer. We all know someone that has been through this, ask them how they would have paid their bills without sick pay.

As staffing levels decrease or as companies say we run leaner, sick leave use will most definitely be monitored more closely. We are already seeing it on the Alliant contracts where the company is requiring employees off on sick leave for multiple days to have a doctors excuse filled out or more to the point their own "Fit for Duty" form. The Local recommends that you keep this document on hand and take with you to the physician to have this filled out just in case you do need it, this will save you a return trip or worse yet being billed again for another visit to get this form filled out. Lastly we want those that have sick leave to speak up to fellow members and stress the importance of this benefit and also to management on how much you value this benefit. We also encourage you to speak up about it, if you do not want it abused, then reward the employees at retirement and allow them to somehow utilize all of their sick leave when they retire.

## Members

Are you considering becoming an “A” Member, leaving the Company and going to the electric contractor world? If you are pondering about leaving, hopefully you have already contacted Robin at the hall to become an “A” Member. Keep in mind, it takes weeks before payroll gets caught up after converting from a “BA” to an “A” member. Calling into the office the day you decide to put your two-week notice in does not allow enough time for the change in membership to occur.

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**IBEW, Local 204**  
**4837 1st Ave SE, Suite 203**  
**Cedar Rapids, IA 52402-3226**

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