

TAILGATING

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Benefits

Lately on our Alliant Contract we have had a growing number of Line Mechanics leave the company for “Greener Pastures.” It is important that if you leave the company that you get an exit interview. It is also important that you express exactly why you are leaving the company. If you are not granted an exit interview you can request one. The Local has had meetings with the company and continues to do so to try and explain why employee’s are leaving also how to remedy them leaving. We all know that Retirement and Healthcare are the big 2 reasons. If there is other reason by all means bring them up, just be honest and respectful in expressing your reasons. The only way to remedy this is to keep bringing the issues to the table.

With the IES Large Group contract expiring next September, it is essential to each have ourselves in a financial situation where we can use our only real leverage....with holding our labor. The Company seems to be running off a new playbook lately and pursuing the things they want at negotiations more aggressively. I believe this has to do with the calculated and successful attack on public sector unions across the country the last few years. The private sector seems to be heading down this path as well. Remember to vote for candidates that support your job and organized labor. I do not need to remind anyone of the many things that have changed for the worse on the last few contracts. All of these contracts were approved by a majority vote by the membership. The Company has shown that one of the items they want do away with is a guaranteed forty-hour work week. They want to be able to send us home on inclement days or when THEY decide there is not work to be done. This has been proposed on the last few small Alliant Energy contracts. The Company may have recently offered for you to take time off without pay or work alternate hours in an effort to be more “flexible” for the employees. It is my opinion that this data will be brought into negotiations by The Company to justify that a less than 40 hours a week is acceptable to the membership and the needs of the customers can still be met.

Another item they have brought to the table is earning less than the current 96 hours of sick leave a year. If there is abuse of a benefit, they will look to be rid of or cut the benefit. Sick days are just that, sick days, not “supplemental vacation.”

What we need to remember is that even though it is a “negotiation” and both sides are required to negotiate in good faith, the Company holds almost all the cards. When the company decides they are done negotiating and say the package is their “Last, Best and Final”, the bargaining unit is required to take it to the membership for a vote. If our membership is not in a financial situation to withhold our labor and go without paychecks the contract will pass, and the power remains with the employer. I have heard members say the Company cannot function without us while on strike or that the IUB would not allow our employer to get to a strike. This is false. Small Group 204 and 949 was facing a strike authorization vote a few years ago and the Company had non-union contractors on retainer to keep the gas, electricity, and power plants on in their absence. The Company said it would lock all the bargaining unit employees out during the strike as well; therefore, no one would be crossing the picket line and going to work anyway.

One of the most damaging phrases being used by some is “have the contractor do it.” Maybe it is a less than desirable job or it is going to be difficult, but there is no reason to encourage “our work” be done by anyone other than us. I have had management tell me that having a contractor do a job is “easier”. Exactly, easier for them as they do not have to manage when a contract crew does the work. If The Company were serious about cutting costs, they would have internal crews do more of the work. We are getting paid to work 40 hours a week regardless whether management does a good enough job of scheduling 40 hours of work for us to do. There is a utility in Iowa that already uses contractors for afterhours callouts.

Be prepared to be able to withhold our labor at the next negotiations in order to get and keep the things we feel are important. If you follow organized labor news across the country, many groups of workers have been on strike in the last year that earn much less money than a utility worker does.

Continue to show our employers that we are the safest and most skilled option to do the work.

If you have questions, comments or concerns, feel free to contact me.

In solidarity,

Matthew Frank

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Think Before You Send

As most of you know social media has consumed our society. People do more communication through social media these days than face to face interaction. Have you ever sent something to the wrong person? Have you ever sent something that was not welcomed on the other end? We need to be more aware of what we are doing on social media so that it doesn't negatively impact our careers. Be cautious of contacting a co-worker through social media. Be cautious of what you are snapchatting while at work. Whether it's Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or any other platform, what you send may not be received as intended. We all know you cannot sense tone or intent in an email. That is the same when you send a message or post something through social media. We also need to be aware of when we are on social media and who can see that we are on social media. Many of our members are friends with their manager and supervisors on which ever social media platform they prefer, and those managers and supervisors are seeing that our members are spending time online while they are supposed to be working. We also need to be aware of what is in the photos we are posting online for the same reason. When posting photos from work or using Snap Chat in the middle of the night while working be cautious of who else is in the photo. Are you breaking any safety rules? Are you supposed to be working at the time of posting? Our employers are watching and taking note. Please be aware of what you are posting and sending and who is on the receiving end.

Protect the Work Week

Recently Alliant Energy has made a mention of allowing our members to take a day off unpaid. The Company made it seem like they were going to do our members a favor and allow this. To some this might seem like a good idea since we all know our lives are busy these days. Please keep this in mind if the Company announces this idea: **IBEW LOCAL 204 DOES NOT SUPPORT THIS AND ENCOURAGES THE MEMBERSHIP TO NOT PARTICIPATE.** We see this as an opportunity to gain a statistic in the effort to not guarantee a 40-hour work week. In recent negotiations the Company has wanted the ability to send employees home with less than 40-hours per week due to unproductive days and inclement days. If we allow members to take a day of furlough it shows that our members do not care to protect the 40-hour work week. We fight hard to protect the vacation and sick leave that we earn. We fight hard to protect the 40-hour work week that we are guaranteed. Not to mention when a member has exhausted sick leave, and vacation has something come up where they need time off, the Company makes it seem next to impossible to do so. So, why now all of a sudden is this an acceptable practice? The answer is obvious. It might seem intriguing and minor, but the ramifications are huge if we allow our members to do this. If you have any questions or comments please don't hesitate to call anyone of us here in the hall and we can give you our thoughts.

2019 IBEW Spring Safety Caucus & The NSC Labor Division

I would like to Thank Local 204 and Alliant Energy for the opportunity to attend the safety conference in Kansas City Missouri.

During the NSC Labor Division I was able to attend training sessions on utilities safety and health committee meetings, Speaker Jack Jackson who is a Senior Safety Consultant with Safe Start had a safety presentation called 10 feet tall and bullet proof. I would recommend this to anyone if they are ever given a chance to attend, it is well worth your time.

Other classes I attended, occupational driver safety , some of the issues from IBEW members were patrolling with one person, tracking devices on vehicles and issues with doing your pre-trip inspections electronically. Bullying, harassment and violence at work are safety hazards too session, letting everyone be heard session, OSHA update session.

I would like to share a few of the things I found interesting during these sessions, if you ever have an accident on your job site and they decide to drug test that individual they can actually drug test everyone that was on the jobsite at the time of the accident. Another item I found interesting was with the new OSHA required crane training some companies are paying for the initial training but if the employee fails the testing he or she has to retake the training and pay for it out of their own pocket. Another area of great concern is the opioid epidemic that is continuing to rise every year.

During the IBEW Safety Caucus I attended the IBEW's Safety directors report, IBEW legal report, Canadian report, Making the connection session. This session they talked about something that I have never heard of before and hopefully they will have at the next conference, Mental Health First Aid. If you would like more information on this you can go to www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org. Believe In Safety presentation, Tactical Confrontation for a safe worker, Utility issue session, and Tick borne disease training.

Going to these conferences helps me bring back issues that we may need to improve on at Alliant Energy and also gives me the opportunity to help other union brothers and sisters out with issues they may be having at the company they work for. We all work together and try to help each other out with safety concerns we are all having in the utility industry. A lot of these issues we would never be aware of without attending these conferences. I would once again like to thank everyone for the opportunity to attend and to continue to bring new ideas or simple changes to make the safest working environment we can for all of our brothers and sisters at Local 204.

Randy Brown
Gas Safety Blue Hat

June 2019

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2	3	4	5 Unit Meeting Washington	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Unit Meeting Emery/ Council Bluffs	13	14 Flag Day	15
16 Father's Day	17	18	19	20	21	22
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I AM A UNION WORKER

That means I am part of an organization that fights not only for my benefit, but for everyone's benefit.

UNIONS set the standards!

UNION SOLIDARITY 

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