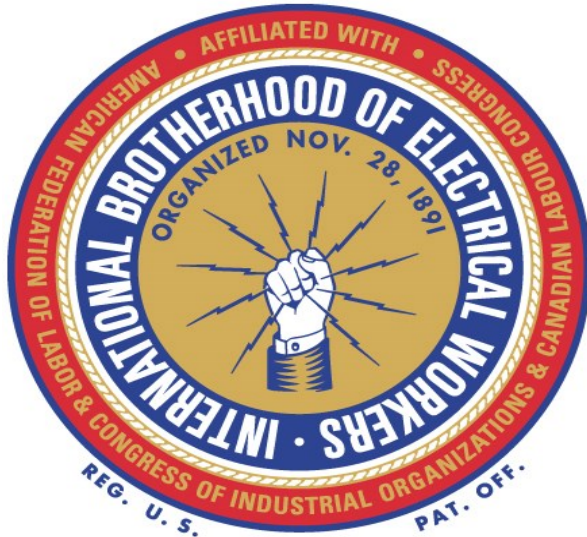


# TAILGATING

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Adam Splinter, Corrosion & Leak Technician from Dubuque, was awarded the 2019 Labor-Management Excellence Award from the Dubuque Area Labor-Management Council on November 26th. This award publicly recognizes and appreciates individuals which exemplify one or more of the principles of collaboration in their daily work lives. The

guiding principles are: Participation, Communication, Mutual Understanding, Education, Trust, Respect, Responsibility, and Openness to Change. Adam is your Area 5 E-Board representative and was nominated by his employer, Black Hills Energy. Congratulations Adam!

*“If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, ‘Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.’”*

*“No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”*

**- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**



## **Put This One In The Books**

As we close the books on 2019 and usher in the 2000's version of the Roaring 20's, let's reflect back on a year that had many moments worth not repeating. All though most of us were not negatively impacted by poor management, many of our members were. We have dealt with leadership who values a degree from an online university more than they value experience and knowledge in their fields. With that comes decisions without thought and foresight. We try to be hopeful that history doesn't repeat itself, but we all know it most certainly does.

In 2019 we saw a lot of changes on Alliant Energy property. As a Local we saw more valleys than hills and some of those valleys were very deep and dark. We knew with automated reading meters we would be losing jobs in the meter reader field. We just had no idea how messy that process would be. To this day there is still a need for meter readers, but management is adamant that they would rather pay a higher skilled and higher compensated employee to go read those meters than work up to their skill set. Makes sense, right?

With automated reading meters we saw the elimination of service positions across the state. That too makes sense because we all know those meters can answer service calls and take care of the customer interaction. Now we have crew members being taken away from the work they should be doing and running orders.

We see a constant attack on the quality of lives of our power plant members with management trying to reinvent the wheel and change the schedules, not caring one bit that they are taking away the one normal week they have in their lives to be with their families and feel normal again. We all need time to reset the clocks and recharge our batteries, but let's take that away from them because saving a few bucks is far more important than safety and family.

One of the most surprising and head scratching moves Alliant has made came towards the end of the year with the elimination of their material distribution centers. The company hired a new Director of Supply Chain in August and by October the decision was made to go to Border States to handle all of the material distribution and warehousing. Keep in mind that Border States has never proven to any of us that they could handle the little bit of work they already had. But, to someone who knows absolutely nothing about a utility company and who has only been around for two months, that doesn't matter. Ignorance is no excuse and something you will not find on a very confident and egotistical LinkedIn profile. With this change we saw the elimination of 20 positions across the state in the storerooms and distribution centers. We know we could do it better and were never given the chance to prove it.

Some of the changes we have seen have come from the hair brain AIC committee. This is the Affordability and Innovations Center committee which was compiled of an internal group and an outside firm. The team was brought in to find ways to save money. Once again, makes sense, right? We all know that when money gets tight and we need to find ways to save, we hemorrhage money to an outside firm to tell us what to do. And when they tell us what we don't want to hear we pay them and send them on their way. **(Continued next page)**

Not to mention the internal team was littered with individuals trying to make a name for themselves and climb the corporate ladder, not caring whose face they are stepping on as they try to grab the next rung. Those committee members ran with any terrible idea they came up with hoping they would get noticed. This committee alone has caused good managers to not be able to make decisions for fear of losing their jobs. They seem to be in a pattern of self-preservation. This committee tried to empower our members only to twist what we were saying and cut us at the knees. This committee has pinned our members against each other as they sit back and laugh and smoke cigars. It has to stop. We don't manage or mismanage the company for them. They do a good enough job sinking the ship on their own.

Like all of the changes we faced on Alliant Energy property we received a lot of lip service from the personnel making those decisions. We were often told we would have a seat at the table, only to be included after the decisions were already made. One thing we have learned from a company that has made numerous bad decisions over the past decade or two, is that they are very reluctant to walk anything back or admit they made a mistake.

One thing about it is, Alliant Energy has some really good managers, directors and executives. Unfortunately the bad far outweighs the good and it seems like it takes an eternity before someone realizes they have a dud on their hands.

With all of this going on around us with all of the negative distractions, we have done a great job of keeping our noses to the grindstone, showing up for work and doing our job safely. We need to continue to do that. We all know that we are the backbone of the employers we work for. We need to stand together and stay united with all that we have coming up this year. As our employers ask us to do more for less, we need to stay focused. If we can't do the work and need help, we need to speak up. If you aren't being heard, let us help. Be sure to document everything. Be your brother or sister's keeper, not their enemy. Do not let our employers divide and conquer. Make 2020 the year you become a better member and a better employee.

We have a busy year ahead of us with our three largest contracts expiring and negotiations coming up, as well as a handful of others. We will continue to try and get out in the field as much as we can. Last year we saw that fizzle out with all of the crap thrown at us that took the bulk of our time. We are hoping to double the number of members attending Steward and Member Education day in March. If you haven't already signed up and are interested make sure to call the hall. With negotiations coming up and the increased workload, you might see new faces putting on unit meetings as we rely more on our executive board to help out where they can. This year we are going to put more of an effort in to organizing than we have in the past. We need to work on growing our membership and not watching it whittle away. We have a busy year ahead. We will continue to try and keep our members informed of all that is going on around us. If you hear something and question it, call us. If the phone isn't ringing here in the hall we aren't doing our job. We can get through this together and hopefully at the end of 2020 we can reflect back on all of the positives. Happy New Year. *Dustin K. Stamma*

## **From Your E-Board**

2020 is here. Dustin, Jon, and Brian will be facing many issues. Big contract negotiations and the countless hours they will be working for the members. I would like to thank them personally for their dedication to the members. They work hard helping finding answers, even if it's not the answers the members want to hear.

Next, I would like to recognize Seneca Fisher (At-Large E-Board Representative), for doing a great job with last month's message. I agree with him that the standby territories are getting so big, making response times in good weather, let alone inclement weather, are becoming a real concern. I would also like to recognize the meter readers who were replaced with AMI meters. Over the years they continued to do their jobs in some terrible conditions.

I have worked for Alliant Energy for over thirty years and been through process redesign, deregulation, mergers, the black belt process, and now AIC. As a steward and E-Board Representative, I have been hearing a lot of "water cooler talk" wondering which department will be next to be cut. The company keeps talking about getting contractors off our property. With the new company direction, the opposite seems to be happening.

I want all of us to continue to work safe and be our brother's keeper. Our Alliant family needs to stay focused on safety and going home to our families every day, no matter what distractions and daily decisions the company makes. Have a great year and be safe.

In Solidarity,

**Doug Kott**—Area 1 E-Board Representative

The new website is up and running! If you have not done so already, go to [www.IBEW204.com](http://www.IBEW204.com) and register to stay up to date on important issues affecting you. You will have full access to the members resources and the ability to manage your own settings. You will also have the option to be added to relevant mailing lists in order to receive important emails on current issues. You will also find links to our app where you can access your contract, constitution, member directory, and meeting minutes as well as receive important messages from your Union. While you are at it, follow us on Facebook and Twitter!



<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100027119016973>



<https://twitter.com/204Ibew>

# MEMBER EDUCATION & STEWARDS TRAINING CONFERENCE

This year's Member Education & Stewards Training Conference will be held on Saturday, March 21st, 2020 at the Longbranch Hotel and Convention Center at 8:00 AM. Registration is at 7:30 AM.

A hospitality event will be open to participants at 5:00 PM on Friday evening March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at the Longbranch Hotel, where beverages and appetizers will be served.

The class is OPEN TO ALL IBEW Local 204 members. Space is limited so be sure to call the hall today and get signed up. Reservations must be made by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

This year we will be focusing on the issues we face within our Local. We will have guest speakers, a breakout session, and a Q & A session. If you have any suggestions or ideas for topics please let us know.

Local 204 will pay mileage OR provide a hotel room (Friday night) if you live between 20 and 120 miles from Cedar Rapids. For those who live MORE than 120 miles from Cedar Rapids, Local 204 will provide a hotel room (Friday night) AND pay mileage.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

We have received numerous phone calls lately from members who have recently been contacted by American Income Life Insurance sales people. We did not renew our contract with American Income Life and they should not be soliciting our members. If an American Income Life Insurance sales person contacts you and says they are affiliated with IBEW Local 204 get their name and number and contact us right away. It is still up to you if you want to listen to their sales pitch and take them up on any offers they might have, but in no way are they affiliated with us and they should not be soliciting our members.

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## Negotiations Updates

**2020:** Linn County Sheriff Sergeants and Linn County Assistant Attorneys negotiations began in December 2019. Cedar County Deputy Sheriffs will start the beginning of the year. ULCS, Windstream, Black Hills Energy, Alliant IES (Large Group) all to begin this spring/summer.