



TAILGATING

From the Business Manager's Desk

One thing that I have always struggled with during my years of being on the Executive Board and then working in the Union office, is trying to come up with a topic to write about that our membership will be interested in. It would be easy to talk about a number of items since there is so much going on in our society right now. In our current environment, I think it would be best suited to talk about the most important thing we have in our jobs, safety.

It is easy in today's world to get wrapped up in all that is going on and lose focus of what we are doing while at work. I've had the opportunity in my career to work for a lot of different Managers and Foreman, some good and some not so good. One thing that always stood out to me was that it was easy to see who was safety minded and who wasn't. I will be the first to admit, I wasn't always the safest person on the jobsite and was at one time, the first to put myself in harms way just to get the job done. The older you get, the more you realize what really is important and that productivity isn't the number one priority.

Safety must have one very important common denominator; it must be personal for it to happen and people to jump on board. Companies can schedule meetings all they want, they can purchase all the PPE in the world, and they can come up with any document for you to fill out, but it still comes down to one thing, you either choose to be safe or you don't. I had one manager in my career that knew exactly how to make it personal. He was able to do this because he cared, and it was very apparent that he did. If this manager was in the building in the morning, he made sure to come out each morning and talk with each of us before we left for the day. He didn't come out to make sure we were getting out of the building at a decent time, and he didn't make it about productivity. This person made sure to come out and tell each of us to remember why we're here. He would always say "Jon, remember why you're here. Your family. Make sure you go home to them. They're counting on you."

At the time, I didn't put much stock into that because I was young, and it just seemed corny. But, as I mentioned earlier, you get older, and you realize that maybe all the distractions going on in the world and at work weren't as important as you thought and getting home to that family is. The reason for this article is exactly that, I am talking with a lot of members on the phone and out in the field and hearing an awful lot about everything going on. It is very easy to get wrapped up with everything we see on the news and on social media, not to mention the changes we see in the workplace. We are seeing an uptick in accidents in the workplace and at home. We have an enormous number of distractions on several of our contracts and I am very worried about one of our members getting hurt. Take your time, look out for one another, and make sure you're doing everything you can to make sure you get home each night safe and sound!!!

In Solidarity,
Jon Van Zante



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Alliant Energy Apprenticeship Experience Letters

My name is Jacob Stych, and I just completed my Line Mechanic apprenticeship for Alliant Energy out of DeWitt Iowa. Having my dad and younger brother both already in the company, I had a general idea of the timeline of the apprenticeship, but not much as far as the work and skills I needed to learn. The beginning of my apprenticeship was just like starting any job; meeting the crew, getting familiar with the area and people, and trying to get comfortable with a new role.

Shortly after I started, I attended the boot camp out at the technical training center in Marshalltown. It was a 2-week period spent making sure we had the very basic knowledge and ability to start as an apprentice in the trade such as climbing, mechanical ability and physical abilities. Once I got back from that and started working with the crew, it was extremely eye opening to how much technical knowledge was needed to be proficient in this career. As an early apprentice I found myself lost and making mistakes often. Luckily for me, I had a very knowledgeable and patient crew who were all willing to teach me what I needed to know.

I was told early on that no one will care about your apprenticeship more than you and that is completely true. You must be willing to ask questions and seek guidance from everyone. Whenever I had a question or was in doubt about something with the job, it was always broken down and answered so that I could understand and remember it. As I got further along in my apprenticeship, I was expected to be able to do more with less direction. The crew would give me less step-by-step direction and let me work through the task by myself with their supervision. Towards the end of my last cold step, it felt like I had a good handle on all the work I was able to do and seemed to drag on as I waited to turn hot. Once I turned hot, it was as if I was a first step apprentice all over again. I was learning something new every single day and it felt like my first couple months on the job. Again, my crew was very helpful during this time. They were always more than willing to break everything down and make sure I was doing everything correctly and in the safest manner possible. With their direction, I slowly became more and more comfortable with the job and soaking in as much knowledge as possible.

Once I was towards the end of my apprenticeship, I was now being asked for my input on what I thought about specific jobs. Throughout the apprenticeship I attended hands on training again in Marshalltown. I really enjoyed the week out there. It gave me a chance to see how guys from other areas did things and we could all bounce ideas off each other and talk about our differing experiences. It was also a chance to be able to pick the instructors brains on questions we had about certain instances on the job that we needed explained a little more in depth without the pressure of a real time situation. I was also able to network with a lot of people from my class so that I now feel comfortable reaching out to them with any questions in the future if I need to. To complete each step and to finish out the apprenticeship there were tests every step, a monthly hour's sheet and progress reports to file. Getting all of these done every month helped me keep track of what areas I needed to put more work in and what the crew thought of how I was doing. All of it made tracking my progress a lot easier.

Overall, I was very pleased with the apprenticeship program that I had the opportunity to participate in. I felt like it has prepared me to enter this career with a solid knowledge and skillset. I also can't thank the crew in DeWitt enough for all the training I have received the past 4 years.

I am Nick Kriegel, a Gas Mechanic in Ames, Iowa for Alliant Energy. I have been a member of IBEW Local 204 for going on three years and in mid-January, I completed my apprenticeship.

Being in my thirties and changing careers can be intimidating. The apprenticeship program was very beneficial to my education and development as a Gas Mechanic. I attended a two-week boot camp training shortly after being hired and four one-week hands on training sessions at the IPL Training Center in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Hands on training was key in covering everyday regular tasks such as setting and exchanging gas meters, leak investigations and installing and repairing gas mains and services. We also covered tasks that may not be encountered on a regular basis such as tapping and stopping steel mains and installing regulator stations. Time was always taken by the Gas Trainers to ask for input from the apprentices on topics they would like to cover.

I was able to work with multiple journeyman throughout my apprenticeship which allowed me to learn different ways to work efficiently and safely. Looking back on the past three years of my apprenticeship, I feel fortunate to have trainers and coworkers who have invested their time and energy in my career advancement.



Local 204 Collective Bargaining Agreements

Alliant Energy Large Group contract (IES)
 Alliant Energy Small Group contract (IPC)
 Alliant Energy Distribution System Operation
 Alliant Energy Emery & Marshalltown Generating Stations
 Atlantic Municipal Utilities
 Black Hills Energy
 Cedar County Sheriffs Deputies
 CIPCO (Central Iowa Power Cooperative)
 Duane Arnold Energy Center (NextEra)
 Linn County Assistant Attorneys
 Linn County Sergeants
 Prairie Energy Cooperative
 ULCS (Utility Lines Construction Services)
 Windstream Iowa Communications



New Members

Please welcome the following members to IBEW Local 204! The following members joined Local 204 in the 1st Quarter of 2022.

Randall Raskie - Alliant
Mark McDonald - Windstream
Daniel Scarberry - CIPCO
Patrick McDonald - CIPCO
Andrew Davis - CIPCO
Clem Morrison - CIPCO
Joshua Green - Alliant
Aaron Case - Alliant-MGS
Brett Riehl - ULCS
Nathaniel Bulman - ULCS
Peyton Boyle - ULCS
Austin Major - ULCS
Jeremy Tegland - ULCS
Alexander Hartwig - ULCS
Beau Stehcon - Alliant
Drew Dickerson - Alliant
Joshua Gavin - Alliant
Travis Blakely - Alliant
Jacob Mathers - ULCS
Shayl Wilson - Linn Co. Atty
Heidi Weiland - Linn Co. Atty
Rena Schulte - Linn Co. Atty
Shon O'Kelley - CIPCO
Cody Hemann - Alliant
Austin Troy - BHE
Cameron Minton - Alliant
Troy Balderas - Alliant
Travis Blakely - Alliant
Rodney Blakely - Alliant
Nathan Hinton - Alliant

New Retirements

Please join us in congratulating the following IBEW Local 204 members on their recent retirement! The following members retired in the 1st quarter of 2022.

Wes Van Antwerp - Alliant

David Kennicker - ULCS

Ricky Meier - ULCS

James Cavnar - Alliant

Brian James - Alliant

Mike Webb - ULCS

Phil Eilers - Alliant

Steve Reyhons - Alliant

Paul Wellborn - ULCS

Al Wessels - Alliant



401k, Pension & Retirement

We all have hopes of retiring at a young age. But are you taking full advantage of your benefits in order to make that happen? As I have been traveling around meeting the membership, I am surprised at the number of members who are not fully taking advantage of the 401k benefit. Please make sure you are putting in the max amount in order to receive the full matching contribution from your employer. If you don't, this is free money you are leaving behind. For the Alliant Energy large contract, if you put in 10%, the Company will put in 5%. By default, you are automatically set up in a traditional 401k. Some members might benefit from setting up their 401k as a roth. Did you know that when you go out of town for a storm, you can raise your 401k contribution and then lower it when you get back? This could help on your taxes while working a storm.

Recently, Alliant Energy changed how they are handling pensions for those who will be retiring. They are now outsourcing it to Willis Towers Watson. There seems to be some "bumps" in the road with this change. If you know you are going to be retiring, please make sure you communicate with Willis Towers Watson and Local 204 well in advance. This will ensure there will not be any delays in getting your pension set up for retirement and also so Local 204 can stop your union dues. If you run into any issues with Willis Towers Watson, please let Local 204 know.

Dale Roshek and Kyle Skinner with Principal have been going around to the union meetings and talking to the membership about 401k and retirement. Below is a checklist they provided of documentation you should gather to provide to your financial advisor if you are thinking of retiring.

Personal Files

Latest income tax return
Outstanding loan statements
Expected cash windfalls such as
Inheritance, gifts, etc.

Retirement

Employer benefits booklet
Lates 401k/403B retirement statement
IRA statements
Social security retirement benefit estimates

Investments

CD/money market statements
Brokerage account statements
Mutual fund statements
College savings statements

Insurance

Life and disability insurance provided
by your employer
Personally owned life insurance
Personally owned disability insurance

One of the most important things for our membership is to make sure you are talking with someone regarding your financial security. It is never too early to start planning for your future.

- Sarah Faber

Staying invested today: Resiliency in the face of tightening



Seema Shah, Chief Global Strategist

FEBRUARY 3, 2022

Financial markets have had an extremely rocky start to 2022. After a month of trading, several major global equity market indices have fallen into correction territory—a drop of 10% from their recent all-time highs—as investors adjust expectations in the presence of United States Federal Reserve (Fed) tightening, elevated inflation, and softening economic growth.

While short-term market pullbacks are normal and inevitable, many investors are concerned about what these fluctuations might mean for the year ahead. After several decades characterized by low inflation, low market volatility, and strong returns, investors must brace themselves for a very different environment. A focus on fundamentals can help fade the noise, identify the risks, and seek out the market opportunities that this correction will likely generate.

today's environment, there are three key reasons why investors ought to stay invested: short-term market pullbacks are normal; the most acute price pressures should soon start fading, easing the Fed's urgency to tighten; and, the fundamental economic backdrop remains solid, driving opportunities.

Short-term pullbacks—uncomfortable, but not uncommon

While the recent global equity pullback has triggered significant unease, such drawdowns are more common than the stable image portrayed by the last few quarters. As recently as 2020, the S&P 500 experienced 12 market pullbacks—the highest count since the 2008 crash—but there are typically four or five market pullbacks of 5% or larger each year. Thus, the fact that the S&P 500 is down over 3% and the NASDAQ nearly 8% year-to-date may seem significant but is standard market behavior.

The pullback that pundits warned of...

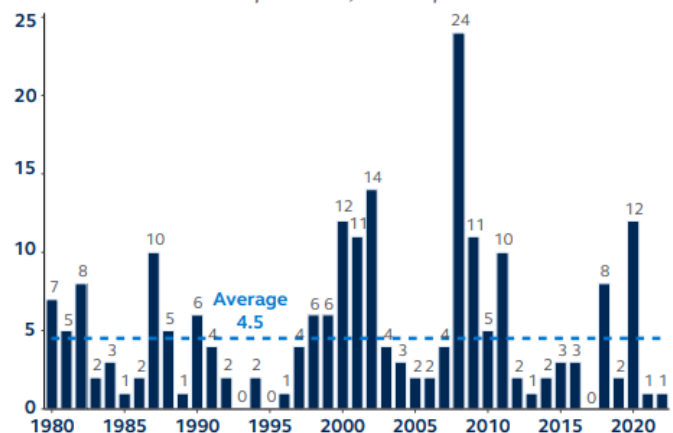
Investors enjoyed a remarkable market recovery from the market low in March 2020 through to the fourth quarter of 2021, with the S&P 500 more than doubling in value. In 2021 alone, U.S. stocks gained 29% with dividends, small caps rose 15%, and international developed markets gained 12%. Investors who stayed overweight risk assets were handsomely rewarded as the economy reopened and policy stimulus hit unprecedented levels.

Since the start of the year however, broad equity markets have tumbled. With the Fed confronted by both surging inflation and bubbling wage pressures, it is compelled to tighten monetary policy as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Omicron, fading fiscal support, and escalating geopolitical tensions between Russia and Ukraine are conspiring to soften global growth.

Are conditions for equity market outperformance becoming more challenging? Yes. But fears are likely exaggerated and do not accurately represent the still-supportive backdrop for risk assets.

Staying invested, even in the face of more challenging conditions, is rarely the wrong decision. And while the pullback in Fed liquidity means risk assets will lose some of their allure, in

There are often several market pullbacks each year Number of 5% S&P 500 pullbacks, 1980 – present



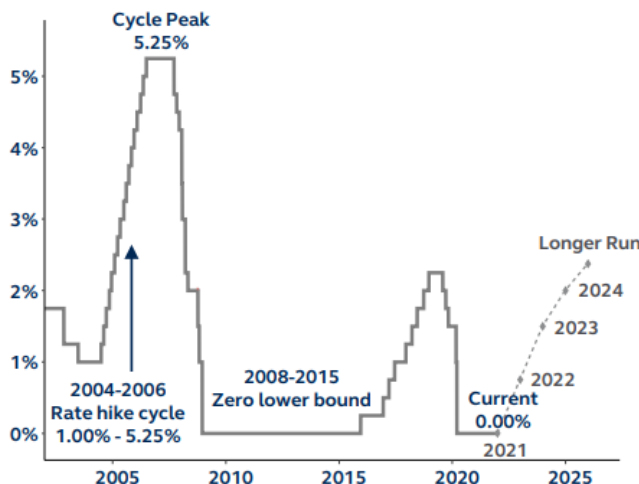
Amidst the markets swings and roundabouts in the month and quarters ahead, equity returns will likely be lower this year than years prior, but should be positive nonetheless.

Fed tightening: Imminent, but measured

The Fed will likely begin its hiking cycle at the March Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting (March 17, 2022) and our current forecasts call for six rate hikes over 2022-2023. The Fed is also likely to begin passively reducing the size of its balance sheet (permitting maturing assets to roll-off) in the second half of this year and at a faster pace than previously.

A Fed tightening which is no steeper than recent cycles

Target range lower limit



Source: Cleareconomics, Federal Reserve, Principal Global Investors. Data as of February 2, 2022.

While Fed tightening is to be expected at this stage in the business cycle, and usually signals healthy economic conditions, equities still often react poorly to sharp changes in the interest rate environment. But, provided tightening expectations are not too onerous, the period of adjustment is often temporary. This was true in 2013 during the Fed taper tantrum, in 2015 when the Fed announced its first rate hike that cycle, and even last year, when the market began to understand that Fed tapering was rapidly approaching.

This time, investors are concerned that the Fed has been far too slow to respond to inflationary pressures and, as a result, many are questioning whether even five hikes this year will be sufficient.

With inflation at its highest level in almost four decades and inflation expectations elevated, the Fed must prioritize fighting inflation. Yet, the most acute upward price pressures should soon start to unwind, pulling U.S. Consumer Price Index down to around 3% by year end. Not only is the economic reopening novelty temporary, but supply chain relief will likely arrive as demand slows and vaccinations enable greater COVID tolerance. This should result in a softening in the Fed's policy stance through the latter half of the year—market rate expectations, like inflationary pressures, are close to peaking.

Most importantly, despite their haste to put the inflation genie back in the bottle, the Fed will try to avoid precipitating a recession. At Fed Governor Brainard's confirmation hearing in mid-January, she noted the desire to sustain a "recovery that includes everyone." Furthermore, Chair Powell's own comments at his confirmation hearing on January 11, emphasized that the Fed needn't rush to get to a *neutral* stance of policy.

With market expectations for Fed tightening so hawkish, the bar for a positive surprise from the Fed is low—it would take just a few reassuring words about the importance of sustaining growth to improve sentiment.

Economic growth: Slow, but solid

While once-in-a-lifetime levels of GDP growth and job gains kicked off the economic recovery, the coming years should experience a steadier pace of growth. Currently, economic data suggest that, even in the face of elevated labor and intermediate input costs, corporate profits are the strongest in decades. Resilient consumers, backed by a war chest of excess savings, imply a continuation of the strong demand conditions of 2021. Greater pandemic resilience indicates a gradual normalization of supply chains, which will provide a boost to both inventories and production.

There is also little sign of a recession in market pricing. Short-term credit spreads have not risen meaningfully relative to long-term credit spreads, suggesting that market participants remain unconcerned about near-term default risk. The relative performance of cyclical and defensive stocks suggests market participants expect healthy economic growth, while the recent underperformance of pandemic "stay at home" beneficiaries points to a market that is anticipating a normalization of activity.

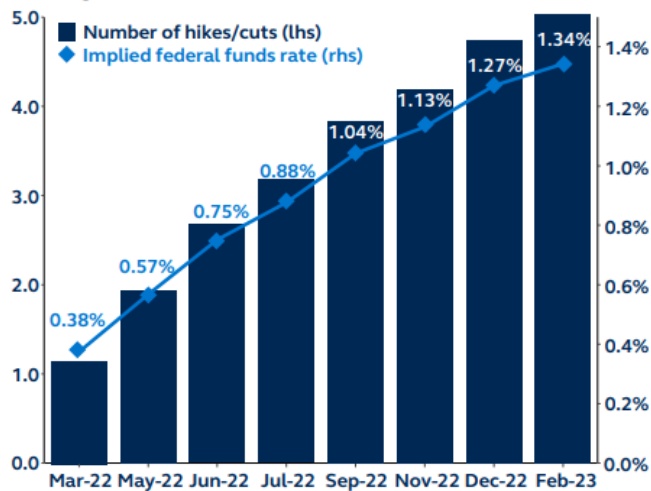
Of course, the recent bond market rout which has driven real yields sharply higher can be a risk to economic growth and are a valuation headwind. Yet, even after the sell-off, real yields are still in negative territory and financial conditions remain historically easy. If market expectations for five Fed rate hikes this year are fulfilled, that would likely still leave real rates negative. While a softer economic outlook is likely, it's worth noting that, since 1954, there has never been a U.S. recession when real rates were this low.

Turning adversity into opportunity

Despite the underlying economic support for risk assets, there still remains significant challenges ahead. Global growth has peaked, elevated inflation could persist through the first half of the year, and markets are facing a trilogy of tapering, rate hikes and quantitative tightening all in one year. That said, after the fastest drop in equity markets since March 2020, valuations are starting to look less stretched and opportunities are growing.

Five rate hikes would still leave policy rates below 1.5%

Implied fed funds rate and number of hikes/cuts at each Fed meeting



Source: Clearnomics, Bloomberg, Principal Global Investors. Data as of February 2, 2022.

Sustained, material drops in equity prices are typically associated with recession. But, while global growth has likely peaked, recession is not in the cards.

Quality

Over the past two decades, quality factors have tended to outperform during periods of slowing growth and worsening market conditions. The companies that can be classified as quality often place emphasis on the stability of earnings, the sustainability of margins and the strength of balance sheets, while pricing power also tends to be strong. These are attributes that will help companies as conditions become more challenging in the coming months.

U.S. outperformance

Although global market upheaval largely stems from happenings at the U.S. Federal Reserve, it is traditionally emerging markets that struggle the most with the resulting tightening in liquidity conditions. During the 2013 taper tantrum, while the U.S. promptly recovered and even delivered positive returns within a few months, emerging markets plunged into a prolonged decline. Where are many quality companies found? The United States.

Diversification across sectors

While growth typically outperforms in a slowing economy, it underperforms in a rising rate environment (vice versa for value). Growth remains historically expensive—but value is also expensive relative to its history. With these considerations in mind, market rotations across styles can occur suddenly and violently. Since it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict the timing of these shifts, investors may want to hold an appropriate amount of each, diversifying across styles.

In the period ahead, one which will likely be wrought with bouts of sharp volatility, investors would be well suited to stay invested with an eye toward factors that will not only participate in further equity market expansion but can help reduce volatility.



Local 204 Scholarship Winners

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the workforce and workplace?

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the workplace in many ways. The abrupt shutdown caused turmoil but also paved the way for a new era of working remotely. This transition may not have been seamless, but it has made certain careers much easier. Remote work has changed the way many employees work at their jobs. Most workers continue to work with the same effort they did before the pandemic, but now with the amount of technology and other sources of equipment, meeting deadlines and getting work done without interruption has improved. However, remote work is not for everyone. This entire shift in the workplace has been very challenging. Many job responsibilities cannot be completed from home, especially in professions like electrical, natural gas, nuclear, and wind power.

Along with the pandemic came a major shortage of workers. To this day, businesses are constantly looking for help because many older workers decided to retire. This action has driven the shortfall of laborers into a deeper hole. There has also been a loss of businesses entirely. Many small businesses and even large corporations were forced to close their doors. Buildings everywhere became vacant with no plan of returning.

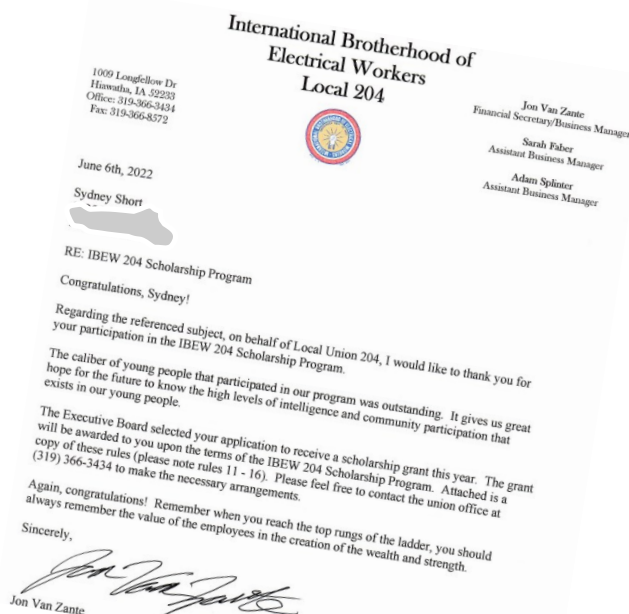
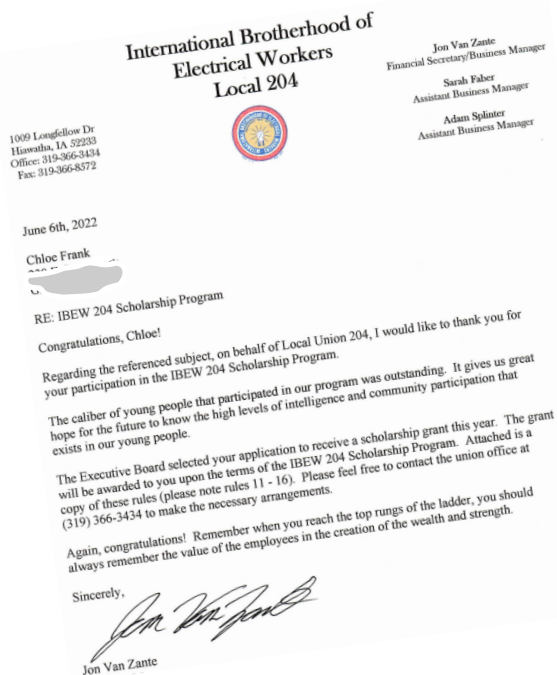
Essential workers were forced to work through the pandemic with no foreseeable future. Police officers, firefighters, healthcare personnel, utility workers, teachers, and transportation employees had to endure during an uncertain time to fulfill their job duties with little supervision. Many managers and salaried persons continue to work remotely, while their employees are required to be in-person for the labor aspect.

The COVID-19 outbreak has created countless changes in the workplace...both good and bad. Businesses continue to adjust and create a new normal for their workers and customers, and this will continue for years to come.

Submitted by Chloe Frank

Covid 19, the talk of 2020 and the talk of today. It affected every single person. The Covid-19 pandemic especially affected the workforce. 23 million people were without jobs. Looking at the trades, they were still able to work during the pandemic. Trades are workers who provide services for community members. They could be electricians, carpenters, lineworkers, or even meter readers. During the pandemic, these people had to change how they work, adjusting to meet safety needs. They may have had to wear masks or meet through Zoom instead of in-person. One example would be my dad, he now takes his Alliant van home every day and had to wear a mask. It's different for every trade, but most of them require human contact. They had to be brave and willing to put themselves at risk. Most of them never gave up and kept working all throughout the pandemic. These jobs in the trades never received a break, people require service no matter what. Workers not in the trades and still employed got options during the pandemic, some were able to work from home. Like I said, people in the trades can't. I'm not in the trades of course but my job didn't have options either. I worked in HyVee Aisles Online all through the pandemic. We were busier than ever before because people liked the safety of not having to go into the grocery store. We all had to work harder than ever, just like people in the trades had too. We couldn't alter the Aisles Online set up, our work had to be done in the store. Even though the pandemic seems to be on the mend, many companies still have their changes in place as they did before. Some still work from home, some still wear masks. The big picture is that people had to make major adjustments and still continue to do so, especially in the trades.

Congratulations to Chloe Frank & Sydney Short



VIA Benefits for Alliant Energy retirees

For whatever reason, we believe not all eligible Alliant Energy retirees are aware of Via Benefits. VIA Benefits does our Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) with Alliant Energy. Eligible Alliant Energy retirees aged 65 and older and his/her spouse receive an annual credit of \$2000.00 a year to be used for eligible medical expenses. That being the case, we want to get the word out to all Alliant Energy Local 204 retirees, so they know they have a VIA Benefit Account and are utilizing those funds. Alliant Energy doesn't believe they have a widespread problem. Our thoughts are, if we have one retiree that isn't aware of VIA Benefits, that's one too many. If you have moved or changed your phone number, make sure you notify the Alliant HR Service Center and Via Benefits with the updates. Those numbers are:

ALLIANT BENEFITS CENTER 608-458-8458
VIA Benefits 1-866-249-7784

When visiting with other retirees, ask them if they are aware of Via Benefits. Make sure to pass this information on to them as well. They may be the one that knows nothing of VIA Benefits.

The Local is now sending Tailgating quarterly. As with Alliant Energy and VIA Benefits, if you have moved or changed your phone number, you need to notify the Local with any changes. If you know someone that isn't receiving Tailgating and they wish to receive it, they can contact the hall at 319-366-3434 to get added to the mailing list.

Tailgating can also be viewed online anytime at:

www.ibew204.com

Scroll down to Member Resources on the left side.
Click on the NEWSLETTERS tab.

Happy in retirement and in Solidarity:

Tim Boyle

Gary Thompson

Local 204 Structure

IBEW Local 204

Local 204 employs four full-time positions; Business Manager/ Financial Secretary, two (2) Assistant Business Managers, and an Office Administrator. All Officer and Executive Board positions are elected positions with 3-year terms. The BM/ FS appoints both Assistant Business Managers and Office Administrator. The Executive Board is comprised of 10 seats from 9 geographical areas and an additional At-Large seat. The Officers and Executive Board, along with the ABM's, attend Monthly Executive Board Meetings. (E-Board)

STAFF

Assistant Business Manager
Assistant Business Manager
Office Administrator

Sarah Faber
Adam Splinter

OFFICERS

Business Manager/Financial Sec.
President
Vice President
Recording Secretary
Treasurer

Jon Van Zante
Dustin Stumma
Jeff Chapman
Adam Splinter
Shelia Altman

Gas Foreman / Alliant
Lineman / Alliant
Maintenance Mech. / Alliant
Corrosion Tech / Black Hills
Resource Coordinator / Alliant

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Unit 1 Keith Jones
Unit 2 Brad Rick
Unit 3 Senica Fisher
Unit 4 Tyler Fredin
Unit 5 Corey Birkel
Unit 6 Chad Hilsabeck
Unit 7 Gary Henry
Unit 8 Jeff Denz
Unit 9 Josh Eaton
At-Large Randy Brown

Sr. Gas Trainer / Alliant / Marshalltown, IA
Electrician / NextEra Energy / Palo, IA
Line Foreman / Alliant / Cedar Rapids, IA
Line Foreman / Alliant / Mason City, IA
Lineman / Alliant / Dubuque, IA
Gas Foreman / Alliant / Storm Lake, IA
Line Foreman / Alliant / Centerville, IA
Lineman / Alliant / Burlington, IA
Line Foreman / ULCS / Perry, IA
Gas Safety Blue Hat / Alliant / Lisbon, IA

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