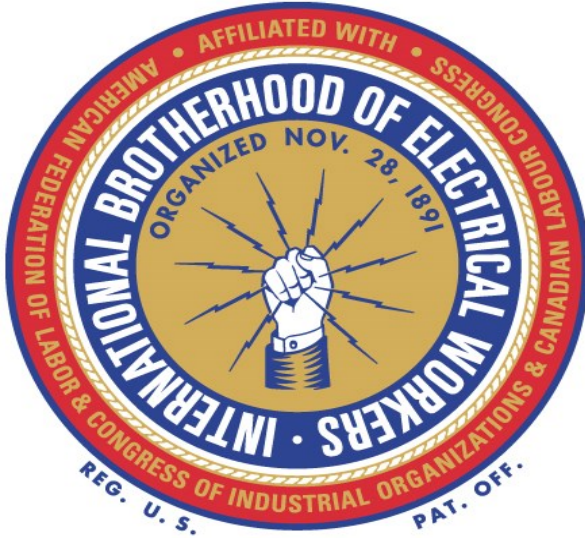


TAILGATING

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Congratulations to Randy Olson on receiving his 25 year watch! Randy is a T-Line Crew Foreman for Alliant Energy from Mason City!



Alliant Energy hosted a site certification ceremony for the Prairie View Industrial Center near Ames, Iowa on October 11th, 2019. Devin Duit (left), a Gas Foreman from Ames, and Jim Boustead (right), a Line Foreman from Ames, were invited to go to represent the workforce. They are pictured here with Gov. Kim Reynolds.

2019 Inter Union Gas Conference

I would first like to thank Local 204 and Alliant Energy for the opportunity to attend the 2019 Inter Union Gas Conference.

I would like to start with the importance of safety rules and decisions we make when we respond to any gas emergency. One individual shared a story about a fellow brother that got called to a hit gas line. The employee responded to the hit line when he got to the location someone had ran a post hole auger into a ½ inch plastic service. The gas was blowing and the individual decided to try to squeeze the line off in the same hole where the hit was. While he was trying to get the line squeezed off, he was overcome by the gas and lack of oxygen in the area that he was trying to make safe. This individual is no longer with us. I would just like to stress the importance of doing things safe. Do we need to have safety rules for everything we do? No!!! Just make sure you are making good safe decisions and you are calling and asking for help when help is needed. This was a situation that the employee thought everything would be fine but this simple job turned into a tragedy.

Contractor locating was a hot topic. Most of the people at the conference had concerns about the contractor locating companies doing a terrible job locating. A lot of damage being done due to miss locates. Some of the union locals are trying to get positions for union locators that will do a better job than what they are getting from contract locators. Only 2 people said they have union positions at the company they work for. Using the union employees for locating has stopped the missed and unsatisfactory locating and has stopped the unnecessary hits and damages to their utilities. It makes sense to me to protect your own utilities, use your own union employees to do the locating to cut down on damages and public safety concerns or accidents due to miss locates.

It was interesting to hear that some utilities are losing 50% of their gas employees to contractors after they have completed their training. I found this interesting because that is currently happening at Alliant Energy on the electric side of the business. So everyone that said this would not happen on the gas side of the business, open your eyes because it is starting to happen. One other issue I found very interesting, a lot of the utility companies are trying to shorten the length of apprenticeships hours and hands on occurrences. They are trying to cut the hours and the number of occurrences in half. This is a huge safety and training concern to a lot of IBEW locals. Is a one and a half year program enough for you to have all the knowledge you need to do your job safe and know what you are doing? As you work with your apprentices think about what quality of journeyman we would have if we shorten the apprenticeship and the hands on training they need to be safe and knowledgeable at that job.

I also got to attend a session presented by Tim Heath, Secretary of UWUA Local 273 “Merrimack Valley Disaster”. This work was done by contractors and not the employees of the utility. This took place in September of 2018, killing one young man and sending 21 more people, including two firefighters, to local hospitals. This incident (which is not the only gas explosion in Massachusetts that has caused loss of life) was a tragic and stark reminder of the importance of gas utilities to maintain the highest safety standards, including having well-trained and highly-experienced people performing all work on gas infrastructure that in any way could put public safety at risk. First-hand, in depth knowledge of actual conditions in the field is critical to ensuring public safety. The resources they needed after the explosion to get the system back to normal included 5,100 workers, 230 pipeline crews, they retired 75 miles of gas main, had to install 43 miles of new gas main, replace numerous services and they had 25,000 meters shut off. Local 273 is fighting for legislation to prevent other disasters like this from happening.

I also attended a service workshop. Some of the issues they are dealing with are the number of weeks you have to be available to work overtime. They make the employees be available for 28 weeks of overtime. This is happening due to jobs not being filled when employees leave or retire. Another growing issue this group has to deal with is pictures getting posted on social media by people of the public posting negative things about them. These individuals had on company logo shirts and were not working at the time of the pictures being taken and the company has chosen to discipline these people because they say the employees were representing the company with the logos on their shirts. So remember that you are being watched at all times.

These are just a few of the things I thought was interesting that the group did address during the conference. If you have a question about any gas issues, give me a call, because it was probably talked about during the conference. If you would like me to ask any questions, let me know and I will ask the group at next year’s conference. Once again I would like to thank everyone for the support to go to these conferences and the importance of being able to get new ideas and or try to make changes to our current process for the better of our employee’s safety and well-being. Also, it is good to share information on how we do things to help some of the other unions with the struggles they are having.

Thanks again!!

Randy Brown — IPL Gas Blue Hat

Words from your E-Board



November

The month of November brings so many important events; the end of Day Light Savings, Election Day, Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. I hope all Brothers and Sisters can look back on a fast ending 2019 and be proud of all your safe work and play hours. When you see a Veteran, be sure and give a sincere thank you for their service. Mostly, I hope everyone has a good Thanksgiving with friends and family. Safe travels to all of you to and from this holiday season. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry

Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Josh Eaton—Area 9

Alliant Energy Large Group – IES Members

As of the date of writing this article the UAW members out on strike at the GM plants have been off work for 37 days. Think about that. Each member has been off work for 37 days collecting \$250 per week from a strike fund. Could you afford to live off of \$250 per week in order to stand up for better wages, benefits and to take a stance against a company constantly eliminating jobs? It appears that a tentative agreement is on the table, but whether or not it goes out to a vote is yet to be determined.

I understand that we can't compare a utility company to a factory, and we can't compare a body of membership of 45,000 to 800. But, what we can compare ourselves to is a body of membership who are fed up and taking a stand. Two of the biggest issues we face at Alliant Energy is poor health insurance and sub-par retirement for those not on the pension. Is that worth taking a stand against?

One thing I want to make very clear is we should never look for an opportunity to strike and we should never throw it around as a weapon or use it lightly. We should never *WANT* to strike. Going out on a strike should always be a last resort when all other options have been exhausted. But, like the GM workers we should be rewarded by the Company for bailing them out in a time of need. The GM workers made concessions to help out their employer back in the 2008 recession. The Large Group – IES members did the same thing back in 2009 by agreeing to take a one week furlough to save the Company money. How did the Company show their appreciation? They forced us on a crap high deductible health insurance plan that only 50% of all employers even offer, and of which only 20% of all employers offer as their only plan. With that being said, Alliant Energy is one of only 10% of employers who offer a CDHP that still has a Health Reimbursement Account and not a Health Savings Account. That wasn't the only thing we have lost since then. We now have to interview for open positions and more often than not applicants off the street are being awarded those positions over members losing their jobs. At least we have a guaranteed 40 hour work week. Oh wait, they keep coming after that too. So, do you feel like you have been fairly treated since helping the Company through tough times? The membership shouldn't have to continue to take the blunt of the Company's poor decision making while bonuses continue to be paid out to undeserving non-bargaining unit employees and executives making millions.

With all of that being said, the time has come to start thinking about what your next steps should be and to start planning to take a stand. Taking a stand doesn't mean we have to go out on strike. Coming together as a unified front with a common goal is the first step in taking a stand. Start talking to one another and finding out what we would like to see in upcoming negotiations. Stop talking to management about what you think the Union is doing or not doing for you. And by all means, stop stabbing your brothers and sisters in the back. If we start there, maybe our voices will be heard without having to go on strike. Unlike the UAW members out on strike, we do not have a strike fund. It has always been the member's responsibility to save on their own. If you are working overtime then put that money aside. If you have money set aside for a rainy day then earmark those funds now. Start to determine what it will take to get you by if you were to go without a paycheck for an extended period of time. If you're like me and have friends who do construction, ask them if they would have room for one more person for a couple months if need be. Start planning now and have that backup plan ready.

We never want to go out on strike, and like I mentioned, should never use that word lightly. We should prepare for the possibility. We know how things have been going at Alliant Energy with the only thing consistent is their ability to be inconsistent, and with the same leadership in place making poor decisions we don't see an end in sight. Keep talking to your brothers and sisters as we prepare for 2020 negotiations and start to prepare to take a stand.

December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Union Meeting Washington	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Executive Board	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Year's Eve				

**2020 LOCAL 204
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 in Cedar Rapids. The class is **OPEN TO ALL** IBEW Local 204 Stewards and members, however space is limited.

Interested participants **MUST** make reservations to the Local 204 office at (800) 397-IBEW or (319) 366-3434.

If you have questions, please contact the Local 204 office.

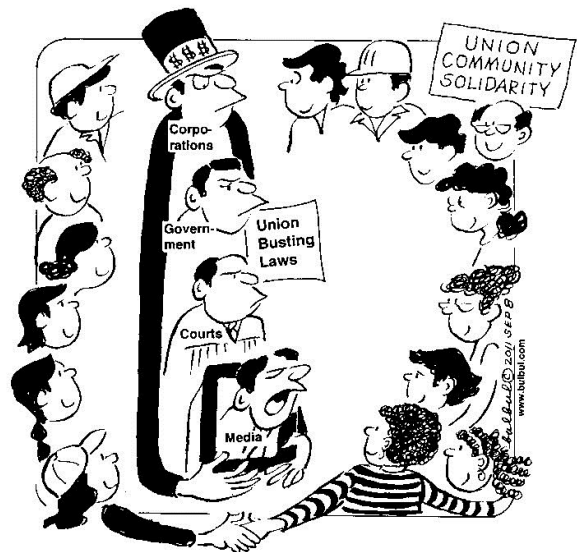
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"We don't call it cuts, we call it a service level adjustment."



Unions, now more than ever