

From Joseph Savia, Sr., Business Manager

Political Update

From the Construction Labor Report, February 11, 2009 Edition

Obama Encourages Use of Project Agreements, Revokes Bush Order

President Obama signed an executive order that encourages federal agencies to consider requiring the use of Project Labor Agreements on a project-by-project basis for large-scale, federally funded construction projects of at least \$25 million. The executive order revoke's Bush administration orders 13202 and 13208. Obama's executive order does not contain an outright mandate for PLA's for any construction project, nor does the order restrict the use of PLA's to only the projects defined in the order.

The Economy

With so much focus being on the economy and the Stimulus package, I have gathered some highlights of ***HR 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.***

The investment provisions in H.R. 1 are targeted to create jobs. Investments in infrastructure and energy will provide millions of good paying jobs and cannot be "farmed out" to other countries. Investments in schools would help with educating our children, which are the future of this country. The legislation also contains \$550 billion in strategically targeted investments and \$275 billion in targeted tax cuts which would strengthen the middle class.

The economic package includes the following investments:

- \$90 billion to modernize roads, bridges, transit, waterways and other public infrastructure
- \$54 billion to transform the nation's energy, making energy efficiency and weatherize low income homes
- \$41 billion for local school districts to modernize classrooms, labs and libraries.
- \$102 billion to assist those of us who have been damaged by the recession by supplementing unemployment benefits, provide job training, COBRA assistance, short term Medicaid coverage and an increase in food stamps.
- \$16 billion to help our economy through science and technology, which includes \$6 billion to expand internet access to rural and underserved areas.
- \$24 billion to lower healthcare costs by updating and modernizing our healthcare system.

M.EDDIE MOORE SCHOLARSHIP

Applications for the year 2008 will be accepted through June 30, 2009. In order to be considered the dependent must be eligible for medical coverage, in our Fund, to apply. For applications please call (301) 333-2356, ext 0.

Dues Check Off Update

Please remember **if you change employers, YOU need to notify the Hall.** Without our members having 100% participation we still must notify the employers of those members who have elected check off.

I also urge you to pay attention to and keep your paystubs. If a dispute arises the paystubs are the only piece of information showing that the dues were deducted. Please also remember that dues' deductions do not cover your Death Assessments.

Shirts, Jackets, Etc...

We now have some new stock of shirts and jackets, all are available for purchase. Come in before the sizes run out.

Maryland License Plates

The new License Plates are out and traveling around town. If you are interested please contact the Hall for the application, checks or money orders for \$25.00 payable to the MVA must be returned to the Hall with the application. The hall will forward the application for you.

Motorcycle plates have been delayed, we currently need 23 more applications to be eligible for the motorcycle plates. If you are interested please file an application with the hall. We will notify you when we have 23 and are submitted the request.

Substance Abuse Issues

We are still holding our Substance Abuse sessions on Thursday's in the hall at 4:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

Please note the opinions in these newsletters are those of that individual officer and not necessarily that of all of the officers

THIS 'N THAT

CONGRATULATIONS

Our Congratulations go out to 5th Year Apprentice Richard Bailey, Richard became a father of Westley K Bailey, born on 1/19/09 weighing in at 7 lbs. 8 oz., and was 18 ¼ inches long.

Congratulations to Retiree Wes Ringgold. Wes became the grandfather of Ella Marie Ringgold, born on 9/10/08 and weighed in at 5lbs. 8 oz. Congratulations also go out to Wes, his son Joshua is now a DC Firefighter.

BIG WINNER

Woody Woodall was the winner of the 50/50 raffle held at the February Union Meeting and donated his winnings to COPE.

LATEST RETIREES

Samuel R. Brown	January 1, 2009
David Edwards	February 1, 2009
Ray Mackall	January 1, 2009
Bernard L Perry	February 1, 2009
Andrew G Susa Jr.	January 1, 2009
Charles T Wamaling Jr.	February 1, 2009

SICK BAY

Simon Lazare is home recuperating after having back surgery.

**THE CURRENT DEATH IS NO. 1313. ANY MEMBER
NOT PAID THROUGH DEATH NO. 1313 IS IN ARREARS.**

From Kevin Sullivan, Business Agent

The other day, we, the officers met with the Mechanical Contractors Association to discuss a few issues; the Separation Notice being one of them. Not aware of what the Separation Notice is? Well basically it is a pink slip that is now being compiled by the Local and the MCA in an attempt to identify those that may have a problem in their work. If you have not received one you probably have not been laid off, resigned, or fired "for cause" since 2004 when this data was first compiled. The theory behind this was if an employer lays off a "bad" employee the employee returns to the hall to be sent out to the next unsuspecting employer. The employers felt that they should be truthful in discharge, firing instead of lay off if so warranted. Then there could/should be a device to track the employee having the problem, thus the beginnings of the Separation Notice. Paragraph 128 of the contract explains the notice. When one such employee is found their problem is identified, the Local Executive Board address's it, and then works to establish a plan to help turn the employee around.

Having an audience with the MCA gave us an opportunity to express our concerns in how the Separation Notice was being filled out, specifically in the information that should not be on it along with being more detailed, in reason, when you do fire someone. We also suggested that before it gets to that point of firing we hope the employee is served notice, preferably written. That notice should address the employee not meeting expectations and if thing don't change they will be let go; that's Human Resources 101.

After the meeting I became interested in looking into our journeyman's "08" firings. What I came up with was quite telling. There were 29 firings for absenteeism, 4 for insubordination, 18 for non compliance if company policy, 10 for unsatisfactory work performance, and 5 for safety violations. What that tells me is less than 3% of our journeyman workforces were fired "for cause". This is proof in print that we have a pretty damn good workforce; with only a handful of exceptions.

We cannot tell an employer how to run their company; what we do ask is this. The legal term firing for “just cause” is wide open; look it up. When you look up firings for absenteeism, insubordination, or lack of production one thing you see with all of them is, a warning of some type should have been given the employee. The employee has (10) ten days to grieve a bad firing and without supplying burden of proof an investigation will take place tying the employer and the Union up.

For those that are filling out Separation Notices, we offer a few suggestions. If the firing is for absenteeism and tardiness, the work record on the right is required to be filled out. If “Not for Rehire on all projects” is checked off we are asking, because of the severity of the punishment, that an owner representative sign it; not the job supervisor. If non compliance of company policy is checked off and it is for drugs please, because of confidentiality, write violation of Appendix B on the notice. If insubordination or violations of safety rule is checked, comments on the circumstances must be added.

As I said earlier, all in all it looks like we do perform. Keep up the good work!

Non Profit Health Care Plan HR 676, Bill Durkin, Business Rep/Organizer

After years of national debate, health care insurance remains one of the most pressing problems facing our nation. While there is a consensus that the health insurance system needs to be reformed and that every American should have coverage, there is no agreement about which plan to choose, how comprehensive it should be, how it would be operated, and what it would cost.

Most of the health care plans being publicized, including President Obama’s, accept a strong role for the private insurance industry. The one exception is the United States National Health Insurance Act, introduced in Congress by Rep. John Conyers (Dem., Mich), as HR 676, commonly referred to as “Single Payer”.

HR 676 would eliminate co payments and deductibles and other charges that provide billions of dollars in profits for the insurance industry, money that can be used for actual health care. The overhead of the insurance companies is far greater than that of government agencies, and you can be sure that the CEO’s and the top management staff are generously compensated with the money from rising premiums. They can also boost their earning by denying claims and insisting on exclusions. Let’s remember, their major concern is not our health, but their profits.

Eliminating the private insurance industry is only one of several reasons why there has been such phenomenal support for HR 676. Nearly 600 labor groups have endorsed the legislation, including 20 nations unions, 39 state federations and 119 central labor councils.

HR 676 would provide health care insurance for all Americans. It would be a blessing to the 47 million people who don’t have coverage and the additional millions of our citizens who are on the verge of losing coverage because of ever rising premiums from private insurance companies.\

HR 676 would make an expanding and improved Medicare system available to all of us, including the right to choose our own doctors, as well as offering comprehensive medical, surgical and outpatient services, plus dental care and a prescription drug plan for the young as well as for retirees.

A single public payer, the federal government, would replace the more than 1,500 private insurers that are now dealt with separately. HR 676 would create a single insurer in each state, locally controlled, but subject to stringent federal standards.

Physicians for a National Health Program estimates that a universal, quality level health care plan could be financed by a 7 percent payroll tax, a 2% income tax and current federal payments for Medicare, Medicaid and other state and federal government insurance programs. The US Government Accountability Office has estimated that savings in administrative costs would offset much of that expense.

Despite the extraordinary support given to HR 676, hardly a word about it has been mentioned in the AFL-CIO NOW Website, in the numerous stories it carries on the health care crisis. That's because the AFL-CIO President, John Sweeney and some of his colleagues on the Executive Council oppose HR 676. The Web Director, Tula Connell, abides by the long standing rule that you don't publish anything that even remotely criticizes Sweeney.

I believe there should be an open debate on health insurance at the AFL-CIO Convention in Pittsburgh, during which the supporters of HR 676 should have their say and demand a roll call vote on the issue.

SOLIDARITY

President, John P. Sullivan

In little more than two weeks from the historic inauguration of President Barack Obama, Congressional Republicans have all but parted ways with the administration on a number of issues. The first significant vote of this session was on the Stimulus Package. It passed the House with no Republican votes. A similar bill has stalled in the Senate because of Republican objections. So much for a new age of non-partisan politics.

The administration is justly fighting back by questioning the newfound religion of the GOP. Larry Summers, the head of the White House's National Economic Council, said on ABC's "This Week", "Those who presided over the last eight years -- the eight years that brought us to the point where we inherit trillions of dollars of deficit, an economy that's collapsing more rapidly than at any time in the last 50 years -- don't seem to me in a strong position to lecture about the lessons of history,"

The President went farther while speaking in Williamsburg, Virginia. "To critics who argue that the government shouldn't be spending billions with a large and growing deficit", Obama said, "I found this national debt doubled, wrapped in a big bow waiting for me as I stepped into the Oval Office."

The American people called for change in November, he said, "and that's what we're going to deliver." "They did not send us here to get bogged down with the same old delay, the same old distractions, the same talking points, the same cable chatter," he said. "They did not vote for the false theories of the past, and they didn't vote for phony arguments and petty politics, and they did not vote for the status quo." "This is not a game," he said. "This is not a contest for

who's in power and who's up and who's down." It's time, he said, to "set aside the gamesmanship in this town and get something done."

Obama told his fellow Democrats that they have "the capacity to do great things" on behalf of the American people, "but we are going to have to do it by not thinking about ourselves."

"It starts with this economic recovery plan," he said. "And soon, we will take on big issues like addressing the foreclosure problem, passing a budget, tackling our fiscal problems, fixing our financial regulation and securing our country."

The President has a tough road ahead and the partisans a setting up ambushes all along the way. It is disheartening to see the GOP continue to defend the bankers over the workers. It is more than sad to see them embrace further tax cuts while fighting a "Buy American" proposal. Good luck Mr. President, I wish you well.

WHAT'S NEW IN TRAINING

The next UA Star HVACR class will start on Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. This class will be held in the new 8513 Ardwick Ardmore Road, Landover, MD location. This new building is located at the corner of Ardwick Ardmore Road and Preston Drive. The instructor will be Greg Davis. Please call the school at (301) 341-1555 for further information and to sign up.

The next Medical Glass class will start on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at 7:00 a.m. This class will be held in the main building at 8509 Ardwick Ardmore Road, Landover, Maryland in Room 206. The instructor for this class will be Dan Glover. Please call Dan Glover at (301) 341-1555 for further information and to sign up.

FROM WAYNE'S WORLD SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Handling man power and sitting on the apprentice committee, I see alcohol and drug abuse by our members causing many problems. These problems range from absenteeism, lost productivity, increased insurance claims and most of all the hardship it puts on their family. Surveys have found that nine percent of drinkers and ten percent of drug users have all missed worked because of hangovers or still being high the next day. Many, who drink and use drugs, don't think they have a problem. However, if you have skipped work in the past month because of alcohol or drug use, you do have a problem. The following are some way to identify if you have a problem: Frequent tardiness or absenteeism, changes in mood or attitude, poor relationships with family, friends, or co-workers, flare-ups of your temper, having a poor appearance, unusual accidents because of error in judgment, being sick all of the time and borrowing money. If any of these problems apply to you, there is a problem. Treatment does works! That is why 602 now offer alcohol and drug counseling every Thursday night at the Union Hall @ 4:30 pm. With the issue of substance abuse being addressed with this program, it is a win-win situation for our members and their families. This program helps our members to find recovery and rebuild their lives. When you stop drinking and using drugs it improves your health, your job performance and your overall quality of life.