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IBEW LOCAL 343 UNION

Fourth Quarter Newsletter 2014  
October, November, December

# Groundwire

## Moving Forward

From the Business Manager...Derek Mensink

I hope all of you have had a safe and fun summer. It sure has been a busy one, and it goes by too quickly! I hope all that attended the IBEW Local 343 Picnic had a great time. It's always fun to see the membership laugh, and the kid turnout was amazing! They certainly had plenty of things to do and lots of prizes to win. It was truly an old fashioned picnic. The volunteers need a large pat on the back! Thank you so much!

The work has been plentiful this spring/summer. It also looks like it will continue to progress in a positive manner. With the work picture booming throughout the United States, we must continue to man Local 343's work. We need IBEW contractors to be confident that they will have enough labor to bid projects throughout our entire jurisdiction. They need to be assured that they can productively start and finish projects without concern. We cannot waiver from that philosophy. It is too important to our local that we maintain the lion's share of the work.

Do not forget what the IBEW stands for. I would hope that all the Brothers and Sisters truly believe in our IBEW Constitution and understand the Objects:

\*To organize all the workers in the United

States and Canada, including all those in the public utilities and electrical manufacturing, into Local Union;

- \*To promote reasonable methods of work;
- \*To cultivate feelings of friendship among those of our industry;
- \*To settle disputes between employers and employees by arbitration (if possible);
- \*To assist each other in sickness or distress;
- \*To secure employment;
- \*To reduce the hours of daily labor;
- \*To secure adequate pay for our work;
- \*To seek a higher and higher standard of living
- \*To seek security for the individual;
- \*And, by legal and proper means, to elevate the moral, intellectual, and social conditions of our members, their families, and dependents, in the interest of a higher standard of citizenship.

It is utterly important to know and promote these objects. I understand the many different opinions (positive and negative) of each bullet point. But I have no doubt that IBEW Local 343 will embrace and continue to fight and believe in all. And we will continue to grow our share of the work. If we remain committed to strive to meet these objects, we will no doubt grow this brotherhood in many different facets.



Lastly, please always feel free to contact any one of us from the office. We are here to help or assist all of you. So, if something has you or others disgruntled, please call. This is the only way we can take care of your concerns.

In Solidarity,  
Derek Mensink - Business Manager

### 2015 UNION DUES

"A" Members \$105.00/Qtr  
"BA" Members \$57.00/Qtr

DUE the 1<sup>st</sup> of EVERY  
Quarter

\$20.00 Late fee each  
month you are late

## Rochester Rep Report >>> Chad Katzung

I would like to send out a huge THANK YOU to all the volunteers that helped with the Austin High School solar project. Without you, this project would have never become a reality for the students at the school. We had 23 Volunteers put in 250 hours in 3 1/2 days. The media didn't give credit where credit was due, but without you, the IBEW, the school would have had to pay for the installation, which would have significantly reduced the size of the system. And without the IBEW's monetary donation, it would have never become a reality this year. So, **THANK YOU!** You are the meaning behind the brotherhood and the IBEW.

The Building and Trades was able to get a Project Labor Agreement signed with the City of Rochester. Some Non-Union



contractors have been trying to get the city to reverse their decision, claiming it is unfair to them. I would like to ask you to call or send a letter to the Rochester City Council, Mayor and also the City Administrator and thank them for what they have done to support and uphold wages for the City of Rochester.

I hope you had a safe & enjoyable summer!

In solidarity,  
Chad Katzung

## Political Director Report...

Greg Graif

Election season is now in full mode. I know that not all members are thrilled about this, but it is a reality that we must embrace so that we can elect people who care about our issues as a union. Our ability to negotiate good wages & benefits is tied to politics whether we like it or not. For example, Governor Dayton's opponent, Jeff Johnson, has been quoted saying that he will "go all Scott Walker on Minnesota." Under Walker's reign, Wisconsin's job creation has plummeted from 12<sup>th</sup> to 47<sup>th</sup> in the country.

This past legislative session, Minnesota passed the "no-excuse absentee voting" law. You are no longer required to give a reason for early voting. You can request your absentee ballot by going to the MN Secretary of State website [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us) Click on the "Elections Voting" tab and click on "Absentee Voting". You can fill out the application online, or you can download the application and send it back by mail, fax, scan or email. Once your application has been received and processed by the Secretary of State, you will receive your ballot in the mail. Be sure to have someone sign as your 'witness' before you put it back in the mail. The other way to vote absentee is by going to your County Election office and do it all in one step.

It took me 5 minutes when I did it for the primary election. No lines to wait in! This way, you can get it done early and not have to worry about being busy or out of town on Election Day. Also, once you vote and get one



of those calls about who you are voting for, you can say you've already voted! The calls will then stop!

I have enclosed a list of candidates that are endorsed by the IBEW Minnesota State Council & IBEW Local 343. If you would like to see a map of your voting district, you can go to the MN Secretary of State website [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us). Click on Elections & Voting at the top, then click Legislative & Congressional Maps, click on State Wide Map and click open at the bottom of your screen. You can then scroll to the area you live in and enlarge the map with the - button as much as you need. This map will show your Minnesota State House and Senate seats, as well as your US Congressional seat. Or if you call me, I'll do it for you. I know you've all heard this before, but I can't stress it enough, how important this election is in keeping Minnesota from being a "Right to Work" state. The endorsed Candidates are a recommendation. Remember, how you vote is up to you!

Thank you,  
Greg Graif, IBEW Local 343 Political Coordinator  
507-995-2800  
[greg@ibewlocal343.org](mailto:greg@ibewlocal343.org)

## Retirements:

Grant D. Hoven, Retired 6/27/14  
John G. Trapp, Retired 7/13/14  
Steven W. Feist, Retired 8/1/14  
Kenneth H. Wetzel, Retired 9/22/14

## Our Condolences:

Retired Brother Stanley G. Ennis of Owatonna, MN passed away on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Stanley had been a member since March 1955.

Retired Brother Dallas D. Doss of LaCrescent, MN passed away on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Dallas had been a member since March 1956

## If you are thinking of retiring:

NEBF Application should be completed and mailed approximately four (4) months prior to your retirement date.

IBEW Application should be completed approximately two (2) months prior to your retirement date.

Call Bonnie with any questions.

## Contact Us:

Derek Mensink, Business Manager:  
507-282-7081 x114  
Chad Katzung, Business Rep (Eastern):  
507-282-7081 x115  
Andy Kuisle, Membership/Marketing:  
507-282-7081 x113  
Shane Meier, Business Rep (Western):  
507-345-2133  
Jim Backus, Membership/Compliance:  
507-951-8267  
Andy Tofi, JATC / Apprentice Office:  
507-282-7081 x118  
Bonnie Hinkle, Pensions/Financials:  
507-2827081 x112  
Colleen Marks, Membership/Referral:  
507-282-7081 x 222



THANK YOU to our Newsletter Helpers from 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter  
(James O'Neil, Tom Huiting, Al Tupper) Many hands make light work!



### Dates to Remember:

- 10/1/14: Fourth Quarter Union Dues DUE
- 10/9/14: Union Meeting, Owatonna Eagle's Club
- 11/11/14: LU343 Offices CLOSED (Provisional)
- 11/13/14: Union Meeting, Owatonna Eagle's Club
- 11/27/14: LU343 Offices CLOSED
- 11/28/14: LU343 Offices CLOSED (Provisional)
- 12/11/14: Union Mtg/New Member Swear-In, Owatonna Eagle's Club
- 12/24/14: LU343 Offices CLOSED
- 12/25/14: LU343 Offices CLOSED
- 12/31/14: LU343 Offices CLOSED (Provisional)
- 1/1/15: LU343 Offices CLOSED
- 1/1/15: First Quarter Union Dues DUE

### REMINDER: Keep Us Informed

Please remember to notify us if any of your contact information changes. (i.e., mailing address, home phone number, cell phone number, email address)  
If you keep us updated, we can keep YOU updated!

**Save the Date!**  
**The Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, March 7, 2015 at the Owatonna Holiday Inn & Suites**  
~Stay tuned for further details~



IBEW Local 343  
9 80<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Rochester, MN 55904



### Jim Backus, Compliance Officer

Hello Brothers and Sisters!!  
It is hard to believe we are entering the fourth quarter for 2014!! Where did the summer go?? It has been very busy for me. Not only were there prevailing wage jobs that I have been (and still am) monitoring, but a lot of time spent on creating a mapping project. This map is utilizing Google Maps so it can be accessed from anywhere. We have various icons, which are different colored, that indicate union vs. non-union and varying licensing. The non-union groups are also colored differently on known vs. unknown. Everyone that assisted on this project agrees that it was a great learning process on whom and where the non-union electricians are. This is a great tool since it can be accessed via the internet from anyplace, including from a vehicle.

When you click on the icon it will indicate their address, phone number, licensing information, where they work (if we know) and one click will give us directions to their house! We also have printed maps, since we are visual creatures, which allow us to plan strategy not only in organizing but also enforcement. Our next addition to the maps will be non-union permits and job sites to see where they are working. There will always be some updating but the foundation is created. If anyone would like to see the maps, please let me know.

I also completed the initial set up of Next Level Suite (separate article). This will utilize technology to increase communications between the hall and membership. Again, remember to text

the code word **ibew343** to the number 44244. This will allow you to receive texts sent from the hall. It is vital that your information is kept current here. As indicated in the last newsletter, each of you ARE the eyes and ears of our local. Please contact me with ANY information you think may be valuable for investigative purposes. My email is [jimb@ibewlocal343.org](mailto:jimb@ibewlocal343.org) or you can call me at 507-951-8267  
In Solidarity, Jim Backus



### Mankato Rep Report...

Shane Meier

Owatonna: There have been two projects in this area that our contractors have bid, Vision Processing Technologies (which went to Four Season's Electric - non-IBEW) and Daikin/McQuay project went to Cole's Electric (non-IBEW). There are plans for a new hotel coming across from Federated Insurance in the coming months.

Mankato: Jordan Sands project is moving forward and will continue to hire guys. This project was supposed to be running in November of this year, but with setbacks, I don't see that happening until early next year. Wal-Mart Distribution project is going strong now, and I look for calls to be coming in on this project through the fall and into early next year. This project is supposed to be 1 year long, with more phases to be bid out in the next couple of months. Fleet Farm project is moving right along with more calls coming in within the next couple of weeks. This project is supposed to be done in April 2015. The parking ramp is moving along with Master Electric. And the seven-story is starting to get enclosed with BLK Electric. With both of these projects there will be some tenant build-outs coming up for bid

Morton: The casino project is



moving along. I don't see any calls coming in soon on this projects as they are caught up now. They will be starting the next phase out there soon, and we'll keep you posted on this project.

Picnic Report: Again, thank you to everyone that attended! And thank you to everyone that helped put it together. It was a beautiful day, and every member and their kids left with a prize in tote!!

Retiree Meeting: It is being held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 10a.m. at the Happy Chef located on Highway 169 North.

It has been a very busy year with the work and organizing stuff that has been going on in Local 343, which is great to see! Again, if you know of anything going on, or anybody that has questions about joining the IBEW, please give us a call. Please remember to get out and vote in the upcoming election!!

In Solidarity,  
Shane Meier

### Organizing Department Report... by Andy Kuisle

Since the last newsletter, making sure our contractors' needs for manpower have properly been met has been one of our top priorities.

This summer was unexpectedly busy, and even with the help of Brothers and Sisters from around the country, we still needed to bring in a few new members to make sure that our work was properly manned. These workers' skill levels ranged anywhere from fresh out of trade school graduates who had started working for nonunion contractors in early summer, to Licensed Master electricians who were an integral part of a nonunion company. If you get the opportunity to work alongside one of these newly organized members, please take the time to welcome them into our organization.

Recently we have entered great discussions with 3 separate shops in our jurisdiction, who are taking a very strong look at how the IBEW can work together with them to help them improve their bottom line. All three of the contractors specialize in smaller commercial work and/or residential, which we need to be doing more of in our towns and cities around the jurisdiction.

In recent discussions with nonunion workers and contractors, they have cluded to the fact that there are fewer and fewer people using staffing agencies (Tradesman Inter-



national, Trillium, Aerotck) in our areas to provide manpower to nonunion contractors. Workers in the system are not happy with the wages, benefits and working conditions. Contractors who use them for manpower are many times unhappy with the electricians they get "referred" to their company, along with a cost per hour that is usually more expensive than what it would take to hire a skilled Union worker.

The reason I say this is because of the amount of work that we have coming for the next decade (and possibly beyond), we need to make sure that if there is a good electrician working outside our ranks, we need to all do our part to make sure he/she knows the benefits of being a Union electrician. If our supply of able-bodied, skilled workers doesn't meet the demand of our contractors' labor needs, they will stop bidding, allowing nonunion to gain a strong foothold in OUR towns and cities.

In Solidarity,  
Andy Kuisle





Local 343 - Summer Picnic - August 9, 2014 - Mankato, MN



More Local 343 Happenings.....



August 14, 2014 Retiree Luncheon



Austin High School Solar Panel Install



Thank you to all the volunteers that helped on 1 or 2 or multiple days!  
Daniel Bergstrom, Scott Braaten, Bradley Diez, Jeremy Evenson, Robert Franks,  
Ray Goodew, Dean Hogstad, Robert Hutchinson, Jr., Peter Jacobs, Roger Johnson,  
Andy Kuisle, Richard Patzner, John Powrie, Randy Pyzick, Jeremy Schubert, Tom Small,  
Daniel Splett, John Swanson, Andy Toft, Larry Tri, Eric Williamson and Tom Yates



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NEXT LEVEL SUITE

After a request at the August Membership meeting we looked into increasing the capabilities of communication through email and texting. We are working with Next Level Suite (NL Suite), a Rochester based company that provides a cloud based contact management system. Cloud based means that we do not need any additional hardware at the Hall and this can be accessed from anywhere internet is accessible.

What is **VERY** important is that you keep your personal information updated at the Hall. Any address, phone, cell phone or email address change needs to be on file here. Initially anyone with an email on file here will begin receiving emails through this system. The email will indicate a sender of IBEW Local 343. PLEASE CHECK YOUR JUNK EMAIL TO MAKE SURE IT IS NOT BEING SENT THERE. If you wish to stop receiving emails from this system there is a link in the email that you can click and it will un-subscribe you.

As far as receiving texts you will need to subscribe to begin receiving them. You will need to send the text **ibew343** to the number **44244**. You will get a confirmation text back asking if you want to confirm. If you do then you type **yes**.

STANDARD TEXT RATES DO APPLY. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE UNLIMITED TEXTING THIS WILL COUNT TOWARD YOUR MONTHLY ALLOTTED TEXTING.

At any time you can opt to be removed from either of these notifications or be added to them. We are currently working on policies for use of these communication tools. Again, having current information on file is of utmost importance. If you have any questions please contact Jim at 507-951-8267 or email at [jimb@ibewlocal343.org](mailto:jimb@ibewlocal343.org).