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**REMINDER → DUES INCREASE for 2016**



**IBEW LOCAL 343 UNION** First Quarter Newsletter 2016  
January, February, March

# Groundwire

**Business Manager...Derek Mensink**  
**What is in store for your retirement?**



You are never too young to thinking about your future. Time soars by quickly and years until retirement do the same. Ten years – Twenty years – Thirty years – Forty years - all seem so like eternity for some of us. But, for many of us, we are realizing that 20 – 30 – 40 or more years comes way faster than anticipated. It also brings change to many. I would ask you to please look at the reminder of how IBEW 343 retirement pensions and annuity are set forth.

**International Pension:** Our International Pension is based on years of membership. This pension is paid from a portion of your yearly dues paid into the IBEW (International Office). With this pension you must have 20 years of membership before you are eligible to take an early pension at age 62, 63 or 64. You can retire at age 65 with less than 20 years of membership. You must maintain your membership with the IBEW to be eligible for a pension. I ask those of you that are A Members to keep that in your thoughts. If at any time you drop your membership or take an Honorary Withdrawal from the IBEW...Your years of membership have been lost. This pension pays out \$4.50 x per years of membership – per month. **Example:** \$4.50 x 40 years of membership = \$180.00 monthly pension payment.

**NEBF (National Electrical Benefit Fund):** This is the second pension fund that you will receive when you retire. The NEBF pension is funded by the 3% of hourly wage rate sent in by your contractor. It has some of the same characteristics as our IBEW Pension. The NEBF Pension has a 5 year vesting period. This pension can be accumulated of the years of work history and can change by how many hours you average over extended period of time. This pension pays out \$32 x per years of service (work history) – per month. Example: \$32 x 40 years of service = \$1,280 monthly pension.

**IBEW Annuity Plan:** This fund is the result of some forward thinking Brothers and Sisters of IBEW Local 343. As this plan started out very minimal in the beginning, it has continued to grow years after year. The monies that go into our annuity come from our negotiated wage increase. It is the membership that makes the decision during allocation

to fund this plan. The current monies that go towards annuity for a Journeyman Inside Wireman is \$5.00 per hour. The monies are sent to our administrator and put into your retirement account. Wells Fargo oversees your investment and the board of trustees oversees the options for investments through Wells Fargo. This information may seem very elementary to some of you. I also know that there can be a lot of confusion on how our retirement plans work. It is my hopes that I refreshed some of you, taught some of you and I am sure I confused some of you. I would ask that if you have any questions regarding this information to please contact myself or the hall. In solidarity,

Derek Mensink  
Business Manager IBEW 343

**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!

**Rochester Rep Report >>>**Chad Katzung

The work picture is looking fairly good for the winter. Amp Electric/Morris group will be ramping up after the first of the year on the Mayo data center. Tentatively they'll be looking for 10-15 JW's for the project. Completion for the project will be around June.

Hunt Electric has started some of their sizeable jobs they landed. They have started work on the data center in Oronoco and also the Radiology project at St Mary's hospital. The 24 story in downtown Rochester has scheduled to start demoing the existing building in Feb.

We are also in the process of working on Prevailing wage surveys for the Federal government. I ask each of our members to talk with their contractor and let them know how important it is to get the information to us, so we can get the survey submitted on their behalf.

I wish everyone a Happy New Year!  
In solidarity  
Chad Katzung



**Unemployment!**  
If you are drawing unemployment, you must be on our books to indicate you are actively seeking work. The unemployment office does do random audits.

**Sparky Fishing Opener**  
**Saturday, June 11, 2016**  
**8 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
**Contact Chris Hellet (507-251-3569) or John Powrie (507-259-5413) to volunteer or for more information**

**\*2016 UNION DUES\***  
"A" Members \$108.00/Qtr  
"BA" Members \$60.00/Qtr  
**DUE the 1<sup>st</sup> of EVERY Quarter (Jan. 1, Apr. 1, Jul. 1, Oct. 1)**  
**\$20.00 Late fee each month you are late**  
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**2015 UNION DUES**  
"A" Members \$105.00/Qtr  
"BA" Members \$57.00/Qtr

**Our Condolences:**  
Retired Bro. **Arnold L. Loesch** – St. Cloud, MN – Retired – passed away 7/17/15. Arnold had been a member since April 1955  
Brother **Bruce G. Moe** – Nederland, TX – passed away mid-Nov. 2015. Bruce had been a member since December 1990  
Brother **Brian R. Rosa** – Marshall, MN – passed away 12/18/15. Brian had been a member since June 1996

Retired Brother **Ronald A. Fuerstneau** – Plainview, MN - passed away 12/20/15. Ronald had been a member since March 1970

**Retirements/Disability:**  
Timothy J. Winkels – 10/25/15  
Michael L. Kaiser – 10/30/15  
Douglas R. Wood – 10/30/15  
Larry H. Bergeson – 11/30/15

**Mankato Rep Report...**Shane Meier



Owatonna, Mankato & Western Areas:  
I would like to thank all of the members in IBEW LOCAL 343 for making 2015 a GREAT YEAR.... The bidding has slowed down in the last 2 months, but we have a couple of bigger projects on-going which calls will be coming in sporadically over the next couple of months. We have a couple projects out in Western Minnesota that will need some manpower and it will be at the Inside Rate, still waiting to hear on a lot of the Solar Projects coming into Southern Minnesota; along with Calpine Expansion in Mankato. We are currently in the process of looking to possibly buy our own building over in the Mankato Area which is very exciting... We will keep the membership informed on that process!! We just had our Building & Trades luncheon over in the Mankato Area with Local Officials and it went very well, and they are starting to see the benefits again of Apprenticeships and what we have to offer. Again if you know of projects going on or someone interested in joining the IBEW please have them get in touch with one of us. I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year and looking forward to another great year, and look forward to seeing everyone at the Awards Banquet in April in Mankato.  
In Solidarity,  
Shane Meier

**Reminder, if you would like to receive informational texts from the hall please 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.**



## Contact Us:

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

## Organizing Department Report...

by Andy Kuisle

Brothers and Sisters,  
Since the last newsletter we have focused our organizing efforts into preparing for the 2016 construction year and all of the work that it hopefully brings to our jurisdiction. Since early November we have been working with the state license list to target many unrepresented workers via internet advertising in order to put ourselves in front of their eyes in 2016 so that we continue to stay in the minds of the nonunion workers as well as nonunion contractors while they are at their computer on the internet. We will also continue to house call, jobsite visit, and contractor visit in 2016, but add internet advertising to our list of tactics to strengthen our IBEW brand recognition and hopefully drive more people to our website to find out hard facts about the local instead of just listening to the rumors of their nonunion boss and coworkers and corporate driven news media.

There has also been a campaign we have kicked off in deep southeast Minnesota with a good size company which will hopefully result in a new signatory contractor in the upcoming 2016. It is still in the beginning stages, so we will keep you all informed as the campaign progresses in upcoming newsletters and membership meeting reports. As always, I urge you, the membership to be vocal in your communities about being an IBEW member. The more we all talk about the benefits a union provides us, the less stigmatism there will be within the unrepresented sector of our electrical industry. As we all know, we are just normal people raising families and helping support our communities and local economies in search of a better standard of living than what the "Open/Merit" electrical contractor can provide, and we need to make sure that the unrepresented workers of our industry know what else is out there. Our future depends on it.

In Solidarity  
Andy Kuisle



## Compliance Officer Report... Jim Backus

Brothers and Sisters,

Hope this newsletter brings health and happiness as we begin a new year.

You have heard us discuss the Fair Contracting Foundation (FCF) at various times. I would like to explain who they are and what they do. They have been in existence for approximately five years now and are based in St. Paul. FCF is very active as they work with all of the Building and Construction Trades in Minnesota. The mission statement for FCF is to "promote prevailing wage law education, compliance and enforcement. It advocates for practices, policies and laws that ensure fair government contracts, a strong local industry and protection of the public interest."

Local 343 works closely with FCF. Currently they obtain a majority of the certified payroll reports for us to review. If we do find a violation they are willing to work with us on filing complaints on the contractor. If we find violations and file complaints, we will share that information with them also. FCF also holds monthly meetings that we attend. These meetings are held to discuss upcoming job lists (both prevailing wage and not), specific non-signatory contractor issues, discussion of various laws and also allows networking with various other trades.

The Fair Contracting Foundation is also a great educational and informational resource. They will provide specific training sessions on topics that we may request. These sessions can be provided to both the worker and contractor. I have attended FCF seminars and have also utilized them to clarify certain state statutes. They have been a great partner in compliance and enforcement. For more information, please see their webpage at <http://fcfmn.org>.

If anyone has any questions or has any information for me regarding violations, please contact me at [jimb@ibewlocal343.org](mailto:jimb@ibewlocal343.org) or 507-951-8267.

In Solidarity,  
Jim Backus

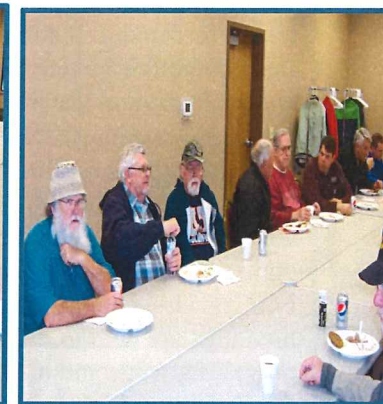
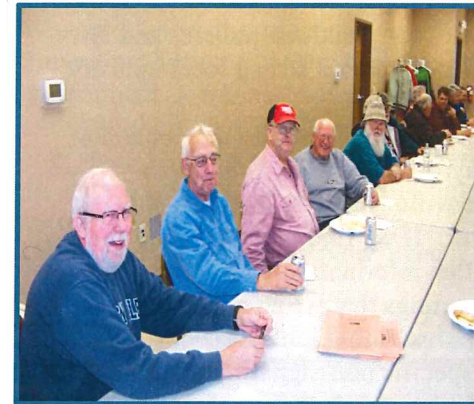


## MEETING NOTICE:

The March 10, 2016 General Membership Meeting will be held in Rochester at the 343 Hall at 7 p.m. Food and beverages will be provided, starting at 5 p.m. Come on out and see what's happening in YOUR local (and catch up with some old friends)!

## Dates to Remember:

01/01/16: LU 343 Offices CLOSED  
01/01/16: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Union Dues DUE  
01/14/16: Union Meeting, Owatonna Eagle's Club  
02/11/16: Union Meeting, Owatonna Eagle's Club  
03/10/16: Union Meeting/New Member Swear-In, Local 343 Hall, Rochester  
03/24/16: RSVP Deadline for Awards Banquet  
04/1/16: 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Union Dues DUE  
04/2/16: 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Banquet, Verizon Wireless Center, Mankato, MN



The Retiree Luncheon was held at the Rochester Hall on 12/10/15. About 20 retirees came and enjoyed lunch & fun conversation!



4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2015 Newsletter Helpers  
Tom Huiting, Bonnie Hinkle, John Guyse, Rob Kochie



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