

# SPARKIE SENTINEL

## IBEW LOCAL #159

### DECEMBER 2017

#### *Business Manager, Michael Grassy*

#### **Conference**

The Electrical Workers Minority Caucus, or EWMC, meets every January to promote equal opportunity and employment, cultivate leadership skills and give back to the local community. Next year's conference starts January 10, 2018 with the EWMC/RENEW young workers conference. The conference will be held January 10-14, 2018 in Detroit, Michigan. At the November membership meeting, the RENEW committee made a request to send 10 delegates, which was approved. Those interested in attending the conference, please contact the office at [office@ibew159.org](mailto:office@ibew159.org) by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Delegates approved will be notified by December 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Business Agent Change**

When I came into office, I brought in a previous Business Manager, Mark Hoffman, to assist with the office transition and to oversee the responsibilities related to internal organizing and outreach. Mark's years of experience working for Local 159 proved a valuable asset to us all through the transition of leadership, negotiations and assisting with getting operations back on track. I thank him for his efforts and dedication to our membership. His desire to serve the membership has not changed. Last month I decided that our direction with respect to internal organization needed to change. I replaced Mark with Maggie Freespirit. Maggie's willingness to help, positive personality, and experience with both serving our membership as well as our outreach activities will prove to be a great benefit to all of us. I would like to both thank both Mark for his service as well as welcome Maggie.

#### **Pension Education Seminar**

We have scheduled representatives from Prudential to hold a pension education seminar on Thursday, March 29, 2018. Mark your calendars. We will send invitations to all participants as the date grows closer.

#### **December Meeting**

Please remember that at the December membership meeting, we will have our annual pin ceremony as well as a holiday meal. I look forward to seeing everyone then.

## **Pre-meeting Classes**

The topic of possibly having 1-hour mini classes directly before memberships meetings has been discussed over the last year and at last month's membership meeting. The general suggestion is to hold a series of 1-hour classes at the labor temple before each month's membership meeting. These classes could be set up to provide 1 CEU if administered correctly. Many members have expressed interest in attending such classes, however, there has not been much interest in developing the classes. We need individuals who are willing to develop and present these classes. We also would need to submit these classes for approval for recognized CEUs. Anyone willing to help, please contact the office in order to get this process started.

## **Steward Class**

We are in the process of scheduling a steward class. Those interested should let us know at [office@ibew159.org](mailto:office@ibew159.org).

## ***Casey Healy, Organizers Report***

Thanks to everyone that helped out this year with the prep work and installation of the Fantasy in Lights. Some new displays were added again this year. The dancing trees were moved out into the soccer field along with some deer and candy canes. Take your family and friends to see and enjoy the fabulous holiday light display located at Olin Park. Happy Holiday to all.

"REGISTERED LICENSE" if you are working under this license (excluding apprentices) you need to take 24 CEU's (continuing education units or credits) before your 1 year license expires. We do offer classes at the hall with CEU's that are free. Go to our home page [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org) and click on member resources and then click on class offerings. You will see a list of classes that are offered. A reminder for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> year CW's, you should take and complete OSHA 10, First Aid/CPR and our 8 hour conduit bending class ASAP. Call the apprenticeship office and register for classes (608) 221-3321.

If you know of anybody that is interested in getting into the apprenticeship program they need to have their application completed by 12-14-17. They also need their high school transcripts to show they graduated or have a (GED). They need one full year of high school math, minimum Algebra or higher with a grade of C or better. They must be 18 years of age before the time of assignment. They can fill out an application at IBEW Local 159 office M-F between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM. If you know of a person that is already an Electrician or a VDV Technician and they want to join the union or is just looking for information about the trade have them contact me at [chealy@ibew159.org](mailto:chealy@ibew159.org) or call me at the office at 608-255-2989.

United we stand. Divided we fall.

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***Referral Agent, Kevin Buntrock***

**608-255-2989 EXT. 114- Cell: 608-334-6224**

Greeting from the Referral desk, the work outlook is still looking good going into 2018.

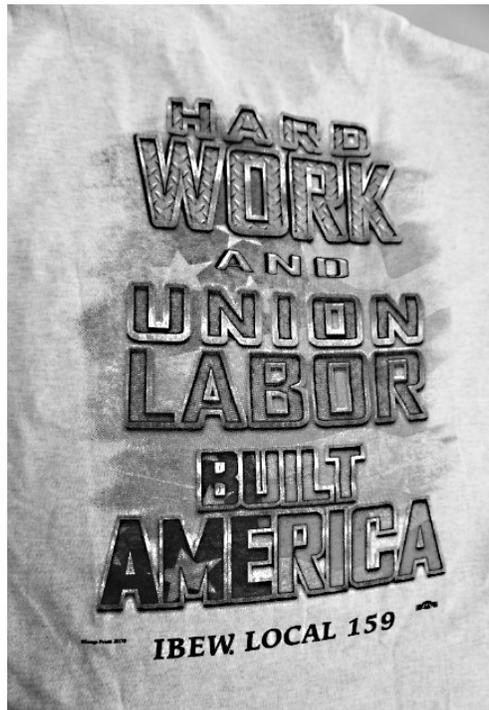
Fantasy In Lights (FIL) is up and running, make sure you drive thru with your family and tell all your friends about the lights.

FIL is a big event that Local 159 puts on for our community, just drive thru some Friday or Saturday night to see all the cars enjoying the lights with their kids. I would like to thank folks for their help with FIL, all the apprentices, office staff, retirees and members who helped. THANK YOU!

***Maggie Freespirit, Business Agent***

Stop in and see our new shirt designs! This design is available in long sleeve t-shirts with a pocket and as a hoodie. The t-shirts are gray, navy blue, hi-vis, and black. The sweatshirts come in navy blue and black. The sizes we currently have are: S, M, L, XL, and XXL.

We still have short sleeve shirts and hoodies in other designs – stop in and check them out. Short sleeve t-shirts are still just \$15.00, long sleeve t-shirts \$25.00 and hoodies \$40.00.





## ***Retirees Club, Jim Virnig***

Our November luncheon was at Toby's. We had a good turnout with 33 members. It was good to see some new faces.

The door prize winners were: Carmen Howe, Joe Hudzinski, Lee Lemens, Don Boe, Roy Holm, Mike Stassi, Bob Quackenboss, Dave Krey, Don Small and Dennis McGinley.

Our December luncheon will be at the **5100 Club**, 5100 Erling Ave, McFarland, WI  
December 11, 2017 Social hour 11:00 a.m. Lunch at 12:00 p.m.  
Email [office@ibew159.org](mailto:office@ibew159.org) or call 608-255-2989 to reserve a seat.

Hope to see you there!

## ***Mark Hoffmann, Former Business Agent***

As I leave the office I want to say what an honor and pleasure it has been to serve the members of IBEW Local 159 again and I thank Mike Grassy for giving me that opportunity. I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and hope that 2018 is prosperous for all in the Local 159.

### **Pension Report**

Core Balanced Fund Earnings	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2017	+ 2.7%
Year to Date 2017	+ 8.9%
Last 12 Months	+ 11.5%

The Pension Trust Committee has decided to add another fund to our self-directed menu. We are adding William Blair International Leaders Fund Class I Shares (WILIX), so look for this addition very soon.

## ***David Boetcher, President***

### **WHAT DOES TAX REFORM MEAN FOR US?**

Recently, during a lunch discussion at work, one of our members asked me if prevailing wage had been completely repealed. I was a bit stunned that the member hadn't heard about it given it was in almost every article on the State Budget when it was finally passed. The budget had a date of September 1, 2018 for when it would be repealed but Walker vetoed the effective date so prevailing wage was eliminated on the date the Budget was signed.

Our Legislative Committee just met for the first time in several years this past week. We felt it was important to focus on a couple of issues. One is trying to get more members to run for their local school boards, city councils, village boards, etc. We will work on identifying places where our members can run and be successful as these types of positions are the ones that decide construction projects and the contractors that are hired. The second issue, has to do with what was mentioned in the first paragraph. Because some of us see or read something we assume everyone knows it. We need to do more to get important information out to all of our members. We can't just reach out at election time and assume members will vote and vote in a way that economically helps us all. We will try to have an article in each newsletter talking about the issues that impact us. This article will talk about the proposed tax cuts.

As the State and Federal Government consider sweeping changes to current tax law it is important to take a look at what is being proposed and how it will affect us. So far, there are no concrete details but at least on the federal level there are some general ideas the Republican majorities in the Senate and House have put out. As such, you may want to consider the effects of some of those changes.

One change being mentioned by the Senate, House and President is ending many tax deductions for individuals. The proposal would end the tax deduction for union dues. You would no longer be able to claim your working dues and counter dues as a deduction. You would no longer be able to claim tools or clothing used for work. You may want to pay your counter dues (and consider paying for a year) before December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year, so you can claim them now in case the change takes effect next year. Also, consider any tool or clothing purchases you may want to make before the first of the year to maximize your tax deduction as you may not be able to claim them next year.

Many of us also claim mileage to and from work. Depending on your individual situation, that may be a deduction you can claim. That said, even if you get it this year if the republican tax plan passes, you will not be able to claim it in the future.

A well-publicized possible part of the tax cut plan is to cut back the amount you can put in a 401K plan that would be tax exempt. It is unclear how it would affect our plan which is a 401(b). Since multi-employer plans are not very common, the press has not covered this aspect of the proposed cut back on 401(k) contributions. We will have to keep a close eye on how this could limit our current 25% retirement contribution and whether we would have to lower it. With the proposed reductions in Medicare and Social Security that have also been discussed in this bill, we all need to carefully consider our retirement package to ensure that we can have a comfortable retirement.

As the Washington Post reported on November 8<sup>th</sup>, "Nine percent of middle-class tax filers (those earning between \$48,600 and \$86,100) would pay more in taxes next year, according to an [analysis](#) by the non-partisan Tax Policy Center released Wednesday. By 2027, 31 percent of middle-class filers would see tax hikes, the center said." Most of us fall into this category.

We hope you will share this information with your fellow workers and families. The best way we can help make politics work for us, instead of against us, is to keep informed. Our vote and voice are only as good as the information they work with.

In future articles we would like to help members get the information they want and need on politics, the law and what our politicians are doing. As such, we ask if you have a question or have an issue you want more information on please send it to [president@ibew159.org](mailto:president@ibew159.org) and we will look into it. Our intention is to help the membership be better informed. If you are wondering if something is true or what the real story is, probably many of your fellow members are too. So please send in the questions, we will provide the research and information on the issues you want to know about (with links and sources so you can see it yourself).

## Save the Dates

### Ed.Comm Banquet

Thursday, January 25, 2018

5100 Club, 5100 Erling Ave, McFarland, WI 53558

### Snowmobile Trip – February 24, 2018

### Polar Plunge – February 17, 2018

### Prudential Pension Seminar

March 29, 2018

5:00 p.m. Local 159 Hall



### December Retiree Birthdays

VERNON	MOE	December	1	THOMAS	JUNCK	December	16
DELBERT	STEINER	December	1	CHARLES	LITTLE	December	17
GERHARD	ELLERKAMP	December	4	THOMAS	CORCORAN	December	18
NORMAN	STAMM	December	7	TIMOTHY	COGER	December	18
MARK	SCHOENEMANN	December	9	BERNARD	FORTMAN	December	19
ROBERT	SALZMAN	December	11	DAVID	CONRAD	December	21
WILLIAM	BATES	December	12	STEVEN	PORTER	December	21
DAVID	BALTES	December	12	DANIEL	TESSMAN	December	22
JOSEPH	STRENGER	December	13	DAVID	ROBERTS	December	23
WARREN	TRAGER	December	14	DOUGLAS	KUTZ	December	25
THOMAS	DUREN	December	14	DONALD	STRASSMAN	December	25
MARY	VOLKMAN	December	15	CARL	POTTER	December	26

## **Bookkeeper's Report, Ammu**

All instructors need to fill out a wage request form, which is available in the classroom (Plexiglass holder) next to the computer monitors. Fill this out after the class and leave in the Plexiglass holder.

Now, to wrap up the calendar year 2017, I will be preparing W2s at the beginning of January for anyone that received a paycheck from the local during the year. Please make sure you did W-4 paper work for local. Reminder: your employer must get your W2 to you before January 31<sup>st</sup>.

As always, if you have questions or concerns about the financials of the Local, please contact us at the office, so we may address them directly.



*Ammu Kuricheti*

[akuricheti@ibew159.org](mailto:akuricheti@ibew159.org)



Education Corner

## **State Licensing**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters, the holiday season is upon us again.

I have recently spoken to a few people who don't yet realize how the State Licensing works. Electrical Inspectors are now checking for State Licenses. If you don't have one, then you and your contractor can be fined. Once you get a license, you will need to take so many hours of Continuing Education Credits to renew your license. If you don't renew on time there is a short grace period during which you pay a late fee and then you can renew your license. If you go past the grace period, you will lose your license and must retest. Also, you will not be allowed to work in the electrical trade for two years. If you have any questions about licensing, please contact the Hall for more information.

A thank you goes out to everyone who has taken courses this year. Our instructors are working very hard putting on good trainings for us. If you see an Instructor thank them for all they do.

**Happy Holidays to everyone. Have a safe and happy season.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Jeremy Crabb**

**Members in Arrears** as of November 28<sup>th</sup>

ACKER	TROY	HILGERS	RAYMOND	RIOS	ANGEL
ADAMS	COLLIN	HILTBRAND	JESSE	ROGERS	ZACHARY
ADAMS	PETER	HOWARD	RODNEY	SCHONENBERGER	JACOB
BEYER	BRIAN	KERR	PAUL	SEE	TANNER
BUCKBEE	JOHNNY	KLADE	MICHAEL	SELJE	RYAN
CUAHUEY	DANIEL	KOCLANES	AARON	SEVERSON	PETER
DELORIMIER	BRYAN	KUQO	FATOS	SHELTON	RYAN
DIETZMAN	JENA	MAAHS	DONALD	STORKSON	MATTHEW
DOBSON	COREY	MORRIS	DALE	TILLEMA	JOSHUA
DREW	BOJESSE	NELSON	JASON	WARD	DEREK
GIBSON	KERRY	NEUBERGER	BRANDON	WARD	KEVIN
GOINES	LEVI	OHLIN	BRADY	WARD	SHANE
HARMES	GRANT	PLASS	GREGORY	WESTPHAL	FRITZ
HATZINGER	GREGORY	RICHTER	JUSTIN	ZIEGLER	MICHAEL
HEIDER	SHINAR			ZWEIFEL	KRISTINE

## **Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) Conference January 10 – 14, 2018 Detroit, MI**

Brothers and Sisters of Local 159,

This year we are looking to attend the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) Conference from January 10th-14th in Detroit, MI. We currently have a motion that passed at the membership meeting on November 9th that will allow us to send up to 10 delegates to this conference. We will be driving there as a group from the hall. This conference will be open to all members and anyone interested can call the hall at 608-255-2989. Any interested member should go to [www.ibew-ewmc.com](http://www.ibew-ewmc.com) for any more specific information you wish to obtain. Deadline for signing up is Noon, December 15<sup>th</sup>. The delegates will be notified December 18<sup>th</sup>.

Our goal will be to start a EWMC charter here in our Local. By going to Detroit and working with other Local's leaders it will help us obtain a road map on starting a successful EWMC. The conference itself will be structured to hit many points on what it means to be a minority worker in the trades and workshops to help solve problems that face some of our members currently. January 10th is scheduled as a RENEW/EWMC day to ignite young workers with the topics the conference will cover and help inform the next generation of the issues that will need to be tackled. January 11th will start off with a "Day of Giving", which is a day that the members of the conference go out into the community and help those in need. Some of the examples range

from electrical work to food bank sorting and many more. Then the following days will be filled with workshops and speakers that will focus on the issues of minorities within the IBEW encompassing all branches of the trades that are represented by the IBEW (Construction, Utility, Manufacturing, Telecommunications, Government and Railroad).

We want to send a strong team to this conference that will take what they have learned and apply it to Local 159. Everyone deserves a voice and we want to give our members the avenue to make it be heard. If learning about these issues and solutions interests you, please call the local office or send an email to [renew@ibew159.org](mailto:renew@ibew159.org). All we need are interested members willing to apply what they've learned to make this successful. We're looking forward to finding those members.



#### Brothers and Sisters of Local 159

RENEW159 is continuously growing and very exponentially over the last few months. We have proportionally taken on more tasks as well. Our focus currently has been sustaining our current events while getting more into our community outreach aspect. Here is a quick summary of the events we currently have in the works....

**-Coat and Clothing Drive:** Please take your gently used (and clean, please) clothing and coats to the hall to be donated. We are looking to send what we have to either the hurricane victims or a local charity, or both if we get enough donations.

**-Second Harvest Volunteering:** RENEW159 will be going to Second Harvest Food Bank on January 20th or 27th to help sort from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. If you would like to join us please contact a member of RENEW159. Don't know anyone on the committee; no problem, email [renew@ibew159.org](mailto:renew@ibew159.org) and we will get you all necessary information.

**-1st RENEW159 Snowmobile Trip:** We are organizing a ride and will meet on February 24<sup>th</sup> at the Carter, WI Casino. We were able to secure a package deal for anyone interested in going. The Package is called the **Carter Club Hotel Package**, which gives two people a one night stay for \$110 and two \$40 Potawatomi Play Certificates. Making reservations is up to you the member, but make sure to mention the package deal. IBEW Local 388 may have members joining us as well. Trails and snowmobile rentals are nearby, or just come and hang out at the casino.

**-Polar Plunge:** February 17th is the date that we once again jump into just above freezing waters for charity. All the money raised goes to the Special Olympics. If you would like to join us raising money this year let us know. You are not required to jump.

**-EWMC Conference:** Last meeting RENEW159 brought to the floor to send 10 delegates to the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus Conference in January in Detroit. There was more interest

than we anticipated and the 10 delegate spots were opened for anyone to attend. If you are interested please refer to the article for the conference specifically.

More information will be posted on Facebook and fliers will be made to be brought to jobsites willing to hang them or pass them out. I hope everyone has a nice time spending Thanksgiving with their families....or in the deer stand dodging the family. Ha.

Our meetings are at 4:30 p.m., one hour before the membership meeting, on the second Thursday of the month in the back of the room that the membership meeting is held. We look forward to meeting more members looking to get involved.

In Brotherhood,

Cam Knuteson

RENEW159 Chairman

**For immediate release.**

Who?

IBEW 159

What?

Volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank

Where?

2802 Dairy Drive, Madison, WI 53718

When?

Saturday, January 27th. 9-11:30 a.m.

Why?

Volunteers are absolutely critical to support efforts to end hunger in southwestern Wisconsin. Give your time to Second Harvest Food Bank on Saturday, January 27th from 9-11:30 a.m. We will be getting food and other products ready for distribution to partner agencies – food pantries, shelters, meal sites, etc. Tasks may include sorting, labeling, packaging food to family-friendly portions, and cleaning the work area following the project.

All new volunteers will be asked to complete a Photo Release Form which can be filled out before the event begins.

Please Remember:

Closed-toe shoes are a must!

Food or drink should not be consumed in the warehouse, though a break room is available for your use.

No tobacco use is permitted in the warehouse. Please do not bring in purses, bags, backpacks, valuables, etc., as we there is not a secure place to store them.

To RSVP, email [renew@ibew159.org](mailto:renew@ibew159.org)



And Graduations to the new  
apprentices!



Happy Holidays to all

# IBEW LOCAL 159

4903 Commerce Court  
McFarland, WI 53558



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Find breaking news & information at the Local 159 Facebook page

[facebook.com/IBEWLocal159](https://facebook.com/IBEWLocal159)

## Contacts

Local 159 Office	(608) 255-2989, <a href="mailto:office@ibew159.org">office@ibew159.org</a>
Apprenticeship Office	(608) 221-3321, <a href="http://wijatc.org">wijatc.org</a>
Dept. of Safety & Prof Services (licensing)	(608) 266-2112, <a href="http://dsps.wi.gov">dsps.wi.gov</a>
WEEBF, Health Insurance & Benefits	(608) 276-9111, <a href="http://weebf.org">weebf.org</a>
(Wisconsin Electrical Employees Benefits Fund)	or (800) 422-2128

**Office open late, First Wednesday of every month, until 7:00 p.m.**

**Women's Meeting, First Wednesday of every month, Union Hall at 4:30 p.m.**

**Retirement Luncheon, Second Monday of every month at 11:30, location varies.**

**Union Meeting, Second Thursday of every month, Madison Labor Temple, 5:30 p.m.**

**Renew Meeting, Second Thursday of every month, Madison Labor Temple at 4:30 p.m.**

**Executive Meeting – Fourth Monday of every month, Union Hall at 4:30 p.m.**