



Official Publication of Local Union #347

~ Business Manager's Report ~

Sisters and Brothers,

A lot has happened since you received the April newsletter. New restrictions placed on gatherings have had a significant impact across the country for IBEW and our own Local Union. Our April General Membership Meeting had to be cancelled, as well as nearly every other meeting that could not be adjusted to an online platform. I have no knowledge of this having happened before in our history here at Local 347.

I am currently planning to cancel our May General Membership Meeting as well, seeing no significant lift on restrictions at the time of writing this. If this ends up being the case, all Des Moines Inside members will be notified in writing of your opportunity to participate in the **June 1, 2020 allocation**. The notice will include relevant historical information, guidance from health and pension trustees as well as instructions on how to participate in the allocation.

Many clarifications have come out on the IBEW/NECA National Disease Emergency Response Agreement (NDERA). This Agreement is in full force and effect between our Local Union and NECA chapter as well as most others across the country. It details the requirements of both parties to ensure a safe and timely response to the pandemic. It addresses concerns specifically related to exposure on jobsites, layoffs, furloughs, callback rights and unemployment. If you need any clarifications on your specific situation, please give us a call prior to taking any significant measures on your own, so long as doing so does not jeopardize your safety.

For covered employers of less than 500 employees, the FFCRA provides for two weeks (up to 80 hours total) of paid sick leave under specific conditions. This includes wages at the regular rate, NEBF (where applicable) and health contributions. If you are quarantined due to a federal, state, local government mandate or advised by a health care provider to quarantine or if you believe that you are experiencing symptoms while seeking medical treatment, you may qualify for this benefit. You do need to notify your employer if you believe that you qualify under the Act for this benefit. Additionally, 2/3 rate of pay applies to two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave because the employee is unable to work due to a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine, to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Also, an additional 10 weeks of leave applies when an employee is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or childcare provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

Iowa Workforce Development has made a change that may be significant to many of you. As of March 30, the requirement to use paid leave prior to receiving unemployment benefits has changed. Employees can use their leave if they wish to be paid a full wage, but this is no longer a requirement by Iowa Workforce Development.

The Local 347 Retirement and 401k Plan has been amended to reflect some provisions of the CARES Act. The most predominant change being that there will be a special distribution due to COVID-19 made available under certain circumstances. In addition, if you are over age 70-1/2 and have been receiving required minimum distributions, you can now opt out of those for the year. Watch your mail for these important notifications from the Plan.

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