

# Local Lodge 1529 Newsletter

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[www.iam1529.org](http://www.iam1529.org)

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## A Message to all Brothers and Sisters of LL1529 from Bruce Hodges

I want to start my first monthly column by thanking everyone for the outstanding turnout we had for the December election. On a percentage basis it was the best turnout for an election in many years, and it shows everyone that the members of this local are interested and engaged as we enter into a contract year. Likewise, it was great to see the large number of members running for offices. For those of you who were successful, congratulations! For those of you who were not, thank you for trying to be a part of the process, and I strongly urge all of you to participate in future elections.

I want to thank my predecessor Randy Birdsall for his years of service to this Local. Randy assumed the Presidency at a difficult time in our local's history, upon the death of one of its most popular Presidents, Geno Campagna. Geno's shoes were tough to fill. It's easy for me or anyone else to 'armchair quarterback' the job of the President of this local, but we have no idea what went on behind closed doors that resolved issues and saved jobs here in Sidney. Likewise, I want to thank Chris Cornish for his years of service as our Vice President, ably filling in for Randy during his absences. They are both good union men. It's much easier to stand on the sidelines and complain, but they took the quantum leap and got involved. I hope both of them continue to be active union members. Thank you Randy and Chris, for all your hard work.

On a personal note I want to thank everyone who supported me in my bid to become your President. I appreciate this opportunity to represent you through the many challenges that lie ahead. Will I have an answer to every question? No I sure won't, but I'll get an answer and get back to you as promptly as I can. Will you like every answer you get? No you sure won't. Everyone always wants to hear they are right, and unfortunately that's not always the case. While we have endeavored to tighten up the contract language for many years, there are still areas where we and the company differ in interpretation. And then, there are those individuals who like to make up their own rules as they go along. This is where the waters 'get muddy' and its difficult to come up with an instant resolution.

One of the main complaints I heard leading up to the election was the lack of communications from this local's leaders to its membership, something I will be addressing several ways, starting with this monthly column in the newsletter. But mostly I'll be addressing this concern by being out on the floor and talking to you, the members. People really want to express their concerns about issues with their union leadership on a regular basis, and I will make every attempt to be available for them to do so. While this position has traditionally been a 1st. shift function, union matters don't end at 3:30pm. Having spent all but one week of my 30 and a half year career on 2nd shift, I'm keenly aware of concerns that 2nd and 3rd shift don't see their union leadership enough. That will change immediately. While I won't be working a split shift on a daily basis I will be doing so several times a month so that I can see all our members on 2nd and 3rd shift regularly.

I'm pleased to report our Communicator and Webmaster John Murray has, after a long hiatus, got our website back on line at [www.iam1529.org](http://www.iam1529.org), to help further increase communications with our members. Please check out our site and come back from time to time for updates as we expand its content. Very soon our Educator Jim Dalton, and others, will be conducting classes to better inform our Stewards on procedures and the upcoming contract negotiations so they can better serve and inform our membership on issue pertaining to them.

2010 will be a tough year for our Local as we struggle out of the worst economic recession since the 1930's. We often seem to be one of the last industries to feel the impact of a recession, and one of the last to recover. Hopefully 2010 will see an upturn in employment and many of our brothers and sisters out on the street will return to work.

The upcoming contract negotiations will be one of the most difficult in decades, with issues like health care costs taking center stage. Your Negotiating Committee will be meeting before the end of January to start preparing for this very important contract negotiation. We need the same enthusiasm and interest we saw in the recent elections to continue into 2010 as we ramp up for this year's contract negotiations. Stay involved, stay informed, and take part in whatever forums that are made available to you to express your opinions. We need to move away from the concept of 'The' Union. It's OUR Union!. We are all members and a part of this organization. If you feel you're on the outside looking in, that's your fault. Get involved. Come to meetings. Ask questions. Express your opinions. That's how the system works. I'll do everything I can to give everyone an opportunity to be a part of the process.

I would like to conclude by wishing all our members a Healthy and Happy New Year. Next month's column will delve into contract negotiations.

## Legislation issued to strengthen 'Buy American'

Much needed legislation to create jobs and strengthen Buy American provisions advanced this week in the House of Representatives, where the *Jobs for Main Street Act* (HR 2847) passed by a vote of 217 to 212. The \$154 billion measure, introduced by Wisconsin Democratic Representative David Obey with Buy America provisions by Iowa Democratic Representative Bruce Braley, includes funds for highway, transit and water projects as well as money to help communities retain teachers and firefighters. The bill, which did not get a single GOP vote, also contains \$41 billion for a six-month extension of unemployment benefits and \$12 billion to renew COBRA health insurance subsidies.

In the Senate, Wisconsin Democratic Senator Russ Feingold this week introduced the *Buy American Improvement Act* (S. 2890), legislation that would significantly strengthen the *Buy American Act of 1933*, which requires the federal government to buy American-made goods whenever possible.

The senate legislation would prohibit agencies from invoking a range of waivers that have been used to sidestep the original law and allow the purchase of foreign-made goods and services. The legislation would also require that products be at least 75 percent American-made in order to qualify under the Buy American Act (current law sets the qualifying content standard at 50 percent).

Additionally, the bill would require federal agencies to consider short-term and long-term effects on domestic employment before granting any waivers under the Buy American Act and require federal agencies to publish all requests for waivers, waiver decisions, and justifications for waivers granted.

### **Mon. January 11, 2010 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Washington, D.C., January 11, 2010 – The Executive Council of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) has voted unanimously to oppose any health care reform legislation that is funded by taxing the value of workers' existing health care benefits.

“For decades, IAM members exchanged substantial wage increases for the best possible health insurance,” said IAM President Tom Buffenbarger. “Now, in a bizarre turn of events, their insurance premiums will be subject to a forty percent excise tax if the Senate version of health care reform becomes law. Democratic leaders have the power to stop this travesty and I urge them to do so, quickly and completely.”

“IAM members are rightfully outraged over the bait and switch tactics at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue,” said Buffenbarger. “They were promised health care reform. Now they face health care deformed by backroom deals.”

No single issue brought more union members onto last year's campaign trail than Republican threats to tax health care benefits, and the Democrats' pledge to protect those benefits.

“Like NAFTA, the health care excise tax is an issue with the potential to reverberate for years,” said Buffenbarger. “Machinists have long memories. And they will long remember who taxed their benefits after pledging on the campaign trail not to do so.”

The IAM is among the largest industrial trade unions in North America, representing nearly 700,000 active and retired members in dozens of industries.

Let your legislatures know how you feel, log in to the **IAM Activist Center** at [www.capwiz.com/iamaw/](http://www.capwiz.com/iamaw/)

Visit our web site at [www.iam1529.org](http://www.iam1529.org)