



# THE BULLETIN BOARD

## LETTER

April 2007

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Donald J. Hoak, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

### Local Union Pride

The new website is up and running and can be viewed at [www.ibew459.org](http://www.ibew459.org). Take the time to visit it in the

**THE BULLETIN BOARD**  
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near future and move around in it. It is in the infancy stage right now and we are still working some of the bugs out of it, so be patient. I believe this will be a great tool for us in the future and it is a credit to the members of Local 459 for having the insight to approve the creation of it. We are having some bugs with entry of pictures and we already see the need for some improvements and they will come in short time. Links will be added, pictures and articles will too. Feel free to tell us what you would like to see on it also. I'm envisioning our newsletter and postings being put on it. We are currently involved in contract negotiations with our biggest employer, Reliant Energy. We are also in contract negotiations with the Village of Westfield, Brookfield Power, a wage reopener with AMES (Allegheny Manufacturing and Electrical Service) and JEMS (Johnstown Electrical and Manufacturing Service), and the bankruptcy battle in federal court with GKI (General Kinetics Inc.). Health care is still the major stumbling block in every one of these negotiations. We will prevail, as we have in the past, however we need to understand that each time we go into contracts these issues get tougher and tougher and tougher. It is time that

we change our strategy, before our contracts come due, and we must take some lessons from the past. Having been around and involved for a long time, I have watched us go from very active prior to contract negotiations to very complacent and mundane. I'm not saying that was the wrong approach for the times, because we made a lot of progress in that period of time and it worked. What I am seeing today at the bargaining table is new players with different attitudes, and many times, a lack of understanding about why our union is cooperative. Sometimes I think people have started to view this cooperative spirit as a fearful spirit or weakness, and they think that we will cooperate to our own demise (nothing could be further from the truth). So far we have been successful at crushing that notion, but we must get back to people preparing (financially or otherwise) further in advance for upcoming negotiations. We must get back to rallying around each other and sticking together like glue. These things really do work, and when we do them, we are a formidable force to deal with. When we don't, we will become easy prey to be taken advantage of.

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2, April 2007

**Local Union Pride**  
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I urge you to keep following the Employee Free Choice Act progress and keep in contact with your legislators on it. It is the single most crucial piece of legislation to run in our lifetimes and we must see that it becomes the law. People should have the right to join a union in this country and it shouldn't be as hard as pushing a wheelbarrow up the north slope of Mount Everest. Become an activist at [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org). I'm proud to lead a Local Union that can fight a company all the way to federal court. I'm proud to lead a Local Union that is well known throughout the state for being a leader. I'm proud to belong to the I.B.E.W., the best International Union in the U.S. I'm proud of what we do together on behalf of our many members and others. Are you proud to be a member of Local 459? I hope so, and I hope we all tell others around us so they know who we are and that we would welcome them to be part of our Brotherhood.

One of our secretaries is retiring in May and I would like to tell her thank you so much for a job well done for the Local Union. She has worked tirelessly and dedicated much of herself to us and we appreciate all of your efforts Marilyn. When you call the hall, please be sure to wish Marilyn Yeager a long and happy retirement- she's been a hell of a good soldier.

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**Making the Right Choice**

Kenneth L. Richards, President/Senior Business Representative/Editor

Local 459 has just recently purchased some new computers. It was discovered at the I.B.E.W. Convention that there were Union made computers on the market. The Company is called Union Built PC. We contacted them and asked them to provide the Local with a quote for a new server and some PC's. The desktop PC's are Union assembled in the U.S.A. by members of C.W.A. Local 1101 and I.B.E.W. Local 17. Laptops are Union final assembled in the U.S.A. also. It was really nice to see the computer equipment being shipped in boxes marked "made in the U.S.A." We have also contracted with Union Built to build our new website, which is now up and running. Their websites are also built here in the U.S.A. and allows us the capability to make changes and updates. The officers believe this will be a very useful tool for the membership.

If you are thinking about purchasing a new computer, the Local would recommend you contact Union Built PC at (877) 728-6466 or go on their website at [www.unionbuiltpc.com](http://www.unionbuiltpc.com).

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**Seniority Rights**

Kenneth L. Richards, President/Senior Business Representative/Editor

With the April 17 deadline drawing near and which will have passed us by the time this newsletter reaches you, I want to share with you just where employers like Wal-Mart enjoy

your tax money. The Wal-Mart Tax is the fact that everyday across America Wal-Mart fails to provide affordable health care for its workers and their families. This corporation directs their employees to taxpayer funded public health care assistance. This costs taxpayers over \$2.5 billion per year while the corporate officers enjoy some of the highest wages across the U.S. We need to stop spending our hard earned Union dollars at corporations that have no regards to paying a fair and living wage and benefits.

So now the new trend with corporate giants is to force out the older workers with higher number of years service. Wal-Mart sets the labor standard for millions of our compatriots' wage caps and forcing longtime employees to work weekends and nights in the hopes that they will quit. A memo prepared by a Wal-Mart executive for the Company bulletin board noted that, "the cost of an associate with seven (7) years tenure is almost 55% more than the cost of one with one (1) year tenure, yet no difference in productivity."

So now this leads to other corporations getting on the bandwagon. On March 28, Circuit City announced it was laying off 3,400 of its salesclerks, not because of poor performance records, mind you. They were shown the door simply because of their tenure, and they were the highest salaried salesclerks that Circuit City employed. So now the terminated employees were permitted to reapply for their own positions at a lower rate of pay. One can only imagine the morale of the employees who did not get fired.

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**Protect American Jobs**  
**Buy "Made in U.S.A."**



SECRET

3, April 2007

**Seniority Rights**  
(Continued from page 2)

Do a good job, get promoted, and you are out of here!

Toyota is now the newest company on the block to find ways to save money on the backs of working families. Toyota touts how many jobs they have created in the United States and how many factories they have built. The workers are saying that the big profits Toyota is making are not being shared with employee health care and safety. They are continuing to develop a plan to reduce workers wages and benefits. This automaker giant has received \$371 million in tax subsidies since 1986. In return, they have promised to provide good manufacturing jobs in Kentucky that pay decent wages. Instead, the Company who is non-union is firing workers who get injured on the job. In addition, full-time workers are being replaced with temporary workers who are paid one-half what the regular employees earn with little or no health insurance. An 18 year veteran at the plant stated he has seen some long-time workers "disappear" after being injured on the job. More and more veteran skilled trade workers are being replaced with temporary low-wage workers and ignoring experienced workers.

This Japanese-based company has no regard or loyalty to its employees, so we should show our support to this corporate unfair employer and NOT purchase their cars and trucks.

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**The Times "They Are A Changing"**

Gregory W. Wolf, Assistant Business Manager, Local 459-Erie

I may be mistaken but the major events of the world are taking place and it seems all that takes center stage in the various news venues is information on Anna Nicole, Imus and American Idol. Issues like Health Care, Employee Free Choice, and the disintegration of the working family take the proverbial back seat. Is this a concerted effort by the Washington establishment to keep everyone in the dark or is it the reaction to the apathy and ignorance of the American public to the reality of the moment? I think every individual needs to reflect on what issues are worth concern and how do they want to go about changing the direction of this country on those issues.

If it is troublesome to you as a member as to how an individual can make a difference, then I have the solution to your dilemma. The answer is simple and has been around a long time, just get active in your local union. History shows the Labor Movement wasn't built by a small fraction of people and for it to succeed, its issues need to be addressed by the multitude. We in sheer numbers can accomplish much and I can assure all that much needs to be done. We have been in retreat for too long and we (as in all) need to get active for the betterment of the working people of this country.

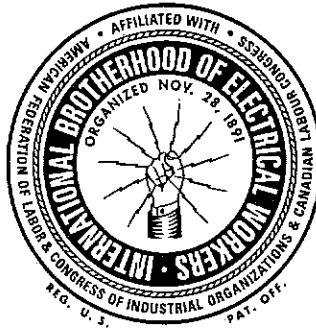
In the coming months you will see an abundance of information on the Employee Free Choice Act. This legislation is as important for this century as the

Wagner Act was in the last century, for the latter gave us a right to exist and the former will give us a chance to continue to exist. Every member will be needed to stand up and be counted on this effort to make this the law of the land and not sit idly by. When the Local calls for help, don't let your number be busy.

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408 Broad Street  
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**ATTEND YOUR MONTHLY UNION MEETINGS**

**1<sup>ST</sup> Thursday**  
4:00 PM Executive Board

**2<sup>ND</sup> Monday**  
7:00 PM Northwest District  
(Erie/ Warren)

**2<sup>ND</sup> Wednesday**  
7:00 PM Central District  
(Clearfield)

**2<sup>ND</sup> Thursday**  
7:00 PM Northeast District  
(Towanda)

**3<sup>RD</sup> Thursday**  
7:00 PM Southwest District  
(Johnstown)

**DON'T LOSE  
YOUR VOICE**



**ATTEND YOUR  
UNION MEETINGS**