

THE CONNECTOR



Iron Workers Local 498 - 5640 Sockness Dr., Rockford, IL 61109 – 815/873-9180

September 2021

From the Business Manager:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope this letter finds everyone happy and healthy and everyone enjoyed their Labor Day Holiday a day set aside for the working men and women of the Nation. As you know the Labor Day Parade and Picnic were canceled due to the issues we are having with COVID not releasing its grip on society. The cancellations were requirements and recommendations the city and county would have liked to see implemented. So, we decided to put something together quickly here at the Hall. I know many have been wanting this for a long time and the time was right to implement it. For last minute, it was a pretty good turnout. We had about 60 adults and 20 children. We will be planning for something like this again next year with a little more planning. I believe everyone was ready to get together for something for the ironworkers.

I want to remind everyone of the upcoming Health Screening on Oct. 16th we do at the Hall every year. As I write this there are only 19 people signed up for it. This is a good opportunity for everyone to get a snapshot of some of their basic health numbers. It is free to you and your spouse and when you participate, they will automatically put \$100 for each of you in your HRA Account (the Benny Card) with opportunities to get more money in there. I hope to see you here at the Hall, so you have every chance of living a long and healthy life.

While I am on the topic of health of our members and their families, I need to address the elephant in the room, being COVID. As you know, recently the Governor issued an executive order addressing the requirement of masks in public buildings and schools, and mandatory testing for unvaccinated individuals in some higher education settings. I am trying to figure out what options we have and am speaking with our lawyers on the best course of action moving forward to protect the Union and your individual rights. We will likely have something in place by the time you read this. I know this has been a highly charged topic and one of personal choice. I totally understand this, but the longer this persists, the longer we will be chasing COVID with mask mandates, vaccinations prior to work, and executive orders. Don't kid yourselves either, this will affect your jobs when the schools, hospitals, factories, and other projects mandate the vaccine prior to work on the project if we don't get COVID behind us. Owners and general contractors have already started implementing mandatory vaccination or testing policies. I will tell you the non-union ABC contractors have already made their employees get the vaccine so that when the union contractors can't provide the vaccinated work force, they will be ready to take your work. I am not telling you to get the vaccine, but things may become more difficult and cumbersome for you to work or go to school based on requirements of the State, by owners or general contractors. Some apprentice programs have already implemented proof of vaccination or weekly negative COVID tests to attend apprentice class and that also includes instructors. We are reviewing our options regarding these possible steps as well. As long as hospitals are getting clogged and have limited space due to the (primarily) unvaccinated taking the ICU beds displacing the stroke, heart attack, car/motorcycle accident victims you will continue to see the mandates and requirements by the government bodies to do what they feel protects the public as a whole. I will tell you the whole staff here is vaccinated along with all the Presidents (Trump included) and all of Congress and Governors both Democrats and Republicans, but you must make your own decision and know there may be consequences including losing out on work and not attending our apprentice program.

I really appreciated the members electing me to go to the 44th Convention of the International this year. It was an honor to represent Local 498 and be asked to be on a special committee that brought some of the resolutions forward to the floor for the convention. I gave an update at the last meeting on some of the upcoming changes. Nothing drastic but dues will be going up a dollar (\$1) and Travel Dues will be going up to \$10 per week. I suspect that will take affect at the first of the year, but I will let you know if it is sooner. There will be some changes in the Constitution that we will require us to fix in our By-Laws which will be addressed when we get the final disposition from the International.

Work has picked up pretty good since August, though we won't likely make up our lost hours for the year. As I write this I am almost out of members for work. Work looks to be like this for the rest of the year so we will more than likely be bringing new ones in through our various options including organizing. Things are looking good for the rest of the year. I hope that for you and your families' things are going well also.

In Solidarity,

Mark



September 10, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to thank all the members for sending me to the 44th International convention. It was truly an honor to be a delegate for local 498. The work picture looks pretty good going into the fall, hopefully the trend continues. The erection of the Dollar General on West State Street will be bad. It will be done by a company called A S Builders and they are out of Tennessee. The one in New Milford will be done by PSS. Harvard Crane is at Rush Creek Distillery in Harvard. Up in Beloit Keller Construction has started moving dirt for the Spry Tek Inc. building on East Colley road, Area has this project. As always give me a call if you see something going on around the local or have any questions.

In Solidarity,

Keith Gahl

Apprenticeship Coordinator

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

Things seem to finally be picking up around here so with that said I expect all apprentices to show up for Dispatch if you not working. You also need to let Mark know when you get laid off. We have to fill all the calls otherwise other trades will do our work and that is the last thing that we want to happen.

With the new "Mask Mandates" we are putting together what our expectations will be here at the hall regarding attending classes, and I will be around next week to discuss with all of the instructors and apprentices what those expectations will be.

Regardless of what your stance on vaccinations are, the reality is that there will likely be more be jobsites in the future that will require proof of vaccination in order to step foot on the property.

Block Training will be starting next week and there will be some weld tests coming up. If you would like to or need to test let Dean Markee or myself know so we can get you set up with a date to test.

If you need to practice, there are classes here Monday-Thursday nights that you can come in and do so.

The Labor Day Picnic here at the hall was a good time and I want to say thank you to all who showed up. I would love to see more guy's next year. We'll have more time to plan for it next year so hopefully it will be even better.

In Solidarity,
Paul Kauffman



Local 498 Calendar

Sept 21st – Regular Membership Meeting

Oct. 19th – Regular Membership Meeting

Reminder, the Executive Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month. The retirees' meeting is the second Tuesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. at the Alpine View Restaurant (Charles St. and Alpine) in Rockford. Contact Ralph Peterson – 815/234-8163.

**No New Death Announcements
Stay Healthy**