



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
District Lodge 66
1307 Market Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Union Herald Article from the desk of:



Neil Kamrowski
Directing Business Representative, IAMAW District Lodge 66

As I am writing this article, I am transitioning from my position as President of IAMAW Local Lodge 1030 (which I will retain until the next election cycle) to Directing Business Representative for IAMAW District Lodge 66. The support I've had in this transition has been overwhelming. I want to thank everyone involved in this transition for the help and support. Also I want to thank Jana Kirch (Vice President of IAMAW Local 1030) for all she has done in stepping up to the plate, and carrying the load at the local until the next election cycle (this fall). Jana is also taking my place as District Lodge Delegate until the next election for that position (also this fall). Her hard work along with that of the rest of the leadership at Local 1030 has been instrumental in allowing this transition to go as smooth as possible. I also want to thank Dave Bierce for stepping into my Shop Committee spot.

The month of June has been busy. I had an opportunity to go to the IAMAW training facility known as the William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center. I also had the opportunity to go to the IAMAW Industrial Conference in Chicago.

William W Winpisinger Education and Technology Center

This center is a training facility for members of the IAM. Classes range from Leadership to advanced classes like Arbitration and Collective Bargaining. I've been to this facility now a total of eight times for various classes from Leaderships 1 and 2 to staff level classes such as Organizing and Arbitration. The class I went to in June was Advanced Arbitration. While settling differences outside that realm is usually preferable, having the tools to put forward a good case to an Arbitrator is a good thing to have.

This school is a great tool for leadership in our locals to send to get the basic fundamentals that aren't really taught anywhere else. Things like Weingarten Rights, National Labor Relations Act, History of Unions and the IAM, and more.

IAMAW Industrial Conference

The resounding message that was echoed throughout the week was the lack of skilled labor jobs, and the causes behind that. There are several reasons that skilled labor jobs are going away in this country. Reasons range from "Free Trade" acts to lack of training.

Acts from NAFTA to CAFTA to KORUS have sent jobs over sea, or over borders. Quite a few of these jobs were good paying manufacturing jobs. Galesburg, IL lost 1600 good paying jobs making Maytag products to Mexico. The list of plant closings, and job displacements would be too long to write in this article. We've seen jobs right here in LaCrosse move south of the border. Trans Pacific Partnership will only make things worse. I won't go into that trade deal in this article. I covered that one last month in my article.

There is also a problem or a lack of training in our younger generations. Employers (including the one I came out of before taking this position) are having trouble finding employees in skilled positions such as tool and die and electrician. Most schools that still offer a tool and die program are tending to focus schooling more on CNC, and less on lathe, and end mill type programs that may be useful in certain industrial applications. Electricians are more and more rare to find these days that are skilled in industrial type applications as well. To make things worse, most employers have held off on their Apprenticeship Programs to the point that when they need an employee to fill these skilled positions, they need them now, not in the two to four years or more that an Apprenticeship program may take.

What is the solution you ask? These are not easy problems to fix over night. To ready our workers more for their future, and to secure more middle class jobs here in the US, we need to train workers to do these jobs, or else if it can't be done here, it will go somewhere else to be done. Technical Colleges: Dust off all your old lathes, end mills, and surface grinders. These machines may not be used as much anymore in today's environment, but they are still in use. Teaching students the workings of these pieces of equipment will make them more employable in the future. Employers: Reinstate full

Apprenticeship programs. I have found that when trained on the job in a program like that, employees will usually stay long enough to retire from that job. This adds a huge value in experience and longevity before future training needs to happen for the employer.

Fast Track Moves Forward, Focus Turns To TPP

Tuesday June 23rd, The Senate narrowly approved a measure that virtually assured a final passage of “Fast Track” Trade Promotion Authority for the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). The Fast Track legislation allows the administration to present free trade deals, such as TPP, to Congress for an up-or-down vote with no opportunity to offer amendments. Votes on the still-secret TPP and dubious aid for workers displaced by trade deals are yet to come.

As I will always urge our readers to do, contact your congress about this as you see it make its way through the news. As of right now, this trade deal is NAFTA on steroids. It needs some strong opposition, or it will turn into another siphon on good middle class jobs here. Silence on deals like these in congress is approval.

District Lodge 66 Shirt Sale!

As is always the case from year to year, we will be ordering shirts to be given out the marchers in this year’s Labor Day Parade. We are currently over stocked with many of the shirts we had available last year along with a few from the year before. We have a number of different sizes. In order to move these out, we are going to sell these through the month of August for only **\$10.00 apiece**. Call the District to check to see if we have your size available.

Obama Comes to LaCrosse

On July 2, I was able to get a chance to see President Obama’s speech in UW-LaCrosse. I have to say that overall, it was a good speech. The President showed his sense of humor, and his great ability to get a crowd going.

One of the things the President wanted to get out in this speech that he was working on (although he didn’t speak very long on this subject) was overtime rules. Currently, Employees who are salaried at less than \$23,660 are non-exempt from overtime rules. In other words, if a company decides to make an employee salaried at \$23,700 per year, the company can schedule that employee to work as many as 60 hours per week or more, and not have to pay overtime for this extra time and energy that the employee puts into their job. If that employee is salaried at \$23,500 per year, the company must pay overtime. President Obama is looking to change that threshold to \$50,440 per year. At current thresholds, if an employee works 60 hours a week at an annual salary of \$23,700, accounting for what should have been overtime, their hourly

rate is a mere \$6.51 per hour. It's no wonder why this is something that needs to be looked at.

He also touted the value of a Union. Most people don't realize that Unions brought us the 40 hour work week. Unions brought us the idea of the weekend. Unions brought us worker protections, worker safety, and a stronger middle class. The President also said "If I were looking for a good job that lets me build some security for my family, I'd join a Union -- because I'd want a union looking out for me. And we're stronger together than we are by ourselves". I'm sure the audience of this monthly paper would agree with that.

For the most part, I am paraphrasing small sections of the speech. There are quite a few more things I would like to cover that were mentioned in the speech, but taking up the this entire Union Herald on only this subject isn't ideal. For a full speech, you can do a search online for either the full video, and watch it, or you can search for the text of it. I would recommend looking it up.

District Lodge 66

The Delegates of District Lodge 66 came together to do the business of the District at the regular meeting held Monday, June 15. Along with the normal business of the Lodge, your delegates took action on a number of issues which included paying a small membership fee and paying mileage and per diem for a Local Lodge 1030 member to attend the MN State Council of Machinists Retiree Conference in August.

There was a motion to cancel the July meeting, which is what is normal to do during the summer months. The motion passed.

Be safe everyone, and enjoy the summer weather!