



# The Sparkie Sentinel

**1602 S. Park Street – Madison, WI. 53715**

*PHONE – 608-255-2989 – FAX – 608-255-3014 – www.ibew159.org*

**Mark D. Hoffmann,  
Business Manager/Financial  
Secretary**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

In this newsletter you will find an insert, which will serve as your official notice for nominations and elections of Local 159 Officers and delegates. If for some reason your newsletter is missing the insert, please contact the office at 255-2989 and we will get one to you.

**Reminder:**  
**Vacation Deduct Option For**  
**Inside Agreement**

If you wish to change your vacation deduction option from 7% to 0% or from 0% to 7%, you must make this request with your employer by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. This timely request will allow the employer to implement your request by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Health Insurance**

We will be having a Medical Trust meeting, April 27, 2010. At this meeting, we will have discussion on whether the National Plan is the right move or not and what we will be looking at for an increase in our premiums.

I have also communicated with WPS about the correspondence I have seen in this office from the past about obtaining a quote from them. Somewhere in the process the ball was dropped and never completed.

I have provided WPS with the information needed to get a premium quote. At this point I am waiting for a response.

**Unemployment effects on Emergency**  
**Pension Withdrawals**

Since the implementation of the Emergency one-time pension withdrawal in September of 2009, we had two members denied unemployment for an extended period of time. This period of time depended upon the amount of cash the member had requested from their pension.

The unemployment office uses a formula to determine how many weeks you would be denied unemployment. This only happens when the member receives cash. If the member rolls this withdrawal into an IRA, this penalty does not apply. We have appealed both cases to an Administrative Law judge, with mixed results. The first case we lost and appealed again to LIRC. The second case we won and had that member's unemployment reinstated. We are continuing the fight for case #1.

There is a bill at the Capitol this month which will change how unemployment handles these withdrawals. Basically, the law says these withdrawals will only be treated as income for the week you receive payment. This bill should be acted on and by all guesstimates, passed by the end of April. Check with this office the end of the month or look for an update in the May newsletter.

**Famous Quote** - "There has never been a statue erected to the memory of someone who left well enough alone."

Jules Ellinger



**IBEW Day with the Mallards**

This years game will be June 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:05 p.m..

The number of free tickets was increased to six per member.

If you have more people you wish to bring, you may purchase tickets for the Duck Blind at the game. Ticket prices would be \$20 for adults w/beer, \$15 for adults wo/beer and \$5 for children under 15. Please call the office to book your reservations at 608-255-2989.

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**Joel Kapusta,  
Business Agent/Referral Agent**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

**Inside**

Book I – 189    Book II – 158  
Apprentices off - 2

**Residential**

Book I – 30    Book II- 0

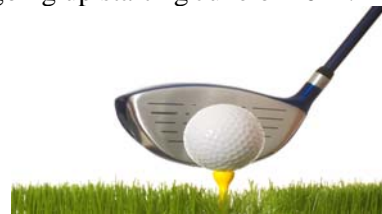
**VDV**

Book I- 8      Book II- 5

Pieper Electric did get the School of Human Ecology on campus.

Excellence got the control work at Badger Prairie in Verona.

According to WE Energies, the wind turbines will start on access roads and sub-stations this fall, with turbines delivered in the spring and towers going up starting June of 2011.



**Save the Date – Saturday, July 10, 2010  
Sun Prairie Golf Course**

Bob Palmer Classic, benefiting the Suchoman Scholarship Fund.

Call the hall to sign up.

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**Chris Crossen  
Business Agent/Organizing Agent**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have been busy in the month of April with the coming of spring.

We have been visiting the Parade of Homes sites in Verona, Deerfield, Bristol, Middleton, and Waunakee talking to non-represented workers and non-signatory contractors. It is a very high profile construction project, so we need to keep up with who is doing them as builders and sub-contractors.

Some of these homes are just foundations and some are already framed and the electricians are on site. I will continue to keep an eye on these projects.

The numbers are still being crunched for the market analysis. I should have the percentage breakdown by next months newsletter.

We continue to contact non-signatory contractors in our jurisdiction. On one of the jobs we have been visiting, one of our apprentices was approached by the non-signatory contractor on the job. He was asked if he wanted to work on Saturdays for the contractor for prevailing wage journeyman's scale. Kudos to the apprentice for saying no way, but it gave me another reason to revisit this contractor and try to get him some more manpower through the hall. I am still talking to him about the ways to do this that will make him comfortable with the idea.

I would like to thank the brothers and sisters who come to the meetings, give their input before and after the meeting, call during the month with jobs, or things they have heard or seen. It is greatly appreciated.

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**David Boetcher,**  
**Governmental Affairs Coordinator**

**Democrats and Wisconsin Taxes**

This fall there will be another election for Governor, Congress and our State Legislature. Often it feels like no matter how we vote things either don't change or get worse. Sometimes we have to look at what has been accomplished to realize that voting does make a difference.

The following statistics and information are from the Milwaukee State Journal.

At the end of last year, one Midwestern state emerged carrying its lightest total tax burden since the early 1960s. Only six states nationwide saw a bigger drop in the percentage of taxpayer income taken for government spending over an eight-year period. Once labeled a top 5 tax hell, the state's spending level dipped below the national median after years of restraints on schools and local governments - The state is Wisconsin.

That may come as a big surprise to most of us but really it has been a long road to get us here but it

was done through a careful thoughtful approach. Wisconsin ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in total spending by all levels of state and local government even though we are 20<sup>th</sup> in population, 24<sup>th</sup> in Gross Domestic Product and 24<sup>th</sup> in personal income for the same year. So we are doing well in keeping our spending down, while working with a higher percentage of population and a higher level of income.

In fact in the past eight years with a Democratic Governor and with the current Democratic controlled Legislature we have managed to go from being the 5 highest taxed State at the end of Tommy Thompson's administration to now the 15<sup>th</sup>. This is just based on personal income taxes and property taxes. When you compare us in all tax categories (including car registration, sales taxes, etc) we are the 21<sup>st</sup> in total per capita taxes (this is from the WI Business Council).

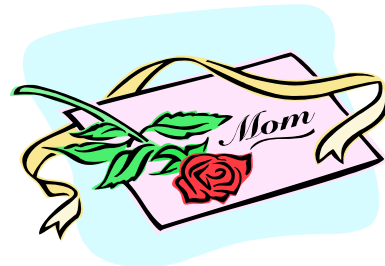
These are the best rankings Wisconsin has had since 1961.

So as we consider voting in this coming fall election, let's remember where we were 8 years ago with a republican governor and legislature to where we are today. While the government cannot directly control the economy it does directly control government spending and taxes.

As you can see, the old myth that Democrats just tax and spend has been shown to be just that – a myth. So as we head towards this election I hope you will help ensure we keep heading down the path we have for the last 8 years – increase prevailing wage jobs, requiring health insurance (to level the bidding field for us), invest in renewable energy jobs and reduce our taxes.

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**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL OUR MOTHERS  
AND GRANDMOTHERS**





## Retirees Club

The retirees met Monday, April 12, 2010 at Monona Gardens. Twenty-two members were present. They were: Ron Disch, Marvin Milleville, Larry Libert, Jim Virnig, Bob Call, Elmer Racek, Dick Gorst, Tom Junck, Roy Holm, Dale Bickle, Ken Goss, Ray Becker, Dave Krey, Gary Gander, Mike Bullock, Donald Boe, David Natvig, Lee Lemens, Ron Dommershausen, Dennis Wiczorek, Larry Droes and Howard Czoschke.

Apologies for omitting the following retired members from the March newsletter:

Mike Bullock – Les Gammeter

Winners of the drawing were Elmer Racek, Dick Gorst, Tom Junck, Gary Gander, David Natvig, Ron Dommershausen and Larry Droes.

It was great to see new retirees at the luncheon. We hope you enjoyed it and will come again.

Elections: Very few people voted; something I have to question, when these are the people who set our property taxes, control our schools and interpret our laws. One person won by three (3) votes out of about 500. So you see, YOUR VOTE DOES COUNT.

Next meeting will be Monday, May 10th at noon – Rex’s Innkeeper in Waunakee. Hope to see you there! June 14<sup>th</sup> will be the semi-annual luncheon at the Labor Temple. Call to make your reservations.

Lee Lemens

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## Accidents – Illness - Injury



Brother Bernie Braun had a major heart attack over the Easter Holiday weekend. He had a shunt put in and is home now recovering.

If you would like us to mention an accident, illness or injury, please contact the office. We do not want to leave anyone out but we do not want to invade anyone’s privacy.



Retired Brother, Edward Trexler passed away March 30<sup>th</sup>. Edward was living in North Carolina and was a proud #159 member for 56 years. Our sincerest condolences to his entire family and especially to his wife, Mary.

Retired Brother, George Marvin passed away April 7<sup>th</sup>. George was proud to be a 30 year member of #159. Grandson, Brian Marvin, #159 member, has followed in his footsteps. Condolences to his family and especially to his wife, Jane.

Brother Howard (Howie) Wettstein passed away unexpectedly on April 7<sup>th</sup>, suffering a major heart attack. Howie was preparing for his retirement from the IBEW in October 2010, after retiring from Capital Newspapers, where he had worked as an electrician. Condolences to the Wettstein family and to his wife, Leola.

Steve Bersing’s father, Vernon, passed away on April 11, 2010, with his family by his side. Condolences to the entire Bersing family, especially his wife of 58 years, Mary.

The thoughts and prayers of the membership are extended to all our families during this difficult time.

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**Volunteers Needed for  
TEAMsurvivor Madison at Bratfest  
May 28 – 31**

Shift volunteers are needed to sign up for Bratfest at Willow Island at the Alliant Energy Center. Visit [www.bratfest.com](http://www.bratfest.com) or contact [teamsurvivormadison@yahoo.com](mailto:teamsurvivormadison@yahoo.com) to raise funds and awareness for breast cancer.

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**Dollar Bank  
Transfers Needed**

There is still a need for members to volunteer to donate a dollar bank to a brother or sister in need. Please consider giving a helping hand. You must have a minimum of six (6) months of premium in your dollar bank. You can only donate to a member who has lost their bank due to their personal or a family member's illness or injury. Call the hall to put your name on the list.



Stephanie and Ryan Ballweg, along with big sister, Natalie (3), welcomed new baby brother, Bryce, born March 18<sup>th</sup>, weighing 7 lbs. 14 oz. and 21”.

Sister Heather Wipperfurth and husband Rob, along with big sister Haley, welcomed new little sister, Ruby Wynn, born March 29<sup>th</sup> weighing 8 lbs – 2 oz. and 19”. Auntie, Bobbi Kahl, #159 member, also celebrates the birth of her new niece.



Haley and Ruby

Congratulations Ballwags and Wipperfurths. Enjoy your new bundles of joy.

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**EDUCATION NEW**

**RESIDENTIAL INSTRUCTOR  
APPLICATIONS**

Approval has been given to hire a part-time residential apprentice instructor.

If you are interested in the position, please contact the office and you will be sent/faxed/emailed an application along with detailed information of the job requirements, when they become available.

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**Personal update**

Remember to update our office with any changes in your address, phone, marital status or beneficiary(ies).

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**Workers Memorial Day**  
**April 28<sup>th</sup>**

“Mourn for the Dead-Fight for the Living. Organize & Mobilize for Safe Jobs.”

**Administrative Notice:**  
**Basic Dues**

**“A” Members –Effective 1/1/2010**

Monthly - \$27.75  
Quarterly- \$83.25  
Semi-Annual -\$166.50  
Yearly-\$333.00

**“BA Members”**

Monthly - \$16.05  
Quarterly - \$48.15  
Semi-Annual - \$96.30  
Yearly. - \$192.60

**Basic dues will increase an additional \$1.00 per month for 2011.**

Basic dues are paid in advance and must be received in the Local Union Office before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month or quarter for which you are paying.

1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. – January 1  
2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. – April 1  
3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. – July 1  
4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. – October 1

**Electrical Workers Local #159  
1602 S. Park Street  
Madison, WI. 53715**

“A” members should send death benefit payments along with their dues payment (\$1.00 for each death benefit). We are currently on #161

The failure of any Local Union #159 member to pay union dues in a timely manner will not only result in membership being dropped, causing the loss of Union benefits, but also discharge from employment. Members who are three months or more in arrears will be charge a \$30.00 reinstatement fee.

**Please check over your dues receipt immediately for accuracy. If you have moved, changed classification or have questions about your dues, please notify the Union office. If you have not been issued a receipt within two weeks from the time you sent your payment, please call the office to make sure it was received.**

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