Local 363 members complete “cat” cracker at Wood River

ConocoPhillips pleased with safety, job performance

LOCAL 363 MEMBERS and other Building and Construction Trades union members have completed outage work on a catalytic cracker at the ConocoPhillips Wood River refinery in Roxana, Ill.

At the beginning of the job, International President Newton B. Jones and U.A. General President Bill Hite toured the facility.

A total of about 300 tradesmen worked on this job for five different contractors — Construction Turnaround Incorporated (CTI), Washington Group Incorporated (WGI), Miller Industrial Service Teams Incorporated (MIST), and Delta Nooter. L-363 Pres. Bill Mulconner estimates the job resulted in 150,000 man-hours.

There were no lost-time injuries on the job. The Wood River facility has had several owners since it opened in 1918, but it has always been 100 percent union.

The ConocoPhillips Web site reports that Wood River is capable of refining about 286 million barrels of crude per day, creating 155 million barrels of gasoline and 75 million barrels of distillate.

That figure represents about 13.5 percent of the nation’s oil production.

See Local 363 at Wood River, page 3

Construction leaders meet

Speakers stress leadership, teamwork to get through hard times

“NEVER QUIT,” THAT’S the advice Lt. Gen. Hal Moore gives. It’s what he kept him going when others thought the battle was lost. It’s what could keep us going during difficult times.

As a guest speaker to the Boilermakers Construction Division meeting, Moore defined his “never quit” attitude as knowing there is always one more thing you can do, and then one more, and so on.

“Trust your instincts,” he said. “Three strikes and you are not out.”

Moore was commander of the first major battle of the American phase of the Vietnam War. Dropped off by helicopter, his feet were the first to touch the ground and the last to leave the three-day battlefield. He wrote a book about that historic conflict — “We Were Soldiers . . . and Young,” and his role in that battle was depicted by Mel Gibson in the movie “We Were Soldiers.”

NACBE Exec. Admin. John Erickson introduced Moore to the delegates. Fighting emotion, Erickson tried to describe the character of the man standing beside him — a 1945 graduate of the West Point Military Academy, a master paratrooper, a commander of two infantries, a veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, and recipient of two Combat Infantryman’s Badges and the Distinguished Service Cross.

But it was when Erickson showed a clip from the movie that the crowd began to feel the magnitude and horror of what he had been through. Moore talked of personal struggles, of how he would tell his men that he would leave no one behind — dead or alive, of the guilt he felt for living when so many of his soldiers had died, and he spoke of what he thought the battle was lost. It’s what could keep us going during difficult times.

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See Local 363 at Wood River, page 3

Lt. General Hal Moore receives a standing ovation for his moving remarks.

makes a good leader. Two principles he learned at West Point, he said, have carried him through life: a positive attitude and teamwork.

“IT takes trust to build a good team,” Moore said.

“The rank must trust the leader, they must trust each other, and the leader must convince the rank that he trusts each of them.”

His advice for leadership can be applied to all walks of life, including that of a union leader. “To succeed,” he said, “you must have a clearly-defined goal and a workable plan. Supportive leaders must understand the goal, the plan, and their role, and you must have plans for all the ‘what ifs.’”

See Construction leaders, page 2
Construction leaders
continued from page 1

IP Jones discusses our union’s goals and plans
LIKE GENERAL MOORE, Interna-
tional President Newton B. Jones
knows what it takes to be a good leader.
At the annual winter meeting of the
Construction Division at the Hilton
Marco Island Beach Resort in Marco
Island, Fla., Feb. 14-18, Jones talked
about union goals, plans, and the roles
we each must play.
He spoke of the great pressure our
companies face in trying to compete
with a nonunion sector that is not going
away. But one way we can compete
is by providing the owner with a
safe job site.
Citing a 94 percent reduction in
our lost-time injury rates, Jones explained
how working safely can keep us com-
mpetitive,” Jones said. “Our safety
records also tell the Department of
Labor (DOL) that the Boilermakers are
doing something right.
So right that the DOL formed a work-
place alliance of building trade unions
that emulates our MOST safety and
substance abuse programs. So far, the
Ironworkers, Carpenters, and Oper-
ating Engineers have joined the Boiler-
makers and the DOL in this alliance to
promote drug-free workplaces.
He reported that while man-hours
are down right now, the outlook is
promising.
“We are working on a deal with
Exelon, the parent company of several
utility companies with both nuclear
and fossil fired plants in the Great
Lakes, Northeast, and Texas areas,”
Jones reported. “The Pipelifters, BEW,
and the Carpenters failed in their nego-
tiations with Exelon, but the Boiler-
makers’ pending proposal with that
company would meet both our needs.
It will include 97 percent of their agree-
ments and every new facility they build
in the Great Lakes and Northeast areas,”
Jones said. “We’ve asked them to
consider adding Texas, and they
agreed to consider it when they see
how this agreement works in the
other areas, which should start in August,”
Jones also predicts that in six or seven years work will be
so abundant that we will be
looking at manpower shortages. To meet those
needs, he advised that sub-
committees are looking at ways to improve our appren-
ticeship programs. “Whether that will be shortening
the length to get members in the
workplace quicker, or mov-
ing those with welding expe-
rience through quicker, or
some other solution, the
problem is being studied to
meet the changing needs,”
Jones said.
As another way to increase our apprenticeship numbers, Jones asked the lodge leaders
to support Helmets to Hardhats of an APL-CIO
building trades program for
former military personnel.
He then discussed the
hardships our union currently faces
with a decrease in membership and
union revenue.
“Multiple plant closings, with 15,000
fewer members in shops in the last
two years, combined with a loss in con-
struction man-hours, has made these
times difficult. Fewer members and
man-hours have also placed a burden
on the pension and health & welfare
funds,” he said.
“But this organization is a sound
organization, despite financial difficul-
ties and the loss of membership.” Jones
said, showing the kind of determina-
tion that has kept our union alive for
125 years. “The financial problems will
be solved. The pension problems will be
solved. And the health & welfare
problems will be solved.”
NACBE recognizes lodges for
excellent safety performance
EACH YEAR, NACBE recognizes the local lodge in each U.S. vice-presiden-
tial area with the best safety performance and the local lodge with the best
safety record in the nation. This year was no exception with Local 242,
Sparton, Wash., of the Western States, earning the national
award. Other area winners included Local 193, Baltimore, for the
Northeast area; Local 454, Chattanooga, Tenn., for the Southeast; Local 374, Hammond, Ind.,
for the Great Lakes; and Local 531, Anmarillo, Texas, for the Central States.
NACBE Exec. Administrator John Erickson reported that of 55 construc-
tion lodges, 29 finished the year with zero accidents. He estimates that since
NACBE began recording the safety index in 1991, 21,843 lost-time injuries
have been eliminated, avoiding over $655 million in direct costs and $3.276
billion in total costs.
NACBE, the National Association of Construction Boilermaker Employ-
ors, was established in 1975 and has over 90 contractors in industrial con-
struction and maintenance activities as members. The NACBE safety index is
used to measure our success in eliminating workplace injuries.

The Boilermaker Reporter
The Boilermaker Reporter is the official pub-
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Marlin McCurdy, Local 242 BM-ST, second from right, accepts the national
safety award from, l. to r., John Erickson, Newton Jones, and Joe Stinger.
Oil companies want to use foreign labor in Alberta oil sands

Local 146 leads fight to use Canadians on all jobs

WITH WORLD OIL prices at record highs, it’s boom time in the oil sands region of northeast Alberta. Here in the rugged, often frigid interior of Canada, companies will spend an estimated $60 billion over 10 years in an effort to extract “heavy oil” from an area containing a third of the world’s known oil reserves — the Athabasca oil sands. The potential profits are enormous, described as “walls of cash” by the oil companies themselves. However, to succeed, the oil firms will need the skills and labor of thousands of construction-trade workers, including Boilermakers from Local 146 in Edmonton. But all is not well with organized labor in Alberta, says Local 146 Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Warren Fraleigh. In fact, Local 146 and other members of the 40,000-strong Alberta Building Trades Council (ABTC) are up in arms over a plan to bring in 680 temporary foreign workers for new construction projects. Although the number is relatively small, the ABTC believes such a precedent could spell trouble down the road. For companies, construction contractors, and some in government argue that there is a shortage of skilled workers in Canada and that foreign workers will be needed to fill that shortage.

Not so, says Fraleigh. For proof, he points to the unemployment rate in the construction industry. In Alberta, the rate is six percent. Across Canada, it’s 14 percent. In some provinces, the rate is 30-40 percent. “As oil companies build new plants and refineries, they need to look to Alberta first for skilled construction employees, then across Canada, and then to the U.S., if needed,” he says. Fraleigh adds that it does not make sense to bring in workers from third-world countries where training standards are lower without first tapping into more immediate sources.

Local 146 and the two dozen other trade union locals making up the ABTC want an answer to how the federal government came to consider approving the oil company’s request for foreign workers in the first place. Fraleigh cites a federal-provincial foreign worker agreement that governs the conditions under which foreign workers may be used to do new construction work.

The agreement’s protocols may have been violated, given current unemployment figures in the construction industry. Fraleigh and other ABTC unions presented the union’s case to Canada’s Deputy Prime Minister, Anne McLellan.

“She was appalled,” Fraleigh says, after seeing the unemployment statistics and the implication that skilled Canadian workers are being displaced if foreign workers were imported.

Local unions of the ABTC fear the effort to hire foreign workers is part of an overall strategy to undermine collective bargaining agreements between the unions and the contractors doing work for the big oil companies. Indeed, Local 146 is encountering pressure to make wage and schedule concessions for upcoming projects.

Fraleigh says some of that pressure is caused by the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC). CLAC is an employer-oriented union that Fraleigh calls a “union of convenience.” Contractors who choose not to be affiliated with traditional building trade unions become signatory with CLAC so they may bid on union projects. CLAC members work for lesser terms and working conditions. Big oil has been giving CLAC larger shares of its available work. CLAC’s inability to fully staff some of these projects may have been a factor in the plan to import foreign workers, in Fraleigh’s view.

Local 146 and the ABTC know their struggle to keep out foreign workers and beat concessionary pressure is just beginning.

The unions are quickly mobilizing and attacking the problem from different angles. We are going more politically active than ever before,” says Fraleigh. “We are meeting with provincial as well as federal officials. We are also making our case to the media and beginning grass-roots efforts to inform the public about the negative impact foreign workers will have on them, such as taking money out of the country instead of spending it locally.”

Certainly the construction trades feel frustrated and bitter over the oil companies’ tactics. Says Fraleigh, “At a time when our skills are in more demand than ever before, even in more demand than a generation ago, the oil companies are seeking [to] use foreign workers to lower their costs so they can make even higher profits.”

More ominous to the construction trades is a feeling that recent events are an opening salvo in more aggressive efforts by the oil industry to lower labor costs, efforts that could reduce the ABTC union workforce and keep union workers from enjoying the economic gains that the oil sands promise to bring the region.
Senator Durbin is the Boilermakers' 2005 Legislator of the Year
Son of Illinois union members, he fights for justice and fairness for workers

SENATOR RICHARD “DICK” Durbin is the Boilermakers’ 2005 Legislator of the Year. As Democratic whip, Durbin works closely with the Senate Democratic leadership to determine their legislative strategy. First elected to the Senate in 1996, he is serving his second term and has a career labor voting record of over 90 percent.

“But it is more than just his votes that makes Senator Durbin such an important voice for working families,” says Government Affairs Director Bridget Maranhao. “In fighting to provide Social Security disability benefits for a Boilermaker member of Local 60, grilling one of the administration’s extremes, taking on the tobacco industry, standing up for civil liberties, or fighting against the president’s agenda, Senator Durbin is always on the frontlines as a champion for justice and fairness.”

Durbin accepted his award at the 37th annual conference of the Boilermakers’ Legislative Education Action Program in Washington, D.C., March 15. In his keynote address, he spoke of his own labor background.

“If you wonder how I happened to become a better officer of labor unions, you only have to look at my home where I grew up,” he said. “We have had a lot of union membership in my home. My mother, my father, my two brothers, and I were all members of the Railway Clerks Union. I was a member of several unions as I was going through school and growing up. Even my daughter, who is an artist, is a card-carrying union member in the city of Chicago, where she did sidewalks and gutters one summer.

“My dad was a union organizer back in the 1940s in East St. Louis, Ill., and we understood that unions gave my family a voice — a voice in the workplace, a voice in America. The Boilermakers have been that kind of union. They have been a voice for men and women across America for years and years. Thank goodness you have used that voice and used it effectively.”

Education is at risk
DURBIN SAYS WE SHOULD be looking at our children’s education, and thinking twice about that, too.

What the Bush Administration is proposing for our children is something that I think is absolutely terrible,” he said. “The budget resolution before the Senate right now is going to make dramatic cuts in areas where we need help. Instead of providing money for education so our kids can get the skills for the 21st century, Pres. Bush’s budget eliminates vocational and technical education.

“A lot of kids go to community college, maybe even beyond, but there are a substantial number of students who are not going to take that career path. They want to pick up the skills to help them get jobs. And where are they going to get them? Through vocational and technical education. Obviously, the president believes we can afford to eliminate that education. He is wrong. He is certainly wrong.

“And when he cuts back on education, he is not just denying our country its future, he is denying our families their future. I wouldn’t be standing here today without my mom and dad keeping me pushing, pushing me. Many of you are in the same predicament with your kids and grandkids. You know that the ticket to success is school and this administration is cutting it.”

Health care is the real crisis
ACCORDING TO DURBIN, health care — not Social Security — is the real crisis this nation is facing.

“If the Boilermakers are like every other union that I have spoken to in the last several years, and every business I have spoken to, large and small, in Illinois, a major concern that you have is the cost of health insurance,” Durbin said. “Every single year, almost without fail, your coverage goes down and your costs go up. And labor leaders say to me, ‘How in the world am I going to tell the rank and file that they are not going to have any more take-home pay this year, that they are going to have to put it all into health insurance and there will be less coverage?’

“But Pres. Bush is going on a motorcade, a whirlwind tour across America, to visit 60 cities in 60 days to talk about privatizing Social Security. I wish this president was going on a 60-city, 60-day tour to talk about health care in America to make sure that every family has affordable and adequate health care coverage.

“Instead, he looks down the tracks at Social Security and sees a distant light, 40 or 50 years away — literally, 40 or 50 years away — and says, ‘We’ve got to do something about Social Security now.’

“I can see that light in the distance — 40 or 50 years away. Yes, we need to do something, I don’t argue with him. We can and we should do something. But while he is looking at that light in the distance there’s a locomotive coming right on top of him that says health care. And that’s really the crisis in America — a crisis which this administration is ignoring.”

Fight for veterans’ benefits
“I WANT TO tell you something else that troubles me greatly,” Durbin said. “We are involved in a war now; some of you have members of your family over there fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. I voted against that resolution to go to war because I thought we needed a more independent coalition — one that would send soldiers and send money and be there to help fight this war with Saddam Hussein. But I lost that vote.

“And I made up my mind at that moment, as did every other member of the United States Senate, that the debate was behind us and we were not going to make the same mistake we made in Vietnam. From that point forward, we were going to stand by our troops. We’ve been with them every moment and for every dollar that they’ve needed.

“So when I see cutbacks in Veteran benefits — benefits for the people who protect our country — it just doesn’t make sense.

“The president’s budget calls for $32 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest. One tax cut, if your salary is over $1 million a year, will give you a $35,000 tax cut a year.

“Whereas, should we want to give a tax cut to the wealthiest Americans when we have a deficit, when we can’t afford health care or veteran benefits? This senator is going to make sure that the hard questions are asked.

“You have stood with me time and time again. When I have asked you for help, you have been there. Now I am here to help you.”

Legislative accomplishments

★ Improving Health Care

SENATOR DURBİN RECEIVED a life-time achievement award from the American Lung Association for his work in the House to ban smoking on commercial airline flights, and for his work in the Senate to protect children from the harm caused by tobacco.

Durbin has also worked successfully to increase federal funding to prevent childhood asthma, increase immunizations, and expand medical research.

“Having successfully fought to increase the share of federal funding dedicated to combating AIDS world-wide, he has also been a leader in promoting organ and tissue donation.

In the spring of 2004, Durbin put forth a plan to give small businesses affordable choices among private health insurance plans and expand access to coverage for their employees.

★ Protecting Consumers

CONSUMER PROTECTION IS high on Durbin’s list of priorities. Continuing an effort spurred by a meeting with the mother of a Chicago six-year-old who died after eating contaminated hamburger, Durbin led the effort to ensure the fragmented federal food safety system under a single food-safety agency.

He has introduced legislation to require manufacturers of dietary supplements to ensure their products are safe before they are sold. He secured $2.8 million for the implementation of new safety standards to protect patients from injuries related to re-use of medical devices that are intended to be used only once.

★ Working for a Fair Tax Code

DURBIN’S TAX CUT agenda includes tax credits for small businesses buying health insurance for their low-income workers, estate tax relief for family-owned small businesses and farms, tax incentives to promote charitable giving, and tax credits for long-term care insurance, child care, and college tuition.

Biography

Senator Richard Durbin was born in East St. Louis, Ill., on November 21, 1944, and graduated from Assumption High School, before heading east to Georgetown University, where he earned a B.S. in 1966 and a J.D./Doctor degree from Georgetown’s prestigious law school in 1969.

In 1983, he was elected to the House of Representatives to represent the people of Illinois’s 20th Congressional District. In 1986, the people of Illinois elected him to the Senate; in 2002, they elected him to a second term.

In 2001, Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) appointed Durbin to the Senate’s leadership team as the assistant Democratic floor leader. In 2000, Durbin served as co-chairman of the Democratic platform committee.

In December 2004, his fellow Democratic senators elected Durbin to serve as assistant majority leader, also known as the Democratic whip, the Senate’s second-highest ranking Democratic leadership post.

Durbin is also the first Illinois senator to serve on the U.S. Senate’s appropriations committee in more than a quarter of a century. He is the state’s senior senator and convener of the bipartisan Illinois delegation.

Senator Durbin is married to Loreta Schafer Durbin. They have three children and one grandchild.
Speakers outline lessons to be learned, what’s at risk for workers

NEARLY 200 DELEGATES to the 37th annual conference of the Legislative Education Action Program (LEAP) met in Washington, D.C., March 14-18, to discuss legislative strategies to advance and protect working family issues.

They heard from a variety of guest speakers, including Democratic Whip Richard Durbin (D-IL) — the Boilermakers’ 2005 Legislator of the Year; members of the U.S. House of Representatives: Neil Abercrombie (D-1st HI), Harold Ford Jr. (D-9th TN), and Steven LaTourette (R-14th OH); and political analyst Paul Begala, co-host of CNN’s “Crossfire.”

Delegates also heard from members of two panels — one made up of professional lobbyists, one of Boilermakers members whose efforts have been successful at the local lodge level. They shared their experiences and insights into how union members can influence legislative representatives at all levels of government. (See separate story on page 8)

In his conference-opening speech, International President Newton B. Jones thanked the members for their efforts in the 2004 election, which resulted in many more Boilermakers volunteering, contributing, and voting. While we fell short of winning an important election, Jones says we are still charged with the role of protecting our members and their working lives. That is why we must continue to fight and to speak out against the unfair policies and political ideology that have targeted the labor movement for destruction.

“We must remain politically active,” Jones said, “and become even more so, to fight for our issues today — whether it be for fair asbestos legislation to help those whose lives have been so horribly affected by exposure to this fiber, or to speak out against unfair trade agreements that undermine the strength of our nation and the gainful employment future of our members and their children.”

He pointed out that only a few more votes in Ohio could have made a world of difference in the 2004 election and for our country, our position in the world, and the working lives of our members. Jones blames Kerry’s loss on the political ideologues of the far right and their allies in big business who targeted for destruction the very foundation of the labor movement — good paying jobs.

“The right-wing machine found a way to divide workers and union members with hot-button issues that played to our fears.”

...our work has just begun
(continued from page 5)

the aisle, Republicans as well as Democrats,” Jones said.

He pointed out areas where we can work together with our political adver-
saries, including President Bush’s Clear Skies legislation.

He then encouraged the delegates to take their voices to the Hill — to let our legis-
avators know why pensions, health-
care, the right to organize and be re-
presented, and the promotion of fair trade so we can have good-paying jobs are all
worth protecting.

“Let them know we will continue our fight as long as it takes and as long as
necessary,” Jones said. “And when you are up there talking with those
who are steering our nation, keep in mind this quote from Mark Twain: ‘Loyalty to the
government, when it deserves it.’”

Lessons to be learned

Paul Begala, LEAP Conference keynote speaker and co-host of CNN’s “Crossfire,” said he thought of General George Armstrong Custard while he
covered the 2004 election. Only instead of asking, “Where did all these dang
Indians come from?” he was asking, “Where did all these dang Republicans
come from?”

He says the 2004 campaign taught him a few things.

“First,” he said, “negative cam-
paigns work. That’s the biggest lesson from Bellagio [casino]. From the begin-
nning to the end, George W. Bush attacked John Kerry every day. They
knew how to lose if Bush was on his own, so they went after Kerry on a
personal level, not attacking his stances, but claiming he couldn’t make up
his mind, that he was an ‘elitist,’ and that despite earning the
Silver Star in Vietnam he was an
unpatriotic coward.”

The Democratic Party, on the
other hand, didn’t want to say anything bad
about anybody. “Our party actually
had a rule during the convention that said, ‘Thou shall not speak ill of a Republi-
can,’” he said.

Begala believes if Democrats had done a better job of attacking Bush on
his record and on the issues, they could have won.

But they didn’t. And they didn’t attack back when Republicans began their campaign to smear Kerry. Instead, all America heard was Bush’s clear and focussed message: I am strong and
steady, and he is weak and wobbly.

“If you ask the 61 million Americans who voted for President Bush, they will
tell you they voted for him because he is strong and Kerry is weak,” Begala said.

“If you ask the 58 million of us who voted for John Kerry why we voted for him, you’ll get 58 million rea-
sons. The Democrats were unfocused.”

“I can’t believe that this is a certi-
fied, bona fide war hero who was made to look weak by a man who spent the
war in Alabama,” Begala said. “Because that’s what happened, and
Democrats need to learn from that. A party that will not defend itself won’t be
defended by the country. We need to acknowledge that war matters and be strong on national defense and
strong against terrorism. We don’t have to be economic and workplace issues, but we need to show America that
Democrats are strong.”

Now that the election is over, Begala believes that the Democratic Party and the labor movement need to get back to
their roots, back to the things that are relevant to people’s lives. We have to
focus on economic issues.

“We have real problems in this coun-
try,” he said, “and it turns out that attacking John Kerry won’t solve any of
those problems. It was a good strategy
for ’04, but it ain’t going to work in ’05.
We have a huge problem with the fed-
eral deficit. We have enormous prob-
lems with health care. We have 150,000
of our boys and girls stuck, stranded in
a desert without enough allies, without
enough armor, without enough ammu-
nition, with no clue of how we are
going to win this thing and bring them
home. Attacking John Kerry won’t solve any of those problems. We must return to the issues.”

In talking about Bush’s plan to “fix”
Social Security, Begala recalled the time
when his father took their dog, Major, to
the vet to get “fixed”.

“You know what that procedure is,”
Begala said, “that which used to work
real well, don’t work no more. Major wasn’t real happy with the procedure
to the outcome. So when Bush says that he wants to fix Social Security, he
wants to fix Medicare, just remember
that he wants to fix you, too. I think
we ought to stand up to him and fight
him on that.”

Abercrombie stirs up crowd

Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-1st HI)
continued the theme of focusing on issues and uniting to speak — and vote — with one
voice.

“Every labor union in this country needs to remember the funda-
ment of labor organization — all for one and one for all; an injury to one
is an injury to all,” Abercrombie said.

“Labor cannot afford to divide its own house against itself. That’s the lesson
that has to be learned from the 2004 election.”

“What is more fundamental than your own job and your own future, the
prosperity of your family and your brothers and sisters of this union and
working people all across this country? That’s the kind of unity that we’ve got
to have.”

Paul Begala, political analyst and co-host of CNN’s “Crossfire”

“Take Social Security as an example. What’s the first thing that Mr. Bush
says? He says, ‘Don’t worry about a thing if you are 55 or over, we are going
to take care of you.’”

“And everybody’s first thought who
is 55 is, ‘Good, I’m off the hook.’
The tactic is called divide and con-
quer. Separate the 55 and over. Say
you are okay, you can shut your eyes.
It’s your kids and your grandparents that we are going to screw. What did I say before? All for one and one for all; an
injury to one is an injury to all.

You heard this stuff about the [Social Security] cap. The only thing
capping around here is you. How
many of your members are making more than $90,000 a year? We are talk-
ning about the Social Security taxable
income; the 6.2 percent that you are
paying. Many of you across this coun-
try are paying 12 months a year — 6.2
percent. Members of Congress only
pay on 55 percent of our salaries. The
third week in June, we stop paying
Social Security taxes and pocket the dif-
ference. The president only pays on 22
percent of his salary. And the dirty little secret in this town is that every single
one of the people telling you that
you have to sacrifice knows the date
when they stop paying Social Security
benefits.”

Social Security is not a system for gambling. You want a personal account? Open one up at Bellagio
Open one up at Bellagio

“We have real problems in this country, and it turns out that attacking
John Kerry won’t solve any of those problems.”

— Paul Begala

“We could solve this whole thing, not by raising the Social Security trust
fund anymore than it’s already been robbed, but by removing the cap.

“We need people looking out for you. To try to make our way in this
world we have to reach out for one another. You have to have a community
of interest. That’s what the pension fund is all about. That’s why you have
to have leadership that’s worthy, that’s why you have to pay attention to who
your leadership is. Because they have the responsibility of acting on your
behalf and that is what Social Security is all about.

Social Security is not a system for gambling. You want a personal account? Open one up at Bellagio
[casino]. Social Security is a way to look after the least among us. Are we going
to have a society that we can say looks out for the least amongst us?

This union was organized and
and every labor organization in this country
was organized so that we look out for each other. There is only one way we can
do it. We’ve got to have people in the Congress of the United States
who first and foremost duty and obligation and object of their legislative life
is to look out for the working people of this
country. Everything comes through that.

“Politics is the key. Politics is what’s at the bottom and what fundamentally
counts. And what counts most in poli-
tics is numbers.

“We’ve got to have more people in Congress — up to a majority that can
elect a speaker and have a share of the committees that will act on your behalf.
And then the only way to do it, the only way to accomplish this is to do two things.

First, see to it that every member of the union and their families and their
eligible kids are registered to vote and
that they vote in the interest of the working people in this country. That’s the
number one fundamental thing that
has to be done.

Second, you’ve got to support your political action committees. I don’t care if it is a dollar a month. I don’t care if it is five
dollars or ten dollars out of your
pocket. The only way that working
people in this country can fight the
big money is with little money from all
of us, put together. That’s what
these political action committees are
all about.”

Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-1st HI)
"If you think you can make gadgets or widgets cheaper in Mexico, you have every right to do so. But I won't give you a tax break to do it."

- Rep. Harold Ford

"I encourage you to reach out to your member of Congress, whether Democrat or Republican."

- Rep. Steven LaTourette

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### Ford brings refreshing views

REP. HAROLD FORD Jr. (D-9th TN) said President Bush’s proposed budget is $400 billion in deficit before we spend a dollar.

"It cuts all the programs that are meaningful to the people in my state of Tennessee, and I dare say to all the states across the country," Ford said.

"The president said his motto for this budget was to keep what’s working and get rid of what’s not, and I have no problem with that. But he ought to apply that same standard of spending to tax cuts.

"Tax cuts that are working we should keep; tax cuts that are not working we should discard.

"If you think you can make gadgets or widgets cheaper in Mexico, you have every right to do so. It’s the American way; it’s how capitalism works. But I won’t give you a tax break to do it. You are not going to take taxes out of our country to go and make a gadget or widget or product elsewhere.

"We can comb the tax code and find a shelter and find other tax cuts that are benefiting a small, narrow group of Americans and discard those much like we do in spending programs that don’t work. Because we will never get our budget in line or balance it like governors all across this country are forced to, unless we are willing to make the tough choices on taxes and make some choices on spending.

"I suggested to the president that his real focus this time shouldn’t be Social Security; it should be Medicare and tax reform. Medicare will run out of money in 2018. We passed a prescription drug benefit without the key component to save money. If we had just allowed Medicare to negotiate with the drug companies, we would have lowered drug prices for everybody in the system, from seniors on down. But the drug companies, every time they make a drug, we buy it.

"And when I say we, I literally mean we, because the government buys it.

The biggest purchaser of drugs in the country, if not the world, is the United States government. They make the drugs, see if it works, and we taxpayers buy it. That issue should be one focused on by the president and this administration, far more than Social Security, because Medicare is going to run out of money much quicker.

"The second is tax reform. I believe that if you go to work each day and you support your family that you deserve a break. When the president says he is cutting taxes at the federal level, and he is cutting funding for education, guess where the burden falls? On local and state governments. In my county in the city of Memphis, we are going to see our property taxes go up in the next six months. Why? Because we don’t have enough resources coming in to meet the rising needs of our schools, of our health care system. You cut taxes here (at the federal level), taxes go up at home.

"And who’s affected the most? The middle-class.

"I believe that you shouldn’t have to pay a larger share of your income in taxes if you make $400,000 versus someone making $40,000. If we were serious about tax reform, we would pass a bill that said the first $40,000 of income would be work revenue, not investment income — in this country we can’t afford.

The first half-a-million dollars of business revenue for any business in the country that provides health insurance for its workers — that have at least three workers and provides health insurance at an 80/20 split would pay no taxes on that first half-million dollar revenue. Why? Small businesses are the backbone of the country. And if we don’t find ways to create incentives in lowering the regulatory burden on their backs, we are not going to create jobs.

"The third thing I would do is to say any employer who has an employee who is deployed to go overseas to fight for your country and mine will get a $100,000 above-the-line tax break to make up the difference between what the U.S. military is paying and what the employee lost leaving their job to protect you and me.

"The fourth piece concerns estate tax. The president believes we should give a complete tax break to the wealthiest of Americans to pass their estate on to the next generation. I can’t afford to do that. I do believe it is unfair to people who built their business, or their farm, or convenience store, or cleaners, or auto dealership, or whatever it may be and the next generation has to sell the company to pay the taxes once someone dies in the family. It is completely unfair.

"But we can solve that problem by simply raising the exemption and making it where anybody with a business that is valued at $7.5 million or less will pay no taxes if they pass it to the next generation. Anything above that should be taxed at 27.5 percent.

"Let the law work so people can plan their estates and let people run their businesses and not have to worry about accountants coming up with gimmicks, ways to avoid paying taxes, or ways to avoid losing your estate when they pass.

"If the president was serious, and if this administration was serious about helping working people, the people who make this country work day in and day out, these are the kinds of things that would be proposed.

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### LaTourette says Republican labor committee will work with unions

REP. STEVEN LATOURETTE (R-14th OH), one of a small number of Republicans who support labor unions on many issues, provided important insights into how workers can get Republican support for our legislation.

"On any given issue there are between 25 and 50 Republican House members who can and will stand up and be counted when it comes to issues that are important to organized labor," LaTourette said. "And those labor organizations that get it recognize that there are 435 members of Congress and it takes 218 votes to get anything done or to keep something bad from happening. As it is, I think it’s worthwhile for this organization and other organizations to reach out to those 25 or 50 Republicans.

"I want to give you a couple examples of where that has worked rather well in the past week. We just passed the six-year transportation bill out of the House. As that bill came up, there were a couple of issues that were real important to labor. We received an emergency telephone call during the bill’s consideration. One had to do with Davis Bacon, the federal prevailing wage law.

"There is a constant assault by some members of the Republican Party on Davis Bacon protections. Davis Bacon protections can be applied not only to the transportation bill, but also to the water resources bill, energy bills, and other bills that are coming along. The Republican labor group went to the leadership and said, ‘If you do not make sure that Davis Bacon protects everything in the transportation bill and everything in the water bill and everything in the energy bill, we are going to take a walk on some important legislation to you.’

"I will tell you that as a result of that meeting we have a commitment today that there will be no Davis Bacon fight on the highway bill.

"Another good thing that happened that week was an amendment that was going to be filed on a bill that wouldn’t have 13c protection. Paragraph 13c is the labor protection provision that applies to people who are engaged in the transit industry. And again as a result of pressure put on them by Frank, and me, and this group of 25 or 50, that amendment not only didn’t succeed, it wasn’t even made in order.

We never even had to debate it. And that again, I think, is the direct result of having open minds and communication between organizations such as the LEAP, fundraising for CAF and LEB, legislation concerning working families, and their Web site that can be accessed by clicking on the LEAP tab at the Boilermakers’ site of www.boilermakers.org.
Representative in local politics, Gunderson said. “The ple of how important it is to be involved more years. The demands and secured their guarantee ment, they met the company’s million grant. Combined with the $2.2 million, they were able to get a $1.8 billion funding. Again we contacted “City and state legislators. The city’s economic development board is giving us $600,000 and if there is more, we’ll find it. We’ve got four banks on board with us and we hope to reopen the plant this spring.”

Gunderson encouraged the delegates to be involved in elections at all levels, whether it is their town chair- man, city council, mayor, or president of the United States. He told them to, “Work on every campaign, no matter how big or how small it is. If it is a school board, it is important. Our pres- ence needs to be known. Our local ofﬁcials are every bit as important as the president.”

Smarra on working with Republicans

“Once, this region had a great industrial back- ground. Politically, that translated into Democratic majorities in all phases of government. But with the decline of the steel industry, the demographics of the region changed drastically. Working with Republicans in Congress became a necessity.”

Smarra credits a politically-active membership for their success. Political activism is stressed at every union meeting and members are involved in phone banks, voter registration drives, door-to-door campaigns, and letter writing. They even ratified a contract with a voluntary CAF donation in it. With the CAF contribution, every member has a stake in the political process,” Smarra explained. “We also pass on information on the issues to our membership and keep them informed on how their elected ofﬁcials — whether they are Republican or Democrat or Independent — are voting.

Not all GOP members understand labor’s goals and it is up to us to edu- cate them, Smarra said. “We need to keep the line of communication open. Just because a member of Congress can’t support us on every vote or every issue doesn’t make them the enemy.”

When Republican Tim Murphy sought a seat in the 18th District, he courted labor’s vote. He came directly to Local 154 and said, “Look, I need your guys help and in return I’ll help you.” Local 154 supported Murphy and he has been receptive to some of their ideas and concerns ever since.

Phil English of Pennsylvania’s third district is another friend to Local 154, as is Sen. Arlen Specter, who is leading the charge on a $30 million earmark for a new IGCC power plant. “Realistically, Arlen Specter has a better chance of securing that funding than any Democ- rat on the Senate. So we need to realize and pass on to our membership that Republicans, now more than ever, are vital to our job creation priorities,” Smarra said. “Whether it is energy issues, defense, or manufacturing, Republicans can be helpful in advancing our agenda.”

Carpenter on getting members active

KEVIN CARPENTER, Secretary-Treasur- er of Local 19, Philadelphia, says now is not the time to grow numbly: it is the time to look at things in a greater perspective. “All we need is right here in this room, ” he said. “It’s right here in the legislative facts.”

Carpenter said his union president approached him two years ago about what he thought it would take to get a spark under the membership. He sent Carpenter to the 35th annual LEAP conference where Carpenter said his own spark was lit.

Carpenter took his inspiration from one of the conference speakers, Rep. Neil Abercrombie of Hawaii. “Now that guy just ﬁres you up. I took that charge back with me and we spread it through our membership. That’s how we do things. We have to lead by example. I had to get out there. When people see you involved, then they start to get involved.”

Carpenter went home and started with himself. “I had to develop a passion for what I was doing because I didn’t believe I could get a message across or be very persuasive to others if I didn’t have that passion in myself.”

He began by educating himself about LEAP and current legislative issues. Then he and the other Local 19 LEAP committee members started a get-out-the-vote drive. First they divided their member- ship list between regis- tered and non-registered members. Then they began contacting the non-registered members at lunch breaks, timed breaks, and after work, handing out registration cards they got from the Post Office.

“we got a lot of people registered to vote,” Carpenter said. “We had pic- nics, and the ﬁrst thing you would see when you arrived was registration cards. We also gave away turkey cards for Thanksgiving, and before a member could get his or her turkey card, they had to fill out a registration form. It’s amazing how quick someone will ﬁll out just about anything for a turkey.”

It worked for Local 19, and it can work for you, Carpenter said. “Just take the knowledge that is provided here back to your membership and stay informed. It really works.”

Connolly on supporting CAF and LEF

JERRY CONNOLLY, Business Man- ager of Local 5, New York, said he came to his first LEAP conference in 1983. Years ago, he said, you not only learned in the conference room, but in the bar as well.

This used to be a big lobbying hotel,” Connolly explained. “I would go in the bar and say, ‘You know that I am talking to these people but they are not responding.’ After three years of this, a railroad lobbyists asked me, ‘Well, kid, do you get any juice?’ “Juice, what do you mean?”

‘Money. You can only do two things they understand down here — votes and money.’

‘After being embarrassed for three years, I decided to go back home and get something done. I started with a LEAP committee. We got in our correct one month of one percent contribution. That was in 1987. Since then we have probably contributed over $200,000.”

What that did for Local 5 was enable Connolly to go out and sell working issues to different politicians, both Democrat and Republican. He spoke of Al Barkan, the national chairman of the Committee on Political Education (COPE), who once said, “There is noth- ing more important than job and good living wages.”

That has to be our focus,” Connolly said. “We have social issues that some people think are more important. But if we can’t communicate to our members how important it is to have a job, the rest of this is really not going to mean all that much. If you come from a local that has not been successful in giving money to CAF or LEF, reevaluate your efforts. It doesn’t have to be a lot of money. You don’t need to be in the top ten, you just need to be in the game. If we are all in the game, it makes it easier.

So I ask you again, go back home, edu- cate your members. You will find resist- ance. But in the end, if you work hard, they’ll appreciate what you are doing,”

Terry Smarra of Local 154, Pittsburgh

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Jacobs on getting members involved

TONY JACOBS, PRES. of Local 169, Detroit, reiterated what Connolly said in his own, straightforward manner: “Money talks, bullshit walks. If you have the money, you’ll get the votes.”

He explained how Local 169 starts educating their members at the apprentice level, and of how they preach the need to be politically active at every apprentice advancement. “If we can get them involved, then we get them involved,” Jacobs said. “We all come down to do the phone banks, and I have six delegates here with me today who all came out of the apprenticeship program. They are taking over the local and what I tell them is this, ‘Only one thing counts and that is her. And right now for them that her is Local 169.”

If you stay viable in politics, you have to stay involved and you have to be in control, he said. Politics is what the world goes around with, and if you don’t give a damn, next time, he guarantees our man-hours will be even less. Jacobs talks votes to Republicans and votes to Democrats. He is involved in grass-roots politics. Local 169’s efforts resulted in six Republican county commissioners and six Republican state house members losing their seats at the last election. A Republican still controls the state house and another controls the state senate, but Local 169 is working to get that changed around.

Yet, Local 169 has Republicans who sometimes call Jacobs on the phone from the floor to see which way they should vote on a building trade issue. That’s why it is so important to get to know all of your representatives.

“Get involved,” Jacobs said. “Get your young people involved. When we do our phone banks, my members know who the Republicans are. But they still listen to them and most still give money to the PAC. We didn’t start with ten-cents-an-hour overnight. That was after 20 years. We have fundraisers. We pass the hat. Every dollar counts.”

Professionals say members make the best lobbyists

Power provides lobbying tips

JAY POWER, A SENIOR lobbyist with the AFL-CIO, said a union member from a representative’s home district can make a bigger impact on that representative than a professional lobbyist he may see every day.

“Whether you know it or not, each one of you is a community leader where you live,” Power said. “The members on the Hill see me and Bridget and Abe all the time. Sometimes familiarity brings attention, but sometimes familiarity just brings, ‘Let’s get this done so I can get to the next meeting.’ That’s why your presence here is so crucial.”

But it’s just as important to make your presence known at home, he said. Power said you might be surprised to discover the influence you have. When there is a bad article in the paper, there should be an organized effort to have all the unions write back to that paper. When a talk show bashes the union, there should be an orchestrated effort to have union members call that station.

“It may influence them,” Power said, “but I’m not so naive that I don’t know that in many cases it won’t. But if they go unanswered they won’t remember the most important thing — that organized labor is a vital part of their community and in a positive way in terms of the collective bargaining agreements they negotiate to obtain a decent living standard for the families and children in their communities.”

Power said it is critically important to make your presence known at home and on the Hill. The AFL-CIO has ten full-time lobbyists on staff. Among their affiliates, there are probably 40 lobbyists on the Hill on any given day. But the banking industry, just the banking industry in Washington, has 800 full-time lobbyists.

“That’s what we are up against. That’s why you are our secret weapon. We need you to come up to the Hill,” Power said. “When we have success, it’s because the members of Congress have been visited and visited by members like you from back home. Local labor is part of the community and they need to listen, even if they don’t agree. It is crucial to our success.”

Walker gives insight on state level lobbying

NAOMI WALKER, AN AFL-CIO state issues representative, said Công is not going to do much to help working families anytime in the near future. That’s why the AFL-CIO is putting a lot more attention and resources into the state level.

She said winning at the state level is not only good for working families there, but the more action that states take, the more pressure it puts on Congress to take action and make uniform rules.

One example is the minimum wage. Connecticut is talking about raising the minimum wage to $8.25 an hour. Other states are talking about raising it to $6.15 an hour. “The more this happens,” she says, “the more the business community is going to say, ‘Hey we don’t want to pay all these different wages in all these different areas,’ and they are going to push for a uniform wage that will hopefully raise the goal for everyone.”

Another example is Social Security. “While our state legislators don’t have any real say over what happens to the Social Security program,” Walker said, “one of the things that we are trying to do is make sure that state legislators pass resolutions urging Congress not to privatize Social Security.” So far, these resolutions have been introduced in 27 states.

The AFL-CIO is also trying to stop the export of good American jobs at the state level. She said many state contracts go to companies who take state taxpay dollars, then ship the jobs overseas.

They are also working on a model healthcare disclosure bill to let taxpayers know exactly which companies shift their workers onto state-funded healthcare.

In each of the 11 states that already do this reporting, Wal-Mart has the most employees on state-funded healthcare. “That means Wal-Mart can make $9 billion in profits — just profit and say, ‘I’m not going to pay health care for my workers, let the taxpayers pick up that cost,’” Walker said.

In Georgia alone, 10,000 children of Wal-Mart employees rely on state-funded healthcare, which costs the state $6.5 million a year. To meet those costs, the state is now talking about cutting services and education. “It is ridiculous that one of the most profitable companies is doing this,” Walker said, and we are trying to stop it.

Burton on building legislative relationships

BURCE BURTON, AN IBEW legislative representative, said his coming to D.C. to work full-time as a lobbyist wasn’t any part of a grand plan.

“Like all of you, I come from the tools,” Burton said. “I worked 17 years as a journeyman electrician. But even as an apprentice in the 80s, I knew I wanted to do something for the union. It’s just a matter of putting back something that had been given to me.”

The IBEW, says Burton, looks at the union movement as a three-legged stool — organizing, collective bargaining, and politics. “The three of them are very much linked together right now,” he said. “In fact, right now like never before.”

We need to organize or we will never start the union movement, he said. Collective bargaining, for the vast majority of union members, is really where it is all about. But politics plays a role in influencing all of those.

To make that third leg work for the first two, Burton suggests you build a relationship with your elected officials. “You pick the official,” he said, “whether it is a state representative, state senator, or your congress people — even Republicans. Never be afraid to talk to these people.”

It is because of good relations that the AFL-CIO was able to work with the Clinton administration even on legislation we disagreed on.

“It’s true we disagreed with the Clinton administration on the trade issue. But there was a very, important difference. When President Clinton’s representative sat down and negotiated a trade agreement, people from the AFL-CIO sat outside that negotiation. During breaks, the U.S. trade representative would come out and say, ‘Hey, what do you guys think of this agreement?’ Aside from not liking it, we were allowed input. Now we get absolutely nothing from an administration that wants to roll us back to the time of Calvin Coolidge. Burton says media reports on splits in the labor community are an exception to the rule. “Don’t listen to Fox news and that kind of stuff. We are all working people. We are all proud of it. And we all work very hard together.” ❒
Awards highlight annual conference

Capitol dome award honors members’ fundraising efforts for CAF, LEF

THE ONLY WAY unions can contribute funds to candidates for federal office is through a political action committee (PAC), which collects voluntary donations from its members and employees. The Boilermakers’ Campaign Assistance Fund (CAF) is our PAC.

Raising money for CAF is essential if our union is to have any impact on what happens in Washington. That’s why at each LEAP conference, awards are presented for outstanding contributions to CAF during the previous year.

The vice-presidential section and local lodge contributing the most money to CAF receive awards, as does the local lodge having the highest CAF contribution per member. This year, awards were also presented to the vice-presidential area and local lodge with the most improved contribution in 2004.

The Northeast Area won the award for the highest CAF contribution by a vice-presidential area in 2004, contributing $114,077.72. Local 154, Pittsburgh, won for the largest contribution by a local lodge, raising $44,462.07. Local 744, Cleveland, Ohio, won for the highest contribution per member at $148 per member.

Local 74, Houston, Texas, won the award for the most improved lodge, raising their CAF contributions from zero dollars in 2003 to $6,251.11 in 2004.

The Central Section won the award for the most improved region, increasing their CAF contributions from $794.31 in 2003 to $9,955.95 in 2004.

Retirees were the single group of contributors who donated the most money in 2004, with $96,901.11 from nearly all retirees combined. International dues money goes into LEF.

In all, $459,245.30 was donated to CAF in 2004, yet only 56 locals out of 297 represent contributing members. Nearly all of the locals forwarding large contributions have included a CAF payroll deduction in their contract. Payroll deductions are the easiest way to raise money. Most people hardly notice a payroll deduction of $2 over a year’s time — putting you barely notice a payroll deduction of $2 a week. Yet donating a couple dollars a week to CAF can raise more than $100 a week. Yet donating a couple dollars a week to CAF can raise more than $100 a week.

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And every dollar is put to good use, supporting pro-worker candidates.

To learn how you can begin contributing to CAF and how to include a voluntary CAF payroll-checkoff clause in your contract, call the Government Affairs Department at 703-560-1493.

Awards honor top LEF donors

THE BOILEMakers’ LEGISLATIVE Education Fund (LEF) pays for virtually all Boilermaker political education activities and is funded entirely through contributions from local lodges. Local lodge members use their vote to determine how much of their dues money goes into LEF.

This was only the second year that awards were presented at the annual LEAP conference to the highest LEF contributors.

For the second year in a row, the Southeast Area won the award as the highest LEF contribution by a vice-presidential area, contributing $20,666.30 in 2004. Local 40, Elizabeth-town, Ky., won the award for the highest LEF contribution by a local lodge, contributing $11,636.40 last year.

Local 40 also won the award for the most improved lodge, raising their LEF contributions from $766.30 in 2003 to $11,636.40 in 2004.

The Central Section also won the award for the most improved region for LEF contributions, increasing their donation from $8,174.35 in 2003 to $14,685.74 in 2004.

Delegates to conference raise money for CAF, LEF

DELEGATES TO THE LEAP Conference were constantly reminded of the importance of raising money for legislative education and political donations. Nearly every speaker pointed out how expensive U.S. political campaigns have become. Delegates also see first-hand the expertise and research needed to keep up with legislation. So it isn’t surprising that the delegates raise money for LEAP while at the conference.

Delegates bought raffle tickets, raising $3,926 in cash for CAF.

Local 455 member Allen Phillips also donated a percentage of his proceeds from T-shirt sales he made at the conference.

Phillips, who sells his shirts at every LEAP Conference, also donated a shirt made from his T-shirts. IVP Othal Smith auctioned the quilt off, with the proceeds going to LEF.

Bidding for the quilt became very spirited, with District 57 finally buying the quilt for $1,200.

In all, $7,290 was donated to LEF at the conference, and CAF took in donations totaling $19,291.

AT RIGHT: Local 40 BM-ST Jimmy Porter, second from left, accepts an award for the highest LEF contribution by a local with, l. to r., IVP Larry McManamon, GAD Dir. Bridget Martin, and IP Newton Jones.

Members of the Southeast Area, pictured with IP Newton Jones, IVP Sam May, and GAD Dr. Bridget Martin, accept the award for the highest CAF contribution by a section.
Top Local CAF and LEF Contributors

Top ten locals sending to CAF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2004 Donation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
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<td>$44,667.07</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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Top ten locals donating to LEF

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Locals with large one-time LEF donations

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Phillips donates quilt, portion of T-shirt sales to CAF

Allen Phillips has a unique way of supporting the Boilermakers Campaign Assistance Fund (CAF). For ten years, he has donated 20 percent of his profits to CAF from T-shirt sales he makes at the annual LEAP conference.

This year was no exception, but he also donated a T-shirt and an all-caps for CAF raffle and a quilt for the auction. The quilt, crafted by his neighbor, has 16 of Phillips’ T-shirts in its design. Intl. Vice Pres. Othal Smith Jr. conducted the auction, raising $1,200 for CAF from District Lodge 57’s winning bid.

Phillips, 44, a 24-year member of Local 455, Sheffield, Ala., not only sells T-shirts, he designs them as well. What started out as a small hobby for Phillips has turned into a part-time business called Creative Design (256-767-4098), with Phillips selling in excess of 10,000 shirts a year.

“Many Local 455 members like to wear shirts that display their union affiliation,” Phillips explained. “I gave an idea of a T-shirt design to an artist friend and a local union printer made some shirts for me. The people I worked with at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant really liked them. Those who traveled the different job sites, and soon I had people from other Boilermaker lodges calling me for shirts. Once I started selling them at the LEAP conference, business really picked up as members brought the shirts back to their home locals. Combined with the exposure I got from selling shirts at the 2001 Boilermaker convention, I now get orders from all across the country.”

Phillips currently has 32 T-shirt designs to choose from. He sells a few ball caps and sweat-shirts, but by far, it’s his T-shirts that receive the most demand.

“People usually wear just one or two of their favorite ball caps, but they will wear a different T-shirt every day. I’ve already had requests for more designs, so I’m thinking of retiring some to make room for new creations,” Phillips said.

Phillips is a fourth-generation Boilermaker. He and his brother, Larry Carl, who joined Local 455 in 1979, still enjoy listening to the stories their grandfather, Carl, 90, tells about his 20-plus years as a Local 455 business agent. However, Allen’s great-grandfather, A.V., and his father, Larry, are deceased. A.V. worked as a Boilermaker in the Tennessee area, passing away at the age of 94. Larry, also a Local 455 member, served as the Southeast Area apprentice coordinator for 25 years.

Many members take for granted the educational information they receive from the Government Affairs Department and International headquarters. They do not consider how much time and expense goes into researching issues, preparing materials, and organizing and holding the annual LEAP conference.

A small donation to LEF — only 25 cents per member, per month — provides an excellent return in educational materials and legislative support.

Without LEF, we cannot inform our members about issues before Congress. It is the duty of each local lodge to help us keep our membership informed on issues that affect their members; however, only 101 of 287 lodges donate to LEF. If your lodge is not already contributing to LEF, make a motion at the next meeting to get started.


We Represent the
LEAP CONFERENCE RECEPTION


LEAP CONFERENCE RECEPTION


Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick (R-8th PA), center, with Intl. Pres. Newton Jones, fourth from left, and delegates from Locals 13 and 18, Philadelphia.


Rep. Donald Payne (D-10th NJ), center, with, l. to r., Jay Brophy (L-28), L-28 BM-ST Raymond Cushing Jr., IP Newton Jones, Nick Gabriele (L119), L19 VP Dave Gallard, Scott Van Wagner and John Devin (L-28), and L-D432 Pres. Steve Martin.

WHEN A SENATOR or representative is unable to attend our reception, often he or she will send a staff member in his or her place. We are always delighted to see these Congressional staff members. First, they signify that the senator or representative wants to ensure that he or she continues to have a relationship with our union.

Members of Congress get invited to many receptions, dinners, and other meetings. In addition, votes may be called at any time. It isn’t always possible to attend all functions in person. Sending a surrogate ensures that we know the member of Congress wants to keep the lines of dialogue open.

Second, experienced lobbyists know that developing relationships with a senator’s or representative’s staff is every bit as important as developing a relationship with the member. Members of Congress do not have the time to learn the intimate details of every bill that comes before them. They rely on staff to keep up with legislation, to understand its impact, and to advise them on whether to support it.

By developing relationships with the staff, we open avenues for discussing the details of proposed legislation that a member of Congress, who is usually looking at broadstances and policies, might overlook.

Lawmaking is a complex business. Changing one word or sentence in a law can have enormous impact on what it does. Close relationships with Congressional staff make us the experts they need to see the minor changes that can make big differences.


Rep. Robert Simmons (R-2nd CT) represented by Jonathan Martin, center, with IVP Newton Jones, and Director of Government Affairs, Bridget Martin.

Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), represented by Greg White (second from left) Justin French (second from right), and Garret Murch (far right), with L-229 and L-229 delegates, l. to r. L-229 Rec. Sec. Mike Fogarty, Steve Godhart, Jack Meade, IR Steve Beal, L-229 Sec. Treat. James Chase, L-229 Pres. Don Driwoodie, Jack Johndrow, Tom Sacco, and Joe Girolini.

Rep. Harold Ford, Jr. (D-9th TN), represented by Diana Oo, center left, with IVP Sam May, third from left, Intl. Pres. Newton Jones, fifth from left, IVP Othal Smith, far right, and delegates from Tennessee and Alabama.
LEAP CONFERENCE RECEPTION


Tony Harrison (right), a staff member in the office of Rep. Al Green (D-9th TX) listens intently as Intl. Pres. Newton Jones makes a point.

Other guests

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney (second from right) and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka (fourth from left) with (left to right) IVP Sam May, IVP Othal Smith, IVP Sean Murphy, IVP Larry McManamon, IP Newton Jones, and IVP Joe Stinger.


SMWIA Railroads and Shipyards Dept. Director Dewey Garland (center) with Intl. President Newton Jones and Dir. of Govt. Affairs Bridget Martin.

Intl. Pres. Jones talks with Celia Jackson Lee (D-18th TX), center, and Director of Government Affairs Bridget Martin.
The most important work of the week occurs when members meet their members of Congress

After all the inspiring speeches comes the real work of the LEAP Conference: lobbying on behalf of our members. Lobbying means meeting members of Congress and their staff in person, in their offices, to discuss the issues most important to Boilermakers and our families.

As those who are most successful at it always remind us, “All politics is local.” All politicians know who elected them to power and who they must satisfy to keep their seats or to advance to a higher level.

Prior to coming to Washington, LEAP delegates will have begun contacting the representatives and senators they hope to see, requesting appointments. Members of Congress attend many meetings and votes; last-minute appointments are not easy to arrange.

During the conference, the Boilermakers Department of Government Affairs (DGA) distributes background sheets to explain the issues that delegates will discuss with their senators and representatives. By focusing on a few of the most important issues, we can have a significant impact in the short time we’re in Washington.

The DGA encourages members to study these background sheets before going to the Hill, to have a copy handy for reference, and to leave a copy so the Congressman’s staff can study the issue.

But the LEAP delegate’s job is not done when he or she leaves the Hill. Once home, it is important to follow up with phone calls, letters, and visits to the Congressional home offices. An effective lobbyist is one who develops relationships.

LEAP delegates take Boilermaker message to Congress

Local 696 President Steve Gromala makes a point to Sen. Debbie Stabenow’s aides. LEAP delegates from all of the Boilermaker lodges representing members in Michigan go to the Hill as a group to show the full strength of our membership in the region.


Sometimes a busy Congressman will only have time for a brief chat in the hallway, as happened when Local Lodge 154 LEAP delegates met Rep. Timothy Murphy (R-18th PA) on his way back from a vote. Left to right, Local 154 Pres. Thomas O’Connor, Murphy, Tony Smarra, Kevin Miller, Raymond Doria, and Michael Ventrone were able to discuss a few issues before his next appointment.

Local 154 President Thomas O’Connor makes a point to Rep. Melissa Hart (R-4th PA), while L-154 members Stanley Wolfe (l.) and Michael Ventrone listen.

L-263 members Marlena Potts (l.) and Nellie Potts, a mother-and-daughter lobbying team, make use of the issue background sheets provided by the Boilermakers Department of Government Affairs (DGA) while speaking with an aide to Rep. Roger Wicker (R-1st MS).

Rep. William Delahunt (D-10th MA) speaks with L-29 member Jack Meade beneath a map of the Congressman’s district. Politicians are ever mindful of exactly who elects them and who they need to please to get re-elected.
Contract Transmittal Reports

The following local lodges announce recently ratified contracts with their employers:

**Local 5 — New York, N.Y.**
Effective Jan. 1, 2005 to Dec. 31, 2005, for five members who work in production at Quickway Metal Fabricators, Inc.

**Local 57 — Belleville, Ill.**
Effective Jan. 15, 2005 to Jan. 14, 2009, for 182 members who make gas heating appliances (floor, wall, and room furnaces under the product line name of White Mountain Hearth) at Empire Comfort Systems, Inc.

**Local 516 — Belleville, Ill.**
Effective Oct. 12, 2004 to April 15, 2006, for 35 members who fabricate enamel for manufacturers of cooking appliances and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems at Roesch, Inc.

**Local 27 — St. Louis, Mo.**
Effective Dec. 1, 2004 to Nov. 20, 2007, for eight members who perform maintenance work for Nooter Construction Company’s field services.

**Local 72 — Portland, Ore.**

**Local D76 — Sun City, Kan.**
Effective July 16, 2004 to July 16, 2007, for 10 members who mine gypsum rock for the National Gypsum Co.

**Local 83 — Kansas City, Mo.**

**Local 108 — Cincinnati, Ohio**
Effective Aug. 28, 2004 to July 31, 2007, for 110 members who work at Enertab, Inc., a multidivisional company providing products and services for the food and beverage, chemical and pharmaceutical, and power and utility industries.

**Local 132 — Galveston, Texas**
Effective Feb. 1, 2005 to Jan. 31, 2007, for 33 members who make pressure vessels for Farmers Marine Copper Works, Inc.

**Local 154 — Pittsburgh, Pa.**
Effective Jan. 1, 2005 to Dec. 31, 2005, for 34 members who make steel pressure vessels and storage tanks for Withupp Fabrication & Erection, Inc.

Settlement Highlights

**Same-Sex Domestic Partner Health Care Coverage**

MEMBERS OF LOCAL D375, Paulding, Ohio, approved a contract at Lafarge North America that extends their health care coverage to include same-sex domestic partners. Most Lafarge health care plans include this feature. Coving same-sex partners the same benefits as husband and wife is a growing trend in the United States.

Settlements

**Local 687 — Charleston, W.Va.**
Effective Nov. 6, 2004 to Nov. 4, 2005, for 12 members at Sistersville Tank Works, Inc.

**Local 744 — Cleveland, Ohio**
Effective Jan. 1, 2005 to Dec. 31, 2007, for members who perform steel fabrication at Eagle Mechanical, LLC.

**Local 1088 — Cleveland, Ohio**
Effective Oct. 21, 2004 to Oct. 22, 2007, for 16 members who work at Forge Products Corp.

**Local 1247 — Chicago, Ill.**
Effective Nov. 21, 2004 to Nov. 21, 2007, for members who work at A. Fink & Sons, the world’s leading supplier of forging die steels, plastic mold steels, die casting tool steels, and custom open-die forgings.

**You Don’t Get What You Deserve…**

UNION LEADERS, like those pictured here, work long hours to negotiate the best benefits they can for our members.

**…You Get What You Negotiate!**

Negotiating a three-year contract for Local 1247 members at A. Fink & Sons are, seated, l. to r., Wendell Baumstark, Jim Green, James Bishop, standing, l. to r., Steve Nelson and Theodore “Ted” Daniels.

**The Tricks & Traps of Collective Bargaining**

The collective bargaining agreement is a tool used by unions and companies to establish ground rules for the terms and conditions of employment. It is impossible to address every potential problem that may arise in a collective bargaining agreement. Often, grievances arise from situations where contract language is not clear or precise, or when employers change well-established practices that were discussed in negotiations but not specifically listed in the contract.

That’s why good note-taking and recordkeeping skills are so important. Notes can be used to clarify contract language and resolve grievances. Note taking fulfills three basic functions. First, it is a way to understand information when it is presented. Second, it is a way to get and evaluate information. Third, it is a way to store information for future use.

Here are some guidelines for taking notes during negotiations:

- Do not try to take verbatim notes. Studies show that notes that look like verbatim transcripts are too cumbersome and do not adequately convey the ideas discussed. Besides, no one can write as fast as most people talk.
- Take clear notes. Don’t take vague or sketchy notes. The idea is to take adequate notes that cover the main ideas or concepts that are being discussed.
- File in a safe place. If you can’t find the notes when you need them, they won’t do you any good.

If your notes are on napkins, scraps of paper, if you can’t find the notes when you need them, they won’t do you any good.
- Keep a time record in the left margin:
  a. Write down the meeting’s start time next to the first line of your notes.
  b. Every 15-minutes, write down the time in the margin corresponding with the notes you are currently taking.
  c. Write down the meeting’s end time.
  d. File all notes (or copies) in a negotiations folder and keep in a safe place.

Traps to Avoid:

1. Lack of notes.
2. Lack of identifying markers: i.e., date, time, location, attendees.
3. Loss of notes.
4. Lack of time.

Mellen, a financial services company, conducted a “Nontraditional Family Benefit Coverage Survey.” In 2001 and 2004, contacting more than 550 U.S. employers with an average of more than 5,000 employees. In 2001, only 19 percent of the companies studied offered domestic partner benefit coverage. In 2004, that number increased significantly to 31 percent, of which 60 percent have offered the coverage for less than five years.
Locals award service pins to members

Local 1, Chicago

JON R. SKERMONT, BM-ST of Local 1, Chicago, reports presentation of pins for continuous years of membership to the following:


Local D69, Waco, Texas

INTL. REP. L.D. SMITH and Jerry Fellers, president of Local D69, Waco, Texas, report the following pin presentations:

- 40 YEARS – Y.D. Goodwin; and

Local 169, Detroit

JOHN MARER, BM-ST of Local 169, Detroit, reports presentation of membership pins to the following:


Above: L. to r., Bill Segiet receives a 50-year pin from L-1 Pres. Jack Benz (in back) and BM-ST John Skermont. To Skermont's left are 30-year pin recipients Roy DiNovo, Gary Ames, Bill Morrin, Robert Knowles, and Emil Priessl Jr.


National Transient Lodge

NDT DIRECTOR BILL ALMOND and NTL ABR Gary Scott report presentation of membership pins to the following National Transient Lodge members:


above: L. to r., Clayton D. Sharp (60) and James A. Nix (50) receive membership pins from NTD Director Bill Almond.

Local 374, Hammond, Ind.

CHUCK VANOVER, BM-ST of Local 374, Hammond, Ind., reports presentation of membership pins to the following:


Local 580, Halifax

CHRIS SCOTT, president of Local 580, Halifax, Nova Scotia, reports the following pin presentation:

30 YEARS – Harold Sinclair.

Local 647, Minneapolis

PAUL PENDERCAST, BM-ST of Local 647, Minneapolis, Minn., reports the following partial list of pin recipients:

- 60 YEARS – Gene Archambault;
- 50 YEARS – Wes Bergston, Wm. Shape, Ken Shilts;
- 45 YEARS – Bob Moe, George Shilts;
- 40 YEARS – James Guss, Roy Heiska, Arthur Jackson, Curtis Kragero, Don Myers, Duane Omdahl, Thomas Quick, Gary Streed;
From the Editor's Mailbox

L-169’s Stickney wants rank and file to affect pension decisions

WHEN IT COMES to something that affects all of our lives, like the pension fund does, wouldn’t it be fair to request input from those of us who have invested a considerable amount of our lives to it? We are told and informed; changes are dictated by the trustees, from the rank and filenot has been an option, wouldn’t it be fair to respect input of our members or unsigned letters. We do not publish personal attacks on our members and their families. We urge you to read and consider the views expressed in our Letters to the Editor. Our hope is that all of our members are more familiar with the members out when we are sinking;

ROBERT L. BROWN, JR., L-627 Duncan, Ok.

Daughter grateful for L-7’s landscape memorial

MY FATHER RECRUITED his brothers John “Red” Evo, James G. Evo, and Francis “Duke” Evo; brothers-in-law George W. Harmon (who served 20 years as L-7’s secretary-treasurer), Stanley Melski, and Chuck Zimmer, and nephews William Melski and Raymond Otto to join Local 7. His brother Duke gave his life in the Buffalo Shipyards when he fell from the crow’s nest of a ship at the age of 18. My father worked hard for the Boilermakers and our house was always a-buzz with negotiations. He served as local president from 1947 until his death in 1958.

ROBERT L. BROWN, JR., L-627 Duncan, Ok.

The Buck Evoy family: Marie and Thomas “Buck” Evoy holding twins Thomas Jr. (Butch) and Margaret, with Roeberta in front.

The night before my father died, my mother told us to stay home because his Boilermaker friends wanted to visit. They were the last ones to say goodbye to my dad. At his wake, which was one of the last ones held in a home, the Boilermakers gave a great tribute to him. I am so pleased you (L-7 BM-ST Pat Lyons) have remembered all the deceased and retired members with this memorial landscape.

ROBERTA CRAWFORD, daughter of L-7 member Thomas “Buck” Evoy

Local 169’s Hall is grateful for pension

I’VE BEEN RETIRED now from the Boilermakers going on two years (L-169, Detroit). Every month that I receive my check I think about the old timers before me, who had the foresight to set this retirement program up. I’m glad no one ever paid attention to me when I’d rally and scream, “Put it in the check.” I hate to admit that I had very little foresight, but with age and time I understand things a little better. So thanks to the Boilermakers who made it possible for me to retire with dignity.

RICHARD HALL, L-169

Detroi, Mich.

Pensioners want a cost-of-living adjustment

THEY SAY SOCIAL Security is going broke. Yet every year they give us a raise. In three years we haven’t had a raise in our Boilermaker pension. Yet our insurance premiums were raised and our fee per prescription was raised. The Boilermakers have the best pension around. It would be difficult to find one better. But after three years without a raise, the retirees need a little help. Boilermaker pensioners, business agents, and our representatives in Kansas City have all gotten raises. It’s time to remember the Boilermakers of the past. It’s time for a raise.

BOBBY EADS AND NUMEROUS L-374 RETIREES

Hammond, Ind.

Editor’s Note: An annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) would be a blessing for our retirees, but the editors hope that the trustees of the Boilermakers-Blacksmith pension are more careful than the Social Security trustees were in establishing their COLA. Like the Boilermaker-Blacksmith pension, Social Security did not have a COLA when it was created; Congress simply voted occasional raises, the way our trustees have done since our plan was established. In 1973, Congress created a Social Security COLA to begin in 1975, but did not adequately fund it. By 1983, the Social Security trust fund was depleted. Congress had to raise payroll taxes, lower benefits, and raise the retirement age to bail the fund out. If Boilermaker-Blacksmith pension trustees create a COLA for our pension, we urge them to establish a funding mechanism that will last longer than eight years.

L-154’s MacNeill finds the true meaning of “brotherhood”

I RETIRED ON January 1, 2005, giving me 38 wonderful years as a field construction boilermaker. During this time, I was elected to my local’s Executive Board as inspector. I went to our commonwealth’s capital in Harrisburg, Pa., and I went to Washington, D.C., as a LEAP committee member. I also was elected to the last contract negotiation committee. I have never considered these positions of power or prestige, but as positions of service and a chance to give something back to my union that has given me so much. I received a certificate from the Red Cross for donating over 20 gallons of blood over the last 38 years. It’s better to give it than receive it.

Retirement is one of the great rewards of a union career. My pension lets me spoil my two grandsons, Connor and Brendan. Happy trails! JIMMY HEIRON L-13 Philadelphia, Pa.

Got something to say?

We welcome Letters of fewer than 150 words on topics of interest to our members and their families. We do not publish personal attacks on members or unsigned letters.

Send a Letter to the Editor:
The Boilermaker Reporter
753 State Ave. Suite 570
Kansas City KS 66101
Fax: (913) 281-8104
E-mail: dcaswell@boilermakers.org
Q: Why do members’ beneficiaries get different death-benefit amounts? Some of the figures are quite low. Also, why do beneficiaries have to pay income tax on these death benefits? We don’t pay income tax on life insurance.

A: If a participant in the Boilermaker-Blacksmith Pension dies before retirement and before meeting the eligibility requirements for an early, retirement or the vested pension, the participant’s beneficiary will be entitled to receive a lump sum death benefit equal to the total contributions credited to his account, up to a maximum of $15,000. If the amount is less than $10,000, no benefit will be payable.

The death benefit for a participant who dies after retiring is currently $6,000. Occasionally the Pension Trust becomes aware of deaths that occurred a number of years ago. In these cases, the amount will differ based on the rules in effect at the time of death.

The cash payments may be made to more than one beneficiary. In some cases not all beneficiaries could be found at the same time; the Reporter lists only payments that are made.

The death benefit is not a payment from a life insurance policy; it is a benefit payable through a Pension Trust Fund. Like all receipts from pension funds, it is subject to income tax.

Q: In the Nov-Dec 2004 Boilermaker Reporter, an article titled “Healthcare costs are a growing concern for all,” listed our healthcare costs of $750 per month (or $9,000 per year) as being below the national average. What is the national average?

A: According to a recent national study, the average monthly cost for a pre-65 retiree is $487 per month or $5,844 per year. For coverage of both the retiree and spouse, the average monthly premiums were $1,124, or $13,488 per year.

The Boilermaker-Blacksmith Pension, Annuity, and Health & Welfare funds generate many questions and comments from our members. In the past, we have attempted to include in the letters to the editor section. But we believe these questions deserve a more focused approach, since nearly half our members participate in one or more of these benefit programs. With assistance from Funds Administrator Dave Hansen and Participant Outreach Representative Edward J. Wiwicky Jr., the editors intend to make this column a regular feature in the Boilermaker Reporter.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Write to: Boilermakers’ Health, Welfare and Pension Funds, 755 State Ave Ste 570 Kansas City KS 66101. To protect members’ privacy, no names are used in this column.
## Lodge & Name

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## DEATH BENEFITS

The Death Benefit Plan under the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust has paid the beneficiaries of the following deceased members who were covered by the plan since the last issue of our publication.

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## IF YOU HAVE NOT yet been furnished this information, contact your local lodge, secure the beneficiary form, complete the required information, and forward to the Administrative Office of the Pension Fund, 7534 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 522, Kansas City, KS 66101, at the earliest possible date. NOTE: These additional death benefits can only be derived for members who worked under a collective bargaining agreement with an employer contributing to the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust.
CBI CALLS IT the Brooklyn Egg Shaped Digester Project. It sounds better than the Oblate Spheroid Digester Project, and describes the digesters better. They look like giant eggs. Three-million-gallon eggs, to be exact.

Working for Chicago Bridge & Iron (CBI) in the jurisdiction of Local 5, New York, N.Y., NTL members are erecting eight of these three-million-gallon egg-shaped digesters and two 2.4 million-gallon sludge tanks.

The project is being completed in Brooklyn, N.Y., at the New York Department of Environmental Protection’s New Town Creek Water Pollution Control Plant.

NTL members have been on the job since July 2003 and they expect to finish the project this summer.

At peak, there were 69 NTL members on the job. So far, they have worked over 120,000 man-hours with no lost-time injuries and are expected to work another 20,000 hours on the project.

The job site is very tight with limited “lay down” space so nearly all the parts have been off-loaded from the trucks and lifted directly into air — that is, put in place straight from the trucks.

Source: Dennis Dickinson, CBI Services
Administration’s budget doesn’t offer much for U.S. workers

Funding makes working families a low priority

T IS THROUGH the federal budget that a president and his administration show their priorities. The budget for fiscal year 2005 makes it clear that taking care of American workers is not a high priority for this administration.

While the U.S. loses manufacturing jobs by the millions each year, the White House is proposing a 60 percent funding cut for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, a program with a proven track record in helping manufacturers modernize, increase productivity, and create and retain jobs. All of this at a time when the current administration encourage corporations to outsource American jobs to other countries, the proposed budget would cut the Trade Adjustment Assistance program that retrain workers who lose their jobs because of our trade laws. When China continues to increase its share of U.S. imports and expand its practice of routinely violating trade laws, the proposed budget eliminates a China-specific trade enforcement and compliance program that Congress enacted in an effort to keep them in line. The Bush administration’s proposed budget cuts two vital program areas so significantly that we could see workers and low-income families fighting each other for scarce funds. The proposed budget calls for more than $550 million in real dollar cuts to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Employment Service (ES) programs. These two funding categories oversee a wide variety of job training and labor exchange programs, including vocational-technical training, employment services for unemployed workers, and vocational rehabilitation programs.

Since 2001, the Bush administration has asked Congress to slash nearly $2 billion in real dollars from these two program areas. The most recent round of cuts would force unemployed workers to use public assistance, cut labor market to compete with each other for government programs to help them get training and find jobs.

Social “insecurity” takes center stage

WHAT THE PROPOSED budget does not do is reassure working families regarding the two problems they most frequently identify as being serious concerns: healthcare and retirement.

Despite soaring health care costs for employers and workers alike, next year’s budget does nothing to shore up employer-based health care, which serves roughly two-thirds of insured Americans. And while states report huge increases in Medicaid spending that threaten their state budgets, the White House’s proposed budget calls for slashing Medicaid funding for states by $45 billion.

The budget’s only nod to our country’s mammoth healthcare funding crisis is a proposal to expand Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and to offer health care tax credits. HSAs are a poor substitute for healthcare insurance. They rely on taxpayers being able to predict their healthcare costs a year in advance, leaving workers vulnerable to catastrophic losses when they experience an unexpected medical problem. And while anyone with medical bills will welcome a tax credit of equal size, few people pay taxes equal to the hundreds of thousands of dollars that any complex surgery costs. These people would need to re-mortgage their homes, borrow heavily, or simply pass up life-saving medical treatment in question. No one should be asked to make such a choice.

Even veterans hospitals would get less funding under the proposed budget. While new injured veterans return from Iraq every day and the White House eyes other countries to attack, the proposed budget grants VA hospitals less in 2010 than this year. But it is when the proposed budget turns to retirement income that we see how radical and reckless it is.

It begins with a plan to privatize Social Security, a plan that has been widely criticized as radical, risky, and expensive — not just by Democrats but also by key Republicans.

And the budget goes on to propose undermining pension protections for workers by cutting federal pension guarantees, outlawing benefits that help workers in the event of a plant shutdown, and restricting the benefits that workers can earn at companies with financial difficulties.

Icing on the cake: more rewards for tax avoiders

TOGETHER, THE BUDGET’S inadequate funding for healthcare and retirement programs creates a level of social “insecurity” we have not experienced for decades. The Bush administration justifies these cuts in the name of “fiscal discipline.” They are necessary, the logic goes, in order to reduce the deficit.

But while the proposed budget cuts funding for programs that help workers, it rewards corporations with tax incentives that do not suggest “fiscal discipline,” but giveaways.

In the years 2001-2003, 82 of America’s largest and most profitable corporations paid no federal income tax in at least one year. Twenty-eight enjoyed negative tax rates — they got money from the federal government — despite enjoying U.S. profits of $44.9 billion. The White House and Congress need to recognize that workers impact the economy at least as much as corporations do. When workers feel uncertain about the future, the economy suffers. Funding federal programs that reduce financial insecurity can stimulate the economy and reduce the deficit.

Local S699 presents their last CAF check

WHEN LOCAL LODGE S699 President Joyce Allgeyer came forward to present a check to the Campaign Assistance Fund (CAF) on behalf of her members, the moment was bittersweet. Sweet because it was Joyce Allgeyer’s first year attending the LEAP Conference as a delegate.

Bitter because it was also her last. Lodge S699, a good lodge full of hard-working members who care about workers across this nation enough to donate money to CAF, will go out of business later this year when Emerson Tool Company closes its doors.

Emerson joins the growing list of American companies that are moving their factories to other countries.

Since 1969, members of S699 have made vacuum cleaners, filters, and accessories — products consumed by their families and coworkers.

They have been good workers and good citizens of their communities. Their union wages afforded them a respectable living. The money they paid their fair share of income, sales, and property taxes.

In addition, the lodge supported the community through donations and volunteer work. They gave regularly to the Salvation Army. When the city of Marinette wanted to renovate a local park, they supported the effort.

And when she delivered that check, she also delivered her first LEAP Conference experience. Joyce Allgeyer wrote a letter to the Brotherhood expressing her belief in what we are doing.

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Local Lodge S699 President Joyce Allgeyer presents the lodge’s final CAF check to DGA Bridget Martin, IP Larry McMahanon, and IP Newton B. Jones. Emerson Tools is closing the plant in Marinette, WI, later this year.

Newton B. Jones
International President

http://capwiz.com/boilermaker

http://www.boilermakers.org