

## SPRINKLER UPDATE

### A PERIODIC REPORT FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER SPRINKLER FITTERS U.A. LOCAL UNION No. 536

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#### *Bob's Report – My Two Cents*

Everyday Local 536 Sprinkler Fitters walk onto a jobsite carrying a five gallon bucket filled with tools of the trade. Throughout the day our members will continuously reach into their bucket and get a tool that will allow them to complete the task in front of them. If our members come across a sprinkler head that is dripping they may reach into the bucket and pull out a head wrench to tighten the sprinkler head. If a piece of trim is leaking on a dry pipe valve you may reach into the bucket and pull out an 8 inch pipe wrench to tighten the nipple. If you need to put up a hanger you may reach into the bucket to get a socket to tighten the beam clamp. To be successful in this trade you need to have the right tools to get the job done. The longer you're in the trade, the more tools you will accumulate to ensure that you will be prepared for whatever challenge you face.

Our Unions fight against our non-union competition is similar to what you encounter on the jobsite. However, all too often, when the Union reaches into the bucket for a tool that will improve the welfare of our members or create more jobs, the bucket is empty. If we are to strengthen our union and win the fight against our non-union competitors we must fill our union bucket with tools. How productive would you be on the jobsite if you only had a pair of channel locks to work with? As good as our members are we would not be able to install a sprinkler system with only a ratchet. Our Union is no different. We need many tools in our tool bucket if we are to be successful.

Recently, I proposed first to our Executive Board and then to our members that we develop and fund a market recovery fund as another tool in our fight against unscrupulous contractors. For those who are unfamiliar with how a market recovery fund works allow me to explain it to you. A market recovery fund is a fund by which we subsidize the labor costs of our contractors on a targeted project, without reducing our wage and benefit package, so that our contractor's labor costs are less, enabling them to take the job from our competitors. I have proposed funding our market recovery fund with a modest hourly contribution of 25 cents. In my opinion this is a small price to pay for a program that will create jobs for our members allowing them to make our \$47.40 per hour wage and benefit package.

While our union can't solve the national problems that have caused our economy to falter, we can put our union in a position to grab a larger slice of the pie to keep our working members employed and get our unemployed members back to work as we navigate through the worst economic recession to face our country. Let's fight to ensure the future success of our union by adding another tool to our tool bucket and another weapon against our competition.

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#### *Christmas Gift Cards*

Everyone knows that the holidays are particularly hard for our unemployed members and their families. That's why our local once again distributed Giant gift cards to all unemployed Local 536 members. I realize it's not a job, but at least it can bring a holiday celebration to the dinner table.

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*Frequently Asked Questions of the NASI Fund Office*

The number one question frequently asked of the NASI Fund Office is why isn't my prescription refill covered at the pharmacy? The answer is that there is a two fill limit at the local pharmacy on maintenance medications. You must use mail order for maintenance drugs or pay for the prescription and mail the receipt to Medco for reimbursement.

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*Tobacco Cessation Program*

Anyone interested in quitting the use of tobacco may take advantage of the free tobacco cessation program available through the NASI Welfare Fund. The Quit for Life Program is brought to you by the American Cancer Society and Free & Clear. These two organizations have helped more than 1 million tobacco users. For more information you may call 1-866-QUIT-4-Life or log on to [www.quitnow.net](http://www.quitnow.net).

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*Alien Sightings*

Please be reminded that if anyone comes to work on your job that is not a member of our Union please call the union office. Do not assume that I already know or someone else has called.

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*Salting*

If you are interested in Salting and would like more information please feel free to call the Union Office. Keep in mind that any member working for a non-signatory contractor not under the supervision of the Executive Board will be expelled from our Union.

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*Union Meetings*

February 2, 2011 – Special Meeting      April 6, 2011 – Regular Meeting  
March 2, 2011 – Special Meeting      May 4, 2011 – Regular Meeting  
Reminder: In accordance with our By-Laws, there will be no meeting in January.

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*Nomination and Election of Local Union Officers*

All UA local unions that have their election of officers scheduled for June 2011 received a letter from the United Association. The letter stated that since the United Association Convention will be held in August 2011, we would be unable to comply with the UA Constitution regarding the filing of credentials for convention delegates and alternates. Therefore the UA has requested that we advance the nomination and election of officers so that our local can file its credentials with the General Office in a timely manner in order to be properly represented at the convention.

The UA has also requested that the nomination and election of delegates and alternates to the convention be held on the same date as the nomination and election of officers, therefore eliminating the need for holding two separate nomination and election meetings.

Therefore in accordance with this directive from the United Association our members at the December 1<sup>st</sup> union meeting have determined that nominations for local union officers and convention delegates and alternates will be held on February 2, 2011 and the election of local union officers and convention delegates and alternates will be held on March 2, 2011.

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*Contract 2011*

This economy has everyone scared. Our unemployed brothers are scared that they will not be able to find a job before their savings run dry. Our members that are still fortunate enough to be working are scared that they will report to work one day to find out that they no longer have a job. I have talked to many people who have been in this industry for a long time and they all say the same thing, they have never seen it this bad. While the sprinkler fitter is not to blame for the ills that ail the economy I fully expect our friends at the API Group and SimplexGrinnell to try to take advantage of the situation. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Please attend all upcoming union meetings to add your input and opinions during the negotiating process.

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*Local 536 PAC Fund*

Authorization forms are easily available for those members that wish to participate in the Local 536 PAC Fund. Simply call the union office and we will mail a form out to you or see me after any union meeting to sign up. An effective political action program will be a key component in the fight to improve the welfare of our members. Wage and benefit increases are not only won at the bargaining table but are also determined in the voting booth and the legislative halls of our elected officials. We must seize this opportunity and act to bring about change. Electing leaders who will help working Americans and overturn anti-worker legislation designed to weaken organized labor will improve the livelihood of all workers, both union and non-union. Allow me to thank you in advance for putting Local 536 first.

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*Reminder*

Please remember to keep the union office updated with your contact information. Also, if a member becomes employed, unemployed, or changes employers please inform the union office. Making sure that our information is up to date and accurate will allow the union to enforce our work ratios and to ensure that our man-power availability list sent to inquiring contractors is correct.

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