

## 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*

During the last few months I have heard different opinions on whether we should be taking in any new apprentices given our unemployment situation. Most of the calls have been against taking in any apprentices until we reach full employment. Some members have been in favor of taking in new apprentices as long as they get to choose who to bring in. I've even received a call from a Grinnell helper who suggested that I put him into the second year apprenticeship class since he heard we would not have a first year class.

Based on what I have heard, not taking in any new apprentices would definitely make my job easier. Every unemployed member that I have spoken to as well as some of our employed members feel we should not take in any new members until we have full employment. I can fully appreciate their point of view, especially that of our unemployed brothers. However, not taking in any apprentices may not be in the best interest of our union and our members.

In fact, not taking in any new apprentices could severely hurt our ability to compete with our non-union competitors and may actually foster unemployment. Everyone knows that we are in a recession and while some would have you believe that our economy is improving it may actually be getting worse. While construction slows to a crawl in these poor economic times, there is increased competition for the small number of projects that are moving forward. In order for our contractors to compete we must be able to get our manpower costs down. One way to do this is by providing our contractors less expensive labor to work with our journeymen members to lower crew costs. Since most of our jobs require two men, the lower we can get our crew costs the more competitive we will be.

By not providing a continuous cycle of inexpensive labor our long term competitiveness may be hurt as well. When the economy begins to improve and construction starts to pick up we want to be able to fully take advantage of the situation. By having a competitive, trained work force in place we should be able to capture work while our competitors search to find and train a work force.

This does not mean we should start a class of twenty new apprentices, but it does mean that we should keep our apprenticeship program moving forward and continue a steady stream of apprentices moving through the program. We shouldn't have a class of four in our fourth year class and a class of fifteen in our third year class. While keeping a uniform number of apprentices in each class is very difficult, it should not prevent us from striving to do so.

Nor does it mean we should flood our contractors with helpers although your employer may encourage you to do so. The union should be the sole supplier of manpower. Anyone working as a helper not under the direction of our union will be disqualified from future membership in our local.

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*Awards Banquet*

Our Annual Awards Banquet/ Bull & Oyster Roast will be held on Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at the Champagne Room. Doors open at 12:30 PM. We will serve an extensive menu featuring pitted beef, pitted ham, Italian sausage, rotisserie chicken, BBQ chicken, pulled pork BBQ, and oysters. The Ravens versus Bengals will be shown on the big screen television. Door prizes will be given away after each quarter and some lucky guest will take home a television. In order to be eligible for our drawings you must R.S.V.P. in advance by calling the union office.

During halftime we will present Service Certificates and Pins to our Veteran Members and recognize our Outstanding Apprentices.

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*Salting*

If you are interested in Salting and would like more information please feel free to call the Union Office. Please 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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*Community Partnership Agreement*

On the evening of July 29, the Baltimore City Council's Taxation, Finance and Economic Development Committee and Labor Sub-Committee held a hearing on the Community Partnership Agreement at Dunbar High School. Over 500 people on both sides of the isle were in attendance. Organizer Warehime and I testified in favor of the bill along with Baltimore Building Trades president Rod Easter and Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO President Ernie Grecco. Testifying in opposition to the bill were Maryland Minority Contractors Association President Pless Jones, former Baltimore City Secretary of Labor and ABC lobbyist Sean Malone and ABC lobbyist Bruce Bereano.

If this hearing is of any indication, we are facing a tough fight to get this legislation passed so if you have not already done so, please contact your council person and tell them to support this bill. Both John and I will continue to lobby the City Council to support this legislation but we are facing a tough fight and we need your help

You can find contact information for the Baltimore City Council by visiting our website at [www.sprinklerfitters536.org](http://www.sprinklerfitters536.org) and clicking on the government information icon which will take you to a map of the State of Maryland. On the map, click on Baltimore City and it will take you to the contact information for the city council members.

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*Union Meetings*

October 6, 2010 – Regular Meeting      December 1, 2010 – Regular Meeting  
November 3, 2010 – Regular Meeting      February 2, 2011 – Regular Meeting  
Reminder: In accordance with our By-Laws, there will be no meeting in January.

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*Voter Registration*

If you are not registered to vote, applications can be found by visiting our website and clicking on the register to vote icon which will take you to the State Board of Elections web site where you may download the registration form. In order to vote in the November 2<sup>nd</sup> general election, registrations must be postmarked or submitted by October 12, 2010.

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*Election 2010*

The Maryland State and District of Columbia Council of the AFL-CIO has announced their political endorsements for the primary election to take place on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Visit our website under political action to see which candidates we have pledged our support and who have agreed to work with organized labor.

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*NASI Welfare and Pension Seminar*

In October, the NASI Trustees and Sprinkler Fitter Business Managers will be meeting to discuss the state of our welfare, pension and supplemental pension funds. If anyone has any concerns that they would like me to forward please contact me as soon as possible and I will see that they are addressed.

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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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*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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“When a man tells you that he got rich through hard work, ask him whose.”

----Don Marquis

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