FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER’S PERSPECTIVE

Organizing, investing, protecting

MOVING FORWARD

Dear Members:

It’s an exciting time to be in Local 292. We have not seen a work picture like this in 15 years. Though we have increased hours, we must not forget what it was like when the Book had 1,000 members on it.

Non-Union Competition. As we move into 2016, the competition with the non-union sector has become fierce. Shops like Berd Electric and Design Electric in the St Cloud area and Caltex Electric, EPS Electrical, City View Electric, and Extreme Electrical in the Twin Cities area, just to name a few, are competing with us every day. These shops pay much less and provide fewer benefits to their employees. Now is the time to add market share. Because the men and women of Local 292 are the best trained and hardest working electrical workers, we are well positioned to make these gains. Always remember: the harder we work today, the longer we will work tomorrow. If you know any employees that work for the non-union shops and you believe that they would be an asset to Local 292, please send them into the hall. There is no better organizer than all of you, our members.

Our Future. Over the last year-and-a-half, I have identified many areas of cost reduction. I have reduced unnecessary conferences, with some resistance. In addition, the office staff and the Reps have taken steps to reduce expenses without sacrificing service, and they have done a great job with this. I am always looking for ways to squeeze value out of every dollar. We need to live within our means. Ever since I joined the IBEW, I have believed that we should own our own building. I am tired of paying someone else’s mortgage, and I am trying to put this Local on a path to own that building of our own. I’m sure it will be long after I’m gone, but if we don’t start, it may never happen. I think it may be time to invest in our future.

Solar Update. It has been slow to begin, but as the frost comes out of the ground, the solar projects are going to be heating up. The Aurora project was awarded to Egan Companies and Mortenson has been awarded four other large projects. These projects may require anywhere between 200 and 400 electrical workers between Locals 292 and 343. As many of you know, over the last couple of years, the Minnesota Class A Journeyman’s license has been under attack. Many solar groups would like the State of Minnesota to either water down the Electrical license or institute a solar installer’s certificate. Either way, this would hurt the electrical industry. We must continue to protect our license. Safety, along with efficiency and quality, is still number one.

Summer Events. Please look for our Local’s summer events listed in this edition of Keeping Current. There is something for everyone: members, families, and retirees.

“If we work together, there isn’t anything we can’t do.”

Pete
Jennifer Gaspersich figured out what she wanted to do while still a junior in high school. “I could never see myself attending a four-year college, at least not right out of high school,” she recalls. “My aptitude test strongly suggested that I should go into the trades.” A member of Jennifer’s family was already a union electrician, and she grew up helping her family do projects and remodeling in their own home. “So I picked the electrical trade for my career,” she says. “I knew what I wanted to do. It was the electrical field.”

She took the tests for admission to Dunwoody Institute during the summer before her senior year in high school. A couple months later, Jennifer received a call from the Dunwoody office, wondering where she was. They said, “Why haven’t you shown up for the last two weeks of classes? We’re going to have to drop you from the program,” she remembers. The scheduling office at Dunwoody had acted so fast on her application that they failed to notice that she had one more year of high school to finish.

Jennifer attended Dunwoody the following year and finished the two-year degree program in 1997. “It was a good place to learn, with both bookwork and hands-on training,” she says. “I attended with a supportive group of guys. We were all excited to come to interview with Local 292.” This was the beginning of her career with IBEW Local 292.

Jennifer says she learned a great deal all through her apprenticeship time. “When I began my work with Local 292, I started in residential and quickly moved into commercial construction,” she says. “I was the kind of person that would constantly ask to try something different, something new. I think that helped me accomplish much more in my apprenticeship than if I had just waited for things to happen.”

A 19-year IBEW member, Jennifer is a Business Representative and the Market Recovery Director for Local 292, a position that she has held since June 2015. “From the beginning, I was given a clear picture by the Business Manager of what I was getting into during discussions prior to accepting a position in the office,” she says.

“You have to love this Local and want to make it a better place.”

Jennifer explains that market recovery is set-up primarily for organizing purposes. “That’s our top priority in market recovery,” she says. “The effort is not meant to subsidize contractors, but rather to organize nonunion shops and their employees. That’s our goal.” Jennifer says that she pays careful attention to all aspects of market recovery and works very hard to make sure that the project’s funds are used appropriately and responsibly.

Of course Jennifer finds numerous other responsibilities on her desk. She works with Eric Peterson to produce the quarterly Keeping Current newsletter. She also is responsible for the production of the yearly wall and pocket calendars, and she assists with work on the Local’s Facebook presence. “I help with other Reps’ duties and responsibilities when they go on vacation or during an emergency,” she says. “I have been involved in some contract negotiations which have been an eye-opener for me.” Recently Jennifer has also spent time training in the hiring hall.

“I try to absorb everything that I run into, working in the office, every day. I believe this will help me to better serve our members.”

“I come from a family where my mother was a union member,” Jennifer says. “She was a 38-year flight attendant for Northwest Airlines. She flew international flights and would be away from home for four to five days at a time.” Her mother Lynn’s time with Northwest included some turbulent contract years in the late 1960s and early 1970s. “Her union went through some difficult times, and this gave me a little background into union activities early in my life,” she adds. “My mother has always said she wouldn’t have had a positive career at the airline without her union.”

“My father, Steven, was a warehouse supervisor,” Jennifer says. “And unfortunately, for the majority of his career he worked for companies that didn’t have union involvement. Jennifer says that he fought very hard for his employees who were often asked to work long, late, and on weekends without overtime pay. “I remember him coming home late and talking about his crew having to work extra hours to make-up the quota for the day on their time. Whenever he would say, ‘Enough,’ or try to stand-up for his employees, it would cost him.” Jennifer says that on two of these occasions, her
JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTES
Keeping Up the Fight to Protect Our Work
By Ted Swenson, Metro Business Representative

Jurisdictional disputes are often difficult to resolve, but we must keep up the fight. Two successfully-resolved examples involved television monitors and fire caulking.

Television Monitors. We recently had a dispute with the carpenters over the hanging of television monitors at the new Vikings stadium. There are over 2,000 TV monitors on this job with many different mounting systems. Through hard work by many of our people and with the help of some of our contractors, we were able to win this dispute and the work was awarded to the IBEW. This same work is now also being awarded to the IBEW at the Target Center renovation. This does not guarantee we will be awarded this work on every job, but we must continue to claim and fight for it.

Fire Caulking. Lately there is a big push to have one contractor do all the fire caulking for an entire project. On a recent job at the University of Minnesota, the fire caulking was awarded to a contractor who was signatory to the carpenters. Even though the majority of the trades were against this, we were unable to resolve the issue in our favor for that project, and many hours of work were lost for our members. Fortunately, we were able to prevent this situation from happening again on a current project also at the University. Fire caulking is evolving to the point where every penetration must be labeled to show which listed system is being used. Of course this takes a great deal more time, so much work is at stake. When awarded this work, we must make sure we do a professional job since much more attention is being paid to these applications now than in the past. Yes, there is a lot of work in our area right now, but we have to keep fighting for our scope of the work. So, please: If you see another trade doing our work, or are not sure whose work it is, ask your steward or call the hall and speak to a Rep. You will remain anonymous, and we will look into the issue.

What you may not want to do today, you will wish you could be doing when times get slow.
AT THE LIMITED ENERGY JATC
Increasing Our Commitment to Hands-On Training

By Dave Dressler,
LEA JATC Training Director

In an effort to increase the level of hands-on training, the Limited energy JATC recently hosted a door strike installation class. A product trainer from ASSA ABLOY instructed 10 members of IBEW Locals 110 and 292 on the proper installation of HES electronic door strikes.

After a classroom session which covered product information and code requirements, each student was given the opportunity to install a strike. This exercise included prepping and cutting a door frame as well as final fitting and installation. We would like to thank Rodger Schmidt from ASSA ABLOY and Brian Johnson from HES for making it such a worthwhile class, and we are looking forward to working with them in the future.

At JATC, updates have also been made to the Structured Cabling and Raceway installation lab areas. We added freestanding racks, wire management cabinets, and patch panels that will allow apprentices to experience what it is like to terminate cabling in a realistic environment. Additions to the raceway installation lab area include 12 new testing stations. The new stations enable JATC staff to better test an apprentice’s ability to translate a classroom lecture into practical application.

Please feel free to stop by and take a tour of the lab and see for yourself. For location and directions, check the Minnesota State wide Limited Energy JATC website: www.statewidelea.org

IT’S A PERSONAL & FAMILY VALUE
Changing our safety “culture”

Local 292 Safety Committee

This spring the safety committee has been talking about how we can see some definitive improvement in our Local’s safety attitude and strategy, and we came up with several suggestions to improve our safety on the job site. Still, I think we might all agree that the most important adjustment we can make is to change our safety “culture.” Safety must be treated as a personal and family value.

Each and every one of us controls the most critical component to the safety of ourselves and our brothers and sisters: our own attitude toward and attention to safety. We cannot simply blame our jobsite, our coworkers, or the company for which we work. We have chosen to work under very hazardous conditions, and we need to address safety head-on, every day. Whether at work or at home, in traffic or on vacation, we need to decide what’s most important to us at that moment. Will we value our safety, our desire to come home to our family and friends, safe-and-sound; or will we be too willing to take short cuts and prioritize speed and corporate profit? I think we all know the correct answer.

Safety is a personal value. We need to protect ourselves and our brother and sisters on the job. Safety is a family value. We want to go home safe each day.
IT’S NOT A REALITY TV SHOW. IT’S REALITY!

Minnesota is a Political Island

By Ray Zeran, Political Coordinator

Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes, is also a political island. We have same-day voter registration, no-excuse absentee voting, on-line voter registration, and readily-available voter information at mnvotes.org. In addition, Minnesota has long been a leader in being respectful of working peoples’ right to organize labor Unions. Minnesota is now the only state in the upper Midwest that has not passed a Right-to-Work law. Right-to-Work (or RTW) laws mean lower wages for working people. For example, let’s compare working in Minnesota to working in Phoenix, Arizona, which is the sixth largest city in the country and is in a state with a Right-to-Work law. According to the IBEW.org jobs board, an Inside Journeyman Wireman in Phoenix can expect to make only 54% of the Local 292 Collective Bargaining rate here in Minnesota.

Every business in America provides a product for a price. Long ago, as an apprentice, I learned from a wise journeyman that, all we have to sell is our personal product of time and talents as we do a quality job. RTW is an assault on our ability to sell our time and talents for a fair price. Any RTW law is very much a “freeloader” bill that is designed to break-down the power of collective bargaining. To continue to combat RTW and to keep prevailing wages, we need to win elections. Thank you to all our members who participated in the March 2016 Minnesota Precinct Caucuses; there was a record turnout! But the battle goes on. We need to continue the fight by being voters and by being volunteers: voters on both Primary and General Election Days, and volunteers for phone banks and door knocks.

Political pundits say, “Elections have consequences.” Organized Labor says, “If we lose at the ballot box, we will lose at the bargaining table.”

No one is getting voted off this political island. In Minnesota, It’s not a reality TV show. It’s reality. All Union members need to be ready for the Labor 2016 political Campaign. And don’t forget to check-out the valuable mnvotes.org on the Minnesota Secretary of State’s website.

[Please: If your Political Precinct Caucus selected you as a delegate to your county unit or district convention, please let me know as soon as possible. And, Congratulations!]

LOCAL 292 “SENIOR SPARKIES” VOLUNTARY DIRECTORY

I would like to be part of the Local 292 “Senior Sparkies” Voluntary Directory. I understand this is only to be used to keep retirees in contact with one another. I am only willing to share the information I have shared below.

Name __________________________________________________________ Card No. __________________

Address ____________________________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State _______ Zip________________________

Phone (H) ___________________________ (C) ___________________________

Email ___________________________@______________________________

Signed ________________________________ Date __________________________
SOLUTION: T.E.A.M.

Problem: Construction Workforce Drug Use

Drug use in the construction workforce is a problem for everyone. According to a national survey on drug use, the construction industry has the second highest rate of abuse for industry sectors of employment. One contributing factor to this ranking is that drug abuse tends to be higher for males in general, and construction continues to be a heavily male-populated industry. The highest rates of drug abuse are with those individuals in the 18-26 year-old age group—new apprentices entering the workforce.

The National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependency reports that illicit drug use is frequently a contributing factor to the construction industry's high fatal and non-fatal injury rate of 35%. Drug use and abuse is at play in 38-50% of worker's compensation claims. The associated mistakes and unsafe behavior exposes everyone on a job site to possible injury or death.

Injuries and health problems stemming from drug use can be a drain on self-funded health and welfare plans. The goal of a robust health plan is to protect the funds from unnecessary depletion to ensure that the best quality of care is available when members need it; but injuries and health problems stemming from drug use have high associated costs. Examples of these could be in the treating of health problems such as pancreatitis, liver failure, and the use of prescription drugs to alleviate depression and anxiety caused by drug use. This costs all members money.

Drug use in the construction industry creates problems of loss of productivity and higher rates of absenteeism. According to the National Institute on Drug Use (NIDA), employees that use drugs are:

- 2.2 times more likely to request early dismissal or time off
- 2.5 times more likely to have absences of 8 or more days
- 3 times more likely to be late for work

In the production driven world of construction, the work still needs to get done on time and on budget. Unreliable crew members force others to work at a faster pace that may raise the risk of injury.

Consider the other more subtle ways drug use effects your workplace:

- Theft of personal tools or contractor tools
- Trouble and fights with co-workers
- Selling drugs to co-workers
- Preoccupation with obtaining and using drugs
- Higher turnover.

One of the most effective ways to address alcohol and drug use problems on-the-job is to fully utilize T.E.A.M., your employee assistance program, provided to members through the health and welfare plan. Safety directors and supervisors should utilize T.E.A.M.'s short-term counseling and assessment services to refer employees for help as soon as possible. Co-workers should tell their union brothers and sisters, "I'm concerned about you." T.E.A.M. Counselors are available to help you 24/7. Services are free and confidential. Make your workplace a safe and drug-free place in which to work. Call T.E.A.M. at 651-642-0182 or (toll free) 1-800-643-7710.

MEMBERS, DEPENDENTS

Scholarship application deadlines approaching

Although the application deadline for Local 292's Alexander & Krech Scholarship has already passed, members and their dependents may still apply for several 2016 scholarships during the next several weeks.

The IBEW Founders' Scholarship as well as several Minnesota AFL-CIO scholarships have April 30, 2016, deadlines. Applications for the IBEW Charles R. Brett Scholarship may be submitted through May 13, 2016, and the deadline for the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship is June 1, 2016.

Web links to the above scholarships, as well as to other conference and grant opportunities, may be found on Local 292's website.
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**June 17**

**Fish**

- Fox Hollow Golf Club, St. Michael, MN
- 8 a.m. Driving Range Open and Sign-In, Shotgun Start is 9 a.m., 18 Holes of golf will be followed by dinner and awards.
- Limited to 200 Members; Lottery if needed.
- Register by July 11
- Registration form below
- Contact the office for more info at 612-379-1292 or office@ibew292.org

**July 18**

**Golf**

- Wabun Park, 4655 46th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN
- Family Event (11 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
- No Registration Required
- Contact the office for more info at 612-379-1292 or office@ibew292.org

**August 20**

**Picnic**

**Local 292**

**Fishing Trip**

**Registration**

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Name _________________________ Card #:____________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip ___________________________________________________________
Telephone ___________________________ Bus Stop Pickup #: 1 2 3 (circle one–see above)

Send to:
Local 292 Fishing Trip.
312 Central Ave SE, Room 292
Minneapolis MN 55414

Indicate:
T-shirt size (circle)
S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Remember:
Register by June 6 for Fishing.
Limited to 50 members.

**Local 292**

**IBEW 292 Golf Tournament**

**Registration**

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Name _________________________ Card #:____________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip ___________________________________________________________
Telephone ___________________________ Handicap __________________ (circle one–see above)

Send to:
Local 292 Golf Tournament.
312 Central Ave SE, Room 292
Minneapolis MN 55414

Remember:
Register by July 11 for Golfing.
Limited to 200 members. Lottery if more than 200 sign up.
Retirements

Congratulations!

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Deaths

Active Members

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Profile: Business Rep Jennifer Gaspersich
Continued from page 2

father lost his job. “I feel that he would have been a great union member or leader for any group,” she says. “He saw too much workplace injustice.”

Jennifer and her husband, Paul, of 15 years, have two children, Lauren, soon-to-be 9 years old, and Griffin, now 11. “They keep us very busy,” she smiles. “They’re involved in multiple sports, such as softball, baseball, basketball, and swimming. Jennifer and her family enjoy hunting, fishing, and spending time outdoors.

Jennifer speaks proudly about her work with Sisters in Solidarity, the Local’s formally-organized women’s group. Started in 2013, “SIS” members meet on the fourth Thursday of the month, providing support for each other as well as doing volunteer work in the community. Jennifer is the group’s chair. There are some 40 members in SIS, with 10-15 attending any given meeting.

“We get together to help each other as needed,” says Jennifer. “We pass-on ‘tricks of the trade’ and have helped apprentices with homework.” Recent volunteer activities have included working at women’s shelters in the Minneapolis area and bagging lunches with the Sheridan Story weekend food program.

Jennifer enjoys both her position and working in the Local office. “It’s not always easy,” she says. “I’m fortunate to work with other Reps who give 100% to the membership. They all want to see this membership succeed, just as I do.”

“I’m extremely proud to be a Business Rep for Local 292.
It’s a great honor for me to be here.”
Keeping current April 2016

Very Successful Day

On the Hill

Jurisdictional Disputes

Keeping Up the Fight to Protect Our Work

By Ted Swenson, Metro Business Representative

Jurisdictional disputes are often difficult to resolve, but we must keep up the fight. Two successfully-resolved examples involved television monitors and fire caulking.

Television Monitors.

We recently had a dispute with the carpenters over the hanging of television monitors at the new Vikings stadium. There are over 2,000 TV monitors on this job with many different mounting systems. Through hard work by many of our people and with the help of some of our contractors, we were able to win this dispute, and the work was awarded to the IBEW. This same work is now also being awarded to the IBEW at the Target Center renovation. This does not guarantee we will be awarded this work on every job, but we must continue to claim and fight for it.

Fire Caulking.

Lately there is a big push to have one contractor do all the fire caulking for an entire project. On a recent job at the University of Minnesota, the fire caulking was awarded to a contractor who was signatory to the carpenters. Even though the majority of the trades were against this, we were unable to resolve the issue in our favor for that project, and many hours of work were lost for our members. Fortunately, we were able to prevent this situation from happening again on a current project also at the University. Fire caulking is evolving to the point where every penetration must be labeled to show which listed system is being used. Of course this takes a great deal more time, so much work is at stake. When awarded this work, we must make sure we do a professional job since much more attention is being paid to these applications now than in the past. Yes, there is a lot of work in our area right now, but we have to keep fighting for our scope of the work.

So, please: If you see another trade doing our work, or are not sure whose work it is, ask your steward or call the hall and speak to a Rep. You will remain anonymous, and we will look into the issue.

What you may not want to do today, you will wish you could be doing when times get slow.

Through hard work by many... we were able to win this dispute and the work was awarded to the IBEW.
In a little over 3 months from the time of this writing, the new home of the Minnesota Vikings, US Bank Stadium will have its opening day. The project which was started in December of 2014 with a ceremonial ground breaking has worked over 3.2 million worker hours. To date, it is the largest construction project ever undertaken in Minnesota history. Proudly done by union labor.
Local 292, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, publishes KEEPING CURRENT four times a year to open a communications channel between the local’s leadership and its members.

Postmaster: send address corrections to Local 292, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, United Labor Centre, 312 Central Ave. SE, Suite 292, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

IBEW Local 292 is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for our members and employees.

Business Manager/Peter Lindahl
President/Dan Ferguson
Editor/Michael Paul Weber

Keeping Current

April 2016

7 St Cloud Informational meeting. 6 p.m.
12 Retirees meeting. 12:30 p.m.
Stewards meeting. 6 p.m.
General Membership meeting. 7 p.m.
Brotherhood Committee. 4:30 p.m.
History Committee movie night. 6 p.m.
Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meeting. 6 p.m.
Executive Board meeting. 4 p.m.
Sisters in Solidarity meeting. 4 p.m.

May 2016

5 St Cloud Informational meeting. 6 p.m.
Cloud union hall, 2803 Clearwater Road
10 Retirees meeting. 12:30 p.m.
Stewards meeting. 6 p.m.
General Membership meeting. 7 p.m.
12 Stewards Dinner. 6 p.m. Invitation only
18 Brotherhood Committee. 4:30 p.m.

May 2016 cont'

19 History Committee movie night. 6 p.m.
23 Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meeting. 6 p.m.
24 Executive Board meeting. 4 p.m.
25 Retiree's Dinner. 6 p.m. Celebrating new retirees. Invitation only.
26 Sisters in Solidarity meeting 4 p.m.
30 Memorial Day. Office closed

June 2016

2 St Cloud Informational meeting. 6 p.m.
Cloud union hall, 2803 Clearwater Road
14 Stewards meeting. 6 p.m.
General Membership meeting. 7 p.m.
Brotherhood Committee. 4:30 p.m.
17 292 Fishing Trip 6:30 a.m.
22 Retirees Summer picnic
Starts at 11:00 a.m. Noon
23 Sisters in Solidarity meeting. 4 p.m.
27 Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meeting. 6 p.m.
28 Executive Board meeting. 4 p.m.

July 2016

4 Independence Day. Office closed
7 St Cloud Informational meeting. 6 p.m.
12 Stewards meeting. 6 p.m.
General Membership meeting. 7 p.m.
18 IBEW Golf Tournament Shotgun start at 9:00 a.m.
20 Brotherhood Committee meeting. 4:30 p.m.
21 Retirees Boat Trip
25 Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meeting. 6 p.m.
26 Executive Board meeting. 4 p.m.
28 Sisters in Solidarity meeting. 4 p.m.
292 Charter Date 1902