

Montana Laborer

Representing Montana's Finest



An official publication of Montana Laborers' Local 1686, LIUNA

June 2013

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

By Kim Rickard

I recently had the opportunity to attend a conference that focused on the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act better known as "Obama Care". The Laborers International Union of North America sponsored the conference and it was well attended by many Union and Management Trustees, as well as Plan Administrators from many of the Laborers' Health and Welfare funds from around the United States.

The Patient Protection Affordable Care Act (PPACA) was built on the concept to provide all with affordable and accessible health care. This is great, isn't it? Who doesn't want affordable accessible health care? Well as it turns out PPACA is an extremely complicated, cumbersome, law that hardly anyone, experts included, can understand and interpret.

Experts spoke on various portions of the law such as Health Care Exchanges and their date of implementation, essential health benefits, levels of coverage, individual mandate, how multi-employer plans (our plan) meets the individual mandate, and mandated costs imposed to our plans that will help to fund the Health Care Exchanges and medical research programs. Workshops were also conducted daily that encouraged and generated much dialogue from the participants at the conference. Much of the information that we received reflected that there are several unknowns associated with the interpretation of the law when it comes to Multi Employer (Union) health and welfare funds. Presenters agreed that when the act was developed it lacked any consideration to our type of plans.

Laborers' AGC Health and Welfare Trust is in compliance with many requirements of the act such as minimum essential benefits. These benefits have been provided to our participants long before the mandate. An example of this coverage is; ambulatory patient services, emergency services, hospitalization, maternity and newborn care, mental health and substance use disorder services, prescription drugs, rehabilitative services and devices, laboratory services, preventive and wellness services/chronic disease management services, and pediatric services, including oral and vision care. PPACA also requires a minimum coverage of a 60/40 plan which means that 60% of your health claims are paid by the insurance company and 40% of the costs are paid out of pocket. Our plans level of coverage is 80-20 which means that 80% of the reasonable and customary charges of your claims cost is covered by the plan and 20% of the costs are paid out of pocket. Our plan exceeds the level of

coverage required by the act and has for several years.

In the 2011 Montana Legislature, a bill to allow the State of Montana to create our own health care exchange was not passed by our representatives. However a bill was passed that prohibited Montana from creating a health care exchange. Due to this Montana is now going to have the federal government run our health care exchange. The Laborers' AGC Health and Welfare Fund along with all other multi-employer (Union) funds will now be required to pay a fee on behalf of each of our participants to the government to help fund the federal government run exchanges. This is forecasted to have approximately a \$180,000 cost to our H&W Trust in 2014. Looks like the plans that have been doing the right thing all along by providing affordable, accessible, above average coverage to our memberships are going to pay again.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2013, individuals in every state will be able to shop for health insurance and compare plans through the Marketplace. Effective date of coverage is set for January 1, 2014 under the health care exchange.

Many questions arose from the conference attendees on how the waiting period for insurance eligibility or lapse of coverage when a member's hour bank expires effects our members. We learned that this part of the act is subject to further guidance by the feds. Further clarification is needed because multi-employer plans that are maintained through a Collective Bargaining Agreement (Union contract) have unique operating structures and eligibility requirements based on the industry and occupation of the participants. Further comments are being taken by the agencies that oversee this part of the act for review and hopefully this will result in a clear interpretation of this part of the law and how it applies to our members who have hour banks expire.

At the end of the conference a consensus was reached by the attendees that there are far too many unknowns in PPACA. Each of the Local Unions and Trusts need to continually educate our memberships and ourselves on the complexities of the act as it pertains to the members of our local unions and participants in our health and welfare funds.

You can expect to receive information in the upcoming months from the Federal Government, State of Montana, and employers as the implementation date of the mandatory coverage closes in. You will also be receiving information from Laborers' Local #1686 and the Laborers AGC Health and Welfare fund that will be more specific to our plan. So be prepared to be inundated with information. But most importantly take the time to read the information carefully and don't be afraid to ask questions. You can contact me or the Laborers' AGC Health and Welfare Fund with specific questions. I will be expecting your call.



Kim Rickard
Business Manager

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Butte Area

Brothers and Sisters winter is over and Construction work is in the air. It has been a tough few years, but I am confident the economy will bounce back, and Laborers will be out in front leading the way as we always have. Here at the office, we are still negotiating contracts, securing safe working conditions, and representing the members on a day to day basis. Apollo Construction is building a water treatment plant in Bozeman, and is still looking to hire pipe layers, concrete hands and general laborers, for the project. Walsh Construction of Butte was awarded the Emma Park Neighborhood project and is planning to use all Union subcontractors.

The Big Hole Water Treatment Plant that was awarded to Swank Enterprises expected to start in May is not going to happen this year, it could be back on the table next spring. Sletten Construction was awarded the Anaconda hospital project and the dirt work work is expected to start in May. It's still too early in the season to report on upcoming work because not much is being reported at this time.

I am sure there will be some more building projects coming up as well as work on various water and sewer main projects. We usually give full reports at the general membership meeting in Helena the first Sunday of every month. The local information meeting is held the second Thursday of every month at the Butte Union hall, and both meetings can always use the support of the membership. If you have questions or concerns feel free to call Mick anytime day or night. I wish everybody a very safe construction season.



Mick Wonnacott
Field Rep

Mick Wonnacott
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156 West Granite Street, Butte, Montana

Billings Area

The first big project of the year is now underway. Cenex Refinery began manning up for pre-shut down work in March. First oil out started April 14 and the last unit to come back on line is scheduled for May 26th. Total man-hours for all crafts during the outage is 341,000 with 91% union labor. Currently there are approximately 160 laborers on this project. This the largest shut down Cenex has ever done.

The shutdown schedule for the Colstrip Powerplants has been pushed back by 1 week to approximately May 10th. Pre-job calls for an additional 42 laborers, split between day and night shift.

The Empire Parking Garage project in Billings is well underway. All demolition was completed in March and the actual build is now in progress. This is a six-story parking garage, with retail stores on the ground floor. Construction costs are estimated at \$11.5 million. Sletten Construction is the General Contractor.

March and April have been busy months for contract negotiations. At this time the Union has tentative agreements for the following contractors, which most likely will be ratified by the time this newsletter is mailed.

COP Construction

2 year agreement

\$.90 1st year with \$.20 diverted to H&W

\$.70 2nd year with \$.70 on wages and \$.10 for maintenance of benefit H&W only

Oftedal Construction

3 year agreement

\$1.00 1st year with \$.20 diverted to H&W

\$.75 2nd year

\$.75 3rd year

Weldtech

1 year agreement

\$1.00 with \$.20 diverted to H&W

The contract with Knife River has been ratified with very good outcomes.

2 year agreement

\$.65 1st year and \$.60 2nd year

\$.10 increase to retirement in 2nd year

Full maintenance of benefits for health insurance

Increase per diem from \$25 to \$35 per day for over-night travel

A dues check off clause

Agency fees for non-bargaining unit work

Meetings with Ostermiller and Western Municipal have been set to begin negotiations on these remaining contracts.

April 22nd was the final day for public comment on the Keystone XL pipeline. A poll conducted by the Pew Research Center on Tuesday, April 9th finds 66% of Americans support the completion of the northern route Keystone XL pipeline project. In January 2012, TransCanada split the project into two parts and offered a revised route for the northern leg that avoids the environmentally sensitive areas in Nebraska. Approval last year to begin construction of the 485-mile, \$2.3 billion southern leg of the project from Cushing, Okla., to Texas is mostly completed. A final decision by the Obama Administrative on the Northern Route is expected early summer.

This summer seems to be shaping up as a good season full of work. I look forward to making job site visits throughout the summer to meet with all the members. Have a safe work season.



Becky Riedl
Field Rep

Becky Riedl
406-697-0309 (cell phone)
1111 Main Street #9, Billings, Montana

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Great Falls Area

Projects in the Great Falls area this construction season include;

Sletten Bridge Projects in Montana include: The Sun River Bridge near Vaughn, the Dry Creek Bridge near Jordan, the Ashland East Bridge, the Maxwell Coulee Bridge north east of Jordan and the Yellowstone Bridge in Livingstone.

Sletten Building Projects include: The Animal Foundation of Great Falls, Northern Montana Hospital MRI Replacement in Havre, Parkview Village Apartments in Sidney, The Grandview Retirement Complex in Great Falls, The Billings Parking Garage and the Community Hospital in Anaconda.

Sletten Industrial Projects include: The Hebgen Dam Intake and Pasta Montana maintenance work in Great Falls.



Brian Boland
Field Rep

Tamietti Construction has started work on a bridge in the Vaughn – Manchester area and a bridge in Belfry.

Cooper Masonry projects include: An addition to the high school in Rocky Boy, the Town Pump in Browning, an addition to the lab at Calumet Refining in Great Falls and the Missouri River Office Building.

Ed Boland Construction has some remediation work at the Conoco – Phillips bulk plant in Helena.

Dick Olson Construction completed some foundation work on a couple of snow plow maintenance buildings for Cascade County.

ADF Group Inc has broke ground on their 100,000 square foot steel fabrication building just north of Great Falls. It does not appear we will have any work on this building but, a good chance of performing work on fabricating modules in the yard on mega loads heading to the Oil Sands in Canada once the plant is built and operating this fall. Please take advantage of any training classes that are offered, the skills you acquire are the key to opportunity and employment. Hope everyone has a great summer!

Brian Boland
406-788-1107 (cell phone)
1112 7th Street South, Great Falls, Montana

Missoula Area

I hope everyone faired the first part of the year well and are looking forward to summer and the possibility of going back to work (if you have not been). I would like to thank members Mark Hanson, Mike Curran, Mick Wonnacott, Austin McCleary and Alan Dauenhauer for their extra help and support when requested by their Union.

Daily we all hear comments about Union and non-Union both pro and con from both sides. A big part of my contribution to this newsletter will be a list of what all Unions have done for all working people and why they should be commended for these efforts instead of attacked for what they have accomplished for working people of the last century and beyond.

The list is as follows: Weekends without work, All breaks at work, including your lunch breaks, Paid vacation, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Sick leave, Social Security, Minimum wage, Civil Right Act/Title VII-prohibits employer discrimination, 8-hour work day, overtime pay, Child labor laws, Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), 40-hour week, Workers' compensation (workers'comp), Unemployment insurance, Defined Benefit Pensions, Workplace safety standards and regulations, Employer health care insurance, Collective bargaining rights for employees, Wrongful termination laws, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), Whistleblower protection laws, Employee Polygraph Protection Act (EPP)-prohibits employers from using a lie detector test on an employee, Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS), Compensation increases and evaluations (i.e. raises), Sexual harassment laws, Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), Holiday pay, Employee dental, life and vision insurance, Privacy rights, Pregnancy and parental leave, Military leave, the right to strike, Public education for children, Equal Pay Acts of 1963 and 2011-requires employers pay men and women equally for the same amount of work, Laws ending sweatshops in the United States.

I ask is that you keep this list handy and when discussions of Unionism arise amongst families, friends or co-workers show them the list. More than a few have forgotten how far working people in the United States have come and how the Unions have had a hand in getting all these items passed. I find it hard to believe that without Unions any of these protections would have come to pass. In fact in this day and age many employers would have you believe that they gave all this to working people out of the goodness of their hearts, when nothing could be further from the truth. It was from the work of the Unions and like minded people who got these accomplished for all working people!



Mick Mulholland
Field Rep

Mick Mulholland
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208 East Main Street, Missoula, Montana

Members' support and input needed on upcoming contract negotiations

By Jay Reardon, Field Rep

While we all wait patiently for spring and summer to hopefully arrive here in Montana springtime also brings us to the end of another legislative session in Helena. We are happy to report to our Public Employee members that the legislature took action to protect your defined benefit pension plan under PERS. This effort was supported by your union as the best solution to insure PERS becomes actuarially sound in the future. The changes are not without a cost to our members though, effective July 1 your contribution and the employer's contribution will increase by 1 %. There are also changes in the GABA (guaranteed annual benefit increase) for both current and future participants until the fund becomes actuarially sound. The Legislature also passed a pay plan bill for public employees and we will be entering negotiations with the Montana University System and the State to negotiate new agreements to implement provisions of the pay plan.

We also will be negotiating numerous other public employee

contracts this spring and summer and are hopeful that better economic times in the State will provide us the opportunity to negotiate wage and benefit increases for our members. As negotiations progress we will be giving members updates on the status of the negotiations.

Spring and summer also bring us the time that we can enjoy the wonderful recreational opportunities that Montana provides us and we hope that you can take the time to enjoy our wonderful outdoors with your friends and family. As you do that please remember to work safe and play safe and enjoy another wonderful summer in Montana.



Jay Reardon
Field Representative



T-Shirts, Hoodies & Hats for Sale at any Local #1686 office.

Call the Helena office for details.

JULY MEETINGS CHANGE NOTICE

In order for the membership and Executive Board to share the 4th of July holiday weekend with our families the July Executive Board and General Membership meeting has been changed to Sunday June 30, 2013 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm respectively

REMINDER

In accordance with the Rocky Mountain District Council of Laborers 2012 dues convention and the LiUNA Constitutional requirements, Laborers Local #1686 working dues are increasing.

Effective July 1, 2013 working dues will increase \$.25 per hour. This increase will bring the total working dues to \$.80 per hour

MONTANA



John S. Ramasko Training Center for Montana, Laborers AGC Apprenticeship, Training & Work Preparedness Trust of Montana

June through July 2013 Training Schedule

Asbestos Contractor/Supervisor Refresher 8 Hour, Space is limited, you must call to be put on list
6/11/13 Helena 8-5pm

Hazardous Waste Refresher 8 Hour, Space is limited, you must call to be put on list
6/13/13 Butte- 8-5pm

Flagging Certification, Space is limited, you must call to be put on list
6/14/13 Billings 8-4pm
7/12/13 Helena 8-4pm

Other classes; Space is limited, you must call to be put on list:
6/17/13 **Cleaning Masonry**- Helena – 8-4pm

6/18/13 **Wall Bracing**- Helena -8-4pm

6/21/13 **Scaffold User**- Helena 8-4pm

CSTOP Refresher 4 Hour, Space is limited, you must call to be put on list
6/14/13 Billings 6-10pm
6/15/13 Billings 8am-12pm

40 Hour Classes- Space is limited, you must call to be put on list

6/24-27/13 **Concrete** 40 Hour- Helena
7/8-11/13 **Hazardous Waste Worker** 40 Hour- Helena

7/15-18/13 **Pipeline Safety** 40 Hour- Helena

7/22-25/13 **Masonry** 40 Hour- Helena

7/29-8/1/13 **General Construction** 40 Hour- Helena

Call Now to Reserve Your Place in Class
(800) 408-9766

For More Information on Training, Visit:
MontanaLaborersTrusts.org

Go to MontanaLaborersTrusts.org for the most up to the date training schedule. Changes are continuously made to the schedule to respond to the Contractors training requests. If you have specific training needs, contact the Laborers' AGC Training Center for more information at: 800-408-9766

MONTANA

LABORERS



Laborers' Local 1686
P.O. Box 1173
Helena, MT 59601

Kim Rickard, Business Manager

Call Us Toll Free: (800) 988-1686

MontanaLaborers.com

Laborers' #1686 4th Annual Membership Appreciation Picnic

*Join us for the 4th Annual Member Appreciation Day and
celebrate with some food, refreshments, music & conversation.*

**Sunday, August 4, 2013
12 :00 pm**

**At Local #1686 Headquarters
3100 Horseshoe Bend Road
Helena, Montana**

Free Health Screening
A Nurse supplied from
the Laborers' Health and
Safety Fund will be present
conducting free blood
pressure, glucose and
cholesterol screenings (no
need to fast).

Free commemorative T-Shirt for each member in attendance

Special Notice: You may have been identified to receive a pin to honor your
years of service to the Laborers Union, Local #1686

August Union Meeting Change - Sunday August 4, 2013
Eboard meeting at 10:00 am & membership meeting at 11:00 am.