



# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Vancouver Island

Quarterly Newsletter

Since 1902

## Federal Economic Stimulus is a Short-Term Fix

The Federal Conservative Party and opposition governments are about to agree to a financial band-aid without addressing the reality of our collective financial problems today. Our governments are extolling the economists and banks philosophy that we need to spend our way out of our current financial crisis, that it will take the middle class to return to the mall, restaurant and car lots with cash (or credit) in hand to get our economy humming again, but the proposed stimulus packages do not address the reason we're in this mess to begin with. I've listened to all of the surface reasons of course from disguised AAA hedge funds to NINJA loans, but these are the surface reasons or the catalyst which got us into the mess, not the real problem.

The real problem can be found by looking at trends over the last three decades, during which big business and misguided governments have worked together to suppress workers wages to the point that the middle class is over their heads in debt, and don't own enough of the money in circulation to make any real long-term positive impact on the economy, even after we return to the mall. During this same time big business has suppressed workers wages to provide hefty returns for shareholders and big bonuses to their top executives effectively taking the money out of circulation, away from the middle class, and giving it to the rich, and I don't mean the summer

cottage rich. I mean the super-rich, and the super-rich do not spend money like 99% of the rest of the population, there are only so many mansions and massaratis they can buy. When the super-rich control a significant portion of the money like they do today, the richest 1% of the population controls about 25% of all of the money in circulation, and we haven't seen that percentage since 1929, remember 1929? otherwise known as the beginning of the Great Depression. In contrast to that, in 1979 around the time when the middle class had really made some headway and the richest 1% of our population only held 10% of the money in circulation, leaving 90% for the rest of us, and the only thing we were worried about back then was inflation. Of course the super-rich doesn't like inflation because when the cost of living rises workers wages rise, and the way the super-rich make their money is by investing in very stable interest bearing accounts, if inflation out paces those stable interest bearing accounts the super-rich lose money.

To affect any real change in our economy we will need a change in big business attitude giving back better wages to their workers, and stronger government regulations overseeing big business. I don't care what you do at work, no one is worth much more than a million dollars a year at their job, let alone the tens, or hundreds of millions of dollars the super-rich are getting paid in severances to leave their job today.

## Winter 2009

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#### **News/Notes:**

**The motion to close the Port Alberni Unit Meeting has been accepted by the International Office, therefore a meeting on May 6th, at the Tye Motel will be information only.**

# Business Manager's Report



**Philip M. Venoit**  
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

So, we trusted big business to run government to the point they've finally shot themselves in the foot in one of their experimental drive by's and now we're stuck paying the hospital bill! After most news reports these days I can close my eyes and literally visualize -- it hitting the fan while the financial guru's sit around the ouji board holding hands and looking for an answer, all the while continue

for these big jobs to ramp up their manpower.

Our Market Recovery Audit is wrapped up as well and found Local 230 was awarded 73% of the ICI and high-rise condo construction work last year, which results in a continuation of the 2% market recovery dues percentage for the year 2009. When it comes to construction market share, I truly believe there will always be a gap between where we are and where we ought to be, and we can all be very proud of the fact we are winning, but we are from the luxury of basking in that pride, we've been through some very tough times before and sat out to watch the non-union eat our lunch while we wondered when our market was going to ever return. I've heard the grumblings from some of our contractors that they cannot afford the increase coming in May, and some non-union contractors are rolling back their workers wages 15-20%? Meanwhile ours are going up. In recognition of that it is imperative for all of us to let the non-union worker know May 1st, the IBEW Journeyman wages and benefits in Construction will be at:

Wages	\$31.56
Vac/Hol	\$ 3.90
RRSP	\$ 5.10
Med/Dental	\$ 2.40
Training, etc.	\$ .87
<b>Total IBEW Construction package</b>	<b>\$43.83</b>

blindly defending the "Free Trade" mantra. Pull out of it 'cause, IT AIN'T WORKING!!!

I wanted to begin this report by saying many communities on Vancouver Island and around our country are hurting and hurting hard, it will likely take years for many to recover from a few unscrupulous misdeeds on a large scale.

I don't want to diminish the unraveling of the financial world over the last six months, but we can count ourselves lucky this time, at this time. With the amount of larger work coming up in construction and the private marine section I fully believe we will have very close to full employment again by this summer, and we will likely need a further injection of membership to deal with all the work we have coming by year's end lasting over the next two to three years. So, although we have seen some slowing in the construction and private marine section we have plenty of reasons to be very optimistic over the foreseeable future, and the surplus we built in the market recovery program is getting a very good workout in providing work for many of the members over this current downturn while we are waiting

In some cases there is almost a \$20.00 per hour gap between ourselves and our competition, this will create an unprecedented competitive gap between our contractors and the non-union contractors that we will have to overcome. The best way to deal with this is, we have to let every non-union worker know they should not be even thinking about a wage rollback, they weren't even close to our package before going into this economic downturn! Let them know what financial harm they are doing to themselves and their families ability to fulfill the North American dream of a middle class. If they are unhappy join the IBEW, tell their non-union contractors they need an increase to their wages and benefits, and if they're still unhappy get their workers to organize their contractors so we can continue to make market share gains for all electrical workers on Vancouver Island.

## IBEW Local 230 Building Society

The membership received correspondence letting you know we have moved to suite #103-2823 Jacklin Road this was not a premeditated move but a product of leasing. Between the cost increases and the time commitment the landlord wanted to tie us to were unfavourable to the Local Union, so we have moved around the corner, into a slightly larger unit, with a larger boardroom with the availability to perform class type training for groups of up to 15 members, with the idea that we can begin generating revenue to help off-set the monthly rent.

Within the lease we negotiated an option to purchase and we will be holding meetings with the members of the Local Units in April to democratically decide on this option in the first half of the year.

### Notice of Motion

*Whereas in 2003, IBEW Local 230 approved the motion to create a Building Fund.*

*Whereas in 2008, IBEW Local 230 approved the motion to transfer \$105,000 to the IBEW Local 230 Building Society for the purchase, renovation, addition to and maintenance of real estate bought on behalf of, and for the betterment of the membership of Local 230.*

*Therefore, I Bob Laquement, Treasurer move that, the IBEW Local 230 Building Society, use the aforementioned \$100,000 as a down payment on the purchase of real estate for the IBEW Local 230 Building Society.*

*Seconded by Pat Baxter, Recording Secretary  
The Executive Board of Directors unanimously endorsed the motion.*

### Unit Meeting dates and locations in April 2009.

#### April 2nd - Campbell River

Halbe Hall  
8369 Island Highway

#### April 7th - Nanaimo

Best Western Dorchester Hotel  
70 Church Street

#### April 8th - Marine

Esquimalt Legion  
622 Admirals Road

#### April 9th - Victoria

Pro-Pat Legion  
411 Gorge Road East

# Bill C-10 Expenditure Restraint Act

Attention: Honourable Prime Minister,  
Stephen Harper

Re: Bill C-10 Expenditure Restraint Act

Dear Prime Minister, it is with great disappointment and dismay I write you on behalf of the collective membership of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 230 on Vancouver Island. Our 200 plus members currently working in the Ship Repair Group of the Department of National Defence without a contract since 2006 perform and provide the highly technical electrical and electronic support for our Canadian Naval personnel serving at home and abroad.

Our members are those that ensure the Radar, Sonar, Diesel-Electric and Generator plants are functioning on-board, they provide their expertise in Communications and in the very worst case scenario the weapons required in the event the Theatre becomes non-negotiable.

These men and women give themselves devoted to their country, and expect a living wage for their efforts. The recently presented Bill C-10 seeks to undo the legally bound and long awaited Arbitrated Award days after the proposed implementation date of this regressive and reprehensible piece of legislation.

Many of our members are supportive of a conservative government, however this unwarranted attack on their constitutional rights to collective bargaining directly impact the ability for them to provide for their families will likely polarize them further than ever before away from the federal conservative party.

It has been barely over a couple of years since the Health Care Unions in British Columbia found a legal high-ground when attacked in a very similar

way, under the political cloak of financial restraint which garnered very little support for the BC Liberal Party, and in that instance the Court found an appreciation for the role of collective bargaining in promoting the core values of *“human dignity, equality, liberty, respect for the autonomy of the person and the enhancement of democracy.”*

It went further to say that in recognizing collective bargaining “as the most significant collective activity through which freedom of association is expressed in the labour context.”

Our members believed in the process and for the first time in recent history after their collective bargaining reached impasse turned to a mediative approach to help resolve their conflict, this process was delayed from months to years and finally awarded on January 20th., less than a month ago, and just prior to your government tabling this Bill which contains a retro-activity component nullifying the *“wage adjustment of 5.2%”* which was made in complete and sober recognition of the economic times we are in today. This Award was not some inability to foresee the future, it literally considered the very financial state, of the state!

The Summary intent of Bill C-10 as described by your government is, *“Canada’s economic action plan will stimulate the economy by pursuing the following goals: investing immediately in infrastructure; cutting taxes and freezing employment insurance contributions; stimulating housing construction; improving access to financing and strengthening Canada’s financial system; introducing measures to help Canadians; and supporting businesses and communities.”* Robbing middle class, blue collar working families of hard earned decent incomes is a blueprint for economic and moral bankruptcy, an action plan drafted by mindless ideologues whom likely spent this morning putting their right foot

into their left shoe, they believe they are prescribing the right approach but ignoring what every educated economist is saying. Now typically if you lined all the Canadian economists up head to toe you wouldn’t reach a conclusion, but today every economist in the land believes the economy will not correct itself until the middle-class return to the malls, restaurants and car lots of our country with cash or credit in-hand, but how can you expect that to occur if your government legislates the suppression of the middle class incomes all knowledgeable people understand necessary to truly stabilize the economy?

Finally, in Canada we have come to understand the simple principle of, “a deal is a deal”. Many of our members grimaced when they read their spectacularly average arbitrated award which they put so much faith, time and money into which returned meager value in consideration and contrast of the services they provide, and now to pull the rug from under them is some sort of poor taste political joke.

We are asking you, in future if collective begging is the conservative parties answer for dealing with financial crisis created by unregulated corrupt corporate cronies who relished in years of windfall profits, so hard working middle class Canadians can pay taxes and give up deserved wage increases so you can bail them out, please let us know, so they can reflect on the support you have shown them before they next return to the voters booth to decide whom they should support.

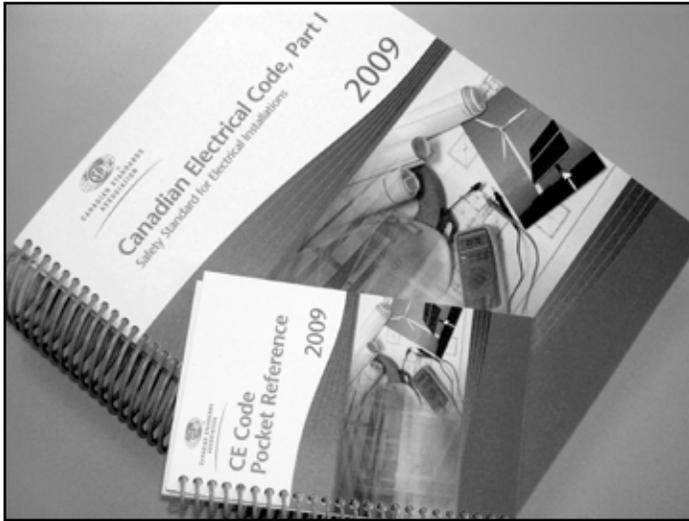
Sincerely,

Philip Venoit  
Business Manager/  
Financial Secretary

# Attention Apprentices Heading Off to Trade School:

Now Available:

The new 2009 Canadian Electrical Code



Part1, 21st Edition, Fully indexed, and easy to use, the 2009 CEC Part 1 and Handbook are available for \$125 in the Local 230 Office, or if requested we will bring to the Unit Meetings.



serving the electrical community

British Columbia Electrical Association

## April 15, 2009 Safety, Energy, and Efficiency Conference

Nanaimo Conference Centre 9:00 am – 5:30 pm

Trade Show 4:00 – 6:00 free with appetizers and beverages for those who preregister online at [www.bcea.ca](http://www.bcea.ca)

**Morning seminars**      What's new in lighting? & Lighting Controls

**Afternoon Seminar**      2009 CE Code changes and Z462 Safety Standards and Part II BCSEA

As an IBEW Local 230 member you are also a member of the BCEA so when registering please let them know you are with the IBEW Local 230. The Western JETS will cover the costs of any members attending this conference. Attention: FSR's please note the afternoon session will count as 5 points towards your required ongoing training.

# Fallen Brothers

On April 28<sup>th</sup> each year over 70 countries around the world recognize the Day of Mourning as a tribute to those workers that died while at work, while we're thinking of those workers, it is appropriate that we think of our own Local 230 Brothers that have passed on as well.

### Fallen Brothers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Initiated</u>	<u>Passed Away</u>
Colegrave, Ralph	7/01/1964	11/29/2008
Comer, Robert	11/01/1965	05/01/2008
Key, Worris	10/01/1964	01/20/2008
Meyer, Karl	06/01/1990	03/01/2009
Ollenberger, Robert	12/01/1979	02/12/2009

After decades of plying the trade we wish all the retirees a well deserved rest, with as much fishing and golf they can hopefully fill their days with!

### 2008 Retirees

<u>Name</u>	<u>Initiated</u>	<u>Date of Retirement</u>
Bagwell, Clayton	06/01/1992	05/31/2008
Champis, Louis	03/01/1970	03/31/2008
Hastings, John	01/04/2001	12/31/2008
Lever, William	05/01/1964	07/31/2008
Nisbett, David	07/01/1971	11/30/2008
Prouty, Ross	05/18/1972	12/31/2008
Shaw, Brian	09/01/1966	09/30/2008
Thompson, Arthur (Ron)	04/01/1971	05/15/2008

