

International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 70

ONSITE / INSIGHT

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2417 Larpenteur Avenue West • St. Paul, MN 55113
(651) 646-4566

March 2009



FOR AND BY THE MEMBERS OF LOCAL 70



**UNION STEWARDS....
PLEASE POST AT YOUR JOB SITE**

March 2009 Meetings

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, 3/05/09

5:30 pm—Local 70 Office

Twin Cities General Membership Meeting

Thursday, 3/12/09

5:00 pm—Rosetown American Legion

700 West County Road C in Roseville, MN

Arrowhead Region Meeting

Tuesday, 3/10/09

5:00 pm—Duluth Labor Center, Hall B

2002 London Road in Duluth, MN

For our future:

- Organizing
- Participation
- Training
- Experience
- Knowledge
- Safety

Dick Lally

Business Manager /
Financial Secretary

Ernest Lund

President

Jim Bratton

Vice President

Sandra Bremer

Recording Corre-
sponding Secretary

Gary Sycks

Treasurer



**CHECK OUT THE NEW WEB
SITE !**

www.iuoe70.org

Excerpt from February 2009 UCS News Service

LAYOFFS SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS; REPUBLICANS SEEK TAX CUTS

When nearly 60,000 layoffs are announced by a handful of companies in a single day, as happened in late January, you know that American workers are in real trouble. And by all accounts it is going to get a lot worse before it gets better.

With the national unemployment rate already at 7.2 percent, this chilling comment came from respected labor economist Lawrence Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute: "Unfortunately, the rise in unemployment we've already had may only be halfway to where we're heading."

The 60,000 layoffs came Jan.26: construction equipment maker Caterpillar said it was cutting 20,000 workers; drug manufacturer Pfizer, 8,000; Sprint, 8,000; Home Depot, 7,000; General Motors, 2,000. In many cases, these cuts followed earlier layoffs.

And while the cuts by big name companies have been attracting a lot of attention, workers at thousands of smaller firms are losing their jobs as well.

According to a report by payroll services firm Automatic Data Processing, small companies with 1 to 49 employees shed 281,000 jobs in December; medium-size firms with 50-499 employees cut 321,000;

Copy That

A CEO was scheduled to give the keynote address at an important convention so he directed one of his top employees, Smith, to write him a punchy, 20 minute speech.

When the CEO returned from the big event, he was furious. "What's the idea of writing me an hour long speech?" he demanded. "Half the audience walked out before I was finished."

Smith was baffled. "I wrote you a 20 minute speech," he replied. "And I gave you the two extra copies you asked for."

large companies with 499 workers or more dropped 91,000.

Some 4.6 million people were receiving unemployment benefits as the year began-the highest level since 1982-while six million more, who could use them, were not getting them because they were working part-time, because their benefits had run out or because they had given up looking for a job in a non-job market.

The layoffs "are not just numbers on a page," President Barack Obama said as he urged Congress to pass his economic stimulus package. "These are working men and women whose lives have been disrupted. We owe it to each of them, and to every single American, to act with a sense of urgency and common purpose."

The President and the Democrat-controlled Congress are proposing, albeit in different plans, more than \$800 billion in economic stimulus to get the economic stimulus to get

the economy moving and prevent further job losses. Money would go to a variety of job-stimulating programs ranging from road, bridge and school construction to development of more efficient cars to aid to states for clean water projects. There is \$43 billion for emergency unemployment assistance for states, and \$20 billion for more food stamps. President Obama's plan also included hundreds of billions in tax cuts for families earning less than \$150,000 a year and for businesses as well.

But congressional Republicans say much of the money in the Democratic and Obama plans would be wasted and would be better used as tax cuts, even more than the president was proposing. Observers saw the Republican position as the first real sign that Obama's effort at bipartisanship, while apparently being well received by rank-and-file Republicans, was being rejected by the GOP delegation in congress.

FROM THE DESK OF ERNIE LUND...

REALITY – that which has objective existence, and is not merely an idea.

This notion has struck home for me. All of my adult life I have battled my problem with weight. I have done most of the diets trying to think this or that was the answer. As I've grown older medical problems have added to my condition. Obesity is a disease and I'm at the point of either living a shortened life or with bariatric surgery extending my life without all the medical problems I have now.

I have decided I want to be around awhile and have a healthier life too, therefore I will be having the surgery. I do not as of February 17, have a set date, but hopefully it will be sometime within the next month. I will be out on medical leave once I have the surgery for approximately two to six weeks depending on which procedure I have done.

With this major change to my life I will have to be ever careful and I have the need to reduce my stress levels. I have tendered my resignation as President of the Local effective March 31, 2009. I will continue to be a Business Representative of the Local.

The decision to step down was not easy, but I am doing so to ensure I take care of me, health wise.

Enough about me....

Local 70 along with many Unions around the state is facing reductions of work forces in many of our bargaining units. The representatives are dealing with several economic driven issues everyday.

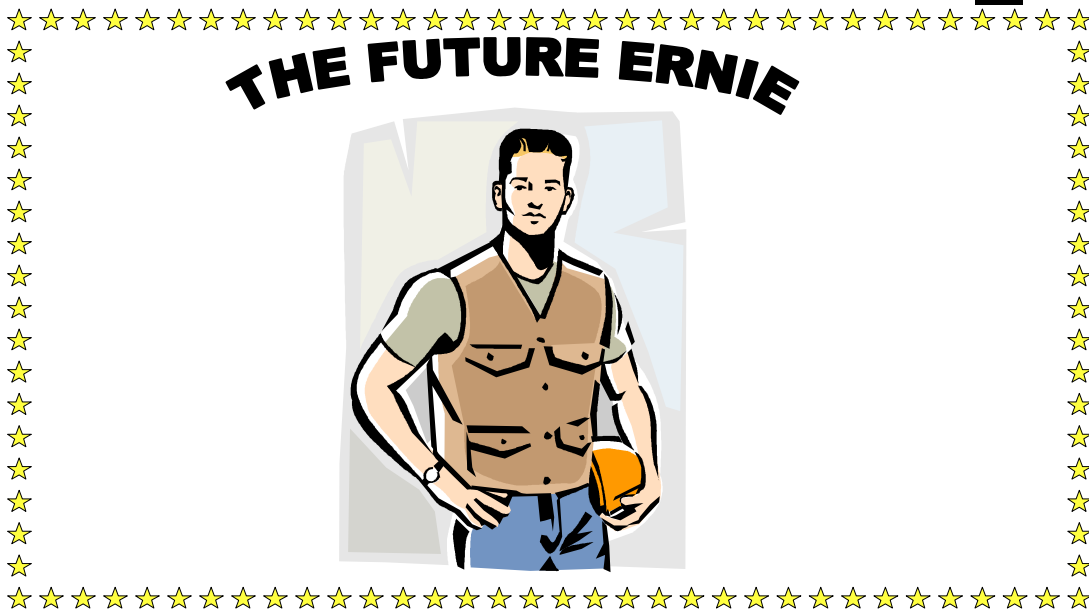
As funds are depleted and Cities, schools and private employers wonder what's next, we see employers cutting employees as their answer to controlling the never ending under funded, unbalanced budgets that each have to figure out. Budget woes should not be put on the backs of the workers.

Without the middle class the country is in my opinion doomed. Keep the working class working, start giving a little more to ensure we the middle class can remain the middle class.

Stop the Greed. Stay united and we will survive.

REALITY – that which has objective existence, and is not merely an idea.

THE FUTURE ERNIE



Excerpt from February 2009 UCS News Service

AFL-CIO, CHANGE TO WIN UNIONS MEET ABOUT UNITY

The painful split among union leaders that caused seven unions to break away from the AFL-CIO and form a new labor federation in 2005 may be healing.

A dozen union presidents, representing both factions, met in January to discuss their differences and released a statement saying they hoped to "create a unified labor movement that can speak and act nationally on the critical issues facing working Americans."

Although the reasons for the split were many, in large part they boiled down to one group—those who left, and formed the Change to Win federation—believing the labor movement had to put more energy and resources into organizing new members, and the other side, the AFL-CIO loyalists, believing that labor's future lay in devoting more time and money to building a stronger political presence and a more labor-friendly Congress and White House—which would in turn yield more pro-labor legislation, including laws that would aid in union organizing.

In the end, both sides were heavily involved in the 2008 election that brought huge Democratic gains. And while there has been some progress in organizing new members,

especially on the side of the "pro-organizing" forces, the gains union-by-union were not dramatically different than were made before the split.

The meeting of the AFL-CIO unions and the Change to Win unions was chaired by David Bonior, an influential, strongly pro-labor Democrat with strong ties to many union leaders.

Bonior heads American Rights at Work, a labor-backed group working for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. He had been an early candidate for Secretary of Labor in the Obama administration, but reportedly was offered the job and turned it down.

Leaders of breakaway unions participating in the meeting came from SEIU, Teamsters, UFCW, UNITE HERE and LIUNA. Leaders of unions that had stayed within the AFL-CIO structure came from AFSCME, CWA, UAW, USW, IBEW, and AFT. Also participating was the president of the unaffiliated National Education Association.

Among the more obvious presumed stumbling blocks that stand in the way of a reunited labor movement are: 1) who would lead it (there has been speculation about a possible "rotating" presidency"), and 2) what name would the new federation adopt.

CENTRAL PENSION FUND

SEMI-ANNUAL STATEMENTS

Soon the semi-annual pension statements will come out from the Central Pension Fund. Don't forget to check your statement to make sure all the information is accurate on the front and the back of your statement. If you have any questions, please contact our office at
(651)646-4566.

14,000 INSURED LOSE HEALTH COVERAGE EVERY DAY

Submitted by: Jack Dobier, Business Representative

In December and January, as the nation's unemployment rate shot upward-hitting 7.6 percent in January-the number of Americans without health insurance neared the 50 million mark.

Some 14, 000 people a day, nearly 100,000 a week, lost their health insurance during that two month span, according to a forthcoming analysis by James Kvaal and Ben Furnas, reports the Center for American Progress' Work Room.

The growing number of working families that are losing their health care coverage highlights the need for swift action on comprehensive health care reform.

The economic recovery package signed yesterday by President Obama offers a health care lifeline for jobless workers. Under the bill, workers who loose their jobs are eligible for a 65 percent subsidy to cover their health care premiums under COBRA for nine months.

COBRA is the program that allows workers to maintain for 18 months the same coverage they had through their employer if they can pay the premiums. But those premiums often exceed \$1,000 a month, a huge cost for an unemployed worker.

The economic recovery bill originally provided broader help for jobless workers, including allowing workers to enroll in Medicaid if they couldn't afford COBRA even with the new subsidies and enabling older workers to remain in COBRA until they qualified for Medicare. But as the Work Room points out, negotiators seeking bipartisan support considered Republican objections and stripped those provisions. Still, only three Republicans voted for the stimulus bill.

2009 SCHOLARSHIPS...

It's that time again...Scholarships are being offered through the Minnesota AFL-CIO. Check out their website at www.mnafcio.org and click on Scholarships 2009 or contact the Local 70 office at (651)646-4566 for a form. You can also contact Candace Lund at the MN AFL-CIO at (651)227-7647 or 1-800-652-9004



Obama's Own Words on Workers, Unions, Labor Law

The following remarks made by then President-elect Barack Obama were excerpted from an extended conversation he had with editors of the Washington Post Jan. 15, 2009, five days before he was sworn in as president.

"Here's my basic principal, that wages and incomes have flat lined over the last decade...(P)art of that has to do with forces that are beyond everybody's control: globalization, technology and so forth. Part of it has to do with workers that have very little leverage and that larger and larger shares of our productivity go to the top and not to the middle or the bottom. I think unions serve an important role in that. I think that the way the Bush Administration managed the Department of Labor (DOL), the NLRB (National Labor Relations Board), and a host of other aspects of labor management relations put the thumb too heavily against unions. I want to lift that thumb. There are going to be steps that we can take other than the Employee Free Choice Act that will make a difference there.

"I think the basic principal of making it easier and fairer for workers who want to join a union, join a union is important. And the basic

outline of the Employee Fair (sic) Choice are ones that I agree with.

But I will certainly listen to all parties involved including from labor and the business community, which I know considers this to be the devil incarnate. I will listen to parties involved and see if there are ways that we can bring those parties together and restore some balance.

"You know, now if the business community's argument against the Employee Free Choice Act is simply that it will make it easier for people to join unions and we think that is damaging to the economy, then they probably won't get too far with me. If their arguments are we think there are more elegant ways of doing this or here are some modifications or tweaks to the general concept that we would like to see, then I think that's a conversation that not only myself but folks in labor would be willing to have...So that's the general approach that I am interested in taking. But in terms of time table, if we are losing half a million jobs a month then there are no jobs to unionize. So my focus first is on those key economic priority items that I just mentioned."

Labor Applauds Obama's Choice Of Liebman to Chair Labor Board

President Obama has named Wilma B. Liebman, a ten-year veteran member of the National Labor Relations Board, as chair of the panel.

Liebman's appointment was applauded by the labor community, where she is viewed as thoughtful and sympathetic to the concerns of working people.

The Board oversees union representation elections and remedies unlawful practices by management and labor that arise under the nation's primary labor law, the National Labor Relations Act.

Three of the Board's five seats have been vacant for more than

a year because of conflict between former President Bush, who wanted candidates favored by business to dominate it, and Congress, which objected to his approach and refused to approve of his choices. Obama is expected to get the Board back up to full strength.

Liebman has served on the Board since November 14, 1997. First appointed by President Clinton, she is now serving her third term, which will expire on August 27, 2011.

Before joining the Board, Chairman Liebman served from 1994 to 1997 at the Federal

Mediation and Conciliation Service, first as Special Assistant to the Director and then as Deputy Director. She began her legal career as an NLRB staff attorney in 1974, then served on the legal staff of two unions: the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (1980-1989) and the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen (1990-1993).

A native of Philadelphia, Chairman Liebman holds a B.A. from Barnard College and a J.D. from the George Washington University Law Center.

30 Million U. S. Jobs at Risk Of Overseas Outsourcing

At least 30 million American jobs are at risk, at least theoretically, because of recent advances in telecommunications, according to an article in the *Monthly Labor Review*, a publication of the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The article listed 160 occupations considered capable of being performed in other countries. The occupations employ one out of every five Americans, in a wide array of job functions, pay rates and educational levels.

The jobs are not just telephone call centers and computer programming. They include mathematical science occupations, architecture, engineering and office and administrative support occupations.

Since 2000, corporations have shipped more than 525,000 white-collar jobs overseas, according to the AFL-CIO Department for Professional Employees. Some estimates say up to 14 million middle-class jobs could be exported in the next 10 years. Accountants, software engineers, X-ray technicians and others all are losing their jobs as corporations look for low-wage workers in countries such as India and China.

Meanwhile, notes the report, the jobs being created in the United States often are low-wage and don't offer health coverage or ensure retirement security. Nearly one in four American workers hold jobs paying less than \$8.85 per hour.

BLS says that among the most susceptible to being sent overseas are those jobs that produce information and do not require direct face-to-face contact. Among them: office and administrative support jobs with relatively low education or training requirements, including telephone operators, payroll and timekeeping clerks, and work processors typists.

Another 11 of the highest ranked jobs are professional and related occupations, which generally possess higher educational requirements. They include pharmacists, computer programmers, biochemists and biophysicists, architectural and civil drafters, financial analysts, paralegals and legal assistants.

The article said that among the occupations least likely to be shipped overseas are financial managers, food scientists and technologists, front-line retail sales managers, and training and development specialists.

IAM ENDS STRIKE AT AIRCRAFT PARTS MAKER

Striking members of the Machinists at Vought Aircraft in Nashville, Tenn. voted in January to end a 15 week walkout with a settlement they had rejected in November, after management threatened to bring in permanent replacements.

IAM Local 735 President Mike Worrell told the Bureau of National Affairs that the workers voted to accept the deal because of the threat of replacements and because "the economic climate changed dramatically" since negotiations began in 2008, with huge layoffs and spiking unemployment across the country.

An early settlement failed because of company demands to replace an existing defined benefit pension plan with a 104(k) defined contribution plan. Ultimately, the union accepted the change for workers with fewer than 16 years of seniority: their existing plan will be frozen and replaced with the 401(k).

The contract also calls for a boost in workers' health care contributions but a reduction in co-pays. The three-year contract also includes hourly raises of 75 cents, 50 cents and 50 cents, and some other gains for the plant's 1,000 workers.

The Nashville plant, which is 90 percent owned by the shadowy Carlyle Group, builds wings and tail sections for military, commercial and general-aviation aircraft.


Onsite/Insight

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Operating Engineers, Local 70**

2417 Larpenteur Avenue West
St. Paul, Minnesota 55113

(651) 646-4566

Statewide and Proud

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*HAPPY
ST. PATRICK'S
DAY*

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS:

Please make sure to update the Local 70 office with your new home address and telephone number if you have moved recently. We want to make sure you receive all important union mailings and publications to keep you informed. Please call us

**IUOE, Local 70
2417 Larpenteur Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55113**

First Class Mail