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9th District Progress Meeting July 23rd to 26th 2024 - Kauai, HI

We were welcomed in beautiful Kauai with a lei and a refillable aluminum water bottle which was extremely helpful and useful as they had water fountains all over the resort to keep everyone hydrated and reduce plastic waste. In a state where water surrounds 100% of the land masses... this was very thoughtful. 😊

I attended two preconference workshops. The first of these was the Women's Committee. Many Brothers and Sisters joined for breakfast with stories from women in the trade. They shared their journey from hearing of the opportunities to navigating access to career traditionally slated for men to struggling through the unique challenges of single mothers or simply never learning the basic use of hand tools so many of us were taught young depending on our family dynamics, gender etc. The key word is ACCESS. Many of them spoke on the simple hurdle of proving they wanted to do this... one hurdle our male counterparts do not have to sell to the interview board, less they "waste" a slot. Overall, the women felt gratitude for having been able to have the access to our amazing careers and training and the massive support they all felt along their journey.

The next meeting I attended was the EWMC Caucus. Big News!!! Keith Edwards, our exalted leader announced his retirement. Big news indeed. His last Day will Be August 21st. Keith spoke eloquently, like he always does, on the fact that only 10% of working Americans are represented by a Union. We as Union Members ARE a Minority! Keith Spoke on some of our accomplishments in the past few years including gender neutral language and advancement of IBEW Strong. He also reflected on the first EWMC meeting having 25 attendees, and the last one had nearly 800! Impressive indeed!!! In closing, he referenced how we all (members, leadership, councils etc.) need to be taking the Tiger Woods View... approach every opportunity, puzzle and obstacle with a 360-degree view... this is why he was so successful and if we see something from every angle, every point of view we will be armed and successful with our endeavors. We are all place holders for the next generation/successor. Our Job is to leave the positions better than we assumed them. This includes adjusting and promoting so that our Leadership looks like our Membership.

The following day we had the opening plenary which began with the Kapa A' ROTC color guard and presentation of gifts to the 9th District Leadership by Hawaiian locals. The invocation was presented in both English and Hawaiian. The Mayor of Kauai spoke from the heart regarding reuniting our nation and his hopes that V.P. Kamala Harris will do this! IVP Dave Reeves spoke on several Locals in the 9th District and their achievements and large projects coming up. A lot of micro grid and power generation projects are on the horizon in all of the 9th District. We are on a precipice of growth in the electrical industry, and we need to be prepared for what is coming! IVP Reeves also reflected on leadership and diversity and gave a shout out to our I.O. and BM leaders in those roles including Hawaii BMs, our BM, Sean Bagsby and a few others. He thanked them for all they do to advance the efforts. He cited 9th District membership numbers of 156,767 as of June 30th, 2024 and our IO President's plan to one million!

We watched several recorded videos from President Cooper regarding elections and jobs needing manpower right now!!!! The rest of the nation is in a boom... microchip plants, data centers, battery plants, EVTIP, solar panels and other manufacturing jobs. 1,800 unfilled calls as of the morning of the conference! We need to step it up in Organizing if we are to fill these calls!!!

IST, Paul Noble spoke on IBEW family medical with NECA (FMCP) and that 40% of the participants are non-construction. National effort to increase buying power for smaller Locals. IST Noble also talked about the first increase to NEBF benefits since 1947! He then went on to recall the devastation brought to Labor by the Trump Administration. Cited in his first days actions of rolling back workers protections, workers' rights and the Janis Decision and produced no jobs, no infrastructure bill which equates to no plan. That's what he brought while in office whereas Biden has been the most Labor friendly president of all time! His Buy American Bill, and priority of returning manufacturing to the US has been instrumental in rebuilding our middle class.

We then heard from the 7th district VP, Leroy Cincio and NECA's Ted Upphole, their Executive Director, he was lighthearted and good spirited when speaking with us. He said he knows we can't always agree on every topic, but if we choose the topics we can agree on that the relationships can grow from there. He believes we can win through cooperation, not adversarial relationships. Our common goals include safety, DEI, business development, organizing, market share and mental health.

Next, we heard from Austin Keyser, IVP 4th District on COPE, organizing and ETA awards. He also spoke on the popular topic of what Biden has done for labor and IBEW. He told an interesting fact, the Biden Campaign was struggling when Biden went to our IO President and asked simply, will you stand with me? We have supported Biden and he has not failed us since then. He turned to the professionals when wanting to write the "Build Back Better" plan. WE WROTE THAT!!! We added PLA for Federal projects language, Buy American mandates and apprenticeship utilization. We are able to bring our values and dignity for the common worker to all of AMERICA, not just the Unionized states. We elevate everyone when we win!!!

We didn't win any awards, 😞 but we were acknowledged for Cope Contributions I believe. Average contribution from 413 members of \$106 dollars for a total contribution of \$207, 832. Also collected here today was \$6,828.

We had many speakers talk about how good Biden has been to us and how now we are on the agenda! We need 4 more years with VP Harris. Many also spoke on the importance of winning Nevada and how members need to hear from their Unions more than they hear from Fox News, the news channel that has a disclaimer "We here at Fox News are not responsible for the news reported." Seriously!!??

Local 1186 spoke on wanting to organize their island and specifically D.O.D work and the struggles there. They also touched on the importance of early policy setting less a mechanic becomes an electrician as he works on electric vehicles.

On Thursday, Aaron Jones with the 9th District leadership referenced the acronym SMART goals, which stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound goals. In a nutshell it is a way to vet and shape your time spent on any given project or task. We all go down the rabbit hole once and a while. He also talked about what power looks like. The Senate is currently 51% Labor friendly candidates. We set policies and rules that govern our industry nationally. In the 9th District we have 37% market share, we DO NOT make the rules, nationally, we have 30%. It is time we change who writes the rules locally in our industries!!! WE the industry leaders should be setting policy. With \$500 billion dollars of work coming our way it is estimated we will need 74,000 new members to maintain 30% market share! That is just to maintain!!! Everything we do is a campaign!

9th District Political Director, Gretchen Newsom referred to just the 185 projects in the 9th District that are valued in the billions of dollars. She also talked about grass roots politics and the importance of Nevada. Website to reference is BetterinaUnion.org/Harris. California and Oregon are #2 priorities for state races. Gretchen then referenced Project 2025 and encouraged all of us to read it in full. It is a handbook on how to kill unions, women's reproductive rights, transgender equality and many more topics the Labor Movement has always supported. It includes removing PLAs, repealing Davis Bacon, breaking union pensions, ending overtime and many more devastating topics... doom and gloom is all I read. She did mention that IBEW has a plan too and to visit Facebook and Instagram to read it.

Adrian Saucedo, the Director of Organizing presented a slide show of our numbers nationally and ultimately indicated retention is as important as securing new members for our growth locally and nationally.

Overall it was one of the better 9th District Conferences I have attended with ours being #1 of course. 😊

Respectfully Submitted,

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Senior Organizer
IBEW Local 46**