

April 2013 Issue 4 Volume 3

**Annual Membership Meeting
Registration**

Barb will begin sending out registration forms this month for the annual membership meeting. This year the meeting is being held at Stone Bridge Resort in Branson, Missouri on July 18—20, 2013.

Please send the information back as soon as possible so we can get an accurate count of rooms and people attending. This year we will be staying in two and three bedroom condominiums.

If you want to check out the facility you can view it at <http://www.stonebridgebranson.com/>.

The resort is located on the west side of Branson near Sliver Dollar City off state highway 76.

Negotiations Begin in Texarkana

We begin negotiations this month in the Texarkana Division. The Business Manager, Steve Hensel, has always been very reasonable to negotiate with. He is retiring this year and has brought the Union President, James Morphew, in as a replacement. James serves on the JATC and is very familiar to our members there.

An increase in the Southwestern Health and Benefit Fund was not been scheduled but is expected in the next 12—18 months. This after the .25 increase January 1st of this year.

The work outlook will be discussed among other issues when we sit down for the first meeting next week.

I hope James is as good to work with as Steve has been.

2013 Arkansas Legislative Session

I mentioned last month about the legislative session in progress. This year for the first time Republicans outnumber the Democrats in the Senate by a 21 to 14 majority, and 51 to 48 in the House of Representatives. In addition the Speaker of the House, Davy Carter, is a young attorney and banker who is a Republican from Cabot.

The Senate President pro tempore who is also a Republican is Michael Lamoureux from Russellville.

So far this group has overridden the Governor's veto on two bills dealing with abortion and just overrode his veto on the voter required identification bill (requires picture ID to vote).

The other main issues yet to be decided are the funding for the proposed new steel mill in Osceola, and SJR 5, the proposed constitutional amendment to give the General Legislature the authority to pass laws regulating damages that may be awarded by the courts, commonly referred to as tort reform. Stay tuned.

In this issue:

Membership Meeting	1
Negotiations in Texarkana	1
Arkansas Legislature	1
From the Director	2

2013 Events

- NECA NOW April 14—17, 2013
Phoenix, AZ
- Arkansas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Mtg. Branson, MO. July 18—20, 2013
- Bd. Of Governors meeting and trade show & convention Oct 12—15, 2013



From the Director

Visiting with our members from around the state most of you are still slow — the up surge in the economy has not landed quite yet.

Last month there was a bill introduced to eliminate the prevailing wage law in Arkansas. I don't have to tell you that would be very detrimental to your ability to compete with the non-union contractors. Prevailing wage rates in most of the metropolitan areas are equivalent to the local inside rates of our agreements. The bill did not get out of committee.

Another bill sponsored by a legislator who happens to be a general contractor wants to give more latitude to contractors allowing employees to be classified as private contractors, issuing 1099's rather than W2's, and having to pay the costs associated with having employees. I don't think this bill will get out of committee.

The Fort Smith Division is scheduled to meet with several IBEW representatives to look for ways to become more competitive in the Fayetteville / Springdale / Rogers area. This area has the lowest market share in the state. We are hoping that through our discussions we can get a foot hold in that market.

Kent Pellegrino, who served as the Arkansas Chapter Manager during the end of 1995 to 1996, called and said to wish all that remembered him well. He just turned 66 and is retired and living in Topeka Kansas.

Jonathan Scurlock, Memphis Chapter Manager, just received the arbitrator's decision on the Memphis negotiations and sent me a copy. It's always interesting to read an "award" (the arbitrator's decision). Looks like the Chapter did okay. In most arbitration decisions I have read, they tend to "split the baby" or give each side something. It is good to keep informed on what is going on with other forms of arbitration and I appreciate Jonathan sharing this.

I don't know if you have heard or read anything from Dr. Benjamin Carson who made news recently for comments he made at the national prayer breakfast. Whether you like Dr. Carson or not he sparked a lot of interest generated by his comments. One thing I noted was the poem by Mayme White Miller his mother read him. The poem is listed below. Dr. Carson was born into poverty and is currently Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Yourself to Blame

If things go bad for you And make you a bit ashamed Often you will find out that You have yourself to blame

Swiftly we ran to mischief And then the bad luck came Why do we fault others? We have ourselves to blame.

Whatever happens to us, Here is what we say "Had it not been for so—and—so Things wouldn't have gone that way."

And if you are short of friends, I'll tell you what to do Make an examination, You'll find the faults in you...

You're the captain of your ship, So agree with the same If you travel downward You have yourself to blame.

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