I would like to thank the members who took the time to participate in member-to-member walks, phone banking and signs in the November elections. I would also like to thank all the members who took the time to vote in this important election. At state level we have elected a labor friendly House, Senate and Executive Council as well as reelecting Governor John Lynch.

For the first time in many years the Building Trades will be able to use our energy to propose legislation that will help all working families. Now we have the opportunity to level the playing field for our contractors rather than playing defense to the continued attacks that undermine collective bargaining and a livable wage and benefits.

On August 17, 2006 President Bush signed the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PPA). While the major provisions of this law do not take effect until 2008, the trustees were forced to make some hard decisions in anticipation of the changes brought about by the PPA. Everyone should have received the notification letter on the changes to the pension plan. The future accrual rate effective November 1, 2006 has been cut in half reduced to $45. Also effective Nov.1, the early retirement reduction factor has been increased to 6% per year on all future service credit. If the plan is in critical funding status as defined by the PPA, in 2008 the early retirement factor of 6% will be applied to all credited service on anyone who retires on or after November 1, 2006. The PPA changes the way pension plans fund benefits effective in 2008. First it requires plans to move to an updated mortality table. In the case of our local plan it increases life expectancy by 2 years or 24 pension payments. The PPA also decreases the amortization schedule from the current 30 years to 15 years, essentially doubling the amount of money required to pay off the unfunded liability of the plan.

The PPA also sets a minimum funding level for pension plans. Multi-employer plans must achieve and maintain a minimum funding of 80%.

- Plans funded 80% or better are considered stable or in the green zone.
- Plans funded below 80% but better than 65% are classified endangered and in the yellow zone.
- Plans funded below 65% are in critical status and in the red zone.

Our current status is 50.5%. When the law takes effect in 2008, if our funding level has not improved to 65% or better, we will be in critical status. At that time the trustee’s will be required by law to implement a rehabilitation plan that moves the plan out of critical status within 10 years time. The rehab plan must include annual funding targets and may include;

- Reductions in expenditures
- Reductions in benefit accrual rates
- Elimination of subsidies
- Plan benefit redesign
- Increases in contribution rates
- Revised investment strategies
- Anything else that may improve the financial outlook of the plan

Once the plan is out of the critical zone and moved to the yellow or endangered status a new rehabilitation plan will have to be implemented to move the plan into the green zone. The timetable to move the plan from yellow to green is 10 years plus a five-year extension if necessary. In the next few years the trustees’ will be working with our professional consultants to devise a rehabilitation plan to move the pension plan to the required funding level. As painful as these changes are today, moving the plan toward a minimum of 80% funded and eventually fully funded will only secure the pension plan and ensure it will be able to pay benefits for our current and future retirees.
Apprenticeship & Training

Kim Trisciani
Training Coordinator

Medical Gas Installation class:
Saturday’s January 13 – March 17, 2007
Forty-hour class!

Orbital Welding:
We are ready to get started! Forty-hour class will be scheduled to start on Monday, January 8, 2007.

UA Valve Repair:
There is an apprentice class that will start in January if any journeymen are interested in participating please sign up!

Community Service:
Our apprentices have established a food drive for the holiday season! They are making donations of can goods and other non-perishable food items for donation to a local food pantry!

We are asking the ENTIRE Local 131 MEMBERSHIP to assist us with this effort.

PLEASE attend the December meeting and bring your non-perishable food item to assist our apprentices with this effort!

REMINDER...All UA Welders and Medical Gas Installers must provide continuity submittals every six (6) month’s. If you are unable to meet these requirements on the job please make arrangements to do so prior to expiration at the training center!

CHECK OUT THE UA WEBSITE
WWW.UA.ORG

Manpower Hour

Steven D. Lachance
Business Agent

Work in the area for local contractors continues to hold its own with no new hiring or reductions in force. Out-of-town contractors working in the jurisdiction is complete, with no new activity as of late. We have members working on the road in Virginia, Nebraska, Arizona, Utah and Minnesota. The New England area and the whole Northeast is not hiring at this time.

We currently have:
* 143 working for local contractors
* 9 working for out of town contractors
* 29 working on the road
* 58 out of work

The Outage at Seabrook Station is complete and from all accounts the Outage went well. We will have a post Outage meeting in January to discuss ORO11. The next Outage is scheduled for April 2008.

RTH has the Conway Hospital job and will be looking for Licensed Plumbers and Pipefitters with Med Gas Certifications in December sometime.

Federal Piping has been picking up work and using our members to supplement his added workload.

NPI has work at Catholic Medical Center, Budweiser, North Conway, Gorham and Keene.

Amari Plumbing has had some emergent work and used our members to pull it off on time.

Congratulations to HVAC Unlimited and their new business partner Chadd Lalime. We welcome the expansion of their business.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, the new membership cards are due to arrive this month. When they arrive, I will need to review them all and mail them out to all of you. So this is a good time to make sure that all the information I have in the database is correct.

Office Bits & Bytes

Mo Demers / Office Administrator

If you have recently moved or gotten a new cell phone, it is very important that you contact this office directly and give us this new information. I think many of you are under the misconception that filling out a ‘Change of Address’ card at the Post Office means that everyone on the planet gets your new address from them. That’s not how it works. Filling out that little card just means that for a few months anything the Post Office receives with your old address on it will be “forwarded” to the new one. After that courtesy time has passed, they start returning mail with the old address back to the sender. If the sender (me) doesn’t have your new address, you won’t get your mail. We don’t know where you are. So whenever you move, it’s really important that YOU tell everyone you can think of about the new address. The Post Office is not going to do that for you. And while you’re at it, try to remember to give us new phone numbers at the same time.
The Bulletin Board

QUARTERLY NOTIFIED
>> Union Meeting <<
WED. December 13, 2006

Scheduled Guest Speaker
Bill Turner
UA International Representative

“United we bargain, divided we beg.”

You throw away the outside and cook the inside. Then you eat the outside and throw away the inside. What is it?

Member News

Condolences to the family of
James L. Sullivan
Who passed away Oct. 12th.

Brothers and Sisters,

I recently attended Local 131’s union meeting and was questioned again about the purpose and results of the District Council. I will do my best to try and explain their thought process.

The UA, which has over 300,000 members and many Locals, District Councils, and Pipe Trades Associations, felt that establishing the District Council in Northern New England could help our market share in Residential and Service work. They did not make this decision without some thought. We need to realize that the UA oversees all of us: They have seen what works in different areas and what doesn't. They decided to create this District Council and asked the three Locals to support it. The plain and simple fact, however, is that all the Locals do not support it. There have been letters back and forth to the UA in protest of the District Council. There have been a couple of meetings with the UA in Washington DC. What has come out of those meetings and letters is a mandate from the UA for the Locals to work together to help all three Locals increase our market share. The UA has seen District Councils work in other areas of the country and they feel very strongly that by working together we can achieve good results. There isn’t a power plant, paper mill, or any job that was built by just one person. You, the members, need to trust and support your elected Business Manager and Business Agent and let them focus on working with the District Council instead of beating on them at every union meeting. This really takes away from them focusing on what should be done.

We have made some progress within the District Council. New Hampshire has 3 school projects ongoing; something that hasn't happened in many years. Federal Piping and the Amari Company are still in business. The state of Maine has contractors from around New England finally bidding on their projects. Vermont is focusing on service training to all their apprentices. We have protected the apprenticeship ratio in New Hampshire. We have met with the Tech-Colleges in Maine to try and get their apprenticeship program recognized by the state. We are establishing a database of non-union service contractors in all 3 Locals. We will be establishing a database of non-union workers. It is a huge undertaking to try and get back a market that we have all lost. This is not an easy undertaking, but if we all try to understand what we are trying to accomplish and work together I feel very strongly, as does the UA, that we can begin to make progress on regaining our strength back. I have always felt that if we have more members and more contractors then we would get better wages and benefits. This is what we are trying to accomplish.