



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Vancouver Island

Quarterly Newsletter Since 1902

UVIC Dining and Dorms



Drone shot of the Dining and Dorms project at UVIC
photo from January 2022, off UVIC's website

In early 2017 we sat down to draft the IBEW-BC Provincial Council's Affordable Housing White Paper (located on the 230 website) to provide to the new minority BC government. That broad document provided solutions to the problems our members and communities around BC had been struggling with for well-over a decade from the lack of action by our previous "free-market" radicals, the BC Liberal-Conservative Government. Our document was picked up by the new minority NDP/Green government immediately, and within months they were employing portions of the IBEW's White Paper. One of those solutions was, our position on Colleges and Universities around BC and their addiction to international students to help them with their budgetary needs. Our document explained how attracting international students without providing any dormitories artificially raised the cost of rental stock in the surrounding areas, making rental affordability a problem for domestic youth, and those who could not afford to purchase housing. The new government met with colleges and universities around BC to offer low-interest long-term loans to these institutions, to utilize in building necessary dormitories, and I'm incredibly pleased this initial strategy document work has translated into on-the-job-work for about 75 Local 230 members for a year.

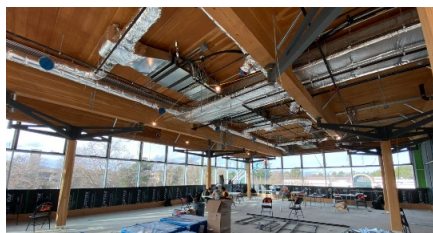
The tender documents came out in four separate portions, power and distribution, security, building automation, and audio/visual, and Houle Electric was awarded all four tenders.

This new Student Housing and Dining project includes two new buildings totalling almost 350,000 square feet and will include conference facilities and two 225 seat tiered classrooms in addition to the new Dining Hall with a serving capacity of 8700 meals per day, and an additional 621 new beds of student housing. Once finished this project will become one of the biggest Passive House projects in Canada. A "Passive House" is a standard of energy efficiency, a method to reduce a building's ecological footprint, curbing greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonizing buildings.

Local 230 members are contributing their knowledge and hard work on projects like this today, to build a green and sustainable future for the students of tomorrow. All at the same time creating a chilling effect on rising rental stock in the greater Victoria area.



Rendering of the project. Sourced from UVIC.



New Dining Hall in Building 1. Sourced from UVIC

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Member's Dues Auto-Deposit

To send dues payment via e-Transfer, email dues@ibew230.org

Remember to include your name and IBEW *card number in the e-Transfer "message" section

*Note: your card number is printed on your yellow dues receipt

News and Notes

We are pleased to announce our office doors are now open to the public. Thank you all for your patience during the last two years.

Unit Meetings are back and held in-person. Please check our Facebook page for updates!

Upcoming Training

North Island

May 7	Conduit Level 1	in-person
May 14-15	Fire Alarm	in-person

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Business Manager's Report



Phil Venoit, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

Earlier this year Treasurer Livingston and I presented a \$5,000 cheque to the Red Cross for BC flood relief, with the Provincial and Federal Governments matching, the cheque became \$15,000 to help those in the lower mainland from the devastation we all witnessed. The idea of “paying it forward” is important, as sooner or later we will be in a situation where the ground below us or the water around us will shake a little and create a whole host of problems we will need to rely on those we’ve helped in the past in turn to help us. A collective making those who call BC their home stronger for it.

I’ve appointed a new Shop Steward in the Weapons Shop at FMF Dockyard Daryl Smith. Like most institutionalized workplaces around the country employing older workers are capitalizing on extended periods away from work to use as a retirement barometer, and so many changes are occurring with the workforce including changing out a good number of our stewards. Thanks, Daryl, for stepping up!

We received WorksafeBC’s draft policy on our Get Flushed Campaign. The BC’s Building Trades recognized the need to raise the standards for all construction trades to a level of human respect and dignity that would equal any other workplace standard for washroom facilities.

I may have once again overstepped in the colour of my language and passion on the belief that our members deserve the same basic dignity in a lit, heated, flushable, water closet with dispensable soap, paper towels, hot and cold running water to properly wash our hands before and after, if necessary. Along with other simple common-sense practices like a posted cleaning and maintenance schedule like all restaurants, gas stations, and workplaces in BC. Based on the interim report, I thought it was important to change the tone in the conversation, so we purchased a few “outhouse” wall calendars and sent them off to some WorksafeBC bureaucrats with a simple note explaining, “let’s get this done this year.” And we will continue to attempt to move this forward to bring about some common decency for all construction workers in BC. But I need your help! I want you to send me pictures of your worst maintained johnny on the spot porta-potty on your

jobs before the end of June. The best of the worst picture will win, the same outhouse wall calendar, a case of T.P. and breakfast with the Business Manager. The pictures need to be before you used (or hopefully refused to use) the facilities. I’m not looking forward to receiving these pictures, but I think they are necessary to help WorksafeBC and the government understand what construction workers have to deal with while deemed essential during a global pandemic. The construction industry has been deemed “essential” while treating its workforce like they are “disposable,” it’s bullshit and it needs to change. This will help with that change. If I receive enough great pictures maybe, we will make our own calendar for 2023 to distribute it appropriately and continue the campaign until this gets the recognition and changes it deserves.

We signed Long Electric to the Inside Construction Agreement as Brother Maarty Long has started an electrical contracting firm and made “the Right Choice” to sign with the Union moving forward. Brother Long’s business model is to continue in the residential and light commercial marketplace South Island and is making great inroads in the Westshore communities. We also signed Tribute Electric out of Nanaimo to the Inside Construction Agreement as well who work more in the utilities and high voltage industry.

At the Joint Electrical Health and Welfare meeting we reviewed the statistics from EQ Care, for the first 4 months, since it’s implementation. Of 1367 members, 52 people have registered (or 3%). There were 16 medical consultations: 13% of those were held between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, 56% were held between 5:00 PM and 11:00 PM, and 31% were held between 11:00PM and 9:00 AM. In terms of member satisfaction and wait times, 92% of the patients rated their experience with five stars, 98% waited less than 2 minutes to see a Care manager and 72% waited less than 15 minutes to see a doctor, (18% waited 15-25 minutes, and 10% waited longer than 25 minutes). Online medical consultations have been coming for years, but COVID-19 really pushed the roll-out of the service, and looking at early results, it appears to be successful so far. If you are having difficulty in accessing your G.P. or having difficulty finding medical help, please try out this service. Then please fill out the survey afterward so we can continue to provide ever better services to you, the members.

The Joint Bursary Committee met to provide for the continuing No Meeting required due to C-19 for your schoolbooks and bursaries policy. The next meeting is scheduled for late June please keep an eye on the Newsletter for updates or changes on this policy. This is also a reminder to all apprentices to get your application in within 90 days of finishing school or you run the risk of not receiving the bursary and associated book money. We are currently reviewing the college “required” books at all public colleges and universities to see if we can possibly increase the book allowance reimbursement for each school year. The difficulty is the colleges do not appear to be requiring the same books, so we will likely be looking at a simple capped value, but will still require the receipts.

The end of year report from the Industry Training Authority is out and Local 230 performed well in terms of Province-wide Sponsorship. We are the 9th largest sponsor with 258 registered apprentices.

We are the 4th largest sponsor of women apprenticeships at 13%.

We are ranked as the 10th largest sponsor of Indigenous Apprenticeship at 7%.

This is a great achievement, moving us to better mirror our communities is an important step for Local 230 to make.

The BCBCBTU Wage Policy Meeting resulted in the construction unions accepting and adopting the Labour Relations Board Agreement between the CLRA and BCBCBTU outlining our requirements for the upcoming year in construction bargaining.

Both Parties are due to present their proposals on June 1st and we have 97 days set aside scheduled until April 30th, 2023, to bargain a renewal to 48 Provincial Construction Agreements.

The Vancouver Island Metal Trades Council has met too many times to count over the last four months, to discuss severance issues and the calculations the employer has been using to determine the pay-out, vacation credits and their calculations, the non-payment of the 5-Day Sick Pay/Leave matter, pending arbitration between the three companies, and the current round of bargaining. The company’s position in bargaining has been nothing less than disrespectful of our collective membership that has played out like a bad joke on themselves, if they had of only approached the unions with the respect we collectively deserve, we could have resolved this in a month. Instead, it took a year for them to move off a 0% increase when our members had to work round the clock throughout a pandemic. So, the message was for all your efforts were worth nothing, zero, zilch. That’s just horrible messaging in terms of what they think of the skills and abilities and loyalty our membership has shown. At the time of writing, the members have voted 98% of strike action and the Company’s last and final offer was rejected by the membership, and we have countered with a reasonable offer we believe will be acceptable by the members.

With COVID restrictions being lifted we will be increasing our organizing efforts: I’ve hired two new organizers Russ Alexander for the South Island and Rob Mangat to help with the North Island. Please welcome them and assist with any pertinent information. Our new organizers and business staff attended the IBEW Winter School on “Grass Roots Organizing” to help them with their new workload.

We also held two full classes of Code of Excellence and one class of Mental Health Awareness for the members at the end of February with International Instructor Jim Watson. Thanks to the members who continue to better themselves and our Local 230 community with knowledge, and thanks to Brother Jim! It’s always a pleasure, and a treasure when you come out to the Island to educate 230 members!

Asbestos Licensing, Training and Credentialing Coming to BC

Asbestos is a fibrous rock material mined around the world for thousands of years. It has fantastic heat resistant and binding qualities. That's why right up until a couple years ago we could buy it in our vehicle brake pads, or crayons for our kids.

Asbestos has been widely used in construction building materials for the past century. It exists as the same great binding agent in our lathe and plaster walls, and some pre-90's drywall, insulation, floor tiles, roof shingles, concrete pipe, and many conductors used asbestos cloth woven on the outer sheathing. That is why construction workers and electricians have been the most vulnerable over the years of being exposed to asbestos fibers and contracting asbestosis and mesothelioma, resulting in the hardening of the lungs. We've been renovating those same buildings for decades, waiting for us to cut into those walls to install our easy boxes, to pull our data lines and conductors through disturbing that asbestos dust, pulling it through directly towards us.

Hundreds of years ago the Parisian fire department used the material as clothing to

protect their firemen. Italy used it as a binding agent in their paper money for durability, but stopped after understanding the human consequences. Four thousand years ago, the Greeks used it to wrap their dead to separate their ashes from wood ashes in their funeral pyres.

They took note and wrote of the breathing disease the blanket weavers would be ailed with and made masks of goat bladders with holes poked in them to act as a form of respirator to protect the workers. This isn't much better than some asbestos abatement contractors working throughout the lower mainland over the past two decades.

For example, WorksafeBC had fined the owners of Seattle Environmental Consulting Ltd. and several other companies owned by the same persons 237 times over a period from 2009-2012 for exposing their workers at least 51 times to the material during renovation or demolition, totaling over \$500,000 in fines. That is why the BC provincial government recently introduced Bill 5 - 2022: Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2022, which proposes new protections to help keep workers safe from the danger of asbestos. The proposed amendments include the establishment of requirements that asbestos abatement contractors must be licensed to operate in British Columbia, and that workers and employers who perform this work must complete mandatory safety training and certification. The bill is currently being considered by the BC Legislative Assembly. Upon passage of the bill, WorkSafeBC will implement the new requirements, which would include, developing the standards that asbestos safety training and certification programs must comply with, and developing a licensing regimen for abatement contractors. While other provinces have taken steps to improve the safe handling of asbestos, B.C. will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to implement a licensing requirement. In 2021, asbestos exposure was a contributing factor in 53 of 161 workplace deaths.



Russian asbestos mining company, Uralasbest, puts Trump's face on the side of their packaging. The photo is from a Facebook post. Only Russia would tout Trump's lies of asbestos being 100% safe.



Asbestos even made it into pop culture!

We presented our views recently to the Labour Minister which can be read on our Local 230 website and applaud the BC NDP for moving this file in the right direction, but we also know we need to continue to push this file further to help ensure we have the best protections possible for our members and all who work in our industries. The IBEW in BC has been actively advocating on behalf of our membership for decades to make many of these changes, like requiring all federal, provincial, and municipal public buildings be audited to determine if and where they have asbestos located in their buildings, so they can be responsibly and methodically abated, as well as requiring all construction and shipyard apprentices take asbestos awareness training throughout their apprenticeship, and lastly, designating the last week of April as Asbestos Awareness Week to coincide with April 28th, the Day of Mourning. The day that over 100 countries around the world gather to pay respects for those who lost their lives at work, and commit to making work a safer place for those who continue on. Our work carries on.

Congratulations to our new Red Seal Electricians!



Top-left: Ralph K., Brodie B., Michael G.
 Middle-left: Lowell B., Namaste L., Donnie A.
 Bottom-left: Tanner W., William M., Liam B.