

2012 Offers Challenges to Labor

As a signatory electrical contractor, you are probably more aware of unions and labor union issues than a typical employer from other industries. While we tend to focus our attention and often complain about the slow-to-change nature of our NECA-IBEW Electrical Industry, there are a couple of “big picture” events taking place right now within the labor movement that you might want to pay attention to because it may affect how unions are perceived going forward.

The Numbers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that last year, unionized workers’ share of the overall workforce fell from 11.9 percent to 11.8 percent. The Associated Press took this to be good news for organized labor because of the losses they suffered in the two previous years. Their reasoning was that unions gained 110,000 workers in the private sector while they lost only 61,000 in government employment. Read more . . . [Membership Slide turns around for US unions.](#)

The realist in me has to point out the sentence — “Despite that growth, unions still represent just 6.9 percent of all workers in private companies, unchanged from 2010.” Stated differently, in private companies, like yours, more than 93% of all workers nationwide are not members of a union.

Most of the growth in the labor movement in the last 20 years has been on the public side where 37% of all workers are unionized. This larger percentage of a smaller number of jobs results in the overall unionization rate of 11.8%. The overall rate peaked in the 1950’s at nearly 34% and was about 20% in 1983. If the public employee union membership continues to decline (as local, state, and federal jobs are being eliminated) it will impact the overall unionization rate. If there is a sustained backlash against public employee unions, it will magnify that effect.



In Indiana

Last week, lawmakers in Indiana voted to make that state the first in almost twelve years to become a “Right-to-Work” state. “Right-to-Work” suggests a number of different meanings, but it essentially means the right to work without having to join a union, and pay the dues associated with that membership. This is significant because the Midwest “Rust Belt” states have traditionally been solidly union. Michigan and Ohio are rumored to be “kicking the tires” on similar measures to be able to compete with their neighboring state.

In Indiana

FROM PAGE 1

If you look at one of your NECA-IBEW labor agreements “Union Security” clause (page 15 in our Wiremans Agreement and page 12 in our Sound & Communications Agreement), you’ll note that all employee’s covered by the agreement are required to become and remain members of the union as a condition of employment. In a right-to-work state (there are now 24 in the United States), those clauses are not legal. As a result, the revenue generating aspect of running a union is greatly impacted, and union officials have a much more difficult time collecting from the people they represent. As a result, unions do not experience the same levels of clout they do in states without this provision. Many national corporations only consider right-to-work states when they evaluate where they will build their next facility or relocate operations. Read more . . . [“Bill puts Indiana in right-to-work ranks.”](#)

In Wisconsin

A much more important labor-relations battle is brewing not far from the small town where I grew up in southern Wisconsin. In addition to being very hardy folks, Wisconsinites tend to be fiscally conservative. They also tend to be surprisingly liberal on social issues. When Scott Walker took over as Governor last year he convinced the state legislature to pass his bill to cut taxes on business. In February of last year, he was successful in passing a budget that reduced pay and benefits of state employees and eliminated most of their collective bargaining rights. Most Wisconsin unions representing governmental workers are now limited to the rate of inflation for their wage increases. This is particularly significant because Wisconsin was the first state (1959) to recognize government employee’s right to bargain collectively. Later, President Kennedy signed an executive order (1962) that gave limited bargaining rights to Federal employees.

Organized labor has put a bulls-eye on Governor Walkers’ back in the form of a recall election that will take place later this year. The result will have serious implications for all government employees. With only 7% of all private sector workers represented by unions, and a governor with an approval rating above 50%, it is not a forgone conclusion that Scott Walker will become only the third state governor in American history to be recalled by the voters. (California was the second in 2003 when Gray Davis was exchanged for Arnold Schwarzenegger.)

In California

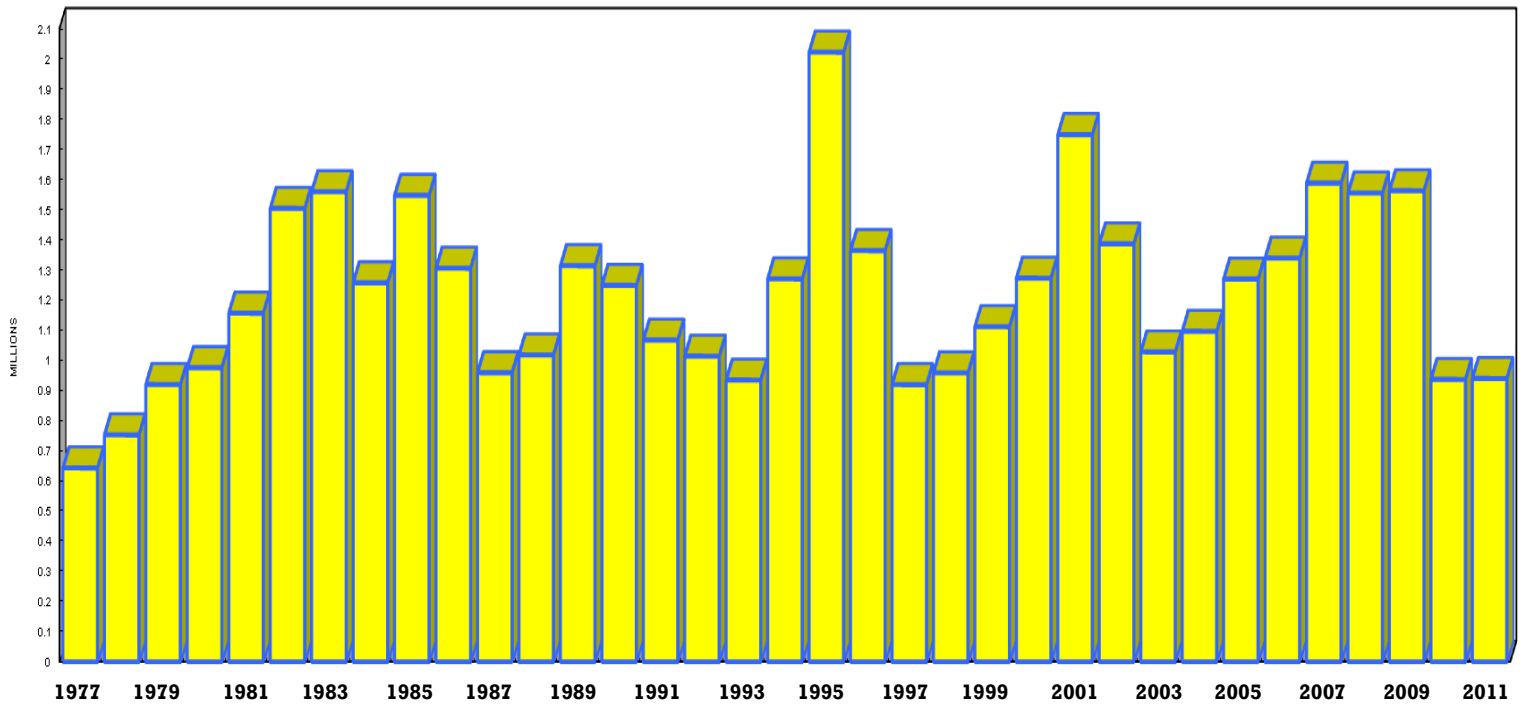
As if things weren’t complicated enough, there will be a ballot initiative in November here in California that will seek to force unions to get written permission from their members every year to use their dues for political purposes. This is a presidential election year, and there will be a least one state ballot measure on raising taxes, so voter turnout will be heavy. Although this has been tried on several occasions before, without success, we have to believe it will divert resources away from some of the other issues that organized labor would otherwise focus on. Read More . . . [Unions to lose political force?](#)

In General

This year promises to be one of the most eventful in recent memory in terms of labor issues. The future direction of the labor movement in this country will be determined by how some of those events unfold.

Construction Manhours

for
IBEW Local 302 Electricians



Portability Agreement with Local 595 & 332

In looking at the work picture in immediate future, it appears that there will be more opportunity to the south of us than there will be in Contra Costa County. Full employment is expected in locals 332 (Santa Clara County) and Local 595 (Alameda, Calaveras and San Joaquin counties). Local 302 and the Contra Costa Chapter happen to have a special portability agreement with those two locals that provide for full portability of manpower between the three locals when certain conditions are met. ([Portability](#))

We encourage you to consider this when looking at opportunities in those areas. If you are not yet signed to the agreement or have questions, please contact the Chapter Office.

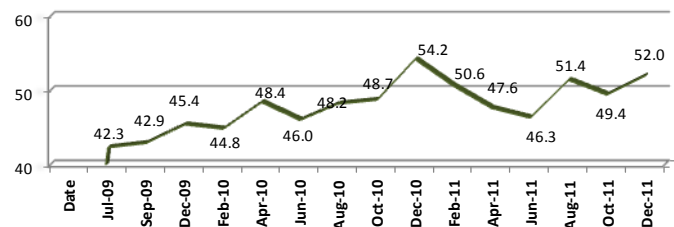


SYNERGY eLinks

[Growth in Green Building Use ...](#)

[Personal Best](#)

Architecture Billings Index 52.0 December 2011



Any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings.

Successful Cash Flow Resolutions to Inefficiency & Differing Site Conditions Claims

Essential Training for Construction Personnel

SDC & Associates will be presenting its program on “Successful Cash Flow Resolutions to Inefficiency & Differing Site Conditions Claims” in Burlingame and San Jose on February 23 & 24 respectively. The flyer on the program may be found at the link below. They are offering the program to our NECA Members for \$99 per person (regular price \$349). This seminar will help further develop skills in preparing, negotiating, preventing, and defending change orders and claims.

The instructor, Anwar Hafeez is the president and owner of SDC and Associates, Inc. He has over 35 years of hands-on experience working as a Contractor/Construction Manager. Mr. Hafeez along with SDC has trained construction personnel by seminars and workshops all over the USA.

If you are interested in attending or sending someone from your firm, respond directly to SDC & Associates using the flyer/registration form provided in the link below.

[Registration Form Link](#)



ELECTRICAL ALLIANCE
of Contra Costa

Construction Collections Seminar on New Lien Laws Effective July 1, 2012

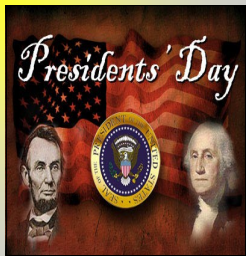
On Friday, March 9, 2012, the Electrical Industry Trust will host a Construction Collections Seminar on “New Lien Laws Effective July 1, 2012.” Mr. Joe Sweeney of Sweeney, Mason, Wilson & Bosomworth, will be the instructor.

This seminar will focus on the new Civil Code Sections which become effective July 1, 2012. Significant changes that will be discussed include:

- **New Forms** Many forms will only need to recite the new code sections; however, the language for Waiver and Releases and Preliminary Notices include significant change.
- **New Definitions** Many of the new definitions simply clarify terms, but certain revisions, such as the revised definition of “completion,” significantly impact collection remedies.
- **New Laws** One of the most significant changes under the new statute allows owners working with multiple direct contractors, to record a separate Notice of Completion with respect to each direct contractor’s scope of work. This change has the potential to drastically affect claimant’s time periods relating to mechanic’s liens, stop notices and payment bond claims. This seminar will also discuss other new laws and their effect on your ability to collect amounts due.

The seminar will begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and conclude by 11:30 p.m. on Friday, March 9, 2012, at the Training Center in Martinez. Lunch will be provided. The program including registration, and all materials will be free of charge to all participants. To order adequate materials, we need to know the number of people from your firm that will be attending. If you plan to attend or send others from your firm please follow the link below to print out the flyer and registration form to complete and send in to the Chapter office.

[Registration Form Link](#)



February 2012

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday



**Contra Costa Chapter
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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 JATC Training Center Martinez 1:30 p.m.	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Electrical Industry Trust Primas Walnut Creek 11:45 p.m.	17	18
19	20 <i>President's Day</i> <u>See Note Below</u>	21 Health & Welfare Trust Training Center Martinez 1:00 p.m.	22	23 SEMINAR Successful Cash Flow Resolutions to Inefficiencies & Differing Site Conditions SFO Airport Burlingame	24 SEMINAR Successful Cash Flow Resolu- tions to Inefficiencies & Differing Site Conditions In San Jose	25
26	27 Retirement Trust Training Center Martinez 10:00 a.m.	28	29			

Please note:

There is no off-day associated w/Presidents Day this year.

Visit: <http://www.ccneca.org/InsideWireman.pdf> to view
2012 Holiday/Off Days under the Inside Wireman Agreement