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the switch

NECA/IBEW LOCAL 48

EVERY VOTE COUNTS

This time of year, it is pretty easy to get voter apathy, with the airways jammed full of political ads, speeches and news coverage. In some cases, the goal of a campaign is to discourage certain voters from exercising their constitutional right. The good news is that in the United States, voting is a privilege and a right. All we have to do is register and then take the time to mark our ballot.

Every four years, we have a presidential election and this year's is turning out to be quite a showdown. All the candidates, whether for the White House or local government positions, have staked out an Energy position. Next year, a new Administration, the new Congress and our State

Legislatures will all be wrestling with the question of how to make our country more energy efficient, environmentally responsible and self sufficient.

The good news for those of us who wire and light up America's homes and businesses, we are on the frontlines in addressing many of these energy challenges. Our ability to continue to install new renewable energy systems, whether it is a wind farm in the Columbia Gorge, solar panels on a downtown high rise or a new state of the art generating facility, will be a function of energy policies, tax incentives and regulatory processes that are formatted and passed by individuals we will consider voting for this fall. So when considering

who to vote for, make sure to include in your evaluation process the candidates' positions that could affect your livelihood.

In addition to voting for elected officials, Oregonians will be considering 12 ballot measures and Washington has just three. On the Oregon ballot, Measure 63 would repeal or suspend requirements for building permits if a home or farm improvement costs less than \$35,000 per year. The implications of this measure to electricians and electrical contractors will be discussed in more detail in the following pages, but this is just another reason why you should exercise your right to vote this November.

Vote by November 4, 2008



Greetings from Tim Gauthier, Oregon-Columbia NECA Chapter executive manager

Support the National Electrical Code and all recognized electrical installation

standards, which have been or may later be established for this area.

NECA has been a strong supporter of local state laws in regard to licensing of contractors, electricians and the regulatory body including the adoption of current National Electrical Codes, permitting of electrical projects and inspection. The main reason for support: the safety of Oregon and Washington citizens. That is why NECA members taken a strong position against Measure 63.

Measure 63 is a dangerous measure that would threaten lives and cause havoc in the electrical and construction industries. In the electrical trade, there are no shortcuts.

Licensed electricians work diligently to prevent on-the-job injuries and to ensure all work meets code, protecting homeowners from electrocution or fire. When you remove the permitting process and inspection, you open the door to unskilled workers. The subtleties of the electrical code are in place to protect your family and home.

Proponents of Measure 63 suggest that all will be fine because it requires work to be completed or signed off by a licensed electrician. The reality: no reputable licensed electrical contractor would assume

the liability of someone else's work. Also, there would be no inspections – something licensed electricians rely on to ensure critical work has been done properly.

Reputable contractors who are heavily invested in ensuring work is done safely will lose out to shoddy, unlicensed contractors and homeowners. Those few dollars that homeowners hoped to save by cutting corners can result in the job actually costing twice as much as it should have.

Measure 63 is a bad idea that would hurt all Oregonians including renters, homeowners, and their families. **Vote "No" on Measure 63 to keep Oregon's homes safe for everyone.**



Greetings from Clif Davis, IBEW Local 48 business manager

Measure 63 deserves a NO vote this fall.

It allows homeowners to make improvements

valued under \$35,000 to their properties without obtaining a building permit. Local 48 opposes it for several reasons. One, the measure is vague; two, enforcing current codes is extremely important; third, it's an obvious attempt to circumvent Oregon electrical laws; and four, Measure 63 is not safe.

The measure does not define "value." Value can mean the market or assessed value of the work, the labor and parts, or an arbitrary

value determined by the homeowner. For example, since the value of real estate is primarily based on location, the same amount of money could build a deck in one area and a 50,000 square-foot shop in another – two very different structures. There is too much room for arbitrary interpretation.

Because code enforcement is a priority in Oregon, inspector demand is heightened by operating on tighter budgets and limited resources. Today, it is easy for a building inspector to check if work is permitted. Under Measure 63, inspectors will be forced to subjectively judge the value of the work and be presented with the challenge of confronting the homeowner who insists the value is under limit.

Measure 63 attacks IBEW 48's livelihood. The Measure would allow an untrained homeowner to do their own electrical work as long as an inspector "checks" the installation. This would breed an industry of inspectors whose goal is to reach the greatest number of inspections, not check the safety of installations.

Most states understand the dangers associated with electrical installations; that's why the trend is for more regulation.

How well do you think Bill Sizemore, the initiative's author, would sleep if the result of his electrical installation resulted in the death of a family member or someone else? Measure 63 is poorly written, over-reaching and irresponsible. **Please vote NO on Measure 63!**

contractor & journeyman Spotlights



Heil Electric Company

One of Oregon's oldest electrical contractors, Heil Electrical Company was founded in 1955 by Philip Heil. Today this Portland based, family owned business is run by the second generation, brothers Gene and Stan Heil. Gene, a journeyman electrician with Supervisors License (Oregon) and Administrators License (Washington), is the President of the company. Younger brother Stan went to college, earned a Masters in Political Science, and after a couple of years in South Korea with the Peace Corps, joined the company to help out his brother after their father retired. Stan serves as the Vice President.

Heil Electric Company has always been an active member of NECA, with both Gene and Stan serving on key boards and committees. Gene has served on the JATC since 1986. Stan's passion for politics never waned and his involvement with NECA has provided him with an opportunity to make a difference at both the local and national levels on issues critical to electrical contractors.

Currently, Stan is the Chairman of the State Joint Legislative Committee that coordinates NECA's political contributions at the state level, while also keeping an eye on building codes, regulations, legislations and appointment to key boards. At the national level, Stan is the regional representative to the National NECA Government Affairs Committee and Chapter representative to the Political Leadership Council. These two groups are tasked a variety of responsibilities including political contributions & fundraising, as well as legislative issues such as: pension reform, energy legislation & regulations, government contracting procedures, immigration policy, health care reform, estate taxes and the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT).

Without the personal involvement of company principals like Gene and Stan Heil, electrical contractors across this great nation would struggle to keep on top of the issues that affect their bottom lines and the livelihoods of their IBEW electricians.



Luis Rojas

To do justice in telling Luis Rojas' life story, you would need hundreds of pages. Luis was born in Costa Rica and developed an early, deep love for the United States when, at age 10, he witnessed American helicopters delivering relief to flood victims in his native country. A strong seed was planted in him: a sense of charity and of "giving back."

After winning a scholarship and attending the National Institute of Apprenticeship in his native Costa Rica, Luis worked for years in various electrical careers as a lineman, an inspector and doing telecom installation. Yet, despite earning a very good living in his native country, Luis wanted more from life and when an opportunity came to work for a cruise line, he jumped at the chance to broaden his horizons. Luis got far more than he bargained for: in addition to enriching his life, he also met the woman who would become his wife, a marriage that brought him first to Detroit and later to Oregon.

In Oregon, Luis returned to the electrical trade and eventually went to the IBEW Local 48 Union Hall looking for work. After resuming his electrical career in the States, Luis saw his opportunity to give back to the nation that had given so much to Costa Rica. Since joining the IBEW, Luis has become one of the most active members in the Union Hall, becoming a member of the Northwest Labor Counsel, the Electrical Worker's Minority Caucus as well as a number of other community outreach programs.

In the past few months, Luis has taken his community outreach to a whole new level with the advent of campaign season. Working as a liaison for Local 48, Rojas has worked with the AFLCIO and the Letter Carrier's Union in Hillsboro (which Luis now calls home) going door-to-door to distribute lawn signs for Jeff Merkley as well as registering voters at the farmers markets in Hillsboro and Beaverton. Yet, in spite of the long hours added to his already exhausting day, Luis is undaunted, excited for the chance to represent the union of which he is so proud, and living in the country he loves.



Did you know...

In 2004, Oregon's general election voter turnout ranked third in the nation at over 86%. So that means, out of the over 2 million registered voters in the state, 1.8 million actually got their ballots turned in and counted. To take that a little further, there are approximately 3.5 million citizens, with about 2.5 million are eligible to vote -- so about 85% of eligible voters are actually registered. That also means that 75% of all eligible voters made it to the polls in the last presidential election.

How has Oregon done over time and is voter turn out decreasing? Well, it doesn't seem to be based on statistics from Secretary of State. Over a 44 year period (1960-2004), the average voter turnout is nearly 81% in presidential elections, with a 64% average in non-presidential years. So how about voter turnout for the primaries? Right now there is a

debate raging over Ballot Measure 65, aimed at reforming Oregon's primary system. The proponents allege that primary voter turnout is unusually low and that the use of a "Top Two" system will somehow boost participation. The proposal eliminates Oregon's current system where political parties use the primary to select their general election candidates. Under the proposal, only the "Top Two" finishers will advance to the November ballot, irrespective of party affiliation.

Based on the Secretary of State data, it's difficult to say that there is any sort of downward trend -- on average 57% of registered voters participate in the primaries during presidential election cycles. In non presidential election years that number is slightly lower. What is even more interesting is that primary turn out had started leveling off at around 50% during

the last several cycles but saw a surge this last primary season where it was 58%.

Oregon has long had the reputation of having an informed and engaged citizenry. And, taking a look at our voter turn out, that seems to hold true. Our primary and general election turn outs are among the highest in the nation. Ironically, there are only states with a "Top Two" system -- Louisiana and Washington. Louisiana consistently ranks among the lowest voter turn out in the nation! And Washington just changed its system, so the jury is still out. Clearly there is NO reason to change Oregon's current system, which has served us well for many, many years. **Vote NO on 65.**



OCTOBER

- o NECA Chapter Meeting, NECA offices Monday, October 13, 2008
- o IBEW 48 General Membership Meeting, IBEW Union Hall, Wednesday, October 22, 2008

NOVEMBER

- o NECA Chapter Meeting, NECA Offices Monday, November 10, 2008
- o IBEW 48 General Membership Meeting, IBEW Union Hall, Wednesday, November 26, 2008
- o Festival of Lights, The Grotto - Begins November 28, 2008

DECEMBER

- o NECA Chapter Meeting, NECA Offices Monday, December 8, 2008
- o IBEW Local 48 Service Awards and Holiday Meeting, Wednesday December 17th, Portland Airport Holiday Inn

code of excellence

We are everywhere

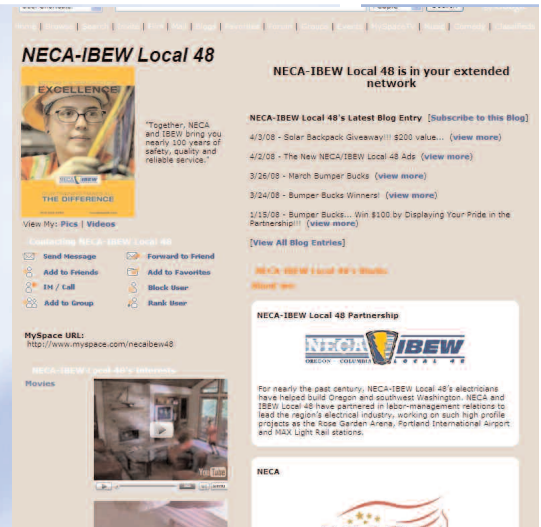
You may have noticed NECA/IBEW Local 48 showing up in some unusual places. There's the MySpace page, YouTube videos and even a Flickr photo page. What's next, Facebook? Actually, yes. NECA/IBEW Local 48 now has a Facebook page.

The contractors and union aren't feeling lonely, hoping that social networking will make us feel more popular. These outreach tools are part of a broad marketing program that connects our electrical union with young, hard-working men and women looking for a rewarding career without racking up thousands of dollars in college debt.

In the August 19 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*, NECA/IBEW Local 48 received national media attention for our innovative marketing campaign. The article highlighted how, even as the economy slumps in some regions, skilled trades are seeking talented and motivated workers who are capable of rising to the challenge of a career that demands the most from our brains and our bodies.

This is nowhere more true than in the electrical industry. Due to the dangers of working with high voltage electricity as well as the complexity of installing electrical systems, our trade requires a commitment to excellence unlike any of the other trades. As anyone who has been through the apprenticeship program will tell you, we only keep the best of the best, and that is why we are continually trying to reach out to young people willing to meet our stringent standards outlined in the "Code of Excellence."

If you know of any committed individuals considering a career in the electrical trade, encourage them to visit www.nietc.org to learn more about the apprenticeship program or visit www.myspace.com/necaibew48 and become a "friend" to stay in touch about the incredible work our electricians do every day.



NECA/IBEW's MySpace page.



Rod's Corner – Written by Rod Belisle

Ron Umali named Assistant Training Director

In moving forward with the impending retirement of Ken Fry, the NIETC is pleased to announce the promotion of Ron Umali to the position of Assistant Training Director.

Ron is a highly qualified member of the staff. Ron graduated from the Inside Program in 1995, and worked for EC Co. until May 2007, when he became a full-time instructor for the NIETC. Ron has been teaching apprenticeship classes as well as coordinating instructor schedules since his employ with the training center. Ron has also taken a lead role in the development of the Craft Certification program at the school.

In addition to his other experiences in the construction industry, Ron joined the US Navy Seabees in 1999 and served as a Construction Planning and Estimate Specialist. He was recently deployed in Iraq and received numerous commendations for his service and dedication.

Ron brings a great deal of leadership and motivation to the staff and will be a great asset to the program in his new position.





Safety First — Written by Barry Moreland

Building Codes – The Foundation of Safety

Building codes are sets of rules that specify the minimum acceptable level of safety for buildings and structures. Codes are the laws that most directly touch our daily lives and that make us safe. The main purpose of building codes is to protect public health, safety and general welfare as they relate to the construction and occupancy of structures in which we live, work and play. A building code becomes law of a particular jurisdiction when formally enacted by the appropriate authority. However, other authorities may elect to use these same codes for other purposes.

Often we find codes from agencies such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), which typically apply to the construction process, are also adopted or referenced by State and Federal Occupational Safety and Health Agencies.

For instance, the OSHA standard for worker protection from electrical shock and related hazards, for both construction and general industry, is derived from the 2002 edition of the National Electrical Code – NFPA 70.

OSHA compliance officers help ensure that these codes are applied and employees benefit from a safer workplace.

Through the permitting process electrical inspectors, using the same National Electrical Code (updated for 2008), ensure the same level of safety in our places of residence. From Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters for shock protection to Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters for fire protection, the NEC provides a baseline for safe electrical installations. Article 90.1 of the NEC spells it out most clearly; the purpose of the code is for the practical safeguarding of persons and property from hazards arising from the use of electricity.

The NEC would be less effective if it were not for the inspection process, which holds electricians and contractors accountable for the methods and materials used in the wiring installation. Without a permitting process to notify inspectors of these installations, shortcuts and sidestepping of NEC requirements would take place. These shortcuts may not be evident initially by a homeowner, but over time could develop into a serious, life-threatening situation.

Your home is an investment. If your construction project does not comply with the codes adopted by your community, the value of your investment could be reduced. Property insurers may not cover work done without permits and inspections. If you decide to sell a home or building that has had modifications without a permit, you may be required to tear down the addition, leave it unoccupied, or make costly repairs.

A property owner who can show that code requirements were strictly and consistently met—as demonstrated by a code official’s carefully maintained records—has a strong ally if something happens to trigger a potentially destructive lawsuit.

Your permit also allows the code official to protect the public by reducing the potential hazards of unsafe construction and ensuring public health, safety, and welfare. By following code guidelines, the completed project will meet minimum standards of safety and will be less likely to cause injury to you, your family, your friends, or future owners.

NECA/IBEW Local 48 in the News

Forbes.com

“Web 2.0 boosts the power of electrical recruitment” - July 1, 2008

Construction Business Owner

“Work Force; Develop and Maintain an Effective Workforce” - August 2008

Daily Journal of Commerce

“Local electricians give aid to Peru health clinics” - August 15, 2008

Wall Street Journal

“Skilled Trades Seek Workers” - August 19, 2008

KPLU

“Blue Collar Jobs” - August 25, 2008

The Oregonian

“Electricians donate their expertise in Peru”
August 28, 2008

Hillsboro Argus

“Hillsboro electrician: Volunteer work in Peru ‘most rewarding’” - August 29, 2008

Daily Journal of Commerce

“Electricians team up to give school new scoreboard” - September 19, 2008

Gresham Outlook

“Groups donate funds for scoreboard”
September 24, 2008

If you’re working on a high profile project, organizing a volunteer effort, or have a story idea that highlights the standards of excellence NECA/IBEW Local 48 exhibits on and off the job, contact Sarah Hammer at hammer@pacwestcom.com. Maybe you’ll be the next NECA/IBEW Local 48 member featured in the local press.



How do you engage with your community?

The Switch is more than just a newsletter, it's a way for you to become more involved in the industry. Join the necaibew48.com Green Team. Members will receive periodic e-mail updates with industry relevant content.

By joining you are automatically entered to win a Solar Messenger bag valued over \$200: necaibew48.com/about_us/green_team.

Winner to be announced December 15th!

NECA/IBEW on KGW Channel 8

NECA/IBEW Local 48 is a proud sponsor of Channel 8's Going Green program. Tune in for the 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. newscast for mini public service announcements touting the importance of surge protectors, the value of energy efficient light bulbs and a 30-second commercial on the partnership. Our own Ron Belisle narrates one of the spots and Louis Rojas and his family star in another. Be sure to tune into KGW and visit www.kgw.com/green/neca to learn more about our sponsorship.



Bumper Madness

You could be the next winner of a \$100 gift card to Joes Outdoors Store if we spot you with the NECA/IBEW Local 48 Green Sticker. Just ask our most recent winners - Chris C. and Jose G. To request Green Stickers for you or your friends ask your employer or contact Sarah at hammer@pacwestcom.com.



www.necaibew48.com