

To the members of Local 290 from Business Manager Lou Christian

## Update on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) April 4th, 2020

- **Rumors** - We have been getting COVID-19 rumors and are investigating to get accurate information on a lot of job sites and locations. Many of these rumors have proved to be false. We take these very seriously. We have also heard of fake OSHA inspectors trying to scam workers or contractors saying they won't shut down the jobsite by paying a fine on the spot. This is absolutely a scam; OSHA never requires immediate payments. All citations go through an appeal process. Please, if you have concerns contact the steward and/or business agent.
- **Unemployment** - The Oregon Employment Department has been overwhelmed with the massive number of claims (week of 3/22 92,700) from the layoffs and furloughs. Filing after hours and weekends online has been recommended by the employment staff if you have trouble getting through during regular hours. The department has hired 75-100 new staff. They have an unprecedented number of filings in a short time period. The 92,700 new claims were up 21% from the new record set the week before. We have links to current information. [COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance Benefits](#), [Filing a new claim](#), [How to file a new claim](#), [Unemployment Benefits Update 3-31-2020](#)
- **E-Board Meeting 4/2** - I asked the E-Board to meet using video conferencing Thursday evening to recap the past several weeks. We reviewed the general presidents March 23 letter. The E-Board minutes are [linked here](#). I reviewed the finance reports for the March Union Meeting that was cancelled with the E-Board. One finance committee member had been able to review the records before the COVID-19 shelter in place order. The remaining finance board members will finish the review when they can. I asked the E-board if they agreed with me should we cancel the next union meeting on 4-17-2020. The board unanimously agreed we should cancel this meeting due to the federal and state guidelines and orders that are in place. The next E-Board meeting is scheduled for video conference on 4-15-2020 at 6 pm. Contact Vice President John Foote if you have business for the E-board.
- **Retiree Wellness** - Classes for April have been cancelled.
- **AZCO Mist Dehydrator Project** - This project has a National Maintenance Agreement and a MOU with Local 290. The drug test and security background check on this project pays 4 hours only if successfully passing both the requirements. [MOU link](#), [National Maintenance Agreement link](#)
- **Gas Distribution** - Contract has been extended with an MOU for 30 days due to the COVID-19 emergency. See the [MOU](#). Wage sheet will be available on the 290 site this coming Monday.

- **Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council** - The council is working to form a C-19 Construction Safety Joint Task Force. We want to jointly with Labor, Management, State Agencies, and Industry stake holders to address job site COVID-19 safety concerns. Help reduce fear and anxiety on job sites. We are getting commitment from our industry partners to participate.

On a conference call 4/3/2020 we talked with two Oregon OSHA representatives how OSHA was looking at jobs. When asked how to work in closer proximity than the current social distancing allows, they said each situation should be evaluated A. For necessity with all the current rules and guidelines B. Social distancing must be followed if possible, C. [Can we use PPE to allow employees to work in close contact?](#)

- **Training Center Update** - Dominic De Piero, the new Director of Training along with Justin May, Assistant Director are the deploying new methods for training during this emergency. The first classes online started this week with more to start soon. The instructors have made good progress in preparing for the resumption of classes that can be taught online. All the coordinators and staff has been hard at work to make this possible. Thank you for all, for your efforts. Journeyman classes will be next. Arrangements with NITC will allow the recertification of med gas. Check back for more information coming to the [TC web site](#). Graduation for the 2020 class of apprentices has been cancelled. The training center will be in contact with the graduates for plans for a future graduation celebration.
- **Work Procedures for Mechanics** – [See the new MCAA video](#).
- **Committee Chairs** - A video conference will be set up to continue communication and ways to serve our members.

In closing we continue to follow up on job site issues. If you have new job site concerns, please continue to contact the Business Agents or the main office number so we can continue to assist you with other issues. I want to thank our Local and Training Center staff for all the extra time and effort to transition to remote locations so we can continue to assist our members.

Thank you to our members for your continued patience in this COVID-19 emergency situation.

In Solidarity,

Lou A. Christian