



**Edwin Hill**  
International  
President,  
International  
Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers

## SPREADING THE UNION MESSAGE TO ALL WORKERS

Strong unions are built on two pillars.

First is the willingness of the membership to stand together. If there is no unity of purpose and no confidence in the courage and fortitude of the members, there is no union.

Second is a broad membership representing a variety of backgrounds, but also — and this is often forgotten — a wide variety of jobs and industries. The most obvious reason is that a union in only one industry can be devastated by a recession. A labour movement that does not represent the full diversity of jobs and people in the U.S. and Canada also opens itself up to political attacks — however unfair — that it is an elitist club that only looks out for its own.

From the beginning, the labour movement has committed itself to winning respect, a voice and a dignified living for every worker.

At times, I believe some people in the labour movement have seen these two sources of strength as mutually exclusive. They say you cannot be both wide and deep.

I have never believed that to be true and offer our membership as a rebuke to those who do.

Just in recent months, we've welcomed to our ranks scores of tree trimmers, the men and women keeping rights of way passable for utility linemen as well as several hundred attorneys general from New Jersey. We have members building a coal

fired power plant with revolutionary carbon sequestration technology, we have members just beginning careers as helpers on construction projects and others building a space telescope that will see into the very farthest reaches of time and space.

We also represent cameramen and rail workers, wiremen and telephone operators, and so many, many more. The IBEW is hundreds of thousands of hard-working, creative folks who rarely make news outside of our pages, but they represent the very best of North America and its labour movement.

But a big obstacle to growing our unions is the lack of awareness by the public about who we are, what we do and our values. Organized labour is under increased attack from wealthy right-wing zealots, right-wing politicians and the right-wing media. We must not let their untruths about "union bosses" and our unions go unchallenged.

One of the important ways to expand our ranks is by "spreading the news" about the benefits of union membership, particularly at a time when the media is dominated by right-wing money.

For the past couple of years in the U.S., the IBEW has aired national ads during football season and on news networks informing viewers about our union and our members at work. Some locals have been placing ads for years and many others are getting in on the act. National ads are necessary but expensive. Local union marketing offers the advantage of targeting local media markets with less expensive ads which also allows us to highlight specific projects.

Just recently, IBEW's First District in Canada launched a national marketing campaign, "We're There for You," which highlights the more than 65,000 skilled IBEW members who help keep the lights on and the economy moving forward. The purpose of the campaign is to show the public how IBEW members support their

communities across the nation.

The marketing campaign has several components. One is a website, [www.ibew-canada.ca](http://www.ibew-canada.ca), which introduces visitors to the kind of jobs IBEW members do every day, from wiring local hockey rinks to maintaining power stations and cable lines.

It also features local stories about IBEW members doing their part to help their community. Called "Local Heroes," it profiles members who are involved in charity and community service organizations. It also lets readers post their own stories recognizing good deeds.

It began airing nationally in April. So far it has been seen by 25 million Canadians on multiple cable networks and on CBC's Hockey Night in Canada, one of the country's biggest programs.

The ad was funded in part from a donation from the Joint Electrical Promotion Plan, a joint labour-management program between the IBEW Construction Council of Ontario and the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario. Several locals are also running ads in their own media markets. The ads also target the French-speaking population in Quebec.

Throughout North America, the IBEW is committed to tell the real story about unions rather than the picture painted by the right-wing about "union bosses."

Our unions have a powerful story to tell. There are heroes in our ranks who save lives. Our members give of their time and effort to charities and national service. When disaster hits, union members are the first to respond. When things break down or need repair, union members are on the job. And when war breaks out, it is union members and their children who are among the first to step forward to serve.

"Spreading the word" is just one way to expand our ranks to include workers in every industry throughout North America. Union members are proud of their work and their union. And they want everyone to know about their "union story."



### Human Rights-Safe Workers Contribution

AIL PR representative Leo Van Den Bussche (right) presents a \$2,000 contribution for the Canadian Human Rights Museum and \$500 for the Safe Workers of Tomorrow, which has delivered more than 10,500 workplace safety presentations since 1997 to young and vulnerable workers. Receiving the contributions is Kevin Rebeck, President, Manitoba Federation of Labour. In the photo below is a view of the Canadian Human Rights Museum, set to open September 2014.



### Winnipeg Labor Day Donation

AIL's Leo Van Den Bussche (right) presents a \$500 donation to Dave Sauer, President, Winnipeg Labour Council in support of the Labour Day Picnic.



AMERICAN INCOME LIFE  
NATIONAL INCOME LIFE  
insurance companies



### Saskatchewan Building Trades Dad's Day Golf Outing

AIL sponsored and supported the Saskatchewan Building Trades Dad's Day Golf Tournament in support of Juvenile Diabetes at Dakota Dunes Golf Links, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on July 31, 2014. In the photo are (left to right) Daryl Barnett, AIL Canadian Director of Labour Relations; Robert R. Blackely, Chief Operating Officer Canada's Building Trades Unions; Debbie Boles, AIL Public Relations; and Craig Strudwick, Regional Director Canada International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers.



### BC Building Trades Charity Golf

The British Columbia Building Trades recently held a charity golf tournament for DADS (Dollars Against Diabetes) and Variety B.C., "All About the Kids," that was supported by AIL. Shown in the photo are: AIL Public Relations representative Fran Christie (far right); Tom Sigurdson, BC Building Trades Executive Director (middle); AIL Public Relations Debbie Boles and AIL PR Steve Orcherton (2nd from the right).