



“ONWARD & UPWARD” with NERCA

The North/East Roofing Contractors Association held its 87th Annual Convention and Trade Show at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA, from March 12 – 14, 2013. The event’s theme was “Onward & Upward,” mirroring the outlook of the roofing industry as the economy begins to heal.

The trade show—which is the largest regional roofing tradeshow in the country—featured over 200 booths displaying products and services designed for roofing professionals. Roofers Union representatives from the International and area local unions gathered at the International’s booth to welcome signatory contractors and market the Union to prospective contractors and members. ■



International Vice President Tom Pedrick, right, says hello to Nels Wennersten of Hudson Valley Roofing located in New Windsor, NY.



From left: Al Doyle and John Marcome with Local 33 signatory contractor Gilbert and Becker Co., Inc. share a laugh with International Vice President/Local 33 Business Manager Paul Bickford.



Local 12, Bridgeport, CT, member Wilson Trabal, Local 12 Business Manager Butch Davidson, International Vice President Tom Pedrick and Noel Prudent with Vac-It-All Services discuss roofing conditions in the Northeast.



International Vice President Paul Bickford enjoys catching up with Charles Gorman of CMG Roofing in Pawtucket, RI.



International Vice President/Local 33, Boston, MA, Business Manager Paul Bickford (second from left) greets Dan Chouinard, Mike Kelly and Robert Marshall of longtime Local 33 contractor Marshall Roofing & Sheet Metal Co., Inc.

Letter from Int'l Marketing Representative Gets Published

International Marketing Representative Fred Gee responded to an opinion piece in the Cincinnati.com online newspaper regarding the decline of unions in the U.S. The opinion piece compared union density in the U.S. to that in Canada, where unions are much stronger, and described the reasoning behind the discrepancy. Much of it is due to labor law and public policy (especially in regards to union elections and first contracts), which are much more union-friendly in Canada, according to the author, Kris Warner.

Brother Gee followed up with a recent first-hand account that supported this theory. He describes an attempt to organize a roofing company, during the course of which workers were intimidated by the employer and ultimately voted against the union. Brother Gee's article, as published, follows:

U.S. Labor Unions Face Stacked Deck

I am a union organizer and I would like to share just one example of why unions are in decline ("Why U.S. unions are in decline," Jan. 29).

My union was approached by a worker from a company that has a plant in the Greater Cincinnati area. He asked if we would meet with him about unionizing the company where he worked. We had an initial meeting with him, and he told us that the plant manager was demeaning to all of the workers, threatening the workers with their jobs. There were also some safety issues at the plant. The workers were satisfied with their wages and benefits, but they didn't like the company's repre-

sentative's way of treating them and talking down to them.

We met with 10 of the 12 workers in the plant. All 10 of the workers that we met with signed cards for representation. We filed the cards with the National Labor Relations Board and they set up an election. The election date was set for about 30 days before Christmas.

From the time the election date was set to the election there was about four weeks. We had limited opportunity to meet with or talk to the workers in that four-week period. The employer in that four-week period fired the plant manager, which was one of the things that the workers were unhappy with. However, the safety issues were not addressed.

The employer also held anti-union meetings, and they already had a union-busting law firm on retainer. They also told the workers that if a union was voted in, they would probably not get their Christmas bonuses. The workers were also told that one of their plants in another city voted a union in and nobody got a raise for three years while they negotiated a contract with the union.

When the election was held, the vote was 10 votes against the union, two for the union. We could not blame the workers for changing their minds with the threat of no Christmas bonus and no raise for possibly three years. This election is typical of the way things work with an NLRB election.

Unions are a voice for the working people of this country. It should not be as difficult to join a union as it now is in the greatest country in the world. ■

International Vice President Receives Labor Council Award

International Vice President/Local 11, Chicago, IL, President Richard Mathis was awarded the Citizen of the Year Award by the Will-Grundy Central Trades & Labor Council, AFL-CIO.



International Vice President Rich Mathis, right, displays the Citizen of the Year award presented to him by Will-Grundy Counties Central Trades & Labor Council President Charles Hanus.

The ceremony took place at the 35th Annual Central Trades Dinner on April 26 at the IBEW banquet hall in Joliet, IL. Council President Charles Hanus presented the award, highlighting Brother Mathis's "outstanding record of leadership in the labor movement, political arena and... charitable work," according to the Labor Record.

Speakers at the dinner also included Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Congressman Dan Lipinski. ■