

# THE JOURNEYMAN ROOFER & WATERPROOFER

# DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

MARKETING ISSUES • APPRENTICESHIP CORNER • SAFETY & HEALTH • THE LEGAL ASPECT

## Marketing Issues

by Jim Hadel  
*International Vice President and  
Director of Market Development*



### Communication and Partnership Building

Building stronger relationships and improving communication with our signatory employers can be a key factor in attaining overall market growth in our industry. Today, more than ever, we are faced with complex problems in the workforce. However difficult these subjects may be to discuss, it is imperative that we attempt to build stronger partnerships than in the past with our employers in order to surmount these modern-day issues together.

Both labor and management are faced with enormous problems that impact business in a negative manner. Immigration and member recruitment are two of the foremost issues that confront the industry today, based on my discussions with both signatory employers and local affiliates. These matters cannot be reconciled solely by either party; they must be addressed by labor and management in a joint effort.

Relationships with signatory employers can be stressful and strained at times, especially during contract negotiations and at times when our contractors are “screaming” for manpower needs that simply cannot be met. We may have a tendency to withdraw in periods of adversity rather than address the issues face-to-face. Instead of retreating and being non-responsive, deal with your employers and let them know how you are responding to the issues. If you do not have the answer, ask for their advice. Remind them that these are matters that affect both labor and management; therefore, they need to be addressed in a cooperative manner.

The fact is most of our locals are working hard to address these industry issues and many others. In addition, they are developing their own initiatives – such as marketing and recruiting strategies – that are beneficial not only to the local but to their employers. Communicate to your employers the efforts you have made in resolving issues or implementing initiatives. Include in those discussions International initiatives – such as foreman training and safety programs – that are of a real value to the industry. It is unfortunate when local unions struggle to improve the industry in their jurisdiction just to find that the contractors are unaware of the efforts being made.

We must encourage our employers to become part of the solutions by seeking outcomes that both labor and management can support. Some employers might not support this labor/management theory of partnership and communication. Nonetheless, there is no harm in trying, and at the very least it can be said that we took a pro-active position instead of being non-responsive.

Developing stronger partnerships with our employers and improving our ability to communicate will pay off over the long term. Our current signatory employers will see an increased value and have a better appreciation for the union sector. In addition, it can be used as an excellent top-down organizing strategy. We must also keep our reputation in mind. Employers, to some degree, communicate with non-signatory contractors in the course of their business. Do we want them putting forth a negative or a positive image of our Union?

Today we are faced with vast and evolving challenges in the roofing industry. Overcoming these challenges will require a bona fide partnership between labor and management. It will also require the capacity to communicate with our employers and function together to resolve these challenges. Labor and management are in this together, and our future will be dependent on our ability to develop strong working relationships with our employers. ■

## Local 26 Signs New Contractor

Local 26, Hammond-Gary, IN, is proud to have Mueller Roofing as a new signatory contractor. Don Mueller, who runs all the work in the field for the company, has been a member of Local 26 since 1979, and his wife, Lori, is president of Mueller Roofing. The company will be working in all aspects of the roofing industry.



*Lori Mueller signs her company's contract with Local 26 Business Manager Jeff Lussow.*