



## Marketing Issues

by Jordan Ritenour  
Director of Market Development



### When It Comes to Information, Keep Digging

Webster's Dictionary defines the word information as knowledge obtained from investigation, study, or instruction. We know there are countless ways of obtaining information in today's wired world. But with so many information outlets, we are left trying to determine which statistics we have gathered are useful. How can all this data benefit our members and the contractors they work for?

When jobs are on the line, it can't hurt to have too much information. Research must be done persistently and thoroughly to keep it up to date. This means organizers search for new sources on a daily basis. Often the easiest places to obtain information are just a click or phone call away. The internet makes it possible to find information that in the past would take days or even months to gather.

Useful information for organizing campaigns can be found on sites such as:

#### Google ([google.com](http://google.com))

This is a great place to start your research. As the world's largest search engine, it is bound to turn up extraneous information that is not useful; however, it always provides a huge assortment of facts and leads. It's free to search, and other than the risk of turning into a time-consuming task, it is extremely helpful.

#### OSHA ([osha.gov](http://osha.gov))

A visit to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration website can be a goldmine in terms of uncovering worker safety violations that you look for when researching a contractor. (Go to [osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.html](http://osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.html) to directly access the violations page.) Because OSHA continually clears their website of old material, be sure to print all information you find. Through the Freedom of Information Act you can also write to your local OSHA office to obtain written reports on worker safety investigations.

#### Facebook ([facebook.com](http://facebook.com))

Chances are you either have a Facebook page or know someone who does. It only takes a few minutes to create your Facebook "profile," and doing so makes it possible to access individual and company information that's not made public in a routine Google search. Additionally, the social networking aspect makes it ideal for sharing information—such as job openings, meeting dates and helpful links and videos—with like-minded Facebook "friends." (And while you're there, be sure to check out the new Roofers Union page.)

As your research advances, the websites you use will broaden. Remember that not all websites are free—and not all "pay" websites are worth the sign-up fee. When you do stumble upon a website that has information on your target, add the

January 8, 2010

Mr. Steve Barnes, Business Manager  
Mr. Kenny Williams, Business Representative

Roofers Local 106  
1201 Baker Ave  
Evansville, IN 47710

Dear Brothers,

I am sending you this letter on behalf of the members of Local 26 Hammond and Gary. I would like to thank your local's leadership and the members who helped picket the school project in Vincennes, IN. Your local's actions were not in vain. I cannot thank you guys enough, as well as your members, for all the hard work that you put into this project. Your fight was taken over by Local 26 and with your information, this contractor decided not to come to Hammond. Brothers, we could not have gotten this done without your help and I cannot say that enough. Your actions helped a sister local get a job turned around and we at Roofers Local 26 would like to thank all our brothers from Roofers Local 106.

With sincere thanks,

Jeff Lussow  
Business Manager  
Roofers Local 26, Hammond and Gary, IN

website to your "favorites" and print it off to add to your paper file. Don't trust memory alone to later recall how you found that site; you will forget how you got there!

Most importantly, don't always rely on websites. You will still need to go to the courthouse, visit job sites and, yes, still do dumpster dives to collect and verify your information. And don't forget one of our most valuable assets: our membership. Whether working with retirees, rank and file, former business managers or even other locals, our membership is a wealth of knowledge. Form relationships with these people and share the knowledge.

Recently Local 71, Youngstown, OH, had a non-union contractor removed from a project by using material that Local 86, Columbus, OH, had gathered on the contractor. The project was then awarded to a union contractor. While conducting research, Local 182, Cedar Rapids, IA, had found information on a police report; Local 65, Milwaukee, WI, later used that information to help remove a contractor from bidding a project.

Above is a letter from Local 26, Hammond-Gary, IN, thanking Local 106, Evansville, IN, for sharing information they obtained on a contractor doing a project in Evansville. Evansville was unsuccessful in removing the contractor, but Hammond-Gary later used the information that Evansville gathered and was successful in removing the contractor. In fact, due to the amount of information Local 106 was able to supply, the contractor never even bid the project.

Remember, you may not win the battle you are in, but by sharing your knowledge you may end up helping another local win theirs. ■