

Hello to all our Essential Sisters and Brothers!! There has been a lot going on since our last in-person Membership Meeting back in March. With the ongoing pandemic we have unfortunately had to cancel our last few membership meetings. Illinois has now emerged into Phase 4 which has a restriction of group gatherings of 50 people. And for those that have ever attended one of our membership meetings know we traditionally have 120-140 at each meeting. We have discussed several different options to convene but none are viable given the restrictions and the concern for everyone's safety. There has been a leveling off of positive cases in Illinois and Indiana which has allowed for those laid off to be gradually recalled while everything else around us returns to some sense of normalcy.

This unprecedented pandemic has caused several things to happen. We had to cancel our Annual Car & Bike Show / Family Picnic. Each year this event gained in participating members and their families as well as in participants entering their cars and bikes into the show. Other events were cancelled as well like our monthly Retiree's Club Meetings, the NASCAR discounted Race event and our Interactive Health Fair Clinic due to them filing bankruptcy. We will continue to search for another provider that can provide this great benefit to our participants and their family for those covered under our Health & Welfare Plan. We closed our Training Facility for a period of time as well. We have recently reopened it though and are conducting training there now. It saddens us to have to cancel the events that brings our membership together but there is just no way we can hold these events that would comply with the Governor's mandates not to mention our concerns for your safety.

Other Union news - our Local 701 Pension Plan as of January 1, 2020 went into the Green Zone for the first time since the multiple market crashes. We are continuing to monitor it, while it seems to be an ever-changing market, especially with the first quarter succumbing to a double-digit loss. We need to have a year with positive returns of 7% or higher to maintain Green Zone status or we may go back in the Orange Zone for 2021. And with a year-end loss, we will most likely unfortunately go back in the Red Zone. It's all based on market returns as we've seen over the years. We are doing everything possible to ensure the Plan remains solvent.

Some positive news that our great Union has done over the past few months – for many years we have heard our members request pre-Medicare Retiree insurance. We made changes a few years ago to increase the benefits for the major medical pre-Medicare Retiree insurance plan. The Union Trustees, Bob Keppler, Mark Grasseschi and I, have fought hard at each of our Trustee Meetings to achieve our current Plan as an option for pre-Medicare Retiree insurance. I am proud to say we now have the ability to self-pay for our current Local 701 Health Plan for our members covered under our Plan which includes spouse, dependents, dental, vision and better coverage for prescriptions. Time and time again I would hear over the years the plea from our members requesting the ability to self-pay for our current insurance plan so they can retire early as their body can't continue to endure working in our industry. You now have that ability should you so choose.

Other news to report on is obtaining our first ratified agreement at the IKEA Distribution Center in Joliet / Minooka. With our first contract, which was overwhelmingly accepted,

we now have almost 200 new Sisters and Brothers to welcome into our Union. Congratulations to Brother Rich Handler for negotiating our first, of hopefully many more to come, distribution center. And congratulations and a warm welcome for our new Local 701 Sisters and Brothers at IKEA.

Another positive is after a long strike resulting in over an almost three-year battle at Napleton's Libertyville Cadillac, we can proudly say we now have an executed agreement and our members will be returning to their former positions at that location. As you recall, the members there went out on strike concurrently when the Standard Automotive members went out on August 1, 2017. Here though, they were striking for their first agreement. And when the Standard Automotive strike ended, they were still striking into 2018. We stood with our Brothers in Libertyville every step of the way. We filed unfair labor practice charges at the Labor Board, went through multiple hearings, sustained multiple appeals by the company and when the final appeal was again denied by the D.C. Court of Appeals, the company finally threw the towel in acknowledging the inevitable loss. They signed the agreement and as previously stated our members will be returning to their former job. We are in the process now of working with the Labor Board through their compliancy division to calculate the damages of Health & Welfare contributions owed, 401(k) contributions owed, Training Fund contributions owed, differential backpay for our members and back Union dues owed which I calculated the damages to be over \$800,000. A big win for our Union and for our members. This also sends a strong message to any other employer moving forward – that Local 701 will NOT back down and we will continue to fight for our members to the end.

I was hoping to have made that announcement in person at one of our Membership Meetings but with the uncertainty of when we can eventually reconvene, I wanted to share the great news with everyone. I'm sure we can all use some good news – especially now. Every month that goes by without a Union Meeting, the Staff at Local 701 gets more eager to reconnect with our membership. We are all looking forward to that day but for now, as I've said from the start of this pandemic, our priority is and will always be your safety.

I was incredibly proud of those that stepped up to help one of our members who unfortunately lost his home and all his belongings in a house fire. So many of our members have fallen on unfortunate circumstances, some are struggling through this difficult time now in different ways. Your Union is here to help and it's very honorable for those that assisted in the past. Thank you! Unity and Solidarity is an attribute we actively engage in every day. We encourage our members to support each other, and if you need support, ask a fellow member and your Union. Our success is achieved when we lift each other up. Continue in this manner and we can continue to achieve great things for our Union.

United We Stand, Divided We Fall. Stay Safe and Healthy!

**In Solidarity,
Sam Cicinelli
Directing Business Representative/Organizer**