

942Dispatch

February 2004



Danny's Sweatshop A Norcon Labor Story

Danny's Sweatshop may not sound like an appropriate name for a union job, but the sign still hangs at the entrance to the ATCO trailer up in Prudhoe Bay. Norcon hands set up the trailer two years ago when they started sewing and modifying their own insulated flange and valve covers. The sign remains, fading into the white wall beside and above the sewing machine.

"Yes, we got about a 40 foot trailer and fixed up half of it. The other half stores insulation tools and supplies. We put in shelves, a window where the refrigerator used to be, and painted it white," shares Steve Case.

Norcon, Inc. has been involved in oilfield construction and maintenance projects since 1974. Most laborers are familiar with Norcon through its work under the North Slope Construction and Maintenance Agreement at Prudhoe Bay.

One of Norcon's jobs is to insulate the valves found on the gathering lines that collect oil from the wells and send it on to the production facilities. For many years, Norcon employees would build boxes made of metal with foam to keep the valves from freezing.

"The boxes were awkward at best," remembers John Hanna, who began working for Norcon in early 2001. "Norcon switched to buying fiberglass insulated blankets and using them to go over the valves and flanges. The blankets were easier to work with, but it was a hassle as Norcon had to order the blankets and then ship them elsewhere for modifications before they could be used. Sometimes the modifications still didn't result in that great of a fit."

It was only a matter of time before the Norcon laborers decided they could do a better job themselves. Two years ago, Anita Stelcel made a trip to Anchorage in search of an old-fashioned treadle
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Valve blankets on the S Pad water injection lines. A Doyon drill rig is in the background.

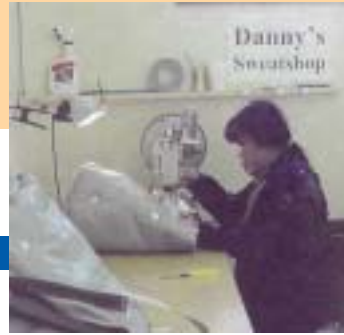
Picture by John Hanna

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Photos by John Hanna



VPad Blankets



Daisy Muller



Anita Stelcel

942 Children's Christmas Party a Fun Event

Thanks to Matt Sampson, Santa Claus made an appearance at the 942 Children's Christmas Party. Held Dec. 22nd, crafts, food, presents and fun were the order of the day. Thanks to everyone who helped with the party details. Jamie Rice and Jonna Weed planned and oversaw the
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Below: Jonna and Rosie Miller (Kathy Miller's daughter) share a moment together while setting up for the Children's Christmas Party.



Photo by Hugh Garrity

Norcon (cont'd from page 1)

sewing machine. She found one designed for canvas sewing and it worked well in modifying the blankets. The blankets are made of vinyl which encloses fiberglass insulation. "You have to be careful not to get the fiberglass in the machine," Steve warns. "The crew is also making canvas covers for slings because the pipe rubs up against the sling and wears it out, but with a canvas cover, the problem is resolved."

The trailer has been affectionately named "Danny's Sweatshop" in honor of Dan Nelson, the general labor foreman at Norcon.



Production Header Valve Blankets on L Pad. These open air skids are used for oil production and water and gas injection. Blankets are essential for proper valve operation in cold temperatures. *(Photo by John Hanna).*



"Whatever their faults, unions have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country." -- Bruce Springsteen



Tim Sharp
Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

Business Manager's Report

As we move into 2004, we find ourselves in comparatively good times. A good amount of work is expected this year and next year in both the Interior and Southeast Alaska. The stock market is on a slow but steady climb back up, our medical and dental plans are on the mend, our Local's General Fund is sound and our construction market share numbers are some of the best in the country. Some might say just relax and enjoy the ride, but our local union has already learned the lessons of the pipeline days the hard way and we know better.

While the pendulum is temporarily swinging our way, we need to work harder than ever to organize more contractors, retool and better train our membership, push for better contracts and elect more politicians that feel the way we do about working people's issues.

Even in these seemingly good times, we also have a number of challenges before us. We have an anti-union President that has chosen to see us as his enemy. He has drafted and pushed through anti-worker legislation against overtime pay, project labor agreements (PLA's) and excessive union reporting requirements. If we allow him to be re-elected this November, we can only expect an onslaught of more of the same. We also have a Republican majority in Juneau that aren't much different in how they truly feel about unions. We have oil companies that are, at best, fair weather friends who acknowledge us when they need our help to lobby for their legislation or perform their high skill or high production projects, but will not commit to project labor agreements, hiring Alaskans first or long-term partnering.

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Children's Party (cont'd from pg. 2)

party. David Brasier handled food, Tina Smith and Linda Farmer set up crafts and John and Carla Reardon led the "Pin the Nose on the Snowman" game. Kathy Miller took charge of the "Cakewalk" game and Hugh Garrity took pictures.

Adults and children alike had a wonderful time together.



Photo by Hugh Garrity

The Torres' family enjoys the craft table at the Children's Christmas party.



Don't forget to reregister every 90 days to stay on the out-of-work list

Keep Your Skills Updated with Training School Classes

Juneau

Mar 18 Asbestos and Abatement Renewal

Mar 19 Hazardous Waste Renewal

Fairbanks

Mar 15-19 Asbestos Abatement

Mar 22 Forklift Safety

Mar 29 Asbestos Abatement Renewal

Mar 30 Hazardous Waste Renewal

Fairbanks

Mar 31 First Aid/CPR

Apr 1-2 MSHA

Apr 3 MSHA Renewal

Apr 5-16 Coating Application - 80 Hrs.

Joel Mamber, Joe McEachern and Lisa Madros at the Pipeline Insulation Class



Photo by Hugh Garrity

Business Mgr.'s Report (cont'd from pg. 2)

The remedies to most of these challenges are fairly simple. To begin with, we need to **register every member and their family members to vote**. Secondly, we need to vote as a block to be most effective. There are over 34,000 AFL-CIO members in Alaska. If all of us voted in any one direction, on any one issue, or candidate, we would be able to elect worker-friendly politicians back in to office, and bring worker's issues back to the forefront in Alaskan politics where they belong. If we can ever learn how to vote together again, instead of fracturing over gun control, abortion, defense, or the permanent fund, our issues, like the right to good health care, safe workplaces, decent wages and benefits, project labor agreements and enforceable local hire would be given more than just lip service during election time. The choice, as always, is up to **you!**

As I said earlier, it looks like a very good summer work season in front of us. The National Missile Defense Project will keep expanding, with up to twenty-six silos going in, instead of the original five originally planned for. The maintenance crew of Fort Greely will also continue to expand as the infrastructure is built up. The Corps of Engineers has recently announced over 370 million dollars of projects on the books for this summer, with most of it happening on Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base. There is more work expected to be let at the Pogo Mine outside of Delta Junction. To date, both the ice road and the new dirt road and civil work dirt package have been awarded to union contractors. Anyone working on the Pogo Mine project is required to have a current MSHA card. Peter Kiewit will begin on the harbor expansion in Nome this summer. They should also hire between five to seven laborers for the continuation of the Blair Lake project south of town. We will also have small jobs in Nuiquisit, Galena, Tanacross, Ketchikan, and Nulato.

The only real weak spot in the picture is the lack of sustainable winter pipeline work on the North Slope. Instead of the

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Dan Simien, President

"The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, the poor." -- A. Phillip Randolph



President's Report

Last year, 2003, was a good year for Local 942 and its members despite the absence of winter pipeline construction work on the North Slope. The in-town work and the missile defense work carried our members through the construction season.

The North Slope Construction and Maintenance agreement will remain in effect until December 31, 2004. January 1, 2004 marked the implementation date for the last scheduled raise of three percent of the total package, for the current North Slope agreement. The crafts will experience a minor increase in pipeline construction with the awarding of a 10" pipeline to Price Inc.

Norcon has signed a two year contract with BP Exploration. The signing of this agreement recognizes Norcon as a prime North Slope maintenance contractor which will result in more employment opportunities for our members. This change of stature for Norcon is a direct result of members of the pipeline trades and Norcon's management commitment to safety and productivity. We are anticipating a March start date for the North Slope work.

The pipeline crafts have been looking forward, for the past three years, to the first quarter of 2005. Based on the cyclical nature of lease sales, exploration, and development time lines, 2005 may be the year of large scale pipeline and satellite development in the National Petroleum Reserves of Alaska (NPR-A). Based on the projected pipeline work on the north slope, the pipeline crafts are planning a joint pipeline training class in the early fall of 2004.

Arctic Slope Regional Corporation recently announced the restructuring of Houston Contracting, Houston/Nana, and Global Communications. At a recent meeting with the pipeline unions, Houston CEO Mike Stophlet and President Warren Christian announced that the new company will be known as ASRC Energy Services, Pipe-

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Training School Classes (cont'd)

Nome

Apr 7 Asbestos Abatement Renewal

Apr 8 Hazardous Waste Renewal

Fairbanks

Apr 20 IMSA Flagging Certification

Apr 26-May 14 Gradechecking/Pipelaying

May 17-Jun 4 General Construction

Apprenticeship Program applications are available Monday-Friday 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Applications must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. March 12, 2004 to be interviewed for this opening.

Jeffrey Summar and Joel Mamber at the Pipeline Insulation Class.



Photo by Hugh Garrity

Sometimes it takes a four letter word to be heard. VOTE.



Laborers Jurisdiction

All Concrete: pouring, placing, vibrating, chipping, grinding, sawing, mudcutter, chuteman, red concrete, coring, drilling, curing, patching, dry patching, bush hammering, grouting, shotcrete, gunnite, strike off, scaling, epoxy

Sandblasting/Greencutting

All pipelaying & conduits including unloading, handling & distribution/vaults

All scaffold/shoring

Trench: backfill, compaction, sanding, grade checking, hand propelled trenching machines, fine grading, ditch digger

All clean up including final- all craft clean up/micro cleaning

All landscape: irrigation pipes & controls

All tending to trades

All fiberoptics: conduits, tuggers, setting vaults

Cathodic protection, grounding, communications cables

Business Manager's Report (continued from page 4)

seventy to one hundred and fifty mile pipeline packages that we need to keep our members working in the winter, only six miles of ten-inch pipe work was let this season. H.C. Price was awarded this work and has pre-jobbed for up to twenty laborers for about six to eight weeks work. There are good indicators that next year will be much better; however, we need to remain cautious until the oil companies actually commit to letting the work. Houston/Nana's dig crews are scheduled to begin in the next week and should keep their fifteen man crew busy for several months.

We have also seen new moves towards actually building a natural gas line. There have been two applications to the State of Alaska under the "Stranded Gas Act." One of the players is Mid-America Co. and the other is a consortium of producers: Phillips/Conoco/Exxon. We will wait and see how the politics and economics shake out before we take a stand on either version. It is worthy of note that our friends at Phillips/Conoco/Exxon will say they can't build the project without us (whenever they speak in public), but will not agree up front to a Project Labor Agreement to cover Alaskan hire, stable wages and benefits and give the Unions the ability to prepare and mobilize our apprenticeship programs.

On the subject of apprenticeship, I'd like to report that as of today we have over thirty active apprentices and plan to interview in March for the next group. We are pleased with the direction the program is going and owe a debt of thanks to Les Lauinger and Hugh Garrity for a job well done. With the implementation of the apprenticeship program, we have lowered the average age of our membership from 47 to 35. We will continue to build up and improve the program, so if you know any good prospects, please continue to send them our way.

I should also discuss a problem that will be addressed this year, as it is getting to be an issue that affects everyone: that of retired Laborers' Union members continuing to work in the

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Union meetings are the second Friday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the hall



Business Manager's Report (continued from page 6)

construction industry while drawing monthly benefits. Our pension plan is one of the best in the United States. It is designed to be flexible in almost every way to give our members the ability to draw their retirement and still continue to work in other professions.

This last summer we had reports of members drawing a Laborers' pension while laying sewer pipe, raking asphalt and checking grade while dispatched out of the Operators Union or laying block, hod-carrying and pouring concrete while working non-union. This is not only wrong, but an insult to our active members, as well as, those who are retired and observing the trust rules. It costs our members jobs and this local its jurisdiction. It cannot be tolerated.

If we find any Laborer retirees performing the jurisdictional work of this local union, we will immediately inform the trust office. This will result in a suspension of benefits and it will be up to the retiree to prove to the trust that they are fulfilling their obligations under the trust agreement in order to begin receiving their checks again. Working outside the trust agreement can also result in you and your family losing your ability to participate in the Laborers' subsidized retiree medical plan for life. **It is just not worth it.** We want your years as a retiree to be the most lucrative and best years of your life. Please don't do it at the expense of your brother and sister members. If you want to start another career as an operator or other profession, we support that right. Just don't do Laborers' work, so you can continue to meet the trust requirements. To help avoid any confusion, I have enclosed a list of most of the jurisdictional classifications we claim as our work. If you have any questions on our jurisdiction, please do not hesitate to call us.

This month we will begin to put on VOICE classes. VOICE stands for Volunteer Organizer in Construction Empowerment. It will begin the process of changing the culture of this local union (continued on page 8)

Laborers Jurisdiction (cont'd)

Forklift (incidental to trade) for all stocking purposes

Hand work/hand tools

All fence: including safety, turtle, chain link, mortarless & mortar

Traffic Control/Flaggers

Temporary tack welding

Stocking of all paint, drywall taping (mud/wall paper), **framing materials**

Asphalt raker, ironer, spreader & luteman

Guinea chaser/grade checker

Multi plate

Gabion basket builder

Micro tunneling

Hazardous Waste Worker

Plaster Tenders/plaster pump

Unloading of all trucks (jobsite/storage)

Vaults: setting and leveling

Dust control

Furniture stocking

Hod Carriers

Mason Tenders

Tunnel & Shaft Workers/Miners

Air Trac Rock Drillers, Powdermen



Photo by John Hanna

Laborers Jurisdiction (cont'd)

High Scaling & Laying of Nets

Fire Watch

Material handling

All walk behind equipment

Forms: stripping, oiling, cleaning

Track Laborer

Tool cribs

Riprap

Pipejacking

Directional drilling

Fine grading

Liner installation

Guardrail Erector

All demolition: cutting, burning, plasma arc

Mainline and Distribution Pipeline Workers

Chain Saw - Faller and Bucker



Business Manager's Report (continued from page 6)

by making every member an organizer. This will not only give us extra help when we are in the middle of an organizing drive, but will also keep every member looking for opportunities and new leads for the local union to organize.

If we are lacking anywhere as a local union, I believe it has been in our contract and jurisdictional enforcement in the field. We made a calculated choice to run one agent short this last season to build our general fund and become more financially stable. Now that we have reached that goal, we will make an extra effort this year to get out on the jobs, visit the members and police our work. We will be training a new group of job stewards to better represent you on the job. The first class began on the 13th of February.

Though I know you have heard it before, please **keep all your certifications current** and please **sign up for the skills training classes**. If you are not accepted to one, sign up for another. Training always benefits you, our contractors and the union as a whole.

Also, so we can keep you better informed of news and other current events, we are implementing an email program. Please make sure we have your email address.

At the end of the day, your involvement at the local here is the key to making this union successful. Please continue to come down and donate a couple of hours, help us with a mail-out, shovel the sidewalk, help teach a class to our new apprentices, and, at the very least, **come to the meetings**.

We are always interested in any ideas you have on how the local can do a better job for the membership. Write down any suggestions or come in and see us in person. We appreciate your involvement and loyalty.