



Convention HIGHLIGHTS

37TH CONVENTION - CLEVELAND, OHIO

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

Lou Dobbs Fires Up Convention

Proclaiming pride in being called a “protectionist” and a “populist” by corporate America, TV anchor Lou Dobbs, the first recipient of IBEW’s Voice of Working America Award, fired up the Cleveland Convention Center, turning his speech into a town meeting that put IBEW delegates on their feet cheering and lining up at microphones.

After his welcome by President Edwin D. Hill, who praised Dobbs for “opening the eyes of millions of Americans,” Dobbs, the anchor and managing editor of CNN’s “Lou Dobbs Tonight,” ripped into a critique of the U.S. political, corporate and media elites.

Our Constitution begins with the words, “We, the people,” said Dobbs, “not we the elitists, we the corporatists, we the free-trade-at-any-price. ... Democracy is fundamentally about us, the people.”

The United States has contributed nearly 80 percent of the total wealth created around the world over the course of the last 30 years, he added. Yet, during that same period, real earnings have been stagnant, and manufacturing wages have actually declined. “Now [we are called protectionists] for suggesting that it is unfair, that it is madness to destroy an industrial base ... that was the world’s envy,” said Dobbs.

Expressing anger at President Bush’s contention that immigrants are taking jobs that Americans don’t want, Dobbs said, “This president can’t finish a sentence. Americans don’t want jobs that pay slave wages.” He also assailed the shameful action of Congress, which invit-



Dobbs addressed health care and public education in a spirited question-and-answer session.

ed financial services companies to line their own pockets by rewriting the personal bankruptcy code.

After the conclusion of Dobbs’ remarks, President Hill encouraged delegates to take the microphone. Leundrius Arties, St. Louis Local 1, asked Dobbs what must be done to keep social issues from “clouding” the political thinking of Americans.

Dobbs suggested changing the subject to talk about the \$5 trillion trade deficit, or the fact that 48 million people in this country don’t have health care. “Talk about the fact

that we can drop hundreds of billions of dollars into overseas adventures and nation building, but we can’t spend a billion dollars to secure our ports and borders.”

Mike Verbout, Tucson, Ariz., Local 570, asked Dobbs what he would think about providing tax breaks to companies that would bring manufacturing back to the United States.

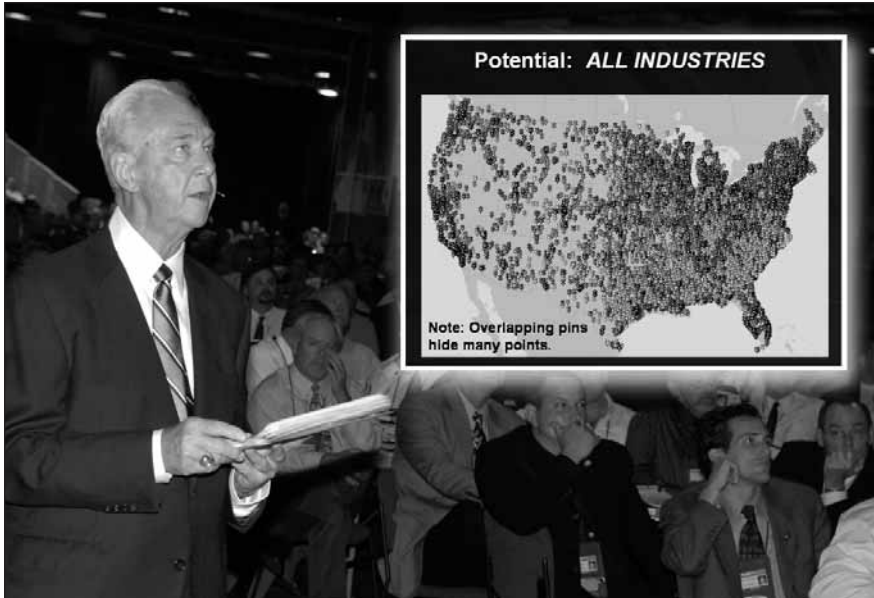
“I guess I’d be all right with that,” said Dobbs. But, he said he had a different view. “How about this — a company that off-shores American production, exports American jobs, and then exports back those goods and services to this country; how about we tax the bloody hell out of them?”

Saying that he was tired of people sitting and simply “discussing the socio-political economic situation,” Dobbs drew thundering applause when he shouted, “No. Raise some hell. Give a damn. And don’t be embarrassed to be a little passionate. ... If we’re honest with one another and demand the truth, you and I will have a great deal to be proud of, and we’ll assure our children a bright future that otherwise would be denied them.”

Panoramic Photo

The panoramic photo will be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session, which will start at 1:15 p.m. Due to the configuration of the convention hall, it will be necessary for some delegates to move so that they can be included in the shot. All delegates are asked to please be in the hall promptly at 1:15 p.m.

Delegates Approve Resources for Aggressive Organizing Program



President Hill: "We have thousands and thousands of potential organizing targets."

Delegates signaled their strong support for an aggressive growth strategy for the union with an overwhelming voice vote in favor of a per capita tax increase to provide the resources for the program.

Delegates approved an amendment to the IBEW Constitution, Article IX, which sets out a \$1 monthly per capita increase for each member, starting on January 1, 2007. A second dollar increase occurs two years later, on January 1, 2009, and the last \$1 increase will take place on January 1, 2011.

In summarizing the financial state of the IBEW, International Secretary-Treasurer Jon F. Walters outlined declining membership numbers and stock market losses. "While some may debate this issue, the undeniable fact is that we will pay a monumental price if we neglect to grow," Walters said.

International President Hill made a forceful presentation on the comprehensive industrial organizing program that he has developed. (See related story.) The per capita increases will be used to implement the program. The increases will also help stave off operating losses in the IBEW's budget.

Following the presentation, delegates lined up at microphones across

the Convention floor to express support for the increase.

"I am 100 percent behind the Law Committee's recommendation for the per capita increase," said delegate Frank Kuders, business manager of Philadelphia Local 614. "My way of looking at it, it's not an additional burden on our members. It's an investment in the International, an investment in our futures and the futures of our children and our grandchildren."

One delegate spoke in opposition to the increase. "How can I vote for an increase that would eliminate money that should be used for another job in the union office that we needed 10 years ago?" said delegate Diane Aird of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Local 2034. "I can't vote that way for our members."

Toronto, Local 353 President Barry Stevens said the increase is necessary for the union's survival. "You have shown leadership with a good vision of where clearly we have to go," Stevens said. "I am glad that we are using that per capita to deliver to marginalized workers more worker rights, fair wages and a hope for their future. To be the best union and a strong union costs money. I choose to invest my money in workers."

Ambitious Organizing Plan Spans North America

IBEW President Ed Hill unveiled an ambitious organizing program that encompasses six industrial sectors represented by the union in North America. Coming down from the podium to walk among the delegates, Hill outlined the plan using a visual presentation projected on the big screens around the hall.

The linchpin of the plan, Hill explained, is the development of multi-industry organizing councils based in specific regions, and the employment of a corps of skilled organizers. "This gives us the opportunity to pull together all the local unions in a particular area to work in this type of council," he said.

Demonstrating the vast potential for organizing within the IBEW's industrial sectors — utilities, telecommunications, broadcasting, government, manufacturing and railroads — Hill displayed several maps that pinpointed specific targets.

"We have thousands and thousands of potential targets," he said. "There are 5,000 nonunion telecom targets alone on this map." These include nonunion companies in the cable TV, satellite and telephone industries.

Also shown on maps were unorganized utility employers (rural electric cooperatives); railroad employers that are maintenance, repair and equipment companies; and manufacturing targets that produce wire and cable, lighting and signs.

Pointing to a map showing amalgamated and defunct locals, Hill said the IBEW has lost 572 locals since 1984 because of a lack of resources and desire to organize. "Because we lost those local unions, we've lost whole communities that thought about the trade union movement. If you're not around, they don't think about you. We need to get them back."

The organizing program will be funded by the International and directed by the Membership Development Department, headed by Buddy Satterfield, special assistant to the International President.

Edward C. Sullivan: Promoting Union Building Trades

IBEW is unquestionably the drumbeat of the future in the construction industry and beyond, AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades President Edward C. Sullivan told Convention delegates.

Sullivan praised IBEW President Hill for his leadership during challenging times for the labor movement and the AFL-CIO. Hill "has been a uniting force in the building trades," Sullivan said, recognizing the IBEW's role in many successful initiatives.

The IBEW/Building Trades partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership "draws attention to the fact that many union members hunt and fish and enjoy the great outdoors," Sullivan said. "Many union members own guns, and we support their constitutional right to do so. This fact is often forgotten at election time by our adversaries who want to divide us on hot-button issues."

With the "IBEW Hour Power Web site, the IBEW is leading the way on many fronts," Sullivan said. "From training centers in Puerto Rico, to solar energy and wind power projects, to satellite technology, the IBEW is on the cutting edge."

The IBEW Code of Excellence program promotes a positive perception of union workers, Sullivan noted, and "it provides a model for all construction unions." Additionally, a newly developed national multi-craft, drug-free workplace program enhances union labor.

"Our fight to preserve Davis-Bacon protections is always a priority," Sullivan said. "In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, President Bush took away critical wage protections from struggling Gulf State workers. We fought back hard until it was restored."

The building trades and the IBEW are "working together in the Gulf States on a workforce development project to help address our industry's critical need for skilled workers," Sullivan noted. "We partnered with the AFL-CIO Housing and Building Investment Trust on a \$1 billion investment initiative to help rebuild the New Orleans area."

Speaking of current legislative issues, Sullivan said, "The building trades are not opposed to legal immigration. ... What we do oppose is illegal immigration and unscrupulous employers" who exploit illegal immigrant labor. "Any legislation must



Edward C. Sullivan
President, AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades

have wage protections" and protect American workers.

"We have worked tirelessly" for pension reform, Sullivan said. He cited recent legislation signed into law that will help protect the retirement security of more than 9.7 million workers participating in multi-employer plans.

IBEW Secretary Emeritus Jack F. Moore: Spirit of Brotherhood Alive and Well

"It warms the heart of an old warrior to stand here before you and receive the enthusiastic and fraternal welcome you just gave me," IBEW International Secretary Emeritus Jack F. Moore told Convention delegates on Tuesday. "The spirit of brotherhood is alive and well here in Cleveland," Moore said.

Moore congratulated the delegates on re-electing IBEW President Ed Hill and International Secretary-Treasurer Jon Walters. "There's no question you have the best team that's come down the pike during my time," Moore said.

Moore also paid tribute to past IBEW leaders and remembered his former teammate, the late International President Emeritus J.J. Barry, who died last year. "Jack's accomplishments are part of the rhythm of the IBEW's past, and I'm sure if he were here now, he'd tell us to ... concentrate on building up the drumbeat of the

future," Moore said.

"It falls to every one of you to seize every opportunity to move the Brotherhood forward, make it grow, and adapt to the changes in all the industries we represent," Moore said. "Each of us has to have the courage to do our part."

Moore urged delegates to be politically active. "We need to use both COPE money and our own sweat and blood in political races this year and in the presidential race of 2008, if we're going to build a better future," he said.

"George W. Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress are the worst I've ever seen," Moore said. "I lived through the Nixon years and the Reagan years and thought I had seen it all. But every day these characters find new ways to stick it to the working men and women of this country and drag America down in the eyes of the world."

"It has got to stop, and the November



Jack F. Moore
IBEW International Secretary Emeritus

elections are the place where we must take the first shot at making it stop. ... I hope all of you are as mad as I am and will work hard to elect people who share our values and will make our voices heard in the halls of power."

NECA President: Flexibility Helping to Grow Union

National Electrical Contractors Association President E. Milner Irvin has tried the new way of doing business under the IBEW's Florida Initiative, and he's a believer.

"We are working in sectors of the market that we haven't been in for years," Irvin told IBEW Convention delegates on Tuesday. "We are working for customers that haven't talked to us for years. And we are organizing and keeping competent workers from the nonunion for the first time in years."

The new construction wireman and construction electrician classifications are responsible in part for helping create and preserve jobs for hundreds of IBEW members, while bringing hundreds of lower skilled workers into the IBEW ranks.

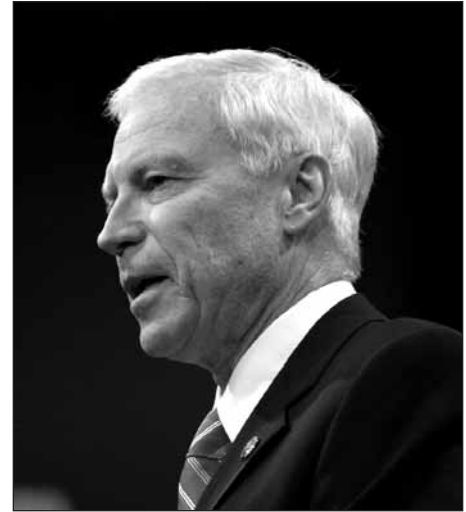
Irvin, who also serves as president of Riverside Electric Co. in Miami, an IBEW

signatory contractor since 1949, talked about his experience with the new classifications.

"The key to the success of the Florida Initiative is that it provides contractors with the flexibility we need to meet the customers' demands, without slashing the wages or benefits of 'A' members," he said. "The construction wireman classification provides a way to build a composite workforce that matches the skills and costs to the job so that we can get the work from the nonunion."

By many measurements, the Florida Initiative is working. The number of journeyman wiremen employed is up. The number of IBEW workers of all classifications in Florida is up.

"IBEW contractors are more excited and energized than I have seen them in years," Irvin said. "And the best part is,



E. Milner Irvin
President, National Electrical Contractors Association

we are just getting started. We are building the market and our market share and there is plenty of room to grow."

Helmets to Hardhats Helps Returning Vets

The IBEW is making a tremendous difference in the lives of vets returning from Iraq and Afghanistan by supporting the Helmets to Hardhats program, retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Matthew Caufield told delegates.

"What you are saying with this program is, 'we do care ... we want you ... we value you and your service to the nation ... and we will give you access to the best opportunity we have, the finest training and jobs with good pay and good benefits,'" said Gen. Caufield, director of the three-year-old program that matches veterans with jobs in the trades.

Helmets to Hardhats is the most effective veterans' employment program in the history of the United States. It is a cooperative effort of the building trades, eight industry associations and 82,000 contractors and "has spread like wildfire since its inception in 2003," Caufield said. "We've signed up 172,000 veterans in three years."

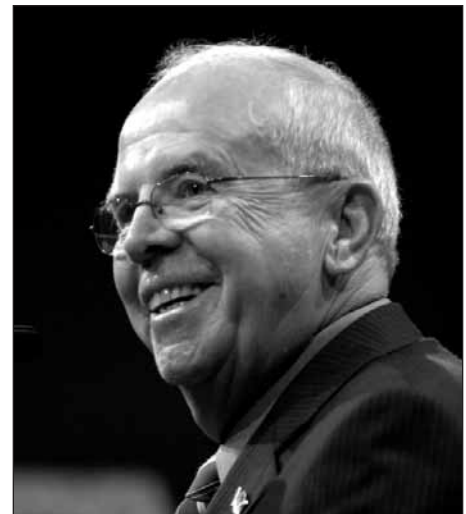
He thanked local IBEW leaders for considering the returning vets for their apprenticeship programs. "This is the best

pool of workers you will find," he said. "You get young people who are eager to learn – drug-free, strong and able."

Caufield contrasted the Helmets to Hardhats program with the lack of job placement assistance of the federal government. "This group of veterans is the first group to have a higher unemployment rate – 18.7 percent – than any other generation. The VA's response was 'Let's do a survey.' But the unionized workforce in the construction industry is really doing something about it."

He read an e-mail from one veteran who is in the second year of a four-year apprenticeship program. "Before I heard about Helmets to Hardhats, I had no hope," Caufield read. "I have a wife and a 10-year-old daughter and had to take government assistance, instead of standing up like a man. Now I have a good job, good benefits. I owe everything I have to the Helmets to Hardhats program."

Caufield also pointed out that, with Helmets to Hardhats conducting regular events with governors in 26 states, the



Matthew Caufield
Marine Corps Major General (Ret.)

general public is hearing about the IBEW and other unions in ways that they had not previously.

"They're finding out that the IBEW is ahead of the pack," he said. "Maybe someday the rest of the country will catch up with you."