

Financial Officers Conference

February 14 thru 17, 2011;

New Orleans, LA

The conference opened with a presentation from UAW International Secretary/ Treasurer (Region 4's own) Dennis Williams. Dennis spoke about the fact that elections matter. With the Supreme Courts 5 to 4 decision in Citizens United vs FEC, Corporations are now free to spend at will to buy elections. We need to do more to raise V-CAP money and mobilize our members to vote.

Secretary Williams spoke about the all out push that the UAW will be making to organize the Trans-National auto companies. In the USA you shouldn't be threatened with losing your job just because you want to join a union! The decline in manufacturing affects everyone in our communities. Good jobs support communities from Doctors and Lawyers to Waitresses and Barbers.

Secretary Williams has been starting some bold initiatives to bring the unions finances into the 21st Century. The goal is to become 70% paperless. Soon we will be able to file our Per Capita Taxes on line and make our deposits electronically as well as receive our Strike Fund Rebate electronically. He has set up a help line phone number where Financial Officers can call to get assistance with questions ranging from LM2 filings & Semi Annual Audits to tax filing & strike assistance. The plan is to make the Financial Officers Conference an annual conference. This timely help with the LM2 & 990 filing will be appreciated by even the most seasoned Financial Secretaries.

He also made it clear that we will be stricter on late Per Capita taxes. For too long we've been giving a pass to late filers, and it's not fair to the majority of Locals that strive to get their Per Capita payments in on time. One of the more exciting changes coming will be guidelines that allow for the use of debit cards. He stressed this does not mean credit cards, and that fully filled out and authorized vouchers along with membership approval will be required. This change will greatly reduce the need for reimbursements, allow for online purchases and save money in third party costs such as travel agents.

The first day of the conference was devoted to filling out and filing the LM2 report required by the department of labor. For me not only the first day, but the first night, the second early morning, lunch the second day, the second night & third early morning were devoted to completing the LM2. We finally got it balanced and verified at lunch on Wednesday. Dino and Carlo put in numerous hours by my side helping me out and giving moral support. The department of labor estimates that it takes up to 500 hours to complete this required filing. Without Roberts Custom Software and their staff at the conference to help it would have been that long for me to complete it.

The second day of classes covered the various taxes require by the Federal and State governments. These include withholding taxes, 941 quarterly reports, unemployment taxes, 940 annual reports, & how often tax deposits are required. Per Capita taxes and Strike Assistance were covered in the second half of the day.

Day three was devoted to filling out the 990 (Federal Non-Profit) filing to the IRS. We have a good start and the resources needed to complete this form ahead of the May 15th filing deadline. We also have a separate 990EZ that must be filed for the Building Corporation (Union Hall).

The last day of the conference we did a thorough examination of our Financial Officers Manual before lunch, then we heard from UAW International Vice President Joe Ashton and the effort we all need to make when fighting off corporate attacks on our standard of living. The legal department briefed us on Beck & Dunning notices. Beck notices are written letters from plant employees that object to being union members where paying dues is a condition of employment. Beck objectors are refunded the portion of dues that are not associated with negotiations or bargaining, but they lose their good standing. They cannot vote in elections or on contracts. They cannot run for office or attend union meetings. A Dunning letter is an attempt to collect a debt from a member for arrears of dues.

We wrapped the conference up with a CAP report and a session explaining some of our strategy for organizing the Trans-National Companies (Honda, VW, BMW, Hyundai, Toyota, etc.). We ask only that we get equal access to offer union membership. We will pick a target company and be willing to picket their dealerships if they refuse to allow fair organizing campaigns and elections. Picketing during peak sales hours will hit them where it matters, in the pocketbook.

In Solidarity,

Scott Houldieson; Financial Secretary UAW Local 551