



## Marketing Issues

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### Why Should You Get Involved?

Maybe you are wondering why I think it's so important for members to get involved in their union. After all, I have heard many statements along the lines of, "We have a business manager who does what you are asking me to do—and he gets paid to do it." But it takes much more than a business manager to spell success for the union.



### Getting to Where We Are Today

Here is a little history. On June 5, 1903, the International Slate and Tile Roofers Union of America came into existence. Then on November 6, 1906, the International Brotherhood of Composition Roofers, Damp and Waterproof Workers was born. Those two unions merged in 1919 and became the United Slate, Tile and Composition Roofers, Damp and Waterproof Workers Association. At the 1978 convention the delegation decided to write a new chapter into our history. That is the year they voted to change our name to the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers. Our union has gone through a lot of changes over the last 107 years—and not just in name.

In 1903 we didn't have an International President, a Secretary-Treasurer or any other International staff. But as our numbers have grown, International leadership has also grown. We now have ten Vice Presidents and five International Representatives covering all parts of the country. The Market Development department has three full-time and three part-time staff to assist you with organizing. Since 1903 we've developed a structure that includes business managers, business representatives, organizers and secretaries. We have the Building and Construction Trades Department looking out for us on a national level. In other words, we have a lot of people working for the advancement of your union. But we need your help as well.

We know one person cannot do it all, even in larger locals that have staff support. This is why we ask our members to pitch in and help things get accomplished. So let's

talk about your responsibility as a rank-and-file member—after all, it is **YOUR** local and **YOUR** livelihood.

### What You Can Do

- ▶ You have an obligation to yourself and your local to attend the regular meetings. You have even more of an obligation to attend special union meetings. It's not unusual for only a few members to attend the regular union meetings. In some cases only the business manager and executive board show up. It is your local; show up to the meetings and be prepared to offer positive input. This is how things get accomplished for the union and its members. Attending meetings shows you have taken an interest in the local and your future. Don't assume everyone else will show up—just go.
- ▶ We must be able to count on all members to lend a hand. During an organizing drive, we need the help of every member in order to obtain a large amount of information in a timely manner. The same holds for house calls: It would be nearly impossible to complete all the house calls with only the business manager or organizer working on them.
- ▶ Every member needs to be on the lookout for new projects. Whether it's a re-roof, new work, or work that has not yet been made public, it is all crucial to the local. Locals cover large areas and it is impossible for one person to know about all construction activity in their jurisdiction. If you see a project, write down the address and contact your business manager with the information. If you hear of a project that may be "coming out," give your business manager a heads-up.

Imagine for a moment, if you will, what the United States of America would be like if George Washington, Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King, Jr. didn't get involved. If you don't want to get involved, that's up to you. But if you don't, do you have the right to complain?

The new year is coming and now is the time to make a commitment to help all roofers get the wages, benefits and respect that they all deserve.

May you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Joyous and Prosperous New Year! ■