

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

What's going on?

It has been determined that Local Unions 353, 894 and 1739 should be merged together effective February 1, 2010.

What does this mean?

Local Unions 353, 894 and 1739 will form one Local Union.

Why?

The IBEW is currently facing a competitive crisis. It has become evident that Local Unions 894 and 1739 are not able to be effective at building their market share while the non-union contractors and CLAC are prospering. They have become a formidable force that has become a threat to the IBEW.

Local 894 and 1739 have tried their best to secure their market share but the fact is that this has not occurred and the evidence has shown quite the opposite.

How do we know this?

Tim Armstrong was retained by the International Office to investigate all relevant issues to recommend the proper action to take place. John O'Grady from Prism Economics was hired to perform the studies and gather the pertinent data and to view these reports, go to www.ibew1st.org.

What does this mean to me?

You will be part of a bigger Local Union that will provide more opportunities and offer more value for your membership.

How will the merger occur?

Vice President Flemming asked the Business Managers and one additional member from each Local Union to meet and discuss how the merger will occur and they reviewed numerous issues such as:

- Dispatch Procedures
- Unemployment List
- Organizing
- Local Union Staff
- Apprenticeship
- Pension and Health and Welfare

President Ed Hill will make a final decision based on IVP Flemming's recommendations.

What about my Pension and Health and Welfare?

Your Pension and Health and Welfare will remain as it is. New members will be enrolled in the Local 353 plans.

What about my place on the 'Out of Work' list?

If you are on the unemployed list in your Local now, you will be placed on the Local 353 unemployed list using the same date you became unemployed.

Currently Local Union 353 has only 582 JW and 116 apprentices unemployed out of a membership of 7,827. When you consider about 200 members of Local Union 353 never respond to calls (most Local Unions have members that maintain their membership but have other jobs) I think you will have to agree that a very low real 6% rate of unemployment in this construction economy speaks for itself.

What about my collective agreement?

The collective agreements must stay in place until May 1st, 2010 when they expire and, at that time a new collective agreement will be negotiated for all Local 353 members.

How will I be dispatched?

There will be one central dispatch system administered by Local 353. As of February 1st, 2010, Local 353 will have designed and implemented a fair, equitable and transparent system for all members throughout their jurisdiction to bid on jobs and not be penalized due to the member's living area. Discussions were held with the Implementation Committee and a number of suggestions on how to make this work were tabled. It is important to know that there are local unions with much larger jurisdictional areas than Local 353 and they are able to administer to their members fairly.

Who do I pay my February 2010 dues to?

Until further notice, please continue paying your dues in the usual manner, just as you would normally pay them.

Why don't I get to vote on this?

Article XIII of the IBEW Constitution gives the International President the right to merge or amalgamate Local Unions.

What about the office and training center?

The existing office will stay open and be used for training and meetings.

Who Is Tim Armstrong?

Tim Armstrong practiced law in Toronto for 16 years, specializing in labour and other administrative law litigation; public servant in Ontario Government for 18 years under Premier's prerogative order-in council appointment with deputy ministerial rank, servicing under 4 Premiers and 10 Ministers; served 4 years as Ontario's Agent General in the Asia/Pacific Region, headquartered in Tokyo; arbitrator, mediator, public policy advisor; counsel/consultant to McCarthy Tétrault.

- Barrister & Solicitor, Jolliffe Lewis & Osler, Toronto, 1959-1968
- Senior Partner, Armstrong & MacLean, Barristers & Solicitors, Toronto 1968-1974
- Chair, Ontario Labour Relations Board, Government of Ontario, 1974-1976
- Deputy Minister of Labour, Government of Ontario, 1976-1986
- Agent General for Ontario, Asia/Pacific Region, Tokyo, 1986-1990
- Deputy Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology, Government of Ontario, 1991-1992
- Consultant and Advisor on Economic Development to Premier of Ontario, 1992-1995
- Counsel, McCarthy Tétrault, Toronto, 1993-2001
- Arbitration/mediation/dispute settlement work by consensual and provincial and federal governmental appointment, 1993 to present.

Who is John O'Grady?

John is well known to the IBEW and has performed work for the IBEW Local Unions in Ontario for over 10 years.

John O'Grady is a consulting economist specializing in the analysis of labour markets and human resources. He is a founding partner of Prism Economics and Analysis. John O'Grady holds an MA in economics from the University of Toronto. He is a member of the American Economics Association, the Canadian Association of Business Economists, the Canadian Industrial Relations Association and the Industrial Relations Research Association.

John has completed numerous studies of labour markets, trends in human resources, and skills needs. His work has focused primarily on the construction industry, the IT industry, and regulated occupations and professions. He has undertaken studies of the architecture profession, the engineering and technology professions, and various regulated trades. In addition to his consulting practice in labour market analysis, John also assists trade unions and employee organizations in their bargaining and arbitration activities, as well as in their representations to governments on policy issues.

In 1992, John was Visiting Senior Researcher at the Economic Council of Canada. At the Economic Council he completed two studies. The first reviewed the impact of compulsory arbitration in the public sector. The second examined the relationship between industrial relations and changes in work organization. Both studies were subsequently peer-reviewed and published. Copies are available in the Studies & Reports section. In his construction industry studies, John has frequently collaborated with Prof. Brenda McCabe of the Dept. of Civil Engineering at the University of Toronto.

John O'Grady's published articles deal primarily with labour market and industrial relations issues. He has also written on various aspects of pension policy and occupational health and safety policy. He undertook study tours in the United States and Sweden, focusing on labour market and trade adjustment issues. He has spoken at numerous conferences and seminars.

For several years, O'Grady served as Treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors of the North-South Institute. The NSI is an Ottawa-based research centre dealing principally with international development issues. John has managed election campaigns for various candidates at the federal, provincial and municipal level. He also has coordinated leader's tour activities.

John was an adjunct professor at the Centre for Research on Work and Society at York University. In 1998, John was chair of an advisory committee of HealNet - a research network supported by the Medical Science Research Council. He also worked with the Centre for the Study of Living Standards. John has taught labour-management relations at Ryerson University and a labour markets issues course at York University. He established a graduate fellowship at the University of Toronto's Centre for Industrial Relations.

John was previously the Research Director and Legislative Director at the Ontario Federation of Labour. Prior to joining the Ontario Federation of Labour, Mr. O'Grady was the representative in Asia for the Canadian Labour Congress and the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. In that capacity, he acted as resident advisor to labour movements in Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. He was variously based in Singapore, Bangkok and Colombo with major assignments in India. He also undertook work in Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Fiji and Zimbabwe. Before taking up his Asian assignments, John served for a number of years as Assistant to the President of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

John is currently Chair of the Institute for Work and Health. The IWH is a research institute focusing on occupational health issues and the demographic determinants of health. John is currently a member of the Board of Directors and President of the Toronto Business Development Centre. He was previously Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors of ORTECH Corporation. ORTECH was a crown corporation focusing on technology assessment.