

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate ***Lincoln Electric*** for a first-class Regional Meeting in Cleveland. Matt Fleming and Lisa Byall, along with countless other Lincoln and 798 employees did a fantastic job of rolling out the red carpet for our members.

Every great company or corporation that strives for longevity must have a succession plan. Local 798 is no different and as we head into the future some changes are in store. I will start with Business Agent Darrell Turner. ***Darrell has served this Local admirably for over 43 years, the last 12 years as your agent in the Southeast.*** He has always been a champion for working people and I am confident he will not change in that regard, although he will be retiring at the end of the year. I want to wish Darrell and his wife, Bonnie, all the best as they move forward to new adventures. ***Jerry "Dale" Crabtree, Jr.,*** will be coming aboard as ***Business Agent*** on October 2 so that he can shadow Darrell for the few remaining months of 2017. Dale is a 31-year Journeyman Welder member and has proven himself to be an asset to 798 and its members. Dale currently serves as Inside Guard at all meetings, and I have received his resignation letter from that position so that he can serve as Business Agent. With Dale moving up, that creates a vacancy that, per the Constitution and By-Laws of Pipeliners Union 798 Article V Section 2, allows the Business Manager to appoint a successor. I have appointed ***Chad S. Williams,*** 18-year Journeyman member, to fill the vacancy of ***Inside Guard.*** Chad is a third generation pipeliner and I am confident he has what it takes to serve in this position.

Justin Wallace, 18-year Journeyman Welder member, and currently employed at PIBF as Pension & Contributions Manager, will be coming down soon to work in the 798 office to assist and train under Financial Secretary-Treasurer Wade Pilgreen. Wade and I both believe Justin has the mindset and ability to take over the finances when Wade decides to retire. I have appointed ***Ed Coker*** to fill the ***Pension Manager***

position at the PIBF. Ed is a 10-year Journeyman Welder member, holds a college degree in finance, and was an elected member of the 798 Finance Committee. Ed has resigned from the Finance Committee so that he may serve as Pension & Contributions Manager and interface with the membership. Per the Constitution, as Business Manager, I have appointed **Steve Birgy** to fill the vacancy on the **798 Finance Committee**. Steve is a 25-year Journeyman Welder member who has served this membership well in the field as a Welder, Welder Foreman, Job Steward and is well respected by his peers.

Last, but certainly not least, Shelia Ledbetter and Jaimee Grisham, both long-term 798 employees, will be retiring by year's end. I want to personally thank them for their service and dedication to the membership. I would encourage you to reach out to these men and women when you have the opportunity, and congratulate them for their dedication and service to this great Local, in the past and going forward.

It seems a tad early to talk about Wade leaving, but I just want the membership to know how much he has done for 798. Wade has done so many things for this union and its members that I could fill up the entire Blue Light with accolades about his performance and dedication. I'll try to sum it up with just a few words. **The commitment that he has brought to not only his office but the Local in its entirety is impeccable.** It has been a real pleasure to work with him. I am proud to call him my friend, and I wish the very best for him and Toni as they start on a new chapter in their life.

Retirees, by the time you receive this report you should have noticed in your bank account that the Trustees have approved a **five percent increase on your pension** amount and have also agreed to a **13th check**, which will also reflect the new raise. I am proud to be a small part of a well-structured and financed pension trust fund. Accruals for the actives were moved up for **Journeyman/Welders** from **\$175 to \$190 per credit and Helpers moved from \$116 to \$126 per credit.** Also, to further enhance the stability of the fund, we moved the

assumption rate (rate of return in market) down from 6.75% to 6.5% and agreed to maintain 110% funding going forward. Thank you to all the staff and Trustees of PIBF for such a fantastic pension fund!

The work outlook continues to be very strong heading into the fourth quarter of 2017, and all of next year. We must continue to be vigilant in advocating for the client's projects. The clients are the decisions makers when the choice is made regarding which contractors will be hired to construct their pipelines. This advocacy is working, but until I leave this office, ***I will always believe We Can Do Better!*** As always, I am proud to say, ***"I work for you, the greatest pipeliners in the world."***

Fraternally,

Daniel C. Hendrix
Business Manager