

**Apprenticeship Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, July 10, 2013  
Minnesota Room – Department of Labor and Industry  
443 Lafayette Road No, St Paul 55155  
[www.dli.mn.gov/ApprenBoard.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/ApprenBoard.asp)**

**Members Present:**

**Johnnie Burns**, *Secretary*  
Harry Melander, *Chair*  
Todd Ferrara  
Stan Theis  
Mark Christianson  
Matthew McDowall  
Dale Narlock  
Mike Mitchell  
Jeni Blaylock

**Members Absent:**

Everett Pettiford

**Staff Present:**

Bernie Michel  
Rich Davy  
Mary Desjarlais  
Terry Frauly  
Brian Wille  
A/C Looman

**Visitors:**

Tom Nieman  
Jim Nimlos  
Brian Hagberg  
Tom Aasheim  
Dick Tessier  
Tyler Amaar  
Buck Paulsrud  
Jeremy Andrist  
Larry Gilbertson  
Al Hauge  
Mary Kay Piltz  
Vicki Sandberg  
Jane Mahowald  
Jack Hettwer  
Phil Reines  
Brian Ashe  
Craig Bistodeau  
Dean Mills

**I. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order by chair Melander at 1:30 p.m.

**II. Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Motion to accept agenda, second.  
All to Accept, none to Oppose

**III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept previous minutes as written, second.  
No discussion, no correction. All to Accept, none to Oppose.

### III. New Business

No new business

### IV. DLI Report (Johnnie Burns)

Starting next week letters will be going out from the Apprenticeship Reps to individual programs. We have made some changes and redistributed some of the programs; if you have a Rep there may have been a change. We are trying to get back to the basics of the Apprenticeship program and really get back to the customer service end, with the customer being the Apprentice as well as the programs themselves. Part of that is re-familiarizing people with new programs and getting back to the basics of what the statute requires and what the programs intents are. In that redistribution some of you may get a new Rep and some will remain the same; it's all an attempt for us to get back to the basics of what the programs are all about. If you have any questions about that we can talk one on one later if you would like to.

**Status of Apprenticeship:** Apprenticeship is good, if you notice starting in April we had about 6400 apprentices, today we have over 6800. Females have had a steady growth, we've seen a reduction in minorities but that is the only concern I have. The programs are doing a great job, the field reps are doing a great job making sure that the programs continue to try to grow. It helps that we have a lot of active construction too; we want to make sure everything is moving in the right direction.

**Question:** in regards to this report I'm not sure what we decided to do, I am wondering if we could get a little more information. Normally when you look at information you like to look at a period of time that's more relevant, I would say a 3 month period isn't relevant enough to see the trends.

**Johnnie:** Yes, that will happen, I apologize it should have happened already, that was an oversight on my part.

**Question:** On the new apprentices, where has been the biggest part of the new growth, it has just about doubled?

**Johnnie:** I don't have that detail on where the biggest jump had been or which programs have the biggest increase. I don't know if we track it that way but we can certainly look into that and provide that data; hopefully there will be continued till the next meeting and we can talk about it then.

**Harry:** We can get you that information. All those approving of the DLI report say I, all to approve none to oppose.

We are also rolling out a new compliance review. Again the compliance review is back to the health of the program, is the program doing what the standards say and what the law requires

also what is the health of the apprentice. We are going to start having more interaction with the apprentice. I know the programs do a great job in communicating with the apprentice but from the DLI stand point we need to communicate with the apprentice as well. A lot of the information in the compliance review is the same as before, no major changes, maybe tracking information differently and getting back to the heart of the program; the safety, the training, the on-the-job training specific to the apprentice and having more direct communication with them. If anyone has any thoughts or ideas on what you're doing in your programs we'd be happy to listen to them. This will be rolling out in the next couple weeks, you may be getting letter from your new field rep to set up a meeting or have a conversation about your program.

## **V. Apprenticeship Coordinators Report - (Jack Hettwer)**

Jack Hettwer, coordinator for the Minneapolis plumbers apprentice program, also secretary/treasurer for the Apprenticeship Coordinators Association. I didn't know if Rick was going to be here so I don't have a lot to report. At our annual injured apprenticeship fundraiser we raised \$4476.00 for the fund. Our next meeting is July 24<sup>th</sup> at the Electricians 292 in St. Michael. I know construction has gone up a lot, I know I've indentured 30 Apprentices in the past few months.

## **VI. Board Discussion**

Harry, first is a request for variance in the apprenticeship ratio from Nieman Roofing, could you come to the front to state your name so you can be part of the record.

Tom Neiman, 2191 North Ave SW New Prague, MN, I am asking for the ratio to be changed so that it is similar to other roofers in my area; most of my work is outside the metro area. The ratio we are asking for is 1:1 for the first 3 and then back to the standard ratio.

**Harry:** Can you tell us a little bit about your apprentices, your experience, the number of apprentices you've had, folks that have been successful in completing the program and why you think this will be in the best interest of the apprentice?

**Tom:** I think our 1<sup>st</sup> apprentice program was in the mid 1990's and hasn't been updated since. Most of our work is in Southern MN, out of the metro area; Mankato down to Worthington ~ Rochester to Crosby, we just don't do that much work in the metro area, especially prevailing wage projects. Being that some of my competition is in this ratio that I requested I'd like to be a little more competitive.

**Harry:** Who are some of your competitors?

**Tom:** Schweickerts, they have a ratio identical to the one I am asking for, also Mayo Roofing.

**Member:** So you're stating your competitors have different contracts?

**Tom:** They have, I assume, a ratio for Southern MN.

**Harry:** The ratios that are established by the Dept. of Labor are Statewide, it doesn't make a difference if you are working in greater MN or the Urban Core.

**Tom:** But there have been requests for changes by companies like Schweickerts.

**Harry:** I can't respond to that, I can get back to you. I know the company you're describing has a ratio of that is identical to the one you're requesting. In my limited knowledge I think the number of apprentices they serve is much greater, 15 maybe 25, somewhere in between there. Their workforce has a significantly larger number of journeymen so that the experiences for the apprentices are much broader. There is a closer connection with journey level workers, more opportunities. I am curious, you made a request and its talking about competition. I think that's great and I understand why you're doing it but I think the role of the Department here is really is not only to create apprenticeship opportunities but to make sure those experiences are meaningful; they start from an entry level apprentice to a journey level worker. That's primarily our concern so maybe you could talk a little more about why you think this will benefit your potential entry level workers, because if this is just for competition I am not sure.

**Tom:** I might have used competition in the letter, I guess since most of my work is out of the metro I want to be in line with where the other companies are at.

**Member:** I am assuming you're a none-union contractor since you talked about coming up with your own program in the mid 90's, I am assuming those ratios were put forth by that program at that point.

**Tom:** I don't know if you came up with our own program but we had one. At the time we didn't have a true ratio within our program, that's why we need to update our program.

**Member:** Because Schweickerts has their own program as well, what is to keep him from re-writing his apprenticeship program, what is controlling his numbers?

**Harry:** The issue that is in front of us today, we have to be very careful that we are dealing with the request and only the request; I think if there is any modification that any applicant needs, it's pretty straight forward that they need to come through the department and we will address that. The issue in front of us is considering the request that the applicant has made to us in modifying his ratio of journeymen to apprentices.

**Member:** First of all I am wholeheartedly in favor of your request, I think it's reasonable and fair given the fact that you know your situation better than we do who you compete against. I do think it comes down to competition, it's one thing to have a law or a rule that says what it has to be and another to actually audit and enforce those things. Even if people have ratios in their agreement is that really what is happening out there on jobsites, my belief is that there are inconsistencies in even knowing if that happens. I think your request is reasonable but I

would like to know when you say you know that others have more apprentices on the jobsite as a ratio to journeyman, how do you gather that information, how would you know that?

**Tom:** I guess going through the process of our new apprenticeship program the other one was incomplete when we did it back in the mid 90's. We were given information from the apprenticeship program of some different ratios that were out there and I thought it was best to use the similar ratio that is used in my area, that's where I came up with that ratio.

**Member:** If you are signatory to a collective bargaining agreement do you if, or if not, you are subject to those requirements?

**Tom:** For example, if you are doing a MNDOT project, if you have a variance in your apprenticeship program they will accept that if its not the standard of the State, if you have an approved program.

**Member:** That's if you have an approved program that really wasn't my question. Here is the question: If you are signatory to a collective bargaining agreement do you understand that you are subject to these rules or are you not subject to these rules?

**Tom:** We are subject to the program that's set up

**Member:** I don't think you understand; there are certain rules that exempt you from the rules and are you familiar with that? That's the reason you are here asking variance is because you have a program that very specifically has to follow the State guidelines for ratios. That's why I think the request is reasonable in my opinion, especially because he isn't asking for a 1:1 ratio for his entire workforce. He's saying for the first couple guys I want a 1:1 for the first 3 and then I want to go back and follow the State guidelines.

**Member:** How many jobs do you have that require more then 6 or 7 guys on the job?

**Tom:** Our crews vary anywhere from 6 to 10 men. Right now I have roughly 6 or 8 journeymen and 3 apprentices left and 2 of them will be finishing the program this year leaving me with just 1 apprentice.

**Member:** In other words, according to your ratio here you could have more apprentices to be more competitive, correct?

**Member:** Mr. Nieman, how long is the apprenticeship program?

**Tom:** It's based on hours, 6000 hours

**Member:** so roughly 3 years

**Member:** If this variance goes through and they do allow a 1:1 for the first 3 and 1:3 after that and you start picking up jobs in the metro area how is that going to effect the other contractors working in the metro, if we start doing this for Nieman what are the other contractors going to do when it comes to asking for additional variance because we've already offered it to one?

**Member:** I have been on this board for a long time and I can tell you this is a broader discussion then just this variance, It thinks is a reasonable request and I feel that as a member of this board it is our position to consider all these requests. A broader discussion of what ratios are and should be have been had and should continue to be discussed because they do put certain individuals at an economic disadvantage, especially if the ratios are not enforced.

**Harry:** we can have that discuss and respectfully Todd we need to be cautious in making statements in regards to compliance that may lead to the assumption that the Dept. isn't properly monitoring apprentices and I don't believe that is what the case and I am sure you don't either. We will continue this as a request; I have a question for Mr. Neiman, I just want to be clear, this competition issue should not be a concern of ours in regards to the apprentice experience. Can you tell me more about your program and some of the things these young men and woman do and getting on the right career path, educational experience, do they go to class, is it on line, what's your involvement with this?

**Tom:** Our classes are supervised by the foreman, our insurance companies call and offer classes too. There is a yearly winter program that has safety and of course on the job training.

**Harry:** How many hours of class time do they get a year? I want to make sure this is for educational not economic reasons.

**Tom:** I may have used economics in the letter, I am aware of other ratios in the State and MNDOT brought it to my attention also. I checked around, we are a small company that's why we signed up for the apprenticeship program.

**Member:** This is for Johnnie or whoever; are there different ratios throughout the State or is there 1 statewide ratio?

**Johnnie:** There is a statewide ratio for apprentice training. The law allows that if you have a difference in your bargaining agreement the State has to look at that agreement, which is what Tom was talking about; or you come here and request variance.

**Harry:** Are you sure that Schwieckerts has a different variance then the State standard, it's your understanding they do but do you know for sure?

**Member:** they do

**Member:** I am failing to understand how bringing in more untrained people can make you more competitive. I understand lowering labor cost to more competitive but bringing in 3 apprentices that are green to 1 journeyman I am not sure I can get a job done properly. I would agree we need a lot more discussion before we can move anywhere on this.

**Tom:** As for our company we always keep a good core of guys, we may lose a guy here, but if I am only allowed 1 apprentice when I could have 3 being taught the likelihood of hiring new people is not as great. I can teach guys and bring them into the field, I have guys that have been with me for 30 years; 75% of my workforce is 15 years or more.

**Todd:** So right now you can have 2 apprentices but with this you could have 5 correct?

**Tom:** We have 6 journeyman so actually we could have more

**Todd:** What you are asking for then is; you have 6 journeymen to the first 3

The board voted to table the discussion until the next meeting. Mr. Nieman will bring more information back to the committee for discussion.

## **VII. Announcements**

Next regularly scheduled meeting

Wednesday February 6, 2013 ~ 1:30 p.m. Minnesota Room DLI

Wednesday April 10, 2013 ~ 1:30 p.m. Minnesota DLI

Wednesday July 10, 2013 ~ 1:30 p.m. Minnesota Room DLI

Wednesday October 9, 2013 ~ 1:30 p.m. Minnesota Room DLI

## **VIII. Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn, seconded and approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Johnnie Burns*

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