

Eastern Region District Councils are Seeing Success

It's just amazing what we accomplished in the last five years.

Congratulations to you on behalf of all of us.

(My union commitment) started 29 years ago when a knock came on the door and (someone)...—some of the guys in the region know this—and said, "Hey, kid, you want to join the union." A gift—a gift that knocked on the door, and a gift that I accepted. That person was Tony Spinelli. He was a painter, an old-time painter who lived behind the house and introduced me to the local. His friends pushed me along. I ran for local union office, district council office.

I first met Ralph Williams when I ran for office. He had to come in and handle an appeal because I really wasn't eligible to run. But I ran. I won. That's when I first met Jimmy's brother. And then I met my predecessor in the district council, Scotty Campbell—another good friend, another teacher. Then I met Jimmy Williams and also then-General Vice President Michael Monroe. Again, mentoring, learning, absorbing what they had (to offer).

We should start calling New Orleans the lost city because it really is. It's forgotten [and], if they continue on this pace, you know, the city might get rebuilt by 2025. And maybe our new president...should look at something like that...He needs to start addressing labor law reform, instead of only putting it back in our backyard, and...the real issues we deal with every day.

We stand here at this convention every five years. You know, it's been 15 years since full affiliation. And, honestly, a lot of the issues that we deal with on the General Executive Board still (have) to be done under full affiliation...Now, it's even proven that it works...if we didn't make these

moves in 1994...and with the predatory practices of a few national unions and international unions, who knows how many of our local unions would have been picked off, one by one, if they weren't under the combined strength of that district council.



BILL CANDELORI
GENERAL VICE PRESIDENT
EASTERN REGION

I come from a district council structure. I'm not an expert on anything, but I think I'm a little bit of a student of full affiliation, and I know what it's done for the 12 district councils in the Eastern Region. I know we wouldn't have the training centers that we have in my own city (without that structure). The Painters, in their wildest dreams, could never have put together a 90,000-square-foot facility in the city of Philadelphia with just painter hours. We needed the glaziers, the drywall finishers, the sign and display people.

As we add councils in Florida, as you've seen in New Orleans, as we

start growing in the Carolinas, and on and on—that won't happen without full affiliation. We...have to take the message back home.

New opportunity will only come if union brothers and sisters work together. In some way, shape, or form, everybody here was elected and trusted by their members to come to Las Vegas, to stand in convention, and to make the changes that we need to make for the next five years. But that's not the end of it.

(I urge) members to go back home and reconnect with lost contractors, go after repaint and industrial work as well as new construction, and take similar steps to refocus and strengthen the union. Use Bid Tracker and make Dodge Reports and get the Reed report to understand where work opportunities are.

Remember that you have to work with your elected leaders—if we don't, we lose.

The purpose of the full affiliation and "councilization" was to put a presence into place, to use the combined resources of that council. I can assure you there would have been maybe two, three, maybe four area local unions in the Philadelphia area whose members would be collecting unemployment right now if we weren't fully affiliated.

My job is to work into the region, to work with every business manager in the region, and to help make that district council a better district council and create more opportunity for our members in that jurisdiction.

With that in mind, here's what we're going to do in our region in the next five years.

- Florida had \$1 million when I left in 2000 and still has \$1 million because the business manager keeps

reinvesting that money...into areas where we never had a presence—a novel idea of a district council, (operating in) all parts of the state. They're starting to build a little bit of the presence in the panhandle—I can't tell you the last time we were in the panhandle of Florida.

- In New Orleans, we made an investment in a brand-new training center there, and it will start getting us back in the game.
- In DC 77/Georgia, part of Alabama, part of Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, we're starting to reinvest some monies there in [new] commercial work...In the whole Southeast, we're investing in industrial work...and we're starting to gear up for the opportunity of work that's coming online in power and in energy.
- In DC 51, we're looking at some other alternatives about getting some work. We have a new training facility there, and we're hoping we can grow something there. We really need to address commercial work—and we are doing that.
- DC 53 is doing great in protecting union jobs there.
- DC 57 probably has one of the better labor management relationships in the region, and they just keep going on.
- My own council has one of the premier training centers in the country. And they just keep going on and on.
- New Jersey had a major win, thanks to a union determination—a real organizing campaign; the Carpenters were house-calling our members. It was a "legit," all-out war. Jimmy Williams, Jr.; Pete

Cipparulo, the director of Organizing; the guys in 1976 dry-wall finishers local—people came in and helped us. It was a team effort—a one-union effort to drive back the Carpenters.

- Thanks to full affiliation—the district council process—there is strong new leadership in DC 4.
- DC 9 won a drywall election; a dry-wall lawsuit that lasted 20 years and increased our membership by around 200 percent. Under the leadership of Mr. Ramaglia, we're getting back into some of the redo/repaint work in the New York City area. It's a tremendous opportunity and the man is addressing it as well as he addressed his building trades issues there.
- DC 11, under (BM/ST) Dominick Cieri, he keeps on going, going strong.
- DC 35 has some work to do in some the areas outside of Boston, to recover from misjudged leadership and pitting one trade against another trade, local against a local, members against members...The members rose, the members spoke, and they elected new leadership in that district council...I'm happy that we have the leadership now in that council.

We've got a lot of work to do. And, under the leadership of Jimmy, it will get done.

You know, this job as a vice president—not such a bad job. It's an easy job to a degree. It's the assignments that are tough, and they've been tough, some of them! But you know what? I'm happy to do it. I was never alone. Now I've got a crew in the Eastern Region—Bobby Porto, John Courtien, Jim Williams Jr., Nelson Thompson; I've got a couple of retirees working with me—

Herbie Santos, George Bednar; and I have a "go-to" guy on special assignment: our ex-business manager out of DC 9, Sandy Vagelatos, who helps out from time to time. We've got a (heck) of a crew, and we really appreciate the respect when they come into the district councils.

In closing, it's nice to see everybody at these conventions. It's a beautiful thing and that's what it's about.

My job is to work into the region, to work with every business manager in the region, and to help make that district council a better district council and create more opportunity for our members in that jurisdiction.

I hope I didn't offend anybody, but honestly, guys, if the shoe fits, you have to wear it. But you're not alone. Seek your help from your vice presidents, from the general president or (executive vice president)—whoever you need to talk to. On some issues—on a lot of issues—we really have to move, because standing still just ain't getting it. And, you know, I'm not the smartest, I'm certainly not the brightest, and I really don't proclaim to have all the answers, but that's why I joined a union. That's why I joined the IUPAT: because, together, we can do anything that we need to do for the best interest of our members, and create an opportunity for them and their families.

[Standing ovation.]