National Pension Fund Names New Executive Director

The Board of Trustees of the Sheet Metal Workers National Pension Fund (SMWPF) recently announced the appointment of Lori Wood as Executive Director of the Fund. She replaces Marc LeBlanc, who retired in June.

Ms. Wood has 24 years of experience in working with Taft-Hartley benefit plans, plan sponsors and organized labor. She grew up in the Washington, DC area, earned a degree in Business Administration and joined the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) as a field auditor. After three years, she moved to the SEIU benefit plans (both Canadian and US). In 1999, she assumed the role of Administrative Director of Benefits where she oversaw several retirement plans and health plans. From 2002 through 2013, she served in a variety of senior management roles for SEIU and its funds, including serving as Deputy Chief of Staff and Human Resources Manager.

Ms. Wood returns to benefit plan administration after a two-year stint at the Children’s Defense Fund where she served as Vice President for Field and acting Chief Operating Officer.

LOCAL 88 (LAS VEGAS) TRAINING DIRECTOR DAN ROSE RETIRES

Dan Rose, second from left, was honored for 10 years of service in a ceremony where members from Local 88, such as, from left, Jeff puffert, Training Coordinator, Byron Harvey, Business Manager, and Hyrum Valdez, Lead Instructor, and others wished him well in his retirement. Rose began his apprenticeship at Local 88 in 1981, and his last day was May 27. “Everything I am and everything I have is because of my training and membership,” Rose said.

Building Trades’ Health Scans Save Life of DOE-Site Worker

Larry Buckner has ridden motorcycles near his East Tennessee home since he was 14. In those winding hills, he figures he can ride for four hours yet be within 10 miles of his house and never hit the same road twice. That is, until health issues made it impossible for him to ride at all. And if not for Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed), things might have been much worse.

A retired member of SM Local 5, Buckner’s first worked at the U.S. Dept. of Energy (DOE) Oak Ridge site in 1975. Over the years, he worked there often, from a few weeks to a year or more.

“We did hosting and air mostly,” Buckner remembers. “Now dust work, reworking old dust. Tearing out and modifying, changing filters. That’s where you get into a lot of dust, changing the filters out.”

“When you’re there, they pretty well assure you that everything’s safe. I think that they intend for it to be, but there’s a lot of unknowns out there,” he said. With active DOE jobsites dating back to World War II, workers “unknowns” have added up.

“They didn’t keep good records then,” Buckner continues. “One building might have had nuclear warheads and later it’d be a library or a medical facility.”

It has taken years of research to identify the hazards to workers at DOE’s nuclear sites, but the evidence is clear: if you worked construction on those sites, your health was put at risk.

Building Trades Respond

That is why, when a letter from BTMed offered free medical screening, Buckner knew it was a good deal.

The BTMed program is open to all who have worked construction on a DOE site. It does a work-history interview to identify the hazards a worker was exposed to and a comprehensive medical exam. Both are free of charge.

At Buckner’s first exam, he felt fine; his health checked out, too. But a couple of years later BTMed offered a low-dose CT scan, and though he felt well, the scan showed he was in the early stages of multiple cancers.

Luckily, the cancers were still treatable when he had the scan. After treatment including surgery that removed his esophagus and right kidney, Buckner is now improving. Without the exams, Buckner believes “it all would have progressed to where there wouldn’t be anything for anyone to do. So the screening definitely saved my life.”

BTMed also educates, so Buckner can stay on top of his health to enjoy the years ahead and even get back on his beloved motorcycle soon.

“I highly recommend that anyone who can, should participate in the BTMed program,” he reiterates. “I wouldn’t be here now if it hadn’t been for that.”

If you or someone you know worked construction at Oak Ridge or any other DOE site, visit BTMed.org or call 1-800-996-9865 to learn more. BTMed is coordinated by CPWR - The Center for Construction Research and Training. Article courtesy of CPWR.

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