

## Why would you want to travel?

- Pros-
- A lot of money out there if you know what you are doing.
- Great way to see the country and how other locals operate.
- Good way to improve your skills with the diversity of work offered.
- You can build up your retirement and insurance in a hurry.
- The Brotherhood is fantastic and you make friends for life.
- Treated better than you are at home.
- Other-
- Cons-
- A good way to go broke if you don't know what you are doing.
- A good way to get divorced.
- You could wind up Book 2 in your home local.
- The Brotherhood sucks and it is very lonely.
- Halls treat you like Road Trash.
- Other-

## You have decided to Hit the Road. Now what?

- Call your business manager/dispatcher. Let them know what you want to do. Business manager/dispatcher can get your paperwork in order. Business manager/dispatcher can fill you in on the latest job info.
- Get a plan.  
If you know where you are going, find out these important facts by calling the respective local and getting the latest information:
  - (1) Times and procedures for sign-in, re-sign and dispatch.
  - (2) What type travel letter (BA to BA, General, plain dues receipt) is required.
  - (3) Wage and Benefit package.
  - (4) Work situation, do they need welders, servicemen, residential, salts, etc.
  - (5) How to get to the hall. Don't rely on an address, sometimes halls can be hard to find.
  - (6) License Requirements, Drug Testing, etc.
- Make sure you have enough money. Figure around \$500 a week to wait in the hall for a job. Some halls dispatch by phone that will save you money.
- Figure out where you are going to stay. Hotels are the most expensive. Other options include, travel trailer, rentals to share, apartments (only if the job is long enough to warrant the first, last and security deposit). If you have a travel trailer or motorhome, you should belong to KOA, etc. Also check if they are open in the winter.
- Join the Auto Club. The free maps and route info will more than pay for itself.

## How to find out where to go.

All tools that you need to employ in your search.

- The Internet
- Target Report
- Word of mouth
- Through the grapevine.

**Never limit yourself to any certain area.**

The more you restrict yourself, the harder it is and the less money you will make.

## **Overtime, 40 hours, man-camps, supporting two households.**

What jobs to chase is a question of personal taste. My experience is that you can make just as much money working a steady 40 hour job week in a local that has a high wage and benefit package than trying to chase time jobs all over the country. If you decide to chase overtime jobs, you better be in the "loop", able to jump and run at a moment's notice, have a special skill (welder), tax write-offs and a "home base".

A man-camp job is easily the best way to save money. They take a portion of your money for subsistence but furnish your food and lodging. You can easily support two households working 40 hours. These jobs can be found in the Rocky Mountain States and Alaska when building large projects.

Working 40 hours and supporting two households is difficult but can be done. You must manage your expenses and work in a local that has a high enough scale to support this. If the work situation is bad enough in our local and steady enough where you are working, it might be wise to sell out and move your family. 15 years ago it took 2 years to get to the top of Local 280's book 1, and then the job you took might last 6 months or less. With this economy it may happen again.

## **Sitting in the hall, waiting on a call.**

One of the most nerve-wracking things is waiting for a call. After dispatch, there is nothing to do except spend precious money. Ask the Business Agent if there is anything you can do for the hall as for Organizing, Picketing, Handbilling, etc. They will appreciate the offer and return the favor if possible. The worst thing you can do is sit in a bar or tavern. This costs money. You can go to the library and study up on the Code, get on the Internet to find work, things that don't cost a lot. Get to know the brothers and sisters in the hall. The more people you know, the better your networking for future jobs will be in the future. If you're new to traveling, don't be afraid to ask questions. You will find 90% of the brothers and sisters helpful.

## **On the job.**

Get an agreement if possible or a sheet that specifies your wage, insurance, pension, vacation, etc. Know what monies you are earning and more importantly how to reciprocate them back home or get them out when you leave. Know the trust fund policies and conditions. When on the job, you take orders from only the steward or your foreman. If someone doesn't like the way you work, wants to walk or wobble the job, slow the job down, start trouble, etc. go to the steward and let him know what's going on. When in another jurisdiction you take orders from the political force that is in power. If it starts getting ugly on a job, and sometimes does during elections, keep your mouth shut and do your job. I have seen it so bad that I have drug-up (quit) a 7-12 job on a Sunday. Always give 8 for 8 and stay out of the in-fighting. Take it from an old fool, I have been run out of locals for being stupid and getting involved with political rival's of the Business Manager. Don't listen to the Carhartt Attorneys in the lunch shack. The local members elected the officer's in control in accordance to the by-laws, the way it should be. If some members don't like it, they can run for office. Stay out of it. When working, call Home Local and let them know where you are working and what the situation is. Maybe you can help someone who needs a job also.

## **Overtime**

How the steward runs the overtime is his business. If you don't like it, ask him about it. If you don't like his answer, live with it or leave. Overtime and how it is distributed is always a "hot" topic. Most savvy stewards have an "overtime" list. The worker with the least overtime hours gets the overtime, but not always.

## **When you leave.**

Shake the hand of the Business Manager or Representative. Let them know you appreciate the work and maybe your Home Local can help them out someday. Check with the secretaries to make sure you are paid up on dues. Also check on any vacation or other funds that are held so you know how to get them out. Your Home Local will be known on how you worked and how you left. If you don't like the BA or the Local, just leave. By starting trouble, you just make it harder for the next traveler. Let the local members clean up the local or job, not you.

## **Taxes and the IRS**

Document all expenses with receipts and keep them in order. "Dome" publications have some very good travel diaries and recordkeeping books at most office supply stores. This is a must to please the IRS. I have traveled with many good brother FLE's and BEE's who don't pay taxes and never have. The only trouble is that some day you may want to settle down and then the IRS will catch up. Do everything legal.

## **Skill upgrade classes**

Most Locals have welcome travelers to attend their skill upgrade and journeyman classes. Don't feel that since you are a traveler that they don't want you to participate. Most locals feel that we need the best-trained workforce to compete in today's marketplace. Please take advantage of these fine programs.

## **Attend union meetings as a guest**

It is a member's responsibility to know when the union meetings are. As a member you have the right to attend meetings and most locals welcome you if you behave yourself. Some locals will close off part of the meeting due to finances being discussed, respect their rules. **DO NOT GO WITH AN ATTITUDE!** If you have a problem, take it up with the steward or business agent. If you start trouble in a meeting, you probably will be on the first layoff where you are working. Remember that you have no vote or voice in another locals meeting (IBEW Constitution Art. XXIII, Sec.1). Locals will usually let you say something under Good of the Union in most cases though.

## **Double Booking**

Even though there is no language in the Constitution about it, the worst thing you can do as a traveler is "Double-book". What this means is working while you are on the out-of-work list in other locals except your own. Most locals will allow you to keep your name on your home list and no other but I have run across some that don't like that either. Remember to take your name off any books you may have signed when you take a long call. By double-booking, you can take a job away from a brother or sister who is out of work and in need.

## **FLE's and BEE's**

The great thing about traveling is meeting all different kinds of brothers and sisters. Sooner or later you will meet a FLE or BEE. They are no different than any other organization and they do know where the work is. I was lucky enough to travel with some very good ones but I have met some real bad ones also. Just remember your "Rules of the Road" and you will be OK.

## **Get involved with the local**

The IBEW is no stronger than the members. If you can help out with union activities please let the hall know by volunteering. I have had many travelers help out on fair booths, organizing, picnics and it is always a pleasure to have the help and I never have seen a traveler turned away from a volunteer effort.

## **Putting your ticket in or "Jamming" your ticket!**

You might find that the local you are working in is a good bunch of guys, a good union and you want to stay there. If you are indeed involved with the local in a positive way by helping out, more than likely someone on the Executive Board or staff may ask you to put your ticket in. This is quite an honor and if the local officers are cool with it, you should do it. I call this "putting your ticket in". "Jamming" your ticket is when you force your Book 1 rights, don't get involved in the local and are a pain for a local to deal with. Every local is different when putting your ticket in and some locals have a moratorium on letting travelers in their local. Get involved in the local first, then if you like the local, ask how you can put your ticket in. Don't be a "Ticket Jammer".

## **Exercising Book 1 rights, Book 1A.**

Some Locals don't want travelers to sign Book 1 to protect their local membership so they have arranged a Book 1A. A traveler should never sign Book 1, Book 1A or anything but Book 2 unless he is going to put his ticket in the local. Book 1 is for local members who live and work in the area with their families. If you believe you should sign Book 1 you should put your ticket in that local. Signing Book 1 in another mans local gives travelers a bad name. It pisses travelers off that a non-union electrician can sign Book One if they have proper Book 1 status but travelers have to sign Book 2. That's the way it is! Organizing is our first priority and the organizer will never sign a shop or organize his manpower by telling his them they have to sign Book 2. These non-union shops have become so big that they control the work in most of the country. The reason a lot of members have to travel is the fact that the non-union has taken the work away from the IBEW. The bottom line is you don't come into another mans home and sign the book ahead of them. It is an unwritten rule of the traveling brothers and sisters.

## **Made in USA**

The worst impression you can possibly make is to show up at a hall in a foreign car. If you do decide to travel or become a road warrior, get rid of the "rat wagon". Road Tramps take offense to anyone driving something that is not made mostly in the USA and if you stick an IBEW decal or bug on a non-USA vehicle, they most likely will "help" take it off for you.