



UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS OF AMERICA

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General President

New Year Provides Opportunity To Strengthen Our Brotherhood

On behalf of the officers of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, I would like to wish all members and their families the best for the new year.

While 2012 will be another year of economic uncertainty and continued challenges, it also marks a year of opportunity to strengthen our union.

It is up to us to keep our skills sharp for the day when the economy turns around. It is also up to us to make our voices heard to ensure that day arrives as soon as possible.

While no one is happy with the pace of recovery, things would be far worse if we returned to the policies that created the mess in the first place. Unfortunately, too many politicians think it is possible to move forward in reverse gear.

We must resist this misguided thinking and mobilize the energy of our nearly half-million members on behalf of candidates and political efforts that favor working people.

In the United States, 2012 will see the most important election in decades. With so much at stake, including Davis-Bacon wage protections, members must go beyond voting and volunteer to assist the political operations at their council or local.

While Canada avoided the excesses of Wall Street and is fortunate to have escaped the worst of the fallout, its new federal government is not worker friendly. I encourage our Canadian brothers and sisters to also become politically involved at the provincial and federal level.

We are not the first generation to face adversity, and, unfortunately, we will not be the last. However, persevering in difficult times makes things better for those who follow.

As the world sank into the Depression in late 1931, Carpenter magazine sent out season's greetings to UBC members. It read, in part, that organized labor deserved credit for "arousing public sentiment against ever permitting a recurrence of such conditions of want and privation in this land of plenty."

Less than a year after those words appeared, voters in the United States elected Franklin Roosevelt president and ushered in one of the greatest periods of social advancement in the nation's history. Over the next few years, Social Security, unemployment insurance, and the freedom to join a union were enshrined in law.

While it would take several more years for the Depression to end, there was no return to the naked capitalism that sank the economy. Instead, we benefit today from the efforts of those who fought to make the future brighter.

We must continue the battle and build on the legacy of those who came before us in order to improve our lives and the lives of those to come. Together, we will succeed.