

# ENGINEERS NEWS

## LOCAL 234





# FACT SHEET

## Treasury Department Releases First-Of-Its-Kind Report on Benefits of Unions to the U.S. Economy

The report's key findings are:

- Middle-class workers reap substantial benefits from unionization. **Unions raise the wages of their members by 10 to 15 percent. Unions also improve fringe benefits and workplace procedures such as retirement plans and workplace grievance policies, and predictable scheduling.**
- **Unionization also has spillover effects that extend well beyond union workers.** Competition means workers at nonunionized firms see increased wages too. And, the higher pay and job security of both union and nonunion middle-class workers can further spill over to their families and communities through more stable housing, more investment in education, and other channels.
- **The diverse demographics of modern union membership mean that the benefits of any policy that strengthens today's unions would be felt across the population.**
- **In addition to supporting the middle class, unions contribute to economic growth and resilience.** They do so in part simply by reducing overall inequality.
- **And unions can boost businesses' productivity by improving working environments and by giving experienced workers more of an input into decisions that design better and more cost-effective workplace procedures.**

## FAMILY FUN DAY 2023



# BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT



**JASON COPPLE**  
**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
**FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

This season has been different than we have seen in the last few years. We have had plenty of work, but haven't seen the big amounts of Energy work we've had over the last 10 years or so. This is the plus side to allowing travelers to come into our jurisdiction -- when we don't have an overabundance of work, we just don't allow travelers to clear-in.

Health & Welfare claims continue to go up every year, but our Fund remains healthy. Prescription drugs costs continue to be a huge expense, and they seem to be out of control. The Health & Welfare Board is looking for a health program to replace the yearly physicals that we lost last year because that company went out of business. As we move forward with that, we need participation from the Membership to be able to continue those programs. Most companies base their cost to our plan based on participation, the more participation the less the cost per Member. Like I said above, our health plan remains healthy and a lot of that has to do with the use of generic prescription drugs and the use of the Dr-On-Demand program. Quite a few trades have unfortunately had to take up to a dollar off of their wages over the last year

to keep their health plans stable, and I don't ever want to have to tell the Local 234 Membership that we have to do that. The past, and hopefully continued, decisions by the Membership to put 10 or 15 cents towards our health plan every year should prevent that moving forward.

The Training Site continues to improve with new equipment for the Membership to utilize, as well as added new classes for the Membership to stay updated on certifications. Keep an eye out for the training schedule that will come out around Thanksgiving. Please get signed up early for any classes you may need. This will allow plenty of time to get extra classes scheduled should the need become evident. Some of the remote training classes that the Instructors have been doing are offered multiple times throughout the training season. I'm not saying that they won't continue to travel, but sometimes the timing of the travel presents problems. Our International Training Site in Crosby, Texas continues to offer classes that we do not, so if you don't see something on our schedule, please check the International Training Site. The International will pay for transportation, lodging, and meals for any classes offered.

Other than that, I hope to see everyone at the General Membership meeting in Des Moines on September 30th, and remember to stay updated on the out-of-work list if you are not working.

## RETIREES PICNIC 2023



### 50 Year Members:

Retired Brothers Larry Riggan, Robert Feiereisen, Ben Olson, Tom Romanco, Kevin Willhour and David Pauls



# JURISDICTION WIDE



**NICK NORTON**  
**EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
**DISTRICT II AND**  
**ASSISTANT BUSINESS**  
**MANAGER**

The 2023 season started out a little slow with several jobs getting pushed back until later dates, but as of mid-summer we were in full swing with quite a few large jobs just getting off the ground. We actually have some set to start later this fall as well.

Six of the public groups that Local 234 represents are up for recertification this fall. The Members of these bargaining groups will be required to vote during the

time-period of October 10, 2023 through October 24, 2023 to decide to retain Local 234 as their exclusive bargaining agent.

Proposals from Members will be taken at the September District meetings around the state for the Heavy Highway and Old AGC Agreements. We will then be negotiating these Agreements with the signatory contractors in the coming weeks and months; bringing the proposals agreed upon back to the Members at the District meetings for a vote. If accepted, breakdown votes

will be taken. It is very important for every Member to attend Membership meetings but ratification/breakdown meetings directly dictate your pay and fringe package. It is important for Members to make these meetings a priority.

Local 234's Business Representatives have been attending public meeting around the state to push for future work in our industry. We have also continued to sit down with non-Union contractors to explain the benefits of being a signatory company with Local 234. Talking with non-Union Operators that are eager to join our Union family has also been a priority. Most are sent to the Training Site in order to evaluate their skills before bringing them into Membership. Organizing is the backbone of any Labor Union and it is up to all of us to spread the word to further our cause.

With our workload still looking strong, I urge any Member not working to stay on the out-of-work list. and to utilize our Training Facility to keep skills sharp and certifications up-to-date.



Brothers David Benitez, Dan Nenow and Ed Brehm working for Spirtas Demolition at the Holcim Plant in Mason City



Brother Eric Wincentsen and Brother Brody Kerner erecting a tower crane at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital for Tri State Crane in Iowa City

# MEETING SCHEDULE

General Membership Meeting:  
September 30, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.  
4880 Hubbell Avenue, Des Moines

District Meetings:  
(All Meetings Begin at 7:30 p.m.)

District I: Des Moines  
4th Thursday of Each Month

District II: Cedar Rapids  
3rd Thursday of Each Month

District III: Sioux City  
2nd Thursday of Each Month

Area Meetings:  
(All Meetings Begin at 7:30 p.m.)  
Council Bluffs Area: 2nd Tuesday  
March, June, September, December

Dubuque Area: 3rd Wednesday  
March, June, September, December

Waterloo Area: 2nd Thursday  
March, June, September, December

Stationary Meetings:  
Sioux City Schools: 3rd Tuesday of  
Each Month September through May

All Others: As Scheduled

## HEALTH & WELFARE FUND

Members are encouraged to call Health & Welfare anytime to verify reported hours for insurance eligibility to avoid a lapse in coverage.

If you are thinking about retirement you may be entitled to continue your health coverage after retirement. Contact Health & Welfare for an estimated cost of your monthly insurance self-payment.

Anytime you work outside the state of Iowa, make sure to complete a reciprocity form with that Local to ensure your Health & Welfare contributions are transferred back to your home local.

**(515) 207-3875 EXTENSION 5600**

**CONTACT HEALTH AND WELFARE ANYTIME YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF ADDRESS;  
DROP OR ADD A DEPENDENT; GET MARRIED OR DIVORCED.**

Is your address, email address and phone number current with your Union?

If not, drop us a note or call us at 515-265-1657

The annual assessments of defense fund (\$2 per year) and good standing fund (\$1 per year) are due each year on July 1st, which pays your assessments through June 30th of the following year.



# CENTRAL & SOUTHEAST IOWA



**CHAD CARTER**  
**VICE PRESIDENT**  
**&**  
**BUSINESS**  
**REPRESENTATIVE**

It's that time of the year already, we are already face to face with fall and soon the typical Iowa work season will be wrapping up. However, there is still plenty happening. The Iowa Utilities Board has held several public meetings for the Summit Carbon Capture Pipeline. These meetings are scheduled until the end of September, and there may be more to come even after that. We had seven small pipeline jobs going on in August. A couple of them have finished up but it's been good work for our Members. We had one to two Local Operators working on each project.

Distribution work has been steady for most of the state, although the east side of the state is a little slower right

now. We have one project going on in Eddyville for Cargill. This project could last until next May. Once it's completely geared up, we should have four Operators working on this project.

Our building contractors are staying busy on commercial warehouses and a few schools. This work should continue through the rest of the season. We also have one of our mechanical contractors building a solar farm in Ames. On the dirt side, Veit and McAninch have started working on the next few phases of Microsoft. This will also get some work for our mechanical contractors. Elder and Corell are both working at the Des Moines Airport and McAninch is busy with the I-35 project, north of Ankeny. Our dirt contractors have also been working on commercial projects as well. We have only had a few housing developments this season.



Brother Chad Leadley operates an excavator to dig around conduit on an Iowa State University solar farm for Waldinger in Ames



Brother Thad McVey operates an excavator on settled ditch lines for a new housing development for Sandstone in West Des Moines  
(Sandstone did not put the services in! They were hired to fix the problems)

## Front Cover:

- Brother Tom Gray operates an excavator digging around 12" pipeline on a MidAmerican Energy project for Q3 in Des Moines
- Brother Mike Dick operates an excavator setting drill stems on North Country Directional Drilling's rig. They are drilling in 3000' of 20" for Northern Natural Gas outside of Grimes
- Brother Greg Hersh operates an excavator and Brother Alejandro Mireles is the oiler getting ready to start digging on 7989' of 30" for Charps LLC in Wright County for the Northern Natural Gas pipeline



Brother Bret Alexander operates a 999 Main Boom 136' & 90' luffer setting steel for Northwest Steel at Iowa State University in Ames



Brother Tanner Becker operates an excavator digging in underground services for a new commercial warehouse for Elder in Urbandale

**SINCEREST SYMPATHIES GO TO THE FAMILIES OF THE BROTHER MEMBERS  
OF LOCAL 234 FOR THE LOSS OF THEIR LOVED ONES.**

Lee Melton	February 26, 2023	51 year Member
Daniel Patton	March 1, 2023	1 year Member
Eugene Partridge	March 4, 2023	58 year Member
Willard Brandt	March 12, 2023	45 year Member
Dennis Ashby	March 16, 2023	3 year Member
Dannel Ripperger	April 2, 2023	9 year Member
Harlen Harris	April 27, 2023	40 year Member
Rick Landers	April 28, 2023	24 year Member
Arnold Roepke	April 29, 2023	47 year Member
Don Downing	May 26, 2023	29 year Member
Don Hines	June 25, 2023	33 year Member
Hubert Balaski	July 24, 2023	33 year Member
Victor Madsen	August 17, 2023	64 year Member



# NORTHEAST IOWA



**BRIAN VASKE**  
BUSINESS  
REPRESENTATIVE

Work in District 2 has been busy. Since spring the weather has been dry in the area, meaning Operators are working lots of hours. Local contractors are saying they will have enough work until freeze out for most Operators. Work on the Palo Solar Farm started with Elder doing the dirt work on phases 1 and 2. Cupertino is doing the installing of the solar panels. We have had, and continue to have, issues with other crafts

on equipment. Ames continues to work at the Lansing Powerhouse dirt project and plans to wrap up the project by early October. Independence Excavating has started demo of the Alliant Powerhouse in Lansing. Kraemer North America was the low bidder on the Lansing Bridge project over the Mississippi River and should start work in the fall of 2023. It should be a couple year project.

Windfarm work has been on the slower side this year. Mortenson is doing work on two small repowers in Delaware and Fayette counties. Work for the University of Iowa is picking up. There will be a few tower cranes coming to Iowa City this fall along with a few crawler cranes for different University of Iowa projects.

Recertification elections for some of our Stationary public groups will be in October. After the election is over, we will start contract negotiations for these groups.

We all know winter will be here in a few months, meaning you need to take advantage of the training center. Layoff season is the perfect time to practice operating equipment that you don't have experience on, as well as honing your skills on equipment you do have experience on. It is also the perfect time to get your certifications updated. Most jobsites are requiring First Aid and CPR, as well as OSHA 10. There have been missed opportunities by Members this year because they lacked these certifications.

Brother Miles Lavin and Brother Seth Skelton work for Dave Schmitt on a project in Iowa City



Brother Tim Hefel operates an CAT 336 excavator at the Lansing Powerhouse demolition project for Independence Excavating





Brother Travis Smith operates an excavator for Engineering & Construction Innovation at the Bee Branch project in Dubuque



Brother Chad Emerson operates a Grove 275 ton crane and Brothers Kyle Ohrt, Grant Ries and Jake Salisbury are riggers for Emerson Crane setting an air unit for UNI in Cedar Falls



Brother Jerry Woodard operates a Caterpillar D6 Dozer at the Greeley Windfarm Repower project for Mortenson

## CONGRATULATIONS RETIREES

Ray Sandhagen 6-1-22

John Estle 1-1-23

Donald Krivachek 2-1-23

Randy Herod 8-1-22

Kenny Grose 1-1-23

Theodore Whitson 2-1-23

Todd Jackson 9-1-22

Ronald Jensen 1-1-23

Phillip Livingston 3-1-23

Kevin Otto 10-1-22

Steve Artrip 2-1-23

Gene Kauffman 4-1-23

Doyle Kinzenbaw 12-1-22

Douglas Cornwell 2-1-23

Mark McNaughton 4-1-23

Peter Simon 12-1-22

William Johnston 2-1-23

Bruce Payne 5-1-23

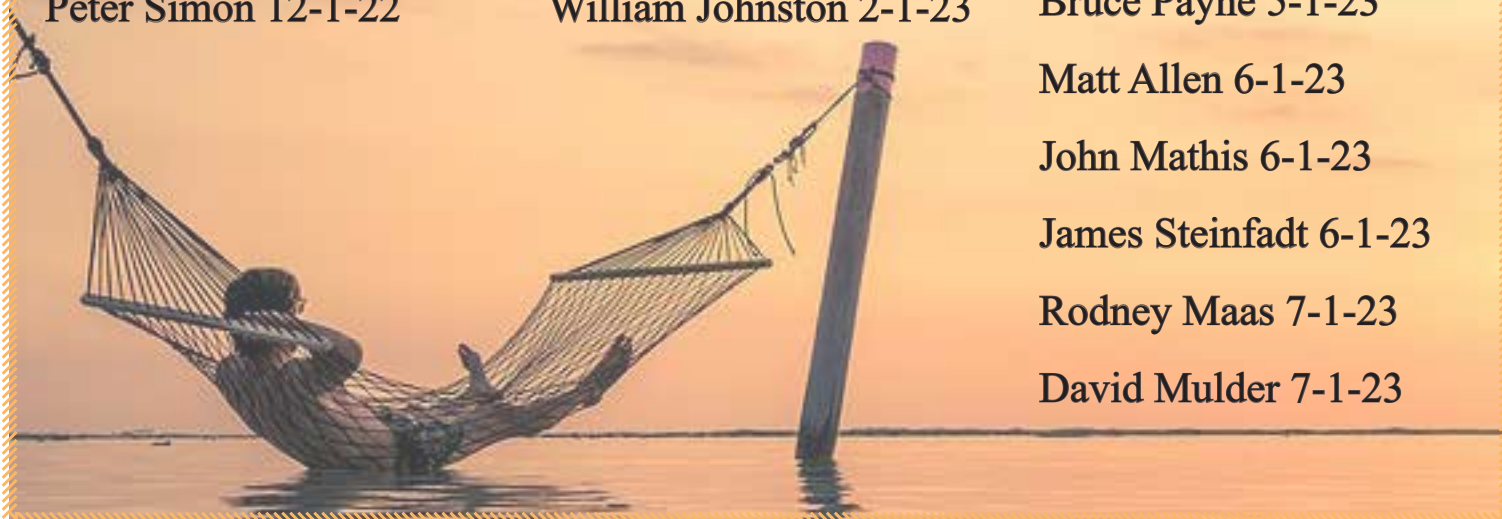
Matt Allen 6-1-23

John Mathis 6-1-23

James Steinfadt 6-1-23

Rodney Maas 7-1-23

David Mulder 7-1-23





# NORTHWEST IOWA



**SPENCER YOCKEY**  
BUSINESS  
REPRESENTATIVE

The work has been good in the D3 area. Klinger is busy with the Royal Canin expansion, a school and hospital addition, along with a project at Cargill. DM Steel is also busy with the Royal Canin, a school addition and a college expansion in Orange City. JF Brennan finished up the last of the 1.5 million yards dredging project near Lake View earlier this year.

The crane rental contractors are busy and have been hiring recently. Barnhart is busy with wind maintenance and curb service. Wilkerson has wind turbine maintenance also. Crane Services, Inc., a new contractor, is also busy with wind turbine maintenance. Vic's Crane Service is currently working a shutdown at the Koch Nitrogen facility near Fort Dodge. National Minerals Corp, another new contractor in the area, has been hiring Operators with work at the powerhouses in Council Bluffs and Salix.

At this point, next year looks to be even busier. Please keep your certifications updated and stay on the out-of-work list if you get laid off.



Brother Dick Braun working at the Hunt and Peck Elevator for Klinger in South Sioux City. His last day was on August 31, 2023, as Dick has officially retired after 30 years with Klinger.



Brother Kelly Reed operates a 250 ton Linkbelt AT and Brother Lathan McDonald, truck driver/rigger, for Barnhart at the Hunt and Peck Elevator in South Sioux City

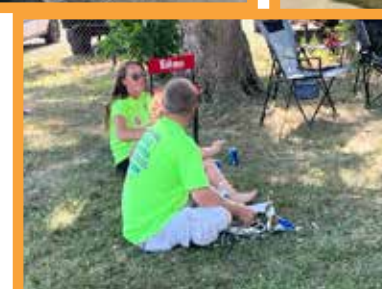


Brothers Jason Steiber, Mark Herman and Dean Ball at the Lake View Dredging project for JF Brennan





# DES MOINES LABOR DAY PARADE AND PICNIC





# SOUTHWEST IOWA



**TREVOR BINDEL**  
**BUSINESS**  
**REPRESENTATIVE**

Ames Construction is nearing completion of the Council Bluffs Power Plant project, as well as their portion of the I29/480 project. Together, these two projects have kept several of our Members employed over the past three years or so.

Work continues on the SLN project in Council Bluffs, which has JE Dunn as the general contractor.

Local 234 has a Project Labor Agreement with Dunn on the SLN Building 4. Berkel is also on this project, as well as Global Earthworks and Underground Company, which are finishing their portions of

pipe work as well. We have been told that Global is continuing to bid more scopes of the project. We also have a Project Labor Agreement in place with Empire Netting and Fence. Topping Out, DBA Davis Erection, is setting precast and Keller North America is on-site installing wick drains. I think it goes without saying, it's been a project that has brought a good amount of work for Local 234 Members.

Rachel Contracting has the civil grading on the Prescott Wind Farm as well as the Creston Solar Farm. AZCO is signed to a National Maintenance Agreement and has started to hire on Local 234 Operators for a solar project.

We will be working with our Stationary groups on new agreements as well as wage proposals throughout the coming months.



Brother Clint Walker operates a motor grader for Rachel at the Prescott Windfarm



Brother Kenny Grose and Apprentice Jace Grose working for McAninch in Council Bluffs

Father/Son and Brother Members Larry Dobberthein, 59-year Member and Joe Dobberthein, 35-year Member





# ORGANIZER

I began learning the ropes of organizing in June of this year. It has been an exciting, yet challenging opportunity. I recently attended the New Organizer Training Class at the International Training Site in Crosby, Texas. Various organizing methods and information were presented, and I hope they prove successful for Local 234.

2023 has been a very busy year for organizing and it looks to remain that way into the foreseeable future. Local 234 was successful in organizing Des Moines Dirt Worx, which currently employs five Operators. Turman Contracting, a contractor signatory with Local 150 in Illinois, was caught working in Altoona and is now signed to our Heavy Highway Agreement.

We are continuing to build relationships with non-Union contractors and Operators. We have had several

progressive meetings so far this year. It will be important to remain persistent, and in doing so, our journey to increase market share for Local 234 should be successful.

As always, it is our goal to improve the lives of all workers with better pay, benefits, and training. If you know of a new contractor or Operator that you believe we should meet with, please contact the Des Moines Hall at telephone number 515-265-1657 so we can get in touch with them.



**CODY PRICE**  
**ORGANIZER**

Brother John Steingrabe operates a 245 ton Demag for Six Crane in downtown Des Moines



Brother Joe Inman operates a 240 ton Liebherr for Champion Crane at the new living quarters project in downtown Des Moines



Applicant Collin Van Der Sluis, Brother Dustin Bennett and Owner/Operator Robert Dixon work on a road project in Altoona for the newly signed contractor Des Moines Dirt Worx

# OFFICE & FINANCE



**TRACY PETERSEN**  
**TREASURER & OFFICE**  
**MANAGER**

The Local began looking for a new Membership database this past spring, and wow.....I had no idea what a process it would become. After vetting every Union database vendors that we could find, we narrowed it down to three to ask for demonstrations. There were seven employees of the Local and Training Program who sat through the demonstrations. With each

demonstration, we were able to ask question that drilled into our main needs and concerns. We wanted to make sure we would find the best fit for the day-to-day work in the office, as well as the most user-friendly Members portal.

After the demonstrations were over, it was a unanimous decision that Union Fusion was the best fit for Local 234. The staff side of the database will be up and running the second week of October, and then of course the learning curve will come after that. Once we all feel comfortable with the new platform, we will be rolling-out the Members portal. Our plans are to make it possible for you to see much of your Union record, such as status and dues paid through date. At this point,

our goals also include you being able to look at your work hours for up to the past 10 years, and making it so paying dues online isn't so cumbersome. The Local will make an announcement and provide log-in information when the Members portal is ready for use.

The Local 234 Scholarship Fund that has been being discussed for what seems like forever is finally going to become a reality. The Local is through about 3/4 of the planning on rules, application, etc. After everything is in place, we will still need to have the attorney look everything over to make sure all of the I's are dotted and the T's crossed. Announcement of the details of the first scholarship(s) to be awarded will happen in January, and the award will be decided on or before June 15, 2024.

Every couple of years the Local holds meetings around the State in order to discuss pension benefits. It will happen again this year – the plan is to have meetings in Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Dubuque. Although I don't have the exact dates at this time, we will be shooting for February 2024 more than likely. All active Members that participate in the Central Pension Fund will receive notices of the dates, time and locations for the meetings. As always, we encourage Members to bring their spouse, significant other, or anyone else that you want to understand your benefits.

## SIoux CITY LABOR DAY PICNIC





# APPRENTICESHIP & TRAINING

With the strong workload this season, the Apprenticeship Program continues to have large numbers of Apprentices – not only starting the program, but completing it as well. There are currently 97 Apprentices working. We are anticipating, and gearing up for, large numbers for classroom certifications and machine training again this winter training season.

The Training Staff has been busy this summer with Journeymen and Apprentices wanting to upgrade their skills, administering CCO practical exams, attending Instructor courses, maintaining the site and equipment, along with assisting on a project for the John L. Lewis Museum.

The Program completed the purchase of a Cat 323 excavator with Trimble GPS. This excavator has all the latest technology available and will be a valuable training tool for Members going forward. It is another example of the Trustees' commitment to have the most up-to-date machines and technology available to train the Membership.

The Family Picnic this summer was the largest yet that we have hosted. I encourage anyone who has not attended in the past to please do so in the future. You and your family will have an amazing time. I would like

to say thank you to everyone that volunteered during the Family Picnic. It was a wonderful event for the Members along with their families and your help was very much appreciated.

I know it may not seem like it, but training season will be here before you know it. We are already working on the class schedule and newsletter. The training newsletter should arrive to Members around Thanksgiving. Please look it over and get signed up early for classes. Members have the option to sign up for courses online under the 'Members only' section of [www.local234.com](http://www.local234.com), by mail, or by calling the training center. Our telephone number is 641-942-7112.

You need to keep your credentials up to date, and add the ones you don't have to make yourself as employable as possible. Please take the opportunities afforded to you as Members. I look forward to seeing you all this training season.



**RYAN HOLLINRAKE**  
APPRENTICESHIP  
COORDINATOR



Local 234 Members doing crane training onsite



The new CAT 323 excavator purchased by the training site

Published by Local 234 of the  
International Union of  
Operating Engineers

92 Counties—State of Iowa

Jason Copple—Business Manager—  
Financial Secretary—515-265-1657

Nick Norton—Assistant Business  
Manager—515-265-1657

#### Portable & Hoisting:

Central & SE Iowa—

Chad Carter, Business  
Representative—Ames, Des  
Moines, Ottumwa

Des Moines—515-265-1657

Northeast Iowa—

Brian Vaske, Business  
Representative—Cedar Rapids,  
Iowa City, Dubuque, Waterloo

Cedar Rapids—319-396-2050  
Dubuque—563-583-2521

Northwest Iowa—

Spencer Yockey, Business  
Representative—Sioux City,  
Fort Dodge

Sioux City—712-255-1374

Southwest Iowa—

Trevor Bindel, Business  
Representative—Council Bluffs,  
Creston

Des Moines—515-265-1657

#### Organizing—

Cody Price, Organizer —  
Jurisdiction wide—515-265-1657

#### Main Office—

Tracy Petersen—Office Manager  
Des Moines—515-265-1657

#### Apprenticeship & Training

Ryan Hollinrake—Coordinator  
Indianola—641-942-7112

#### Health & Welfare

Jessica Wardyn—Office Manager  
Des Moines—515-207-3875

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DES MOINES, IOWA 50317

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#### Members only section:

- User Name = your register number
- Password = first initial of first name and entire last name all lower case, no spaces