

Historic Summit in Chicago

Ready to



Organize



950 IAM activists gathered in Chicago for the first IAM Organizing Summit designed to transform the IAM into a high performance organizing union. The summit generated more than 400 organizing leads and thousands of ideas on organizing new members.

A sense of excitement and urgency filled the air as 959 IAM organizing activists came together in Chicago on October 5, 2005 for the IAM's first Organizing Summit.

From all over the U.S. and Canada, leaders gathered to take part in this historic event, which marked the beginning of the IAM's transformation into a high performance organizing union.

"We need something bigger than any one of us. We need a union, and we need one damn big union if we're going to succeed for our families and the future generations of North Americans," International President Tom Buffenbarger told the delegates on the opening morning.

The IAM Organizing Summit

was not the typical conference — heavy on speakers and light on action. Rather, it was a chance for the IAM's best and brightest to participate in a truly interactive event that gathered their ideas and suggestions.

"Today we have the activists, the leadership, the movers and the shakers all sitting in one room. Look around because we need help from each and every one of you to organize and help grow this union again," said Buffenbarger.

To say these activists were successful would be a gross understatement. They left Chicago after three days with more than 400 solid organizing leads covering over 260,000 potential members and hundreds of pages of ideas on how to overcome obstacles organizers face and ways to grow the IAM.

District and Local Lodge leaders left the summit with a strong incentive to organize. Buffenbarger announced that, effective November 1, 2005, the IAM Executive Council placed a one-year moratorium on the per



Photo by Bill Burke, Page One Photography

Bringing innovation to organizing, computer stations at every table allowed delegates to pool their collective ideas, record them electronically and have the tabulated responses back by the next morning.

capita tax paid to the Grand Lodge for each new member organized. That translates into \$20.26 per month per member that Local Lodges can reinvest in organizing.

Success Stories

On the summit's opening morning delegates heard from three Machinists who persevered in hostile organizing climates.

To a standing ovation, Local 759 Chief Steward Renell Manns, of P&B Transport in Jacksonville, FL, praised IAM organizers for their help organizing P&B Transport.

"The IAM Organizing Team came in with a very well thought out and well planned operation that

allowed them to touch base with all the drivers at P&B. The way the organizing drive was handled made me extremely proud to be part of the IAM," said Manns.

"The IAM has definitely made a difference for not only me, but others who had to fight to get proper representation in their workplace."

Local 734 President Jim Long of New Piper Aircraft in Vero Beach, FL and Local 2545 President Dale Smallen of Maremont in Loudon, TN also talked about the benefits of IAM membership.

"To sum it up, union membership doesn't cost – it pays – and we are committed to organizing and growing this great union," said Smallen.

Getting to Work

IAM Strategic Resources Director Steve Sleigh presented the activists with the results of a pre-summit electronic survey.

Clearly, delegates had come with fresh ideas and were prepared to put in the work needed to grow the IAM.

The survey produced a long list of groups to organize, ideas on how to bring more members into the IAM and how to overcome the difficult organizing obstacles they face.

However, the survey offered a sobering reminder that much more work needs to be done. Almost 60 percent of respondents said they had not been involved in a single winning organizing campaign in the last five years and 30 percent of the delegates said they had not been active in an



Photo by Bill Burke, Page One Photography

Delegates came to the conference with fresh ideas and were prepared to put in the work needed to grow the IAM.



Activists compare notes and enter their responses during the e-brainstorming session on overcoming obstacles to organizing.

organizing campaign in the past five years.

“We set the terms and conditions for not only our members, but the entire workforce in the 50’s, 60’s, and 70’s. Unfortunately, it’s not that way anymore and we need to put in the work to regain that power,” said Sleight.

With the survey results in hand, delegates then got to work. To better facilitate the exchange of ideas, the IAM became the first union to implement an e-brainstorming session, which saw the nearly 1,000 delegates use 120 interconnected computers to simultaneously generate ideas on how to better organize new members.

The potential impact the e-brainstorming sessions would have on IAM policy was not lost on the delegates, who produced 50 pages of ideas about how to overcome organizing obstacles, expand incentives

to organizing and target future growth opportunities.

Educational Workshops

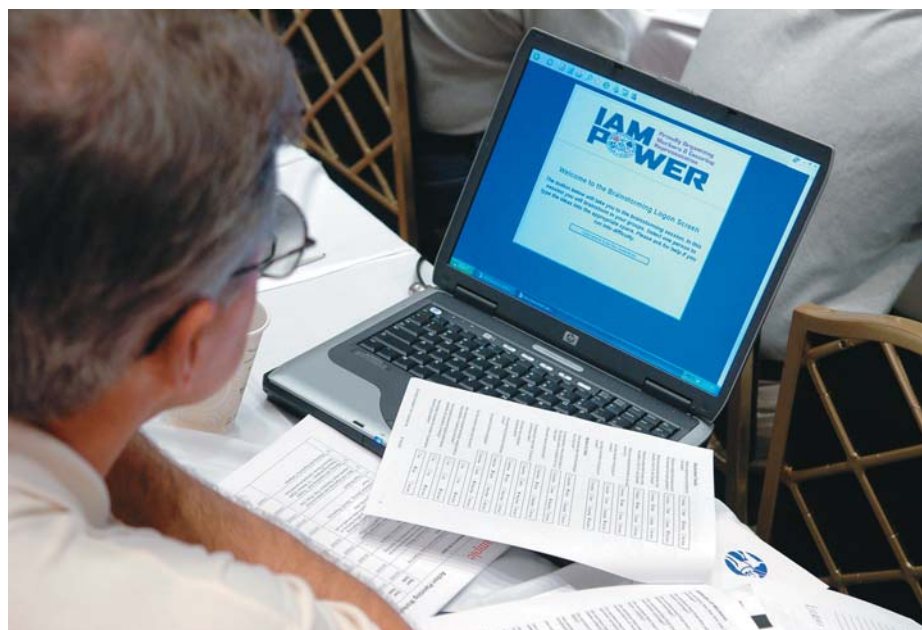
Delegates wrapped up the first day of the summit by participating in workshops about strategies for growth and issues surrounding organizing.

IAM attorneys Allison Beck and Mary McHugh, along with research economist Beth Almeida, led a workshop on Bargaining Issues to show how to use contract negotiations to further organizing goals.

“I tell people that ‘density is destiny’ because the more strength we have in organizing the more union density we will have. The more union density we have the more strength we will have at the bargaining table,” said McHugh.

Delegates learned about bargaining to organize, a strategy to bargain agreements that require companies to remain neutral in organizing campaigns, recognize the union through card checks and more.

“In order for the IAM to



The IAM’s cutting-edge software allowed delegates to input their ideas, including a pre-conference survey, general session and territorial brainstorming sessions and lodge organizing action plans. Delegates generated hundreds of pages of organizing ideas and leads.

Building on the IAM's Strengths

Best-selling author Harry Beckwith gave delegates a crash-course in "selling the invisible." It's a technique for selling a product that can't be seen, based on building strong interpersonal relationships both outside and within the union.

"You must work hard to develop relationships. People's feelings about a service are tied to how they feel about the people selling the service," said Beckwith.

"You must build and communicate this union relentlessly," said Beckwith. "The reputation and brand you build will shape the way people perceive the IAM."



Photo by Bill Burke, Page One Photography

Noted author Harry Beckwith teaches delegates how to communicate effectively about the IAM.

Beckwith praised the courage of IAM organizers and the risks they take every day. "It takes courage to organize, it takes courage to go through a highly volatile election, but you do it because you are not afraid to take risks," said Beckwith.

bargain to organize, we must develop a strategy to maximize leverage, getting buy-ins at all levels, membership education and involvement and committing resources," Almeida told the delegates.

Strategic Targeting

Steve Sleigh, polling expert Vic Fingerhut and the IAM's Canadian Research Director Lou Erlichman led a workshop on Strategic Targeting that took a sobering look at declining membership within the IAM and then outlined ways to reverse the trend.

"As a result of overall union density falling, workers are producing more and get-

ting less," said Sleigh. "Our challenge here is to grow the IAM – today, tomorrow and into the future. A key approach to doing this is strategic targeting."

Sleigh reminded delegates of the help available from the Strategic Resources Department and the power of polling to help pick organizing targets.

"We have to pick our targets strategically, assess workers' willingness to unionize and then organize, organize, organize," Sleigh said.

After hearing from Fingerhut about the role of polling in past organizing victories, Erlichman discussed

issues facing union workers in Canada.

"There is a tremendous opportunity for organizing in Canada. Seventy percent of manufacturing workers are unorganized, only five percent of business support service workers are organized and less than 10 percent of all maintenance and repair workers are organized," said Erlichman.

A Positive Message

Jim Leslie kicked off the workshop on Positive Message Development with a look at membership trends in the IAM since the Union was founded in 1888. Membership levels have fluctuated due to many factors such as the political climate.

To show the strength workers hold when they stand together, Leslie brought up a group of Boeing Machinists fresh off their 28-day strike.

While every single Machinist easily snapped a single stick, even the strongest Machinist couldn't break a bundle made up of dozens of sticks, demonstrating the strength of worker solidarity.

"We have to stand together in unity because that is the only way we will continue to maintain our strength," said Leslie. "Boeing tried to break 18,500 Machinists by dividing them, but these brothers and sisters stood together and the result was a victory not only for the IAM, but all of organized labor."

Delegates then discussed

the message they need to convey when someone asks them “Why join the IAM?”

Many nonunion workers don't know unions service their community through relief efforts and charity, wield political power to fight for worker-friendly laws, fight for a better global workplace and take part in collective bargaining to ensure a better life for everyone.

Organizing Techniques

The IAM's organizing director, Larry Washam, led the final workshop on Tools, Techniques and Resources for Organizing. Delegates received a number of vital tools including DVD's about organizing, a pamphlet about the Service Contract Act and



From left, Local 2339H members Kathy Compton and Rosalie Canton along with Local 2339C member Ed Miller at the computer during the “Positive Message Development” workshop.

information on in-plant organizing programs and the IAM blitz program.

Washam also discussed the obstacles IAM activists



Delegates from every local and district lodge drafted actions plans to turn their organizing leads into active campaigns. Roger Lewis, left, and Randy Gann of Local 1538 in Erin, TN write out their action plan before entering it into the computer system.

face organizing anti-union employers and handed out a packet that goes through a typical anti-union campaign.

“I have seen companies we help day in and day out turn around and bash us with anti-union propaganda on the shop floor and it makes me sick to my stomach,” said Washam.

Action Plans

On the final day and a half of the summit, members from each of the IAM's seven territories brainstormed ways to better organize within their territories. Led by their respective General Vice Presidents, each territory produced dozens of organizing leads and lodge action plans to grow the IAM.

Notably, common strategies evolved. The need for each local lodge to have an

active organizing committee became clear. So did the need for accountability at all levels.

Delegates identified numerous advertising opportunities, including billboards, radio, television, the Web, newspapers and local community events such as relief efforts and food drives.

Many territories also stressed the importance of diversifying their targets in their strategic organizing plans. “Our southern leaders have plans to organize workers we would have overlooked before. Many areas, such as auto mechanics, unionized in the rest of the country, are not organized in the South and we will find the keys to organizing these workers,” said Southern Territory GVP Robert Martinez, Jr. “If they are

workers, and they want a better life for their family, we will aggressively pursue them.”

The GVP’s asked delegates to take the enthusiasm they showed at the summit back to their district and local lodges.

“The enthusiasm shown during this summit has been tremendous and it is contagious. Take this enthusiasm back to your locals and infect your members. I look forward to working with you and together we will ROCK this union,” said Eastern Territory GVP Lynn Tucker, Jr.

(Video interviews with each Territorial GVP about the Summit are online at www.goiam.org)

A Clear Mission

In a week that saw IAM members implement groundbreaking technology and learn about the most modern strategies to organize, Buffenbarger recalled the legendary former IAM President William W. Winpisinger to remind the delegates that technology alone won’t organize workers for them.

“Wimpy did it the old-fashioned way. He took his job to organize as a personal challenge and I know you can do the same.

“If you want to make a name for yourself in this union, and I think you do, then organize, organize, orga-

nize,” said Buffenbarger.

And Buffenbarger sent the delegates home with a clear mission:

“The clock on your organizing plan begins ticking now. We need to generate more leads, you need to execute your action plans. Go back energized by what happened here this week.

“This is an historic moment in the history of the IAM, a moment you made. It is now our generation’s turn to contribute to this great union just like our founders did.

“Everyone in this union must be involved in organizing – no exceptions,” said Buffenbarger.

Former Fighter Pilots Wow Delegates



Former fighter pilot Kyle “Cruiser” Howlin explains how to apply the training pilots receive to planning successful organizing campaigns.

Accompanied by thunderous music and scenes of the world’s most advanced fighter aircraft in action, fighter pilots Kyle “Cruiser”

Howlin and John “Hitman” Hilterman of Afterburner, Inc., sent the delegates home with a very clear message: “The same process that

makes fighter pilots successful in high-stress, combative environments will also help IAM organizers as they embark on the mission of growing the union.”

“Cruiser” and “Hitman” stressed the importance of teamwork and knowing your enemies. “If you ever lose sight of your threat or enemy, whether it’s anti-union officials within the government or money-hungry corporations, you

will lose the fight,” said Howlin.

Delegates learned about Afterburner’s flawless execution model, a four-step plan, much like an organizing blitz, that incorporates planning, briefing, executing and debriefing.

“In the end, you are truly successful when you apply the tools of Flawless Execution, whether it is in a fighter jet or on one of your organizing drives,” said Howlin.

Summit Delegates Speak Out



Woodworkers, like workers in other industries, have gone through a lot of downsizing. Many of the jobs switched from good manufacturing jobs to low-paying service jobs. We have to organize to create good jobs for us and our kids.

**Bill Cox, President
Local Lodge W484
Warren, AR**



You could tell right away this was going to be a different kind of conference. It was inspiring to see delegates making nonstop suggestions from the floor about how to grow our union.

**Stacy Breunig,
President
Local Lodge 63
Portland, OR**



This conference has been a real eye-opener. I've gotten a lot of good ideas, especially from the brainstorming sessions, to use on organizing campaigns. I'm here because I want workers in other communities to be treated with the same respect that we have as IAM members after we organized our shop.

**David Hicks, President
Local Lodge 850
Oklahoma City, OK**



With everything being thrown at federal employees these days, it's organize or perish. We started with just 27 members at our VA hospital. Now we're one of the largest of all the IAM/NFFE locals. I'm very excited about learning ways to bargain to organize.

**Patricia La Sala, President
IAM/NFFE Local Lodge 1
San Francisco, CA**



If we don't increase our numbers, we'll suffer as a union and the country will follow. It's unions that set the standards for the entire country."

**Ross Miller, President,
Local Lodge 822
Quincy, IL**



Organizing nonunion workers is essential to the growth of the IAM and we must ensure our current members are satisfied with their representation.

**Malinda Simms,
Local Lodge 2339C
Akron, OH**



This Summit has been an incredible motivator and a great opportunity to share information. We should definitely keep this going. It's also a great way to recruit younger workers, which is the key to keeping the IAM strong in the future.

**Michel LeBlanc,
Organizing Chairperson
Local Lodge 2309
St. Laurent, Quebec, Canada**



This conference is right on target. In organizing, learning is a continuous process and sharing information is vital. I was only making \$7 per hour when we organized our shop. We won better wages and benefits and organizing is my chance to do the same for others.

**Donna Perinetti, Organizer
District Lodge 26
Kensington, CT**