

Secretary-Treasurer's Report
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On April 2, 2012, the Brotherhood reached a new milestone in its 125 year history when National Division headquarters moved to its newly purchased headquarters building in Novi, MI. The move to our new building culminates years of contemplation and effort to find a permanent location for our National Division offices that will serve our membership for years to come.

Our new headquarters building is located at 41475 Gardenbrook Road Novi, MI 48375-1328. The building includes 17,900 square feet of office space and a new state-of-the-art training facility with A/V equipment and 24 computer stations for officer and member education and training. A committee comprised of National Division employees and staff worked closely together to customize the interior renovations and technology necessary to meet the current and future needs of the Brotherhood. I want to express my sincere appreciation to all who assisted in this effort, especially staff members Rick Forbes, Chris Leidy, Daniel Yack, Michelle Osborne, Ron Columbus, and Bill Hildenbrand.

The property sits upon 2.3 acres and is conveniently located close to major highways, the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, and many hotels, restaurants, and shopping; making it a very good real estate investment for the Brotherhood. I am also proud of the fact that all required renovations to the building since BMWED's purchase were completed using 100 percent union labor.

The cost to the previous owner to erect the building back in 2005 was approximately \$4 million. The asking price of the property was \$1.6 million; however, we were able to negotiate a purchase price of \$1.05 million. Based upon the costs associated with renting our previous office space, we estimate that we will recoup the purchase price of the building in approximately 10-12 years. More importantly, BMWED will have a permanent headquarters to serve the membership and our union for years to come. This is just another step in the National Division Officers' ten-year plan to transition this Brotherhood to the next generation of leaders and leave them in the best possible position to continue the progress achieved for our members since our founding in 1887.

Of course, this is not the first time in our 125 year history that the Brotherhood owned its own office space, nor is it the first time the National headquarters has moved to better serve its members. In 1888, founding President John T. Wilson laid down his tools and began working from the Brotherhood's first headquarters building in Demopolis, Alabama; the birthplace of the BMWED. In 1889, Wilson moved the headquarters of our growing organization to Birmingham, Alabama where he carried on an active crusade, traveling thousands of miles across the United States and Canada, to tell the story about the union, then known as the Order of Railroad Trackmen.

Over the following decade our union grew in membership to over 40,000, with more than 1,500 new members enrolled in March, 1903 alone. The growing Order found it necessary to move to larger, centrally located temporary quarters in St. Louis. In view of the Brotherhood's constant expansion, the 1904 Convention authorized the Grand President to appoint a committee to select and buy a suitable office building for the Brotherhood, either in St. Louis or some other city of central location. However, this plan did not come to fruition until 1913, when the Brotherhood's 1912 biennial convention voted to purchase a building and move Grand Lodge headquarters to Detroit, MI.

Approximately 38 years later, on October 30, 1951, Grand Lodge moved its offices again, this time to a new building in Highland Park (Detroit), Michigan. At the open house ceremony BMWED President T.C. Carroll dedicated the new building to the previous generations of BMWED members, saying: "To the memory of those who spoke without fear; who were persecuted and ridiculed because of their love of human liberties. These liberties, our heritage, we pledge to uphold for all mankind."

While President Carroll envisioned that the Highland Park building would be the headquarters of BMWED for evermore, he could not have envisioned the devastation of the Highland Park neighborhood which resulted from the precipitous decline of the U.S. auto industry during the last decades of the 20th Century. Due to declining property values and the unsustainable costs of maintaining the building's infrastructure and security, Grand Lodge sold the building to the City of Highland Park and moved to Southfield, MI in 1992 where we rented office space until our relocation to our new building in Novi, MI.

I am proud of what this Brotherhood and its members have accomplished over the past 125 years. And I am proud of our union and its leadership for their efforts in assuring that the BMWED will have a permanent headquarters to carry on the important work of our union for generations to come. In dedicating the Highland Park building in 1951, President Carroll said, "This building brings to full fruition the dreams of many men and the completion of plans begun many years ago. The founding fathers laid the foundation upon which our present structure has been built... as a monument to the dreamers and planners of the past...."

Our new building also brings to fruition the dreams of many men and women and the completion of plans begun many years ago. It too is built upon a strong foundation, both literally and figuratively. And it too stands as a monument to the dreamers and planners of the past; and as a beacon of strength and enduring hope that this Brotherhood shall prevail and its members prosper for generations to come.

