

# InfrastructureUSA

## Guest on THE INFRA BLOG

**Edwin Hill, International President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers**

**Conversation with Steve Anderson, Managing Director, InfrastructureUSA**

### **Patches Don't Hold Forever**

I think we've lost sight over a period of years not paying attention to it, and if you will, patching here and patching there. I believe that no one really paid attention to it until it started to really get bad. It's easy to look at things until something happens, drastic happens, and calls attention to it; no one seems to be paying attention. We spent a lot of time for a while doing water treatment plants and sewage plants because we felt that the rivers were getting really bad, and we cleaned them up. But I just think people didn't pay attention to it. And I don't know where it fell down. We saw what happened with the Second World War with the highway system and they're talking about it again now, and if you really look at it, there hasn't been much been done with it since then. We worked at it—they compared the grid system, the electrical grid system to the interstate highway system and I said, well, that's good to compare it and good to deal with it, however that interstate highway system isn't completely finished yet.

### **It's an Easy Formula: Investment=Jobs**

Every time, any time that we get involved in it they don't look at it as us having the public interest at heart, they pass us off as just looking for jobs. Well, that's true to an extent but what we're saying is when you fix infrastructure, that creates employment opportunities. Our membership would be more than happy to get out front on issues of infrastructure but every time that a union person stands up and talks about they look down on him, as saying all you're interested in is the jobs it creates. Well certainly, fixing the infrastructure in this country is going to create jobs, and we all have to. If we're going to invest in it, that's the way it's going to be.

### **Jobs, Get Out of the Way!**

I think there are a few people on it forcefully, but I don't think the government at this particular point, they can't get out of their own way in my opinion. The investment in infrastructure works, it creates jobs, you can't deny that, but it just seems they can't get out of their way to agree. When a good job is created, they can't get out of their own way: what to pay them, whether prevailing wage rate would prevail or whether there has to be design to take it away. All of those things I think enter in to what's holding it all back. You talk about the pipeline coming, the Keystone Pipeline, for example; they don't want to put that in. There's all kinds of issues over that. But when you take a look at the pipelines that are already here, they're dangerous. They're dangerous; there are a number of them that probably need to be rebuilt, there are pipelines that go across this country that I don't think they pay much attention to, frankly. I think the companies

are and I think the people that are aware of them pay attention to them but I don't believe that the government really sees that as a way to create jobs. I mean they talk about jobs, the last couple elections all you heard was jobs, jobs, jobs. I haven't seen any yet.

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