

Phillip Wallace –

I write this Blue Light Report from Lincoln, Nebraska, while attending the Keystone XL Pipeline Permit Hearings. The KXL has been on the table since 2009 and has been the big victory for the Pipeline fighters since the project has been held up for the last few years. Special Representative of the UA Pipeline Department David Barnett; 798 Organizer Justin Hornbeck; Wade and Toni Pilgreen; and I have attended public comment meetings this summer to voice our support for the KXL. Also, I want to thank retired Welder member Warren Jones for showing up to support the KXL. Nebraska is the only hurdle left keeping this permit from being issued. This week, the second week of August, should be the last of the hearings for the Nebraska Utility Board, which is expected to make its decision sometime in late October or early November. David Barnett will testify for the United Association and Local 798. Ellen Boardman is here representing the UA and 798 in this hearing. Ellen always does an excellent job; she has been a great asset to 798 with all she does for you and your Local.

The work in my area has picked up with some more maintenance and replacement work in Kansas, Iowa, and Minnesota. Appalachian Pipeline picked up 13 miles of 20" in Iowa for Northern Natural Gas. This is the largest mainline job in my area all season. I feel like the 875 miles of 36" on the KXL coming from Canada into Montana and South Dakota and tying into the Keystone Pipeline at Steele City, Nebraska; and the 354 miles of 36" on the Enbridge Line 3 Replacement Project in Minnesota, will be a reality in the second half of 2018 or early 2019. The future looks good for 798 Pipeliners.

At the end of July, we have worked six million man-hours, and that's about what we have averaged the last four or five years. We are on track to have 10 to 11-million man-hours this year. Our members have done a great job manning our work this year, along with all the new members we have given an opportunity to be part of this Local and become Pipeliners. I want to welcome these new members that want to become part of the best workforce in America. It's not an easy job and being away from home for several months at a time is not for everyone. If you do make the cut, the rewards you receive are great with a decent wage, great health care benefits for you and your family, and the opportunity to build a pension for when you retire.

I have a darker message to some of our union members that are not helping this Local man the work we have been so blessed with. The ones I am speaking of are the ones working non-union, destroying everything this union stands for. In my area, I'm talking about the ones working on the Diamond Pipeline for Energy Services South, Strike, and Pumpco. I'm also talking about the ones working for Jomax CCI, and some more Mom and Pop contractors in Oklahoma that I've never heard of. I can't imagine why they would be working non-union with all the work we've had the last two years. The only reason I can think of is that you can't make it working for our contractors, but you may be a shining star among the undocumented, unskilled workers you're working with. We get a lot of phone calls from these jobs reporting book members working there. Not from inspectors like you would think, but from the non-union workers that don't want you there taking jobs from their friends and family. These people are just non-union workers trying to make a living for their family. The ones working there with a union book in their pocket are the Rats, in my opinion. I want to thank the ones calling. We know who you are, and you will be getting a registered letter with charge papers after the September Meeting.

Pre-Jobs:

Appalachian Pipeline:

Boone, IA. Northern Natural Gas. 13.76 miles of 20". Superintendent: Bobby Rose.
Welder Foreman: Rusty Wallace. Job Steward: Warren Lyda.

Michels:

- North Branch, MN. Viking Gas. 2,000 ft. of 20" HDD. Superintendent: Tim Turreson.
Welder Foreman: Andy Bacon. Job Steward: Troy Weaver.

-Bushton, KS. Northern Natural Gas. Fab and Install 4 Launcher & Receivers, and 4
Block Valves. Superintendent: Al Martinez. Welder Foreman: Jimmy "Cowboy"
Williams. Job Steward: Jack Broome.

Minnesota Limited:

Salisbury, MO. Enbridge Spectra. Pump Station Modifications & Inner connects.
Superintendent: Joff Kuznia. Welder Foreman: Dan Thompson. Job Steward: Bradley
Mudd.