**COVID – 19**

The COVID-19 pandemic, as designated by the World Heath Organization, has went worldwide with cases reported in 150 countries. How long this will last and the full economic impact is hard to predict. Thus far it has impacted production and supply chains and created unemployment levels that were unimaginable just a few months ago.

The COVID-19 pandemic, seems to have many things in common with the Great Depression of the 1930s. The depression was worldwide and is used as an example of how intensely the global economy can decline. It had a devasting effect on both the rich and poor countries. Personal incomes dropped. Tax revenue, profits and prices of goods dropped. International trade fell by more than 50 percent and unemployment rose to more than 23% in the U.S. Cities were hit hard, especially those relying on industrial jobs and construction virtually halted in many countries. Farming and rural areas suffered as crop prices dropped by than more than 60 percent. Plummeting demand with few alternative sources of jobs, such as mining and logging, suffered the most.

The recovery from the Great Depression in the United States was brought around by the American people’s strengths. We are a country of hard workers, who respect hard work. We place value on creativity, we have a deep respect for the rule of law and an intense desire to be independent. We are an optimistic people with a “can do” attitude. We love innovation and ingenuity. We have rich and interesting subcultures, that come with pluralistic values and a strong tradition of philanthropy. These were the strengths that brought us through the great depression and are the strengths that will see us through the COVID-19 pandemic.

As proud brothers and sisters of the SMART TD, we are the very essence of this great country. WE will stand together and help brothers and sisters in need. Through our ingenuity and innovative ideas, we will overcome adversity. We work hard and we respect others that do the same. Our belief in the rule of law has seen many of our sisters and brothers self-quarantine, for the safety and health of others. With our “can do” attitudes and our creativity we will extend help to others as needed and maintain our independence. Together, as proud members of the SMART Local 329 and members of the SMAR-TD, we will overcome and persevere through these extremely challenging times. We need to unite! Put aside “what is good for me” and think what is good for the United States of America, the SMART Local 329 and the SMART TD. As a country, we persevered through the Great Depression of the 1930’s and as a country and a strong Union we will overcome the obstacles and troubling times presented to us by the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

Stay positive and maintain your health,

Ralph E. Hardy LC 329