

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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Leading the Way on Quality

New York City Local 3 journeyman wireman John Murphy faced a competitive acceptance process when he applied for adventurous electrical work at Antarctica's McMurdo research station. But the contractor immediately recognized that Murphy's IBEW membership set him apart from other applicants and moved his name to the top of the pile.

"It definitely gives you a leg up," Murphy said. "It tells them that you meet a certain criterion. That streamlined it for me."

More than anything else, it's the quality of our work—embodied in the Code of Excellence—that gives employers the assurance that IBEW workers will get the job done the right way, the first time.

"It makes sense that 'quality' is the final piece of the Code's SPARQ acronym," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "Because when you add up all the other components—safety, professionalism, accountability and relationships—quality is the logical result."

When the Minnesota Twins wanted to build a new baseball stadium in Minneapolis a few years ago, former president Jerry Bell insisted on having union electricians work on what eventually became Target Field. "You get the best quality that way," Bell said. "You have people who are experienced. The craftsmanship in this ballpark is second to none in the major leagues."



IBEW quality comes from our first-class training and mentoring, not just during our apprenticeships but throughout our careers. It's affirmation of the hard work we've put in, and a guarantee that employers and customers get what they pay for.

You see our commitment to quality in the experienced instructors combining top-notch classroom education with hands-on guidance at our

"Training programs affiliated with the labor movement have a combined budget of over \$1.5 billion and are the second-largest providers of workplace training in the United States, after the U.S. military."

—Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO executive secretary and member of Portland, Ore., IBEW Local 125

NECA-IBEW training centers across North America. You see it through our investment in the National Utility Industry Training Fund, or when our telecommunications members take advantage of the latest NACTEL courses. And you witness it every day on the job, when experienced members take the time to share their skills with the next generation.

We understand that sharing our knowledge solidifies our well-earned reputation for quality, which helps us grow our market share as we gain and retain customers.

"Our customers and contractors have come to expect quality work from IBEW members, and it's easy to understand why," Stephenson said. "Our Code of Excellence is what makes all the difference."



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email theSPARQ@ibew.org



A Shared Commitment to Quality

The partnership between San Diego Local 465 and San Diego Gas & Electric shows the power of the Code of Excellence to improve the quality of a utility company and its relationship with its employees and customers.

Local 465 and the utility officially implemented the Code of Excellence in early 2018. Part of that adoption included training for members that helped SDG&E have its safest year in the company's 130-year history.

Business Manager Nate Fairman said the union is also focused on getting its members involved with SDG&E's internal committees to expand their leadership opportunities. It's another way the expertise of the members can improve service at the company. It also builds relationships between management and the workforce that might not exist otherwise.

Local 465 and SDG&E's shared commitment has extended to politics as well. The union worked with the utility on Assembly Bill 1054, which would help protect utilities if they take certain precautions to prevent wildfires.

But it's the level of IBEW members' work—the attention to detail and unwillingness to let a job be half-done—that truly sets our utility workers apart. Quality work and pride on the job can prevent catastrophes and accidents in the first place.

"The Code is a reminder to our members at SDG&E that

they've got a stake in the success of the company, just as the company has a stake in the success of its employees," Fairman said. "We're all pushing for quality in everything we do, and we know the extra effort pays off for both sides and, ultimately, for SDG&E's customers."



SPARQ GOES LOCAL



NTI attendees take part in hands-on training.



Participants attend the 2019 NTI Graduation Ceremony.



NTI graduates stand proudly in front of Hill Auditorium at the University of Michigan.

Quality begins with training, and the National Training Institute (NTI) is key to making sure that IBEW apprenticeship instructors are the best. This year marked the electrical training ALLIANCE's 30th NTI, which included more than 2,100 participants.