

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

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."

"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



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



Without Quality, Partners Will Turn Elsewhere

In the ultracompetitive world of telecommunications, IBEW members set themselves apart by their commitment to quality.

“Quality to me is knowing the customer will not only recommend our products, but will recommend me personally as a technician,” said Stuart Douglas (pictured left), who works for AT&T’s DirecTV and is a chief steward for Boise, Idaho, Local 291. “Our reputation is as valuable as the service provider.”

Technicians communicate face to face, but call center employees are the customer’s first contact with the company. Making a strong initial impression is essential.

“Quality is knowing my customer remains committed to our brand and continues to have a positive experience with the services we provide and I assist with,” said Local



291 member and DirecTV loyalty agent Dusty Mitchell (pictured right). “It’s making sure that customer, no matter the issue, hangs up the phone with a smile.”

We do everything possible to get the job done right the first time. Consumers have many other options to choose from—they won’t hesitate to do so.



Quality is also essential to maintain relationships with longtime partners such as Verizon, which has entrusted members of East Windsor, N.J., Local 827 to build out its FIOS network.

“I want them to continue to build that out here in the state of New Jersey so all of our members will have the ability to retire,” Business Manager Robert Speer said after the IBEW reached an agreement in July 2018 to extend its contract with Verizon until 2023.

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.