

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016



Convention HIGHLIGHTS

Our Founding, Our Future 39th International Convention Opens in St. Louis

Guest Speakers for Monday

Lonnie R. Stephenson
IBEW International President

Curtis E. Henke
*Eleventh District Vice
President*

Jay Nixon
Missouri Governor

Frank Jacobs
Local 1 Business Manager

Jerry O'Connor
Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus



Downtown St. Louis has been transformed by the arrival of nearly 5,000 IBEW members, spouses and guests for the 39th International Convention.

“The IBEW could not be prouder to be back in St. Louis because it was here, 125 years ago, that the first-ever union of electrical workers was born,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “We’ve grown from 10 linemen to more than 725,000 members, but in many ways, the Gateway City is still our spiritual home.”

The convention opens at 9 a.m. Sept. 19, when the nearly 2,100 delegates and alternates will begin the official work of electing leaders and debating and voting on laws and resolutions.

Pre-convention events started Thurs-

day with the IBEW Day of Service and the opening of the Henry Miller Museum in the former boardinghouse where the IBEW was born. Other highlights included the Electrical Industry Expo, which prominently features an extensive collection of artifacts and photos from the IBEW Museum in Washington, D.C.

The RENEW/NextGen caucus, Women’s Caucus, Political Caucus and the Electrical Workers’ Minority Caucus meetings were attended by hundreds of IBEW rank and file members, delegates, guests and International officers including Stephenson and International Secretary-Treasurer Salvatore “Sam” Chilia.

Throughout the convention, delegates will be addressed by IBEW leaders, past and present, speakers from IBEW repre-

sented companies and luminaries from the North American and international labor movement.

The convention is not just formal work. Throughout the week there are social events that give attendees the chance to connect with old friends and build relationships that bind the IBEW across generations, borders and job classifications.

“The convention is where we honor where we’ve been, make an honest assessment of where we are and set a course for where we’re going,” Stephenson said. “The delegates have a difficult and important task in the next few days, but I know we can rely on them to make wise decisions.”

‘We Owe it to the Community’: Hundreds of IBEW Members Volunteer for Day of Service

Standing before eight buses packed with volunteers, International President Lonnie R. Stephenson told members gathered for the IBEW’s Day of Service he was humbled to be a part of an organization committed to giving back to the community.

“Here with all of you, it makes me so proud to be IBEW,” he said to the more than 400 volunteers the morning of Sept. 15. “We’re only here for a short time, but the people of St. Louis are going to remember the work we did here today for a long time to come.”

The service event kicked off several days of activities around St. Louis in advance of the IBEW’s 39th International Convention. For the first time at a convention, delegates from dozens of local unions got up before dawn to pitch in at 26 different sites around the city, accounting for more than 1,600 hours of service in a single morning.

One of the day’s largest projects

was at Our Lady of the Holy Cross Church in the Baden neighborhood in north St. Louis. Much of the church’s unused space has been repurposed as an afterschool and community center. “It’s a great facility that wasn’t being used,” said program director Antoinette Cousins, “And now 40 kids a day learn programming, cooking, gardening, boxing and basketball.”

The neighborhood today is high crime, too dark for many kids—or their parents—to feel safe coming to the center at night Cousins said. So St. Louis Local 1 provided more than \$7,000 in LED light fixtures to improve the safety and function, and St. Louis Local 1439 provided thousands more worth of bulbs.

Alderwoman Dionne Flowers, who grew up in the neighborhood and attends Holy Cross, estimated that IBEW volunteers had put \$100,000 worth of work into the church and community center in a



Day of Service volunteers replace sanctuary lights at Our Lady of the Holy Cross.

single morning.

“We thank you, the children this center serves thank you,” she said. “This work would not have gotten done without the IBEW today.”

Inclusion and Political Action are Top Themes at Women’s Caucus

In St. Louis during pre-convention activities, some 400 delegates attended the Women’s Caucus on Sept. 16, with all genders represented.

“We want to honor our history, but most of all, we’re here to make it. And that’s something the women’s caucus—and all our IBEW sisters—do every day,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “We’re going to be writing the next chapter of IBEW history starting next week. And you’re a vital part of it. We’ve made a lot of progress. But we still have a long way to go,” Stephenson said.

Carolyn J. Williams, director of IBEW’s Civic and Community En-

agement, led the program, which included panel discussions, on inclusion and organizing, and personal stories of IBEW women, or “HerStories.”

Ashley Keith works at DirecTV in Idaho and was approached by two unions interested in organizing her and her co-workers. But she said only one showed her respect as a transgender woman.

“IBEW never, ever treated me badly,” said Keith, a member of Boise, Idaho, Local 291. “When I met President Stephenson, he said he looked forward to the day when he could call me sister.”



Delegates at the Women’s Caucus traded strategies for recruiting women.

Henry Miller Museum Opens Ahead of 39th IBEW International Convention

In a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 15, the Henry Miller museum opened its doors with a copper wire “ribbon,” snipped by IBEW leaders wielding lineman’s pliers.

More than two years in the making, the building that was once a boardinghouse has been renovated and turned into a museum to honor the founding of the IBEW. The house founder Henry Miller stayed in 1891, it was where he and nine other delegates gathered to create a union for electrical workers.

“It’s better than I envisioned,” said St. Louis Local 1 Business Manager Frank Jacobs, a fourth-generation IBEW member. “I hope that visitors take as much pride in it as we have.”

Local 1 purchased the long-abandoned building after leaders learned of its significance in a video produced by the IBEW Media Department in 2009.

The ceremony was attended by hundreds of members from across the U.S. and Canada. Speakers included Jacobs, local leaders, International President Lonnie R. Stephenson,



Hundreds of people from the U.S. and Canada attended the opening ceremony of the Henry Miller Museum on Sept. 15

International Secretary-Treasurer Salvatore “Sam” Chilia and Eleventh District Vice President Curtis Henke.

“Our union was founded by 10 men, just up those steps,” Stephenson said. “Being able to visit this place reminds me of how far we’ve come. Our tool chest may have grown over the last 125 years, but our principles remain the same.”

As members and their families strolled through the museum, with storyboards throughout telling the

story of the IBEW, many signed their name to one of the beams in the basement. Many signatures have union numbers accompanying them, leaving their mark on the building built to preserve their history.

“If you don’t get chills in here, you’re not IBEW,” said Local 1 member Dave Roth, who worked on the renovation. “Today was the type of moment you can’t pay for.”

Norcross: We Need More IBEW Members ‘In the Room’

New Jersey Rep. Donald J. Norcross, the only active IBEW member in Congress, was one of the featured speakers during Friday’s Political Caucus before about 350 delegates.

Norcross encouraged IBEW members not just to get involved, but to consider running for office themselves. He noted favorable legislation was passed when he was a member of the New Jersey state Legislature because several other union members also held elected positions. Norcross and Rep. David McKinney, R-W.Va.,

recently formed the Congressional Building Trades Caucus.

“It’s different when you’re in the room,” said Norcross, a former business representative of Folsom, N.J., Local 351. “It doesn’t happen overnight, but we need more people like you in Congress with me.”

Other speakers included Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander, the state’s Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate; Georgia House Minority Leader Stacey Abrams, who has worked closely with IBEW leaders in

the Peach State; and Missouri House Minority Leader Jacob Hummel, a member of St. Louis Local 1. Hummel is running unopposed for a state Senate seat.

A proclamation issued by the Missouri General Assembly honoring the IBEW was read. At least one IBEW member has been a member of the state Legislature since 1945, including 13 from St. Louis Local 1.

Young Workers Think Big

Attendees to the RENEW/NextGen caucus Thursday afternoon heard from four RENEW/NextGen members from across North America.

A panel included Kennitha Wade from Portland, Ore., Local 48; Meaghan Olmstead from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Local 2228; and Aaron-Zboch Alves from Toronto Local 353. “Having the opportunity to help out in my local has been awesome,”

said Wade, a first-generation IBEW member.

RENEW—Reach Out and Engage Next-Gen Electrical Workers—was formed in 2011 to inspire new IBEW leaders by focusing on issues important to younger workers and providing education about the labor movement. It merged with its Canadian counterpart NextGen this year.

EWMC Meeting Honors Past

The Electrical Workers Minority Caucus brought together hundreds of IBEW members and guests to discuss the past, present and future of diversity in the Brotherhood.

“The Electrical Workers Minority Caucus and the work you do is absolutely vital for the IBEW because the reality of today’s and tomorrow’s workforce is more diverse than ever,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “We need more women and more people of color, especially in the industries we represent.”

EWMC President Keith Edwards opened the day’s proceedings by

honoring the men and women who formed the EWMC for the progress for minority workers that has been made in the intervening 40 years.

“Talkers didn’t build this union. Critics didn’t build it either. It was the people who put their butts on the line, who did the work, who sacrificed lots of blood, sweat and tears to make the IBEW everything it is. It was built by people who when they saw injustice, they fought to change it. When they saw opportunity, they worked to seize it,” Edwards said.

The session moved from a look at the history of the organization, to

IBEW Delegates Enjoy Food, Fun

Food, fun and music were the order of the day Saturday afternoon as IBEW delegates and guests gathered for the 39th International Convention’s welcoming picnic and concert in downtown St. Louis.

Comedian Bill Engvall had guests laughing before Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees The Steve Miller Band headlined the evening’s concert.

Thousands of delegates and guests enjoyed St. Louis specialties like toasted ravioli and pork steaks while listening to country and rhythm and blues bands from the central live stage. But the highlight of the night was the concert, which had delegates excited during and after the show.

“On a scale of one to 10, it was a 10,” said Diamond Bar Calif., Local 47 member Ernie Lopez.

reports from six EWMC chapters about their activities since the last convention and closed with a panel focused on the LGBTQ IBEW members.

Caucus Meeting Rooms

Caucus meetings are scheduled for Monday, Sept. 19, following the adjournment of the afternoon session of the convention. Meeting locations are as follows:

District	Room	District	Room
First District IVP	Rooms 263-264	First District IEC	Room 276
Second District IVP	Rooms 261-262	Second District IEC	Rooms 261-262
Third District IVP	Room 276	Third District IEC	Room 220
Fourth District IVP	Room 224	Fourth District IEC	Room 223-226
Fifth District IVP	Rooms 260-267	Fifth District IEC	Rooms 230-232
Sixth District IVP	Room 241-242	Sixth District IEC	Room 240
Seventh District IVP	Room 225	Seventh District IEC	Room 275
Eighth District IVP	Rooms 265-266	Eighth District IEC	Rooms 263-264
Ninth District IVP	Room 274		
Tenth District IVP	Room 222		
Eleventh District IVP	Room 221		