



## Convention HIGHLIGHTS

### Stephenson-Chilia-Erikson Leadership Team Elected

### Speakers for Tuesday



*Erikson, Stephenson and Chilia take the stage after the voting.*

Lonnie R. Stephenson was unanimously elected the IBEW's 17th international president Sept. 19, at the opening of the 39th International Convention.

International Secretary-Treasurer Salvatore "Sam" Chilia was reelected and New York City Local 3 Business Manager Christopher Erikson was chosen to be the chairman of the International Executive Council.

Choosing the three senior officers of the IBEW was the first order of business. Nearly 2,000 delegates from almost 700 locals elected Stephenson, Chilia and Erikson by unanimous voice vote.

Stephenson's election came, he said, 25 years after he attended his first convention as a delegate for his home local,

Rock Island, Ill., Local 145.

"If anyone had told me then that I would be back here 25 years later as president of our great international union, I would have told them they're crazy," he said. "It would have been the furthest thing from my mind. But now that I'm here, I couldn't be prouder or more humbled than I am right now standing before you today."

Stephenson has been International President since the IEC appointed him to complete the term of International President Emeritus Edwin D. Hill, who retired in 2015. With the election, he begins a full 5-year term.

Stephenson used his acceptance speech to shine a light on the people who

**Paddy Kavanagh**  
*General Secretary, Technical Engineering and Electrical Union, Ireland*

**Liz Shuler**  
*AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer*

**Edwin D. Hill**  
*International President Emeritus*

**Lindell Lee**  
*Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus*

**Darrell Roberts**  
*Executive Director, Helmets to Hardhats*



mentored him and to thank the members for their trust.

"You are our foundation, you are the trunk of our oak tree that feeds and supports each branch of our great union," he said. "While each branch is different, each one is equally important to our very existence. Together, you and I and everyone I mentioned previously – we together are the IBEW and I'm damn proud to be here."

Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245 business manager Tom Dalzell nominated Stephenson, calling him "a fighter, a diplomat, and a preach-



*International President Lonnie R. Stephenson delivers his keynote address to delegates.*

## Stephenson: Don't 'Put the Brakes' on Organizing

International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said decisions made during the previous two International Conventions to devote additional resources to organizing allowed the IBEW to emerge from the 2008 economic collapse as one of the strongest labor unions in North America.

But just because the U.S. economy has improved doesn't mean it's time to slow those efforts, he said.

"Unless we double down on our commitment to organizing here at this convention, unless we commit even more resources and time to membership development," Stephenson said during his keynote address Monday afternoon, "all those gains we've made will be gone sooner than you think."

"When you're on the right road, that's not the time to put on the brakes," he added.

The IBEW has added 133,000 "A" members and 120,000 "BA" members since 2011, Stephenson said. But it

lost 250,000 members due to deaths, dropped members and retirements.

"That's why I'm so thankful for the decisions we made," he said.

Stephenson encouraged delegates to fully support RENEW/NextGen and the Electrical Workers Minority and women's caucuses to "break down barriers and open the doors of opportunity for new members."

"If we don't look like today's workforce, if we aren't out organizing every community, color and gender, we'll face major challenges," Stephenson said to a round of applause from the nearly 2,000 delegates.

The IBEW will soon unveil a core Code of Excellence program that will standardize training across the IBEW, Stephenson said.

"What we want is to make sure that no matter where you are, or where you are working, every member shares the same values of excellence," he said.

## Missouri Gov: Union Job Formed Values

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon proudly noted he keeps a shovel in his office that he used on job sites while a member of the laborers union. That job helped him pay for college.

"You're the hardest working, most highly skilled and safest workforce in the world," he told delegates during a Monday morning speech. "Union workers get up early, stay late and get the job done. It's that simple."

Nixon has used his veto pen or the threat of a veto to thwart several attempts by the GOP-dominated Missouri Legislature to pass a right-to-work law. State law prohibits him from running for a third term and he leaves office in January.



### Follow Us: Multimedia Convention Coverage

For extended coverage and videos, follow our official convention website and IBEW's Facebook and Twitter pages. Also, visit our YouTube and Vimeo pages for stories on Henry Miller and the new museum, the Code of Excellence and more. And if you're on Twitter, use #IBEWinSTL.

- Website: [ibew.org/convention2016](http://ibew.org/convention2016)
- Facebook: [facebook.com/IBEWFB](https://facebook.com/IBEWFB)
- Twitter: @IBEW
- YouTube: [youtube.com/user/TheElectricalWorker](https://youtube.com/user/TheElectricalWorker)
- Vimeo: [vimeo.com/ibew](https://vimeo.com/ibew)

# Pomp, Ceremony Mark Convention Opening

Beneath a 36-foot replica of the famous St. Louis Gateway Arch, the IBEW's 39th International Convention kicked off with a celebration of the working men and women at the heart of the Brotherhood.

Dancers leapt, tumbled and twisted themselves into familiar shapes as video tributes to each of the IBEW's branches played on a giant screen. Using only their own shadows, the Eclipse dance troupe wowed the crowd with lifelike tableaux of a lineman climbing a utility pole, spinning wind turbines and an assembly line.

The performance was on message with the morning's speakers, who welcomed the crowd to a city – and a union – rich in history and built upon the backs of working people.

"We are here to remember those who came before us," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson told more than 5,000 delegates, alternates and guests in the hall. "But we're not

here just to study the past. ... We must take the lessons of the past and apply them to guaranteeing a future for the IBEW for generations to come."

The delegates heard from Eleventh District Vice President Curt Henke, St. Louis Local 1 Business Manager Frank Jacobs and Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, who welcomed them to St. Louis, the birthplace of the IBEW 125 years ago.

Tributes to the United States and Canada thundered from the instruments of New York Local 3's Sword of Light and Canada's Black Watch pipe and drum bands as they ushered both nations' colors into the hall.

Delegates also took a quiet moment to remember the officers who died in the five years since the Vancouver convention, including former International Secretary Jack Moore and International Secretary-Treasurer Jon Walters.

Stephenson opened the convention using a hand-carved ceremonial gavel made and presented by Manufacturing Department Director Randy Middleton, one of two gavels presented. The other, crafted by retired Kansas City, Mo., Local 53 member Larry Curry, will be used to close the convention on Friday.

"Now," Stephenson said, "let us come together with the determination and resolve of our forefathers to best serve the interests of our members and all working people across our two great nations."

## Credentials Committee Report

A total of 1,934 delegates from 678 local unions were registered and present for the 39th International Convention. Those unions represented a total membership of 632,015, as reported to the Convention by International Executive Council Chairman Christopher Erikson.



Performers thrilled the crowd, twisting themselves into IBEW-themed shapes during the opening ceremony, including the letters "IBEW."

## O'Connor Fires up Delegation

International Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus Jerry O'Connor addressed delegates Monday with a fiery speech about the vital role of the labor movement.

When organized labor flourishes, he said, so does the middle class. He put the onus for developing the ranks on the delegates.

"If you won't organize for yourselves or for the IBEW or for organized labor ... If you don't, your



kids, their kids, and their kids are going to work for starvation wages and live in your basement."

## Video Remembers Founder, History



One of 10 planned bronze lineman statues sits atop a utility pole in the Henry Miller Museum's Founders' Plaza.

On the opening day of the IBEW's 39th International Convention in St. Louis, delegates and guests were treated to a video trip through the Brotherhood's 125-year history, starting with what we know of founder Henry Miller and ending with this year's careful restoration of the boardinghouse where he and his nine fellow delegates met in 1891.

Gathered less than a mile and a half from that modest structure, the 5,000-strong convention crowd learned of Miller's humble origins as a traveling lineman and his dream of a national organization built to fight for better wages and working condi-

tions for electricians like him.

"This story of our union's founding right here in St. Louis is one we're proud to tell to kick off this convention," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "By knowing where we came from and how we got to where we are, we put ourselves in a better position to prepare for the future."

The video also tells the story of that crumbling boardinghouse and of the fight against time to preserve it. "When we first saw this place, we knew in our heart we had to save it," said St. Louis Local 1 Business Manager Frank Jacobs.

## Stephenson-Chilia-Erikson Leadership Team Elected *(cont'd. from p. 1)*

er of the gospel of organized labor and trade unionism."

Chilia was nominated by Cleveland Local 38 Business Manager Dennis Meaney, who recalled their time working with the tools together nearly 20 years ago. "It is said that unionism comes naturally to an unselfish person. Sam is that person."

Chilia thanked his family and the men and women who shaped his career. Chilia said he sees bright days ahead for the IBEW with Stephenson at the helm.

"Lonnie is a humble guy, and the last person to talk himself up. So let me do it," Chilia said. "I haven't been this excited about the future of this union in so many years. We stand on a powerful foundation. We enjoy a rich and inspiring history, and now, it's in our hands."

Erikson thanked the members of Local 3, President Stephenson and the convention delegates for the privilege of serving as IEC chairman. "There is no greater honor than to be elected by your peers to represent them. Whether you are an elected officer of this great organization or a convention delegate, you have the same responsibility: to act on their behalf with integrity and with the resolve that the decisions you make are in their best interest."

### District Photos Begin Today

Delegates for odd-numbered vice presidential districts are invited to gather near the bleachers in the rear of the convention hall for photos to be taken Tuesday during the lunch break.