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IBEW News

Building the Gas Boom

Mammoth Construction Project in Western Pa. to Peak at 1,000-Plus Electricians **3**

Welcome to the IBEW

Baltimore Gas and Electric Workers Ratify First Contract **5**

Triumph in the Desert

Nevada Election Wins Pay Off for Workers **6**

In This Issue

Editorials **2**

Letters to the Editor **2**

North of 49° **7**

Circuits **8**

Politics & Jobs **10**

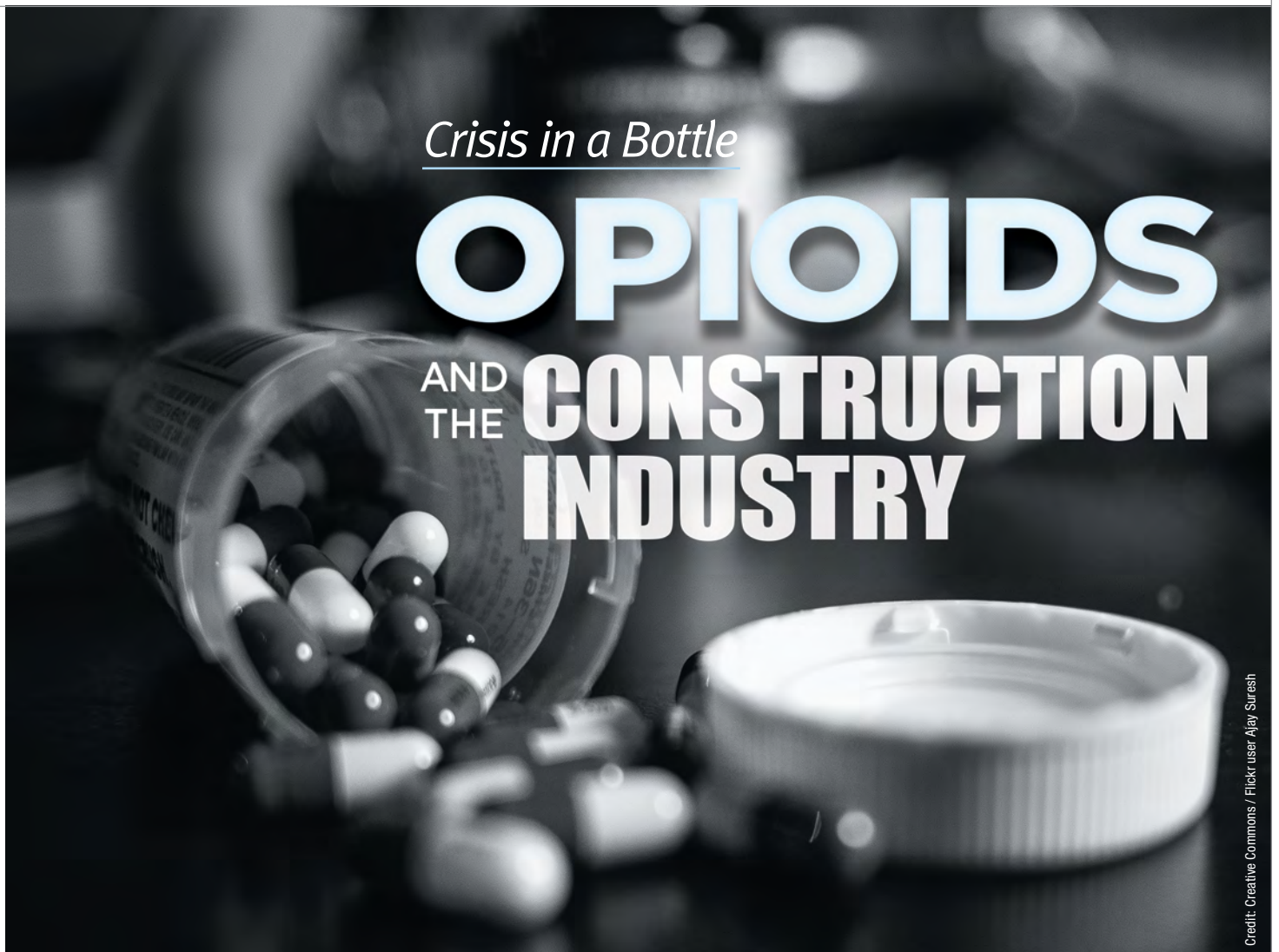
Organizing Wire **11**

Transitions **12**

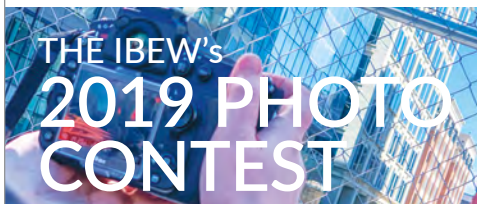
In Memoriam **13**

Local Lines **14**

Who We Are **20**



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user Ajay Suresh



Deadline: Oct. 1
See page 9 for details

Opioid deaths in the U.S. and Canada are at epidemic levels, ravaging communities across regional, ethnic and socioeconomic divides. But no industry suffers higher rates of addiction and death than one of our own: construction.

“This is something that has hit our industry especially hard,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “I want every one of our members to know that the IBEW is committed to doing everything we can to help any of our brothers and sisters who are suffering. No one is alone in this fight.”

FIGHTING ADDICTION IN THE TRADES

Every day across the U.S. more than 130 people die from opioid overdoses, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The numbers are proportionally similar in Canada, where, like the U.S., the crisis is fueled by a combination of factors, including reckless doctors, profit-hungry pharmaceutical companies and more.

“There’s an individualistic culture in Canada and the U.S. that says, ‘I’ll do my thing and you do yours.’ We deal with things in private,” said Jim Watson, an international representative in the Education Department who runs trainings on mental health and addiction. “For something like this, though, we need

to start talking.”

Since 1999, sales of prescription painkillers have skyrocketed 300%, according to the Midwest Economic Policy Institute. And since 2012, more than 259 million opioid prescriptions have been written — enough for every American adult to have their own bottle.

Of course, opioids can be safely taken and help a lot of people in pain. But too often, they’re misused. And for anyone in construction, it’s a near perfect recipe for addiction.

Few occupations are more physically demanding. The injury rate is 77% higher than the national average, according to MEPI, so it should come as no surprise that substance abuse is nearly twice as high as the national average.

On top of that, construction workers only get paid if they show up, so pain medication is as common on the job as hard hats and tape measures. Home rest or physical therapy doesn’t pay the bills.

In Ohio, construction workers were seven times

CRISIS IN A BOTTLE *continued on page 4*

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FROM THE OFFICERS

Replacing Stigma with Solidarity



Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

I'd like to use this space this month to talk to you about an issue that hasn't always been the easiest to bring up: addiction.

Every one of us knows someone who's struggled with addiction, whether it's alcohol, tobacco or drugs, prescription or illegal. Sometimes we dance around the subject, but we know when it's there.

Our two nations — and the construction industry, especially — are in a crisis. Many prescription painkillers and their illicit sister-drugs are laying waste to families and communities, and the construction industry is far-and-away the hardest-hit.

Members of our trades are at higher risk of injury on the job. And when your paycheck depends on you being at work, it means sometimes you take a few extra Advil and work through the pain.

Unfortunately, it also means some turn to stronger prescription medicines. But doctors and drug companies aren't doing enough to warn folks about the dangers of some of these opioid-based painkillers. Some of these drugs can be used safely, but without the proper supervision, it's way too easy to develop a problem.

And that problem is killing people, including some of our own sisters and brothers.

As your president, there's no part of the job I take more seriously than keeping you safe. Usually that means fighting for tougher standards at OSHA or making sure that you're able to speak up on the job when a supervisor asks you to do something unsafe. But this opioid problem is harder to tackle.

So, I want to say that the IBEW is here for you. There is no shame in seeking help if you're suffering. Talk to your steward or business manager if you think you might have a problem. We want to help — to keep you safe.

It's why we're devoting resources to finding qualified treatment programs and working to make sure they're available in our health plans. We're working with North America's Building Trades Unions to address the opioid issue across the entire union construction industry. Some of our locals are developing trainings and programs that can be shared across our two countries, and we're encouraging every local to adopt an employee assistance plan for members and their families.

But most importantly, we're not going to be silent about the danger of opioid addiction any longer. Stigma and shame have kept people from seeking help for far too long, and at the IBEW, we're going to be leaders in replacing shame with solidarity.

I want each of you to learn the warning signs of addiction and then look out for them in your co-workers and in yourselves. We owe it to one another, because having each other's backs is what union brotherhood is all about. ■

Persistence Pays

In my 33 years in the IBEW, I've had ups and downs, wins and losses. But when my time in the Brotherhood is done and I think of my proudest moments, near the top will be the day the 1,400 members of Baltimore Local 410 signed and ratified their first contract. I think Lonnie will agree with me on this one.

When we started the organizing drive four years ago, I was still Fourth District vice president. Baltimore is an important American city, one of the largest in my district. The four previous losses at BGE were painful, both for us and for the men and women who had worked so hard, only to fall short.

So, the decision to commit to the fifth drive was not an easy one for former International President Ed Hill, for me or for Special Assistant to the President for Membership Development Ricky Oakland. What convinced us was the passion and commitment of the men and women who wanted to be our brothers and sisters. When we told them they would have to take the lead organizing themselves, that we couldn't do it from outside, they didn't just accept; they insisted. I can't tell you how many times I heard, "This is our campaign."

And they proved it. Day after day, in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, they were outside worksites holding signs and answering questions or walking up the driveways of nearly every home in the unit. They were there to sign the cards, and they were there on election night, just like they promised.

And when negotiations for that first contract dragged past six months, they showed up again. They showed up at monthly local meetings, informal information sessions and wherever else they were called on. When the word went out that a show of solidarity was needed, they showed up in orange. When we needed them to make noise outside of a negotiating session, they made such a ruckus that company negotiators had to close the blinds.

It has been a four-year process since those leaders first approached us to arrive at this day. The membership had questions, but they never lost their resolve. Their reward is the protection of an agreement negotiated across a table with management. They got the respect that they earned, and no one can ever put them back where they were.

We may have had bigger election wins, but no one still working can remember them. I've definitely never been witness to a win for so many working families all at once.

So, let's celebrate this great moment for the members of Baltimore Local 410, and, tomorrow, go out there and make their story the first of many, the seed of the rebirth of the American working family. ■



Kenneth W. Cooper
International Secretary-Treasurer

“LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

A Plea for Safety

No one looked at knife-blade disconnect switches through the eyes of a child; none have child safeguards.

I'm writing to praise lawmakers in the state of Maryland for their important work in protecting that state's children against potential electrical hazards. House Bill 586 was signed into law on April 30, effective July 1, requiring lock-out tags on knife-blade switch box enclosures on residential photovoltaic systems. Before this law, these boxes were left accessible and in reach of children far too often. When opened, these boxes can expose children to connections and bare terminals that can deliver life-threatening electrical charges.

As a retired JATC instructor and residential solar inspector, I know first-hand that in homes, they're often placed on exterior and interior walls where children can reach them, so it's important that our industry and our elected officials lead the way in protecting our children.

I hope more states follow Maryland's lead and require locking devices on residential solar installations, and I hope IBEW members around the U.S. and Canada help make it happen. I'd be happy to assist anyone looking to enact these new rules in their jurisdiction. Please email me at coralreef9861@gmail.com.

*Tommy Davis, Local 26 retiree
Washington, D.C.*



From Facebook: Every month the IBEW Facebook page receives thousands of comments from our dynamic and engaged community of members and friends.

More Than a Job

I am so glad that I was given the opportunity to become a member of IBEW Local 317 in 1970. It was one of the best decisions I ever made. I initially took a cut in pay from the electrical maintenance job I had at a plant where railroad cars were manufactured, but even as an apprentice, the wage caught up and surpassed the factory job in a couple years or so. An older fellow who had been employed at the rail car plant advised that I'd be sorry and construction work would starve me to death. Boy was he wrong! That plant has now been shut down for many years, but as a retired IBEW member, I have been enjoying all the benefits of early retirement since I reached age 60. I shudder to think where I'd be if I had stayed with the first employer.

*Paul D. Clary, Local 317 retiree
Huntington, W. Va.*

A Sense of Belonging

I am a proud 40-year veteran of the IBEW. I have enjoyed a living wage, great health care and now a comfortable pension. Belonging to a brotherhood is a great feeling, knowing that your brothers and sisters and the IBEW have your back in and out of the workplace. Thank you, Long Island Local 25 and the IBEW!

*Charlie Foote, Local 25 retiree
Long Island, N.Y.*

Union Strong

Unions are one of the last hopes we have for promoting safety, keeping wages decent, protecting retirement, etc. Unions represent workers way better than politicians do.

*Jeff Briddick, Local 702 member
West Frankfort, Ill.*

Welcome to the IBEW

Congratulations to Local 410 [at Baltimore Gas and Electric]. It was a long-fought battle, but you made it. Stay strong and reap the benefits of being union.

*John Hawkins, Local 1900 retiree
Washington, D.C.*

[Ed. Note: See story on Page 5 of this issue.]



The Shell Pennsylvania Chemical Project near Pittsburgh will employ 1,000 electricians for more than a year, making it one of the largest projects in the IBEW.

\$6.5 Billion Pa. Cracking Plant Puts a Region to Work

One of the largest projects in the IBEW is finally underway north of Pittsburgh.

After years of rumors, planning, permitting and approval, the Shell Pennsylvania Chemical project on the banks of the Ohio River in Beaver County is rapidly taking shape.

The \$6.5 billion project will take the bountiful natural gas from the Marcellus and Utica shales and pump out trillions of tiny, transparent polyethylene beads, the building block of countless consumer and industrial products.

At the moment, Beaver Local 712 has more than 350 members on site, but by the start of next year, peak demand for our members will reach 1,000 and continue at that level for more than 12 months.

"We haven't had a job this big since the Beaver Valley nuclear plant 40 years ago," said Local 712 Business Manager Frank E. Telesz Jr.

The plant is the first of its kind outside of the Gulf Coast and is only possible because of the meteoric growth of U.S. natural gas production since horizontal fracturing — better known as fracking — was introduced just over a decade ago. Twenty years ago, next to no natural gas was produced in the Ohio River Valley. Today, it accounts for nearly 30% of the national supply.

If it were a country, the region including parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia would be the third-largest producer of natural gas in the world behind the rest of the U.S. and Russia.

And unlike the Gulf Coast, where most cracking plants are today, it is less than a day's drive to nearly all the companies that use polyethylene beads to pump out car parts, medical equipment, consumer goods, food containers, sporting goods and much, much more.

And there are no hurricanes.

"This is the kind of job the IBEW was built for. We are the only place to find that many skilled wiremen and apprentices to do it right, do it safely and do it on budget," said Construction and Maintenance

Department Director Mike Richard.

Local 712 has only about 450 members and, like many locals, nearly everyone is working.

There is both a need and an opportunity for travelers, Telesz said.

"They are running staggered daylight shifts and started a second turn," Telesz said.

The contractors are especially eager, he said, for veterans (12% of the current workforce) and women (15%).

"Most of the petrochemical plants on the Gulf Coast have been built, at least in part, nonunion. We have been pitching Shell on the value of working with the IBEW. Now is our time to deliver on that promise," he said.

The scale of the project is nearly unprecedented. Just during pre-work, Shell built two heavy haul bridges, relocated a portion of a highway and moved 7.2 million cubic yards of dirt.

The Horsehead zinc smelter on the site was demolished and the concrete from its foundation was recycled into a 200-foot retaining wall.

The heart of the plant is the "cracker," which heats the natural gas liquid ethane to nearly 2,000 degrees, strips off hydrogen atoms and breaks it down into a smaller molecule, ethylene. The ethylene is then cooled in the 4-million pound quenching tower that was recently installed by one of the largest cranes in the country, known as the "Mother of All Cranes."

The ethylene is then strung back together in long chains as either high- or low-density pellets, and this single plant will churn out billions of pounds each year.

When the project is complete, in addition to the ethane cracker, the two high-density polyethylene pellet units and the single linear low-density polyethylene pellet unit, general contractors Great Arrow Builders will construct a water treatment plant, a 250-MW natural gas-fired power station, an office building, a 900-foot cooling tower, rail and truck facilities and a laboratory.

When construction peaks early next year, there will be 6,000 construction workers from all trades across the site.

In operation, Shell said there will be 600 full-time jobs.

However massive the Shell project is, it is likely only the beginning. Natural gas production from the more than 13,000 wells in the region will have risen 700% between 2013 and 2023.

Thousands of feet below the Ohio River is the Marcellus Shale, the second-largest natural gas field in the world. Hundreds of feet below that is an equally valuable natural gas deposit known as the Utica shale.

Even better, the rocks are loaded with natural gas liquids — ethane, propane and their chemical cousins — that are mingled in the more common methane heating gas. Those liquids are the building blocks of what could become a petrochemical powerhouse.

"Ethane is to the chemical industry what flour is to bakers," said Steven Hedrick, chief executive of the Mid-Atlantic Technology, Research & Innovation Center at a recent energy conference.

MATRIC estimates that there could be as many as 25,000 permanent jobs in plastics and related manufacturing just in this region.

A study sponsored by a regional development company found that the Ohio Valley could support up to four more ethane cracking plants equal in size or larger than the Pennsylvania plant.

"We could become the new Gulf Coast," Telesz said.

In March 2018, then-Ohio Gov. John Kasich announced a stepped-up investment commitment by Thailand's PTT Global Chemical and South Korea-based Daelim Industrial Co. Ltd. for a proposed cracking plant in Belmont County, in the heart of Utica's "wet" shale gas area. Community leaders are hoping for a positive decision by the end of this year on a project that could be worth up to \$10 billion. The company has already spent more than \$150 million on engineering and design work for the project, and a final

decision is expected sometime this year.

Then, in November 2017, China Energy Investment Corporation and West Virginia officials signed a memorandum of understanding outlining a staggering \$84 billion investment commitment in natural gas industries that would span two decades.

"It is hard to even fathom what that amount of investment in this region would mean," said Third District Business Development International Representative Ed Hill Jr. "There is nothing to compare it to."

However, in the shadow of the trade war launched by the Trump Administration, the Chinese conglomerate's first visit to the region was canceled last summer.

"I would take it more as a sign of the potential value of the resources in this region rather than, say, clearing space on my calendar to get a job," said Hill said.

In his annual report to Congress last year, Energy Secretary Rick Perry recommended that a new ethane storage and distribution hub be built in the region, further cementing the region's new reality as a near-permanent jobs center in the U.S.

"I have not been as excited about a prospective project with anything I've done before, including in Texas, as I am about this," Perry said in an interview with the Washington Examiner.

"Everybody in this Brotherhood knows how many and what kind of jobs are available on the Gulf Coast. I want people to understand that the game is changing," Hill said.

In fact, the Pennsylvania petrochemical plant was one of the very first projects targeted by the Business Development Department nearly a half decade ago. Local 712 is the home local of Hill's late father, former International President Edwin D. Hill.

"Lives will be changed and careers will be made with all the work we are going to see in this region for people who have seen hard times and need a break," Hill said. "There is now real opportunity for people here." ■

IBEW MEDIA WORLD

In addition to your monthly issue of The Electrical Worker, check out the wealth of IBEW-related information online.

www.ibew.org

Get all the news for and about IBEW members, including the online version of The Electrical Worker, at IBEW.org.

YouTube

IBEW members mobilized when Ontario's government gutted apprentice training. See how they responded at YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker.

Vimeo

Visit vimeo.com/IBEW to see how the First District



used one of Canada's biggest motorcycle races to find and recruit the next generation of electrical workers.

HourPower

Check out IBEWHourPower.com to learn more about the annual NSUJL rodeo and the journeymen lineman causes it supports.



ElectricTV

The NECA/IBEW Powering America Team recently worked on one of Oregon's largest affordable housing projects in Portland. Get the scoop at ElectricTV.net.



Crisis in a Bottle: Opioids and the Construction Industry

▶ **Continued from page 1**

more likely to die of an overdose than other working people, according to a Cleveland Plain Dealer analysis. In British Columbia, 55% of the province's overdose deaths were construction and transportation workers, reported the Ottawa Citizen.

The Plain Dealer numbers from 2016 pin most deaths on heroin or fentanyl (a synthetic opioid more deadly than heroin), but many of those who died started with prescription painkillers deceptively marketed as safe.

"They knew all along it was addictive," Boston Local 103 member Brian Galvin said of the pharmaceutical industry. "It's a broken system."

Galvin, 43, suffered with addiction from a young age. He's been sober since 2006 and now advocates for others who are going through a similar battle.

"We need to break the stigma of what drug addiction and alcoholism are," Galvin said. "People with this disease aren't bad people getting good, they're sick people getting healthy."

A Massachusetts Department of Public Health study found that workers in the building trades and mining accounted for almost a quarter of all opioid overdose deaths in the Bay State. The report also noted higher injury rates in construction than in other professions, with back pain the most common chronic ailment.

That's how it started for Local 103 member Bryan Snow. The opioid painkillers he was given came with the typical warnings, but nothing to suggest the level of addiction he'd experience.

"Addiction takes you to a very deep, dark place," Snow said. "It's like you're taking the drug to feel normal, but then it wears off, so you never feel good. It's like there's no way out."

Fortunately, people noticed, including some at Local 103, and they got him the help he needed.

"If my union didn't help, I wouldn't be where I am now," said Snow, who comes from a family of electricians. "I needed to be an active participant too, but I also needed help to realize where I was at."

Local 103 recently hosted a week-long conference put on by Boston-area

building trades on substance abuse disorders and the stigma surrounding them.

The event's organizers called for naloxone to be available at all job sites. Sometimes referred to by the brand names Narcan and Evzio, naloxone is a potentially life-saving drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. Snow says he carries it with him all the time. It's part of his decision to be open about his addiction and recovery, to let others know they're not alone.

"I'm here to say it's OK, that there's a way out," Snow said.

Breaking the Stigma

But the way out is often blocked.

There are structural issues that push people into addiction, like a lack of paid time off or a culture of working through the pain, but the stigma associated with an addict can be just as damaging. "Just because someone's addicted, it doesn't make them a bad person," Snow said. "If someone was walking around with cancer, we wouldn't judge them or shun them. We need to treat addiction like that."

Once certain painkillers take hold, the stigma of addiction surrounding not just substance abuse, but mental health in general, often makes recovery even harder.

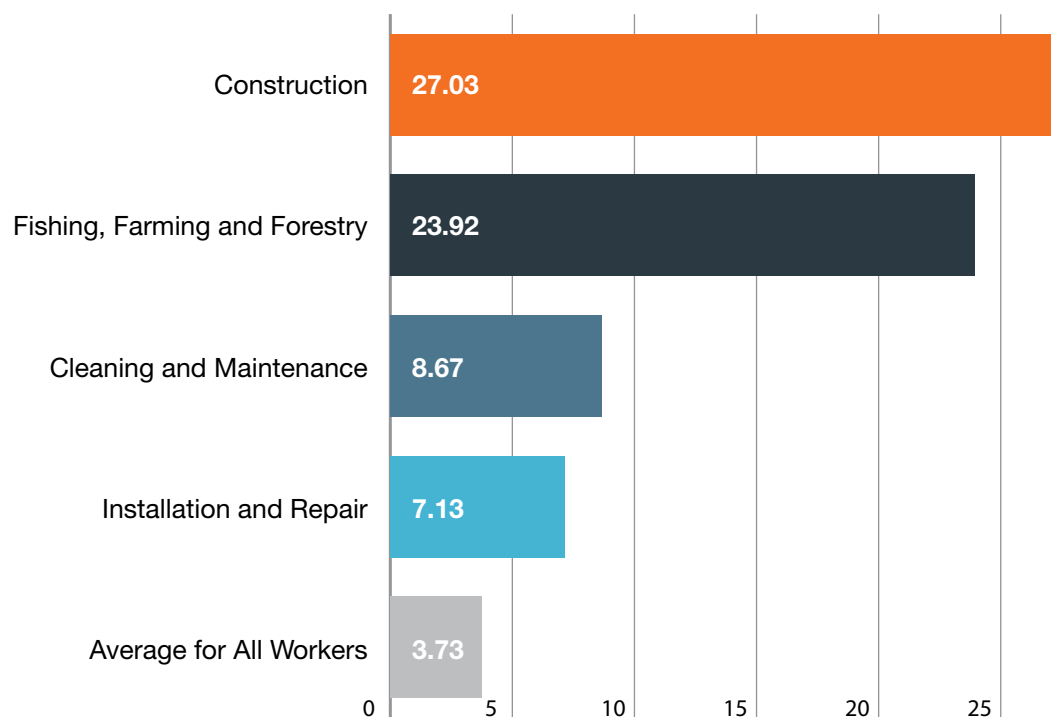
"We have these things that we hold in secret and keep quiet about, and it's hurting us," Watson said. "We need to educate ourselves and our leaders on how to deal with this."

Watson noted that suicide rates are higher for those with addiction issues and a report from the Centers for Disease Control found that those in construction and extraction have the highest rates of male suicide. Opioid use is associated with a 75% increase in the likelihood of a suicide attempt, according to the Addiction Center.

"There's no way to talk about addiction without talking about suicide too," Watson said. "We have to talk about all of these issues."

Talking about sensitive issues like addiction, depression, suicide and other mental health issues isn't something that

Highest Overdose Death Rates by Industry in Ohio (Per 10,000 employees)



Source: Ohio Department of Health and Cleveland Plain Dealer

comes easy to most, especially men, Watson said. And construction is overwhelmingly a male profession. Furthermore, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, men die by suicide at a rate three times higher than that of women.

"It's a testosterone-driven culture. Men don't talk about emotions or pain," Watson said. "There's this belief that, 'if I'm emotional, then I'm not a man.'"

Watson, who sits on the Canadian Labour Congress' Labour Education Advisory Committee, says he spends a lot of time at his trainings creating a space where members feel safe enough to talk openly about their situation. The trainings have received good reviews, he said.

Stephenson has appointed Construction and Maintenance Department Director Mike Richard to serve on North America's Building Trades Union's opioid task force. Currently the task force is gathering data and best practices from the U.S. and Canada and is working on an actionable plan that it can recommend to the NABTU general presidents, Richard said.

"We have members dying and suffering through addiction, and we have a moral obligation to do all that we can," Richard said.

The task force has also developed vetting guidelines for treatment centers.

"Not all treatment centers are the same or even effective," Richard said. "A lot are just in it for the money, and the treatment of our members is too important to leave to chance."

In June, Stephenson participated in a panel hosted by the Kennedy Forum, an organization that works on mental health care issues. The panel was part of a day-long event and focused on combating mental health stigma in the workplace.

"Addiction can creep up on anyone, and every IBEW member needs to know that substance abuse is first and foremost a health issue that must be dealt with," Stephenson said. "And dealing with mental health is part of that."

MEPI's report on the opioid epidemic in construction focused on the Midwest, which suffers from some of the highest rates of misuse and death. Its recommendations for addressing the issue, however, can be applied across the U.S. and Canada.

Among them are providing health insurance that covers substance abuse and mental health treatment, encouraging alternatives to opioids like physical therapy and anti-inflammatory medications for certain injuries, providing at least two weeks of paid sick leave and updating policies to include regular drug testing but not immediately firing those who test positive.

Watson says most locals have employee assistance plans that offer assistance to those with substance use issues. However, many only cover about six visits. And depending on the availability, a member might have to take off work to attend.

"We think it's been one-size-fits-all and we need to individualize it, to look at it from a multifaceted point of view," Wat-

son said. "Thirty days might be enough for some, but not for everyone."

'It Takes a Tribe'

Syracuse, N.Y., Local 43; Philadelphia Local 98; Providence, R.I., Local 99 and Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213 all offer naloxone training to their membership and in some cases for family members too. Local 213 offers it along with a session on mental health. Local 99 includes it with CPR and awareness training on the symptoms to look for in someone who might need help.

For Local 43, the training was part of a comprehensive program they developed with an area hospital. Business Manager Al Marzullo said they've put about 150 apprentices through it so far as well as held a training for the general membership and their family members, which was well attended.

"I didn't know how the training would be accepted, but our apprentices and members were ecstatic about it," Marzullo said. "Their eyes never left the screen during the presentation."

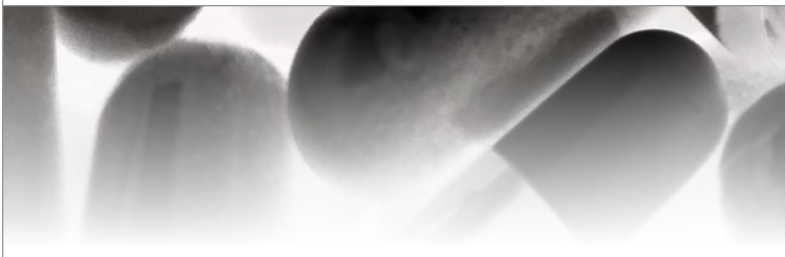
For Marzullo and the local, it's personal. They had a second-year apprentice die last year.

"This job is hard enough, but the hardest thing is to see a 26-year-old apprentice in a casket and look his parents in their eyes and give my condolences," Marzullo said. "At that point, I knew we had to do something. We had to get out in front of it."



"I'm here to say it's OK, that there's a way out."

— Boston Local 103 member Bryan Snow



Two Decades' Effort Pays Off First Contract Ratified by BGE Workers

Local 99 provides rehabilitation services and an anonymous support group, says Alvin Reyes, the Reach Out and Engage the Next Generation of Electrical Workers representative. RENEW, along with NextGen in Canada, is the IBEW initiative to get more young members involved in the union. Those services are provided with support from RENEW, reflecting the joint commitment between the local and the chapter, Reyes said.

"This crisis has impacted us all," said Reyes, who is also Local 99's membership development coordinator. "We let our brothers and sisters know that we're a family and we do not abandon them, especially in a time of crisis."

RENEW/NextGen has an important role to play, said Tarn Goelling, director of Civic and Community Engagement. According to MEPI, 66% of those who misuse pain medication are between the ages of 18 and 34 years old.

"This is an opportunity for RENEW," Goelling said. "Its role is to address issues that affect young members, and with the right education and tools, chapters could really be the bridge between their members and the locals."

In the Tenth District, International Vice President Brent Hall wanted to get in front of the issue and held a session on opioids at last year's annual progress meeting for leaders in Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

"The opioid crisis in our four states is at epidemic levels, and we would be naïve to believe we do not have members that have or could get trapped in this

dilemma," Hall said.

Other districts have taken similar steps or are planning to engage members and leaders on the issue at upcoming meetings.

At an international level, the IBEW has supported and will continue to seek common-sense legislative actions in both the U.S. and Canada to expand treatment options and seek solutions to the crisis. More research into alternative pain management and non-addictive medications is needed, and lawmakers in both countries need to do more to take what is, in effect, legal heroin off the market.

But both Galvin and Snow stressed the importance of looking out for one another and knowing what to look for in a brother or sister who is suffering. Both say they're glad to be able to play their roles as someone in recovery who can help others, including their IBEW brothers and sisters.

"Someone did it for me," Snow said. "Part of staying clean and sober is giving back."

Knowing that you have a support system there for you is incredibly important, Galvin said.

"It takes a tribe," Galvin said. "If there weren't people there to help me, I would without a doubt be dead."

What is your local doing to combat opioid and other substance abuse issues? Let us know and we may highlight it in a future Electrical Worker story. Email us at media@ibew.org.

After four failed organizing drives and two years of negotiation, the more than 1,400 members of Baltimore Local 410 ratified their first contract with Baltimore Gas and Electric in late June.

"Congratulations to the Local Union 410 bargaining team, and welcome to the IBEW," said Fourth District International Vice President Brian Malloy, announcing the conclusion of a 20-year campaign for the protection of a negotiated and democratically approved collective bargaining agreement.

The members of Local 410 now officially become members of the IBEW, the largest single-day growth of the Brotherhood in more than a generation, said Director of Professional and Industrial Membership Development Jammi Juarez.

"I am extremely proud of the work of the negotiating committee," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, congratulating Business Manager Eric Gomez, Vice President Ben Ferstermann and members Marvin Austin, Andrew Aziz and Mark Dill.

Stephenson and Malloy also thanked Fourth District International Representatives Gina Cooper and Chuck Tippie.

"Chuck and Gina have dedicated themselves to this effort for over two years," Stephenson said. "Their professionalism and tireless work on this agreement has made me proud. I can't thank them enough for the job they do every day."

BGE workers had tried and failed to win organizing elections for times over the years: 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2010. Many of the workers wanted the protection of a contract, but wages were pretty good, and while the small company may have had its problems, many workers said it still felt like they were family problems that were either solvable or bearable.

The utility's management at the time was also virulently anti-union and spent more than \$50 million fighting off the first organizing drive in 1996. Union supporters were fired, threatened, transferred to units far from their homes and given the worst and least reliable trucks. The IBEW filed dozens of unfair labor practice charges against the company in 1996, said former Utility Department Director Jim Hunter, who led that campaign as then-business manager of Washington, D.C., Local 1900.

"They scared everyone," said Bill Riale, a 25-year overhead line worker and a member of the volunteer organizing committee. "We had over 600 cards signed in one election but got fewer than 400 votes. They smashed us."

The next two organizing elections, in 2000 and 2010, lost by more than 2-to-1.

But then the company was bought in 1999 by Constellation, which was acquired by Exelon in 2012. That "mom and pop" feeling began to fade away.

"That company from the last orga-



International President Lonnie R. Stephenson signed Baltimore Local 410's charter in 2017 with International Secretary-Treasurer Kenneth W. Cooper.

nizing campaign [in 2010] is gone," Ferstermann said at the time. BGE was also the only Exelon-owned utility without an IBEW-negotiated contract. Wages and benefits began to fall behind the other units, and BGE workers noticed.

"It's not a bad company. Everything I have is because of my job at BGE, and I want them to do better," Gomez said in 2017. "We just want to do better too."

In 2015, more than two dozen BGE workers approached the IBEW to ask for another shot. They formed the core of a volunteer organizing committee, and the IBEW assigned two full-time organizers, Regional Organizing Coordinator Bert McDermitt and Membership Development International Representative Troy Johnson, to the campaign.

With the workers in the lead, and the support of then-Fourth District Vice President, now-International Secretary-Treasurer, Kenneth W. Cooper, they developed a campaign timeline. Starting in 2016, they would collect cards and hold meetings to answer questions. Then the IBEW would bring in dozens of volunteers to conduct a two-week blitz of site and home visits, phone-banking and a final push to collect cards. The target was an election scheduled for Jan. 11, 2017.

On the night of the vote, members of the V.O.C., Cooper, McDermitt and Johnson gathered in the National Labor Relations Board's Baltimore office to watch the three-hour vote count. In the end, the vote wasn't close.

Three months later, Stephenson, Cooper and then-international representative Malloy traveled to Baltimore Local 24's hall to charter the new union, Baltimore Local 410, chosen because it is the area code of the region serviced by BGE.

"I've been in the IBEW for 41 years now and I have never been as honored as I just was to do that," Stephenson said that night, his voice cracking. "I have not had the pleasure or opportunity to sign a charter for a new local union. So, this was a big event not only for you but for me."

A parade of Baltimore politicians attended the chartering celebration in March of 2017 including Rep. John Sarbanes, city councilor John T. Bullock and then-state delegate and Local 24 assistant business manager Corey McCray.

There were hopes at the time of the charter that negotiations would go smoothly, Gomez said.

"It took about a year and half longer than I thought it would," he said.

There were times, toward the end of negotiations, where the committee was meeting 15 hours a day, two to three times a week, Tippie said.

"The committee was very supportive and active, coming up with ideas and arguments, looking up policies and procedures to assist the negotiating committee. You cannot underestimate the support of the membership," Tippie said. "Their patience, solidarity and hard work paid off in a strong agreement."

Most importantly, Cooper and Tippie said, they are no longer at-will employees. There is a grievance procedure to protect workers from favoritism and managerial caprice. Job bidding has been transformed to reward good workers and length of service, not just relationships with supervisors.

The on-call system was also reformed, honoring the utility's responsibility to keep the power on while respecting workers' family responsibilities.

"This is a great foundation, a great first contract," Tippie said.

Gomez said the overwhelming approval by the membership was validation of the long struggle and testament to the solidarity of the new members. Now, BGE workers can continue to provide the best service for their customers, confident that they've got on paper what they've been seeking since the mid-90s: a voice on the job that ensures good work is fairly rewarded and a relationship with management that puts BGE in a position to thrive.

"Now we've got nothing left to do but work for a living," Gomez said. ■

You Can Help: Know the Signs of Addiction

PHYSICAL SIGNS OF INTOXICATION AND ADDICTION	BEHAVIORAL SIGNS OF ADDICTION	SIGNS OF OVERDOSE EMERGENCY
Slurred speech	Changes in mood or behavior	Decreased vital signs
Constricted pupils	Absences from work	Pale or clammy face
Nausea, drowsiness and headaches	Spending less time with friends/family	Bluish lips or fingernails
Impaired memory or attention	Change in appetite/appearance	Vomiting or gurgling noises

Get Help Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's confidential national hotline 24/7 at **1-800-662-HELP** or visit **www.samhsa.gov**

Sources: Information taken from Hazeldon Betty Ford Foundation, the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Hitting the Legislative Jackpot: Nevada Unions Reap Rewards of Hard-Won Election Victories

Led by IBEW members, Nevada's building trades unions hit a triple in the Legislature this spring, restoring prevailing wage and project labor agreement laws killed by the business lobby in 2015, and ensuring that apprentices from accredited programs fill a percentage of jobs at public construction sites.

"We came in focused on priority bills that would make Nevada stronger without costing the state money," Las Vegas Local 357 Business Manager Al Davis said. "We felt confident that the governor would see the same benefits we saw, and he did."

Fine those victories and a long list of other 2019 legislative wins for working Nevadans under "Elections Matter."

Unions and social justice allies ran exhaustive campaigns to get out the vote last November. Their efforts sent twice as many Nevada voters to the polls as in 2014, when midterm losses shook the state's labor movement. Anti-worker politicians and a governor who shared their agenda rapidly attacked workers and unions with punitive legislation.

Today, a pro-worker trifecta is in charge: a supermajority in the Assembly, a near veto-proof Senate, and a progressive governor unafraid to stand with labor. It is also the nation's first female-majority legislature.

The results have been dramatic.

More than 20,000 public workers in Nevada finally have collective bargaining rights — the biggest victory of its kind in any state in nearly two decades. The state's minimum wage is going up. Many workers without sick leave are gaining a week's worth. Costly penalties are in store for employers that violate equal-pay rules and other workplace protections.

More broadly, new laws tackle everything from pocketbook issues to government transparency, including better access to health care, lower prescription costs, an urgent increase in school funding that also will raise teacher pay, money for technical education, tax credits to spur affordable housing, same-day voter registration and sharper teeth in the state's public records law.

In all, Gov. Steve Sisolak signed 636 bills by the mid-June deadline. One of the last was SB207, requiring building contractors to fill a percentage of public works jobs with apprentices from accredited programs.

The bill's chief sponsor was Sen. Chris Brooks, a Local 357 member who brought his solar contracting business into the IBEW nearly 20 years ago.

One of the state's foremost solar experts and a staunch labor advocate, Brooks was elected to the Nevada Assembly in 2016, re-elected in 2018, then quickly appointed to fill a Senate vacancy.

His apprentice legislation stated that "a skilled construction trades workforce is essential to Nevada's economic



As fellow lawmakers applaud, Nevada state senator and Las Vegas Local 357 member Chris Brooks engages with Gov. Steve Sisolak as he signs bills restoring PLA and prevailing wage laws that GOP legislators killed in 2015.

well-being" and that training on public projects is crucial experience.

Brooks also sponsored the PLA bill in the Senate and championed the Assembly's prevailing wage bill. Notably, all three bills improving wages and opportunities for building trades workers passed without a single Republican vote.

It wasn't for lack of trying. Via plane to Reno and rental car to Carson City, Davis made the case for the bills at the Capitol multiple times, often in tandem with the executive director of the southern Nevada NECA chapter.

After the crushing defeat in 2014, Davis helped establish a labor-management committee to cooperate on building trades legislation that would benefit both sides.

"It wasn't just labor by itself," Davis said, explaining the strategy he and his NECA partner employed. The two met jointly with some lawmakers and approached others one-on-one — those politicians at either end of the spectrum who'd be more receptive to arguments from business or labor, but not both.

In May, Davis was among labor and industry special guests as Sisolak signed prevailing wage (AB136) and project labor agreements (SB231) back into law.

"The bills I'm signing today are a demonstration of my commitment ... to ensuring that our economic recovery reaches every kitchen table in every working household in the state of Nevada," Sisolak said.

The governor made good on his word, Davis said.

"Steve got up at his inaugural and told everybody what he was going to do — he was going to bring back prevailing

wage and project labor agreements and pass collective bargaining for state workers," Davis said. "He was adamant about it and he laid it all out in his first speech."

Sisolak isn't shy about pointing out how labor fights for the greater good on issues commonly demonized by the right — from collective bargaining for public employees to reviving prevailing wage.

"By requiring that workers are paid a prevailing wage on public construction projects, we're not only supporting our working men and women by providing competitive wages, we're also attracting the best workers to ensure a quality product as an end result," Sisolak said at the bill-signing.

"Nowhere," he added, "is that more important than in our children's schools. Our kids deserve to learn and grow in a safe, well-constructed school that will last for years to come."

Nevada's building trades were well armed to battle for prevailing wage in the 2019 session, no matter who won last year's elections. In February they released an 81-page report by two economists who studied the effects of the 2015 law, finding that it hadn't cut construction costs or increased bid competition.

In fact, the rollback "harmed Nevada's construction industry without delivering on its promises of lower costs. ... This policy experiment should not be repeated in Nevada or in other jurisdictions," the researchers stated.

The assault on PLAs was similarly harmful. Sisolak said restoring them, "rights another wrong."

"The 2015 law claimed that making it hard for unionized workers to participate in

"The credit goes to our members, who responded to our ask to participate, to educate themselves on the issues and to vote for labor-friendly candidates — and to phone bank and knock on doors and get other voters to the polls," he said.

Halsey hopes members can see how different things might be without their activism and votes.

"I try to stay away from the whole Republican-Democrat thing because we interview and endorse labor-friendly candidates regardless of party," he said. "But sometimes Republicans make it clear. We didn't get support from them on any of our labor bills — but we didn't need it either."

While Republicans maneuvered to block union bills with "fiscal notes," inflating or conjuring up costs of enacting them, the Legislature's worker-friendly majority was strong enough to withstand the pressure.

Davis cautioned that the new laws alone won't persuade members that their energy and effort in 2018 was worth it. "I don't think they'll fully connect the dots until we see the jobs that are created because of the legislation," he said. "It all sounds good, but it doesn't really mean money in your pocket yet."

Meanwhile, he said, it's critical to keep members engaged heading toward 2020, when there's even more at stake: the state lawmakers they elect will redraw the boundaries of Nevada's legislative districts.

"We got severely gerrymandered in 2010," Davis said, referring to the current district maps that hurt the interests of working people and paved the way to disaster in 2014.

"I think what's been accomplished so far is great, but we need to keep our eye on the next 12 years," he said. ■

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NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

With Election Approaching, New Contract Secures Gains for Federal Workers

With the federal election on the horizon, Ottawa, Ontario, Local 2228 reached tentative agreement with the Treasury Board for a new four-year contract that will guarantee an 8% increase in salary for the more than 1,000 members covered.

Those members it covers are electronic technologists working for the federal government. They are scattered across 18 different departments, including the Department of Defence, Coast Guard and Transport Canada. Local 2228 members were voting on the contract as The Electrical Worker went to press.

The agreement also included more parental, maternity and caregiver leave for members and sets up a leave system for members dealing with domestic violence. Business Manager Paul Cameron said he was especially pleased to get a contract within a year of the expiration of the previous agreement, providing members with more certainty to prepare for the future.

“We went in with what we thought were fair and clear-cut proposals,” Cameron said. “We did not want to be complex. We knew there would be some movement because of the upcoming federal election.”

The parliamentary session ended in June, and federal elections will be held in October. IBEW leaders are urging members to support worker-friendly candidates, including from the ruling Liberal Party, which has welcomed an open dialogue with the IBEW and other Canadian labour unions.

The Conservative Party was hostile to labour in the nearly 10 years in which it either held power or formed a majority government before the Liberals took power in 2015.

Cameron said that change showed in negotiations. It was easier to reach a deal with the Liberals in power instead of the old Conservative government. There was more flexibility and openness to Local 2228's proposals and none of the take-it-or-leave-it attitude shown in prior discussions.

“Typically, during the last 10-20 years, negotiations to the time of ratification would take two years,” Cameron said. “When the Conservatives were in power, there was a real sense of, ‘You better take this deal or we’re going to legislate it on you.’ It was not friendly. With the Liberals in power, there was more of a sense of working with us.”

“It’s a gain to what we had in the last round. Is it everything we wanted? No. But we thought it was a fair deal that reflects the value and work of our members.”

The federal election is expected to be extremely close. In late June, CBC’s Poll Tracker gave the Conservatives a 35% chance of forming a majority government and the Liberals a 29% chance.

The Amundsen, a Coast Guard icebreaker and research vessel, docked in Quebec City. Some members of Ottawa Local 2228 are employed by the Coast Guard.

“Paul and the local’s negotiating team showed extraordinary leadership in getting a fair deal done for their members, many of whom do important work seldom seen by the general public,” First District Government Relations Director Matt Wayland said.

“But as he noted, having a government in power that respects the collective bargaining process and the value of civil servants made negotiations much more productive. It’s another reason to support worker-friendly candidates and not turn our backs on the gains we’ve made in the last four years.”

The agreement with the IBEW was part of five new contracts the Treasury Board reached with public-sector unions, covering about 30,000 workers.



“This is another illustration of the respect our government has consistently demonstrated for Canada’s public ser-

vants,” Treasury Board President Joyce Murray said. “We remain committed to our good faith approach to collective bar-

gaining and hope to continue to reach agreements that are good for public servants and fair for Canadian taxpayers.” ■

À l’approche de l’élection, le nouveau contrat assure des gains pour le personnel de compétence fédérale

À l’aube de l’élection fédérale, le local 2228 situé à Ottawa, Ontario a conclu une entente de principe avec le Conseil du Trésor pour les quatre prochaines années, offrant ainsi une augmentation salariale de 8 pour cent à plus de 1 000 membres visés.

Les membres couverts par cette convention collective sont des technologues de l’électronique qui travaillent au sein du gouvernement fédéral. Le personnel est réparti à travers 18 secteurs différents, notamment la Défense nationale, la Garde côtière canadienne et Transports Canada. L’entente du local 2228 passait au vote au moment de l’impression du journal *The Electrical Worker*.

La convention collective permet, entre autres, aux membres d’avoir plus de congés parentaux, plus de congés de maternité et plus de congés pour les aides familiaux, et un congé a été établi pour les membres qui font face aux cas de violence domestiques. Le gérant d’affaires Paul Cameron se réjouit particulièrement du fait d’avoir conclu une entente avant l’année où la précédente expire, ce qui permettra aux membres d’être mieux préparés pour leur avenir.

« Nous avons entamé nos négocia-

tions avec ce qui correspondait, à notre avis, des propositions justes et claires, » dit Cameron. « Nous n’avons pas voulu compliquer les choses. On savait que les choses allaient bouger en raison de l’élection fédérale imminente. »

La session parlementaire a pris fin en juin et l’élection fédérale sera tenue en octobre. Les leaders syndicaux de la FIOE exhortent les membres à appuyer les candidates et les candidats favorables au mouvement ouvrier, y compris celles et ceux du Parti libéral déjà au pouvoir, qui étaient favorables à un dialogue ouvert avec la FIOE ainsi qu’avec les autres syndicats canadiens.

Avant l’arrivée au pouvoir des libéraux en 2015, le Parti conservateur s’est montré hostile envers les syndicats au cours des 10 dernières années, autant lorsqu’il a formé le gouvernement que lorsqu’il a été majoritaire. Cameron dit que ce changement paraissait durant les négociations. L’arrivée à une entente avec les libéraux au pouvoir était plus facile, contrairement à l’ancien gouvernement conservateur. Il y avait plus de flexibilité et plus d’ouverture à l’égard des propositions du local 2228, et non avec la mentalité « c’est à prendre ou à laisser », tel que

vécu dans les négociations précédentes.

« Généralement, au cours de ces 10 à 20 dernières années, les négociations jusqu’au moment de la ratification prenaient deux ans, » ajoute Cameron. « Lorsque les conservateurs étaient au pouvoir, on avait vraiment l’impression d’être forcé à accepter l’accord sinon ils allaient légiférer. L’échange n’était pas amical. Alors qu’avec les libéraux au pouvoir, on avait plus le sentiment que c’était une collaboration. »

« Il s’agit d’un gain par rapport à ce que nous avons eu au dernier cycle de négociation. Avons-nous obtenu tout ce que nous voulions? Non. Mais nous avons estimé que c’était une entente équitable qui représente la valeur et le travail de nos membres. »

On s’attend à ce que l’élection fédérale soit extrêmement serrée. Le sondage électoral des bulletins de nouvelles *CBC* a donné au Parti conservateur 35 pour cent des chances pour former le gouvernement majoritaire et le Parti libéral 29 pour cent des chances.

« Paul et son équipe de négociation ont fait preuve de leadership extraordinaire en concluant cette entente de manière équitable pour leur membre, bien que plusieurs d’entre eux effectuent un travail très

important et rarement à la vue du public, » mentionne Matt Wayland, le directeur canadien des relations gouvernementales.

« Mais comme il a fait mention, en ayant un gouvernement au pouvoir qui respecte le processus de négociation collective et la valeur des fonctionnaires, ont rendu les négociations beaucoup plus productives. C’est une raison pour laquelle il faut appuyer les candidates et les candidats favorables aux travailleuses et travailleurs et ne pas oublier les gains que nous avons réalisés dans les quatre dernières années. »

La convention collective avec la FIOE faisait partie des cinq nouveaux contrats conclus entre le Conseil du Trésor et les syndicats du secteur public, qui visent environ 30 000 travailleuses et travailleurs.

« Ceci est un autre exemple qui fait preuve de respect démontré de façon constante par notre gouvernement à nos fonctionnaires du Canada, » exprime Joyce Murray, la présidente du Conseil du Trésor. « Nous restons déterminés à négocier collectivement de bonne foi et espérons conclure des conventions collectives qui sont profitables pour les fonctionnaires et justes pour les contribuables canadiens. » ■

CIRCUITS

Wyoming Organizer Honored for Leading Local 322 Volunteers in Conservation Projects

Bruce Johnson, a Casper, Wyo., Local 322 organizer and avid outdoorsman, has been named the IBEW Conservation Steward of the Year for his leadership on volunteer projects protecting elk and their habitat.

Presented by the Union Sportsmen's Alliance, the award is given for exceptional efforts that bring union members together to donate their time and tradecraft to preserve the great outdoors.



Local 322 organizer Bruce Johnson, left, receives the 2019 IBEW Conservation Steward of the Year award from Walt Ingram, director of union relations at the Union Sportsmen's Alliance.

"Bruce is a dedicated conservationist and volunteer whose leadership helps us execute projects that benefit wildlife populations cherished by his local community and sportsmen across the country," Alliance CEO and Executive Director Scott Vance said. "His commitment exemplifies the spirit of union solidarity and community service that drives the USA's mission."

Last July, Johnson rallied Local 322 volunteers to build a custom fence-crossing for elk herds entering a state feeding ground in western Wyoming at winter-time. An exterior ramp allows elk to jump down to feed inside the refuge, while the fence discourages them from leaving until snow melts on grazing land beyond the boundaries.

Two summers earlier, Johnson headed

construction of the popularly named "Shed Shed," a garage-size structure for storing the thousands of antlers that elk drop, or shed, throughout the nearly 25,000-acre National Elk Refuge each spring.

Local 322 members put more than 700 hours of volunteer labor into the Shed Shed, a project welcomed by refuge managers who previously used a hodgepodge of garages and trailers to store antlers until the annual Elkfest auction in Jackson Hole. The May event supports preservation of elk habitat and also benefits an area Boy Scout troop that scours the refuge to collect antlers.

Johnson, a journeyman inside wireman who began his apprenticeship in 1980, received the conservation award in April at the Construction and Maintenance Conference in Washington, D.C. He gave credit to the IBEW members who joined him on the projects, saying they "deserve as much recognition as I do."

"They're a good group of guys, family-oriented, community-oriented and all of them love the outdoors" — a prerequisite for living in Wyoming, Johnson said. "Like we say, you don't live in Wyoming for the wages."

As an organizer, Johnson has used Wyomingites' shared enthusiasm for the outdoors to appeal to nonunion contractors and workers. His local sponsors an annual "Buck Contest," with prizes for top deer antler racks, open to anyone in the electrical industry and immediate family.

"When you go to a nonunion contractor, if you walk in as the organizer, the fence goes up, they're on guard," Johnson said. "When we talk about the buck contest, the fences come down."

By showcasing members' skills, craftsmanship and commitment, the volunteer projects are another way Local 322 is building bonds in Wyoming.

Watching the crew work on the Shed Shed, elk refuge employee Natalie Faith told an IBEW Hour Power interviewer that she'd gained "a better sense of the expertise that union workers bring to federal lands."

"It's been a phenomenal experience," Faith said. "This project would not have been possible without their involvement."

Learn more about the Union Sportsmen's Alliance at www.unionsportmen.org ■



Volunteers from Casper, Wyo., Local 322 construct a custom elk jump at a state feeding ground, a project spearheaded by organizer Bruce Johnson, whose conservation efforts were honored this spring by the Union Sportsmen's Alliance.

Free College, No Catch: IBEW Members Say Degree Program Hasn't Cost Them a Nickel

With just four or five classes to go, Todd Bedard is on the verge of having an associate degree in business management — without accruing a penny of student debt.

Bedard, the president of Manchester, N.H., Local 2320, is making the most of the Union Plus Free College Program, which covers tuition and online course materials for active and retired union members and their families.

"I haven't taken a dime out of my pocket. I haven't opened my wallet; I haven't given a credit card number," he said. "I just filled out the financial aid paperwork. I thought it was going to be painful, but I think it only took about a half hour."

An equipment installer for Consolidated Communications, Bedard previously earned an associate degree in applied science for telecommunications when he worked for Verizon. His program now, through Eastern Gateway Community College, has the potential to open all kinds of doors.

"I have 21 years doing what I've been doing, and I want to see where a business degree can take me in the future," he said, adding that he may pursue a four-year college degree and possibly an MBA.

"I tell everyone who will listen: If you're not doing it, you're losing money."

— Student and Local 2320 President Todd Bedard

At age 47, it's not something he would have considered if he hadn't heard about the program, which marshals all available federal aid and grants on behalf of students, then fills any funding gaps the aid doesn't cover.

Union Plus, in partnership with AFSCME, rolled out the benefit in 2018 with online associate degree and certificate programs, and is working to offer a bachelor's degree by the end of 2019. Fields of study include advertising, cyber security, finance, hospitality, labor studies, marketing, criminal justice, teacher education and office management.

Bedard is an evangelist when it comes to urging Local 2320 brothers and sisters to enroll. "I'm annoying about it," he said with a laugh. "I tell everyone who will listen: If you're not doing it, you're losing money."

In Florida, journeyman inside wireman Lorraine Llauger is another IBEW member singing the program's praises.

"I never thought I'd be going to col-



Manchester, N.H., Local 2320 President Todd Bedard



Orlando, Fla., Local 606 Organizer Lorraine Llauger

lege," said Llauger, an organizer at Orlando Local 606. "I thought, where am I going to find the time? I can't go off to a campus."

Llauger's coursework focuses on labor studies, knowledge she is excited to share to educate current IBEW members and organize new ones. One of her ideas is a short class on labor history.

"I want to remind our members about the hard work it took to get us where we are today, and why it's important to never forget your roots and to always fight for your rights," she said.

Llauger didn't hesitate when she got wind of the program. "I jumped right on it," she said. "I wanted to be the guinea pig. I wanted to be one of the first people trying it out — to find out if it was too good to be true. It's not. It really is that good."

The flexibility of online learning allows her and Bedard to take full advantage of their free education. Classes fit their schedules, and there are no tiring commutes to and from school.

"My favorite thing is that I can be anywhere where there is internet," Llauger said. "The classes are broken down so they don't give you too much work at one time. You're not overloaded and you can go at your own pace, but you still have to be responsible and do the work."

A single mother, Llauger enjoys studying alongside her son and daughter as they do their middle-school homework. She loves knowing they're proud to tell friends that their mom's in college.

Bedard squeezes in study time around family activities on evenings and weekends, and he doesn't waste a minute during the workday.

"There are times when I have to plug in my work computer to do an upgrade and there's 10, 15 minutes where I have to sit

and let that happen," he said. "Or I'm on the phone, on hold. And during my breaks."

At those moments, he fires up his personal laptop to study, take quizzes and post questions and answers on student discussion boards. While that's an obligatory part of the program, he said he gets a lot out of it. "I'm talking to people all around the country, many of them union members, and we're able to share our life experiences."

When Bedard learned of the benefit, his reaction was like Llauger's — recognizing right away it could be life-changing for him and other union brothers and sisters, if it lived up to its promise.

"As president, I wanted to be able to talk to my members about it firsthand," he said. "I signed up within a day or so and haven't looked back."

To learn more about the free college program and how to apply, go to www.unionplusfreecollege.org or call (888) 590-9009. ■

N.J. Local's 'Good of the Union' Commitment Bolsters Community

Members of Trenton, N.J., Local 269 put in long, hard hours during the week. But well-earned weekends aren't just for relaxing; many members are also committed to the wide variety of community service activities the local sponsors through its "Good of the Union" committee.

"Volunteerism is an extremely rewarding experience and it benefits all involved," Local 269 Business Manager Stephen Aldrich said. "Knowing you have helped through simple sacrifice is its own reward."

It's that spirit that inspired the "Good of the Union" committee, which is now woven into the local's fabric and regularly enhancing its reputation within the greater Trenton community.

Coordinated by Guy Miliziano, the local's recording secretary, the committee connects many Local 269 members with community organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the American Cancer Society's annual "Relay for Life." Some members can be found collecting food for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen or games, dolls and more for the U.S. Marine Corps's "Toys for Tots" drive. As the winter holidays approach, the local raises money to help families of terminally ill children. Several times a year, it also sponsors blood drives to benefit the American Red Cross.

Local 269's jurisdiction covers the Garden State's capital city along with Bucks County, Pa., just across the Delaware River. It's there that, for more than 10 years, members of the local also have taken part in the "Adopt-a-Highway" program managed by Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation.

"We do it twice a year: in May and October," said Local 269 member Marc Sciarrotta, who has organized this roadside litter pickup activity ever since he completed his apprenticeship and became a journeyman wireman seven years ago.



Roadside cleanup is just one of the many volunteer and charitable activities available to members of Trenton, N.J., Local 269, thanks to its busy “Good of the Union” Committee.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation supplies the garbage bags, gloves, signs and warning flags, Sciarrotta said, and IBEW members provide the manpower.

For this year’s spring event on Saturday, May 11, nearly two dozen apprentice and journeyman members of Local 269 met Sciarrotta at 8 a.m. near Oxford Valley Road, at the western end of their designated mile-or-so stretch of U.S. Route 1.

“Usually, we get 15 to 20 apprentices — who are required to get a certain number of community service hours — plus another 10 to 12 journeyman wiremen,” Sciarrotta said. The project can take a few hours to complete, he said, “but the more people who show up, the faster it goes.”

Three official highway signs mark both directions’ starting points: a dark blue sign reading, “Adopt-a-Highway Litter Control;” a lighter-blue one bearing the union’s logo and reading, “IBEW L.U. 269;” and a third that reads, “PennDOT Thanks This 10-Year Participant.”

The volunteers typically find ordinary, run-of-the-mill litter, Sciarrotta said, such as beverage bottles or fast food bags, along with the occasional vehicle part like a mirror or hubcap.

“We’ll end up with anywhere from 75 to 100 bags of trash” he said — about two to three per volunteer. PennDOT retrieves the full bags, usually within a few days.

The entire cleanup process is a positive experience both for the local and for PennDot, Sciarrotta said. “We do our best, and they’re happy with the work we do.”

“Our local’s commitment to serving our community is a big part of what we do, whether it’s cleaning up the highway, building a house for a needy family or collecting presents for kids whose parents can’t afford them at Christmas,” Aldrich said. “It’s also building schools and hospitals or delivering electricity. We live in this community, and we want to make it a better place.”

If your local is interested in adopting or sponsoring a portion of a nearby highway, get in touch with your particular state’s or province’s department of transportation. ■

How This Shipyard Created a Values-Based Commitment to Excellence — and Success

At a time when federal employees are disparaged as lazy and a drain on taxpayer dollars — especially by the president and his administration — the working women and men at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, have been quietly proving themselves to be consummate professionals. And they’ve been doing it for years.

Now, they’re looking to share part of their recipe for success with other shipyards around the U.S.

“Our members, and those of other trades that we work with, take a lot of pride in their work. They always have,” said Paul O’Connor, director of the IBEW Government Employees Department and former president of the Metal Trades Council at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

This isn’t to say that things were always great. Like a lot of workplaces, PNS went through periods of low morale and productivity. But unlike a lot of places, those challenging times led to a great success story.

In 2010, the shipyard needed a change. Stagnation was setting in and nothing they tried to improve things was working — until they looked at the issue a little differently.

“We were looking for a better way,” said O’Connor, a member of Portsmouth, N.H., Local 2071. “Our performance level had peaked, and we were deliberating what to do.”

Much of what they had tried was schedule or process-driven, he said.

“For decades our shipyard would cherry-pick elements of these third-party initiatives to grab the attention of our workforce and shoehorn them into a rigid, industrial hierarchy. And management always maintained veto authority,” O’Connor said. “There was never workforce buy-in.”

So they shifted gears. They came together and decided to try a different, home-grown approach: no more third parties; something based on values. What if they focused on trust, dignity, integrity

and respect? And what if everyone — labor and management alike — had input?

“Labor and management jointly created an environment of trust, and our workforce stepped into that environment believing their voices could and would make a difference. And that’s what happened,” O’Connor said. It wasn’t officially the Code of Excellence, which hadn’t been extended to non-construction branches at the time, “but we utilized the same values-based philosophies.”

Of course, it wasn’t all smooth sailing. They had to break down a lot of barriers, between labor and management, civilian and military, the day shift and the night shift, engineers and trades. There was skepticism. Was this going to be just another flavor of the month? Something else that management would jam down their throats?

But they kept going — and listening. And they took those concerns and used them to form the basis of what became the Declaration of Excellence, a document that created a permanent relationship based on shared values between labor and management and between the various trades on the yard.

“Labor and management together created a Declaration of Independence-type document that outlined what the next 200 years on the yard should look like from a cultural perspective,” said former Local 2071 Business Manager Andrew Perry, who also served on the Metal Trades Council. “The groups who signed it and all who have read it understand how important dignity and respect are.”

“When you get the relationships right, the rest follows.”

— Government Employees Director Paul O’Connor

Everyone, labor and management alike, receives regular refresher training and the Declaration is part of the new employee orientation and the shipyard’s technical manuals. Since its implementation in 2012, performance has improved dramatically, with all nuclear submarine overhauls being completed on schedule and on budget.

They also established an ideas program, co-chaired by labor and management. The decision to accept an idea is made jointly, with input from the employee who made the suggestion as well.

“It’s a way to let people know we’re really listening,” O’Connor said. “And two of the ideas saved the shipyard an estimated \$5 million a year.”

Now in Washington, O’Connor is working to take his experience at Portsmouth and use it to develop an official Code of Excellence across the four Naval shipyards in the U.S.

“Much of the Code, and same for the Declaration, could be incorporated anywhere,” O’Connor said. “They’re business models based on values. When you get the relationships right, the rest follows.” ■



THE IBEW’s 2019 PHOTO CONTEST

Enter Today!

Deadline: Oct. 1

1st Place: \$200

2nd Place: \$150

3rd Place: \$100

Honorable Mention: \$50

Summer is here, and that means it’s time for this year’s IBEW photo contest. Last year’s winner, Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245’s Nicolas Rains, captured his co-workers on the job in extreme weather conditions, but you don’t need to find the extraordinary to win. Your IBEW sisters and brothers do extraordinary work every day — even on the most routine assignments.

Send us the photos that capture that spirit of excellence and togetherness, the foundations of what it means to be a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Photo Contest Rules:

1. The contest is open to active or retired IBEW members only. The person submitting the photo must be the person who took the photograph. Members may enter up to five photos each.
2. International officers and staff are not eligible.
3. Photos MUST be submitted as digital files of at least 300 dpi, measuring 1,200 by 1,800 pixels at minimum, in color or black and white. Larger files of at least 2,200 pixels are encouraged.
4. All submissions become property of the IBEW Media Department.
5. Photo entries must have an IBEW theme of some sort, with IBEW members at work, engaged in a union-related activity or featuring subjects conveying images of the electrical industry or the union.
6. If members are featured in the photo, they should be identified. If large groups are pictured, the name of the group or the purpose of the gathering (e.g., a safety committee, a linemen’s rodeo, a union meeting) can be submitted in place of individual names.
7. Photos previously published in IBEW publications or on the website are not eligible for submission.

8. **Entries MUST be submitted electronically** via the Photo Contest link on IBEW.org. Please contact the Media Department at media@IBEW.org or 202-728-6102 with additional questions.

9. Up to 15 finalists will be selected and posted on IBEW.org for final judging by the public. The winners will be featured in a future issue of the Electrical Worker.

THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

Florida Activists Fight to Fend Off Deregulation Threat

In Florida, IBEW members are mobilizing to help kill a proposed constitutional amendment that aims to deregulate the state's investor-owned electrical utilities — a law that, if implemented, could disrupt the livelihood of thousands of electricians who work and live there.

“Energy deregulation has been proven to be bad policy,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “It’s a dangerous idea that drives electricity prices up, reduces service quality and puts highly trained union electricians out of work.”

Last year, a political action committee called Citizens for Energy Choices (CEC) gained approval to mount a campaign to place a so-called “energy choice” amendment on Florida’s 2020 general election ballot.

“It would dismantle the affordable and reliable current electric grid and industry,” said Fifth District International Vice President Brian Thompson, “all to give electric utility market profiteers a chance to gain a financial advantage. Deregulation risks leaving electricity customers without reliable and safe providers.”

Proponents of deregulation typically sway skeptics by claiming that customers’ ability to shop for low-cost power forces providers to compete by offering better service at lower prices. But deregulated utilities also can more freely boost profits by charging customers higher rates.

Regulated systems must balance their right to make money with infrastructure and customer needs, justifying rate-hike requests before an oversight body.

“Energy rates in Florida already are among the lowest in the nation,” said Thompson, whose district includes the Sunshine State. “And we’ve got years of evidence that deregulation doesn’t work.”

Because of deregulation, thousands of jobs in the trades and other fields have vanished, with rates going up as infrastructure investments decline. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia have some form of deregulation.

“It didn’t work in California, and it’s not going to work in Florida,” said Ed

Mobsby, a Fifth District international representative who also serves as the state’s political coordinator. In the early 2000s, unregulated energy providers in California, such as Enron, manipulated the electrical grid to drive up prices. Statewide rolling brownouts and blackouts ensued, and IBEW members lost jobs by the hundreds.

In Florida, state law limits ballot summaries to 75 words, so one major challenge Florida’s IBEW activists face is revealing what CEC is leaving out of its summary. “It’s kind of vague, the way they’re describing it,” Mobsby said.

Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody agrees. “This unclear language fails to disclose that the proposed amendment would require enactment of laws prohibiting investor-owned utilities from owning, operating or even leasing any facilities which generate electricity and would prevent investor-owned utilities from competing in a new, electric utility market,” wrote Moody, a Republican, in a letter to the Florida Supreme Court.

“A lot of people that traditionally oppose labor and the trades are on board with us on this,” said Thompson, noting that Florida’s Republican-majority House of Representatives and Senate also have problems with the measure. A brief filed by the state’s Chamber of Commerce complains that complexities in the proposed amendment’s summary violate current law and could leave voters confused.

The summary also omits how the proposed amendment seeks to eliminate existing storm recovery agreements and resources critical in helping to restore power after hurricanes and other disasters.

Before the amendment proposal can be included on the November 2020 general election ballot, supporters must collect more than 766,000 valid signatures from registered Florida voters by Feb. 1.

“For now, we’re trying to keep it off the ballot,” Thompson said. “We’ve got a lot of work to do, but the good news is we’re getting started early and we’re already out in front of it.”

In late June, Florida’s Department of Elections showed that CEC was only about 42% of the way toward its signature goal. And even if the initiative makes it onto the ballot, it would still need to receive at least 60% of the state’s popular vote

before gaining ratification.

“We’re hoping we’ll have enough information out there to let people make an informed decision before then,” Mobsby said. The main task for IBEW activists now, he said, is education and mobilization.

It’s worked before. Using nearly identical ballot language, Citizens for Energy Choice tried to mount a similar constitutional campaign in Nevada, and in 2016, 75% of the state’s voters favored deregulation. But after the IBEW’s on-the-ground educational campaign, two-thirds of the electorate there rejected it last November.

“We can use Nevada as a playbook to come at deregulation with a good grassroots effort in Florida,” said Thompson, who has regular conversations with IBEW leaders in that state.

“Our utilities are putting together a game plan, too,” he said. If the amendment was to pass, the electricity generation business for Florida Power and Light, Duke Energy and Tampa Electric — all IBEW employers — would disappear.

“We would lose jobs for sure,” said Thompson, adding that there also would remain uncertainty regarding power transmission and distribution.

“Electricity is a service, not a commodity that can be bought and sold to satisfy corporate greed,” said Stephenson. “We need all hands on deck in Florida to help voters understand this, before this dangerous amendment becomes a hard-to-repeal part of the state’s constitution.”

Visit fareflorida.org to learn more. ■

Clock Ticking on Bill to Preserve Nuclear Jobs in Ohio

Hundreds of IBEW jobs in Ohio could be in serious jeopardy if the state’s Legislature fails to pass a bill to keep two nuclear plants open.

“This is not a political issue,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “We need this bill in Ohio because the impact of closing these plants would be catastrophic to the workers and their families and to their friends, neighbors and local communities.”

The measure is the Ohio Clean Air Program Bill (House Bill 6), introduced in January by Republicans Jamie Callender and Shane Wilkin. Among the bill’s proposals are provisions designed to help support carbon-free baseload energy generation at the state’s only two nuclear power stations: FirstEnergy Solutions’ Davis-Besse plant outside Toledo, and its sister facility, Perry, near Cleveland.

“Our sisters and brothers work hundreds of thousands of hours a year in these plants, providing the kind of carbon-free grid stability you don’t get anywhere else,” said Fourth District Vice President Brian Malloy. “Investing such a tiny amount in these plants and these workers will pay off many times over for the state of Ohio.”

Davis-Besse was the state’s first nuclear power station, a single-reactor facility that started operation in 1977.



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user FirstEnergyCorp

If its Legislature fails to act, Ohio’s two nuclear plants, including Davis-Besse, above, could close, wiping out work for hundreds of IBEW members.

About 400 IBEW members work there, with Toledo Local 8 providing construction and maintenance workers, along with members represented by Toledo Local 245 doing in-plant work and Toledo Local 1413 covering security workers. Coming online a decade after Davis-Besse, the Perry plant employs members of Painesville, Ohio, Local 673, who perform construction and maintenance work there.

H.B. 6 calls for adding a modest \$1 fee to the bill of every FirstEnergy customer in the state beginning in 2020. Most of that money would go toward helping sustain both nuclear plants, which have struggled financially in recent years due to plunging natural gas prices and energy pricing factors that disadvantage baseload generation.

“This is about jobs,” said Malloy, who noted that some of the funds raised by H.B. 6 also would benefit Buckeye State IBEW members by supporting job-creating solar energy generation projects, including five planned utility-grade solar farms. One of those is a 400-megawatt American Electric Power facility in Highland County, set to be built in part by members of Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575.

“This bill has been going back and forth in different versions for years,” said Fourth District International Representative Dave Moran, who testified in favor of the current measure during a May 22 state House Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing. (The IBEW’s Fourth District covers Ohio as well as the District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia.)

But interest groups for the gas industry like Americans for Prosperity and the American Petroleum Institute have been waging a full-bore battle against H.B. 6 and similar bills for a simple reason, Moran explained: “Allow the nuclear plants to close and gas would basically become the only game in town.”

The bill was approved on May 29 by the state’s full House of Representatives on a bipartisan 53-43 vote. “It was a big win for the IBEW,” Moran said. “But it wasn’t the end of it.”

Malloy agreed. “If you were to ask me a year ago if we could get a bill passed, I didn’t have a lot of hope,” he said. “But Local 245 Business Manager Larry Tscherne and Local 1413 Business Manager Brad Goetz never gave up. They kept it

on the radar, which in turn kept me and other people focused on the issue.

“All our local unions definitely stepped up and lobbied their representatives. The members never let up. They know what’s at stake.”

In fact, IBEW activists across Ohio, in coordination with representatives of local and statewide trades councils, for months have made phone calls and attended key legislative hearings, Malloy said.

“We stressed that we are for ‘all of the above:’ renewables, nuclear, gas,” he said. “We also stressed jobs, clean energy, and the devastation to communities if either of those plants close.”

In a July 1 statement, FirstEnergy said it was “optimistic about the outcome” of H.B. 6, but without it, the closure threat lingered because the company remained unable to commit funds for Davis-Besse’s next scheduled refueling cycle. “Should we receive the long-term certainty that comes with an affirmative vote within this timeframe, we will immediately reevaluate our options,” it said.

“If we don’t get this bill passed, both plants will close,” Moran said — Davis-Besse as early as next year, with Perry following suit in 2021.

As The Electrical Worker went to press, H.B. 6 had been sent to the Ohio Senate’s Energy and Public Utilities committee for further consideration. “We have a lot of work left to do,” Malloy said.

Moran noted that Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine has stated that he is in favor of nuclear power and has generally signaled support for H.B. 6.

IBEW activists have been hard at work, pressing representatives from both political parties to support this job-saving bill and urging all of their Buckeye State brothers and sisters to do the same.

“No form letters or petitions, but one-on-one contact with the people that vote for them,” Malloy stressed. “It’s the personal touch that works.”

Moran said that Vice President Malloy had himself personally contacted every local in Ohio. “We asked business managers from every branch of the IBEW to use their relationships with local politicians,” he said. “We got a lot of support from every local so far. They are engaged because they know this affects all of us.”

Members in Ohio can visit



Credit: FP&L

A dangerous deregulation proposal in Florida could put thousands of IBEW jobs at risk.

ohiosenate.gov/senators/district-map to find out how they can tell their senator to support H.B. 6 as written when it comes up for a vote. ■

IBEW Urges Congress to Get Moving on Nuclear Waste Storage

A trio of recently introduced bills before the House of Representatives could help unlock meaningful, long-term employment for IBEW members in Nevada — and beyond.

“A critical piece to supporting the future of our nation’s nuclear sector, and the tens of thousands of family-supporting jobs that the nuclear industry creates, is opening a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel,” Political and Legislative Affairs Director Austin Keyser told a House subcommittee hearing in June. Nearly two decades after the original deadline to open a permanent repository, “ratepayers and workers are still waiting ... to safely store over 80,000 metric tons of SNF sitting at 121 sites in 39 states across the country,” he said.

Keyser was one of five witnesses called to testify before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change, which is considering three bills intended to help finally move forward the longstanding plans to allow Nevada’s Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository to accept spent nuclear fuel for permanent storage.

“We believe a permanent repository is necessary to ensure the public’s support for the next generation of advanced nuclear reactors that we hope will come online in the near future, including small modular reactors,” Keyser said.

In 1982, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act directed the Department of Energy to move spent nuclear fuel from temporary onsite storage facilities at commercial nuclear power plants and store it in a stable and lasting location. The department eventually designated Yucca Mountain, an extinct volcano in the middle of a desert about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, as its preferred site.

Delegates to the IBEW’s 35th International Convention in 1996 approved a resolution in support of emission- and carbon-free nuclear energy and called for a national nuclear waste disposal facility. Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, scores of Las Vegas Local 357 inside wiremen worked alongside members of other building trades on and in the mountain, performing electrical maintenance on tunneling machines, wiring lights and upgrading fire prevention and alarm systems.

The actual process of transporting and storage of spent fuel that was supposed to begin in early 1998 never got started, however, largely because of opposition from Nevada’s governors and residents, fueled largely by persistent myths and fears surrounding the safety of nuclear energy.

“We know that it’s safe. We know that IBEW members are in these facilities



Political and Legislative Affairs Director Austin Keyser testifies during a U.S. House hearing.

constantly. The high-water mark for industrial safety is at these facilities,” Keyser said. “These are the types of family-sustaining careers that Americans are looking

for and policymakers should support.”

Nearly 15,000 IBEW members work full time in more than 55 nuclear facilities, providing reliable baseload energy to communities across the U.S., Keyser said. Thousands more rotate through nuclear plants as maintenance and refueling support.

“We are the largest union in the nuclear industry,” said Keyser. “We represent most of the workers in nuclear generation. We have IBEW members doing core work, whether it’s in the plant operations, in electrical construction and capital improvements, and in the decommissioning of sites.”

Introduced in late spring, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act (H.R. 2699) and the Storage and Transportation of Residual and Excess Act (H.R. 3136) are both intended to get the spent fuel stor-

age process moving again. The Spent Fuel Prioritization Act (H.R. 2995), introduced in May, calls for allowing the Department of Energy to begin construction of interim storage facilities in Texas and New Mexico to handle spent fuel from decommissioned reactors. That fuel is currently being kept in what were only meant to be temporary on-site storage facilities, a stopgap strategy that is costing taxpayers and utility customers millions of dollars.

“The opening of interim storage facilities would allow for the redevelopment of shuttered nuclear plants,” Keyser said. “Many closed nuclear stations are ideal sites for future development of other forms of electrical generation, including renewables, due to the already existing electrical transmission infrastructure.”

If the myriad safety and political

considerations surrounding Yucca Mountain can be resolved, hundreds of IBEW electricians could find work installing and maintaining the facility’s lighting and alarm systems and as well as on construction of buildings designed to accept canisters containing spent nuclear fuel.

“The IBEW would strongly prefer that Congress take action to open a permanent repository as soon as possible,” Keyser said, “but we recognize that providing authorization for interim facilities may be the best first step towards a necessary comprehensive solution.”

Representatives from the nuclear industry, the environmental movement, the state of Nevada and the U.S. government also offered testimony. ■

ORGANIZING WIRE

In Boise, New Telecom Unit Boosts Membership in Right-to-Work’s Shadow

About 3,000 employees at DirecTV facilities across 13 states voted for IBEW representation in the spring of 2016, a major organizing win for a telecommunications industry that has weathered remarkable change over the last decade.

For many local unions, however, the hard work was just beginning. Five of the new bargaining units were in right-to-work states, meaning that leaders like Boise, Idaho, Local 291 Business Manager Mark Zaleski not only assumed additional jurisdictional duties, but also had to recruit the new members. Adding to his challenge, Local 291 was primarily a construction local, so he also needed to learn the new industry.

That’s where Jason Taylor, a DirecTV installer, came in. Zaleski hired him in December 2016 as a telecom representative and organizer.

“Jason was the ringleader of the organizing movement here in Boise,” Zaleski said. “He really was the architect.”

They worked with the rest of 291’s staff and members to develop a recruitment strategy at the DirecTV garage and call center in Boise. Thus far, results have been impressive.

Today, 43 of the 48 installers and technicians at the garage are Local 291 members. About 300 of the 490 employees at the call center, where there is a much higher level of turnover among workers, are members.

“If you had told me three years ago we would be at 50% membership, I would have said no way,” Zaleski said. “I knew it was going to be a long chore. I could not be happier about the way it’s moved along.”

Taylor didn’t grow up in a union household. His father owned a pipe-fitting company. But he had worked as a DirecTV dish installer for 10 years and thought he and his co-workers deserved to be treated better, so he did his research.

He liked what he saw from the IBEW and urged his colleagues to seek representation for nearly two years prior to the vote, taking IBEW organizing training classes himself. An opening came in 2015, when DirecTV was purchased by AT&T, Inc. The IBEW has a long-standing relationship with the telecom giant across the U.S.

“We were able to hit the ground running pretty quickly and not have too many roadblocks,” he said.

AT&T agreed to allow Local 291 officials to meet with employees for 45 minutes during the new-hire orientation. Taylor and others found they spent most of that time answering questions about benefits, especially health insurance, so company officials agreed to extend the time to 90 minutes. That was a key early win.

“The longer we’re in there, the better success we have,” he said.

Convincing new employees to join still wasn’t easy. Less than 5% of Idaho’s workers are unionized, according to the Bureau of Labor statistics, sixth-lowest in the country. Unionization in neighboring Montana, which is not a right-to-work state, is more than 11%. Many of the new employees have been taught unions are a negative influence.



Despite Idaho’s right-to-work law, Boise Local 290 is growing its members among DirecTV employees.

Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user Yhojan Diaz

Taylor said a way to counter that idea is having stewards lead the training. They’ll be working next to new hires on a daily basis. Hearing about the value of the IBEW from a colleague instead of a Local 291 official is more powerful, he said.

“We’re making sure the folks doing the work are spreading the message,” he said.

Amanda Miller, the senior chief steward at the call center, does just that.

Miller grew up in Boise and had little understanding of unions. But as the vote approached, a friend working in management told her union representation might be a good thing for both sides because there would be no surprises. Every issue would be guided by a written contract.

That caught Miller’s attention. She liked that a manager with an ax to grind would not be able to impose discipline on his or her own. Procedures would be followed. There would be a scheduled pay-raise system instead of arbitrary raises being given.

“I’ve been fortunate in that I’ve had a great experience with the company,” she said. “But I also know there’s another side to that and not everyone’s been so lucky.”

Miller and other stewards lead a game when meeting with new hires called “Fact or Crap,” where stewards post a series of 25 scenarios about unions. The group responds by telling if they are true or false. Taylor said the mood is light and there’s plenty of laughter, but the exercise also is informative and counters any misconceptions.

“We usually don’t have a lot of questions after that,” he said.

By that point, many of the participants are ready to join. Taylor and his stewards tell the ones who aren’t they will contact them again. Sometimes, it’s the next day. Some decide to join when they see the majority of the workforce wearing Local 291 shirts.

If a new employee still decides not to join, Taylor asks him or her to return the membership package they were provided with because it cost Local 291 \$16-\$20 to put each one together. That gives him and the stewards another chance to explain the value of Local 291 membership.

Miller said even if fellow employees continue to hold out, she encourages members to treat them as valued co-workers and not as outcasts. Now, she’s seeing more longtime employees agreeing to join. Growth in numbers isn’t as dependent on new hires, she said.

“In order to get them to understand the value and find out why people might want to join, you have to make a friend,” she said. “You get to know them and maybe their families. You find out what they enjoy.”

Both Taylor and Miller said having a good relationship with management helps, too. Miller works as a customer solution associate, a role that allows her and others in her department to point out potential problems to employees before they get to their superiors. Management appreciates their role, she said.

Local 291 was featured in a recent IBEW Code of Excellence video. A panel consisting of members and managers hears disciplinary appeals, including termination. Approximately 80 percent of Local 291 members who have appealed a dismissal have kept their jobs at the end of the process. Better yet, the company reports a 100 percent success rate for the employees allowed to return, Taylor said.

Taylor added that he’s learned plenty from the leadership of Downers Grove, Ill., Local 21, one of the IBEW’s leading telecom locals. Both Local 21 and Local 291 are part of the T-3 AT&T System Council.

“We’ve told the company that you’ll always know our position and we will not hit you with any surprises,” he said. “We’re always going to act with integrity.”

Because Local 291’s success hinges on a simple strategy of mutual respect between employees and peers and the union and management, it’s no coincidence, they say, that membership continues to grow. ■

TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

Kirk Groenendaal



For a brief moment in time, Kirk Groenendaal wasn't an IBEW electrician. His junior year of high school, he lied about his age and was

hired as a union welder on the second shift at the GE plant outside of Erie, Pa.

In his second year, he was welding together the cabs and structural frames of trains.

It set a pattern in his career: competence in his craft matched with an impatience to get going.

“My favorite part is getting people jobs, getting them raises and bringing in new contractors”

— Kirk Groenendaal

Groenendaal said he was never going to stay a welder. He was forced to wait because there was no apprenticeship class after his senior year at Erie Local 56. His grandfather, Ed Sinnott, joined the local in the '30s and had been business manager in the '60s. Groenendaal's cousins and uncles made up “half the damn local,” he said.

Now, after 44 years, he is about to not be an IBEW electrician again. After a career hustling for the brotherhood, on Sept. 1, Groenendaal will relax.

When Groenendaal signed on in 1976 as a probationary apprentice, it was, he said, “the end of the peak,” that period in the IBEW's history where too many people thought the work, in his words, “couldn't be done without us.”

“Then the market grew; we didn't. It led to our reckoning,” he said.

The truth was, the attitude was widespread. But the '80s arrived and changed things. Like many of his generation, he topped out, got laid off and hit the road. But he always knew he wanted to follow his grandfather and do more than pay his dues. When a seat came open on the executive board in 1983, he volunteered, and his offer was accepted.

But, Groenendaal said, while he was always ready to serve, he was never one to wait around. When that same business manager decided Groenendaal would run for the board again in 1987 — without asking him — Groenendaal told him he preferred to run for vice president.

He ran anyway and won.

“I was never noncontroversial,” he said.

In 1988, Groenendaal became president, and when the order came from the International Office that every local needed a full-time organizer, Groenendaal volun-

teered to be the first in the local's history.

In 1992, frustrated with the pace of change, Groenendaal ran for business manager. This time he lost, so he went back to work. He was the first person in his local to ever be called off the books by name to be a foreman.

Five years later, he ran for business manager again and won. And then he won again. And again. And again.

Groenendaal immediately changed the organizing process. He made joining the union an efficient, year-round process and made it easy for contractors to come in, and — if they didn't come in — made it difficult to win work or hold workers.

To the people who complained about all the new faces not being “real” IBEW, he had a simple message.

“No one in here has a longer pedigree than I do, and I wasn't born with an IBEW bug tattooed on my butt cheeks,” he said. “Every one of us chose the IBEW at some point.”

In 2004, after a year serving as one of the lead negotiators for the Council on Industrial Relations while still leading Local 56, then-International President Edwin D. Hill asked Groenendaal to come on staff as an international representative in the CIR/Bylaws Department.

In 2009, Hill promoted him to director of construction organizing and, half a year later, to special assistant to the president for membership development, the longest title and one of the most important jobs in the IBEW.

Hill had made it a priority of his presidency to end the reckoning and return the IBEW to an organizing union. His assignment to Groenendaal was to take charge and carve it into stone.

“When me, Scott [Hudson, then-director of construction organizing] and Gina [Cooper, then-director of professional and industrial organizing] came in, we had to take the organizing system that was and create the one we have today,” he said. “We went from a half-dozen people in the field to go and created the system to manage them while we were growing.”

With the foundation for the new organizing system in place, in 2014 Groenendaal went to the job he said he loved most, being an international representative in the Construction and Maintenance Department.

“There are 775,000 members, only 350 construction business managers, and only a handful of international representatives,” he said. “I have always thought it is a hell of an honor to sit in this chair.”

Groenendaal said what he has enjoyed most hasn't changed since that first run for vice president.

“My favorite part is getting people jobs, getting them raises and bringing in the new contractors,” he said.

And the family tradition continues. The fourth generation of his family — his son, Dan — is a journeyman substation electrician in Phoenix Local 266 and a “good chunk” of Local 56 is still family, though more nephews now than uncles.

In retirement, Groenendaal plans to hunt, work outdoors and fully explore the United States from the cockpit of the two-seater Vans RV 8 airplane he

built himself.

Please join the officers and staff in wishing Brother Groenendaal a long, healthy and airborne retirement. ■

DECEASED

Robert B. Wood



Retired Research and Education Department Director Robert Wood died in May at age 85.

Brother Wood was born and raised in New Orleans and joined his hometown's Local 130 when he was 19. He quickly gained a reputation for his craftsmanship and knowledge.

“He was extremely bright, extremely competent and extremely dedicated,” said Dale Dunlop, former executive assistant to International Secretary-Treasurer Jack Moore.

Wood joined the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve in 1952, topped out in 1957, made foreman within four years and began teaching the next generation of apprentices before his 30th birthday.

Then, Wood applied for the IBEW scholarship supporting members seeking degrees in electrical engineering, then run by the Research and Education Department.

“He hadn't heard back,” Dunlop said. “His business manager was coming to D.C., and he promised Bob he'd look into it.”

When the business manager asked what was up, Dunlop said, he was told then-Director Thomas Hannigan had something else in mind.

“He told the business manager that, instead of giving him the scholarship, they wanted to interview him for an open international representative position at the International Office,” Dunlop said. “Bob just impressed you.”

Wood was offered the job and moved his family to Washington in 1968. Two years later, he was promoted to assistant director and, two years after that, he replaced Hannigan as director.

He held the position from 1972 until retirement in 1994.

Wood did get the electrical engineering associate degree from Delgado Trade and Technical Institute, as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial education from Northwestern State College.

When Dunlop came to D.C. in 1970, he and Wood shared an office.

“He was the brightest person in that building,” Dunlop said.

The Research and Education Department, in those days, was like the central nervous system of the IBEW. It handled all the agreement research and comparative wage studies, supplied locals with data heading into negotiations and also prepared testimony before Congress, especially about illegal foreign trade practices.

Wood's reputation spread, and he was appointed to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Advisory Committee and the Labor

Department's Trade Steering and Labor Sector Advisory Committees. He was also responsible for running the scholarship program that had inadvertently brought him to D.C.

“He could have done any other job in that building, but the leadership always wanted him there. It was a very important part of the operation, and they knew that Bob would always tell them the truth,” Dunlop said.

But the true measure of the man, Dunlop said, was not the high opinion of the people he reported to, but the respect and love he inspired in the people who worked for him.

“You look who got promoted in that building — directors and up — and so many came from his department. He never looked for praise for himself, but he was extremely good at getting attention, advancement and raises for his people,” Dunlop said. “He took care of his people. Those people in his department would do anything for him, and he would do anything for them.”

Brother Wood is survived by Joyce, his wife of 63 years, and sons Bob Jr., Mark and Jeffrey. Bob Jr. and Mark were both members of Washington, D.C., Local 26 where they both were general foremen on some of the local's largest projects. Bob Jr. is now retired.

On behalf of the IBEW's members and staff, the officers offer our deepest sympathies to Brother Wood's family. ■

DECEASED

Herman Ray Hill



Retired Seventh District International Representative Herman Ray Hill, a respected figure in Texas labor circles during 60 years of IBEW membership, died June 7 after becoming ill while attending the district's Progress Meeting in San Antonio. He was 80.

“Somebody made the comment he was where he wanted to be,” said Seventh District International Representative Gary Buresh, who worked with Hill on the district staff and considered him a mentor. “He was with friends. I don't think Ray ever missed a progress meeting unless he was sick, and he attended all the conventions.”

Born in Clarendon, Texas, Brother Hill moved with his family to Amarillo, Texas, in 1953 and lived there the rest of his life. He worked in a grocery store and as a cotton picker and truck driver before entering the apprenticeship program at Amarillo Local 602 in 1957, eventually topping out as a journeyman inside wireman.

It wasn't long before he became a leader in his local union. Hill earned a seat on the examining and executive boards in 1967, became president in 1968 and was elected business manager in 1969.

Although he came up through the construction ranks, Hill quickly became familiar with all branches of the IBEW.

Retired Seventh District Vice President Orville Tate noted that Local 602 had members working in inside and outside construction, manufacturing, utilities and telecommunications when Hill served as business manager. He was in charge of 31 bargaining units spread out across several hundred miles in west Texas.

“He serviced all that almost by himself,” Tate said. “He had just one assistant. He was very well-rounded. That's why I hired him.”

That was in 1981, when Hill joined the Seventh District staff as an international representative and serviced locals throughout west Texas. Later in his career, he was in charge of training new stewards and business managers in the district and served as Tate's executive assistant.

“Ray was one of those people who took the time out and answered whatever questions you had,” Buresh said. “He made sure you understood why [the IBEW] did what it did and what it took to be successful.”

Hill also made a mark on labor and the construction industry outside of the IBEW. He was active in the Texas State Association of Electrical Workers and served as its president from 1971-75. He was vice president of the Texas AFL-CIO from 1979-81 and vice president of the Texas Building Trades Council from 1972-81.

Tate said that allowed Hill to build relationships with contractors and other business groups, which helped avoid potential conflicts with management and IBEW partners.

“He was really popular around the state because of what he did with the electrical workers,” Tate said. “He just knew everyone. And when you know someone personally, you have a better chance to settle disputes before they get out of hand.”

Following retirement in 2002, Hill remained close to the Seventh District staff. Buresh said he been undergoing radiation therapy during a cancer battle for the last few years, but had been in good spirits recently, including when he showed up for the progress meeting.

But he fell ill at the meeting, Buresh said, and was taken to a local hospital, where he died a few days later.

Hill is survived by two sons, four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Pat, and his brother, Jim, who also was a Local 602 member.

In addition to his work for the IBEW, Hill served in the Texas Air National Guard from 1956-62, as a Democratic precinct committee chairman in Amarillo and was involved in several charities during his career.

“He had a very good disposition,” said Tate, who spent time with him the night before he was taken to the hospital. “He did not fly off the handle easily and get mad. But he could get stern and be a little hard-headed, and that's a good thing at times.”

The officers and staff extend their deepest condolences to Brother Hill's family during this difficult time. ■

In Memoriam

Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in June 2019

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
1	Bennett, W. D.	2/19/19	48	Bjur, R. H.	5/10/19	145	Zuidema, D. A.	4/26/19	441	Barth, L.	4/8/19	573	Maretich, R. M.	1/22/19	1249	Bolas, C. J.	2/9/19
1	Breeden, R. J.	3/29/19	48	Gresham, J. L.	4/15/19	146	DeAngelis, J. W.	4/2/19	441	Berkey, J. H.	4/23/19	575	Minch, T. L.	7/9/18	1253	Burgess, E. F.	4/24/19
1	Dulle, R. W.	1/19/19	48	Stearns, M. H.	4/28/19	146	Schloz, R. F.	5/8/19	441	Enriquez, N.	3/21/19	584	Martin, C. E.	4/4/19	1501	Leone, A.	3/30/19
1	Johnson, J. R.	3/13/19	51	Guthals, A. G.	2/18/19	150	Breitung, K. C.	5/1/19	445	Carpenter, C. D.	5/8/19	595	LaRiviere, J. B.	1/1/18	1531	Forrester, H. L.	4/29/19
1	Lucks, T. B.	4/8/19	51	Hill, W. E.	3/15/19	164	Morton, W. G.	4/28/19	445	Daly, R. L.	3/28/19	606	Mirabile, C.	4/21/19	1547	Ives, T. G.	3/8/19
1	Thompson, J. L.	4/21/19	51	Poole, D. D.	12/19/18	164	Roberts, T. A.	1/9/19	461	Clementz, G. D.	4/5/19	611	Gutierrez, G. A.	4/5/19	1547	Pederson, R. H.	4/21/19
2	Moser, B. J.	4/11/19	58	Ludwic, R. J.	4/7/19	164	Shingelo, R.	5/3/19	461	Michael, D. T.	2/8/19	617	Hurley, H. L.	2/24/19	1547	Spiegel, H.	12/2/18
3	Bensaia, J. L.	5/4/19	58	Wilson, R. W.	4/27/19	164	Turs, R. E.	3/30/19	465	Koskela, R. R.	2/21/19	625	Atwell, E. W.	4/20/19	1553	Severson, T. A.	5/8/19
3	Brooks, S. J.	12/3/17	60	Langendorff, J. C.	1/28/19	176	Woodard, D. L.	4/26/19	474	Boyd, C. R.	4/15/19	640	Atchley, W. C.	4/28/19	1837	King, L. F.	8/28/16
3	Faraone, G. A.	10/30/18	64	Layton, M.	4/30/19	177	Hill, E. R.	1/18/19	474	Viglietti, L.	1/12/19	640	Longo, A. L.	3/23/19	2150	Recla, B. A.	4/26/19
3	Flynn, G. H.	4/24/19	68	Geisheimer, H.	4/15/19	177	Smith, J. D.	4/6/19	474	Young, C. K.	4/2/19	640	Wrazen, R.	2/16/19	2166	Chase, R. P.	5/1/19
3	Forlini, A.	3/30/19	68	Pinkston, J. R.	1/25/19	194	Klein, P. D.	3/9/19	479	Broussard, S. C.	6/21/18	654	Conover, F. L.	4/24/19	2166	St. Pierre, S.	4/12/19
3	Gorman, E. J.	4/16/19	71	Byrd, H.	6/19/18	213	Bardock, G. D.	3/3/19	479	Dorsett, W. T.	5/7/19	659	Buseman, V. W.	2/18/19	2286	Cowart, A. D.	4/7/19
3	Healy, T. F.	4/9/19	76	Ernst, G. L.	2/20/19	213	Slamon, R.	4/21/19	479	Herin, C. W.	3/31/19	659	Lott, W. T.	3/26/19	I.O. (6)	Schell, F. S.	3/14/19
3	Kelly, W. J.	11/8/14	77	McNeil, J. H.	4/18/19	223	Karafotis, S. D.	4/5/19	479	Kauzer, J. G.	4/17/19	659	Ver Steeg, A. B.	1/15/19	I.O. (15)	Thompson, W. T.	5/1/19
3	Localzo, F. R.	5/9/19	77	Ross, S. C.	4/25/19	223	Peckham, R. W.	5/7/19	479	Wise, J. M.	2/3/19	676	Fenaes, R. L.	4/11/19	I.O. (77)	Dudley, R. L.	5/19/19
3	Serpe, T.	5/8/19	82	Barton, M. E.	1/23/19	223	Reagan, R. P.	4/19/19	481	Danz, H. H.	4/26/19	684	Zakarian, J.	4/18/19	I.O. (139)	DePue, D. R.	3/26/19
3	Stefanski, R. V.	4/22/19	84	Robinson, F. C.	4/16/19	237	Schmitz, J. V.	3/24/19	481	Winters, T. D.	3/12/19	701	Galvan, M.	5/3/19	I.O. (233)	Walner, R. J.	4/20/19
8	Anteau, J. L.	5/10/19	86	Bauer, L. R.	3/22/19	245	Cromity, J. A.	2/10/19	488	Maceyunas, E. M.	3/20/19	701	Harris, P. R.	4/27/19	I.O. (1033)	Hildebrandt, H. K.	4/10/19
8	Burnard, R. E.	4/23/19	86	Salamone, R. L.	4/18/19	258	Chartrand, J. H.	2/4/19	490	Parkhurst, R. E.	3/18/19	701	Kallas, J.	4/16/19	Pens. (70)	Delawder, R. E.	5/4/19
8	Komisarek, E.	3/10/19	86	Stafford, D. G.	10/27/18	269	Horrocks, S. J.	4/27/19	494	Brajkovic, V.	4/23/19	701	Ory, J. T.	4/27/19	Pens. (317)	Arthur, T. F.	4/3/19
8	Sonner, D. R.	3/8/19	86	Travis, P. A.	1/12/18	271	Lewis, K. B.	4/12/19	494	Marquardt, C. A.	4/24/19	716	Inniss, S. W.	4/25/19	Pens. (606)	Robinson, W. L.	4/12/19
9	Cipkar, S. P.	4/21/19	90	Lauria, J. F.	3/4/19	271	Zveglich, F. H.	5/8/19	494	Sandretto, R. O.	4/28/19	716	Jones, G. H.	3/9/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Chisholm, D. J.	4/24/19
9	Rush, J. T.	4/28/19	95	Fuller, R. N.	2/19/19	280	Hurst, K. E.	5/3/19	494	Werner, E.	2/6/19	721	Woodward, A. L.	2/21/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Clenney, A. D.	3/21/19
11	Allen, K. L.	8/13/18	96	McElroy, W. J.	4/25/19	292	Emanuelson, J. R.	3/31/19	505	McCullough, J. A.	2/1/18	743	Snyder, D. H.	5/12/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Dakan, R. W.	3/16/19
11	Anderson, R. W.	1/26/19	97	Haettich, B. D.	3/30/19	292	Kilian, R. M.	4/30/19	508	Douglas, J. W.	12/21/18	760	Joyce, S. M.	4/20/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Ferrarie, V. C.	5/13/19
11	Anderson, H. A.	12/14/18	98	Bayer, M. H.	5/13/19	292	Nash, J.	2/22/19	520	Alvarez, M.	1/28/19	760	Renfro, W. M.	5/3/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Immordino, D.	4/6/19
11	Hastings, R. H.	3/23/19	98	Gavin, M. F.	5/1/19	294	Collie, S. B.	2/1/19	520	Pettit, O. J.	4/28/19	763	Wolf, R. E.	11/23/17	Pens. (I.O.)	Keister, N. K.	11/9/18
11	Nottingham, B. L.	9/14/18	98	Pron, A. C.	4/23/19	295	Stewart, D. R.	4/20/19	527	Allison, M. E.	1/16/19	773	Ebbinghaus, C. R.	2/22/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Knight, T. J.	4/6/19
11	Parker, J. M.	3/31/19	99	Cannon, J. R.	12/12/18	302	Case, J. L.	3/3/19	530	Swass, R. J.	3/30/19	804	Proctor, G.	3/23/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Maffe, J.	4/17/19
15	Hall, R. B.	3/2/19	99	Morgenstern, B. W.	3/12/19	305	Miller, R. J.	2/21/19	531	Beavers, G. W.	4/9/19	861	Nassar, M. J.	5/4/19	Pens. (I.O.)	McBride, M. R.	5/3/19
16	Rapp, J. L.	4/29/19	102	Kuhns, R. E.	3/30/19	306	Carney, J. R.	5/3/19	531	Long, K. R.	3/3/19	873	Bailey, T. J.	4/14/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Metz, R. J.	3/30/19
17	Miklovich, A. M.	2/22/19	102	Rawlings, R. L.	4/9/19	306	Fenton, E. E.	4/15/19	540	McLean, J. E.	4/27/19	906	Andriacchi, F. P.	5/8/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Perron, D. I.	3/8/19
18	Niebrugge, F. E.	1/1/19	102	Vangeli, A. S.	3/5/19	307	Moreland, R. E.	4/22/19	551	O'Donnell, W. A.	4/2/19	915	McKendree, J. I.	4/15/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Radford, R. M.	3/23/19
20	Basurto, M. C.	4/18/19	103	Cooney, R. T.	11/4/18	332	Brett, T. W.	1/2/19	553	Champion, A. S.	1/30/19	968	Pierce, A. E.	4/6/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Remick, L. A.	3/12/19
20	Muse, C. E.	5/14/19	103	Koskinen, J. L.	4/14/19	340	Parkyn, R. H.	3/18/19	553	Knight, L. H.	4/19/19	969	O'Brien, A.	3/16/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Sandquist, R.	12/19/18
20	Pickel, G. H.	3/22/19	105	Sguigna, V.	5/6/19	340	Partanen, L. O.	4/11/19	558	Phillips, B. R.	4/28/19	972	Pletcher, D. E.	1/31/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Sandvold, C. M.	4/5/19
21	Rafa, E. L.	3/23/19	110	Anderson, E.	9/17/18	340	Sittman, D. A.	4/28/19	558	Rickard, A. R.	4/16/19	993	Blassing, K.	12/25/18	Pens. (I.O.)	Sass, A. J.	4/23/19
22	McCormick, D. D.	5/7/19	110	Krueger, D. R.	4/28/19	342	McLemore, J. G.	4/13/19	568	Delisle, B.	1/31/19	993	Mertins, E. O.	5/3/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Sracic, S. T.	4/9/19
24	Lamon, D. H.	2/1/19	110	McMahon, B. J.	4/26/19	349	Gonzalez Bonilla, F. W.		568	Desy, A.	10/31/18	995	Hughes, R.	4/1/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Tempel, R. L.	3/11/19
25	Zarb, E. A.	5/2/19	112	Campbell, D. L.	5/5/19			2/16/19	569	Biddlecome, D. A.	5/11/19	1141	McClung, D. K.	5/9/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Thayer, A. R.	4/26/19
26	McCawley, T. J.	8/25/18	112	Dameron, R. D.	4/18/19	349	Kenney, J. D.	4/21/19	569	Degoursey, R. E.	4/9/19	1186	McAfee, S. E.	1/28/19	Pens. (I.O.)	Watkins, E. L.	4/20/19
26	Wozniak, G.	5/12/19	115	Hall, S. J.	4/12/19	350	Distlehorst, B. R.	4/16/19	569	Thomas, A.	3/18/19	1245	Dean, M.	12/30/18	Pens. (I.O.)	Wolbert, D. J.	5/4/19
35	Cramer, H. H.	4/13/19	115	Kennedy, T. W.	5/2/19	351	Hernandez, M. H.	5/8/19									
35	Morgan, F. C.	11/7/11	115	Platt, J. D.	5/8/19	353	Dealy, R. R.	4/25/19									
35	Renna, L.	4/26/19	120	Carfrae, H. N.	5/6/19	353	Garcia, L.	5/15/19									
38	Maldonado, I. J.	5/13/19	120	Flynn, J. P.	4/15/19	353	Hosein, H. H.	5/16/19									
38	Reynolds, A. M.	5/1/19	124	Hilburn, G. D.	4/21/19	353	Pearce, J. R.	8/11/18									
38	Wiltshire, R. C.	5/6/19	125	Froh, C. S.	4/29/19	354	Adams, M. L.	5/6/19									
40	Brickner, R.	4/27/19	125	Quimby, W. L.	5/11/19	354	Evans, J. T.	2/5/19									
41	Gabel, A. M.	5/6/19	126	Shirk, B. L.	5/18/19	357	Andrews, M. R.	2/15/19									
42	Brede, G. S.	4/19/19	126	Toricellas, R. E.	5/10/19	357	Chenard, D. W.	3/27/19									
42	Bullock, J. T.	5/13/19	126	Waters, G.	5/12/19	363	Accordino, V. J.	5/16/19									
44	Clifton, J. B.	1/15/19	127	O'Donnell, K.	3/10/19	363	Craig, H.	3/26/19									
45	Young, A. R.	1/30/19	134	Hancock, W. D.	4/23/19	363	Johnson, S.	5/25/19									
46	Adamek, H.	2/27/19	134	Karamas, E.	1/8/19	369	Kilgore, R. J.	2/25/19									
46	Burnside, N. W.	5/9/19	134	Mazzone, R.	4/21/19	379	Bean, K. R.	2/27/19									
46	Dinsmore, A. J.	1/23/18	134	Noe, W. S.	5/17/19	396	Houck, K. T.	3/19/19									
46	Laabs, C. R.	4/9/19	134	Resh, R. J.	5/2/19	401	O'Day, J. N.	11/25/18									
46	Monson, D. G.	5/1/19	134	Taggart, W. M.	4/11/19	405	Mugge, D. J.	2/25/19									
46	Seefeld, F. J.	5/19/19	134	Vieceli, L. E.	3/11/19	413	Boston, G. W.	12/30/18									
47	Crandall, L. D.	4/30/19	143	Hess, S. L.	3/28/19	424	Melly, J. F.	5/11/19									
47	Ortega, J. M.	4/29/19	143	Thompson, G. G.	3/22/19	440	Pentoney, K. W.	4/10/19									

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Green Infant Onesie \$8.00
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These items and more are now available at your IBEW Online store.

LOCAL LINES

'Welcome to Travelers'

L.U. 8 (as,em,i,mar,mt,rts,s&spa), TOLEDO, OHIO — The inside work scene in Toledo is strong with 100% employment and dozens of travelers helping us man our jobs. This will sustain us for the next several months at least, and perhaps longer as some projects have yet to break ground. We need welders and overhead crane operators especially and welcome the traveling Brotherhood for good jobs in the Glass City.

Local 8 has secured a new and unprecedented written working agreement for the electrical supervisors employed by Day & Zimmermann at the Fermi Nuclear Plant. Previously, workers in those supervisor positions had become at-will employees, leaving them excluded from the parameters of the General President's Project Maintenance Agreement (GPPMA) and proper representation.

The election of Local 8 officers recently concluded, with Roy B. Grosswiler re-elected as business manager and Eric Grosswiler as president. Other notables (and first time as officers) include: Vice Pres. Dominic Chamberlain, Fin. Sec. Ann Peek, and Treas. Perry Hester. Congratulations to everyone elected and best wishes in your leadership roles.

Please stay safe in all that you do and attend your union meetings.

Mike Brubaker, P.S.

Festival & Family Picnic

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — The 22nd Turkey Testicle Festival was once again held on the last weekend of April. It was another resounding success with over \$31,000 raised for the year. This brings the grand total generated since its beginning to almost \$500,000 for brothers and sisters in need.

Local 16 held its annual Family Picnic on May 19. Despite some challenging weather that morning, more than 320 people enjoyed great food, games, children's activities, and the opportunity to renew old friendships. Two retired members, Donald L. Pyle and Anthony E. Russell, received pins recognizing their 65 years of service in the local. Retired member Vernon O. Seddon was acknowledged for his 70 years of IBEW service. Special thanks are due Carolyn Bittner and Sara Schapker for skillfully directing the kitchen crew and keeping everyone well fed.

Things have also been busy for the Political Action Committee. They have held a poker run, golf scramble, and raffles. Anyone interested in this great organization should come to the union hall on the second Tuesday of the month.

The JATC performed a neighborhood cleanup this spring. Thank you to all for making it shine!

Donald P. Beavin, P.S.



At Local 24 service pin awards presentation: back row, Fin. Sec. Mike McHale (left) and Rec. Sec. Dave Springham; front row, Pres. John Ranking, Bros. Charles Klingelhofer, Richard Jordan, Richard Robbins, Santo Azzarello, Bruce Parish and Aaron Butcher, and Bus. Mgr. Pete Demchuk.

Shop Stewards Training; Pension/Retirement Seminars

L.U. 24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — The local awarded service pins to those in attendance at the April union meeting. Bros. Santo Azzarello and Richard Robbins were awarded their 60-year pins. Bros. Richard Jordan, Charles Klingelhofer and Bruce Parish were awarded their 50-year pins. Bro. Aaron Butcher received his 15-year pin.

On Tuesday, May 7, 27 members received Shop Stewards training put on by the International Office. This four-hour course covers all aspects of being a steward, from how to handle a possible grievance to the legal requirements that come with the job. I thank those who attended for getting involved.

The local held four retirement seminars for members over the age of 50. Three meetings were held in Baltimore and one was held on the Eastern Shore. Trustees, administrators and our Pension Fund consultants went over pension options as well as spousal benefits, retiree health care coverage and Social Security options. Members and their spouses attended, and dinner was served. The positive feedback was proof of how helpful these seminars can be when planning for the next phase of our life. Thanks to all involved in making the seminars a success.

Peter P. Demchuk, B.M.

Four Scholarships Awarded; 2019 Graduation Ceremony

L.U. 26 (ees,em,es,govt,i&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — Local 26 is proud to announce the four winners of this year's scholarship award: Janiya Brooks, Sarah Byram, Sarah Donaldson and Molly Meador. Congratulations to all and stay tuned for further details in our next article.

Thank you to everyone who came out and enjoyed the Manassas, VA, picnic on June 22 and the

fishing trip on July 15. The Maryland picnic will be Saturday, Aug. 24. The annual golf outing was June 3, with 550 golfers. Thank you to all who played, donated and volunteered. It was a successful event for a great cause, Dollars Against Diabetes.

Congratulations to the 2019 graduates of our JATC program and the "R to A Upgrade" program. Graduation ceremonies were June 1 and there were 173 graduates. Best wishes to our new journeyman electricians!

Best wishes to new retirees: Jonathan F. Stetson, George D. Tolbert, Patrick C. Ortman, Colleen M. Melton, Robert F. McCarthy Jr., Charles E. Blackwell, Preston H. Williams, David H. Gossard, Richard L. Dixon Jr., David E. Icenhower Jr., Richard Yuracka, Thomas M. Smith, David J. Didion, Randal J. Colbert, Mitchell W. Bademan, Barry S. Payne, Gregory T. Baldwin, Ali Jabarooti, Gregory S. Shifflett, Paul J. Good III, Robert Backover, Harold W. Tomlin, Michael M. Bowman, Eddie W. Yates, Ronald C. Washabaugh, Misael Martinez and Hans Baumann.

Sadly, several members passed away since our last article: John P. Mudd, Robert L. Siemon, James V. Pitcher, Frank J. Thompson, Larry H. Cross and James T. Blanche.

George C. Hogan, B.M.

Work Picture Update

L.U. 38 (i), CLEVELAND, OHIO — Two-hundred Cleveland Building Trades members from multiple trades and over 80 IBEW Local 38 members came out with banners and signs at the grand opening of a new Menards store in Cleveland. The signs and banners were in protest to Menards not using a local workforce

to build its new stores — and to educate the public about the company's building policies. Many people beeped their horns in support as they drove by, and several people decided not to enter the store's grand opening after learning about what Menards did. There have been multiple protests, and more are planned.

The work picture looks good for Cleveland. Over 100 IBEW members are currently working on the Rocket Mortgage Field House (formerly the Quicken Loans Arena) expansion and renovation project. Members there are working for several different contractors including Einheit, Irizar, Speelman, United, and Lakeland Electric companies. More calls to the union hall for journeymen and technicians are expected for that job, as the project has to be completed before the opening of the Cleveland Cavaliers' season.

The next phase of the East Bank Flats project on the Cuyahoga River will include apartments, cinemas and retail, and it is scheduled to start late this summer; Lake Erie Electric has the job.

Multiple other new projects are expected to start this fall.

Dennis Meaney, B.M./F.S.



Local 38 members protest outside a Menards store in Cleveland. A labor-wide contingent protested the company's failure to employ a local workforce to build the new store.

'Bringing Members Together' Golf Tournament & Fishing Trip

L.U. 40 (em,i&mps), HOLLYWOOD, CA — Local 40 held its Annual Golf Tournament this summer and provided an opportunity to bring the members of Local 40 and the members of other crafts and guilds in the motion picture industry together for a wonderful day of golf. Every year the local partners with a local charity. This year's charity was the Burbank Temporary Aid Center, which provides emergency food and assistance to those in need and helps the homeless.

Events like this show the community that union members care about the communities we live in and are taking an active role in finding ways to help. A special thanks to Bros. Tyler Lane and Dustin Little, our two co-chairs of the Golf Tournament, for all their

Submitting Local Lines Articles

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via email (locallines@ibew.org) or U.S. Mail. We have a 200-word limit. We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are based on the editor's judgment. Our guidelines and deadlines are available at www.ibew.org/media-center/IBEW-News-Media-Center/Submitting-Local-Lines. Please email or call the Media Department at (202) 728-6291 with any questions.

Trade Classifications

(as) Alarm & Signal	(et) Electronic Technicians	(mps) Motion Picture Studios	(rts) Radio-Television Service
(ars) Atomic Research Service	(fm) Fixture Manufacturing	(nst) Nuclear Service Technicians	(so) Service Occupations
(bo) Bridge Operators	(govt) Government	(o) Outside	(s) Shopmen
(cs) Cable Splicers	(i) Inside	(p) Powerhouse	(se) Sign Erector
(catv) Cable Television	(it) Instrument Technicians	(pet) Professional, Engineers & Technicians	(spa) Sound & Public Address
(c) Communications	(lctt) Line Clearance Tree Trimming	(ptc) Professional, Technical & Clerical	(st) Sound Technicians
(cr) Cranemen	(lpt) Lightning Protection Technicians	(rr) Railroad	(t) Telephone
(ees) Electrical Equipment Service	(mt) Maintenance	(u) Utility	(tm) Transportation Manufacturing
(ei) Electrical Inspection	(mo) Maintenance & Operation	(uow) Utility Office Workers	(ws) Warehouse and Supply
(em) Electrical Manufacturing	(mow) Manufacturing Office Workers		
(es) Electric Signs	(mar) Marine		

Efforts are made to make this list as inclusive as possible, but the various job categories of IBEW members are too numerous to comprehensively list all.

hard work and dedication to make this event happen. We also thank all of our event sponsors who generously donated.

Local 40 also held its annual fishing trip this summer, bringing the members together for a day out on the open sea — and demonstrating that the members are not just friends, but an extended family. The local thanks Bro. Frank Monzon, who each year has led the charge to organize and coordinate this event, making it the success it is.

Marc Flynn, B.M./F.S.



Local 40 Golf Tournament co-chairs Dustin Little (at podium) and Tyler Lane (standing, left) welcome participants at the tournament reception in June.

Motorcycle Ride Fundraiser; Apprenticeship Graduation

L.U. 42 (catv,em,govt,lctt&o), HARTFORD, CT — Halfway through 2019 and things at Local 42 are as busy as ever. Our work picture is booming with both transmission and distribution working overtime. There is railroad and substation work as well.

Local 42 held its annual Dinner Dance/Apprentice Graduation on April 13. Congratulations to the class of 2019 apprenticeship graduates: Joseph Carasone III, Joshua Bouthiller, Jacob Fascendini, Thomas Bane Jr., Patrick Dudzinski, Zackary Fonicello, Robert Perri, Michael Theriault, James Miodowski Jr., Trevor Howel, Kevin Ryan, Alec Wasilonsky and Trent Stimson.

May 4 was the Local 42 Trap Shoot. And on May 11, Local 42 held its 15th annual motorcycle ride and poker run, to benefit The Bridgeport Burn Center Hospital. This year is Local 42's 50th anniversary, and we are planning a huge dinner gala/celebration to be held Dec. 7 at Foxwoods Resort & Casino.

Regretfully, we must report the loss of several Local 42 brothers: Howard Duffy, Steven Wysocki and retirees George Breede, Leo "Bobby" Faucher and John "Tommy" Bullock. We extend condolences to their families.

Derek Santa Lucia, P.S.

New JATC Training Center

L.U. 44 (catv,lctt,o,rtb,s&u), BUTTE, MT — On April 26 this year, a grand opening was held for the new Stan I. Dupree Training Center in Helena, MT.

Those in attendance included: Eighth District Int. Vice Pres. Jerry Bellah; delegates from the Eighth District office; Western Line Constructors Chapter NECA Exec. Dir./Chapter Mgr. Jules Weaver; and the Mountain States Line Constructors Apprenticeship & Training JATC board of trustees.

This state-of-the-art training center has: a large classroom (which can be divided) that features state-of-the-art technological teaching aides and can seat up to 80 people; a large break room; an indoor lab building; and hands-on training equipment including a Three Phase Innovations scale-model Mobile Cabinet transformer, training equipment that will help both the apprentices and journeyman linemen.

The Helena center currently has about 100

apprentices in the apprenticeship training program. Recent years have seen an increasing number of apprentices, making the old training center too small. JATC instructor Tim Newman noted that the old training center was 2,200 square feet, and the new facility is about 7,700 square feet, with the ability to expand and grow as needed! Future training equipment may include a back hoe, as works are in progress to add more equipment.

The future is indeed bright!

Dwight Rose, Mbr. Dev.

Celebrating Years of Service; Welcoming New IBEW Members

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,mt,rtb,rts&st), SEATTLE, WA — April is always a special time at Local 46! Every April, at our general meeting, we get the opportunity to celebrate our sisters' and brothers' years of service in the IBEW. This year we recognized over 1,100 active and retired members, including 116 retired members with more than 50 years of IBEW service. Local 46 extends a heartfelt "thank-you" to each one of you for your continual service and dedication to our local and the IBEW!

At a New Member Orientation in May, we had the honor of swearing in 89 new members of IBEW Local 46. Our membership has surpassed 5,800 and continues to grow! In just the first five months of 2019, Local 46 welcomed over 300 new IBEW members.

Be sure to mark your calendar for our Seattle Picnic on Sunday, Aug. 18, at Vasa Park Resort, beginning at 10 a.m. Please join us and be sure to bring the kids or grandkids. This is a family event with great food, fun, and lots for the family to do!

Effective Aug. 5, 2019, our Inside Wireman Unit will receive a \$1.75 per hour wage and benefit increase, and our Sound & Communication Unit will receive a \$0.50 per hour wage and benefit increase. Both units voted on the allocation for these raises at their June unit meetings.

Warren Shill V.P.



IBEW Local 46 swore in 89 new members at the New Member Orientation in May.

Volunteers Serve Community

L.U. 50 (u), RICHMOND, VA — IBEW Local 50 RENEW members and the Executive Board participated in a volunteer event with Grace & Holy Trinity Church in Richmond on Friday, March 8, this year.

Every Friday, the church feeds between 100 and 250 homeless and hungry in the community. The church relies heavily on the college students from nearby Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) for many of its volunteers. Local 50 coordinated with VCU social work intern, Savannah Williams, planning the volunteer event. However, on the weekend of March 8, many of the VCU students were away for spring break. Our IBEW Local 50 volunteers assisted with preparing and serving food, washing dishes, and other cleanup, such as vacuuming and mopping. Our volunteers also assisted at the church's Red Door Clothes Closet, which is open to all people in need, bringing donations of men's clothing. They also



IBEW Local 50 volunteers, joined by VCU intern Savannah Williams (center). Front row, Hunter Wells, S. Williams, Noelle Young; middle row, Brandon Cotman, Howard Ellis, Mark Flowers, Doug Williams; at rear, Dustin Sadler.

helped with the Friday distribution of personal care items, such as soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.

RENEW Committee Chmn. Dustin Sadler said that he was "extremely proud of our local for the impact made in our community today."

Thank you to Bus. Rep. Doug Williams for contributing information for this article.

IBEW Local 50 represents over 3,000 workers with four employers in North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.

John Albert, Sr. B.R.

Newly Elected Officers

L.U. 68 (i), DENVER, CO — Greetings, brothers and sisters. On Saturday, June 1, Local 68 held its election of officers and also elected delegates to the IBEW 40th International Convention.

Newly elected officers are: Bus. Mgr./Fin. Sec. Jeremy Ross, Pres. Morgan J. Buchanan, Vice Pres. Bruce Dahl, Treas. Kyle Weber and Rec. Sec. Nick Shimon; Executive Board members Robert Delgado Jr., Tony Pastore, Curtis Engle, Michael Thomas, Deb Tikka, Troy Ingalls and Lavell Flamon; Examining Board members Mike Lowitzer, Ken Pafford, Mark Kirkham and Steve Block. Building Association: Ross Aaron, Jeffrey Clark, Sean McMahon and Ricardo Felix. Delegates to 40th International Convention: Jeremy Ross, Morgan J. Buchanan, Mike Jacks, Robert Delgado Sr., Bruce Dahl, Ted Thomas and Robert Delgado Jr. Congratulations to all newly elected officers.

The Local 68 Retirees Club held their last meeting before summer break with a presentation of IBEW service pin awards. Retirees were honored for IBEW service ranging from 50 years to 65 years. Awards were presented for a combined total of 730 years of service. Congratulations to all honorees and their families.

Mark your calendars: The IBEW Local 68 Annual Picnic will be Saturday, Aug. 17.

We extend deepest sympathy to the families of recently deceased members: Robert Mennenga, Larry D. Thompson, William L. Barnhart, Robert A. Blume, Henry Geisheimer, Christopher Wise, Lloyd W. Mayer and John B. Peacock.

Morgan J. Buchanan, Pres.

Satellite Office Opens

L.U. 70 (lctt&o), WASHINGTON, DC — In March of 2018, Bus. Mgr. Bill Tipton opened a Local 70 satellite office in Virginia. It has been more than a year now since that office opened, and we are still getting a positive response from the membership and contractors regarding the satellite location. It is a big help for our members who live in Virginia or go to work there. The new office saves those members a trip through traffic in Washington, D.C. The membership thanks Bill and his staff for the great job they are doing going into his fifth year in office.

George A. Embrey, B.R./Exam. Board



Local 70 opened a new satellite office in Virginia in March 2018.

120th Anniversary — Noted Traditions of Excellence

L.U. 80 (i&o), NORFOLK, VA — Local 80 is embarking on its 120th anniversary as of May 2019.

Notably, one of our signatory contractors that has also stood the test of time will celebrate its centennial in 2020. E.G. Middleton Inc. spans three generations as a company, with the next generation learning the industry. Middleton's reputation for performing quality work over the last 100 years in Hampton Roads, VA, warrants satisfied repeat customers, and in some cases at the same location years later.

For example, 32-year local union member Bro. Simon Bettinger, who as an apprentice started his career at the Norfolk AT&T Building, is now general foreman for Middleton performing electrical upgrades for the same customer.

The current Norfolk AT&T Building project started in late May 2018 and includes installation of new electrical service and major, large-scale electrical upgrades. With all the major electrical system changes, a project of this size and complexity takes a total team effort.

Congratulations to Bro. Simon Bettinger and his crew of 10 electrical workers on performing their tasks safely and productively while keeping the original power and equipment online without interruption. This project is scheduled to be significantly completed this summer — just another reminder of superior leadership and quality IBEW craftsmanship at its finest.

Local 80 hosted its annual picnic on May 4. There was a good turnout, and everyone enjoyed the festivities.

Recent contract negotiations went well, and we secured a three-year contract.

We are continuing to organize new members in our shipyards, naval facilities and non-union shops.

We mourn the loss of member Paul Chapman, who passed away April 17, 2019. Our condolences go out to his family.

Wil Morris, A.B.M.

LOCAL LINES

'Help Save a Brother's Life'

L.U. 90 (i), NEW HAVEN, CT — Greetings, brothers and sisters.

Work in our jurisdiction remains steady. A project labor agreement was signed with General Dynamics, for the new construction of the South Yard assembly building at the electric boat yard in Groton, CT. Various projects are underway at Yale University.

Our Local 90 membership outing is Sept. 7, at Camp Mountain Mist in Meriden, CT.

Sadly, one of our members is in need of a live kidney donor with type "O" blood. The member's name is Clifford O'Connell. Bro. O'Connell has 29 years of service with Local 90. A dedicated family man, he has a wife, Andrea, and a daughter, Erin. Time is of the essence for Bro. O'Connell. The waiting list for a donor is five to seven years. His life is on the line! If anyone can help Clifford, please call the Hartford Hospital donor coordinator at 860-972-9918.

We wish all members and their families a safe and enjoyable summer!

John Bellemare, Pres./Bus. Agent



Local 90 member Clifford O'Connell with daughter Erin.

IBEW Substation Journeymen

L.U. 108 (ees,em,es,lctt,mar,mt,rtb,rts,s,spa,t&u), TAMPA, FL — Congratulations to our substation electricians who recently achieved journeyman status and are employed by Tampa Electric, an Emera company. IBEW Local 108 is extremely proud of these guys, who worked hard to achieve journeyman status as substation electricians. These men are a huge asset to the department and the company as a whole. They have definitely raised the bar on professionalism in the industry. Congratulations, guys! We are proud of you.

Bruce Bailey, P.S.



IBEW Local 108 congratulates class of 2018 substation journeymen electricians: Rodney Lee, Justin Main, Randy Goff and Kyle Keys.



Local 124 congratulates the apprenticeship graduating class of 2019.

Political Action is Key

L.U. 124 (ees,em,i,mar,rts,se,spa&t), KANSAS CITY, MO — In Jefferson City, MO, our state legislators have completed another session where only a few gains for working families were successfully passed. We did avoid a few anti-worker bills like reducing unemployment benefits, misclassification of workers, prevailing wage by county, and "right-to-work" by county. It is very difficult to stop all of the anti-worker legislation.

The simple solution to this problem is to elect labor-friendly candidates. Please vote. One labor-friendly elected official on the Kansas side is Gov. Laura Kelly. She is working with a Republican-majority legislature trying to restore Kansas to a functioning state after the failed Brownback tax experiment. We wish her luck.

The Local 124 apprenticeship class of 2019 celebrated graduation and advanced to journeyman status. Congratulations to our newest journeyman brothers and sisters. In solidarity.

Steven Morales, P.S.

'Powering Chicago' — IBEW & ECA Serve Community

L.U. 134 (cat,em,govt,i,mt,rtb,rts,spa&t), CHICAGO, IL — IBEW Local 134 and the Electrical Contractors' Association of City of Chicago's LMCC, Powering Chicago, continues to positively impact the community we serve. Just in the first few months of 2019, we've partnered with the Chicago White Sox to provide a unique, one-of-a-kind experience to families in need, and we've worked with Special Olympics to ensure this year's athletes received their materials in time for the annual games.

Not only did IBEW Local 134 members and the Electrical Contractors' Association of Chicago donate time and resources for the annual Rebuild Together Metro Chicago event in late April, but through our partnership with the White Sox, we also were able to give four tickets and Sox gear to each of the 75 families who were impacted by the event. For the past 25 years we've made it an annual tradition to give back to those in our community, along with other union trades, through Rebuild Chicago.

Special Olympics has a history that dates back to the summer of 1968, when the first games were held in Chicago — so, it's only fitting that we donated our Local 134 union hall's space as a staging ground to hand out shirts to the 4,000 athletes participating this year.

Kevin Connolly, R.S.



Apprentice Graduates Honored

Decatur, IL, Local 146 congratulates class of 2019 apprenticeship graduates. Front row: graduates Richard Karr, Tanner Miller, Tyler Murphy, Tyler Cothorn, Adam Gensler, Brandon Bryant, Kevin Rhodes, Tom Tripp, Darren Allin, Allen Presley. Back row: Bus. Mgr. Josh Sapp; Training Dir. Jason Drake; Robert Berry, JATC secretary/NECA; graduates Don Brown, Jon Burckhardt, Jon Koester, Blake Davis, Ian Weddle, Alan Handy, Jacob Gough and Paul Grubb; Blain O'Connell, NECA; and Justin Martin, JATC chair/IBEW.

National Rebuilding Day — IBEW Members Volunteer

L.U. 164 (c,em,i,o&t), JERSEY CITY, NJ — On Saturday, April 27, Local 164 once again participated in National Rebuilding Day, a day of community service organized by Rebuilding Together, a national organization dedicated to helping homeowners stay safe, warm and independent in their homes. The organization assists those who cannot maintain their homes for themselves, including veterans, and also assists various community service-based nonprofit facilities.

Our members come out every year and give of their time to help with the Rebuilding Together project and serve the community. It is an amazing day of brotherhood and camaraderie.

It takes many weeks in preparation for the big day and doesn't get done without the members. Hudson County is coordinated by Bro. Victor Badaracco Jr. Essex County is coordinated by Bro. Earl Rush. Bergen County is coordinated by Bros. Mike McCarthy and Warren Becker. But it doesn't get done without the over 100 members who make it happen.

Bus. Mgr. Dan Gumble and Pres. Tom Sullivan thank and congratulate everyone for another successful year and a job well done.

Warren Becker, V.P.

New Contract Ratified

L.U. 212 (i), CINCINNATI, OHIO — Bus. Mgr. Rick Fischer, Bus. Agent Chad Day and Pres. Jason Mischke presented the terms of a newly negotiated six-year contract at a special meeting May 14, 2019. The new contract, ratified by the membership, includes a raise of \$10 over six years and institutes a new option for a NEFP 401(k) plan. Our new wage starting June 3 will be \$30.18 per hour.

Our work outlook remains steady with 60 on Book 1 and five on Book 2. This summer, new work at CVG (Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport) and Amazon Prime Air will continue to keep us busy.

There is also speculation about a possible new Hard Rock Hotel, following Hard Rock International's acquisition of Jack Casino and Turfway Park.

Our two Activate Health & Wellness Centers continue to be an important resource. They have helped our members save on the cost of routine visits, as well as prescription medications.

Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley spoke at our JATC facility. He announced a plan for all future solar work to be done at prevailing wage.

As always, I challenge you to get active. Our union is not a spectator sport!

Phil Bovard, P.S.



Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley (at podium) speaks at Local 212 JATC event. He is flanked by Local 212 Bus. Mgr. Rick Fischer (back row, center, in blue IBEW shirt), Bus. Agent Chad Day (front row, in dark jacket) and others.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

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Apprenticeship Graduation

L.U. 234 (i&mt), CASTROVILLE, CA — We here at Local 234 are pleased to report on another graduating class of apprentices. Graduation was held May 24. Our members who have truly distinguished themselves as graduates are: for Sound & Communication — Adrian Mendoza; and for Inside — Sabyn Cupples (overall Outstanding Apprentice for the five-year program), David Durbin, Ivan Garcia-Ponce (Outstanding Fifth-Year Apprentice), Michael Gruber, Andres Laureano, and Patrick Ortiz (perfect attendance). [See photo below.] These gentlemen, who are well prepared to follow their predecessors, will go forth as journeymen to build bridges, roads and streets, schools, hospitals, businesses, and utilities, and also to replace our aged-out infrastructure, all of which we so badly need.

Our graduates received generous donations from electrical industry suppliers Milwaukee, Fluke, Ideal, Platt, and Klein. In addition, our Labor Management Cooperation Committee (LMCC) will send Sabyn Cupples to NTL this summer.

Also attending the celebration were our outstanding apprentices for each class and their guests. Those apprentices were as follows: 1st year class — Darien Rosbach, 2nd year class — Gilberto Espindola, 3rd year — Kevin Rategan, 4th year — Jeff Beers, and 5th year class — Ivan Garcia-Ponce.

On behalf of our Local 234 members, their families, our staff, and all IBEW members, we extend sincere congratulations to the Local 234 graduates and to all graduating IBEW apprentices.

Stephen Slovacek, P.S.



At the Local 234 apprenticeship graduation. Front row: Sabyn Cupples, Andres Laureano, Bus. Mgr. and Co-Training Dir. Andy Hartmann, Patrick Ortiz, Ivan Garcia-Ponce. Back row: 5th Year Instructor Mark Dybdahl, Michael Gruber and David Durbin.

Outreach to Community; New Contract Negotiated

L.U. 236 (catv,ees,govt,i,mo,rtb&t), ALBANY, NY — After a tough set of sessions, we have negotiated a contract that will carry us into 2022. A survey sent out to the membership revealed that focus needed to be placed on positive language changes for our members. We made every effort to make that happen.

Our work picture continues to improve after a slow winter, with large projects such as Regeneration on the horizon that will provide a large number of electricians with work.

Our members continue to improve our community and the image of the IBEW through various committees. The Community Outreach Committee filed for nonprofit status to provide additional ability to benefit those who need it most. The RENEW Committee seeks to engage our youngest members in brotherhood and show them that we are more than just a place to provide a job; we are a place to provide a second family.

Thanks to everyone who has been a part of Local 236, and we strive to make it a better place for electricians to be every day.

Michael Martell, Exec. Board



Local 270 congratulates new journeyman wireman graduates. From left are: Michael Ward, Derek Bunch, Bill Barber (apprentice of the year), Training Dir. Daniel Smith, Lori Duggan Weeks, Isaac Huling and Reece Hughes. Not pictured: Dalton Hamilton and Kodi Stephens.

JATC Graduating Class

L.U. 270 (i&o), OAK RIDGE, TN — At this writing, our work picture looks very good. We are working several traveling brothers and sisters and expect to put many more to work in the next few months.

Local 270 recently hosted a fish fry for our retirees. We thank retired member Rick Berrong for catching all the fish that was eaten. We had close to 100 people in attendance and the event was a great success.

IBEW Local 270 congratulates our newest class of apprenticeship graduates on becoming journeyman wiremen. These recent Oak Ridge Electrical JATC graduates are top-notch and have a bright future in store.

We also congratulate Kevin Lawlor, an IBEW member and Oak Ridge Electrical JATC teacher, on his upcoming retirement. Bro. Lawlor has taught for 30 years and has passed down his knowledge to so many of our members throughout the years. He will be greatly missed.

Jake Lequire, R.S.

'A Banner Year'

L.U. 280 (c,ees,em,es,i,mo,mt,rts&st), SALEM, OR — In Local 280 we are still enjoying a great work picture. We continue to add previously unrepresented electrical workers to our ranks weekly.

With projects ranging from data centers to solar farms, hospitals to schools, water treatment plants to new housing projects, the work opportunities in Local 280 are unlimited. 2019 will be another banner year and 2020 looks to be great as well.

We are blessed and cautious heading into contract negotiations. Local 280 enjoys a great relationship with our contractors and hopes to continue with that good partnership with these negotiations, increasing opportunity and position for our members



Local 280 assisted with Oregon state Rep. Dan Rayfield's parade float, which featured the "Polkaticians" band, for the Portland Rose Festival Starlight Parade.

and contractors. It's an honor to be associated with the men and women of the IBEW, a brotherhood that includes what I consider to be the greatest trades people to be associated with daily.

Local 280 was honored to be able to help Oregon state Rep. Dan Rayfield and his band, the "Polkaticians," in putting together a float for Portland's Rose Festival Starlight Parade held in June.

Drew Lindsey, B.M./F.S.

Apprenticeship Graduates

L.U. 302 (i,rts&spa), MARTINEZ, CA — This year's apprenticeship graduation dinner was held May 30.

That night, 12 inside wiremen and five sound and communication installers graduated from our apprenticeship programs. [Photo at bottom, right.]

Congratulations to our new journeymen and installers for all their hard work, commitment and success. The recent graduates are: Michael Alvarez, Zachary Beason, Drew Crider, Gary Cruz, Walter Duran, Jeremiah Lesmeister-Neckel, Tyler Lightfoot, A.J. McNally, Patrick Murray, Jerrick Page, Lennathan Pak, Bryce Perez, Ryan Roos, Lou Saephan, David Troxell, Isaac Westphal and Thomas Young.

We wish them all the best as they start a new chapter in their careers.

Melissa Vaughn, R.S.

Training Classes For A Technology Driven Future

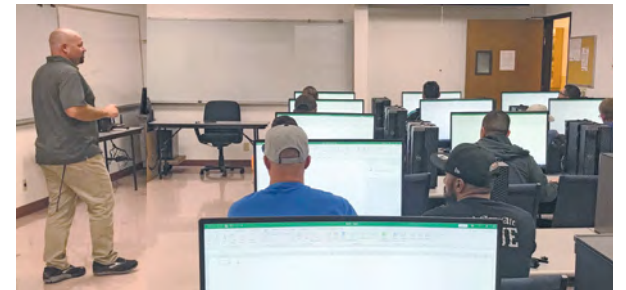
L.U. 332 (c,ees,i&st), SAN JOSE, CA — In anticipation of the next major transition of our industry, IBEW Local 332 has made a valuable and significant investment in our ability to modernize our workforce by offering a series of classes covering current industry solutions using digital technology. The classes will range from a course in basic com-

puter skills to advanced applications of Bluebeam, Revit, PlanGrid, and a variety of Microsoft office products used in administration.

In addition to teaching fundamental functions for each of these programs, all these courses will be taught from a field application perspective, increasing our workforce's efficiency and productivity through better communication and collaboration methods.

While this is an important first step, there is a lot of ground we will need to cover, given rapidly changing technology in an evolving industry. Computers are now a pivotal foundation of how our projects are built and are largely steering the industry toward destinations that are currently unknown. The opportunity exists for our electrical workforce to take the reins and steer this trend in a direction that will benefit not only our current market share, but also our future prosperity.

Chris Doyle, JATC Sr. Instructor



Local 332 members attend JATC training classes on industry trends in digital technology.

Celebrating Past, Present ... And a Bright IBEW Future

L.U. 340 (i,rts&spa), SACRAMENTO, CA — Local 340 held a combination Open House/Pin Party in early May to celebrate our new facility and to honor the Local 340 members (past and present) who made it all happen.

One of this year's recipients was former Local

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Local 302 congratulates the recent apprenticeship graduating class.

LOCAL LINES



At the Local 340 Open House/Pin Party in May. Attendees included former business manager A.C. Steelman (back row, second from right, in pink shirt) and current Bus. Mgr. Bob Ward (back row, sixth from right, in suit and tie).

340 business manager A.C. Steelman, who attended and told me he is truly enjoying his retirement. He received a 50-year service pin and certificate, presented by his son Local 340 Pres. Mark Steelman and Ninth District Int. Rep. Michael Meals. Congratulations, Bro. Steelman, and congratulations to all Local 340 members who received pins this year. Your hard work and dedication got us to where we are now and we are very grateful.

Work in our jurisdiction and new member installations in Sacramento are still booming at the time of this writing. We've been able to fill all of our job calls with Local 340's new and current members and with many of the travelers who like to work in sunny California. Thank you to the fellow IBEW local unions for sharing your members with us, and thanks to the locals that are employing our members who choose to travel. It is a great feeling that IBEW locals everywhere are working the members, organizing new members and growing our national numbers.

Robert D. Ward, B.M.

Summer Picnic a Success

L.U. 364 (catv,ees,em,es,i,mt,rts&spa), ROCKFORD, IL — Work remains steady in Local 364 heading into the fall with several projects underway and more being completed by the end of the year.

On Saturday, July 20, IBEW Local 364 held our summer picnic at our union hall and banquet facility in Rockford. Several hundred members and their families attended. Everyone had a great time. There were several games and fun activities throughout the picnic including egg toss, horseshoes, a rock-climbing wall and water slide just to name a few.

The summer picnic is becoming one of Local 364's more popular events and each year it gets better and better.

We would like to thank all the travelers who have helped Local 364 through a busy 2019, and we look forward to a safe and prosperous fourth quarter.

Brad Williams, P.S.

Ongoing Commercial Projects; Building Renovation Complete

L.U. 424 (as,ees,em,es,i,mo,o,ptc,rtb,rts,spa&u), EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA — Local 424 nominations for officers took place in May. Thank you to all the candidates who put their names forward. As this article went to press, the ballot count was scheduled to be held at the Local 424 office in Edmonton on June 27, 2019. At press time, results were pending.

Renovations for the local's new EBFA building have been completed. The Employee Benefits Funds Administration has now moved into its new location. The Electrical Industry Training Centre of Alberta (EITCA)

is expected to move operations over in the near future.

There are several ongoing commercial projects in Edmonton and the surrounding area. Western Electric has ongoing work at the Stantec Tower. Canadian Power Pac and Western Pacific Enterprises have work at the TransED LRT.

Scott Crichton, P.S.



New IBEW Local 424 EBFA building.

'Little Things Mean a Lot' — IBEW Community Service

L.U. 494 (em,govt,i,mt,rts,spa&t), MILWAUKEE, WI — Since 2000, recycling little aluminum tabs from the tops of soda cans has generated over \$360,000 for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin Inc. Ronald McDonald House Charities is an independent nonprofit organization whose stated mission is to create, find, and support programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children. The organization provides a place to stay for families with hospitalized children under 21 years of age (or 18, depending on the house), who are being treated at nearby hospitals and medical facilities.

Revenue from recycling these little bits of alumi-



Local 494 member James Turdo and daughter Jenna Turdo deliver recyclable aluminum soda-can tabs to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin Inc.

num helps us keep families close to the resources they need to thrive. Saving pop tabs is easy! They're compact, with a high concentration of recyclable aluminum.

Member James Turdo of Uihlein Electric and his daughter Jenna Turdo delivered 118 pounds of tabs to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Wisconsin's tab toss day. Again, thank you to all the Local 494 members who donated pop tabs to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities.

John T. Zapfel, Political Dir.

'Welcome to New Journeyman'

L.U. 540 (i), CANTON, OHIO — Local 540 is proud to recognize the apprenticeship graduating class of 2019.

Congratulations to all the graduates on successfully completing their JATC apprenticeship. Graduates Heidi Steiner (Inside) and Patrick Swejk (Telecom) were 2019 Apprentice of the Year Award recipients.

The following brothers and sisters graduated on May 23: Inside graduates — Tyler Brahler, Reese Colaner, Jason Crosier, Kyle Friedman, Andrew Gore, Justin Guy, Daniel Hill, Steve Kromi, Blake Miller, Austin Neisel, Jacob Rippi, Garrett Robbins, Eric Sanford, Keith Schwyn, Charles Schoenfelt, Heidi Steiner, Paul Stiles, Bryan Stragisher, Robert Wester, Hunter Williams and David Yoskey. Telecom graduates — Joshua Porter, Patrick Swejk and Steven Teppert. Winners of the Vern Wolgamott Perfect Attendance Award were: Austin Neisel, Jacob Rippi, Joshua Porter and Patrick Swejk.

Good wishes to all graduates on their IBEW careers.

Rick Waikem, R.S./P.S.

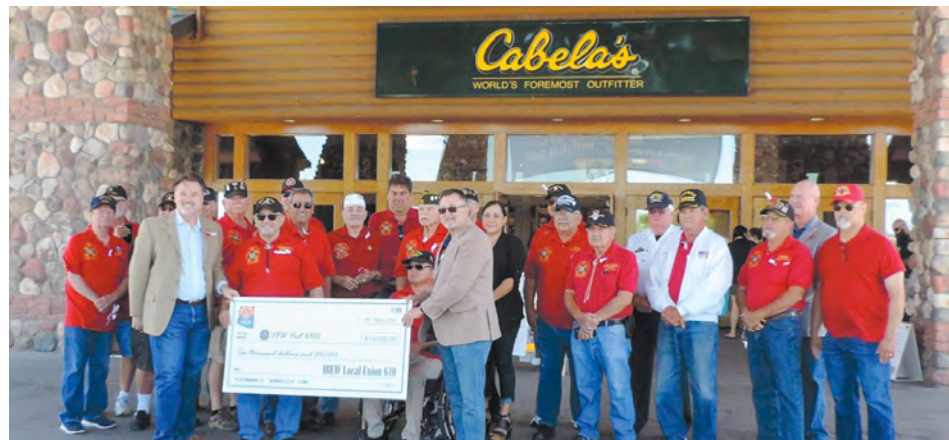
Apprentice Graduating Class

L.U. 558 (catv,em,i,lctt,mt,o,rtb,rts,spa&u), SHEFIELD, AL — Greetings, brothers and sisters.

Congratulations to the 2019 apprenticeship graduating class of inside journeyman wiremen and outside journeyman linemen from the Electrical Training Alliance for all their hard work and dedication in achieving this monumental task. There were 24 wireman graduates (pictured below) and four lineman graduates in the class. Special congratulations to Nicholas Suns on his Outstanding Wireman award,



Local 558 class of 2019 inside journeyman wireman graduates.



Local 640 Bus. Mgr. Dean Wine (front, center) and Pres. Delbert Hawk (front, left) present check to the members of VFW Post 6310.

and to Eric Smith, honored as Outstanding Lineman. IBEW Local 558 is very proud of all who graduated, and we are assured that the reputation as well as the future of the local will be protected.

Also, Local 558 celebrated our Spring Picnic on May 18 this year. We enjoyed a large turnout of members and their families along with great food, music, prizes, and fellowship. It was an excellent time for young and old members to get together, and the weather was perfect. A big thank-you to the staff and members who helped make the picnic a success.

In closing, I would like to commend Florence Utilities as well as the City of Florence for the Chris Williamson dedication memorial marker placed at one of the city's substations in his honor. Bro. Williamson tragically lost his life while working storm work in Florence on June 5, 2014.

Mac Sloan, Pres./Mbr. Dev.

Donation for New VFW Building

L.U. 640 (em,govt,i,mo,mt,rts,spa&u), PHOENIX, AZ — The work outlook in Phoenix is still strong. We thank all of our traveling brothers and sisters who have helped us man our work throughout this boom!

Our organizers have been working hard to bring in new members and we have seen a substantial increase in our membership since January of 2018.

On Memorial Day, Local 640 was proud to present a \$10,000 check to the VFW post members from Tolleson, AZ, to help them build a new VFW post. [Photo at bottom, right.] They have not had a place to call their own, and with land donated to build a post, we wanted to assist in keeping the construction project moving forward. We value our veterans and are going to do everything we can to help them.

Tim Wilson, B.R./P.S.

Members Ratify Contracts

L.U. 702 (as,c,catv,cs,em,es,et,govt,i,it,lctt,mo,mt,o,p,pet,ptc,rtb,rts,se,spa,st,t,u,uow&ws), WEST FRANKFORD, IL — On Saturday, June 1, newly topped out journeyman lineman Brennon McCord won the T-H Marine FLW Bass Fishing League All-American Tournament on the Potomac River. This first-place finish came with a



Local 702 member Brennon McCord (third from left) displays his championship fishing trophy. With him are family members and friends, including his father Neil (left) and mother Keli (second from left), who are both Local 702 members.

\$100,000 check and the opportunity to be a “sponsored” fisherman for the next year. Congratulations to Brennon for this tremendous accomplishment.

Earlier this year, members at Vectren ratified a new three-year agreement with annual wage increases of 2.75%, 2.75%, and 3.0%, while our Ameren Illinois members recently approved a two-year contract extension that contained annual wage increases of 2.5% each year, but is contingent on the amendment / extension of Illinois Senate Bill 1652 from the 2011 legislative session.

Members at Tri-County Electric Cooperative ratified a new five-year contract with annual wage increases of 2.5%, 2.5%, 3.0%, 3.0%, and 3.25%.

For our Inside members, Scarborough Alliance Group will hold two Retirement Planning Workshops at our local this fall. The first one will be Saturday, Sept. 21, and the second one will be on Saturday, Oct. 19. Both will be from 9 a.m. — 10 a.m.

As of this writing, our referral books are as follows: Inside Construction — 98, Outside Construction — 8, Line Clearance — 1.

Mark Baker, B.R./P.S.



Local 704 Pres. David Becker (right) presents Treas. Don Rausch with a recognition plaque for longtime, dedicated service.

‘Welcome to New Unit’ Trades Expo for Area Students

L.U. 704 (catv,em&i), DUBUQUE, IOWA — We are excited to welcome a new unit into our local following a NLRB election and a unanimous vote in favor of IBEW representation. We recently worked with, and organized, the Hilton Garden Inn hotel workers in Dubuque. The unit includes front desk, housekeeping, kitchen and maintenance workers. We are currently in negotiations, and our team is more than up to



Local 760 congratulates recent ETAK apprentice graduates (standing). Seated are retired former NJATC executive director A.J. Pearson (center) and ETAK committee members Larry Cole, Wayne Wojciechowski, Lonnie Hunley and Tim Oaks.

the task. It has been an exciting challenge and the workers deserve all the credit.

We participated again this year in the Dubuque Area Labor Management Construction Expo. The building trades unions came together to show over 400 high-school students the trades with hands-on activities. Our workstation included conduit bending and wiring up a junction box. We believe this promotion is not only good for the students, but it also gives their teachers a close look at what we do.

Lastly, we congratulate Don “Sarge” Rausch on his retirement. Don is a 44-year member and has been the local union treasurer for the last 37 years! It’s incredible to think about how many apprentices Don has trained over the years. At our May meeting, the local presented Don with a recognition plaque for his many years of service to our local.

David Becker, P.S.

Apprenticeship Graduates

L.U. 760 (i,lctt,o,rts,spa&u), KNOXVILLE, TN — Local 760 congratulates recent apprenticeship graduates of the Electrician Training Academy of Knoxville (ETAK).

The recent graduates include: Zachary Beard, Tyler Collier, Adam Crawhorn, Philip Daugherty, William Gamble, Mitchell Jenkins, Rhonda Johnson, Clinton Jones, Abel Lupescu, Ryan Oakley, Christopher Phillips, Jacob Sercovich, Richard Smith, Wesley Smith, Austin Stinnett, William Watson and Joshua Welch. Additionally, five veterans were among the graduates: Billy Decker, David Farmer, David Fellows, Zachary Hawkins and Erik Hunt.

Graduate Rhonda Johnson had perfect attendance. David Farmer, outstanding graduate, obtained a 95.5 grade average. William Gamble and Wesley Smith are already pursuing training for the EPRI Instrumentation Level A exam.

Speakers at the graduation ceremony included: Local 760 Bus. Mgr. Tim Tate; Chase Pendergraft, East Tennessee Chapter NECA; Jack Rolling, Milwaukee Tool; Dr. Anthony Wise, president of Pellissippi State Community College; JATC Chmn. Wayne Wojciechowski; and Local 760 Pres. Larry Cole.

Dr. Wise presented certificates to all graduates who have earned 45 semester hours of credit toward an associate degree. Sue Wojciechowski presented ETAK \$990 to register each graduate for the 57 semester hours of “recommended” college credit with the American Council on Education.

Congratulations to all the graduates on achieving their new journeyman wireman status and keeping the IBEW strong.

Jason Leary, A.B.M.



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

The Electrical Worker was the name of the first official publication of the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in 1893 (the NBEW became the IBEW in 1899 with the expansion of the union into Canada). The name and format of the publication have changed over the years. This newspaper is the official publication of the IBEW and seeks to capture the courage and spirit that motivated the founders of the Brotherhood and continue to inspire the union’s members today. The masthead of this newspaper is an adaptation of that of the first edition in 1893.

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HOW TO REACH US



We welcome letters from our readers. The writer should include his or her name, address and, if applicable, IBEW local union number and card number. Family members should include the local union number of the IBEW member to whom *The Electrical Worker* is mailed. Please keep letters as brief as possible. *The Electrical Worker* reserves the right to select letters for publication and edit all submissions for length.

Send letters to:

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WHO WE ARE

Ontario Volunteers Make Life-Changing Journey to Guatemala

Five thousand miles from the building codes and safety rules of Ontario, Canada, the team of IBEW electricians had never seen anything quite like the dormitories for older students from a Guatemalan children's home.

Live wires draped from walls and ceilings; nothing was grounded; breakers were shot and overload protection was dangerously inadequate. Girls were even getting mild electric shocks in their showers.

Some of the kindest people they'd ever met were counting on them to fix it all in 10 days' time.

Not only were they determined to do that and more, each one paid \$2,700 from his own pocket for the privilege.

Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804 retiree Jerry Wilson would happily do it again.



Retired Local 804 journeymen Neil Whittaker and Gerry Snyder rewire a meter at a dormitory for older students from the children's home.

"One hundred percent of our people who went there felt so rewarded and fulfilled," said Wilson, who pitched the trip to fellow members of the local's retiree club. "We were all blown away by how much we accomplished in a short time."

Wilson and his wife, Terry, were among 13 volunteers who made the April journey to Parramos, Guatemala, 60 miles inland from the Pacific coast.

The group included nine electricians — five retirees, three active Local 804 journeymen and one apprentice — along with three family members and a coordinator from the charity that arranged the trip, Friends of the Orphans Canada.

Their destination was Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH), which translates to "Our Little Brothers and Sisters," a children's home and school that impressed its visitors beyond all expectations.

They were awed by the depth of the loving care, creative therapies and abundant learning opportunities for the vulnerable children — some whose parents had died, but most removed from troubled families.

They marveled at the radiant smiles and joyful spirits of people who had next to nothing materially.

"It was a life-changing experience to

realize how little some people in this world have and how fortunate we are, basically because of where we were born," said Local 804 retiree Neil Whittaker. "Even though they didn't have much, they were all happy, and they were immensely grateful for anything we did."

'The Most Awesome Crew Ever'

Back at home, Local 804 retirees have wired more than 80 houses for Habitat for Humanity and generously support other causes with deeds and donations. But they'd never ventured far from their communities.

They were familiar with the good works of Friends of the Orphans Canada, or FOTOCAN, their country's arm of an agency that provides aid to children in need around the world.

After a FOTOCAN presentation last October, the retirees began sponsoring a child in Haiti. At their next meeting, a speaker who coordinates the agency's volunteer programs in Guatemala told them about the NPH home and its urgent need for electrical upgrades it couldn't afford.

Wilson put out a call for volunteers, assembling an eager group willing to pay its own way, with the cost of supplies built into the \$2,700 per person fee.

That applied to family members as well — Wilson's wife, their daughter, and Whittaker's wife. The women helped build a sensory garden at the home, lent a hand in English classes and otherwise assisted staff and the NPH alumni serving as live-in volunteers for a year after college.

Living and working in different areas of Local 804's territory, most of the group started off as acquaintances, if they knew each other at all. Now, Wilson said, they're family.

"It was magic how nine electricians meshed so well," he said. "It was a challenging job — not the same materials we'd have here, no code, no rules, no blueprints, no nothing. Everyone just figured out how we were going to do it, and that's what we did. It was the most awesome crew ever."

So great was the camaraderie and commitment, Whittaker said, that "there was no disagreement among the group at any time."

When he and his wife, Wendy, decided to make the trip, an online search hinted at what was ahead.

"I Googled 'electrical code in Guatemala' to get an idea of the standards, and the first thing that came up was 'how to take a shower in Guatemala without getting electrocuted,'" he said.

Some of the materials and larger tools they needed were waiting for them at the dormitories, located in the region's capital city, about 15 minutes from the home's main campus. The two buildings house older residents who have moved



Pictured with a farewell piece of art from the boys at the NPH home and wearing bracelets made by the girls, Local 804 volunteers wind down their 10-day journey to Guatemala, joined by some of the grateful children and staff they helped. See more photos with the story online at ibew.org/media-center.

on to college.

A challenge right off the bat was the language barrier as the crew coordinated with the NPH head of maintenance through an interpreter who didn't know electrical terms. But Wilson said it helped considerably that retiree Gerry Snyder, who effectively served as the project's foreman, could speak some Spanish.

'It was magic how nine electricians meshed so well.'

— Local 804 retiree Jerry Wilson

Tackling the boys' dorm first, they drilled through solid concrete walls to install new panels and pipes to upgrade power distribution from the meter base, then re-fed the existing circuits. They similarly overhauled the girls' space, where new wires, breakers and a grounding rod put an end to residents' 70-volt jolts in the showers.

They made supply runs as needed to a wholesaler that was surprisingly modern. But it didn't have everything. "We had to MacGyver it, if you will, sometimes," Wilson said.

Despite the obstacles, they finished in time to install a thousand feet of outdoor lighting at the 25-acre Parramos complex of children's dormitories, classrooms, offices, a medical center, housing for visiting volunteers and other buildings.

Terry Wilson, who with the other

women spent the most time at the main site, said the project made the entire neighborhood safer.

"They strung wires from tree to tree and hung these amazing lights through an area that otherwise was pitch black at night," she said. "Lots of people walk to work at the home, or walk past the home to jobs at a factory. The light bleeds out onto the street, and that makes such a wonderful difference."

Many of the tools the men used in their work were their own, items relatively easy to pack such as pliers, hammers, chisels, screwdrivers, tape measures and channel locks.

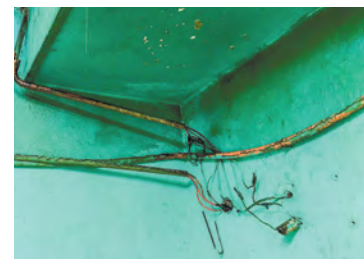
Their bags were far lighter flying home: They left virtually everything with the NPH foreman, Luis, and his maintenance crew.

"He was so grateful," Wilson said. "And it will allow students who were with us to continue hands-on learning."

Big Hearts All Around

Life skills, from metal shop and carpentry to sewing, baking and gardening, are part of the holistic education for the roughly 75 NPH children and another 250 students in the community with the good fortune to attend the school, Terry Wilson said.

The trip was a homecoming for her. After graduating with a university degree in Spanish literature in 1969, she won a scholarship to study and teach in Guatemala. She fell in love with the beautiful country and its people, but had never been back.



Examples of the team's challenges, from top, an original main panel; the switch for an outside light, a common type of wiring; and some of the many holes that had to be drilled through concrete walls and ceilings.

One highlight of her return was working with her daughter and Wendy Whittaker on the sensory garden that she said is designed "to be very welcoming for children with special needs — lots of bright flowers for them to touch and smell."

She found compassion and tenderness everywhere she looked.

"The whole time we were there we did not hear anyone being chastised or punished or ridiculed or made fun of," she said, speaking both of patient grown-ups and the kindness young residents showed each other.

Although poverty and trauma were largely what brought them to NPH, "They were the happiest, happiest children and adults that I have ever had the pleasure of spending time with," Terry Wilson said.

The group bookended its stay with two days of guided sightseeing, traveling to Mayan ruins and open-air markets and taking in the largest Palm Sunday parade in Central America. They spent evenings socializing with the home's volunteers, sometimes led in song by Jerry Wilson and daughter Shannon Brinkman on guitars.

The gratitude as they departed was palpable. The girls gave them homemade bracelets and the boys presented a piece of artwork featuring the flags of Canada and Guatemala.

"There were tears," Jerry Wilson said. "They thanked us for improving their lives. It felt good knowing that we left their home in much better condition than when we arrived." ■