

(Continued from previous page)

In the past, HP&L bore total responsibility for its program standards and supplied the instructors. As the need for qualified utility workers became more intense, HP&L and Local 66 worked together to develop the training plan—in fact, Local 66 members are part of the committee that is developing the training program, which now contains 120 members.

The JATC has boosted its training for construction work in the HL&P area. About 60 apprentice linemen are all working, and the Houston Area Subcommittee of the JATC interviews and ranks apprentice applicants monthly.

In California, IBEW Local 1245, Walnut Creek, and PG&E jointly administer an apprentice/journeyman training program which must be completed by PG&E workers. A joint apprenticeship committee governs the program that covers the 15,000 PG&E workers. The three-year program complies with standards of the California Department of Apprenticeship, which monitors the program guidelines set by PG&E and Local 1245. One master apprenticeship agreement covers many different classifications. PG&E operates a centralized Linemen's Training School. Apprentices must participate in 40 days of centralized training and are evaluated on both academic and on-the-job training, which is documented for evaluation.

The IBEW has long advocated genuine, certified apprenticeship programs governed jointly by labor and management, as evidenced in the construction industry partnership with the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA). The IBEW and NECA jointly administer the National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, which has developed uniform stan-



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dards adopted and used nationwide to select and train thousands of qualified men and women. Apprenticeships and training are offered in the following categories: residential wireman, journeyman lineman, journeyman tree trimmer, journeyman inside wireman, advanced journeyman training and telecommunication installer-technician. Utility companies and their contractors are not participants in the IBEW/NECA partnership. However, having cut in-house training, some utilities are either recruiting trained workers from the contractor work force or seeking prequalified trainees through NJATC programs.

Some smaller utility companies, especially cooperatives and municipals, have formed training consortiums that provide a higher quality training than they could provide alone.

THE CONCERN FOR QUALITY TRAINING

The basic training for utility workers is determined by Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standards. OSHA regulations require workers to be familiar with hazards and the ways to mitigate their exposure to those hazards. Utility workers are task-trained by their employer, i.e., workers must demonstrate proficiency in the skills required by their specific job in order to become a "qualified worker" and if they have not performed certain tasks within a 12-month period, they are required to redemonstrate their proficiency in those tasks.

In the gas industry, OSHA pipeline safety rules govern basic training. In the nuclear industry, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) guidelines determine what workers must know. Mechanical work is covered under still another standard.

The quality of work force training, in every industry, is a national concern. Since 1994, with the enactment of the National Skills Standards Act, a group of industry, labor, education and community stakeholders has met to design voluntary national skills standards for all industries

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in the United States. The National Skills Standards Board (NSSB) is composed of 16 industry clusters, one of which is utility. The mission of the NSSB is to encourage the creation and adoption of a national system of skill standards

that will enhance the ability of the United States to compete effectively in a global economy. (See the April, 1997 issue of the *IBEW Journal*, "Skills to Power a Nation," p.22 and September, 1998, "Preparing for the Jobs of Tomorrow," p. 12.) The IBEW is a prominent labor member of NSSB.

THE INFLUENCE OF OVERSEAS INVESTORS


With the advent of deregulation, cash rich utilities seeking high growth for their investments have expanded their holdings to power companies overseas. Now, U.S. utilities are beginning to see acquisition bids from foreign power companies. The most recent from two British companies, with National Grid moving to acquire New England Electric System (NEES), and ScottishPower agreeing to buy PacifiCorp. The NEES service area is Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont and New Hampshire. NEES workers are represented by Locals 326, Lawrence, Massachusetts, and 486, Worcester, Massachusetts. PacifiCorp serves California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming with representation from Locals 57, Salt Lake City, Utah; 125, Portland, Oregon; 415, Cheyenne, Wyoming; 659, Medford, Oregon; and 768, Kalispell, Montana. The ScottishPower acquisition, should it be approved by FERC and state regulatory bodies, could prove to be a new model and positive influence on work force training in the utility industry.

ScottishPower acknowledges that the quality of its employees contributes significantly to business success. The company is committed to quality training and in the booklet, *ScottishPower on Learning*, the company claims, "...we have always encouraged the development of skills and abilities by providing high quality training. To maintain our skill levels in a rapidly changing business environment we recognized the need to provide our staff with a supportive learning environment where they could take control of their own learning at their own pace. To achieve this we were one of the first UK companies to set up a network of Open Learning Centres."

Open Learning Centres are an extension of the considerable learning and development expertise provided to workers at Scottish-

Power. ScottishPower Learning was established to take that resource into the community where it could provide real benefits for local people. Much of ScottishPower Learning focuses on the education and skills development of young people, including secondary school students and youngsters without jobs. The company also provides support to unemployed adults, including those with special needs, and works in partnership with other businesses, local and national government, training providers and charities to enhance this training. The program is totally funded by ScottishPower.

A very active Board of Advisors has an equal number of senior company management and full-time trade union officials. The program provides an example of how a company can integrate the training of its own work force with the provision of training opportunities for the community. It also demonstrates just what can be achieved when management and trade unions work together.

The IBEW, in addition to its role on the National Skills Standards Board, is working with integrated parties to develop a plan for restructuring legislation that will cure the problems of a declining and untrained work force. Many locals are following the lead of Locals 66 and 1245 to provide quality training for their members. "Our commitment to education and training for our members is well known," said International President J.J. Barry. "Our objective is to improve the quality of life for our members with good wages and benefits and training for the future. Current and future workers should be provided training opportunities to match technological advances to increase worker value and assure system reliability and service quality. The IBEW *will* be part of the skills training movement in the utility industry." 

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