

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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We Are the Power Professionals

IBEW members do our best every day because we're professionals to the core, not because it leads to awards or accolades. But when we are recognized, it's worth celebrating. After all, it's an acknowledgment of our commitment to being the best in the business.

Every year, *Power Magazine* scours the globe to find the best, most efficient and most advanced gas power plants in the world for their annual awards issue. Last year, the editors honored the Wolverine Power Cooperative's 432-megawatt Alpine gas plant in Elmira, Mich., for a record-breaking reliability record.

The plant is not only one of the most reliable in the nation; Alpine's owners say it is the most efficient in their fleet. And IBEW members don't just run the plant—they built it. The \$166-million project began in 2015 and used only union trades. Signatory contractor Swan Electric hired members of Traverse City, Mich., Local 498 for all the substation, power line and construction work that brought the plant to life.

It nearly goes without saying that the project came in on time and on budget.

"I speak for all of us at Alpine when I say we are proud of the work we do to serve our members," said Grand Rapids, Mich., Local 876 member and Chief Plant Operator Dan Boulter. "When people come to our



plant, we take pride in our ownership of its performance and appearance. We take care of everything inside this gate, from cleaning the toilets to troubleshooting our emissions control system."

In recognition of that commitment to professionalism, Wolverine puts the names of the workers who run Alpine on a plaque out front.

Boulter said that while they do nearly all the work themselves—nearly 95 percent of the plant's work orders are for preventative/predictive maintenance—he may be proudest of what he hears from his peers in the industry, the traveling millwrights that work outages and do upgrades all

across the region and see into dozens of plants.

"We like when the millwrights come to the plant and say, 'We don't usually see a plant this clean.' Or, 'We are treated great around here,'" Boulter said. "It's good sign when they tell you, 'When you need help, we want to come back.'"

It's that kind of professionalism and pride from IBEW members—in all branches—that sets our members apart from the competition. With the Code of Excellence as our guide, it's the kind of performance that every day earns us the moniker "The Power Professionals."



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



We're in this Together

Local 245 member Joseph Weaver is a broadcast engineer at WTOL-TV, the CBS affiliate in Toledo, Ohio. For him, professionalism means understanding that his work has an impact on all his colleagues, not just those in the bargaining unit.

One of Weaver's duties in the control room is ensuring commercials air within scheduled breaks of the local newscast. If he and his colleagues fail, even by a second, it costs the station money. It costs sales department members commissions they count on to provide for their families.

"If there is a technical mistake that was avoidable and we lose money, it's not just hurting the station," he said. "It's hurting a lot of other people. It's the people we park next to or sit with in the cafeteria. Those people count on us."

Local television remains a vital news source, but financial pressure on the industry continues to increase, making professionalism more important than ever. Without that professionalism, consumers and advertisers turn to other options.

"The [economic] pie is smaller than 20 years ago," Weaver said. "We can fight for more, but it's a bigger piece of a shrinking pie."

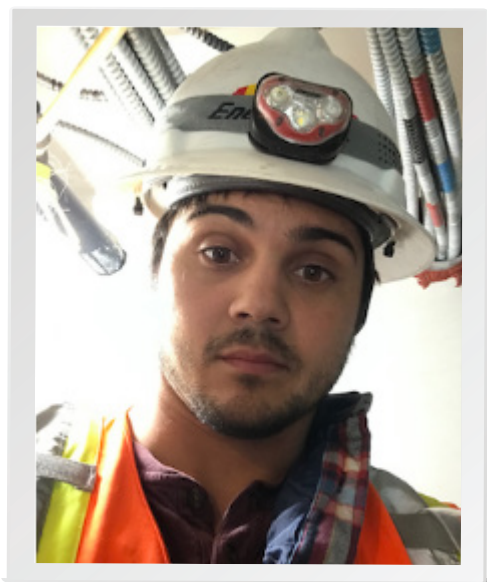
WTOL is owned by Tegna, a company not always in

harmony with its unions. But Weaver said Local 245 members have built a strong relationship with managers who work at the station. Differences arise, but they're dealt with respectfully.



"We know the success we have as employees is best when the station does well," he said. "But it goes both ways."

WTOL's IBEW members credit their professionalism on the job with putting them in a position to negotiate for better wages and benefits. That's a Code of Excellence win for everyone.



Justin Long, Apprentice Wireman
San Luis Obispo, Calif., Local 639

Professionalism From Day One

"I do not believe I could have learned the necessary skills for the electrical industry without the guidance of the IBEW apprenticeship program.

Without a professional apprenticeship, working in the electrical industry is extremely dangerous and I would not feel safe on the jobsite without the supervision of a journeyman and classroom instruction.

My apprenticeship is my ticket to the middle class."

Share your IBEW story for a chance to be included in an upcoming issue of *The Electrical Worker* (IBEW.org/MyIBEWStory).