

# The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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## Leading the Way on Quality

New York City Local 3 journeyman wireman John Murphy faced a competitive acceptance process when he applied for adventurous electrical work at Antarctica's McMurdo research station. But the contractor immediately recognized that Murphy's IBEW membership set him apart from other applicants and moved his name to the top of the pile.

"It definitely gives you a leg up," Murphy said. "It tells them that you meet a certain criterion. That streamlined it for me."

More than anything else, it's the quality of our work—embodied in the Code of Excellence—that gives employers the assurance that IBEW workers will get the job done the right way, the first time.

"It makes sense that 'quality' is the final piece of the Code's SPARQ acronym," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "Because when you add up all the other components—safety, professionalism, accountability and relationships—quality is the logical result."

When the Minnesota Twins wanted to build a new baseball stadium in Minneapolis a few years ago, former president Jerry Bell insisted on having union electricians work on what eventually became Target Field. "You get the best quality that way," Bell said. "You have people who are experienced. The craftsmanship in this ballpark is second to none in the major leagues."



IBEW quality comes from our first-class training and mentoring, not just during our apprenticeships but throughout our careers. It's affirmation of the hard work we've put in, and a guarantee that employers and customers get what they pay for.

You see our commitment to quality in the experienced instructors combining top-notch classroom education with hands-on guidance at our

**"Training programs affiliated with the labor movement have a combined budget of over \$1.5 billion and are the second-largest providers of workplace training in the United States, after the U.S. military."**

—Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO executive secretary and member of Portland, Ore., IBEW Local 125

NECA-IBEW training centers across North America. You see it through our investment in the National Utility Industry Training Fund, or when our telecommunications members take advantage of the latest NACTEL courses. And you witness it every day on the job, when experienced members take the time to share their skills with the next generation.

We understand that sharing our knowledge solidifies our well-earned reputation for quality, which helps us grow our market share as we gain and retain customers.

"Our customers and contractors have come to expect quality work from IBEW members, and it's easy to understand why," Stephenson said. "Our Code of Excellence is what makes all the difference."



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email [theSPARQ@ibew.org](mailto:theSPARQ@ibew.org)



## Quality Is IBEW's Signature

Government jobs can be thankless on their best day, as IBEW sisters and brothers working for federal agencies and contractors know all too well. And as attacks on our union rights escalate, it's not getting any easier.

But that hasn't changed the commitment to quality we demonstrate every day at places like the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

"We continue to show up on time, perform top-quality work and do it with respect, dignity and pride," said former steward Don Bongo, now a Honolulu Local 1186 business representative serving the shipyard's 365 members.

Despite what Bongo calls the "worst barrage of attacks on federal employees" in his 35-year career—rollbacks the IBEW is battling—he said members "are in good spirits overall, and that's the attitude they bring to work."

Across the Pacific at the decommissioned Hanford nuclear site, 800 members of Richland, Wash., Local 984 carry out exacting duties for Department of Energy con-

tractors managing millions of gallons of radioactive waste.

Quality and safety are intertwined at Hanford, where the local's vice president Dianne Whitten has worked for 31 years.

"We ensure that our coworkers are protected from exposure to radiation and chemicals. That comes first," she said. "At the same time, we provide a quality service. We have time constraints and pressure to get the job done. We meet and exceed what's demanded of us."

From day-to-day stresses to political attacks, distractions at work are a fact of life, said Paul O'Connor, director of the IBEW Government Employees Department.

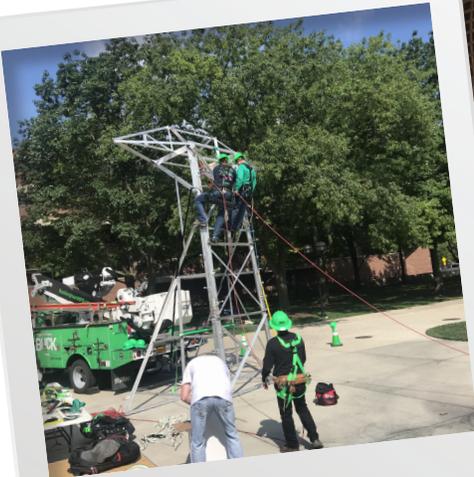
Rising above them is what sets IBEW members apart.

"The men and women of IBEW stand tall, unrivaled, time and time again," O'Connor said. "Through quality workmanship, training, relationships and work environments we create superior products and provide superior services. That's our signature."



Photo credit: Washington State Department of Ecology

## SPARQ GOES LOCAL



NTI attendees take part in hands-on training.



Participants attend the 2019 NTI Graduation Ceremony.



NTI graduates stand proudly in front of Hill Auditorium at the University of Michigan.

Quality begins with training, and the National Training Institute (NTI) is key to making sure that IBEW apprenticeship instructors are the best. This year marked the electrical training ALLIANCE's 30th NTI, which included more than 2,100 participants.