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IBEW News

Jobs for America's Last Frontier
Biden Backs Alaskan Project **3**

Clearing a Path for Organizing
VP Visits IBEW Local to Listen to Union Members **5**

A Path to the Top
Detroiters Given Opportunity for Success in the Treetops **6**

In This Issue

Editorials **2**

Letters to the Editor **2**

My IBEW Story **2**

North of 49° **8**

In Memoriam **9**

Politics & Jobs **10**

Circuits **12**

Grounded in History **13**

Transitions **14**

Organizing Wire **15**

Local Lines **16**

Who We Are **20**



THE IBEW's
2021 PHOTO CONTEST

Deadline: Oct. 1
See page 6 for details

BUILDING HISTORY:

IBEW Members Working to Modernize THE BIRTHPLACE of the ATOM BOMB



As construction continues on the massive Uranium Processing Facility near Oak Ridge, Tenn., left, representatives from Oak Ridge Local 270 and the other construction trade unions on the project meet regularly wherever possible — such as in an unfinished corridor of UPF's Main Process Building, above.

The birthplace of the atomic bomb is getting a massive makeover, and an increasing number of IBEW members are on the way to help ensure that this much-needed upgrade is taking place safely and professionally.

Inside eastern Tennessee's Y-12 National Security Complex, a sister facility to its more widely known neighbor, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, researchers on the Manhattan Project enriched the uranium used in the atomic bombs deployed over Japan to bring an end to World War II in 1945.

IBEW members were there then, and they're still there nearly 80 years later, working at Y-12 and continuing to support its mission to prepare and store uranium

for installation in modern warheads as well as for use in the reactors that power the U.S. Navy's nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. Workers there also safely dismantle decommissioned weaponry and securely stow their nuclear payloads right on the site.

But eight decades can be a long time for any facility, a primary reason why the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration broke ground in 2018 on a replacement for the aging Y-12 complex: the multibillion-dollar, state-of-the-art Uranium Processing Facility, or UPF.

Since then, IBEW members in ever-growing ranks have been recruited not just to work on a significant national security project, but also to better understand the important work that's been happening for decades in the Volunteer State.

"It's a massive undertaking," said Tenth Dis-

trict International Vice President Brent Hall. "It says a lot about the IBEW that we've been able to staff this job so well."

By the end of 2021, upwards of 800 journeyman wiremen and apprentices are expected to be in place to help install more than 600 miles of wire and cabling throughout the buildings that make up the new facility.

Oak Ridge Local 270 Business Manager Daniel Smith says his members, who are charged with handling the entirety of the UPF's electrical construction, are ready for the coming influx of workers who will be working for the project's contractor, Consolidated Nuclear Security. "Everything's going in a really good direction," he said.

OAK RIDGE URANIUM *continued on page 4*

FROM THE OFFICERS

A Stronger IBEW



Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

One year ago we announced the IBEW Strong initiative in this newspaper, and I want to thank each of you for everything you've done to make the IBEW a more diverse, inclusive union that is growing more representative of the communities we call home each day.

I especially want to thank the locals that have embraced our challenge to reach beyond traditional boundaries and extend the opportunities of the IBEW to young people and other workers who might not otherwise have considered joining our ranks. We are so much stronger for their membership and solidarity.

This month I want to highlight just one of the programs that's doing the hard work required to fulfill the promise of IBEW Strong.

In Detroit, Local 17 and utility DTE need tree-trimmers, lots of them. Detroiters need jobs. So, the two partnered with a community organization called Focus: HOPE to bring good-paying, union jobs to people committed to learning the ropes and working hard.

Earlier this year, Detroit's Tree Trim Academy graduated its first class, putting a dozen young men and women on the path to life-changing careers in the industry.

This new academy, which works hand-in-hand with Local 17 and DTE's long-successful tree-trimming boot camp and apprenticeship programs, is open to anyone, but it puts a special emphasis on recruiting promising young men and women from the city of Detroit.

Tree-trimming is tough work, and it requires professionals willing to work at great heights, often in terrible weather. It's not for everyone. But for those who can cut it, the opportunity is there to make more than \$100,000 per year. That's life-changing money for many Detroiters.

I'm excited to see what's happening at Local 17, and you can read more about it in this issue. And I'm glad to see so many other locals across North America taking steps to recruit more women, more people of color, more LGBTQ+ people into the IBEW.

It's really very simple. The future runs on the things we do best, and IBEW members for 130 years have been the men and women bringing electricity and data connectivity to factories, homes and businesses and making things work.

If we're going to survive for another 130 years or more, we need every person available to build and maintain the infrastructure that keeps powering innovation and productivity in our two countries. That means there's a place for your children if they choose to join this union just as there's a place for those who've not grown up knowing the opportunities the IBEW can provide.

Our doors are open. If you're eager to learn, to give a full day's work for a full day's pay and to take pride in what you're doing, then there's a place for you in the IBEW. That's what IBEW Strong is all about. Keep up the great work and keep sharing your successes. We can all learn so much from what's working well at our local unions. ■

Celebrating Our Freedom

Last month, we celebrated Independence Day here in the U.S. and our Canadian sisters and brothers celebrated Canada Day just a few days prior.

Both days mark the births of our two nations, different as they were. But they also celebrate something deeper: our freedom of self-governance, of making our own choices about our futures.

Our nations' constitutions later laid out the rules by which we'd govern ourselves, and both of our countries continue to set a standard for freedom and democracy that the world's oppressed look to for inspiration and guidance.

If you think about it, a constitution is similar to a union contract. It sets the rules of the road, protects both the employer and the employees – or government and citizens – and sets out processes for making new rules or changing old ones and for settling disputes. A union contract is also the envy of those who aren't fortunate enough to work under one.

Just as the U.S. and Canada serve as inspiration to people living under autocratic governments, our union contracts are inspiring workers and influencing not just union employers, but nonunion ones as well.

We all know that child labor laws, weekends, the 40-hour work week and more exist because unions were powerful enough to insist on them. Health and safety standards protect us at work because unions stood up and demanded an end to hazardous conditions and productivity-at-any-cost decision-making.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, unions insisted on amped-up protocols to keep workers safe, and – even though it took an administration change in Washington – we've been largely successful.

Protecting the sanctity of a union contract and workers' ability to join together and demand representation is at the heart of everything we do at the IBEW, especially our political views. We work with politicians committed to protecting working people and to working with us, not ones who kowtow to big businesses and billionaires who can write the biggest checks.

Protecting those contracts and our ability to negotiate for them is our version of freedom. A union contract is freedom from arbitrary decision-making by employers. It's freedom from wage theft and bait-and-switch policies; freedom from having your health care or retirement changed without notice. It's the freedom to speak up when you're asked to do something unsafe without worrying about getting fired.

So, let's celebrate our nations' freedom, but let's also remember the freedom the IBEW gives us and work to extend that to even more Americans and Canadians.

Thank you to our veterans for all they've done to preserve our nations' freedoms, including the right to stand up for ourselves on the job. God bless our two countries. ■



Kenneth W. Cooper
International Secretary-Treasurer

“LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR”

Making Our Kids Proud

I am a member of [Anchorage, Alaska] Local 1547 and a children's library assistant. I am very thankful to be a part of the union for so many reasons.

I want to let members know of a beautiful new book, “Someone Builds the Dream” by Lisa Wheeler and illustrated by Loren Long. The book celebrates the skilled women and men who work to see the plans of architects, engineers and designers brought to life. As you can imagine the subject of construction and machines is popular with kids. The subject of skilled workers is valuable for children to explore. Highlighting a parent's chosen field of work makes this book a great read to educate their own children as well as classrooms about the usefulness of skilled labor.

Thanks for all you do to keep us informed!

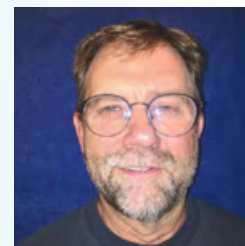
*Ann Marie Meiresonne, Local 1547 member
Anchorage, Alaska*



We Want to Hear From You: Send your letters to media@ibew.org or Letters to the Editor, The Electrical Worker, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

My IBEW STORY

Dave Class, Retired Journeyman Lineman
Anchorage, Alaska, Local 1547



“As a kid, I remember a man walked into our back yard, said hi and that he needed to do some work on the pole. He strapped on a belt and hooks and climbed right up the pole. I think my mouth dropped wide open; I was amazed at how easy he made it look.”

I joined the IBEW when I took a temporary summer job as a grunt on a natural gas crew in Evergreen, Colorado. You had to join to work there, and I didn't really know anything about unions. After about six months, the division manager asked if I was going to continue on with school or if I would be interested in a power lineman apprenticeship. I had a flash back to the lineman in my back yard and immediately said yes. It was the best decision I've ever made.

I moved to Alaska right after I topped out as a journeyman, where I learned a lot more about unions. During the '80s and '90s I can't count the number of informational picket lines, strikes, lock-outs, phone banks, legislative letter-writing campaigns and labor-management disputes I've been on, but we prevailed on most counts because of the brotherhood and union solidarity. Everybody standing together was spiritual – and in the end those memories are the ones that count.

The IBEW has given me more than I could ever ask for. I've had medical, dental and vision benefits my whole career. The union helped provide my apprenticeship, including training that has no doubt saved my life on a handful of occasions. It's also given me great job opportunities, safe working conditions, good wages, benefits and retirement, not to mention the value of brotherhood itself. Many thanks to our founding brothers and sisters!

Share your story at ibew.org/MyIBEWStory

In a Win for Workers, White House Affirms Support for Alaska's Willow Oil Project



The Biden administration's support for the Willow project is a boost for Alaska's working families and Anchorage Local 1547 members, seen here installing power and fiber optic cable inside the National Petroleum Reserve on the North Slope.

Feds' decision will bring jobs to Alaska's struggling economy

The Biden administration provided a lift to IBEW members and skilled construction workers in Alaska on May 26, when it filed a brief in federal district court defending the Willow gas and oil project on the state's North Slope.

The project originally was approved by the previous administration and some worried Biden would reverse course in light of the president's public commitment to green jobs and a just transition to clean energy.

But the Willow project was deemed too important and key to that transition, providing a boost to an Alaska economy that lags behind much of the lower 48 states — much to the relief of IBEW and other labor leaders in the Last Frontier. The project is expected to create about 1,000 skilled construction jobs and IBEW signatory contractors are expected to bid on that work.

"Fundamentally, Alaska is an oil and gas state," Anchorage Local 1547 Business Manager Marcie Obremski said. "That is what we've thrived on. Our members reflect that going back to the [Trans-Alaska Pipeline's construction in the 1970s]."

Dave Reaves, who was Local 1547's business manager for nearly four years before being appointed a Ninth District

international representative in April, said the project is vital not just for labor, but for all of Alaska.

"We rely on oil and gas revenue," Reaves said. "It's one of the major drivers of the state's economy and we've been in one of the longest recessions [dating back to 2014] in our history. We were starting to come out of that before COVID-19 set us back."

Ninth District International Vice President John O'Rourke applauded the move and thanked members who reached out to government officials urging them to support the project.

"Working families have a great friend in President Biden and his administration showed that with this decision," said O'Rourke, whose district includes the entire West Coast along with Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada and part of Idaho. "It's a win for the entire state of Alaska while also balancing the commitment to clean energy, which also employs many of our members. This is great news for the entire IBEW."

At first glance, the decision to support Willow might look like a reversal for Biden, who has insisted that a move to cleaner, non-fossil fuels be part of any major infrastructure project.

The proposed infrastructure bill

agreed upon between a group of Senate Democrats and Republicans in late June designated \$100 billion for clean energy projects.

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland opposed the Willow project when it was first approved by the Trump administration when she was a New Mexico congresswoman.

Plus, Biden canceled plans to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on his first day in office, a centerpiece project of the previous administration.

But unlike the Wildlife Refuge plans, which opened an entire new area of drilling on land previously committed to environmental protection, the Willow project will be conducted on the Northwest Petroleum Reserve Alaska, which has been set aside for oil and gas drilling since 1923. It is owned by the federal government and managed by the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management.

The IBEW and the rest of the Alaska labor community weren't the only ones supporting the project. It also had the support of many environmental organizations and Indigenous groups who have opposed other drilling projects in the past.

According to the New York Times, George Edwardson, the president of the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, wrote in a letter to Haaland that oil drilling was "critical to the economic survival of the eight Inupiat villages that call this region home."

The Alaska congressional delegation, which is composed entirely of Repub-



licans, also lobbied the administration to support it. Sen. Lisa Murkowski told the Anchorage Daily News the brief showed the administration understood the project's importance to the state.

"This is a good day for Alaska," she said.

Obremski said one of the goals in adding new members will be to increase opportunities to the Indigenous population. Local 1547 has jurisdiction throughout the nation's largest state.

"When you fly into Seattle, you see a lot of cranes because of all the construction," Obremski said. "We have not seen that kind of vertical construction in Alaska for a very long time. This oil and gas project is a really big deal for our members and future members."

Alaska AFL-CIO President Joelle Hall, who worked closely with the IBEW and other unions to get the project approved, said most Alaskans realize the U.S. needs to make a transition to cleaner energy, even with the state's oil and gas heritage.

Projects like Willow will help with the transition, she said.

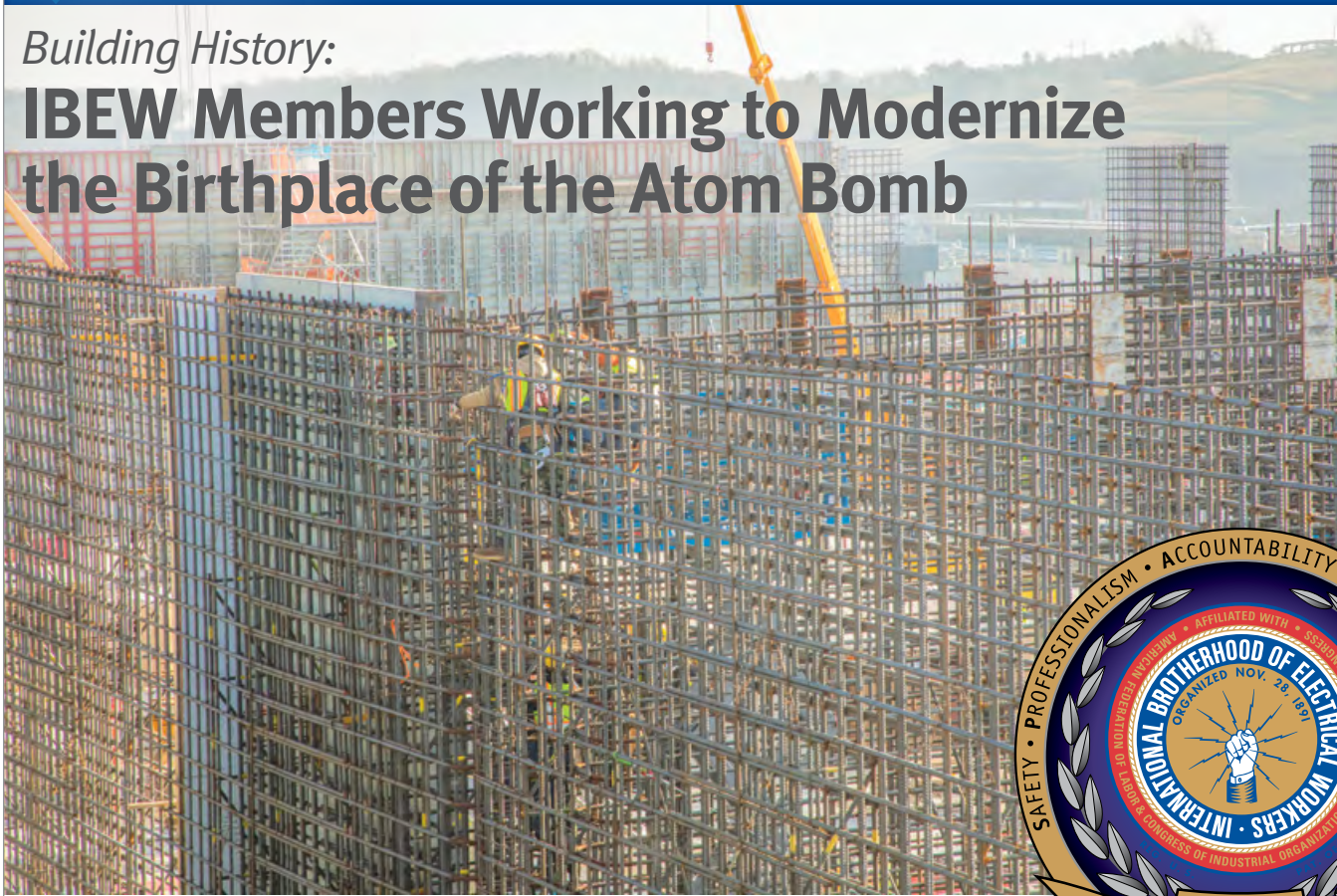
"It's going to be a long day coming before you can totally turn off the switch for petroleum," said Hall, noting that about one-fourth of the Alaska state government's budget comes from oil and natural gas. "The question now is where can you produce that petroleum safely and then safely transport it. We have a plan that is realistic."

ConocoPhillips, the developer of the Willow project, has said it will include five drill sites, two airstrips, hundreds of miles of pipeline, 37 miles of gravel road and a processing facility to prepare oil for shipment. It could produce up to 160,000 barrels of oil daily and about 600 million barrels over three decades.

"These are really good jobs performed by highly skilled construction hands," Hall said. "Developing the Arctic is really tricky. It takes a person of really high skill who is able to endure a really awful climate, but we have about 60 years of experience in doing it." ■

Continued from page 1

Building History: IBEW Members Working to Modernize the Birthplace of the Atom Bomb



Construction on the U.S. Dept. of Energy's Uranium Processing Facility near Oak Ridge, Tenn., began in 2018. Now that much of the steel, concrete and lumber infrastructure is in place, top left, growing ranks of electrical workers represented by Oak Ridge Local 270 are working alongside other building trades members to install electrical equipment as well as millions of feet of wires and cables on what's about to become an official IBEW Code of Excellence jobsite: in the Mechanical Electrical Building, top right; outside one UPF substation, bottom left; at a new 13.8kV switchgear in the MEB, bottom center; and at one of two capacitor banks near another substation, bottom right.

A Storied History

By 1943, as America's involvement in World War II entered its second year, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration had concluded that developing weapons that tapped into the raw power of fission could help end the global conflict that already had killed millions. The War Department selected Oak Ridge for its development site in part because of its relatively easy access to the electricity provided by the various dams and other infrastructure of the Tennessee Valley Authority, another IBEW success story.

Enticing electrical workers to come and work in rural Tennessee was a challenge at first. In his book, "Now It Can Be Told," Army Lt. Gen. Lesley Groves, who oversaw the Manhattan Project, detailed how Robert Patterson, Roosevelt's undersecretary of war, worked closely with then-IBEW International President Ed J. Brown to come up with a recruitment plan that included transportation benefits and the transfer of seniority rights.

"This plan was a lifesaver," Groves wrote. "There was an almost complete absence of labor trouble, despite the fact that as many as four crafts were often involved in setting up a single piece of

apparatus. To me our excellent labor relations were a great satisfaction."

Spurred by the urgency of the war effort, these IBEW members worked with the other building trades to get Y-12's 175 buildings, some as large as football fields, up and running in just 18 months. This time around, the upgraded UPF is on a somewhat more leisurely schedule, albeit just as strict, a seven-year trajectory that's targeted for completion by 2025.

Preparing for the Future

Smith said about a fifth of the IBEW workforce getting the job done at the UPF is, and should continue to be, apprentices. "The project's working with us on rotating them in," he said. "It's great for the contractor and great experience for our apprentices."

As in the 1940s, these electrical workers are joining nearly 2,000 union brothers and sisters from other building trades who are also working on the UPF. That size of a union presence is significant, Hall said, because organizing workers remains a challenge in Tennessee. It's been that way since 1947 when Tennessee became one of the first to adopt a "right-

to-work" law after the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act made targeting unions and union members the law of the land.

Still, a handful of unions including the IBEW represent workers at Y-12 and the UPF, including electricians from nearby Knoxville Local 760, who will continue to handle maintenance tasks at both facilities, Hall said. Upon completion of the UPF, the Y-12 facility is set to be fully decommissioned by the mid-2030s.

"A nonunion workforce is out there" to pull from, Hall said. "The UPF might not be your typical construction site, but like any other IBEW job, it still pays well and has attractive benefits." Another plus to having workers fairly negotiate their union wages, he said, is how their hard-earned money has flowed through to support the Oak Ridge area's businesses for decades.

No matter what, considering how UPF's need for electrical workers could wind up nearly tripling the size of Local 270's membership, "it's going to be a great opportunity for the local to be organizing," Hall said.

Construction on the UPF has continued uninterrupted since 2018, even as lockdowns took place around the world to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Smith said. Both the workers and

the work itself were considered essential to national security.

"Much of the structure work is complete," he said. "But there's a bunch of electrical work still to be done." Local 270's electricians already have helped bring online several of the UPF's infrastructure pieces, but remaining projects, including buildings for processing, salvaging and mechanical/electrical, remain fully on track for completion by 2025.

The men and women of Local 270 who are building at the UPF site take their jobs extremely seriously, Smith said. "They fully understand that the high-security environment requires a major commitment."

The Department of Energy's stringent security requirements remain a consideration as well. "It can take months of rigorous background checks that often involve the FBI before our members can gain access inside with all the secret stuff," Smith said, including workers who might have direct access to nuclear materials at some point. Everyone working at Y-12 and UPF goes through some sort of background check, he said, with the depth of the investigations dependent on where the work can take them.

"Working in nuclear is still serious

business and potentially hazardous," he said. The Department of Energy continuously monitors workers' exposure to radiation, including daily inspections, regular safety stand-downs and worker-driven safety initiatives. "For them and for us, safety is paramount," Smith said. "It's very intensive."

And while Y-12 remains as safe and secure as it was when it was first commissioned, Hall said, the UPF is going to be "a whole lot safer for our workers and the public." Plus, the project is taking advantage of the efficiencies developed over the last 80 years. "The new main building is maybe a quarter of the size of the building it's replacing," Hall estimates.

Consolidated National Security has been impressed with the work that the IBEW has been putting in at the UPF, Smith said. "They've even asked us to make it a Code of Excellence job," he said, with work underway to come up with a Code training program for the UPF's workforce.

Hall is not too surprised by this recent development. "Word's been getting out about the Code in Tennessee. It's a valuable tool for the IBEW and for our contractors to use to let our customers know that they will be satisfied with our results," he said. ■



Pittsburgh Local 5 Hosts VP, Labor Secretary for Roundtable on Organizing

Business Manager Mike Dunleavy had less than four days' notice before Vice President Kamala Harris, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and an entourage of aides, media and Secret Service swept into Local 5's headquarters in Pittsburgh the third Monday in June.

Harris and Walsh came to listen and learn at a roundtable featuring Local 5 organizer Bill Garner and counterparts from seven other unions.

Beforehand, they held a flurry of private meetings in the massive facility, including a half hour that Dunleavy and Recording Secretary Mike Varholla were able to spend with Walsh.

"The previous Thursday we got a call from the White House asking if we'd be willing to host them," Dunleavy said. "Of course we said yes."

He did so happily, despite knowing full well from past VIP visits that "your whole life gets turned upside down."

The following days were a whirlwind of vetting and security protocols — even taps on the local's phone lines — with details dribbled out on a need-to-know basis. Early Monday, June 21, hours before the afternoon event, anyone coming in contact with Harris and Walsh had to be at the hall for a mandatory COVID-19 test.

The roundtable was research for the first-ever White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, led by Harris and Walsh.

President Joe Biden created the task force in April, giving appointed Cabinet members and top advisors six months to report back on ways the federal government can better support union growth and collective bargaining.

"There is no issue we can take on that is too small or too big," Harris said in opening remarks. "If we are going to be strong as an economy, we have to support our work-

ers and make sure they are strong."

In addition to Garner, who introduced Harris and Walsh, panelists included staff and organizers from the Steelworkers, Laborers, Communication Workers, Service Workers, American Federation of Teachers, National Nurses United and Unite HERE.

"If we are going to be strong as an economy, we have to support our workers and make sure they are strong."

— Vice President Kamala Harris

They rotated through questions and answers about barriers to organizing in different industries, ways to appeal to potential members, reasons workers give for being reluctant to join a union, fears about retaliation and more.

It was a lot of ground to cover in barely two hours. "It just scratched the surface," Garner said. "I think in time they'll go deeper, based on what they heard. They were genuinely seeking information about the concerns of organizers."

Dunleavy, Varholla and a handful of area political leaders were allowed to observe from a corner of the room. The limited access, apparently to allow panelists to speak freely, resulted in a scarcity of news coverage.

"That was disappointing," Dunleavy said. "Union members in particular would have been very pleased to hear the vice president and secretary of labor asking

about 'what's making it hard for you to form a union and what can we do about it?' They came here with the intent of finding out, and that's never happened before."

He and Varholla were thrilled to have the opportunity to talk privately with Walsh prior to the roundtable.

A Boston Laborer who rose to lead the city's building trades before being elected mayor, Walsh is the first union member to head the Labor Department since the brief tenure of a Machinist in the 1970s.

When Walsh was nominated, IBEW leaders in Boston who know him best described a union brother who never forgot where he came from — "truly one of us."

That was exactly what Dunleavy and Varholla said they experienced in Pittsburgh.

"He was in our pipe-bending lab eating a box lunch when we walked in," Dunleavy said. "Down to earth is the perfect way to say it. He speaks our language. He's very easy to relate to."

Varholla said it was like "sitting down and having a conversation with a guy on a jobsite. I can't express the gratitude I have to have someone in that position who actually comes from labor."

They talked about Biden's pro-union agenda, about diversity in the building trades and the positive example that Local 5 has been setting for decades, but mostly they bonded over their shared backgrounds.

"He was a Laborer, so we'd kid each other about different things," Dunleavy said. "He said he wants to come back when there isn't all this hoopla and we said we'd love to give him a tour."

They're also hoping to host President Biden despite how much more security and press "hoopla" it will involve.

"We've had Al Gore, Bill Clinton twice, Hillary twice, Obama, Biden prior to being elected, and now the vice president

Pittsburgh Local 5 hosted Vice President Kamala Harris and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh in June for a historic conversation with eight union organizers, including the local's own Bill Garner. Harris and Walsh came to talk to participants about roadblocks to organizing and how the federal government can help remove them.

and labor secretary," Dunleavy said.

Local 5's sprawling, modern complex, with its offices, meeting hall and training center under one roof, is well suited for such visits.

Dunleavy even has approved changes to the building and grounds to satisfy Secret Service protocols, such as reversing the swing of certain doors and removing a curb and a tree in order to connect a driveway with a thru street.

Even with all their experience, Dunleavy and Varholla aren't jaded. They still marvel at how fast and efficiently the White House, Secret Service and multiple federal, state and local agencies come together to plan and secure an event.

"It's so fluid. That's what we always laugh about," Varholla said. "They'll come up with a timeline, but 99.9% of the time it alters. And somehow it goes off seamlessly."

June 21 was a remarkable day in the history of America's unions, International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said.

"The value of it can't be overstated. You had the vice president and secretary of labor walk into a union hall — our hall — and sit down with a group of union members for two hours," he said. "They weren't campaigning or making a big announcement. They weren't interested in the media at all.

"Their only agenda was to learn about union organizing from the experts, from the people who live and breathe it. The workers around the table were the VIPs that day." ■

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

Read the very latest news for and about IBEW members, plus download this Electrical Worker and past issues, at IBEW.org.

YouTube & Vimeo

Dozens of short-form videos touching on the interests of IBEW members are available to watch and share on Facebook and Twitter via our official channels at [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](https://www.youtube.com/TheElectricalWorker) and [Vimeo.com/IBEW](https://www.vimeo.com/IBEW).

HourPower

Visit IBEWHourPower.com to watch the

members of

Lincoln, Neb., Locals 265 and 1536



demonstrate how they're proudly helping the Lincoln Electric System meet the electrical energy needs of their community, which has grown by more than 25% since the turn of the century.

ElectricTV

Growing communities depend on reliable power. At ElectricTV.net, lineworker members of Orlando, Fla., Local 222 show how their hard work with Duke Energy is bringing



modern transmission lines to Pasco County and its booming Tampa-area townships.



THE IBEW's 2021 PHOTO CONTEST

Enter Today!
Deadline: Oct. 1

1st Place: \$200

2nd Place: \$150

3rd Place: \$100

Honorable
Mention: \$50

The 2021 IBEW Photo Contest is here, and with it a chance to show your union sisters and brothers what being a member of the greatest union in the world means to you. So, grab your cameras and smartphones and get to it! We want to see your best shots of 2021. See below for rules and details, and as always, contact us at media@ibew.org for more information.

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.

Tree Trimming Academy Brings Career Opportunities to Detroit Area

'Something to Be Proud Of' for Detroit Residents Eager to Work in the Trees

Detroit's Tree Trim Academy recently graduated its first class of tree trimmers, providing much-needed talent in a high-demand field and a lucrative career opportunity for area residents.

"The DTE Tree Trim Academy is an incredible opportunity for Detroit residents to learn a valuable skill, make an excellent wage and contribute to improvements being made in our neighborhoods," said Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan in a statement. "I appreciate DTE's commitment to diversifying its workforce and the partnership of IBEW Local 17 and Focus: HOPE to assist Detroiters for this innovative program."

The tree trimming academy is a collaboration between Detroit Local 17, utility company DTE, the city of Detroit and Focus: HOPE, a local nonprofit organization that provides services including employment training and assistance.

Some 70% of power outages are caused by trees, and a lot of today's trimmers are reaching retirement age, creating a need for a new generation to fill these much-needed jobs. The tree trimming academy was created to establish a new pipeline of talent. While the program is open to anyone, there's an emphasis on actively recruiting from Detroit and the surrounding area to make sure as many jobs as possible go to locals who might not otherwise be aware of such an opportunity.

"We strive to build an empowered and diverse workforce and are excited to help develop more well-trained and well-paid workers who put safety first," said Local 17 Business Manager James Shaw. "Growing



The training program is open to all with a focus on recruiting Detroit-area residents.



Detroit Local 17 is part of a new effort to recruit more line clearance tree trimmers with a focus on bringing in local residents to meet the demand.

and developing local talent has to be a focus to best maintain safe, reliable energy."

The six-week training program was designed to equip participants with all the skills and training needed to eventually move into Local 17's apprenticeship pipeline. Graduates also earn a commercial driver's license and a certificate in customer service.

Upon completion, successful graduates go to work as woodsmen, an entry-level job that acts as a sort of audition. If all goes well, the pre-apprentices then move on to a nine-day boot camp, run by Local 17, which helps to prepare them for the formal apprenticeship.

Local 17 runs one of only two Department of Labor-certified tree trimming programs in the country. It currently has around 800-900 line clearance tree trimmers, but it's not enough to meet demand.

"We're having a hard time filling calls," Shaw said. "DTE has had to bring in out-of-state crews at times, so we're trying to create more opportunity for local residents to fill these jobs."

Academy participants are recruited and screened by Focus: HOPE, which helps the program reach more people than the traditional outreach done by Local 17 and DTE.

"They can cast a wider net than what we've been able to do so far," said DTE Lead Instructor and Local 17 member Clinton Williams, who also sits in on the interviews with potential candidates.

Academy students start off with Focus: HOPE for their first two weeks. During this time, they have access to wrap-around services that can include anything from assistance with securing child care to

computer and financial literacy.

"The access to wrap-around services is really huge," Williams said. "It lets the participants focus on the work, which positions them for success instead of having to overcome unnecessary obstacles."

From there the potential tree trimmers go to Local 17 for another two weeks where they get trained on climbing trees, tying knots and chainsaw safety among other skills. They also get an introduction to the Code of Excellence and the importance of labor unions. The final two weeks are spent earning a commercial driver's license and a customer service certificate.

On the first day of the academy with Local 17, which created the curriculum, participants take turns shooting a basketball into a hoop from a bucket truck. It's a way to teach them how concentrate on the task at hand and not any fears that might be rising up from being so far off the ground.

"Most people have a fear of heights to some degree, so it's about learning how to control that fear so you can do your work," Williams said.

While shooting hoops might be fun, other aspects are downright dangerous, and still more require a fair amount of math and engineering know-how.

"It's an engineering feat to be able to bring a tree down without damaging any of the surrounding area," Williams said. "There's a lot more to the job than most people realize."

It's no surprise then that not everyone makes it through. Only about 30% to 40% of a cohort will usually make it to the end, said Shaw.



“It’s nine days of climbing trees, every single day,” Shaw said. “And you can’t be afraid of things like live power lines and working 60 to 70 feet in the air on a windy day.”

For those who do make it through, they can end up earning more than \$100,000 per year. And it’s an experience that develops a strong bond among the classmates, one that can last long past those initial six weeks.

“I completed my apprenticeship in 2003 and still keep in touch with my cohort,” Williams said.

Having that journeyman license really means something when you’ve proven yourself on so many levels, says Shaw.

“It raises the level of how they see themselves as well as the trade,” Shaw said. “It’s really something to be proud of.”

Participants are trained on climbing trees and tying knots among other skills, including shooting basketballs from a bucket truck to get comfortable working at 60-70 foot heights.

All photo credits: Mark Houston, DTE Energy



part of the appeal.

“When I’m up in the trees I get an adrenaline rush,” said Local 17 journeyman Matthew Landenberger in a video from DTE. “I have to remember that it’s a job and I’m not just having fun. It’s exhilarating.”

The first class of 12 finished the program in early June and all 12 made it through, Williams said.

“That was really nice. And it was great to have a woman in the class as well as a good cross-section of the metro Detroit area. We want our workforce to reflect the community that we work in.”

What’s more, that inaugural class is telling others about the program.

“That word of mouth is really promising,” Williams said. “I’ve already been in some interviews with people who heard about the program from a friend who went through it.”

The second class started on June 21 and Shaw and Williams say they’d like to have about four classes for 2021 and five or six next year. Including this year’s class of graduates, the program plans to create 200 jobs in the Motor City by 2024. ■



“When I’m up in the trees, I get an adrenaline rush. I have to remember that it’s a job and I’m not just having fun.”

— Local 17 Journeyman Matthew Landenberger



NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Manitoba Hydro Members End Successful Strike for a Fair Contract

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Local 2034 members are breathing easier since the end of their 9-week strike in May.

“Everybody can get back to normal,” said Local 2034 Business Manager Mike Espenell. “It’s been a long road and we’re happy to be at an end that benefits everyone.”

The roughly 2,300 members who work for Crown Corporation Manitoba Hydro have been dealing with an expired contract since the fall of 2018, and the province’s anti-worker Progressive Conservative government led by Premier Brian Pallister has been interfering in the process, Espenell said, dragging it out and making it harder to reach an agreement. With this hurdle, plus the potential of new anti-union legislation on the horizon, Local 2034 members voted overwhelmingly to go on strike.

“Nobody ever wants to go on strike,” Espenell said of the action that began in March and ended in May. “It was a difficult decision, and certainly not one we took lightly. But it was the right thing to do under the circumstances.”

Local 2034 members do everything from generation and transmission to distribution, “soup-to-nuts,” Espenell said. No one wanted to inconvenience their customers, but negotiations were stalling. Despite demand, the provincial utility was pushing for next-to-no real wage increases and layoffs. And in 2020, workers were mandated to take three unpaid days off, which translated to a loss of 1.25% in annual wages. When factored into Hydro’s proposed offer, Espenell says the overall proposed wage increases would’ve only worked out to a 0.5% bump over four years.

“It’s unprecedented to go on this long,” Espenell said of the extended negotiations. “I can’t think of anything like it for any public sector union in recent history.”

This time it was all about cutting costs. The government’s meddling made the process worse for Hydro employees. Among other actions, it mandated wage freezes for two years. Manitoba Hydro has also let staffing numbers dwindle, with hiring freezes across all areas for the last two years.

“We have a history of working collaboratively with Hydro,” Espenell said. “But the government is handcuffing the whole process.”

Following the end of the local’s first strike in more than a decade, the terms of the new contract will be determined by the Manitoba Labour Board, a neutral third-party tasked with such cases. The hearing was set for July 7 and a decision is expected in early August.

The timing is crucial, says Espenell, since the labour board might not be

around much longer. The PC government is expected to push for passage of Bill 16, the Labour Relations Amendment Act, which would essentially do away with the alternate dispute resolution that helps end strikes longer than 60 days. Without the option of appealing to the arbitration-like body when negotiations stall, unions could be left out to dry.

“They could dictate negotiations without ever being at the bargaining table,” Espenell said. “The bill allows the government to puppet the public sector however they want, pulling even more strings.”

Under the current government, Espenell says it’s practically a foregone conclusion that the bill will pass. That was a factor when members cast their votes to strike. They needed to act while the Labour Board was still an option. And with the success of their strike, which was done on a rolling basis to alleviate customer inconvenience as much as possible,

Winnipeg, Manitoba Local 2034 members successfully ended a 9-week strike in May, their first in more than a decade.

other public sector unions are taking note.

“The nurses and other groups can see the writing on the wall too, and they want to do all they can before that door closes,” Espenell said. “It’s not that anybody wants to go on strike. We just want more agreements.”

Bill 16 isn’t the PC government’s only attack on unions. In 2017, the governing party introduced legislation that would have mandated a two-year wage freeze for government employees once their existing contracts expired, but the court threw it out in 2020, calling it a “draconian measure” that would greatly



inhibit a union’s bargaining power.

“Our members at Manitoba Hydro are among the best in the business and they deserve a fair contract,” said First District International Vice President Tom Reid. “Strik-

ing is never an easy choice, but as they demonstrated, sometimes it’s the necessary course of action. I’m proud of our brothers and sisters for standing up and making the hard decision to do what was right.” ■

Les membres de Manitoba Hydro ont mis fin à une grève réussie

Les membres de la section locale 2034 à Winnipeg, Manitoba respire mieux depuis la fin de leur grève en mai qui a duré neuf semaines.

« Tout le monde peut revenir à la normale, » mentionne le gérant d’affaires Mike Espenell de la section locale 2034. « La route a été longue et nous sommes heureux d’arriver à une fin qui est profitable pour tous. »

Les quelques 2 300 membres à l’emploi de la société d’État Manitoba Hydro travaillent sous une convention collective expirée depuis l’automne, et le gouvernement progressiste-conservateur antitruvailleurs dirigé par le premier ministre Brian Pallister s’est ingéré dans le processus, déclare M. Espenell, pour faire traîner les choses et rendre la convention collective plus difficile à conclure. Face à cet obstacle en plus d’une nouvelle législation antisyndicale éventuelle, les membres du local 2034 ont voté en grande majorité en faveur de la grève.

« Personne ne veut jamais faire la grève, » déclare M. Espenell en parlant de la grève qui a eu lieu de mars à mai. « C’était une décision difficile à prendre, et certainement pas été prise à la légère, mais on a fait ce qu’il fallait dans les circonstances. »

Les membres du local 2034 font de tout, de la production et la transmission à la distribution, « de la soupe jusqu’aux noix, » dit M. Espenell. Personne ne voulait incommoder ses clients, mais les négocia-

tions étaient sur un point mort. Malgré la demande, la compagnie d’électricité de la province a fait pression pour qu’il n’y ait pratiquement aucune augmentation salariale et de procéder à des mises à pied. En 2020, les travailleurs ont été obligés de prendre trois jours de congés non rémunérés, c’est-à-dire une perte de 1,25 % en salaire annuel. Si l’on tient compte de l’offre proposée par Hydro, M. Espenell affirme que les augmentations salariales proposées n’auraient représenté qu’une hausse de 0,5 % sur quatre ans.

« C’est sans précédent d’éterniser les négociations, » déclare Espenell, en parlant de la prolongation des négociations. « Je ne peux même me souvenir d’une chose similaire dans une histoire récente pour un syndicat du secteur public. »

Cette fois-ci, il s’agissait de réduire les coûts. L’ingérence du gouvernement a aggravé le processus pour le personnel d’Hydro. Parmi d’autres mesures, il a imposé un gel salarial pendant deux ans. L’hydro-électricité du Manitoba a également diminué le nombre de l’effectif avec le gel d’embauche dans les régions pendant les deux dernières années.

« Nous avons l’habitude de travailler en collaboration avec Hydro, » mentionne M. Espenell.

« Mais le gouvernement a pris en otage l’ensemble du processus. »

Après la fin de la première grève de la section locale depuis plus de dix ans,

l’application de la nouvelle convention collective sera déterminée par la Commission du Travail du Manitoba, une tierce partie neutre responsable de traiter ces cas. L’audience est prévue pour le 7 juillet et la décision est attendue au début du mois d’août.

Il est essentiel d’agir rapidement considérant que la Commission ne restera pas en place longtemps, déclare M. Espenell. On s’attend à ce que le gouvernement conservateur provincial pousse pour faire adopter le projet de loi 16, Loi modifiant la loi sur les relations du travail, qui éliminerait essentiellement le mode alternatif pour le règlement de différends, qui aide à mettre fin aux grèves de plus de 60 jours. Sans la possibilité de faire appel auprès d’un comité d’arbitrage au moment où les négociations stagnent, les syndicats peuvent être laissés pour compte.

« Ils peuvent imposer leurs dires sans être présents à la table de négociation, » mentionne M. Espenell. « Ce projet de loi permet au gouvernement de manipuler le secteur public comme bon lui semble, lui donnant plus de marge de manœuvre. »

L’adoption de ce projet de loi sous le gouvernement actuel est pratiquement acquise, dit M. Espenell. Il s’agissait d’un facteur déterminant lorsque les membres ont voté en faveur de la grève. Ils devaient agir alors que le recours à la Commission était encore une possibilité. Et avec le succès de la grève, qui s’est déroulé sur une

base continue afin de remédier le plus possible aux inconvénients que pourraient vivre les clients, les autres syndicats représentant le secteur public prenaient des notes.

« Les infirmières et les infirmiers ainsi que d’autres secteurs d’activités ont vu le résultat et ils veulent également en profiter avant qu’il ne soit trop tard, » déclare M. Espenell. « Cela ne signifie pas que tout le monde veut faire la grève, nous voulons simplement conclure plus d’ententes. »

Le projet de loi 16 n’est pas la seule attaque contre les syndicats fait le gouvernement conservateur de la province. En 2017, le parti au pouvoir a présenté un projet de loi qui exige un gel salarial d’une durée de deux ans pour les employés du gouvernement une fois que leur convention collective existante aurait expiré, mais la Cour l’a rejeté en 2020 en la qualifiant de « mesure draconienne », ce qui affaiblira considérablement le pouvoir de négociation des syndicats.

« Nos membres au Manitoba Hydro sont les meilleurs dans l’industrie et ils méritent d’obtenir une convention collective équitable, » mentionne le vice-président international Tom Reid du premier district. « Faire la grève n’est jamais un choix facile à faire, mais comme ils l’ont démontré, parfois c’est nécessaire. Je suis fier de nos consœurs et de nos confrères qui se sont levés avec bravoure et ont pris une décision difficile de faire ce qui est juste. » ■

THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

IBEW Mobilizing Helps Kill Right-to-Work in New Hampshire, for Now

Following months of phone calls, emails and text messages from IBEW members in New Hampshire, Democrats and Republicans in the state's House of Representatives voted June 3 to reject yet another attempt to enact a so-called "right-to-work" law.

"We appreciate the willingness of New Hampshire House members to listen to our concerns and the concerns expressed by dozens of New Hampshire businesses," said Second District International Vice President Michael P. Monahan. "We're grateful that they ultimately acted to protect the interests of thousands of working men and women in New Hampshire."

Introduced in the New Hampshire Senate on Jan. 6, SB 61 called for allowing employees covered by a collectively bargained contract to enjoy that agreement's benefits without paying their fair share to cover the costs of administering it.

"Senate Bill 61 would have undermined New Hampshire union members and private companies that utilize union workers," said Monahan, whose jurisdiction covers the Granite State as well as Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont.

There have been at least 30 unsuccessful right-to-work bills that have been introduced in New Hampshire over the past 40 years, Monahan said. The IBEW and its worker-friendly allies worked with state House legislators from both parties to successfully stop the previous attempt in 2017.

Knowing that a fresh battle over the law was coming again in 2021, the IBEW last fall began a full-court press to stop it, said Second District International Representative Ed Starr.

"Right after the elections last November, we started doing weekly strategy calls with all the New Hampshire locals plus the ones in Massachusetts that have members who live in New Hampshire," Starr said. "We did this every week up until the vote, and primarily because the IBEW was on the ball, things played out the way we hoped they would."

That's not to say there were no defeats along the way to the June 3 vote. With Republicans holding a slim majority in the Senate, in February that chamber narrowly passed SB 61 and then sent

it to the House, where the GOP holds a bigger advantage over Democrats, who were in lockstep opposition to the anti-worker measure.

"This was not our first rodeo, and we knew [the final vote] was going to be tight," said IBEW activist Peggy McCarthy, vice president of Manchester Local 2320 and herself a former Republican representative in New Hampshire's House. "Knowing it was at least possible to win helped a lot."

The COVID-19 pandemic, of course, made mobilizing much more difficult than in past right-to-work fights, McCarthy said. "We couldn't work the way we did before. Almost everything was remote. To be able to virtually come up with our strategy and make it work was impressive."

Even without a lot of in-person contact, activists still were able to rely on their ongoing positive dealings with many of the IBEW's allies from previous right-to-work battles.

"Our opposition had every reason to expect that this would be their time," McCarthy said. "But everything turns on relationships in New Hampshire."

Twenty-seven states have ratified right-to-work laws, but none of those are in the northeast. This latest attempt to turn New Hampshire into a right-to-work wedge in the New England, Monahan said, was pushed largely by out-of-state special-interest groups, such as the Business and Industry Association of New Hampshire, based in Washington, D.C.

"This was never a New Hampshire issue, and that was obvious at every step of the legislative process," Monahan said. "Everybody took it seriously."

Democratic legislators in the state faced a massive amount of pressure from their Republican colleagues to support it, while dozens of state-based union-friendly companies turned out to oppose the bill during hearings held by the House. Should SB 61 have reached his desk, Gov. Chris Sununu had indicated he would sign it into law. All along, though, activists kept their emphasis on workers, not politics, McCarthy said.

On June 3, there were actually two SB 61-related votes held in the House. The measure itself was defeated, 199 to 175, with 21 Republicans joining all but a single Democrat to oppose it. A second vote, on a motion to prevent right-to-work from being introduced again until at least 2023, passed with bipartisan support, 196 to 178.

Monahan thanked the members from New Hampshire's IBEW locals —

Concord Local 490, Dover Local 1837, Portsmouth Local 2071 and Manchester Local 2320 — who turned out in force, virtually, to oppose SB 61, as did members of Massachusetts locals 103 and 104 in Boston and 1505 in Waltham.

"We had the AFL-CIO and the building trades council working with us on this, too," Starr said. "We made a plan together to go out and get the support we needed."

The two men also consider McCarthy something of a "most valuable player" in the SB 61 fight, especially considering how she works nights as a network operations center technician for Consolidated Communications.

"Peggy was pivotal, making calls when she could during the day," Starr said. With her experience as a former member of the New Hampshire House, "she knew something about every member of the Legislature. She deserves a bunch of credit."

"It was a great concerted effort, but nobody would deny that the IBEW was a big reason right-to-work failed in New Hampshire, again," Monahan said. ■

Illinois Moves Forward With Right-to-Work Ban

Illinois voters will have the chance to more permanently ban right-to-work laws when they go to the polls next year.

"Voters in Illinois know what most working people across the country know, that right-to-work laws are wrong. They're bad for workers and bad for the economy," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, who began his career and remains a member of Rock Island, Ill., Local 145. "This is a chance to enshrine the true rights of working people into the state constitution and say once and for all that every employee deserves a voice on the job and the right to bargain collectively."

The Workers' Rights Amendment would establish a new section in the Illinois Bill of Rights that would limit the power of the General Assembly, state, or any local government to pass a law that restricts or prohibits collective bargaining over wages, hours and terms and conditions of employment, including private sector workers' rights to contract for union security agreements.

The amendment passed both the state House and Senate with bipartisan support in May. Since this type of legislation doesn't require a governor's signature, the next step is for the issue to go before voters via ballot, which will happen in November 2022. It will need approval from three-fifths of all those voting on the question or a simple majority of all ballots cast in the election to be ratified, reported Capitol News Illinois.

Despite mountains of evidence demonstrating their many shortcomings, right-to-work laws have proliferated across the U.S. The laws, largely championed by anti-union businesses and their allies, allow employees to access the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement without having to pay any fees for them. Consequently, union budgets are starved,



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user Shaun Greiner

Illinois legislators voted to enshrine collective bargaining rights into the state's constitution, sending the issue to voters via ballot initiative for the 2022 elections.

weakening their bargaining power.

Currently, 27 states have these nefariously named laws on the books, including neighboring states Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. According to a new study from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois fares significantly better for having avoided this pitfall.

Among the findings, when compared to right-to-work states, Illinois workers' have a 6% higher annual income, are 5% more likely to have health insurance coverage, are 3% more likely to own their homes and are 4% more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher. Worker poverty is also lower. Illinoisans also have 32% fewer on-the-job fatalities.

"The data shows that the states that are most effective at building middle-class jobs and delivering economic growth are those that support workers' rights and collective bargaining," wrote study authors Frank Manzo and Robert Bruno. "This suggests that passing the proposed Workers' Rights Amendment would promote good jobs, safe workplaces, and a strong economy for the people of Illinois."

An earlier study from ILEPI found that there are 31% fewer registered apprentices in right-to-work states and that economic productivity is 17% lower per worker.

"Over the past year, we've come to rely on many of our hourly workers as essential frontline heroes who have more than earned the right to bargain for fair wages and safe working conditions," wrote Marc Poulos, executive director and counsel of the Indiana, Illinois and Iowa Foundation for Fair Contracting, a labor-management organization, in an op-ed for the Chicago Sun Times. "So-called right-to-work laws are designed to chip away at this principle. And the data shows that they not only have short-changed workers, but they have proven to be fundamentally bad economic policy."

Earlier this year, both New Hampshire and Montana legislators voted against right-to-work in their respective states. And the Missouri General Assembly is once again considering its own right-to-work law, despite Show Me State voters overwhelmingly rejecting such a measure in 2018.

At the federal level, the Protecting

the Right to Organize Act would do away with right-to-work laws altogether and enact numerous other worker protections. The PRO Act passed the House earlier this year, and has the support of President Joe Biden, but has stalled in the Senate. ■

Biden Budget Proposal Extends Lifeline to Existing Nuclear

The Biden Administration announced a proposal to extend up to \$1 billion in tax credits to existing nuclear plants, advancing a priority the IBEW has long fought for as a win both for good jobs and a cleaner environment.

The Production Tax Credit expansion is part of the administration's multitrillion-dollar plan to rebuild American manufacturing, infrastructure and energy sectors to face the challenge of a rising China.

PTCs have supported the construction of carbon-free wind, solar, storage and nuclear generation for years, but they have never been extended to existing nuclear plants.

"This just gives nuclear parity with other clean energy producers," said Assistant to the President for Government Affairs Austin Keyser. "It also sends a very important message that nuclear is indispensable in the fight against climate change."

Over the last decade, about 10 nuclear reactors have shut down, often because competitive energy markets favor intermittent producers like wind and solar and carbon-emitting gas peaker plants.

The federal government "has not historically subsidized plants, but this is a moment to consider [it] to make sure we keep the current fleet active," said Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm in testimony before a House Appropriations subcommittee in June. "We are not going to be able to achieve our climate goals if nuclear power plants shut down. We have to find ways to keep them operating."

The PTCs will direct aid to nuclear plants in competitive marketplaces with pricing structures that do not fully compensate nuclear producers for the full value



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user Warren Lemay

Even with limited access to New Hampshire's Statehouse (above) to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, IBEW activists joined working men and women from around the state to help defeat, again, an attempt to enact a so-called "right to work" law.

they provide to the grid. Many competitive marketplaces like the PJM Interconnection, which covers all or part of 13 states, including New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Illinois, only pay per megawatt produced and ignore the reliability nuclear plants provide. The marketplace also ignores so-called grid services like in-rush power to fire up air conditioners and voltage smoothing that protects sensitive electronics.

Plants would be eligible for the credits if they demonstrate a good operation and safety record, that the facility is facing financial operating losses and that future projections include continued losses and that emissions of various air pollutants would increase if the facility closed.

The proposal also includes a requirement that the credits would be paired with “strong labor standards, benefiting employers that provide good-paying and good-quality jobs.”

A great deal of energy and federal money has gone to support the construction of new nuclear power plants. Some of that support was funneled through the so-called 45j program which offered eight years of subsidies to new nuclear power plants.

The Biden administration also requested a 57% increase in funding for the Office of Nuclear Energy to nearly \$2 billion, much of which will go to support research and roll-out of the advanced nuclear plants.

And the results have been encouraging for nuclear energy supporters. More than 20 U.S. companies are currently developing advanced reactors that have the potential to offer greater flexibility in power, size and operation. In May, for example, Terrapower announced the construction of a Sodium-powered nuclear facility on the site of a shuttered Wyoming coal powerhouse.

Over the years, though, much less attention has been paid to maintaining the existing fleet of 94 nuclear power reactors, even though they will be “absolutely essential” if the country is to meet Biden’s commitment to reduce carbon emissions 50% economy-wide by 2030, said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson.

“It’s simple: 20% of total U.S. energy production and 56% of carbon-free energy

production comes from these reactors. We used to have more than 100 of them. Letting any more close would be a disaster for the people who work in those plants and a tragedy for our country and our clean energy targets,” he said.

The aid comes too late for the Indian Point nuclear plant outside New York City. The last of three reactors at that site shut down in April.

But it might be enough to convince Exelon to change its plans to close four reactors at two additional plants by November.

Like most of the nuclear reactors that have been shuttered, Exelon’s plants in Illinois are perfectly safe, produce power reliably and cheaply, and will for decades to come.

But wind and solar are extremely cheap — in part because of tax incentives — at the times of day when they produce the most energy. Nuclear operates around-the-clock at a near-fixed cost. That means nuclear power, critically, is available when wind and solar aren’t, but those plants have to sell power at a loss during the times when wind and solar are abundant. Without a pricing structure that accounts for nuclear’s stabilizing influence and consistent availability, the economics make little sense.

The production tax credits are not the only Biden administration proposal to redesign the energy marketplace to pay nuclear generation for all the services it provides.

Biden also supported a Clean Energy Standard in the infrastructure plan that would require utilities to prioritize purchasing carbon-free power. The goal is to have markets reward the outcomes our economy needs, in this case energy production that doesn’t disrupt the atmosphere.

There is little support, Keyser said, for a national energy policy that would rationalize pricing and include payments for grid services nationwide. The regional and state energy regulatory system is too entrenched, and opposition would be enormous.

As it stands, the only opposition to extending the PTC to existing nuclear powerhouses comes from some, but not all, environmentalists and competing producers. He said the coalition of labor, utilities,

and the rest of the environmental movement make him optimistic the proposal will pass.

In her testimony, Secretary Granholm stated the challenge bluntly, Keyser said.

“She said we have to add hundreds and hundreds of gigawatts of clean energy to the grid. She’s right,” Keyser said. “It’s an easy win and a hell of a lot cheaper to keep what we already have.” ■

The Limits of Labor Law — and How the PRO Act Can Fix it

America’s current labor law leaves much to be desired from the worker’s perspective, according to new research from the Economic Policy Institute. But there’s a way to fix it — if Congress decides to act.

As just about anyone who has ever tried to organize their workplace can attest, the deck is stacked against them. It’s the rare employer who voluntarily recognizes its employees’ efforts to join together, meaning that workers must fight for their rights in an arena that offers few penalties for anti-union employers and considerable risk for the employees. This imbalance, says EPI, is due in large part to weaknesses in the National Labor Relations Act.

“It is a cruel irony that the two laws most important to workers being able to join together to protect their health and safety on the job — the National Labor Relations Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act — are the two labor and employment laws with the weakest anti-retaliation protections,” write EPI’s Lynn Rhinehart and Celine McNicholas.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the NLRA into law in 1935, he stated that, “A better relationship between labor and management is the high purpose of this Act. By assuring the employees the right of collective bargaining, it fosters the development of the employment contract on a sound and equitable basis.” At a time of high economic uncertainty and labor strife, this was an attempt to establish labor peace by leveling the playing field. And it worked. With passage of the NLRA, also called the Wagner Act after the New York senator who spearheaded its passage, union membership increased as did productivity, wages and improved working conditions.

In the decades since, however, the NLRA has been repeatedly weakened, and with it union membership. Despite nearly half of all working people saying they would join a union if they could, less than 11% actually belong to one. This disconnect between what workers want and what they actually have is because of the unequal playing field created by anti-worker laws and policies that allow employers to get away with undermining their employees’ right to organize.

According to EPI’s analysis, fundamental flaws in the NLRA make it significantly weaker than other labor laws with regard to anti-retaliation protections. As a result, it fails to provide an effective deterrent against employer retaliation — an all-too-common



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user AFL-CIO

The National Labor Relations Act is due for an upgrade and there’s legislation to do that waiting for a vote in the Senate. Among the changes would be an end to right-to-work laws, which Missouri voters resoundingly rejected by ballot in 2018.

occurrence in organizing campaigns.

As the authors note, employers face no monetary penalties for illegally retaliating against workers who exercise their rights, nor do workers receive compensatory damages when they’re illegally fired. And those who are illegally fired don’t get their jobs back while their cases are pending, meaning they can be out of work and losing pay for months or even years. If they do get reinstated, deductions are taken out of the back pay they receive. For workers who want to pursue their anti-retaliation case, their only recourse is through the National Labor Relations Board, which is often slow or fails to act at all.

By contrast, anti-retaliation whistleblower provisions in other laws, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act, provide for monetary damages to workers for the harm they experience, as well as attorneys’ fees to compensate the worker’s legal representation. The NLRA does not. And many other employment laws — though not the OSH Act — allow workers to pursue their case before an administrative agency or federal court if the relevant agency fails to act.

With regard to the OSH Act, the coronavirus has laid bare its deficits. As a separate EPI report noted, workers have the right to file a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the agency born out of the Act, if they feel their working conditions are unsafe. And yet, despite receiving more than 9,000 such complaints by September 2020, OSHA closed more than 80% of them and opened just 199 investigations. And while OSHA does have whistleblower protections, they involve lengthy court proceedings and don’t give workers a right to sue their employers on their own.

“Many workers still do not have a meaningful right to refuse to accept dangerous assignments or protect themselves when they accept those assignments,” said report author Ann Rosenthal. “These structural imbalances are amplified by the fact that many of the most dangerous jobs in this economy are disproportionately held by some of the most vulnerable and lowest-paid workers.”

The solution, says EPI, is the PRO Act. It’s been called the most significant

piece of labor legislation in decades with more than 30 proposed changes to existing law. Among those proposed reforms are increased protections against employer retaliation. Workers would have access to full back pay without deductions for time out of work, front pay if reinstatement is not feasible, consequential damages to compensate for harm caused by the violation, and double the amount of back pay as liquidated damages.

The PRO Act also directs the NLRB to seek preliminary reinstatement of workers when they file retaliation charges and the board finds reasonable cause to believe that a violation occurred. The board would also have to prioritize such cases. If an agency does fail to act in a timely manner, the PRO Act further establishes the right for workers to seek justice in federal court. In such circumstances, the courts would be authorized to award back pay, front pay, liquidated damages, consequential damages, punitive damages and attorneys’ fees to workers who prevail, similar to provisions in most other anti-retaliation and modern whistleblower statutes.

The landmark labor legislation would also streamline the election process — bringing back changes enacted by the Obama administration that were rolled back by the Trump Labor Department — ban captive audience meetings, call for mediation and arbitration if an employer doesn’t commit to a first contract and do away with right-to-work laws, among numerous other improvements.

The PRO Act passed the House of Representatives in March and has the support of President Joe Biden, as well as a majority of likely voters according to a new poll, but has stalled in the Senate.

“The coronavirus may have pulled back the curtain on the precariousness of far too many working families, but these problems pre-date 2020,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “Passing the PRO Act would reinvigorate the right to bargain collectively, which has long been under attack, and restore balance and prosperity to not just the economy, but the lives of working people everywhere.

“We need you to call your senators and tell them the PRO Act is the right solution for working families.” ■



Credit: Exelon

The Quad Cities plant was saved from closure when Illinois passed a bill similar to the Biden administration’s proposal to pay nuclear producers the full value of the clean energy they produce.

CIRCUITS

Wisconsin Member Turns Pandemic Downtime into Scholarship

Pablo Baxter knew nothing about unions five years ago when he looked into an apprenticeship with Madison, Wis., Local 159.

Despite a humble, working-class childhood, he said, “I didn’t really know that unions existed growing up.”

Nowadays, the new journeyman wireman can’t stop talking about them.

“I’m all about getting the union buzz out there,” Baxter said. “I want to bring unions back into the discussions around the dinner table and water cooler.”

He’s better prepared for that mission after finishing a labor studies program paid for by the Union Plus free college benefit.

Available to union members and their families, the benefit covers tuition and other expenses for a wide array of associate and bachelor’s degrees, and certificate programs.

Baxter had an impressive resume already on top of his IBEW training: a bachelor’s degree in business administration; fellow in the New Leaders Council; chair of Local 159’s RENEW committee of young activists; co-chair of the regional AFL-CIO’s parallel committee; and a long list of other activism, volunteerism and continuing education.

Frittering time away simply isn’t in Baxter’s DNA, he said. So, he was determined to put his free hours to good use when COVID-19 slowed down construction in 2020.

“I want to bring unions back into the discussions around the dinner table and water cooler.”

— Local 159 member Pablo Baxter

“I’m always about self-improvement, and being efficient with my time,” he said. “I thought I might as well look into learning if I’m going to be off work.”

He started out as a skeptic, even though he’d heard about the benefit at conferences for RENEW and IBEW women. “Initially, I thought, ‘What are they trying to sell here?’” he said. “Then I did some more research.”

He found a fully accredited program through Eastern Gateway Community College in Ohio with the flexibility of online classes divided into eight-week sessions. And that magic word: free.

“As much as I love education, I’ve got enough student loans to pay,” he said. “This was free. It literally covers every last dollar to fill the gap between your tuition and any federal or state grants you receive — which they help you apply for. It couldn’t be easier.”

Baxter wasn’t accustomed to help like that. “I knew from an early age that whatever I wanted to do, I had to do myself,” he said.

He’d grown up in the Sacramento area in a family with few means. He put himself through college at the city’s Cal State campus, earning a business degree and indulging his passion for art with a course in gallery management. He hoped to make a career of it.

Heeding a professor’s advice, he headed to one of the nation’s art hubs as soon as he graduated. “I bought a one-way train ticket, grabbed everything I



Journeyman wireman and Local 159 activist Pablo Baxter, pictured with other RENEW volunteers at a Wisconsin food bank in April, took advantage of COVID-19 downtime to earn a labor studies certificate using the Union Plus free college benefit. Union members and their families can study for a wide variety of college degrees through the program.

could carry, and took a three-day ride to Chicago,” he said. “I told myself, ‘sink or swim.’”

Baxter couch-surfed at night and explored the city by day, keeping an eye out for galleries.

“I’d go in and ask if they needed any help. I got responses ranging from ‘no,’ to ‘please leave’ to ‘we’re painting our back wall today, we’ve got beer and pizza.’”

He was having a ball, but rarely had more than \$20 in his pocket. Within a year, he followed his then-girlfriend a few hours north to Madison and worked a series of low-wage jobs before landing a better-paying gig as a glass company driver.

But he wanted a real career and began analyzing his options. “I didn’t want to sit in front of a desk,” he said. “I wanted something different, something physical and challenging, a blend of using your brain and your body.”

After exhaustive research online he settled on the trades, narrowing his choice to plumber, equipment operator or electrician.

Asked how he made up his mind, he laughs.

“I chose electrical because the IBEW website was the easiest to navigate.”

The freshman apprentice still knew next to nothing about unions. “I started poking around, visiting the hall, started going to meetings, and then I learned about RENEW,” Baxter said.

He was chair of the group by his second year and has been leading young members in community projects ever since, from clothing and food drives to a polar plunge for charity, service days at a local hospital, adopt-a-highway cleanups, sponsoring a music festival, and more.

The good works put Local 159, the IBEW, and unions in general in a good light, but it’s not just PR. It’s education, Baxter said, thinking back on his lack of awareness.

“I want to reverse that,” he said, full of thoughts about marketing and outreach, including his own visits to high schools to talk about the trades.

“Why don’t I see union billboards on the highway?” he asked. “I know all about Coke and Pepsi.”

At his suggestion, RENEW members also spent six months viewing and discussing a series of labor history videos, some of the same materials that popped up later in Baxter’s curriculum.

“Watching the videos reinforced the solidarity and the brotherhood, learning together about struggles of labor in the past,” he said.

Baxter’s certificate in labor studies builds exponentially on everything he’s taught himself and experienced in recent years, and he has nothing but praise for the Union Plus benefit that made it possible.

“It’s an awesome program,” he said, urging all

union members who think education is out of reach to look into the benefit for themselves or their families.

Areas of study vary among the associate, bachelor’s and certificate programs, but dozens of choices are offered, from business and arts to hospitality, cyber security, criminal justice, marketing, accounting, health care and many others.

“It’s something that’s there for you on your own time, super flexible and very rewarding,” Baxter said. “Because union members have banded together and used their collective strength, these kinds of benefits and opportunities are available. We should make the most of them.”

Union Plus offers scholarships in addition to the free college program. Learn more about both at www.unionplus.org/benefits/education. ■

‘Unusual’ NRC Commissioner Puts Workers First

It isn’t unusual for Nuclear Regulatory Commission members to visit operational powerplants to see for themselves that safety and performance expectations are met.

But it has been historically uncommon for commissioners to spend time speaking to the workers who benefit from and carry out those regulations.

“We often get ignored,” said Utility Director

Donnie Colston. “Utilities will roll out the red carpet and make a big show, and most of the time, we watch from the side.”

That may be changing for good.

In late May, when NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran visited Plant Vogtle near Waynesboro, Ga., he not only insisted the tour be led by members of Atlanta Local 84 and Augusta Local 1579, but he also tweeted about it. Twice.

“I really appreciate hearing the perspectives of the operators, maintenance workers, electricians, and other IBEW members working at the operating plant and construction site,” he wrote.

Meeting with union workers and putting them front and center during his visits has become a habit for Commissioner Baran, first nominated to a five-year term by President Barack Obama in 2014 and re-appointed in 2018.

“He makes it a point that labor is part of his walk through,” Colston said.

The nuclear industry is the most regulated in the United States, and the NRC controls everything from hours of work to tools to work practices and building maintenance,” Colston said. Because of all the regulations, regulators have unique power to shape how 20% of the nation’s energy and more than half of its carbon-free energy is produced.

“It’s common for the NRC to discuss safety and working conditions. It’s uncommon they discuss it with us, except for Baran,” Colston said.

Baran visited not just the two operational units at Vogtle, he also toured the sites for Units 3 and 4, the largest IBEW project in North America and the new nuclear reactors under construction in the U.S.

It is one thing to stand for pictures, Colston said, something that many commissioners have done over time. And Baran is far from the only member that has done so, including the current Chairman Christopher Hanson, who was appointed to that post in January by President Joe Biden.

“No question organized labor has a friend in Chairman Hanson,” Colston said.

What distinguishes Baran, Colston said, is not just that he goes out of his way to stand with our members in pictures, he stood up for labor when the cameras weren’t there.

In 2015, an IBEW member was denied access to all nuclear power plants because he failed to disclose he had received a traffic ticket. His employer declared him unfit to serve, effectively ending his career in the nuclear industry nationwide. The company then refused to answer the IBEW demand that they show just cause for implementing the so-called “death pen-

NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran (center) was shown around Plant Vogtle near Waynesboro, Ga., by members of Atlanta Local 84 and Augusta Local 1579.



alty,” as required in the contract, saying that under the Nuclear Regulatory Act companies have an unchallengeable right to make fit-for-duty determinations.

“Baran stuck with us,” Colston said.

Through the successful federal court challenge and in the effort to get the NRC to change its rules giving that power to utilities, Baran made a point of speaking for labor in rooms where labor wasn’t allowed to speak for itself.

“Baran gave us credit for producing the evidence that disproved all of the utilities’ claims and worked hand-in-hand with the IBEW to successfully block the proposed rulemaking,” Colston said.

Wins don’t get much bigger than that one. While the photo-op showed a federal bureaucrat standing with a few nuclear workers, the truth behind the picture shouldn’t be lost.

“He’s been a real friend,” Colston said. “And not because he has to be. It’s because he’s a public servant who cares about the people who make the nation’s nuclear power work.” ■

plies. Fortunately, Burkhart was there, as well as another guardsman who also had electrical experience, Lt. Matt Denault.

The power had been off for about four hours when Army staff woke up Burkhart and his fellow guardsman to help. Using his IBEW training, Burkhart says they started at the source and then worked their way downstream until they found where the problem was and began troubleshooting the specific issue.

It turned out the transfer switch control panel didn’t have power because of faulty batteries. It had been overlooked by the contractor because the rack itself had a generic voltmeter falsely showing good voltage on the batteries. All in all, it took them about an hour to troubleshoot the issue and then another hour to swap out all the batteries.

“Everyone was shocked that we were able to quickly identify the problem and get the power back

on so fast,” said Burkhart who is now back in Illinois and working for utility company Ameren. “Situations like this are what make guardsmen unique. We bring so much more to the fight than our primary duties in the military.”

Burkhart, who served in Afghanistan for nine months as a technical sergeant and joint terminal attack controller, says the base mechanic may have been a little embarrassed about the situation but was ultimately grateful for their expertise.

“It shows how valuable good quality training is regardless of where you may find yourself putting those skills to use,” Burkhart said. “The IBEW, like the Air Force, has very high standards and strives for excellence in everything we do. The mission comes first overseas, just like when storms and outages hit stateside. Linemen go to work and do what it takes to ensure safe restoration to all customers.”

While power outages on a base are relatively common, Burkhart says they are rarely as long as the one he experienced. And if they hadn’t been able to solve the problem, it would have been days before a contractor would have been able to get to the base. In fact, Burkhart and Denault were awarded commander’s coins, which are given by senior leadership to show appreciation for an exceptional job done on the spot, and Army Achievement Medals.

“I couldn’t be prouder of Brother Burkhart’s dedication and service to our country and the IBEW. Tim is a great example of the level of training and ability that the IBEW provides and helped end an event that could have jeopardized lives in that region of conflict,” said Local 51 Business Representative Jed Doolley. “I am truly proud to know Tim and appreciate all he and his fellow servicemen and women do to ensure our freedoms.” ■

Illinois Member’s IBEW Training Helps Avert a Crisis in Afghanistan

When Springfield, Ill., Local 51 member Tim Burkhart, was deployed to Afghanistan he probably didn’t think he’d be called on to use his IBEW training to save the day, but that’s what happened.

“It was very gratifying to be able to help,” said Burkhart, a journeyman lineman and guardsman with the U.S. Air Force. “We were definitely the heroes for a couple days at the camp.”

In July 2020, a total power system failure occurred at Camp Stevenson in Afghanistan, creating a potentially serious situation. The base was completely mission ineffective and at risk of losing critical base defense systems and medical sup-



Springfield, Ill., Local 51 member Tim Burkhart used his IBEW skills to restore power to his base in Afghanistan.

GROUNDING IN HISTORY

An Evolving Structure

The leadership structure of the IBEW has evolved alongside the expansion of electricity in the United States. When the union was created in 1891, there were only 43 states, with much of the West lacking major cities or electrification. But as the electrical grid spread and our membership grew, the need for executive regional representatives soon became apparent and the formation of districts began. Here is a brief history of how it came to be.

1891 - 1903

At the time of our founding, there were five executive officers: grand president, grand secretary-treasurer (GST) and three grand vice presidents (GVPs). The position of GST was later split in 1895 and combined again in 1998. As for the GVPs, they served in their respective localities since districts had yet to form. The duties of the GVPs included assisting the GP, transmitting annual reports of their actions to the GST, conducting quarterly audits of the GST accounts and submitting constitutional amendments to the membership for vote. The third GVP also served as the grand organizer and appointed deputy organizers in each state. The number of GVPs expanded to five by action of the 4th convention in 1895 and each was made an organizer.

1903 - 1910

When the first Canadian local was admitted into the IBEW in 1899, and with total IBEW membership nearing 10,000, the call for an expansive leadership structure began. At the eighth convention in 1903, seven districts were created for the GVPs, which comprised an “Executive Board.” Their duties were to supervise all local unions in their district, submit monthly reports to the GP and serve on an auditing committee before each convention. The First District was reserved for Canada, the Second and Third were made up of Northeastern states, the Fourth with Southern states, the Fifth with Midwestern states and the Sixth and Seventh with Western states and territories.

This system was expanded again at the 9th convention in 1905. The “Executive Board” was renamed “Grand Executive Board” and the title of GVP was dropped. Their duties now consisted of auditing the accounts of the grand treasurer and grand secretary, overseeing constitutional amendments and preparing financial bonds for local unions. But the role of GVPs as supervisors of local unions was still needed. Therefore, a new body of three GVPs was created, each with their own district. The first GVP served the states from the First to Third GEB Districts, the second from the Fourth and Fifth GEB Districts and the third from the Sixth and Seventh GEB Districts.

1910 - 1929

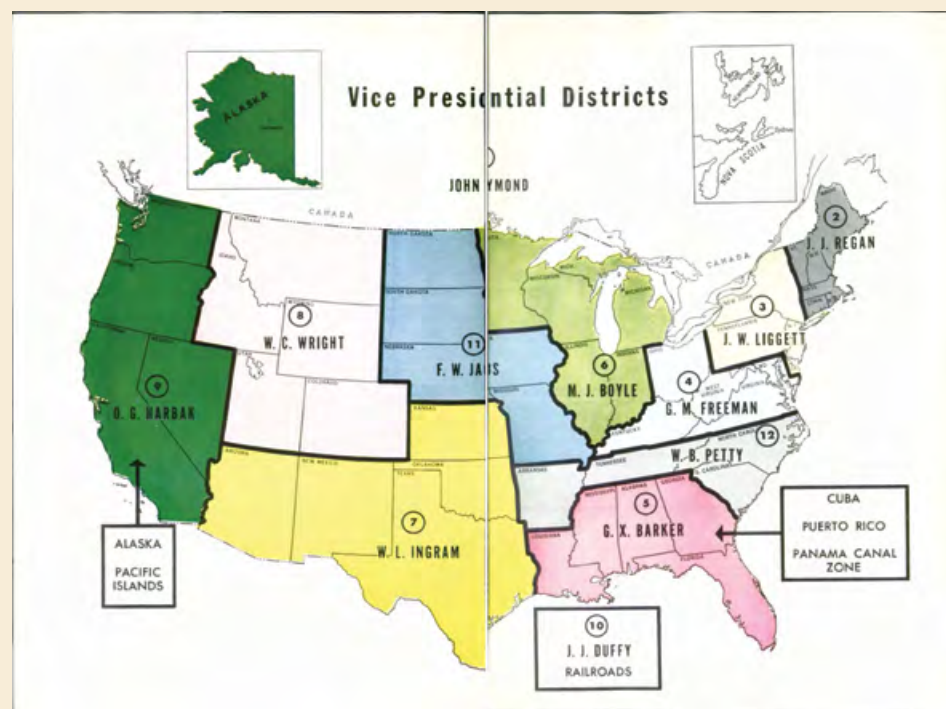
In acknowledgment of the IBEW’s international scope, the title of these leadership bodies was changed in 1910 to “international vice president” and “International Executive Board.” By action of the 15th Convention in 1919, both the IVP and IEB were expanded to eight districts. Canada remained as First District of the IVP, but was moved to the Eighth District within the IEB. A ninth member was also added to the IEB to serve as chairman. In 1928, the “International Executive Board” was renamed “International Executive Council” and remains so today. This was the last time the IEC structure was changed.

1929 - 1947

By action of the 20th Convention in 1929, the Tenth IVP District was created to have jurisdiction over all railroad local unions. After World War II, which saw a boost in IBEW membership, delegates at the 22nd Convention in 1946 approved a referendum vote to be held on whether to add two additional districts. In 1947, the vote was passed and the Eleventh and Twelfth IVP Districts were created.

1947 - 1998

The structure of the IVP districts remained unchanged until 1998, when by a referendum vote, the Tenth District was dissolved and its IVP was absorbed into the Railroad Department at the International Office. The Twelfth District was renamed the Tenth, making a new total of 11 districts. This was the last major change of the IVP district structure. ■



A 1950 map of the IBEW’s vice-presidential districts as organized at the time. The structure has changed greatly over 130 years.

For more on how to support the IBEW’s preservation of its history, visit nbeiw-ibewmuseum.org. Have an idea for this feature? Send it to Curtis_Bateman@ibew.org.

TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

Greg Logan



After 40 years in the IBEW, Eleventh District International Representative Greg Logan retired at the end of June.

Logan started his apprenticeship in 1981 and joined St. Joseph, Mo., Local 545 a year later, right as the economy cratered. Unimaginable now, he was laid off as an apprentice, along with more than two-thirds of the local. He topped out in 1985, and, he says, it wasn't a month before he was asked to sit on the apprenticeship committee.

"My brothers and I volunteered for everything. It was the way my dad did it: 'This is your union. You help out,'" Logan said.

"There is nothing nobler in life than helping working people get the salary and benefits they deserve."

— International Representative
Greg Logan

Logan's father, Martin, was president of the local in the 1950s then left the trade for a few years, but he kept his membership and returned in 1975 before his retirement in 1982. Logan's brothers served multiple terms on the Executive Board, and he joined them, first in 1986 and, in 1989, was re-elected and made chairman.

At the time, Logan said he was an organizing skeptic, a view held by much of the membership. They all had reasons, Logan said, some better than others.

The 1987 Membership Development Conference in Las Vegas changed everything.

"I came to find out I was wrong," he said with a laugh. "That's all it took: one conference and I could see us in big trouble if we didn't organize."

The message that convinced him wasn't complex. It was simply that the IBEW would be better off with more people in it than outside.

"If a jurisdiction is 80% IBEW, we dictate what goes on: Better wages, benefits and working conditions for our members," he said.

Standing in front of the folks who elected him and admitting he was wrong was hard, he said, but it was a small price to pay, and he jumped into organizing with both feet. In 1989, Logan was hired

by then-Business Manager Charlie Castle as the local's organizer, a role he held on and off until 1995, when he was elected business manager.

As the opposition to his organizing efforts got louder, his father gave him some advice.

"My dad told me when I was getting hell, 'What makes them think that they shouldn't be members? When I started there was no apprenticeship. Organizing was the only way we got members, and we were at our strongest,'" Logan said. "He said, 'Just keep pushing.'"

Logan took some things for granted in his reelection, he said, and lost. It was 1998, and after almost a decade in the hall, he went back to the tools.

"There is nothing nobler in life than helping working people get the salary and benefits they deserve, but I love working with the tools and was happy to get back to it," Logan said. "The best part of the job was just being out there with your brothers and sisters and seeing what you got done each day."

He still volunteered as an instructor two nights a week, and that would have been enough, he said. But although the brother who replaced him was very capable, Logan said, they just had different visions for the local.

"I swear if it weren't for [International Presidents] Barry, Hill and now Stephenson making organizing our focus, I think this brotherhood would be lost," he said.

In 2001, "I ran like I was losing," and that is how he says he won that and two more terms as business manager until International President Ed Hill appointed him an Eleventh District international representative in 2010.

Logan said what he loved about being a business manager was still a part of the new job servicing locals.

"It's like being a bartender: sometimes you're a friend, sometimes a preacher, sometimes a psychologist and sometimes you got to be a dad and say, 'Dude, you will not be able to keep a job if you keep on like this,'" he said.

"I am with the folks who love the day-to-day stuff. Sure, you want to leave the local better off than when you got it. But the day-to-day stuff and helping people is all I ever wanted to do," he said.

There is one highlight that stuck out, when he handed his father his 70-year pin with his brothers and a nephew, all members, in attendance. A year later, Martin Logan died.

"It was a moment among many to be grateful for," he said.

Logan retires with that greatest of treasures for a man who spent so many days away from home: a 40-year marriage with kids close by and an armful of grandkids.

"It was nothing to be gone three, four nights a week. Connie made it so I could have this career. We stayed married because she held it down. She is pretty great," he said.

Please join the officers in wishing Connie and Brother Logan a long and healthy retirement. ■

RETIRED

Johnny Simpson



Johnny Simpson, the Ninth District's first international representative assigned exclusively to focus on gaining renewable energy work

for IBEW members, retired effective July 1.

Simpson was born in Hobbs, N.M., a small town near the state's southeast border with Texas. "My grandpa was both an IBEW lineman and a Teamster," Simpson said. "He died before I was born. Dad was an inside wireman in New Mexico." His father moved his family around the Southwest following work for a while, Simpson said, "but when we got to L.A., Mom said, 'Enough.'"

The family eventually settled in San Diego, where Simpson attended Kearny High School. After graduating, he took some college courses and worked various construction jobs. But as the son and grandson of IBEW members, "there was never any doubt that I would go into the trade," Simpson said. "My dad had a really good life, and the IBEW is a proud tradition."

Sure enough, Simpson started an apprenticeship with San Diego Local 569 in 1977 and he was initiated into the local a year later.

Once Simpson completed his apprenticeship, "I followed the sun and bummed around," he said, following the example of his father's younger years when it came to looking for work. He found employment at the San Onofre and Diablo Canyon nuclear power plants, among other gigs, before finally settling down to work in San Diego for good.

"Jurisdictional issues, jobsite or developer issues — countless times, Johnny would say 'Let me see what I can do,' and he just took care of it."

— Ninth District IVP John O'Rourke

He hadn't planned to become a union activist until he spoke up and said something at a union meeting. "I don't remember what it was that I said, but someone said to me, 'Instead of complaining, why don't you run for office?'" Simpson took that advice and wound up successfully running in 1986 for the first of three consecutive terms on Local 569's Executive Board.

In 1992, two months into his third

term, he was asked to come on staff as an organizer, Simpson said. "We had lots of organizing wins and lots of friends were brought into the union."

Simpson held that position until 2004, when he became Local 569's assistant business manager. During his time with the local, he also served terms as president of the San Diego Building Trades Council, on the Executive Board of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, and as vice president of National City Parks Apartments, a low- to moderate-income community owned by the California AFL-CIO.

In 2010, Simpson was elected business manager of Local 569, an office he held until International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, on Ninth District International Vice President John O'Rourke's recommendation, appointed him in 2016 as an international representative in the district office.

"He's an old and dear friend, and when I was able to create a position that dealt directly with green energy jobs, Johnny took it and ran with it," O'Rourke said. "Jurisdictional issues, jobsite or developer issues — countless times, Johnny would say, 'Let me see what I can do,' and he just took care of it."

"He's extremely calm in the way he takes a task and meets with principals," said Ninth District International Representative Dominic Nolan. "Johnny gets through it in an agreeable manner — makes a couple phone calls, taps some shoulders, and it's solved."

"For me, it was about thinking outside the box," Simpson said. "There's always a way forward."

"It's been an incredible run for Johnny," O'Rourke said. "We're all friends, truly family, in this office. I miss him already."

Simpson's replacement, former Local 569 environmental organizer Micah Mitrosky, said she valued her predecessor's friendship and mentorship. "Johnny's a true leader who lifts everybody up around him," Mitrosky said. "He's a really progressive leader with an eye to the future, on the cutting edge of clean energy jobs while making sure those jobs were union jobs that put IBEW members to work."

"Johnny's very skilled at working with partners to get a win-win everyone can be proud of," she said. "He never worried about who gets the credit for it."

Simpson said one of the biggest accomplishments during his time in the district office was the multi-trade solar agreement O'Rourke assigned Nolan and him to work on. "Since then, we've worked over 65-million-man hours on solar, with 65% of the work being done by IBEW members."

He also worked out an agreement with San Diego Gas & Electric that became the basis for agreements with multiple California utilities to recognize and use the IBEW-developed Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program, which provides training and certification for electricians installing electric vehicle supply equipment and is taught at IBEW training centers across the country.

Although he is retiring from the IBEW, Simpson said he has two more years remaining on a term with the California Contractors State Licensing Board.

"I'll also sit on some advisory boards in San Diego and play some golf with IBEW buddies I've known since our apprenticeships," he said. He plans to spend as much time as he can with his wife, Xema, who also remains active with various concerns around the area, as well as with his son, Cody — also a Local 569 member — and his family and, when able, with his daughter, Alex, who lives with her family in Montana.

"I'm a workaholic, so letting go is hard for me," Simpson said. "It's been the greatest honor of my life to represent IBEW members. Working around people of integrity, honor, ethics and quality made me a better person."

"It's also been kind of cool to work with your pals," he said. ■

DECEASED

Edward C. Troy



Edward C. Troy, who retired as a Third District international representative in 1993 after 46 years with the IBEW, died March 2. He was 93.

Known as "Big Ed" to his friends and family, Troy always felt fortunate to be part of the IBEW brotherhood. He gave a shout out to his union on Twitter in 2019.

"I am a 91-year-old retired IBEW member living in a senior living community," he said. "Thanks to the union I live very comfortably."

"He was a big guy, very friendly, great to be around, very loyal to the IBEW."

— Retired Third District IVP Don Funk

Daughter Susanne Overton said her dad "made remarks like that all the time."

"He was not bashful about talking to people about the union," she said. "We heard it our whole lives. He shared his love of the union and how valuable he felt it was for the workers."

She said he marveled at "how someone who didn't go to college was able to do what he wanted without having to worry about money or dental and health care benefits, because it was all covered."

Troy, who was born in Port Chester, N.Y., and raised in Stamford, Conn., served in the U.S. Navy before being initiated into then-Local 501, now part of New York City Local 3.

After 20 years as a wireman, he was hired as a Local 501 business representative in 1967. Nine years later, he was plucked away by then-Third District Vice President J.J. Barry, who made Troy his assistant.

ORGANIZING WIRE

“He was a big guy, very friendly, great to be around, very loyal to the IBEW,” said friend and union brother, Don Funk, who led the Third District after Barry was elected international president in 1986.

Funk, who retired in 1994, said Troy was anxious to get out of the office and serve members directly. “He generally worked in the eastern Pennsylvania area,” he said. “He was an excellent representative, and also a lot of fun.”

Overton described her gregarious 6-foot-6 dad as “larger than life,” a sentiment echoed by people who have reached out to her since Troy’s death.

“The stories that coworkers and old friends have been sharing, their interactions with Big Ed, it’s a good feeling to know that he really touched a lot of people’s lives,” she said. “That’s his legacy, the relationships he built.”

But he was also meticulous about his work. Overton remembers seeing him go over blueprints at night and said he always showed up early for the next day’s job.

“Way back when I was a young girl, on a Saturday, my dad would want to take a look at a jobsite and he would take me with him,” she said. “He’d explain, ‘here’s the electrical work and here’s what we have to check.’”

When he got home in the evenings, she said, “he and my mom would sit down and have a beverage and he’d share stories of his day.”

The union was never far from his mind. “Matter of fact, my sister was a schoolteacher until she retired and part of the union,” Overton said. “He’d give her all kinds of advice, like ‘this is how you handle a grievance.’”

Above all, she said, “his biggest focus was family.” He eagerly flew all over the United States to visit far-flung offspring, and once joined Overton’s family for a cross-country motor home adventure.

In addition to his two daughters, he is survived by five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and in-laws that he treated like blood relatives, said Overton’s husband, Dave.

They gathered in June to celebrate Troy’s life with a memorial and weeklong reunion at Lake George in upstate New York, one of his favorite summer vacation spots.

An avid golfer, Troy retired to Florida with his wife, Bernadette, who died in 1997. Ten years ago he headed west, moving to a senior community five minutes from Overton’s home in Monterey, Calif.

The pandemic limited visits with family the last year of his life. But Overton and her husband were able to spend a Sunday with him at the end of February.

“We were sitting in the area of some really beautiful gardens. It was warm and sunny, we just had this wonderful afternoon together,” she said.

That night, Troy fell and hit his head. He died two days later. “It was sad,” she said. “But it helps to know that he lived such a good life.”

The officers and staff send sincere condolences to Brother Troy’s large and loving family, with gratitude for his decades of dedicated service. ■

Statehouse Pioneers: Oregon Legislative Aides First in U.S. to Unionize

Trailblazing aides at the Oregon Capitol voted overwhelmingly in May to form the nation’s first-ever legislative staff union, a victory that’s captured the attention of statehouse workers coast to coast.

Now, the new members of Seattle-based Local 89 are preparing to bargain a landmark contract, bringing clarity and equity to salaries, job rules and more in a workplace with 90 bosses and 90 separate ways of doing business.

“I think it could be game-changing,” said Claire Prihoda, aide to Portland Sen. Kate Lieber. “Sometimes I think, ‘Wow, we’re the first.’ We’re part of something historic not just in Oregon but possibly across the county.”

More than possible, perhaps, if the inquiries Local 89 organizer Tony Ruiz is fielding are any indication.

“Absolutely weekly, if not daily, we’re getting emails and phone calls from legislative aides reaching out to us — ‘Hey, congratulations, and how do we do this?’” Ruiz said. “We definitely recognize the significance of it and are humbled to have gotten to this point.”

Oregon’s 30 state senators and 60 House members each employ a year-round staffer and most hire at least one more when the Legislature is in session. Depending on the calendar, the bargaining unit will represent about 90 to 180 workers.



“Absolutely weekly, if not daily, we’re getting emails and phone calls from legislative aides reaching out to us — ‘Hey, congratulations, and how do we do this?’”

— Local 89 organizer Tony Ruiz

A core group of staffers began making phone calls last July, kicking off a campaign that was virtual from start to finish due to COVID-19 restrictions at the Capitol.

They were pleased but not necessarily surprised to find a groundswell of support. Aides to Democrats and Republicans alike soon began signing union cards.

“It’s not partisan,” Prihoda said. “The work we do, helping constituents navigate agencies and bureaucracies, is pretty nonpolitical. We have all the bread-and-butter issues in common.”



Aides to Oregon’s 90 elected lawmakers are the first legislative staffers in the country to form a union, voting by a wide margin to join Seattle-based Local 89. Inside organizers, pictured under the Capitol dome with copies of their unit’s logo, include, from left, Claire Prihoda, Carrie Leonard, Zoe Klingmann, Kien Truong, Logan Gilles, Lina DeMorais, Nathan Soltz, Amanda Orozco-Beach and Omar Sandoval.

As the pandemic made even greater demands on their time and energy, staffers grew closer.

“People were really connecting, asking each other, ‘How did you manage this problem?’” said Zoe Klingmann, aide to Eugene-area Rep. Julie Fahey. “There was a lot of solidarity even before there was a formal union.”

Beyond their professional duties, shared concerns range from parking and travel expenses to workplace harassment and pay equity, an issue the Legislature tried and failed to resolve by way of committees and consultants.

“We tried to engage leadership and HR and were rebuffed,” said Logan Gilles, who’s worked for Portland Sen. Michael Dembrow since 2009. “It felt like we’d tried every other way to do this, so it made sense to join a union.”

Gilles said staffers had whispered for years about organizing, but thought they were prohibited by state law. That was a misconception, as Ninth District organizer Ray Lister helped clarify last year.

Lister, a journeyman wireman out of Portland Local 48, ran for the Oregon House in 2016. He didn’t win, but the race plugged him into the Capitol grapevine, where he heard that staffers were contemplating a union.

He knew how badly they needed one. In terms of balance of power, he said few workplaces are as lopsided as a statehouse.

“People who get elected to office are people with big personalities, big egos, and they’re very powerful,” Lister said. “Labor representation is key where there’s the greatest power differential. And there’s a huge one where you’re dealing with workers who have no voice at all and elected leaders who have the power to make law.” Staffers were excited to team up with the IBEW, but worried about being high maintenance. Or as Klingmann put it, “being such a weird workplace.” Would unionizing amid the chaos of state laws, rules and traditions, policies and politics take its toll?

“The IBEW, and especially Local 89, have been awesome, even with all our idiosyncrasies,” Prihoda said. “We’ve had millions of questions, thousands of scenarios — we come from organizing and political backgrounds ourselves — and they’ve been very patient with us.”

Their fears stemmed from hearing that another union walked away from a similar organizing drive in Delaware. So, when the Oregon Department of Justice filed objections to their union on constitutional grounds last December — weighing in at the behest of unknown lawmakers — staffers held their breath.

“We were waiting to see if the IBEW was going to stick with us,” Gilles said. “But they had our backs. They really went to bat for us.”

IBEW organizers were proud to do so. “They were a phenomenal group to work with,” Lister said, also praising Local 89 and Salem Local 280, which offered invaluable support.

In April, the state Employment Relations Board rejected DOJ state arguments against the union, clearing the path to the May 28 election. The vote was 75-31 — a margin so wide it didn’t matter that another 30 ballots were set aside when state lawyers raised eligibility issues.

Local 89, which represents an eclectic mix of units in the Pacific Northwest, was seen as the perfect fit for workers in jobs with strict government ethics rules.

“It was better for them to have a local that didn’t have a political tilt,” Ruiz said. “We don’t have a PAC. We don’t make endorsements. We don’t support candidates financially.”

That was a big selling point, Gilles said. “This isn’t a traditional public-sector union. Their lobbyist isn’t going to show up in our offices asking for a monetary allocation. It helps avoid even the appearance of conflict.”

Gilles has worked at the Capitol an exceptional 12 years and knows that high turnover among typically younger legislative aides will be a challenge for the new unit. At the same time, he’s hopeful that a union contract will slow down the churn.

“I’m an uncommonly tenured staffer,” Gilles said. “Three or four years, two sessions, is more standard. But people might choose to stay longer if there’s more security and equity.”

There’s a greater good, too, he said. “One of the things that happens with lots of turnover, is that it gives more power to the lobbyists. The lobby becomes the place where institutional memory is vested.”

As their success drew national headlines, staffers took turns speaking to the media. More attention is likely if the anti-union Freedom Foundation carries through with threats to file a lawsuit reviving DOJ objections.

Gilles, in a radio interview with Prihoda on Oregon Public Broadcasting in June, explained that legislative aides are no different than other workers in needing a voice on the job.

“Part of my interest in this is just codifying some of the status quo elements that we have, because without a union, legislative leadership can change our pay, our health care benefits, our premiums, our retirement benefits. They could change them tomorrow,” Gilles told listeners.

“If we have a signed contract where both sides agree that this is what it is, and if it’s going to change, we’re going to talk about it, I think that’s a huge step forward.” ■

LOCAL LINES

Growing Membership and Participation

L.U. 8 (as,em,i,mar,mt,rt,s&spa), TOLEDO, OH — Our local grew by 116 new “A” members in 2020, granting us the Fourth District award for membership growth.

Local 8 was also awarded the IBEW PAC award for 100% participation, averaging \$96 per member. Thanks to all who recognize the increasing importance of political education funding and for contributing your hard-earned money to those who support our issues.

President Biden’s American Jobs Plan will not only put thousands of Americans to work but will directly benefit the IBEW’s core sectors with clean energy initiatives and labor protections vital to rebounding the American economy.

With COVID-19 becoming more distant in the rear-view mirror, Local 8 looks forward to our annual Labor Day parades and picnics, the fall dinner dance and all the social functions we missed out on for over a year. Please encourage all to get vaccinated if you haven’t done so already.

Stay safe and attend your local union meetings.

Mike Brubaker, P.S.

New App and NECA Agreement

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — On May 13, the membership voted to sign a new three-year agreement with the local chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association. This contract provides for an improvement in wages without a loss of protective language. Considering the current lack of employment opportunities, the negotiating committee and all of the members who came out to support the package are to be commended.

Local 16 has recently launched a new app that is much more user-friendly. It allows members to be better informed about upcoming events in a much more timely and efficient manner. With the app, brothers and sisters can also re-sign the out-of-work list, bid on available jobs and pay their dues more conveniently.

Union members were recently reminded of the current state Legislature’s priorities when the Republican supermajority agreed to fund the nonunion Associated Builders and Contractors’ apprenticeship programs with millions of taxpayer dollars. These educational opportunities have always been funded at the member’s and contractor’s expense through contractually bargained working agreements. For those who still believe politics don’t matter, please keep in mind on Election Day that you are paying for your competition’s schooling.

Donald P. Beavin, P.S.

Taking Care of Our Own

L.U. 24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — On Aug. 27 our local will be celebrating its 60th anniversary. Thank you to all the retired and active members who made this possible. Thanks to those that came before us and had the foresight to start the health, pension and annuity plans so that we could enjoy a retirement with health coverage and dignity.

We will be holding our 21st annual picnic this year on Sunday, Aug. 8, from noon until 5 p.m. at Conrad’s Ruth Villa. You must wear a mask upon entry to the park.

Members working under the Voice Data Video agreement ratified a new three-year agreement in May. The new agreement took effect May 30. I would like to thank the VDV members for their input and support during these negotiations.

In March, Brother Claude Carrington III was sworn into membership. In May, while at work, Brother Carrington lost everything in a house fire. Fortunately, no one was injured. The membership stepped up and provided food, clothing, pots, pans, silverware and toys for Brother Carrington’s son; one member donated an entire storage locker of furniture and others donated money. The Patterson High job raised \$2,000, with one member donating 50% of the amount collected on that job. Thanks to all that donated and showing that as a union, we truly do take care of our own.

Peter P. Demchuk, B.M.



Local 24 will hold its 21st annual picnic on Aug. 8, 2021.

Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

L.U. 26 (i,es,ees,govt,em&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — Congratulations to the 2021 graduates of the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee program and the R-A Upgrade program. Graduation ceremonies could not be held again this year. There were a total of 202 graduates. Best wishes to all of you!

At the time of this writing, the Inside and Residential agreements should have been fully ratified and the new agreement books should have been mailed to each member.

Unfortunately, the 49th annual Midwest IBEW Softball Tournament that was scheduled for July 16-18, 2021, had to be canceled. We hope that all of our events are able to resume next year. For the most up-to-date information and updates, please visit our website at www.ibewlocal26.org.

Best wishes to the following new retirees: Michael P. Breece, Alan G. Cannon, Bill D. Collette, Mark A. Dean, Kenneth P. Garber, Howard C. Green, Michael E. Hryckiewicz, Christopher A. Johnson, Lathan E. Kornegay Jr., Jeffrey E. Lehmann, James C. Lundeen, Robert F. Middleton, Robert M. Noonan, Steven A. Orchowski, John P. Payne, Rodney Plesko, David E. Ridley, Michael T. Santini, Thomas W. Taylor, Robert E. Venis, Richard A. White Jr. and Coskun Yildirim.

The following members have passed away since our last article: Jose “Joe” Fuentes, Steven S. Lay, William P. Linton II, Donald “Bub” E. Martin, James R. McGee, Gordon W. Miles, Robert M. Romero, Charles “Charlie” F. Stroop and David M. White.

George C. Hogan, B.M.

Service Pins, Negotiations and Vaccination Event

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,rtb,rt,s&st), SEATTLE, WA — Our local usually awards service pins in April at our general meeting. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to award members in person. This was the second year we were unable to award service pins and honor our members in person at our regularly scheduled general meeting.

We awarded 1,196 service pins in 2021, including two 70-year recipients, thirteen 65-year recipients, twelve 60-year recipients, twenty-six 55-year recipients and thirteen 50-year recipients. We thank our members for all your years of service.



Local 46 negotiating committee members Sister Adrienne Minter and Brother Wayne Horton stand in solidarity banner for an equitable Inside Wire contract during negotiations.

Local 46 is currently in negotiations for our Inside Wire, Residential, Stockman, Light Fixture Maintenance and multiple Broadcast unit contracts. Local 46 has begun bannering in our jurisdiction near our electrical projects for an equitable Inside Wire contract as well as fair wages.

We hosted a vaccination event on Saturday, May 8, at Local 46 in cooperation with the Martin Luther King Jr. County Labor Council. Regional firefighters administered the Moderna vaccine to 98 members and their families. The second dose was administered on June 5 in our Local 46 auditorium. We were visited by local labor leaders, dignitaries and political figures.

Deva Nelson, P.S.

Celebrating JATC Apprenticeship Grads

L.U. 80 (i&govt), NORFOLK, VA — Hello to all our brothers and sisters. With a vast amount of work and new projects coming up, Local 80 has been very busy. We have done a lot of organizing and have had success bringing in new members and showing them why it pays to be union, and also showing them what brotherhood is all about.

Amazon has taken off with two facilities. Both projects are still in need of journeymen, apprentices and other classifications. The Microsoft project has progressed rapidly and is looking to man up more within the next couple of months. Our local contractors also have numerous projects. This would be a good book to sign.

Congrats to the JATC apprenticeship graduates for 2021. Your dedication and determination have paid off. Stay safe and work safe.

Wil Morris, A.B.M.

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 IBEW.org/LocalLines. 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.



Local 100 Inside Wireman and Sound and Communications graduating classes of 2020 and 2021.

Congrats to Graduating Classes of 2020 & 2021

L.U. 100 (c,em,i,ptc,rts&st), FRESNO, CA — Our local would like to congratulate the Inside Wireman and Sound and Communications graduating classes of 2020 and 2021!

Due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, Local 100 was not able to traditionally celebrate the hard work of the apprentice class of 2020. Fortunately, with restrictions easing up and life slowly getting back to normal, on May 28, 2021, Local 100 was able to celebrate the graduating classes of 2020 and 2021.

Jake Piland, A.B.M.

Long-Serving Brother Retires

L.U. 108 (ees,em,es,lctt,mar,mt,rtb,rts,s,spa,t&u), TAMPA, FL — Our local congratulates Kent Sprague after 37 years of employment with SECO Energy. [See photo bottom, left.] Kent began his SECO career as a helper in the Line Department, where he advanced to a service tech and continually progressed throughout his career, eventually retiring as a first-class line tech.

Local 108 members are very proud of the accomplishments Kent has achieved, and it's been an honor working with him. Kent has been a great co-worker and a reliable friend. Local 108 members will miss working with him. As Kent journeys into his retirement years, we wish him the very best future and all the enjoyment it holds.

James B. Bailey, R.S.

Reopening Offices and Remodeled Collegeville Training Center

L.U. 126 (catv,lctt,o&t), PHILADELPHIA, PA — Our local has officially reopened all business offices, including our newly remodeled Collegeville union hall and training center. We look forward to welcoming members

and friends to visit our new facility and take advantage of our state-of-the-art learning center.

The work picture remains solid, with many jobs working overtime to help keep up with demand. Our apprenticeship is now home to 251 apprentices, who have done a great job keeping up with their book work and on-the-job training throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We plan on hosting another boot camp to help fill growing manpower needs.

Business Manager Muttik and Local 126 staff would like to congratulate the following linemen who completed their apprenticeships this year: Clayton Adkins, Thomas Albanese, Kyle Baumgardner, Zachery Buck, Christopher Cannon, Levi Daughenbaugh, David Griffin, Christopher Guiteras, Robert Helmick, Sean Holohan, Nicholas Hyatt, Jason Inverso, Luke Kahler, Andrew Lynn, Dakota McNemar, Robert Miller, Kaelin Quinn, Joseph Reed, Robert Smith, Tyler Thigpen and William Woodward. We wish you all safe and prosperous careers.

Michael Simmonds, A.B.M.



Local 126's newly renovated Collegeville union hall and training center.

NEW Contract Ratification

L.U. 134 (i), CHICAGO, IL — Business Manager Donald Finn and the Electrical Joint Arbitration Board successfully negotiated a new five-year agreement that became effective June 7, 2021, and will remain effective through May 31, 2026. There will be a total increase of over \$14, or 16.02%, to the wage and ben-

efit package over the 5-year agreement. Language was added that formally addresses Local 134 jurisdiction over the installation, operation, maintenance, service and repair of building-integrated solar electric, wind, hydroelectric, generators and energy storage. The membership ratified the new agreement by 91%.

In June, Local 134 also celebrated the early retirement of hundreds of construction members who were over 59 years old and able to take advantage of the special Pension Plan 2 COVID Assistance Program. Another highlight of summer 2021 is the return of the auto show to McCormick Place in July. This is the first large convention to take place in the city since COVID-19. It is a sure sign that we are returning to business as usual in Chicago.

Donald Finn, B.M.

Welcoming a New Class of Graduating Apprentices

L.U. 146 (ei,i&rts), DECATUR, IL — We have unofficially gotten back to normal! We enjoyed a fun June Saturday morning of brotherhood with our 19th annual golf play day. Friendly competition and camaraderie were highlights of the day, along with a luncheon afterwards.

The local also plans to celebrate the graduating apprentices with a banquet in late July. Tim Canaday, Colton Cloyd, Mike Dougherty, Tim Holman, Dallas Hubbard, Brandon Koehler, Houston Napier, Ryan Nave, Josh Robinson, Terrance Slaw, Austin Thomas, Trent Younker and Dominik Zola are the new class of journeyman wiremen. Also, congratulations to our new VDV technician, Anthony Pruemer. Along with graduation comes the new crop of first-year apprentices. If you happen to see Miranda Banning, Levi Clayton, Wade Collier, Blake Haubner, Grant Idleman, Evan Klaves, Travis Koester, Grant McMillion, Dylan Meek, Ryan Murray, Dylan Ohnesorge, Odell Peoples, Sam Ward, Ben Wente, Jack Westendorf or Lamarus Williams, please make them feel welcomed and offer any needed assistance to them.

Many JWs have retired since 2020; among them were David Banning, Nick Buckley, Donald Creek, Ron Cummings, Bruce Deters, Brad Eveland, Randy Harrell, Bob Hawbaker, Chuck Jost, Paul Kibler, Douglas London, James May, Gregg McClelland, Brian Miller, Ken Musick, Jeff Price, Chris Propst, Terry Rhodes, Kelly Robinson, Lewie Sill, Scott Sullivan and Terry Winterrowd. I sure hope that I didn't leave anyone out.

Our work picture still looks pretty good, with several projects starting. Be sure to check the job line on our website, ibew146.com. Hope everyone's summer has been delightful.

Steven L. Tilford, R.S.

Graduating JATC Trainees and Scholarship Awardees

L.U. 150 (es,i,rts&spa), WAUKEGAN, IL — Recently the following members graduated from the JATC training program, and our new JWs are: Colton Charbonneau, Robert Gazdzicki, Michael Gembra, Johnathan Green, Brent Havisto, James Jones, Esfrain Lechuga, Casey Lipsey, Timothy Lipsey, Edward Maluska, Jonathan Pelote, Kyle Price, Angelo Salamone, Mark Scales, Marcos Silva-Reyes and Ed Whalen. The following are V DVs: George Foster, Nathaniel Golden and Kimberly Hombaker.

The scholarships for the 2021-2022 college year have been awarded. The following members' children were each awarded \$500 scholarships: Davin Cummings, Rebecca Funderburk, Grady Germann, Claire Gregory, Heather Houghton, Camille Husko, Reid McNeill, Brynn McNeill, Roseannah Niskanen, Samantha Schild, Dylan Sheppard and Katelyn Wirtz.

Local 150's annual picnic will be on Aug. 7 at the hall. It is always fun for all involved. The car show is still on for Sept. 4. The rain date is still Sept. 11. It is being held at the hall. Lots of cars, friends and fun. The cars are always a sight to behold, and so much work goes into restoring them. Please join us for a great time to socialize.

The golf outing will be at the Fox Lake Country Club on Aug. 28. Sign up at the hall.

Stay safe and stay healthy!

Wendy J. Cordts, P.S.

Band of Brotherhood

L.U. 212 (i), CINCINNATI, OH — Our local was recently visited by the IBEW Hour Power team to highlight one of our own members. "Band of Brotherhood," which spotlights IBEW members who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, focused on Brother Rob Guthrie, who served in the Marines. Rob is a journeyman wireman and teaches at our JATC. We are privileged to have him as a member, and he has earned the recognition for all his hard work.

At our May meeting, the membership voted on this year's raise allocation of \$1.75. The body voted \$1.05 on the check, bringing our hourly rate to \$32.32, with \$.20 into NEAP and \$.50 into Pension. This will bolster our pension to the point that the multiplier can be raised from .75% to 1.0%, which will increase the monthly retirement benefit going forward.

Work remains steady in our area. With the completion of the FC Cincinnati stadium and the music venue at The Banks, the number on the book remains low. Thank you to the travelers who helped us man these and other big jobs. As COVID-19 restrictions end in Ohio, we look forward to our local's annual picnic. Many of our members have taken advantage of getting vaccinated at Local 212's clinic, which has turned out to be a great benefit. Membership has its privileges!

Phil Bovard, P.S.



Local 108 members (left to right) Kyle Rich, Tommy Lankin, Jeremiah Stynchcomb, Kent Sprague, Brandon Blackman, Kyle Stephenson and Chris Reynolds.



Business Manager and agents at Local 212's annual picnic in 2019: (left to right) Jim and Mara Fischer, Steve McMannis, Todd Michel, Chad Day, Mary Jo and Scott Kenter, Richard Hiembrock, Rick Fischer, Courtney Groesch, Wayne Myers, Erin Hiembrock and Chris Myers.

LOCAL LINES

Enjoying a Better Life

L.U. 236 (catv,ees,govt,i,mo,rtb&t), ALBANY, NY — It's finally starting to feel normal again! Though the hardship of the past year and a half still stains our collective memories, the events and activities that we all used to enjoy are becoming available once again. We were all in this together, everyone did their part to work toward a common goal, and as a result we can all now enjoy a better life. Sounds a lot like the labor movement and what we fight for each and every day!

We are pleased to be able to resume our usual annual activities such as the great escape day, golf outing and steak bake. Additionally, a graduation ceremony was held for both the 2020 and 2021 graduates to acknowledge their hard work and dedication during their apprenticeships, even in the face of some unpredictable circumstances. Great job to all 60 of our 2020 graduates and all 24 of our 2021 graduates as well!

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

Mike Martell, A.B.M.

Looking for Increase in Work Opportunities

L.U. 292 (em,govt,i,rtb,rts&spa), MINNEAPOLIS, MN — As of June 1, calls for work have continued to be slow. As anticipated, the construction industry in this area is experiencing an economic lag because of the COVID-19 crisis. We are hoping the ECO bill, which passed this year at the Minnesota Legislature, will help to provide jobs in the energy conservation and efficiency field. In addition, there are added incentives and requirements for more EV infrastructure and solar installations on state and local government buildings. We are also hoping to see an increase in work opportunities in the energy sector.

Two Saturdays this spring, Local 292 members participated in a community food giveaway coordinated by the Minneapolis AFL-CIO, which took place at our new building. Members handed out 30-pound boxes of food and gallons of milk to families in our community. Both events had about 30 volunteers and we handed out 2,000 packages of food each day.

Local 292 members will be involved in negotiations throughout the summer for several contracts that will affect an overwhelming majority of our membership. Please keep an eye on your mail, email and IBEW292.org for updates on the negotiating committee's progress, future meetings and contract votes. As of May 1, the members working under the Inside agreement settled a new three-year agreement with just over a 3% increase for each year.

Andy Snope, P.S.



Business Rep. Chris Kohn helps direct traffic at the May 17 community food giveaway event at Local 292.

Congratulations, New Journeymen and Installers!

L.U. 302 (i,rts&spa), MARTINEZ, CA — Congratulations to our new journeymen and installers. It has been a difficult time getting our apprentices through their final hours of classes while we are sheltering and social distancing for COVID-19. Our 2021 turn-out dinner has been put on hold, so it is especially important to let these new journeymen and installers know we are proud of what they have accomplished.

Good job everyone and we hope to celebrate with you soon!

Here are the names of the Class of 2021 Inside Wiremen: Joseph Arruda, Eric Gargiulo, Dillon Hart, Nick Isola, Joshua Lapid, Cheyenne Lucero, Jose Macias, Ryan Magee, Angelo Martinez, Jordan McLellan, Daniel McNulty, Manuel Reyes, Christopher Roark, Quinn Rodrigues, Michael Schuman and Victor Vargas.

And for the Class of 2021 Sound and Communications: Marat Hafizov.

Melissa Vaughn, R.S.

Getting Back on Track With Member Events

L.U. 364 (catv,ees,em,es,i,mt,rts&spa), ROCKFORD, IL — Many congratulations go out to our newly topped-out apprenticeship classes, who have waited through a pandemic to finally celebrate. We were finally able to with an outdoor event on the hall grounds at our May union meeting. The future looks bright for these young journeymen and journeymen, and we wish them a very safe and prosperous career.

Local 364 is probably the busiest it has been in the last 35 years, with the Facebook project having well over 400 members working during the normal construction season, school work and solar work. We would like to send a sincere thank you to all the brothers and sisters from all the locals throughout this great land who are working in our jurisdiction.

As of this writing the new Hard Rock Casino has no projected start dates yet, but we are expecting information soon. This much anticipated project has experienced several delays and we remain optimistic that construction will begin soon.

As Illinois opens up, Local 364 has plans to get back on track with much anticipated events for our members. With Labor Day fast approaching and more future events being planned for later this year, it's an exciting time in Local 364.

Brad Williams, P.S.

Congratulations Inside Wireman Classes of 2020-2021

L.U. 466 (em,es,i&rts), CHARLESTON, WV — On June 18, 2021, our local came together for dinner and a graduation ceremony to recognize the classes of 2020 and 2021. Of course, we usually have this ceremony yearly, but we were not able to have a ceremony last year because of pandemic restrictions. So we combined the two class ceremonies this year after CDC restric-



Local 466's wireman classes of 2020-2021 (front, left to right) Gary Moles, Keith Morley, Michael Leonard, Joey Turner, (middle) Dustin Vaughan (TD), Michael Milam, (back) Clayton Young (INST), Chris Good, Justin Southworth, Rick Hackney and Sean Brady. Not pictured are Kristofer Dunn, Tim Edens, Joseph Gatrell, Tyler Humphreys, Brian McClung, Thomas Pack, Brandon Stump, Kenny Tyler and Aldon Wilson.

tions were lifted. We also recognized two outstanding graduates at the dinner. The outstanding graduates were Thomas Pack for 2020 and Keith Morley for the class of 2021. Once again, thank you and congratulations to the classes of 2020 and 2021!

John Epperly, B.M.

First Unionized Campaign Staff in Wisconsin History

L.U. 494 (em,govt,i,mt,rts,spa&t), MILWAUKEE, WI — The Alex Lasry for U.S. Senate campaign announced that it has voluntarily recognized Local 494 as the exclusive bargaining representative for its campaign staff. In taking this action, the Lasry campaign became the first campaign staff to unionize in Wisconsin's history.

Business Manager Dean Warsh praised Lasry and his campaign while calling on the other U.S. Senate candidates to follow Lasry's example, saying, "This was exactly how a workplace organizing effort should go. Once again, Alex walked the walk, immediately recognizing the signed cards and agreeing to neutrality. Alex did the same when we worked with him on the construction of Fiserv Forum and the Deer District."

Warsh cited Lasry's work on Fiserv Forum and the Deer District, where Lasry led workforce development efforts that required 40% of workers on the project to consist of people underemployed or unemployed for the previous five years and at least 25% of service contracts to be awarded to minority and disadvantaged businesses. Under Lasry's leadership, the Bucks surpassed these goals.

"The IBEW is thrilled to represent the workers of Lasry for Wisconsin," Warsh continued. "We share Alex's commitment to sustainable, progressive change in our state and in our country and couldn't be more proud to be representing the workers on his campaign."

John T. Zapfel, Political Dir.



Local 558's first-year apprentice wireman class are sworn in during a union meeting on May 10, 2021, which took place in the parking lot due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Pride in New Journeymen

L.U. 540 (i), CANTON, OH — Local 540 is proud to recognize our new journeymen for 2021.

Congratulations to all the apprentices on successfully completing their JATC apprenticeship. Graduate Anthony Widder (Inside) and Kenneth Moon (Telecom) were 2021 apprentice of the year recipients.

The following brothers graduated: (Inside) Nathan Angstadt, Jacob Burton, Anthony Collins, James Galbraith, Ronald Gnau, Tim Hoagland, Kaden Jones, Caleb Kernell, Benjamin Kieffer, Jesse Locke, Chase Merten, Ryan Moore, Nevan Shedron, William Soliday and Anthony Widder; (Telecom) Sawyer Collins, Kenneth Moon and James Nutter. Tim Hoagland, Kaden Jones, Benjamin Kieffer, William Soliday and Anthony Widder were all winners of the Vern Wolgamott perfect attendance award.

Local 540 welcomes our new journeymen and wishes you the best of luck.

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

Getting Back Into Full Swing

L.U. 558 (catv,em,i,lctt,mt,o,rtb,rts,spa&u), SHEFFIELD, AL — Our local has been extremely busy since our last reporting. The Mazda/Toyota project is still going full speed, with production set to begin by the end of 2021. Thank you to all the members for their efforts in helping build this monumental project. The work at Facebook is ramping up with 4 different signatory contractors on site. TVA will be installing three new combustion turbine generators at the Colbert CT site.

Local 558 has taken advantage of the market share increase in the area, allowing the JATC during the last two years to take on the largest class sizes ever, with a first-year class of 90 apprentices and a second-year class of 107 apprentices, all to become inside journeyman wiremen.

Our local has also been fortunate to have signed two new contractors in 2021, Bluff Creek Electric and SP&J General Contractors. Our staff and members look forward to assisting these new contractors in growing into successful companies as well as growing the NECA footprint in our jurisdiction.

Mac Sloan, Pres./Mem. Dev.

JATC Director Retires

L.U. 606 (em,es,i,rtb,spa&u), ORLANDO, FL — After 51 years in the electrical industry, JATC Director Jim Sullivan is retiring. During his career with Local 606

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Central Florida JATC Training Director Jim Sullivan is retiring after 51 years in the electrical industry.

he has been an apprentice, journeyman, foreman, general foreman and superintendent; and for the last 34 years, he has been the training director of the Central Florida JATC. As the JATC director, Jim has mentored hundreds of apprentices who have since become journeymen, supervisors and at least three signatory contractors in Local 606.

Jim is also an avid runner who has completed marathons in all 50 states and has completed 315 marathons overall. He has also completed seventeen 100-mile ultra-marathons. Additionally, Jim is an accomplished mountain climber, having reached the highest elevation in 48 different states. He is a member of a long-distance motorcycle riding club called the Iron Butt Association and has completed several 1,000- and 1,500-mile rides in 24 hours, 5,000 miles in five days and a U.S. coast-to-coast ride in 100 hours.

We congratulate Jim on an illustrious and memorable career and wish him and his lovely wife Jan a well-deserved retirement with many more adventures.

Fernando Rendon, P.S.

Strong Work Outlook in Phoenix

LU 640 (em, govt, i, mo, mt, rts, spa&u), PHOENIX, AZ — The work outlook in Phoenix is coming up very strong this year. As we come out of the COVID-19 restrictions, we have multiple data centers, Intel expansion, hospital work, EV manufacturing and a large new microchip manufacturing facility breaking ground.

We recently settled our second contract in a row without arbitration, the only two in the past 40 years, and those raises will begin on July 1.

We will keep the International's job line updated as work continues to materialize. There probably aren't enough electricians in the entire state to man all the work ahead, so we hope you'll come and spend some time in beautiful Phoenix! Take care, brothers and sisters, and we hope to see you soon!

Tim Wilson, P.S.

A Birthday Surprise for Brother Leo Howell

L.U. 692 (i, mt&spa), BAY CITY, MI — On a chilly yet gorgeous early summer's afternoon of May 24, Brother Leo Howell, card #793081, celebrated his 97th birthday with his family at his side. Leo was also given a birthday surprise: a 75-year pin commemorating his years of service to the electrical industry.

Brother Howell enlisted into the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II in 1943 when he was 19 years old. He served honorably in the U.S. Navy, stationed in the Philippines and New Guinea, where he would learn his craft as an electrician before returning home in February 1946. He was sworn into membership shortly thereafter on May 13, 1946, and began his career as a journeyman inside wireman at Local 692.

Brother Howell worked locally when he could, building a solid reputation as a skilled craftsman and a trusted hand. When times got tough, Leo hit the road and did what was necessary to provide for his family, offering his experience and expertise to



Local 692's Brother Leo Howell holds his 75-year pin commemorating his years of service to the electrical industry.

locals across the country in need of skilled manpower. A true journeyman, Brother Howell retired in 1986 after a dignified 40-year career with the tools.

We'd like to congratulate Brother Howell on his monumental achievement. Let us never forget the great brothers and sisters in our history who have built this union that we all are privileged to represent.

Brendon Baranek, P.S.

Election Results & Labor Day Activities Returning

L.U. 702 (i, o, u, uow, em, rts, rtb, spa, t, catv, lctt, cs, c, es, govt, mt, mo, ptc, se, st, ws, as, et, it, p&pet), WEST FRANKFORT, IL — We are excited to announce that Labor Day activities will be returning to the Du Quoin State Fairgrounds and encourage all members to join us in the Twilight Parade on Friday, Aug. 27; contact your business representative for the time and location of the lineup.

We continue to support legislation in the Illinois Capitol that would provide work for our Inside and Outside branches with solar being a large focus for our wiremen and recoverable infrastructure expenses at utilities for our linemen.

On Thursday, June 10, the local's election concluded. This was the local's first mail-in ballot election, which was conducted by MK Election Services and occurred with no issues. All future elections will be held in this same format. Congratulations to Business Manager Steve Hughart, who ran unopposed and will be serving his fourth full term. All other officers and Executive Board members were re-elected, and we thank them for their service to the Brotherhood.

This year's golf outing is scheduled for Oct. 22 and will only contain one flight of golfers.

As of this writing, our referral books are as follows: Inside Construction — 67, Outside Construction — 55, Line Clearance — 2.

Mark Baker, P.S.



Local 702 members employed at Ameren Missouri in the Cape Girardeau Electric work group line the street on the processional route to the cemetery in honor of their fallen co-worker, Brother Joseph Paul "JP" Moore, who passed unexpectedly on April 10, 2021.

Local 1426 Members Give Back to Neighbors in Need

L.U. 1426 (govt, i, o, rtb, spa&u), GRAND FORKS, ND — This year has been extremely hard on some who are not as fortunate as most of our members. With the help of the Northern Plains Labor Council, the Northern Valley Labor Council, the Red River Valley Building and Trades Council, the North Dakota AFL-CIO, and the St. Paul Building and Trades Council, our members helped to distribute nearly 195,000 pounds of food and 6,500 gallons of milk to our local neighbors at five different events early this year. Many others have done the same this year, and we should all be so blessed to have members who donate their personal time to help others in need. Local 1426 would like to give a graceful thank you to all those who helped: Ricardo Badillo, Dillon Enninga, Rodney Erickson, Jared Fjelstad (Matt Fjelstad's son), Matt Fjelstad, Michael Fjelstad, Wayne Gronbeck, Phil Humann, Lacey Johnson, Dan Lamberson, Cody Schroder, Dennis Schroder and Brian Severinson.

Steve Walsh, B.R.



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

North Carolina Apprenticeship Director Wins Statewide Award

Rebecca Axford was not the obvious choice to run the Durham JATC. She didn't know much about electricity at first. Her husband, Rob, was an expert, a member of Local 553 and an instructor at the JATC, and he saw the possibility, and recommended her for the job when it opened in 2016.

She also wasn't an educator. She was, at the time, running a high-end relocation company that worked primarily with universities to move elaborate laboratories and operating rooms and the homes and offices of the professors who ran them.

"I wasn't sure why he thought I would be good for the job. I wasn't even looking for a job," Axford said.

Axford had seen the power of the apprenticeship program through Rob's success.

"He did all these amazing things: got his license. Ran work. Served the local. And then, freely gave his knowledge to the next generation of men and women. It is a great system," she said. "The work I was doing was important, but for a limited number of people. I knew at the JATC I could be a part of something so much bigger."

Her husband asked her to read the job description and then decide whether to pursue it or not.

"I realized I didn't need to be an electrician to be the training director. I needed to facilitate apprentices' learning processes and trust their ability," she said. "They didn't need another journeyman; they needed a principal."

So, she applied, a very non-traditional applicant with a very non-traditional message for a union training program in one of the lowest union-participation corners of the U.S.

Axford believed that apprenticeship in general was going to have its moment in the state. The underfunded primary education system was leaving many without the skills to fill open jobs. Many couldn't afford college, and the skills gap was growing and dragging the state's economy down.

"If we made apprenticeship more powerful in the state, of all kinds, union and nonunion, in all kinds of jobs and not just the trades, then our JATC would rise with it and so would labor unions," Axford said. "We are one choice among many. We are not trying to be the only choice; we just want to be able to take our piece of a larger success story."

That now-five-year-old effort to raise the profile and standing of apprenticeships in North Carolina, and the JATC specifically, has been recognized by the state-run apprenticeship body, ApprenticeshipNC, awarding Axford and her program the Special Recognition Award, the first time it has gone to a union.

"Because of her background with unions, she really understands what



Durham JATC Director Rebecca Axford receiving the ApprenticeshipNC Special Recognition Award, the highest honor the organization can give. It was the first time it has gone to a union.

the workforce development community where unions weren't seen as the enemy, she said. Rather, they weren't seen at all.

That needed to stop, and the turnaround began with the work she began with pre-apprenticeship programs that bring in historically underrepresented groups including women, veterans, young people and Black, Hispanic and Asian applicants.

In her award recognition, Axford chose to highlight the work she does with Hope Renovations, an innovative pre-apprenticeship non-profit that combines preparing women for careers in the trades by doing jobs that allow seniors to stay in their homes longer.

"I am just enamored with them. They are all about the right things: training the future and honoring our elders," Axford said. "I thought, 'Let's give them airtime. They need our support.'"

Axford said she understands that

employers need, and has been a great ambassador," said Andre Pettigrew, director of the Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

"Getting the head of the Economic Development Council to say the word 'union' in a positive light?" said Tenth International Vice President Brent Hall. "It was nothing short of a miracle."

Hall said the award is the closest thing the state has to an apprenticeship program-of-the-year, but it is also recognition for Axford.

"Our program has nearly tripled in size since Rebecca took over and the diversity of our classes has dramatically widened," said Durham Local 553 Business Manager Rob Axford, Axford's husband, who was elected three years after Axford started at the JATC.

What she brought to the job, he said, was a deep commitment to the movement part of the labor movement and a business acumen and language honed in the corporate world.

For example, when Axford took over, like many JATCs, it operated out of what space could be carved from the local hall. That was fine, but growth was limited, as were the kinds of equipment they could use.

Today the JATC partners with Durham Tech, the local community college, using space at their campus and sharing some of the resource costs.

Axford has been invited or volunteered for some of the most high-profile workforce commissions, committees, and workgroups in the state, including the Durham Workforce Development Board, the Youth Council, the NC Community College Apprenticeship Council and Durham Public Schools' advisory board.

That won her the respect of some of

there were reasons why the IBEW has had some lack of diversity in its membership. It was in part due to a desire, especially in the South, to just hold on to what they had and not lose more.

"At first I was worried that promoting our JATC in a community that didn't seem to welcome organized workers would attract negative attention to our whole group. It has in the past," she said. "And so I know why word-of-mouth and referrals seemed like a safer way to grow, even if what we were actually doing is shrinking and becoming exclusive."

But, she says, the proof is there that times are different.

"The members are ultimately the deciders if we are doing this the right way. Our members have accepted and welcomed the pre-apprentices we bring in, and they deserve our gratitude and credit for making them our sisters and brothers," Axford said. "That they embrace the peo-

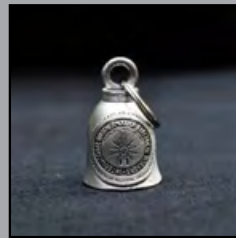
ple I send out is huge. And they do. They take that young person or woman who has no previous electrical experience, and they embrace them and teach them."

Axford said as they open up our doors to new communities, the JATC will remain a powerful recruiting tool to the Durham IBEW, and the need for member involvement is critical.

"I know today's members want their family to have the same opportunity they did, their son or daughter or other loved ones, and we want those people. Any referral from a skilled trades worker means they have been well screened," she said. "But for every family member or friend you refer, my ask is, go out into your community and recommend five more to give us a call. Wear your IBEW shirt when you coach softball or volunteer. Be a proud member of your community and your IBEW. And speak up about what a union apprenticeship can do for them too." ■



Axford has been a high-profile advocate for expanding all kinds of apprenticeships in the state, including expanding the pool of applicants to the Durham JATC.



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