

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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## IBEW News



### On Top Again

IBEW Journeymen, Apprentices Take Top Honors at Annual Skills Tournament **3**

### IBEW Heroes Honored



Oregon Duo's Quick Thinking Saves the Life of Ironworker Brother **6**

## In This Issue

Editorials **2**

Letters to the Editor **2**

My IBEW Story **2**

North of 49° **7**

Politics & Jobs **8**

Transitions **10**

Circuits **11**

Local Lines **13**

Retirees **17**

In Memoriam **18**

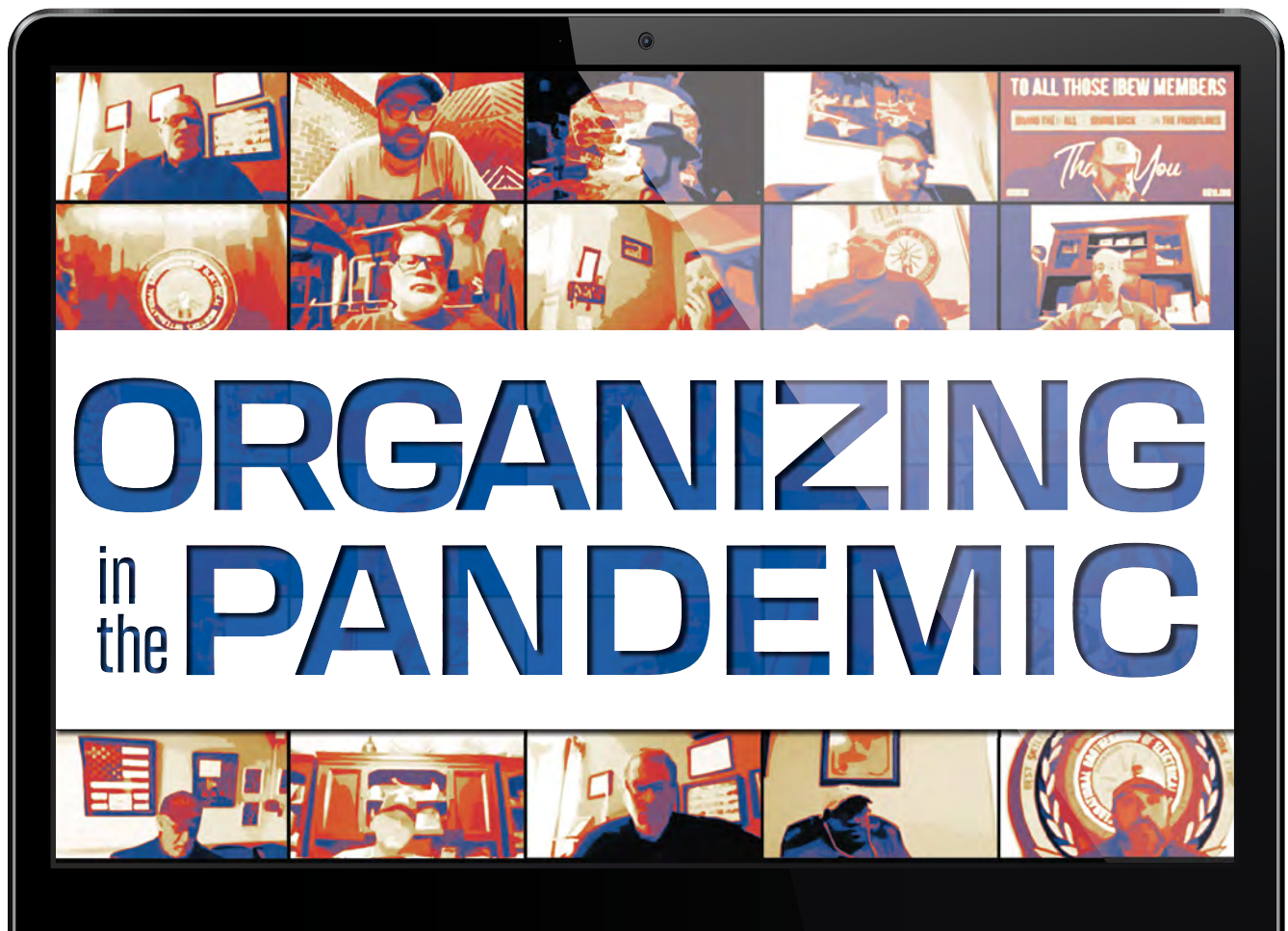
Grounded in History **19**

Who We Are **20**

## My IBEW STORY

We asked you to share what IBEW membership has meant in your life. See what you had to say.

See page 2



In the two-plus years since COVID-19 transformed the lives of billions of people, so much has been lost or taken away. Nearly six million are dead, 900,000 of them in North America. Millions more suffered devastating hospitalizations and slow, often imperfect recoveries.

Jobs, years of in-person schooling, a sense of security and community were lost as well. People celebrated holidays alone, mourned alone. The gathering places — restaurants, movie theaters and union halls — closed.

## WHAT WE LEARNED FROM COVID

And it was a profound challenge to organized labor, which has always relied on solidarity, connection and trust to improve the lives of working people.

Along with so much else, for a time, the pandemic took away the most powerful tool the union movement had: face-to-face, person-to-person conversation and connection.

“To an organizer, it was impossible to imagine doing your job with no eye contact, no direct conversation,” said Assistant to the International President for Membership Development Ricky Oakland. “The bene-

fits of joining in union can be read on a pamphlet, but reading isn't knowing, let alone trusting.”

As COVID sealed off jobsites and sent millions of workers to home offices, kitchen tables or near-empty office buildings, the need for worker protections didn't diminish, especially for those who couldn't work from the comfort of a laptop computer. The clamor for union protections only increased.

Eighth and Ninth District Regional Organizing Coordinator Bob Brock said the pandemic left organizers with a choice: change or watch and wither on the vine.

“Everyone has been forced to zero in on the essentials, the core,” he said. “But this has been needed. It has been an opportunity to get back to the basics and reset.”

Two years on, even with the pandemic still underway, it is possible to see what organizing will look like going forward: much of it familiar, but with new tools and strategies blazing the path to the future.

**ORGANIZING IN THE PANDEMIC** continued on page 4

## FROM THE OFFICERS

## Investing in Organizing



**Lonnie R. Stephenson**  
International President

**W**hen everything shut down two years ago this month, we never anticipated COVID-19 would drag on as long as it has. And while the lost lives and livelihoods are by far the most important casualties of the last two years, many other parts of our lives and our union have also suffered.

One of those things we lost early on was the face-to-face contact that drives the labor movement forward. Brotherhood and sisterhood are the building blocks of everything we stand for, and the in-person elements of that have been sorely missed.

In recruiting new members, face-to-face interactions are an organizer's most effective tool. Trust can be built, assurances given, but it's never easy for a non-union worker to take a risk, let alone with someone they've never met in person.

Still, our Membership Development team is making it work. 'A' membership is at its highest level ever and showing no sign of slowing down. And 'BA' membership is continuing to recover from the depths of the early pandemic.

A big part of our success has been the way our organizing strategy adjusted and evolved with the realities of a COVID-19 world. When we couldn't rely on the things we'd relied on before like jobsite visits, industry nights and house calls, our

organizers changed tactics to keep themselves and potential new members safe and healthy.

That included an embrace of technology, and we've learned so much that we'll take forward into our post-pandemic strategies.

One thing I'm very excited about — and you can read more about it in this month's issue — is the Workforce Recruitment Task Force model that I and my counterpart at NECA authorized last year and recently expanded to 25 new markets.

With this new model, we're using technology to connect nonunion electricians to our NECA contractor partners and organizers in new ways, and we're seeing impressive results. Our local unions are filling calls at remarkable rates in high-demand markets, and our contractors are bidding even more work.

We've also evolved the way we organize on the Professional and Industrial side, rolling out the digital membership application, which has streamlined the process of signing authorization cards and taken so much opportunity for error out of the equation. When you use the DMA, your membership is recorded right then. It's worlds away from the old way.

COVID-19 forced us to think differently, and our organizers have risen to that challenge. I'm proud of what they're accomplishing with new tools at their disposal.

Now let's get out there and fulfill the IBEW's most important objective: to organize all workers in the entire electrical industry. ■

## A Career for Everyone

**L**ike so many of you, the day I joined the IBEW was a turning point in my life. Belonging to this great brotherhood allowed me to seize control of my own future and make a comfortable middle-class life for myself and my family.

I found my way into the IBEW after a few years of college and searching for the right fit. For others, the IBEW is a family tradition. Some of you chose this path after leaving the military or even after many years in another career. Let me be clear: There's no wrong way to join the IBEW and earn the respect you deserve on the job.

But this month I'd like to talk about reaching young people to help them consider all the options available to them in the trades before they make important decisions about their futures. And that starts in high school.

For way too long, schools have been pushing young people into four-year degrees as the only option for success. But we know the truth. College isn't for everyone, and in many cases substandard colleges are preying on kids and turning them out into a world saddled with debt and facing grim job prospects.

Meanwhile, the demand for skilled tradesmen and women is skyrocketing. In many jurisdictions, the median starting salary for an IBEW apprentice is significantly higher than the salary for an entry-level college graduate. And with the IBEW, there's no debt, no cost, no four-year delay in building for your future.

I'm not saying every high school graduate should join the IBEW, but for those who aren't sure that college is the right choice, it's on you and me and every IBEW local union to reach those young people and educate them on the opportunities that could be there for them in the trades.

In Canada this January, the government launched an advertising campaign to promote the skilled trades as a strong first-choice career path for youth and young adults. First District International Vice President Tom Reid and his staff were an integral part of the process and deserve a lot of credit for helping to push for this pro-worker policy. That's the kind of forward thinking we need from government at every level.

In the U.S., many local unions are out in their community's schools regularly making young people aware of the opportunity an apprenticeship brings, too.

In this month's "My IBEW Story," you'll meet a young woman who wouldn't have been a part of this great union without a high school shop teacher who showed her that there was a different path. A school field trip to the local hall led to her being accepted as an apprentice and making a career in the electrical trade.

We're stronger as a union when we reach beyond our walls and invite our communities' young people in. Keep spreading the gospel of the trades and the union movement. We're changing lives for the better. ■



**Kenneth W. Cooper**  
International Secretary-Treasurer

## “LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

### You're Not Alone

I have a son who is addicted to alcohol and prescription drugs. He turned his life upside down and our lives have been as well for the past five years.

We were introduced to a program called PAL (Parents of Addicted Loved Ones). PAL is a free program that helps the parents of addicted men, women and kids. The program helps to deal with all the drama and chaos that addiction puts the whole family through. This has helped my wife and I tremendously.

Now, I can't be the only member of the IBEW to be dealing with this problem. So I want to make sure this information is available to all of our brothers and sisters. PAL is available nationwide, either in-person or online. You can find out more at [palgroup.org](http://palgroup.org).

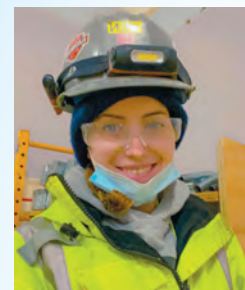
If you're struggling to help a loved one through addiction, please get some help.

*Dan Rodarte, Local 640 member  
Phoenix, Ariz.*

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

## My IBEW STORY

**Genesis Cornejo, Inside Apprentice**  
New Haven, Conn., Local 90



“Before being introduced to the electrical field as a freshman in high school, I was just a young girl who didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. I assumed I'd follow the crowd: graduate high school, struggle through college, hopefully get a good job that allowed me to pay off the student debt and start a family.

I'm so glad I learned about the IBEW instead. Today, I'm a fifth-year apprentice at Local 90. My husband is a Local 90 journeyman and everything we have as adults has come from our IBEW paychecks. We bought a house at 24 and 26, and our two kids are growing up watching both of their parents work hard and earn an honest living with the training and support of our local.

I became aware of the IBEW through my high school electrical shop teacher, who was a member of the local. From the first day, he taught us about the importance of a career versus a job, about paying attention to things like health benefits and retirement plans. But the best thing he showed us was the value of having a brotherhood and sisterhood through the IBEW.

As a woman in the industry, it's not always easy. There just aren't enough women in our trade, and little things can still be a struggle, from finding work clothes that fit right to figuring out what to do when there's nowhere to use the bathroom — it happens more often than you'd think. But the sisters and brothers of the IBEW make it work and support one another in so many ways.

That's why I use Instagram (check it out at [@genny\\_from\\_electrical](https://www.instagram.com/genny_from_electrical)) to connect with other IBEW women, but also to show young girls that someone like them can make a real career in the trades. Young people are on social media all the time, and meeting them where they are and showing them the opportunities that are out there with the IBEW is so important.

IBEW membership means everything to my family, and I want to share those opportunities with everyone I can.”

# IBEW Journeymen, Apprentices Take Top Honors at Annual Skills Tournament

IBEW members once again were top performers at the 2021 Ideal Nationals, a hands-on skills-demonstration competition for union and nonunion electrical workers held one week before Christmas in Nashville, Tenn.

“These wins year after year are a real testament to the high quality, continuing training our union apprentices and journeymen receive,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “Congratulations to these electrical workers and thank you for the pride you’ve brought to every man and woman in the IBEW.”

As in past years, there were categories at the Nashville finals for apprentice-level electricians to compete against their peers as well as for professionals to go up against fellow professionals. A new third category this year was a “pro-am” team challenge, where a seasoned electrical worker was paired with a student or apprentice.

Taking the top spot in this updated pro-am category was team “Risky Business,” which found journeyman wireman Will Barnett of Elgin, Ill., Local 117 paired with second-year Chicago Local 134 apprentice Chris Brieschke.

“Will and I had met at a qualifying event,” said Brieschke, who approached Barnett about teaming up for a pro-am run. “Nashville was only the third time we had met up.”

The field of 142 finalists gathered at the Music City Center was what remained of more than 32,000 electricians who started out competing in knockout rounds across the U.S. Some of these trials took place at venues hosted by the IBEW or its National Electrical Contractors Association partners.

“Chris was looking for a professional to be paired with,” said Barnett, an experienced wireman who was happy to oblige the eager apprentice. And because Barnett and Brieschke live a quick drive from one another, they were able to get together and strategize.

“We even spent one eight-hour day at Will’s house just learning how one another worked,” said Brieschke, whose drive and work ethic helped him graduate from high school early so he could get a jump start on his IBEW apprenticeship.

“I’ve learned a lot in the small shops, too,” he said. “They taught me so much; they pushed me.”

“We spent a lot of time talking strategy,” said Barnett, who has competed in every Ideal tournament since the annual event was created. “He was my prep king. We knew we were never going to succeed without a plan.”

“Will did a lot of the work,” Brieschke said. “I just tried to make it easier for him.”

As the top prize winners, Team Risky Business picked up \$40,000, plus \$5,000 for Barnett’s contractor to spend on Ideal tools, plus another \$5,000 in “Ideal Cash” for Brieschke’s Local 134 training center.

“You can always attribute our wins to the IBEW,” Barnett said. “You go in not knowing what to expect, but you’re ready for anything.”



IBEW members took several top honors at the Ideal Nationals, an annual electrical skills competition held in December in Nashville. On stage to receive awards were Waterloo, Iowa, Local 288’s David Hand (standing above, fourth from left), as well as (standing above, starting sixth from left) Binghamton, N.Y., Local 325’s Michael Zurenda; Elgin, Ill., Local 117’s Will Barnett; Chicago Local 134’s Chris Brieschke and Local 117’s Greg Anliker. At right, competition host Chip Wade interviews a working competitor.

Garnering a third-place honorable mention in the pro-am category was a team from Toledo, Ohio, Local 8 consisting of members Pat Cryan and Arthur Heudecker.

Competitors’ family members and friends cheered as the participants demonstrated their electrical skills in rounds featuring a commercial pull box prep and installation, a commercial panel installation, a three-way switch installation and a full panel change-out.

In the apprentice competition, coming out on top was Michael Zurenda of Binghamton, N.Y., Local 325.

“I just did it the exact same as I do it every day,” said Zurenda, who also took home a \$40,000 first-place prize. “You have to be ready for anything — sometimes you work two to three jobs a day, other times you’re on big commercial jobs.”

Zurenda, who is in his fifth year of apprenticeship, said he got interested in electrical work because of a family friend who’s an electrical inspector.

“I always try to be the best professional possible,” he said. While he has learned a lot as an apprentice, “I’m a very hands-on person and learned a lot in the field.”

Waterloo, Iowa, Local 288 apprentice David Hand took third place in that category, winning \$10,000.



Another familiar IBEW face took the stage to accept third-place honors in the professional category: repeat competitor and frequent winner Greg Anliker of Elgin, Ill., Local 117.

“This year, I actually think the apprentices had harder competitions than the professionals,” said Anliker, who received a \$10,000 prize.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 competition was a smaller, invitational-style tournament. The December event, though, marked a return to the more familiar competition, complete with lights, cameras and cheering sections. And this time, it had a more real-life feel to it, Anliker said.

“We reused some of our boards for multiple rounds,” said the 24-year journeyman wireman. “If you made a mess in

the round before, you had to deal with it.” Keeping up on his education and code updates helped a great deal, he added.

“Brothers Barnett and Brieschke exemplify the best in IBEW training, two men from two separate local unions coming together as one cohesive team,” said Sixth District International Vice President David J. Ruhmkorff, whose jurisdiction includes Illinois. “They made our district proud, as did Brother Anliker as he continues to excel in this competition year after year.”

Founded in 1916, Ideal Industries has grown to become a global, family-owned electrical, lighting and infrastructure business. Ideal Electrical established the national championship in 2016 to highlight the professional trades as a rewarding, in-demand career path and showcase the skills of electricians.

“It is more imperative than ever that we attract more men and women to the electrical industry to meet the swiftly increased rise in demand,” said Carmen Cardillo, general manager of Ideal Electrical U.S. and Mexico. “The Ideal National Championship is one of many initiatives designed by Ideal to attract young talent to the skilled trades and the strong community that makes up the industry, and highlight just how hands-on, mentally challenging and rewarding a career path it can be.”

Those who couldn’t be on-site to watch the show in Nashville in December — or those competitors who wish to relive their experiences — can stream coverage of the competition via Fox Sports 2. The show ran on the cable network on Feb. 6. ■

Continued from page 1

# ORGANIZING in the PANDEMIC

## Essential Workers of the World Unite

One thing the pandemic didn't change is that working people in America are getting rooked. After decades of wage stagnation, jobs shipped overseas, factories shutting and union busting, the average CEO makes more than 300 times the average worker. The Great Recession swiped a generation's wealth, bailed out the banks and left working families on their knees.

Then, in March 2020, 13 million workers were laid off. Another 9.3 million followed them a month later.

Millions who weren't thrown out on the street were forced back into jobs with minimal protections and shoddy health coverage.

Yes, there was applause for essential workers — the first time since 9/11 that working people were allowed the spotlight normally reserved for tech billionaires and CEOs. They may have been celebrated, but it rarely translated into higher salaries, better benefits or even proper personal protective equipment. Working Americans and Canadians could see with crystal clarity how little they were valued.

It was no small thing that organizing was at a crossroads just as workers were looking around for tools to improve their lives.

There were, basically, three great challenges that needed to be solved. The first and greatest was replacing the lost face-to-face connection between workers and the organizers working to help them. Development of leads and signing up new members while keeping everyone safe and distanced were the remaining two.

But meeting up, that was challenge number one.

"We have been about face-to-face for a very long time. With the rug ripped out from underneath us, well, how do we do what we are tasked to do every day?" asked Tenth District International Representative Brian Adams. "As a district, we are great at rolling up on a job, getting in front of a contractor, grabbing an electrician in a parking lot and telling them the reason why the IBEW would be great for them. We are really, really good at it. But how do you still be effective when that jobsite is locked down behind COVID precautions or shut down because people got sick?"

For that, organizers turned to teleconferencing — Zoom or any number of alternatives — the side cut pliers of the pandemic organizer: one tool with a thousand uses.

El Paso, Texas, Local 583 is conducting wireman interviews over Zoom calls.

Third District International Representative Keenan Eagan ran informational meetings for Shamokin, Pa., Local 607 using Microsoft Teams. Second District International Representative Ed Starr held volunteer organizing committee meetings for presidential campaign workers who were spread across the country.

"The local contacts the guy, 'We see you applied, just want to follow up.' Only now the follow-up is a Zoom call, not a house call," Adams said. "We are all about identifying roadblocks and smashing through them."

There are even official vote counts conducted by the National Labor Relations Board that are observed using Skype, including a long-delayed election at Allied Power Services overseen by Sixth District International Organizer Lynn Arwood. The NLRB shut down in March 2020, right as the election was supposed to be held. It was delayed until July and the result was disputed by the company but was ultimately successful.

As of late January, Arwood said the IBEW and Allied were negotiating a first contract and close to an agreement.

One of the most promising uses of videoconferencing is the transformation of the traditional job fair, said former Director of Construction Membership Development Virgil Hamilton.

Historically, job fairs have been all-hands-on-deck, multi-week extravaganzas with organizers from many states leafletting the parking lots of jobsites and electrical supply companies, phone-banking and email-blasting, all to get nonunion electricians in the room with contractors with open calls.

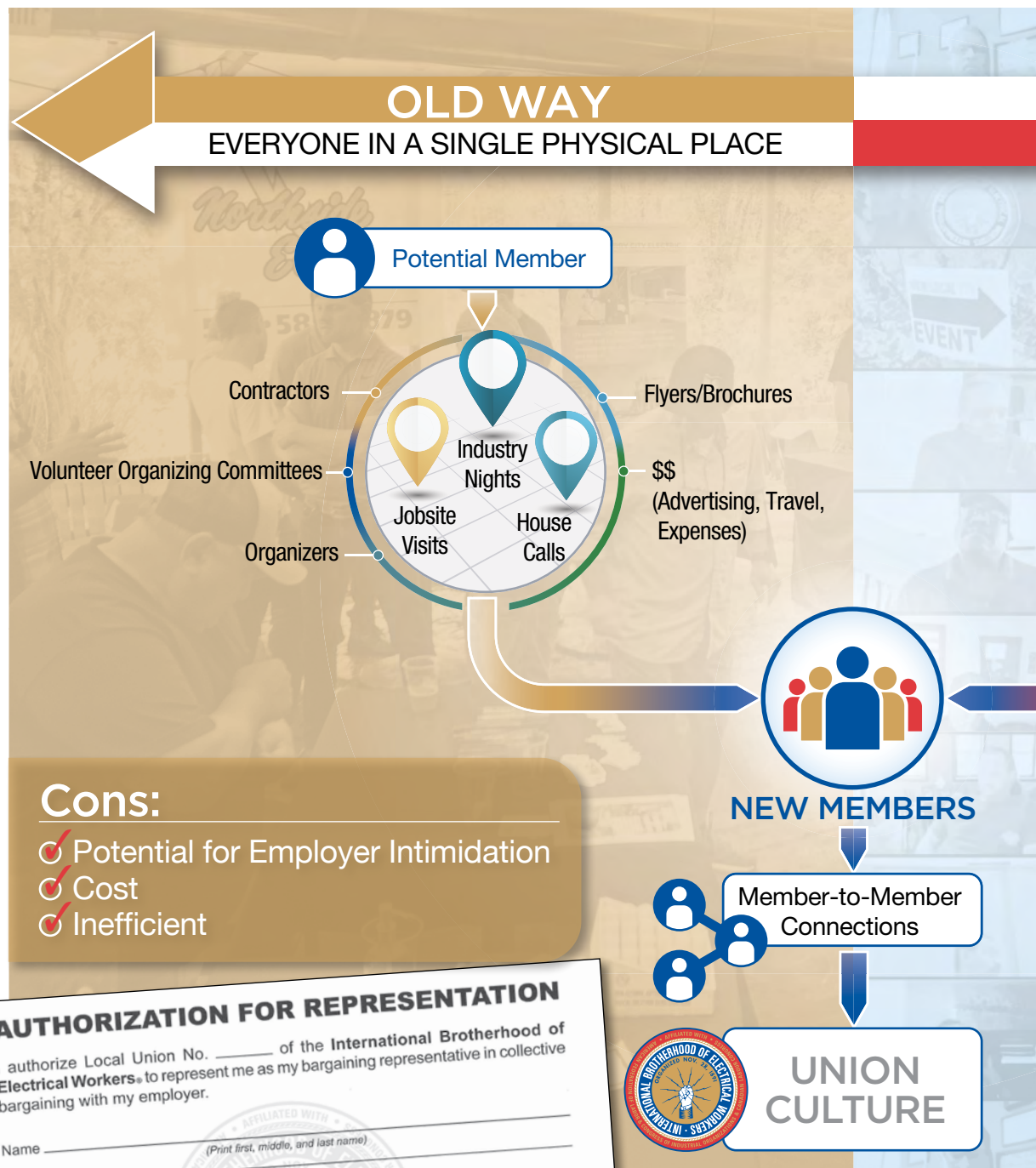
They are time-, personnel- and money-intensive and require many people, not least the non-union workers, to all be in a single place at a single time. They also require a fair bit of courage.

"People are genuinely afraid of going to job fairs and are afraid of being seen by owners or spies. We know owners come to job fairs. Shop managers and owners just drive through the parking lot to see if they recognize cars or schedule overtime to keep people from going," Hamilton said.

All of that changes when job fairs pivot to private teleconferences.

One format of the virtual job fair was developed out of a series of district and international organizing conference calls.

The organizer or a local union volun-



### Cons:

- ✓ Potential for Employer Intimidation
- ✓ Cost
- ✓ Inefficient

### AUTHORIZATION FOR REPRESENTATION

I authorize Local Union No. \_\_\_\_\_ of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers® to represent me as my bargaining representative in collective bargaining with my employer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Print first, middle, and last name)  
 Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department \_\_\_\_\_ Manager \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Shift 1<sup>st</sup>  2<sup>nd</sup>  3<sup>rd</sup>   
 Date of Authorization \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Form 141 Rev. 9/13

teer is assigned to every applicant. They conduct a virtual interview to establish experience level, do a skill assessment and create a personal connection.

"This is nothing new really: Relationship Building 101. The organizer's job is to educate them on what to expect and to forge a personal connection," Hamilton said.

It's the next part of the process that is new. The organizer then sets up Zoom interviews with the hiring contractors, and the job fair valet stays with the potential new member every step of the way. The job comes from the organizer, but the opportunity, the standards and protections in the contract, and future jobs, that all comes from the IBEW.

"We want them to see us as more than a job provider. We want them to see the brotherhood aspect of the IBEW from the start of their journey," Hamilton said.

It is a significant bonus that in a virtual job fair things like getting mailers, brochures and yard signs ordered and shipped, reserving tables and spaces and coordinating schedules and travel to get everyone in the same place take a backseat.

"Now we are universally focused on message, outreach and follow up," he said.

Even in more ways, Adams said, the rise of videoconferencing made communication easier, especially internally.

"What's funny is we are probably

communicating at a higher level now. It was more one-on-one before. Now it is district wide. We have guys in Arkansas talking to organizers in the Carolinas who maybe hadn't talked more than twice a year during a blitz or at a conference," he said. "It is a [hard] time to be alive, let alone try to fill a 10-man call by your lonesome. Just connecting with one another, it keeps the morale high."

Fourth District Organizing Coordinator Gary Osborne put it more simply.

"We're busier than ever because we haven't been in our cars," he said.

### Developing Leads

It must be said that the volume of online meetings that characterized the start of the pandemic has waned. Most locals returned to in-person meetings in the fall, even if some went back to restrictions during the omicron variant wave.

But some new tools that grew in prominence during the pandemic will only grow further, Oakland said.

Developing lists of nonunion electri-



Virtual job fairs don't end in-person events like this one in Salem, Ore. Old tools live on next to new ones.



During the deepest lockdown, Nashville, Tenn., Local 429 Organizer Kevin Wilson interviewed now-member Willie Farris, made a classification determination and sent him out on job before ever meeting in person.

North America and a strategy to reach them with a compelling message both online and in-person to create a real relationship.

“It will take time, but we have the tools,” he said.

Jones is almost evangelical in his advocacy for the newer, computer-based tools to start the connection with non-union workers, but he is clear that what will make it last is the community-built worker-to-worker interactions.

“The realities of organizing in a pandemic helped us to make connections between old tools and new ones, and now we’re operating on another level,” Oakland said.

membership applications. We emailed them links and left pamphlets with QR codes in the workplace.”

The key change was the digital membership application.

“The DMA is an absolute game changer,” said Director of Membership Development for Professional and Industrial Jammi Ouellette. “I can’t begin to describe how big going digital is. There’s nothing more frustrating for our new members than chasing down paper. When the office closed and we couldn’t manually process applicants, what were we supposed to do? Luckily [Per Capita Department Director] Louie [Spencer] was a champion to get us digitalized and offer an electronic membership option.”

Atlanta Local 1997 signed up a majority of its new members using the DMA within eight weeks of its first contract approval. Since then, the unit has grown to more than 200 workers without the signing of a single physical card.

Brock said you don’t even need the pandemic to see how valuable that is; you just look at the opposite case. On a recent campaign, signed authorization cards expired before they could all be submitted.

“Paper is a challenge, just the logistics: I get the authorizations from the International Office, give them to the volunteer organizing committee captains; they give it to the new members, back to the captain, back to me and then back to the I.O. The DMA just eliminates all those exchanges,” Brock said.

Now, organizers are going back through the unit and doing authorizations with the DMA and when the member fills it out on a computer or by phone, it is filed and official.

“The second they fill it out, it’s where it needs to be instantly,” he said.

Across North America, the unthinkable is commonplace: newly organized wiremen and linemen are contacted, signed up, interviewed and sent out on work without ever meeting anyone in person.

“The only time they come in now is when they get sworn in,” said Seventh District Organizing Coordinator Javier Casas.

Some locals aren’t even requiring people to come in for that. Boston Local 103 Business Manager Lou Antonellis saw only the torsos, heads (some masked) and raised right arms when he swore in the Joe Kennedy for Senate campaign workers via videoconference in 2020.

## Signing Up by Logging On

Finally, there was the problem of signing up new members when the old way required in-person interactions deemed unsafe in the pandemic’s early days.

In February of 2020 when the first contract was agreed with Atlanta Gas Light, any worker who wanted to join the IBEW could do it roughly the same way anyone might have joined 125 years ago: filling out a paper form. And that was the plan to sign up new members to Atlanta Local 1997.

But by mid-March, there was no way to get the paper applications to everyone and International Office staff that processed the applications was largely working from home.

“We couldn’t speak to potential members and stewards couldn’t even see their coworkers because the company, understandably, kept them separate,” said Fifth District International Organizer Joe Skinner. They had to come up with new tools, new strategies nearly overnight. “We pushed everyone to digital forms and mobile-based

In early 2021, the positive outcomes from the BGU campaign led International President Lonnie R. Stephenson and NECA CEO David Long to create a Workforce Recruitment Task Force that would target Nashville, Tenn., Phoenix and the San Antonio/Austin market, areas with lots of open calls and high expected growth.

The result was astonishing, Oakland said.

“In three months in these cities we filled at least as many open calls as we did over a decade using industry nights, and we did it for far less than 10% of the cost,” he said.

The results were so promising that Jones compiled a manual that included all the tools used in the task force trial run and made it available to local and international organizers from the Membership Development Department. Then, in January, the Workforce Recruitment Task Force model was expanded to an additional 25 cities.

“This has been a difficult time, but in 10 years I have never felt as effective as an organizer as I do now,” Jones said.

The end goal, Jones said, will be a database of every nonunion electrician in

cians from hiring websites like Indeed, LinkedIn and others is a valuable tool that is only now being used to its full potential. Organizers are also developing campaigns to reach the entire community of nonunion workers, including targeting ads to specific locations like jobsites or electrical supply companies.

Organizers had been using each of these tools in a scattershot way, or hiring specialist companies to do it for them, for years. But they were brought together as a unified and flexible pandemic toolkit during the Berg’s Going Union campaign, a multi-jurisdictional organizing campaign targeting one of the largest nonunion contractors in North America.

“What we have come to realize is that a person’s online address is at least as important as their physical address,” said Workforce Recruitment Coordinator Aaron Jones, a third-generation IBEW member from Las Vegas. “We needed to find a deeper use for social media, adapting it and hiring platforms for organizing purposes. And then we needed an online resource, not just a website. Something more than ‘Call us today.’”

## The Tools We’re Keeping

Another thing the pandemic taught organizers was that some of the old tools — the oldest tools — worked just fine.

Not everything changed two years ago. On the construction side in the U.S. and some parts of Canada, the building boom took a brief stutter step and then simply barreled on. Open calls were the reality before 2020 and for many locals manning the work is still an organizer’s primary task.

“Our message never changed, especially to contractors. Top-down organizing can be very effective via phone or Zoom — in-person meetings are not completely necessary to address their fears or concerns and discuss the value we bring to their company. If the top-down process isn’t successful, and they choose not to sign, I’ll strip your workers,” said Second District International Vice President Mike Monahan. “Most of what we do in the Second is top-down organizing and COVID restrictions didn’t impact that.”

Anyone can find out that a nonunion contractor won a job through online sources like Dodge, Industrial Information Resources and others and explaining the benefits of signing an IBEW contract can be accomplished over the phone.

“We never skipped a beat, never had to change,” Monahan said

Fourth District Organizing Coordinator Gary Osborne said field organizers continued making jobsite visits, though with precautions never seen before.

“If for some reason a jobsite came down with the virus, we don’t want blame to come down on our organizer,” he said. “They are following the guidelines. They may go on jobsites, but they go with a mask, distance and just as often as talking they leave literature on car windows fishing for calls.”

You have to be an idealist and an optimist to be an organizer, but you have to be brass-tacks pragmatic, too.

“We’re like MacGyver. You use every tool, and every tool has a use. And organizers never, ever throw a tool away,” Jones said.

And while the future will involve developing better, more complex and interconnected tools to find prospects and make the pitch, the job of the organizer hasn’t dramatically changed because the most important skill is what an organizer does when they make a connection, Brock said.

“I have a rule. The more I’m talking, the worse I’m doing,” he said. “My job is to listen, because if it was only about wages and benefits, everyone would already be in our union.”

“Whether you are trying to organize electricians or camera operators, really what you are trying to figure out is the change that person wants to see in their work life, so you can then have the conversation about how being part of the IBEW can help them realize that change. The only way to find that out is listening. In person. Online. On a Zoom. In a living room. You listen. And when we listen, we have a chance to change lives forever.” ■

## IBEW MEDIA WORLD

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

### www.ibew.org

Get the latest IBEW news, including the online version of the *Electrical Worker*, at [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org).

### YouTube

At [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](http://YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker), members of Washington, D.C., Local 1200 and Broadcasting Director Robert Prunn describe how they worked with Fox Sports to bring back live broadcasts during a pandemic.

### Vimeo

The 2021 Canadian Women's Conference in Toronto marked the first time the gathering was held since COVID-19 began. Visit [vimeo.com/IBEW](http://vimeo.com/IBEW) to learn how our sisters in the trades build resilience and educate allies.

### HourPower

Raleigh, N.C., Local 553 is seeing immediate returns on its investment in pre-apprenticeships. Visit [IBEWHourPower.com](http://IBEWHourPower.com) to see how their program is bringing more diversity to the electrical trade.



### ElectricTV

Members of Youngstown, Ohio, Local 64 recently lighted a new statue commemorating the historic 1946 handshake between major-league baseball's first Black player, Jackie Robinson, and his white teammate, Youngstown's George "Shotgun" Shuba. [ElectricTV.net](http://ElectricTV.net) has the story.



# Lifesaving Oregon Journeymen 'Definitely Put Themselves in Harm's Way'

One moment they were installing conduit, hunkered down in the concrete moat of a massive building site south of Portland, Ore., earplugs in to minimize the snare-drum racket of the metal decking across the steel I-beams above.

The next, journeymen Kevin Jorgenson and Keoki Hookano were rushing to save a union brother's life.

"It sounded like an earthquake and a hurricane had hit the building," Jorgenson said. "I assume now it was the bolts in the roof beams breaking apart. Then I saw Jimmy hit the ground."

"You could hear and feel it," Hookano said. "Then Kevin was shouting, 'Man down! Man down!' I turned around and saw a crumpled orange figure."

The broken, bleeding body of an Ironworker, who we will call Jimmy for privacy reasons, lay some 30 feet away. He had plunged more than two stories.

Instincts and training took over as Jorgenson and Hookano flew across the moat, propelling themselves with their dollies.

Their actions and courage in the terrifying minutes ahead that morning in June 2020 have been recognized with one of the union's highest honors, the IBEW Life Saving Award.

Portland Local 48 presented the awards in December, along with a special Certificate of Recognition for journeyman Sergey Elikh, who assisted other workers in saving a second critically injured Ironworker who broke his back.

"If it were not for the quick response of our members, and lifesaving techniques used, these workers may have had a drastically different outcome," Local 48 Business Representative Joshua Carter said. "These members not only acted swiftly to save the lives of these two individuals, but also bravely, because of the unknown dangers still present from the collapsing steel."

A responding firefighter/paramedic from Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue said the honor is well deserved. "They definitely put themselves in harm's way," Griffin Rojo said. "They dragged the victim out of the danger zone, cut off his harness, and held his C-spine (neck) until we arrived on scene."

The hazards overhead were the first major challenge when Hookano and Jorgenson reached Jimmy and two panicked, uninjured Ironworkers at their fallen brother's side.

About 60 tradesworkers were on site that day, a public works project being built to state-of-the-art earthquake standards, Jorgenson said.

"One guy says, 'We've got to move him' and the other one says, 'Don't move him!'" he said. "Then the first guy says, 'Steel is falling!' We were smack dab in the middle of pick-up sticks."

The four men cautiously grasped Jimmy's limbs and eased him onto one of the rolling dollies — a feat complicated by the fact that he was missing a chunk of his right arm and bleeding from the back of his head.

"We got about 150 feet away," Jor-



Two Oregon journeymen recently received the IBEW Life Saving Award for their swift actions at risk to themselves after a worksite catastrophe left an Ironworker near death. Keoki Hookano, left, of Tangent Local 280, and Kevin Jorgenson, Portland Local 48, are using their experience to talk about jobsite safety and first-aid training.

genson said. "It had rained and there was water on the ground of the moat. There was a solid blood trail in the water a hundred feet long."

He was unconscious and not breathing, not until his rescuers cut his harness.

"He immediately started gasping for air," Hookano said. "I had my hand putting pressure on his head. He had orbital fractures. His right arm was pretty much hanging. He had multiple broken ribs."

He said both injured men had been harnessed to the roof beams, "but when the joint broke, they both slid off."

Oregon OSHA reported that the accident resulted from a failed connection between a column and a beam due to a lack of welding at the connection.

As Hookano cupped Jimmy's head, Jorgenson used rags to wipe blood that was pooling in his eye sockets.

Elikh, who was also helping the second man's rescuers, rushed them an AED — an automated external defibrillator. Ironworkers attached the paddles, revealing that Jimmy's heart rhythm was stable.

"As electricians, we're trained especially in AED and CPR," Jorgenson said. "I didn't know what was going on with his heart, but I knew we needed a reading. The AED itself tells you whether the person needs to be shocked."

While ambulances were on their way, he said, "everything seemed like it was in slow motion. At the time it seemed like forever before the paramedics got there, but I know it wasn't."

The stress on the injured men's brothers was palpable. "Ironworkers travel as a crew," Jorgenson said. "They are as close as family, and they were seeing this happen to someone they know personally."

He knew he had to keep his cool. But after he and Hookano helped medics



Journeyman Keoki Hookano receives the IBEW Life Saving Award as he shakes the hand of President Wayne Chow at Local 48's December membership meeting.

strap Jimmy to a board and lift him out of the moat, he looked over and saw the Ironworkers' foreman on the phone.

"Immediately I knew who he was talking to, a call to Jimmy's wife to tell her what's going on," Jorgenson said. "I lost it, because I couldn't imagine somebody making that phone call to my family."

The odds for Jimmy, a young father, didn't look good. As Hookano said, "I've seen people die from less."

In fact, rumor spread a short time later that he'd died in the ambulance. "I didn't know whether to cry or hold out," Jorgenson said. The next morning they learned he was alive.

Jimmy spent a month in a medically induced coma, while his tool partner was in a trauma unit after back surgery. According to reports, both men have made remarkable recoveries.

The gravity of the 10:01 a.m. callout nearly two years ago has stuck with emergency personnel, even though theirs is the largest, busiest fire district in Oregon. The journeymen's response is part of that memory.

"The actions of these electrical workers allowed firefighter/paramedics to

more quickly assess and treat the victim," department spokesman Peter Scott said.

The rule of thumb when someone is immobilized by injuries is to let medics alone handle them, as the IBEW members and Ironworkers at Jimmy's side anxiously debated under swaying steel. But in such life-and-death situations, it's not always possible.

"It's usually best to wait for trained responders to arrive," Scott said. "But in this case, the actions of Mr. Hookano and Mr. Jorgenson ultimately helped deliver a positive outcome for the patient."

For Jorgenson and Hookano, the greatest value of their life-saving awards is the opportunity to put a spotlight on job safety. They say they rarely talk about the day itself.

"I don't go around telling the story about what we went through when I am talking to people," Jorgenson said. "It is solely focused on the importance of CPR and first aid."

Hookano, whose home local is Tangent, Ore., Local 280, said safety instructors are as important as their subject matter.

When he worked on a tech giant's project in Eastern Oregon, he said, "they had a guy come out there who was probably one of the best CPR teachers I've ever had. This guy made it personal, had everybody else make it personal, and now everybody's invest-

ed in it."

Both men also stress that more accountability and transparency from investigators and employers is critical.

"When I'm talking about safety, it's also the importance of shutting jobs down, so we can all reevaluate what's going on after an accident," Jorgenson said.

They are frustrated not to know more about the official report, saying all parties — builders, contractors, unions, and the industry — need to understand what happened and why.

What they do know is that they'd respond again without hesitation.

"My dad was a firefighter. He ran toward danger," Hookano said. "He was always the first person to stop if someone needed help. He kind of drilled that into us. I'd do it again, for anybody."

Wrestling with PTSD after the incident, Jorgenson spoke a lot with his own father.

"The more I talked, the better it got it," he said. "My dad asked me, 'Looking back, is there anything you'd do differently?'"

"I said, 'No, nothing. I know we did everything the way we were supposed to do it.'" ■

Photo courtesy of Northwest Labor Press

# NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

## Canadian Women Renew Bonds at Toronto Conference

The Canadian Women's Conference in Toronto last November was a celebration of firsts, starting with being IBEW Canada's first major in-person event since before the pandemic.

"It was pretty cool, everyone was so excited to see each other," said Cheryl Paron, the First District's international representative for diversity, equity, and inclusion. "I had a hard time reining them in to start the conference. It was like the first day of school trying to get everyone to settle down."

Once she did, the 85 delegates heard from speakers who included Bea Bruske, the first woman in 30 years to lead the Canadian Labour Congress; Liz Shuler, "a proud IBEW sister" and the first woman to lead the AFL-CIO; and Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper, the IBEW's first woman IVP.

"This role for me is a win for all of us," Cooper said. "Every time one of us breaks that glass ceiling it makes it easier for the next."

Delegates came from across the nation's six time zones, following all COVID-19 safety protocols to renew their bonds and recharge their spirits over three days.

"If you look at the size of the IBEW in Canada, we are kind of remote from one another," said Becky Lupton of Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213. "Getting together to hear their experiences, their stories and their triumphs — not just struggles, but their triumphs, the things they're succeeding at — is really important. It helps push you forward."

Supportive union brothers are essential, too, and delegates and speakers alike expressed gratitude to one of their strongest allies — First District International Vice President Tom Reid.

"Thank you, Tom, for your focus, your resilience, and to your entire team for recognizing the power that our women in the movement have," Shuler told him.

CLC President Bruske praised IBEW Canada for living its values. "You have long worked with the government to invest in women and to help reduce barriers to participation and advancement," she said. "You are a shining example of activism, engagement, and leadership."

In his own remarks, Reid honored the work of IBEW staff women and revisited the 2019 conference's theme of women in leadership.

"Run for election, volunteer for a committee, take a steward appointment if offered. This is how we will make needed change," he said. "I believe women belong in all levels of leadership in the IBEW and the labour movement, and I want to encourage you to do just that."

Paron said delegates included about a dozen men, mostly business managers, who

took part in an eye-opening new program from the Canadian Women's Committee.

"We put them through an allyship bootcamp," she said: "Four workshops with real-world examples."

Some of the men had attended past women's conferences, others were newcomers. All appeared shaken by what they heard.

"When men hear anecdotally about women being harassed and discriminated against on the job, sometimes they'll say, 'Is that actually still happening?'" Paron said.

"I think having these women right in front of them, putting a face to the story, hearing these painful experiences, makes it more real. When you have a woman full of emotion telling you what she's been through, you can't unsee or unhear that."

Women also cited progress at work and times when union brothers had their backs. But Reid said present-day stories make it clear there's a long way to go.

"We still have a toxic environment



The Canadian Women's Conference drew 85 delegates from across the nation for three packed days of inspiration and sisterhood last November. It was the first major gathering for IBEW Canada since before the pandemic.

La Conférence canadienne destinée aux femmes a accueilli 85 déléguées et délégués venus de tout le pays pendant trois jours d'inspiration et de solidarité entre consœurs en novembre dernier. C'était le premier grand rassemblement de la FIOE avant même la pandémie.

on a lot of jobsites and our women face that every day," he said. "They need support on the jobsite and off the jobsite to change that culture."

Change can be expedited with more women in charge, speakers stressed.

"I've reached this place in leader-

ship [by] working with and standing on the shoulders of the women in our movement," said Shuler, whose union career began at Portland, Ore., Local 125.

She urged her audience to do the same.

"If you're hesitating because you're

saying, 'I don't think I'm qualified,' think again," Shuler said. "Because while you're talking yourself out of it, there's a guy right next to you who is less qualified saying 'Heck yeah.'"

"Take that next step. The labour movement needs you." ■

## Les femmes canadiennes renouvellent les liens à la conférence de Toronto

La Conférence canadienne destinée aux femmes qui a eu lieu à Toronto en novembre dernier a été une célébration de premières, en commençant par le premier grand événement en présentiel de la FIOE Canada avant même la pandémie.

« C'était vraiment génial, toutes les personnes étaient si heureuses de se voir », déclare Cheryl Paron, la représentante internationale du premier district qui s'occupe de la diversité, de l'équité et de l'inclusion. « J'ai eu du mal à les contenir pour commencer la conférence. C'était comme la première journée d'école, j'essayais d'établir le calme ».

Une fois avoir réussi, les 85 déléguées et délégués ont entendu des témoignages des conférencières dont Bea Bruske, la première femme en 30 ans à diriger le Congrès du travail du Canada; Liz Shuler « une fière consœur de la FIOE » et la première femme à diriger la FAT-COI; et Gina Cooper la vice-présidente internationale du quatrième district, la première femme VPI de la FIOE.

« Ce rôle pour moi est une victoire pour nous toutes », déclare Cooper. « Chaque fois que l'une d'entre nous brise le plafond de verre, la tâche devient plus facile pour la prochaine ».

En suivant les protocoles de sécurité de la COVID-19, les déléguées et délégués sont venus de tous les fuseaux horaires du pays pour renouveler les liens et de retrou-

ver un regain de vie pendant trois jours.

« Si l'on considère la taille de la FIOE Canada, nous sommes tous éloignés l'un de l'autre », mentionne Becky Lupton de la section locale 213 de Vancouver, Colombie-Britannique.

« Se rassembler pour leur permettre d'écouter leurs expériences, leurs histoires et leurs triomphes — pas juste leurs luttes, mais leurs triomphes, leurs réussites, c'est vraiment important parce que ça permet d'avancer encore plus loin ».

L'appui des confrères est également essentiel, et les délégués et les conférenciers ont exprimé leur gratitude envers l'un des plus grands alliés — Tom Reid, le vice-président international du premier district.

« Merci Tom pour ton attention, ta résilience, et à toute ton équipe de reconnaître le pouvoir que nos femmes possèdent dans le mouvement », lui a dit Shuler.

La présidente Bruske du CTC a fait l'éloge de la FIOE d'être fidèle à ses valeurs. « Vous travaillez avec le gouvernement depuis longtemps pour investir dans les femmes afin de réduire les obstacles pour encourager la participation et l'avancement », dit-elle. « Vous êtes le parfait exemple d'activisme, d'engagement et de leadership ».

Dans ses propos, Reid a honoré le travail des femmes de la FIOE en poste et a fait mention du thème de la conférence de 2019, les femmes en poste de leadership.

« Présentez-vous aux élections, faites du bénévolat au sein d'un comité, si l'occasion se présente, devenez déléguée syndicale. C'est ainsi que le changement nécessaire aura lieu », dit-il. « Je crois que les femmes ont leur place dans tous les niveaux de leadership dans la FIOE et dans le mouvement syndical, et je veux les encourager à le faire ».

Paron mentionne que parmi les déléguées, on y trouvait une douzaine d'hommes, principalement des gérants d'affaires qui ont participé à un nouveau programme révélateur du comité canadien des femmes.

« Nous les avons fait participer à un cours intensif d'alliés », dit-elle, « quatre ateliers avec des exemples tirés de la vraie vie ».

Certains hommes avaient déjà participé aux conférences destinées aux femmes dans le passé, d'autres étaient de nouveaux venus. Tous semblaient ébranlés par ce qu'ils entendaient.

« Lorsque les hommes entendaient des histoires au sujet des femmes qui subissaient le harcèlement et la discrimination dans le milieu de travail, parfois ils disaient, "ça se passe encore réellement ?" », déclare Paron.

« Je crois que le fait d'avoir ces femmes sous leurs yeux, d'associer un visage à une histoire, d'écouter ces expériences douloureuses rend les choses plus réelles. Lorsque tu entends une

femme remplie d'émotions qui raconte ce qu'elle a vécu, il est impossible de retourner en arrière ».

Ces femmes ont aussi partagé leur progrès et des moments où leurs confrères les ont soutenues. Mais Reid mentionne que ces histoires actuelles montrent clairement que la route est encore longue.

« L'environnement toxique est toujours présent dans beaucoup de milieux de travail et c'est la réalité à laquelle nos femmes sont confrontées tous les jours », dit-il. « Pour changer cette culture, elles ont besoin d'appui sur le chantier et en-dehors du chantier ».

Les conférencières ont souligné que le changement peut être accéléré si davantage de femmes étaient en poste de direction.

« Je me suis rendue à ce poste de direction en travaillant et en m'inspirant des femmes de notre mouvement syndical », déclare Shuler, dont sa carrière syndicale a commencé à la section locale 125 située à Portland en Oregon.

Elle a incité son auditoire à faire de même.

« Si vous hésitez parce que vous vous dites, "je ne pense pas être qualifiée", réfléchissez à nouveau », mentionne Shuler. « Parce que pendant que vous vous en dissuadez, le gars à côté de vous qui est moins qualifié se dit "je fonce" ».

« Passez à l'étape suivante. Le mouvement syndical a besoin de vous ». ■

# THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

## IBEW Member to Head Building Trades Veterans Program

For the first time since the Helmets to Hardhats program was established in 2003 to promote union jobs for military veterans exiting service, an IBEW member will serve as the organization's executive director.

Martin Helms, a 16-year inside journeyman wireman with Akron, Ohio, Local 306 assumed his new position in October. He was previously the director of the Akron Area Joint Apprenticeship Training Center.

"The day I heard about Helmets to Hardhats changed my life," said Helms, who also serves in the Army's Ohio National Guard. "Since then, I am financially sound with an awesome family and have been helping to change more lives directing the training at the same JATC that uplifted mine. I look forward to continuing to transform even more lives, using my skills from the trades and in uniform, and continuing to give back to this great industry and country."

Helmets to Hardhats was created by the North America's Building Trades Unions to help connect men and women leaving military service with construction-industry careers. The IBEW is one of the 15 labor organizations that support H2H, alongside the signatory contractor associations within the Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment and Veterans Employment.

Helms was an obvious choice to head Helmets to Hardhats, said Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper, whose district includes Ohio.

"Martin's a real H2H success story," Cooper said. "The program has so clearly helped him take advantage of his extensive military service to get into an electrical career he loves, and now he's in a position to lead countless other veteran men and women into similarly rewarding careers throughout the entire construction industry."

Since he was a teenager, Helms showed an aptitude for the electrical trade, working with a local non-union electrical contractor during evenings, weekends and school breaks. But between his junior and senior years of high school, he decided to sign up with the Ohio National Guard.

"My goal was to use my Army service to help pay for a college education under the G.I. Bill," he said, noting that his father had been in the Coast Guard and his grandfather served in the Army during World War II.

After graduating high school and completing advanced individual training with the Army, he started working as a nonunion electrician full-time, began full-time college work at the University of Akron and got married.

Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Helms was activated under Operation Noble Eagle to serve a two-year full-time service stint at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.

It was during an Army-led "Yellow Ribbon" meeting after that deployment that he learned from a Helmets to Hardhats representative about the program and its connections to the IBEW. The timing couldn't have been better.

"The workload of keeping up with family, work, school, and the military was burning the candle at both ends," Helms said. "The thought of an apprenticeship circled back around and seemed like a perfect way to balance out my life."

With help from Helmets to Hardhats, Helms was accepted into an apprenticeship at the Akron JATC in 2006. There, he was better able to balance his apprenticeship and National Guard commitments, and it wasn't long after topping out that he was using his Army-sharpened leadership skills to work as a foreman on several large building projects.

*The first IBEW member to head the Helmets to Hardhats program is Akron, Ohio, Local 306 inside journeyman wireman Martin Helms, right, who also serves in the Ohio National Guard.*



Credit: Spc. Brian Johnson, Ohio National Guard

Over at the JATC, meanwhile, Local 306's Paul Zimmerman was beginning to wind down his nearly 30 years of service leading the center.

"I knew I needed a succession plan," said Zimmerman, himself an Air Force veteran. "Ideally, I would have somebody start as my associate."

Around the same time, Helms was deployed to the Middle East for a one-year assignment based out of Kuwait. After he returned to Ohio, he began working with the Akron JATC, first as an instructor and then as assistant director in 2017. And after the local's training committee thoroughly interviewed about a dozen applicants for the director position, Helms was hired for the role.

"Martin brought in some young blood [at the JATC] and created a great thing for Akron," Zimmerman said. "I applaud Martin for his stick-to-itiveness and for everything he's accomplished: college, apprenticeship, military service, raising four kids."

"Helmets to Hardhats landed an excellent person for that position," he said.

Helms is eager to spread the word about H2H to the entire construction trades community, he said. "I worked many years in unorganized electrical labor and could not get traction for a strong career with formal education, a livable salary, health care and retirement, even though my commitment was strong every day," he said.

Thanks to the IBEW, he said, "I can support my family with a strong wage package, health benefits and a sound retirement. I've had the pleasure to use my skills to give back to my country, community and family."

Helms eventually finished his work toward an associate degree in electrical maintenance, and he remains active with the Ohio Army National Guard, now holding the rank of Chief Warrant Officer, grade 2, assigned to the 112th Engineer Battalion based in suburban Cleveland.

"Being a warrant officer is not like any other rank in the military," he explained. "Our classification of knowledge often comes from our past real-world experience of doing the job, not just learning it through the traditional academic atmosphere."

"His experience and unique perspective as a Helmets to Hardhats success story will continue strengthening the organization's vision and growth," said NABTU President Sean McGarvey. "We look forward to working with him on efforts to bring H2H to the next level and positively change the lives of even more veterans and transitioning service members."

Helms' hiring comes as the Helmets to Hardhats program implements a plan of strategic growth in programs, development and outreach, and furthering the successes of more than 39,000 successful transitions into registered apprenticeship programs.

"My military career and civilian career grew

because of skills learned from both sectors," Helms said. "Every employer I have worked for appreciates the soft skills the military service prides itself on: attention to detail, being on time, professional demeanor and being physically fit, to name a few."

For more information, visit [helmetstohardhats.org](http://helmetstohardhats.org).

## New Report Showcases the Importance of Unions Working With Environmental Groups in the Clean Economy

When unions and environmental groups work together, both sides get better results than when the two sides are at loggerheads, according to a new report.

Most often, compromise leads to better results for the environment and increase resources and support for the creation of good-paying union jobs in the clean energy economy. The Natural Resources Defense Council has issued a report highlighting some of this work, including from several IBEW locals.

"Our members are already doing the work of building the clean economy," said IBEW International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "We know not only that it benefits the environment, but also that it can provide a family-sustaining career. And we're proud to be doing this work with coalition members like the NRDC. We're all stronger when we work together."

The report shows how labor unions and climate advocates have been able to come together in support of a cleaner energy economy. Through multiple examples that include IBEW locals across the U.S., the authors showcase how labor is often at the forefront



Credit: Local 683

A new report shows the benefits of unions and environmental organizations working together for a cleaner economy.

of tackling climate change while also providing strong, middle-class job opportunities.

"It really comes down to people, and there are a lot of areas where we can come together," said Fourth District International Representative Steve Crum, who has built a relationship over the last three years with the Director of Labor Relations for the NRDC's Climate and Clean Energy Program Dan Sawmiller on solar issues in Ohio. "We don't agree on everything, but we've chosen to work together where we can, and it's been very beneficial."

The report states that, "when it comes to emerging clean energy industries, we should draw on union expertise in worker training, project management, and problem solving to navigate these new industries efficiently. Doing so will help ensure that clean energy projects remain cost effective and are completed on time." It further notes that, "environmental and community advocates, lawmakers, and developers should start working with unions early in the project development process, not as an afterthought."

An example the NRDC points to is the Block Island Wind Farm, the first offshore farm of its kind in U.S. waters and one that IBEW members worked on. The facility generates approximately 125 megawatt-hours of clean energy a year, enough to serve roughly 17,000 households and about 50 Providence, R.I., Local 99 members helped make it happen. But not just in the normal way of construction. The IBEW also worked with a coalition including the NRDC, the building trades and others to successfully bring the work in and get it through regulatory approval.

Now more work in wind is on the horizon. North America's Building Trades Unions recently reached an agreement with the largest wind developer operating in the United States to develop a plan to transition U.S. union construction workers into the offshore wind industry. And in March 2021, the Biden administration announced its plan to encourage development of 30 gigawatts of offshore wind projects by 2030.

In Ohio, the story is about solar. As the report points out, while large utilities and unions usually have strong, long-standing relationships, most utility-scale solar projects are being advanced by private developers who do not have a history of working with unions and often tend to think such workers are too expensive. To address this issue, the IBEW joined forces with the NRDC, the Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council, the Ohio AFL-CIO, and the BlueGreen Alliance to advocate for solar development across the state and ensure that the jobs will be union.

"With all of the positives that utility-scale solar can bring to our communities — jobs, revenue, increased energy independence, and more — Ohio should embrace this solar development," Crum said.

"Many of the proposed projects are concentrated in rural areas of Ohio where many IBEW members live and work. Our members and their families need these local jobs in Ohio."

As IBEW members already know, but many outside the labor movement may not, the brotherhood and others in the building trades provide the state-of-the-art training centers where apprentices and journeymen learn about the latest in top-



ics including solar power generation, transmission, energy efficiency, instrumentation and electrical construction. The benefits of this training came into play when one solar project in the Buckeye State started out nonunion only to turn to Cincinnati Local 212 to finish the job on time. The report also noted that turning to Local 212 for its qualified workforce helped the project secure key incentives by hiring 80% of its workforce from within the state.

“We’re learning each other’s languages and priorities,” Sawmiller said. “We’re working together to find paths that deliver successful outcomes that we can both be proud of and that deliver meaningful outcomes to workers, communities and our environment.”

Some of labor’s priorities that the NRDC has supported include project labor agreements, which can ensure provisions like working standards and local hiring requirements on construction projects; and the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, a major piece of federal legislation that calls for a number of pro-worker improvements. The NRDC is one of a number of groups to come out in support of the PRO Act, including signing on to a letter last March.

“It’s extremely important that we have the support of groups like the NRDC,” Crum said. “NRDC understands that people have to have decent work opportunities, and they have relationships with stakeholders at the local, state and federal levels that we don’t and vice versa, so the more voices we can align, the better.”

Crum and Sawmiller both note that their organizations don’t come together on everything. But they don’t let those differences get in the way of the common ground that they do share, because that’s where a lot of real work can get — and has gotten — done.

“My relationship with the IBEW is based on transparency and trust and has delivered significant results for both of our organizations,” Sawmiller said. “And the more I work with the IBEW, the more motivated I become. It feels like family, like I’m working with someone who I know will have my back. It’s a relationship that I place tremendous value in.” ■

## Study: What Women Want — and Need — From the Construction Industry

What is it like to be a woman in the construction industry? A new report from the Institute for Women’s Policy Research has some answers.

In the largest survey to date of tradeswomen in the U.S., the IWPR asked 2,635 women and non-binary people what they think of working in the construction industry. The questions asked how they got into the field, what they like about it, and what challenges they face, including if they’ve ever considered leaving. The results show both positives and negatives.

“The report shows just how important and transformative a career in the trades can be, while also highlighting that workplace culture and practices need to change if the industry wants to attract and retain women,” wrote the authors.

In 2020, more than 300,000 women — the largest number ever — worked in construction occupations, reflecting growth even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, women remain highly underrepresented, accounting for just 4% of all workers in the industry. Considering the pressing need for more skilled construction workers, this presents significant opportunity for growth.

Among the survey’s findings are that, like a lot of tradespeople regardless of gender, the respondents like the work, as well as the pay — particularly if they’re in a union. Union members tend to make



*A new study looks at the experiences of tradeswomen and how the industry can improve its inclusion efforts.*

more than their nonunion counterparts and also have more access to health care and better benefits like a pension.

According to the survey, seven in 10 union respondents, compared with just over half of non-union respondents, said that their earnings were “very important.” Furthermore, a national analysis of the full-time earnings of construction workers from 2016 to 2018 found that women construction workers not covered by a union contract earned 40.1% less than women who were covered by such a contract. For men, the corresponding gap was slightly smaller, at 34%.

The authors also noted that, of the individuals who answered the survey, 55% earned at least \$50,000 per year in 2019, and almost three in 10 respondents earned at least \$75,000. By comparison, the median annual earnings for all women in 2019 was just under \$36,000.

Regarding the work experiences of tradeswomen and non-binary tradespeople, many report feeling respected and said that they enjoy what they do.

“I fell in love with it, seeing things go from one stage to another,” said New Orleans Local 130 member Janelle Dejan on a webinar that accompanied the release of the report.

While that sentiment is shared by numerous tradeswomen, it’s not always enough to keep them in the trades. More than four in 10 respondents say that they have seriously considered leaving the industry. For those individuals, discrimination or lack of respect is the most cited reason for wanting to leave, with 47.2% rating it as very important. Additionally, nearly four in 10 respondents say that they were driven out of the trades because the problems they raised were not taken seriously. And close to 50% say they are held to a higher standard than the men they work with, and sometimes contend with an unsupportive, if not hostile, work environment.

The survey also looked at parenting. While issues like finding childcare and pregnancy accommodations can pose very real problems, the study points out that, “the large percentage of mothers among respondents suggests that it is problematic to assume that just becoming a parent will cause women to leave the industry.” In fact, the majority of those with children have not considered leaving.

Respondents also pointed to factors that help them succeed in the trades, including support from their union, which was described as “very important” by 45.9% of union members and as “important” by nearly 90%. Women’s committees and tradeswomen’s organizations, as well as participation in a women-focused pre-apprenticeship program, are just a few of the ways unions support women in their ranks.

Workplace procedures like anti-harassment policies were also identified as very important to success

in the trades by more than four in 10 respondents, followed by having an employer committed to diversity goals and project owners with incentives or hiring goals for women.

“In our training we learn to select the best tool for the task at hand. The data from this survey will serve as a tool to help inform policymakers and leaders in their efforts to optimize available resources at the national, state and local levels,” Dejan said.

The IBEW Strong initiative was launched in 2020 to focus on diversity, inclusion and equity, and aims to make the union a truly welcoming place for electrical workers of all genders, races and other differences.

“IBEW Strong is our way of saying there’s a place for you with us,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “It doesn’t matter who you are, just so long as you want to work hard.” ■

## BRAVE Act Aims to Get Vets Into Apprenticeships

Rep. Donald Norcross of New Jersey knows the value of a union apprenticeship. A member of Folsom, N.J., Local 351, Congress’s only union electrician has a bill to help extend that opportunity to as many veterans as possible.

The Bringing Registered Apprenticeships to Veterans Education, or BRAVE, Act would require the Department of Labor to provide information about apprenticeship programs to members of the Armed Forces who are separating from active duty. It also calls for the establishment of a publicly accessible and user-friendly website where veterans can find the information they need and it extends post-9/11 GI Bill stipend benefits to participants in these registered programs.

In a rare congressional feat, it passed the House of Representatives unanimously on Nov. 16. The bill is currently awaiting Senate action.

“We provide America’s servicemembers with world-class training to fulfill their responsibilities to our nation, and it is only right that we provide them with world-class opportunities as they transition back into civilian society,” Norcross said. “The men and women of the U.S. armed services are highly skilled and uniquely qualified for registered apprenticeships, which allow apprentices to earn while they learn and build toward a fulfilling career in a skilled trade.”

While college is a great option for some, for many others the opportunities afforded by an apprenticeship are a better fit. And for those who choose such a path, there are clear financial rewards to match the job satisfaction. According to the Department of Labor, 92% of apprentices retain employment after graduation and do so with an average annual salary of \$72,000. By comparison, the average starting salary for a graduate of a traditional four-year college is around \$55,000 a year. Further research by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute found a union benefit as well, where apprentices of union programs tend to make more money and have more benefits compared to their nonunion counterparts.

There are currently programs like Helmets to Hardhats and the Veterans Electrical Entry Program to help servicemembers transition into construction careers, but not everybody knows about them, Norcross wrote in an op-ed for Roll Call. That is where the BRAVE Act comes in. It will connect veterans to resources that are eligible for Veterans Administration education benefits, ensuring that when they begin considering their next steps they’re provided with up-to-date and easily accessible information about registered apprenticeships.

“I still take great pride in knowing I was a small part of building enduring monuments in my community. As an electrician and graduate of a registered apprenticeship, I worked to electrify the Ben Franklin Bridge — an iconic landmark used each day by thousands of commuters ... By participating in registered apprenticeships, our veterans can pursue careers that are meaningful in the sense of service but also beneficial individually,” Norcross wrote. “From one apprentice to the future apprentices who I hope are reading this: Consider the trades. Your service to our country and community doesn’t need to end just yet.”

Each year, according to the Department of Labor, approximately 200,000 men and women leave the military and return to life as civilians. As the country faces a construction shortage, and with the passage of President Biden’s massive infrastructure bill, tapping candidates from the military may become increasingly important to meeting workforce demands. While not all will want to pursue the trades, many will see the chance to move into a structured and physically challenging job as not only appealing but familiar.

“Many of our best apprentices have come from the military,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “They know the importance of discipline and professionalism, they’re not afraid of hard work and they understand the significance of a brotherhood. We are more than happy to welcome them into ours and provide them an opportunity for the kind of career and benefits that can support their families for many years.” ■



*A bill by Rep. Donald Norcross of New Jersey, who is also a member of Folsom Local 351, aims to help get veterans into the trades.*

# TRANSITIONS

## RETIRED

### James Burgham



Youngstown, Ohio, Local 64 Business Manager James Burgham, who had served as the Third District representative on the International Executive Council since 2014, retired effective Jan. 1.

Brother Burgham was elected business manager in 1996 and re-elected nine times, serving in other leadership positions in labor and business throughout northeast Ohio during his tenure.

He was a member of the Council on Industrial Relations, which mediates disputes between the IBEW's local unions and signatory contractors, from 2005 to 2010.

**“He taught me that when you make decisions, make sure you are fair and think about the membership as a whole.”**

— Local 64 Business Manager Scott Satterlee

“Times are changing and continue to change,” Burgham said. “We need to get more of our younger members involved. Sometimes, when a younger member approaches someone about the value of [IBEW membership], people are more receptive. I’m thankful for a good career and now it is time to turn things over to someone else.”

Burgham has IBEW roots in his family but his career nearly took him to his father’s trade. His uncle, Bill Lyden, is a former Local 64 business manager, but his father — also James — was a member of the Sheet Metal Workers union.

As a young man, Burgham attended college for a year before deciding to pursue a career in the trades. His first job earned him membership in the Sheet Metal Workers for two years while he waited to see if he would be accepted into its apprenticeship or the IBEW’s.

“The IBEW called first,” Burgham said.

With that, he joined Local 64 in 1981. He was elected to the Executive Board in 1987 and named president in 1992. He was re-elected to that position in 1993 and elected business manager three years later.

Burgham credits the late Jack Manning, Local 64’s president early in his career, for encouraging him to get involved in the union. Manning gave him his start in leadership by appointing him to the

local’s Health and Welfare Committee.

He credits Local 64’s members for any success he had as a business manager. They recognized that a jurisdiction hit hard by manufacturing job losses could sometimes be volatile in terms of work, he said.

“They understood the ups and downs of the industry,” he said. “I didn’t take credit when work was plentiful. They didn’t blame me when we had a couple of winters when work was slow. They were very good to deal with.”

Local 64 kept good relationships with its key partners, such as Youngstown State University, Mercy Health and Southern Park Mall, he said. Burgham also worked to create an alliance with Youngstown’s Chamber of Commerce chapter, a group not often seen as a labor ally.

“Sometimes, when a business is coming to an area and they know the chamber has a good relationship with organized labor, they don’t shy away from using it,” he said.

Burgham said he was particularly honored when then-International President Edwin D. Hill asked him to join the IEC because Local 64 is a relatively small construction local — it currently has about 380 members — and is overshadowed by larger local unions in nearby Cleveland and Pittsburgh. The nine-member council meets four times per year and is the final authority on the granting of pensions, vested rights and disability payments, among other things.

New Local 64 Business Manager Scott Satterlee said it was obvious how much respect Burgham had within the brotherhood when he attended an IBEW employee benefits conference with him in 2019.

“I was just amazed at how many people he knew,” Satterlee said. “When I went down there, I was proud to be part of Youngstown, Ohio. With him as our business manager, we were represented extremely well.”

As he intended, Burgham is turning leadership over to a new generation. Satterlee, 29, was Local 64 president when appointed as Burgham’s successor and will face re-election next year. He also worked on the local’s staff as an organizer.

“He taught me that when you make decisions, make sure you are fair and think about the membership as a whole,” Satterlee said. “Everyone is the same and show no favoritism.”

“He was always involved in the community, which is a lot of work. He spent a lot of extra hours going to certain events. That made me realize the business manager of a local has to be involved in the whole area as much as you can be.”

In retirement, Burgham plans to split his time between Youngstown and Venice, Fla., with Shirley, his wife of 36 years, and spend more time traveling and riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Shirley Burgham is a retired member of the American Federation of State, County

and Municipal Employees. He was replaced on the IEC by Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 Business Manager Daniel Shirey.

The officers and staff thank Brother Burgham for his many years of service and wish him a long and happy retirement. ■

## APPOINTED

### Daniel L. Shirey



International President Lonnie R. Stephenson has appointed Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 Business Manager Daniel Shirey to the

International Executive Council representing members in the states of Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia.

Shirey replaces the Third IEC District’s James Burgham, a former Youngstown, Ohio, Local 64 business manager, who retired from the IEC and as business manager effective Jan. 1.

A native of the Portsmouth-area village of Otway, Shirey didn’t jump into an electrical career right away, he said.

“After high school, I went to Shawnee State University for a year,” he said. “But I realized that college wasn’t for me.”

So, Shirey decided to follow his father into the IBEW. He was admitted into an apprenticeship with Local 575 in 1996 and was initiated into the IBEW the following year.

The busy local put him to work right away. One of his proudest projects as a wireman, he said, was working on Unit 3 of the East Kentucky Power Cooperative plant just upriver from Portsmouth in Maysville, Ky. “It was a really big job for us,” he said. “We had 150 members on it at peak.”

Eventually, Shirey grew more active with his local, serving on its Executive Board from 2005 to 2011. He was hired as a Local 575 referral agent in 2007, and in 2011, he was appointed business manager to fill a vacancy. He has since been re-elected three times.

“I can remember when I started as international vice president of the Fourth District in 2011 and meeting a smiling young man eager to help the IBEW,” said International Secretary-Treasurer Kenneth Cooper. “I watched Dan grow in his role and knew that his commitment to the IBEW membership would put him in a leadership role. As a business manager, he was always eager to step up any time we asked for his energy and help, and I think he will do a great job while serving on the IEC.”

Fourth District Business Development Representative Jon Rosenberger has known Shirey since 2015. “Dan and I just kind of hit it off,” he said.

Rosenberger has a lot of good mem-

ories working with Shirey, he said. He recalled one time when a variance of the regional agreement was needed from Local 575 for work on a major southern Ohio solar project.

A phone call with Shirey was arranged, with Rosenberger and fellow Fourth District International Representatives David Moran (now retired) and Steve Crum to work out the parameters of the deal.

“Dan said, ‘If it’s going to provide work opportunities for IBEW members, then of course we’ll do it,’” Rosenberger said.

“Dan and his wife were on vacation at the time,” Rosenberger said. “He’s just always willing to step outside the box to get those projects.”

Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper said that Shirey has always stepped up when asked. “Whether he is testifying at Ohio Power Siting board hearings, rallying political allies, serving his brothers and sisters at the Ohio State Conference or in his community,” she said, “he is a great leader who goes above and beyond for his membership and is always trying to secure more work and better wages and benefits for all workers.”

Shirey has served as chairman of the Southeastern Ohio Business Managers Association as well as two terms as vice president of the Shawnee Labor Council, which covers the labor unions of the greater Portsmouth area. He is president of the Ohio State Conference of the IBEW and also is a volunteer firefighter.

**“He is a great leader who goes above and beyond for his membership.”**

— Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper

“I have been the city of Portsmouth’s electrical inspector for the last 10 years, too,” he said. “That’s been a very good organizing tool.”

Shirey has been married to his wife, Amy, for 29 years. They have three grown children; the oldest, Daniel, is a construction wireman on one of Local 575’s several solar farm projects, and he has applied for an apprenticeship with the local. The couple also have two grandchildren, whom Shirey calls “the lights of our life.”

“When I was just a young journeyman, I never envisioned running for office. It just kind of happened,” Shirey said. “It’s always been my goal to serve the membership. Somebody’s got to step up.”

Shirey counts traveling with his wife and family as one of his top hobbies. “It’s kind of our thing,” he said, “although with COVID-19, it’s been kind of hard.” He also enjoys making his way up to Lake Erie for walleye fishing.

“Dan’s always optimistic. I couldn’t think of a better person to take Jim’s place on the IEC,” Rosenberger said. “I know he will work hard for the members.”

Please join the entire membership in wishing Brother Shirey much success in his new role. ■

## DECEASED

### Larry Schell



Former First District International Representative Larry Schell, a leader in construction organizing in Canada for nearly three decades, died

on Jan. 9 after a bout with pneumonia. He was 71.

Brother Schell was a close friend and colleague of First District International Vice President Thomas Reid. The two worked together for many years when Schell was the construction organizing coordinator for western Canada while Reid served in the same role for eastern Canada.

“Larry was such a genuinely beautiful person,” Reid said. “He liked everyone. He was friendly to everyone. He was very giving. He would help anyone at any time.”

Victoria, British Columbia, Local 230 Business Manager Phil Venoit, a friend for more than 20 years, said Schell “really did smile at everything.”

“My mother used to say, ‘Don’t worry about the small crackers,’ and Larry had that same attitude and a smile that went along with it,” said Venoit, who also serves as Canada’s representative on the International Executive Council. “He was always a gentleman and had a very logical mind. You could almost see his mind working in his facial expressions as he solved a problem. He was a great shoulder to lean on and always looking to help.”

Brother Schell’s career began in his hometown, when he joined Kitchen, Ontario, Local 804 after being hired at Electrohome, a consumer electronics firm, in 1969. Working in the company’s engineering department, Schell was part of a group that used lathes and milling machines to make prototypes of new products.

Schell overcame a cancer diagnosis early in his career to become a full-time business agent for Local 804 in 1973. Five years later, he accepted an offer to become the first full-time organizer for Edmonton, Alberta, Local 424 and headed west. He remained in Alberta the rest of his life, joining the First District staff in 1993 as an international representative.

His influence went beyond construction. Venoit represents a local whose members come from several branches. To work with an international representative like Schell, who had experience in both manufacturing and construction, was invaluable, he said.

“That’s where he really found gold in our local, because of our diversity in terms of the work itself,” Venoit said. “He found comfort in a lot of the conversations and problems we had because it took him back into his old role of manufacturing.”

Reid said Schell and his wife Jan always made sure to send his three children Christmas presents while they were growing up. They viewed them as surrogate nieces and nephews, he said.

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## CIRCUITS

One year, while Schell was in Ottawa for a First District progress meeting, the couple rented a car and made a more than three-hour drive to the wedding of one of Reid's daughters.

That was indicative of the way Schell lived his life, Reid said.

"Family meant everything to Larry," he said. "That was his mantra back in the day when I was hired. Family first, IBEW second. Those were his two priorities."

Jan Schell remembers a moment in the late 1990s when her husband's devotion to the brotherhood really showed through. An electrician with a baby at home was out of work so Larry decided to loan him one of the Schell family cars.

Well, loan isn't quite accurate. Turns out the Schells actually gave the electrician and his young family the car, Jan said.

"My car went," she said. "We got a second-hand one for me. I look back and shake my head at all the events we went through. He loved everyone and I can't even begin to explain all the good things he did for people."

Venoit said anyone in the IBEW who was a friend of Schell was a friend of Jan's.

"I don't think there was a time in the last two decades without me hugging them both when I saw them," he said. "She was there with a very similar smile as Larry's. If they liked you, you knew they really liked you. There was no holding back. There's almost a salt of the earth type feeling when people approach you with obvious goodwill and good intentions like that."

Schell served on the Alberta Labour Relations Board, an independent council that worked to resolve disputes between the province's trade unions and management, from 1984 to 2011. He also was an active volunteer for the Special Olympics and Ride for Sight, a motorcycle-based charity that raised money for the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

**"Family meant everything to Larry. ... Family first, IBEW second. Those were his two priorities."**

— First District International Vice President Tom Reid

He retired in December 2017 but continued to conduct classes on organizing education.

"He was a very successful organizer, very dedicated and had a huge impact on the IBEW in Canada," Reid said.

Schell's father, Lorne, who also was an Electrohome employee and a World War II veteran, passed away on Jan. 25 at the age of 97.

Larry Schell is survived by Jan, who he was married to for 51 years; children Jason and Katrina; and four grandchildren. Jason Schell is a Local 424 member.

The officers and staff extend their deepest sympathies to Brother Schell's family and many friends. ■

### Following Deadly Tornadoes, Kentucky Local Gets Special Help from Ohio, West Virginia Neighbors

Just two weeks before Christmas, two deadly tornadoes tore across the heart of the U.S. Among the hardest hit areas were the 14 western Kentucky counties covered by Paducah, Ky., Local 816.

"The storms rolled through like a freight train," said Local 816 organizer Chad Rennison. "They did their thing and moved on, destroying everything in their path in about 30 minutes."

As always after such tragedies, IBEW members from all over North America rushed to offer professional and financial aid to the residents and businesses in the affected communities. One notable relief effort came from the members of Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575, which covers four counties over on the eastern part of the Bluegrass State.

"We know that if we ever needed help, our IBEW brothers and sisters would be there for us," said Local 575 Business Manager Dan Shirey, who was recently appointed to the National Executive Council.

The National Weather Service said that the strong Dec. 10 storm system that tore along a path from the Ozark Mountains to the Great Lakes produced nearly 60 tornadoes. One violent twister spun up in northwest Tennessee and traveled east about 165 miles across western Kentucky — essentially the entire length of Local 816's jurisdiction. Another also formed in Tennessee, this time moving a nearly parallel 123 miles through Local 816's territory before finally dissipating in Todd County, Ky.

Right after the storms stopped, Rennison said, "We had members volunteering, trying to help people and do whatever they could." Locals and individual members from all over the country also were sending emails asking, "Can I come down and help?"

"I don't think most people can understand the chaos that ensues when something like this happens," Rennison said. "The storms hit at night, so we didn't really understand how bad things were until the next morning."

Large relief organizations such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the America Red Cross mobilized almost instantly. But as Local 575's Shirey saw on the news just how widespread the damage had been, he knew that his local needed to pitch in, too.

"After learning what their needs were, [Local 575 organizers] Joe Dillow and Randy Brown reached out to our Executive Board about buying some supplies," Shirey said. The board agreed without hesitation and authorized the trio to spend up to \$10,000 on necessities such as diapers, blankets, toiletries and cleaning items.

Donated power generators in Paducah were plentiful, Shirey learned, "but they said they needed more plug bars and power cords, so we went to every local supply house we could. Lots of folks in our community went out and bought



After violent tornadoes ripped across western Kentucky, members of Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 drove a trailer full of relief supplies to help affected residents. From left: Local 575 Organizer Randy Brown; Kentucky State AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Wiggins; Local 575 Business Manager and IBEW Third International Executive Council District Representative Dan Shirey; Paducah, Ky., Local 816 Organizer Chad Rennison; and Local 575 Organizer Joe Dillow.

supplies, too."

While the Local 575 members were shopping, Dillow had a conversation with his friend Skip Bailey, an organizer for neighboring Huntington, W.Va., Local 317, and mentioned what the members of the Portsmouth local were doing.

"We've always worked closely with Local 575," said Bailey, who passed the word on to his business manager, Shane Wolfe. "We absolutely want to split the cost with them," Bailey recalled Wolfe saying. "And when we brought it up [at the next local meeting], there was no second thought about it."

"You see these things in the news, but I know when you get there, you get a whole new feeling for it," Bailey said. "We were glad and willing to join the efforts."

Working with Local 575 Training Director Matt Louanglath, supplies were gathered first at the local's Electrical Training Academy building and then packed into just about every inch of the academy's 20-foot trailer. At 4:30 on the morning of Dec. 17, "we drove 6 1/2 hours nonstop to Princeton, Ky., another one of the towns that was shook pretty hard," Shirey said.

When Shirey, Dillow and Brown arrived at their destination, Rennison was there to help them stage their distribution efforts out of an empty former grocery store. "Chad had worked out the logistics," Shirey said, "and later he took us around to survey some of the damage."

It was sometimes hard to grasp the amount of devastation they were seeing throughout the area, Rennison said. "Lots of people we dealt with still had structures, but we were also seeing people who had nothing. Whole city blocks were just piles of rubble. We were hooking up generators to structures that were still livable in low-income areas and to homes of elderly people who had been without power for nearly a week — no baths, no heat."

"We've also got guys volunteering to rebuild services," Rennison said. "[Local 816] Business Manager [Jimmy] Evans has been coordinating with local politicians and the Kentucky Department of Housing and Building Trades to make sure all

inspections are still being done."

At this writing, 77 deaths have been attributed directly to the two tornadoes, which also leveled more than 1,000 properties and left thousands homeless.

"To our knowledge, one member lost everything," Rennison said, as did a retired IBEW member in Tennessee and the widow of another retired member. AccuWeather has estimated that the cost of the storms could reach \$18 billion in total damages and economic losses.

"I think we have a responsibility to help," Rennison said. "We need a lot more love and compassion these days. I'd also like to think that people would help us out if the situation was reversed."

Rennison believes an experience like this can make electrical workers think about their apprenticeship roots. "Back then, you had to learn how to work as a team," he said. "That thinking transfers over to your whole life without you even knowing it."

The union relief committee of the Kentucky AFL-CIO and the Greater Louisville Central Labor Council established a disaster fund to raise money to help union families affected by the tornadoes. Mail checks, made out to the United Way of Kentucky, to P.O. Box 4653, Louisville, KY 40204-0653, and write "Union Disaster Relief" on your check's subject line. ■

### Must-See TV for Union Outdoorsmen Moves to YouTube

"Brotherhood Outdoors," the Union Sportsmen's Alliance long-running show that highlights union members on once-in-a-lifetime hunting and fishing expeditions, has a new home — one that makes it easily available to more viewers.

New episodes of the show, which recently began its 14th season, are posted on Monday at 4 p.m. EST on YouTube instead of airing on a cable television channel. Episodes average 12 minutes in length.

The IBEW is a sponsor of the show and 14 members have appeared on it over the years.

"American union workers are the heart of the Union Sportsmen's Alliance and their stories are what 'Brotherhood Outdoors' is all about," said Forrest Parker, USA's director of conservation and communications.

"After 13 seasons of airing 'Brotherhood Outdoors' on network TV, we are very excited to move our union-dedicated outdoor series to YouTube to give all our

CIRCUITS continued on page 12



Steve Murray, a member of Boston Local 104 and the owner of River Keep Lodge in Newfoundland and Labrador, fished for trout and salmon with his son, also named Steve, during a Season 7 episode of "Brotherhood Outdoors."

## CIRCUITS *continued*

members real-time, free access to enjoy it and help shape future content through their digital engagement,” Parker added.

In addition to the regular episodes, the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance will post bonus videos on topics such as cooking while in the field and how-to segments on its YouTube channel. Other videos will include insights from exploration guides and guests.

The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance is a non-profit organization made up of union members who use their outdoor skills while volunteering to advance conservation efforts and preserve North America’s outdoor heritage. Members have built and improved facilities that allow more access to the outdoors on public lands. They also have sponsored and participated in events that expose schoolchildren to fishing and the outdoors who might not have an opportunity to do so.

Active and retired IBEW members in the United States and Canada are encouraged to apply for a spot on “Brotherhood Outdoors,” but they must be a member of the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance to be eligible. Membership in USA is free for IBEW members.

See new episodes at [YouTube.com/UnionSportsmen](https://www.youtube.com/UnionSportsmen). ■

### BC Signatory Commits to ‘Period Promise’

There’s a lot that goes into creating an inclusive working environment on a job-site. One thing that probably doesn’t come to mind though, is the availability of menstrual products. But construction sites in British Columbia are beginning to take notice and account for the on-the-job needs of everyone in the trades. One contractor leading the way is IBEW signatory Houle Electric.

“Once we learned about this campaign, it was really easy for us to say yes,” said Houle Vice President of People and Culture Amber Roberts. “Our vision is to be an industry leader, and that includes embracing and advancing diversity and inclusion.”

The Period Promise campaign is an initiative of the United Way that aims to eliminate what’s known as “period poverty.” Half of all people who menstruate say that they have struggled to purchase products for themselves at some point in their lives, and more than a quarter have gone through a period without having any products at all. In terms of work issues, research by the United Way found that more than 20% of people who menstruate missed work because of an inability to access menstrual products. And 30% have had to leave work for the same reason. Menstruation is, in fact, one of the top two reasons that women miss work in Canada.

Affordability can even be a concern for tradespeople. Despite being paid a solid living wage, individuals sometimes have to pay CA\$18 or CA\$20 for a box of tampons in remote and rural areas.

There can be other barriers for construction workers too, said Mollie Routledge, a journeymen electrician responsible for membership development with



*Menstrual products are starting to be made available on certain construction sites in British Columbia, including through IBEW signatory Houle Electric, thanks in part to the efforts of Kamloops Local 993’s Mollie Routledge.*

Kamloops Local 993. Women, non-binary people and trans men represent less than 5% of skilled tradespeople, so their menstrual needs are rarely considered when it comes to stocking the restrooms.

“It’s not something that everybody thinks about,” Routledge said. “And it’s not necessarily an easy conversation to bring up if you do need something.”

Routledge, who is also a director of Build TogetHER, the women’s committee of the BC Building Trades, took her concerns to Houle last summer and said she’s thrilled to have the company sign on and even post about it on social media.

“I’ll admit it’s a pun, but this is the right thing to do, period, and I’m deeply grateful to Houle for taking this step,” Routledge said. “They are an outlier in the sector, but all good leaders are outliers at some point.”

Houle signed the pledge on Aug. 30 and is currently providing menstrual products for its roughly 80 members doing electrical work on the multi-year CA\$623 million Mills Memorial Hospital project.

“Houle is a positive, forward-thinking company and their employees welcome having easy access to these menstruation products in the same manner as toilet paper,” Routledge said.

Adopters of the Period Promise include unions, post-secondary institutions and nonprofit organizations, but only a handful of private companies like Houle. Also of note is BC Infrastructure Benefits, the first crown corporation to sign on. BCIB manages workforce development on certain public infrastructure projects.

“BCIB is working with the province and contractors to open doors for women and people across the gender spectrum,” said Irene Kerr, BCIB’s president and CEO, in a statement. “But it’s not enough to simply open the door. We need to create safe and welcoming jobsites so that everyone is able to do their best work.”

Fluor Constructors, which is working on the Canada LNG project, has also signed on. LNG Canada’s Kitimat terminal is part of the largest private-sector infrastructure project in Canadian history, a CA\$40 billion-plus development that

includes new pipelines running from gas fields near the British Columbia-Alberta border to the west coast export terminal. At peak, Routledge says they are expecting to have 3,000 electricians on site.

The Western Joint Electrical Training Society has also signed on with the Period Promise and will have products available at all of its locations. Western JETS is responsible for the training of the electrical specialists employed by all signatory contractors of IBEW unions including Victoria Local 230, Local 993 and Nelson Local 1003, which covers Vancouver Island, Northern British Columbia, the Yukon and the Kootenays region in the southeast.

The United Way and other supporters are optimistic that more companies will eventually come on board.

“We’re hoping that the more companies like Houle become adopters, the more it will catch on,” said Neal Adolph with the United Way. “Employers will realize that the Period Promise program not only benefits workers, but is feasible, economical, good for business and the right thing to do.”

Routledge also noted how programs like the Period Promise can help to address the province’s need for more tradespeople.

“We have a skilled trades shortage, so there has been a push for some time to recruit people from underrepresented groups, including women,” Routledge said. “The more ways we can demonstrate

that construction is welcoming to women, the more inclined they’ll be to consider a career in the sector.”

The Period Promise is an extension of Local 993’s broader inclusion efforts. Last March, the local received a Breaking Barriers award from the province for its work to recruit and retain women, Indigenous people and other historically under-represented groups.

“This is another way in which we can help to remove stigma, promote dignity and provide healthy work places where everyone can work to their highest potential,” Routledge said. ■

### Tennessee Boy Scouts to Offer Trades Badges at New Skilled Trades Center

Young boys and girls in Tennessee will soon have a dedicated place to learn about the electrical trade, thanks to the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

“This is a great way to reach young kids and plant that seed that will hopefully turn into a career,” said Nashville Local 429 Assistant Business Manager James Shaw.

The Roy Grindstaff Skilled Trades Center at the Boxwell Reservation in Lebanon will offer more than 900 youth aged 13-18 the chance to earn a merit badge in trades including electrical, automotive maintenance, home repair, painting, plumbing and welding. Grindstaff was a 60-year IBEW member with Local 429.

“I wish I had this growing up,” said Jason Flannery, the council’s camping director and main force behind the project. “These are solid skills to have but you need to be introduced to them.”

That’s just what the center aims to do, to give kids a taste of the trades, not just for their practical value but also to help train the next generation of professional tradespeople.

“In today’s environment, youth are taught that the only way to a successful career is by receiving a bachelor’s degree at a four-year college,” Flannery told the BSA blog. “While that is true for many young people, there are those for whom college is not the best path. These youth are often not exposed to the exciting and professionally rewarding arena of the

skilled trades.”

While the badges themselves are not new, having a center specifically for teaching the scouts is.

“I am not aware of another council in the country with a free-standing facility to be used specifically for introducing scouts to skilled trades,” said Scout Executive Larry Brown. “Scouts will not only be able to earn merit badges in these areas, something that would be difficult for many to do on their own, it may also foster a future career or lifelong hobby interest. Our country needs people trained in the skilled trades who have also gained the values and integrity taught by scouting programs. This will be an important way for the council to help with that effort.”

The Middle Tennessee Council serves more than 15,000 youth and adult volunteers in a 37-county area extending from the Tennessee River to the Upper Cumberland Plateau and Fort Campbell, Ky.

The electrical curriculum will focus on basics like making an electromagnet, making and running a simple electric motor, and showing how a battery works. There will also be a mobile bathroom with electrical outlets and wiring for the kids to get a hands-on feel and see a cross section of the inside of a home. There will also be a focus on safety.

“I want hands-on safety before it’s hands-on,” Flannery said.

Scouts will also have the opportunity to earn a merit badge in American Labor. The course, taught by an area high school teacher, will even encourage participants to visit a local union or attend a union meeting.

Local 429 members including Shaw and retirees Gerald Grant, David McBride and Grindstaff’s old classmate James Pistol attended the groundbreaking ceremony in October, and the local has donated money to help fund the new project. They are also in talks to have members teaching electrical courses during the summer camps.

“Having a professional partner such as IBEW Local 429 is very important, not only through their generous financial support but also through the expertise they are able to share,” said Linda Carter, the council’s associate development director. “In addition, having a connection to the building’s namesake, Roy Grindstaff, adds something special.”

The building is scheduled to open this summer. ■



*Nashville, Tenn., Local 429 members attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the Roy Grindstaff Skilled Trades Center, a project of the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America, where youth will be able to earn badges in electrical and other trades.*

# LOCAL LINES

## Get Involved — We Need You More Than Ever

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,l,mt,ptc,rts,s,se,spa,st &ws), ST. LOUIS, MO — We hope the holidays were a time of family and fellowship. The local Electrical Worker Minority Caucus spent a Saturday in November picking up trash in Ferguson, Mo. The EWMC returned in December to shop with a cop, gathering toys and items for citizens of that community.

Recent highlights of the pin ceremony were presentations of two 80-year pins to brothers Robert Dehn and Francis Zulauf. We look to our past to help plot the future. Get involved in the upcoming Alderman and school-board races. This is where future labor allies get started. We need you now more than ever.

Kyle Hunter, P.S



Local 43 members brought their world-class work and craftsmanship to the Marcy Nanocenter, a new water-fabrication facility.

## Local 43 Builds Marcy Nanocenter

L.U. 43 (em,i&rs), SYRACUSE, NY — The brothers and sisters of the IBEW built the new \$1 billion, 200mm silicon-carbide wafer manufacturing fabrication facility at the Marcy Nanocenter, which is the largest facility of its kind in the world. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your world-class work and craftsmanship!

Jeff Cassano, P.S.

## Energy Bill Crosses the Finish Line

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — In July 2021, with help from the IBEW Education Department, we hosted new steward training for 28 members. Your steward is the first person you should talk with if you have a question about your union contract or an issue at work. Stewards are one of many rank-and-file leaders that make our union strong. It is encouraging to see so many IBEW members wanting to be a representative of Local 51 to our members.

Work remains strong within our jurisdiction. We have five wind and two solar farms currently under construction. We hired 48 temporary union workers for Clinton Power Station's October refueling outage. We have recently started 10 line and three substation apprentices. Additionally, we have organized two directional boring companies, EI Utilities and S & S. Underground work has been picking up due to aging cable. Line-clearance tree trimming continues to remain at full employment.

On Sept. 15, 2021, Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed the long-awaited energy bill (P.A. 102-662) into law. Local 51 and other affected locals, in conjunction with the IBEW State Conference, worked this legislation tirelessly for the last several years. These collective efforts produced a bill that addressed the majority of the

IBEW's concerns: saving the nuclear fleet, establishing nation-leading labor standards, allowing for renewable investments at existing plant sites, a new performance-based ratemaking process that allows for continued investment in infrastructure, inclusion and diversity provisions, worker protection and just transition language, to name a few. Thank you to everyone who played a part in getting this legislation across the finish line.

Our condolences to the families of those members and retirees who passed away in 2021: David C. Armstrong, John J. Biagioni, Leslie Bright, James E. Chandler, Robert W. Christa, Paul Doerr, Benedict "Ben" Dwyer, Thomas W. Ellner, Danny R. Espinoza, William "Bill" Fisher, John "Jack" Gooding, Janet K. Harrold, Ophelia Hill, Janet E. Hoff, Bernard "Bernie" Hoffman, Dale Johnson, Charles "Charlie" Jones, James "Jim" Kamin Jr., Glenn Korando, Harold Lange, Ronald D. Leathers, David Lohr, Robert "Bob" Lourash, Brian MacPhee, Russell E. Martin, Lewellyn Marquardt, James "Jim" McMullin, Keith "Kip" Miller, Orval Paris, William Pleasant, Donald D. Robinson, Eugene "Gene" Sanders, James W. Scott Sr., Clarence "Ed" Seth, Timothy J. Sexton, Terry Teegarden, Milo "Mike" Thomas, Joseph "Mark" Tomlovich, Clifford Turner and Lupe G. Vasquez. Rest in peace, brothers and sisters.

Be safe and Happy New Year!

Karlene Knisley, B.R.

## Unprecedented Weather in Iowa

L.U. 55 (c,lctt,o&u), DES MOINES, IA — Hello, brothers and sisters: Disaster hit in the form of a derecho and 43 tornadoes on Dec. 15, the first recorded derecho ever to happen in December anywhere in the U.S. Some places recorded winds over 105 mph. We ended up with many line personnel working a lot of overtime to get transmission lines up and running and then working to get the power restored to a lot of small communities. That really threw a monkey wrench into the plans of our 2021 Christmas party. It was held at the Shriners

building in Altoona. For those who did not make it, we had a really good time! Thanks to the staff for putting it together. Our local continues to be blessed with a lot of work. If you're looking for a job, give us a call!

Local 55 is celebrating 125 years this year! Let's continue to work safely! Never put your fingers where you can't see them!

Myron Green, P.S.



Local 55 Press Secretary Myron Green with his two grandsons at the local's Christmas party on Dec. 17.

## Davis and Brownrigg Celebrated for Service

L.U. 89 (catv,em,lctt,o,ptc&t), SEATTLE, WA — As business manager, I was honored to present 60-year pins to two retirees: Brothers William (Bill) Davis and Robert (Bob) Brownrigg both reach 60-year milestones this year. Brother Davis, as many will remember, was the former business manager of Local 89 and later became the director of the Telecommunications



Local 89 Business Manager Matt Carroll with retired member William (Bill) Davis, who recently reached his 60th year of IBEW service.



Local 1 Brothers Robert Dehn and Francis Zulauf each were awarded 80-years of service pins.

## New UBS Arena in Elmont

L.U. 25 (c,catv,es,i,ptc&rts), LONG ISLAND, NY — The new UBS Arena located in Elmont next to Belmont Park, the final leg of the Triple Crown, is the home of the National Hockey League New York Islanders. Construction began in early 2019. It has been a huge undertaking and a lot of manhours for a \$1.2-billion construction project. Construction was completed in November 2021 with the soft grand opening on Friday, Nov. 19, 2021, and the first New York Islander game at the arena on Saturday, Nov. 20. The new UBS Arena is a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility.

Local 25 had over 400 local and traveling members working on this project. IBEW electricians worked six to seven days a week around the clock for two years in order to complete the arena. Construction was finished on schedule, even with all the restrictions with the pandemic.

One advantage of the IBEW is its unlimited supply of manpower. Without the help from all of the IBEW travelers, this job could not have been completed on schedule. Thank you to all of the men and women travelers that came to help.

Tom Lawless, P.S./B.R.

## 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](mailto: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](http://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	(rtb) Radio-Television Broadcasting	(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 LINES

Department at the International Office. Brother Brownrigg was a business representative for Local 89 during his tenure.

Bill gave me my start at the local by appointing me to a national committee years ago. It is my privilege to recognize his contributions and commitment to our local while celebrating this milestone in his life. These two members collectively represent 120 years of membership and service. Congratulations, gentlemen!

*Matt Carroll, B.M.*

## Local 97 Members Volunteer at Albany Ronald McDonald House

L.U. 97 (ptc&u), SYRACUSE, NY — For the past 12 years, our local's members from National Grid's Albany Overhead Line and Underground Electric Departments have given back to the community by performing a day of service at the Ronald McDonald House of Albany. In prior years they hung Christmas decorations, cleaned and dusted indoors and trimmed hedges, raked flower beds and hung wreaths and lights to decorate the outside of the buildings. Due to the coronavirus, this year they were restricted to working only on the outside of the buildings. They are shown here in late November using bucket trucks to raise a Christmas tree to the second-story porch of one of the buildings. Once the work was done, our members took up a collection to help with the expenses. Over \$5,000 was raised, which was then matched by National Grid and donated. Well done, everyone!

*Dan Machold, B.R./P.S.*



*Members of Local 97 working on the Ronald McDonald House of Albany, NY, in November.*

## Rules and Tools Prevent Accidents

L.U. 125 (lctt,o,t&u), PORTLAND, OR — While we cannot control what happens with the pandemic or politics, we can maintain focus on what matters in the IBEW — safety, organizing, education, professionalism and taking care of our brothers and sisters.

**M e m b e r s** throughout Local 125 know Brother Cliff “Zeek” McCarthy. He has served on our Executive Board for eight years, yet many know him through his involvement in the Pacific Northwest Lineman Rodeo, where he has served for years as the chief judge. Zeek has worked at Clark Public Utilities since 1996, where he became a foreman in 2005 and served on the 125 Club Board.



*Local 125's Cliff “Zeek” McCarthy, known for mentoring new members and creating a culture of safety in his trade, will soon retire.*

Zeek is known for mentoring new members and always making safety his priority. He has an unwavering commitment to his trade and simply won't take on a project unless he can give it his all. “Zeek's hard work and devotion has created a culture of safety,” said Business Rep. Travis Hefely.

As Zeek prepares for his upcoming retirement, we want to thank him for his tireless service to our great union. We wish him a long healthy retirement and promise to remember words he lived by: Rules and tools prevent accidents. Thank you, Zeek!

*Marcy Grail, A.B.M.*

## Much to Celebrate, More Work to be Done

LU 129 (i), LORAIN, OH — Summer and fall of 2021 thankfully provided a much-needed relief for our members and their families. Despite the ongoing health precautions, we were able to participate in league softball, have our annual golf outing, host a new event called The 129 Fun Ride (motorcycles and one scooter) and, most importantly, attend in-person monthly meetings.

A special thanks to Brothers Nick Yannucci (softball organizer) and Business Manager John Novak (golf-outing coordinator), who stepped up for these activities; and YES, please attend union meetings.

Work remains steady from now into next year. Many members are working at the Geothermal project at Oberlin College and the Blue Can project in Huron. We are cautiously optimistic that a few large projects are on the horizon.

The favorable work conditions have allowed us to develop a better understanding with elected officials and businesses who gladly take our hard-earned dollars, but don't always reciprocate with opportunities that benefit our members. Recently, we have met with both political parties to continue the push for equitable wages, benefits and bidding opportunities. A plan to provide member-spending awareness to private and non-profit organizations is also being put in place.

Moving forward, we are not waiting on corporate growth speculation but will be proactive in developing new, and strengthening existing, relationships.

Thank you to the Fourth District leaders who are providing us with the necessary “tools” for success and to our members who embrace the future of the IBEW.

*Paul Kress, P.S.*

## Longtime Local 141 Members Celebrated

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters: Work in our jurisdiction remains slow, with 95 members on Book 1.

Local 141's Social Committee was quite busy during the holiday season. The local participated in several community Christmas parades, complete with our own float. We resumed our holiday festivities in 2021 with a member Christmas party, where service pins were awarded. Brothers Larry Neidert, Ken Davis and Mickey Cupp were in attendance to receive their 50-year service pins, and Brother George Miller received his pin for 75 years of service. The Local 141 Social Committee also hosted a kids' breakfast with Santa and holiday dinner/dance for the members and their families. Both events were well-attended and enjoyed by all.

Local 141 is mourning the passing of Brother Dave Myers Sr. He will be sadly missed.

Please stay safe and healthy.

*Kurt “Bug” Reed, P.S.*



*Local 141 members with their service pins: (left to right) Mickey Cupp, 50 years; Larry Neidert, 50 years; George Miller, 75 years; Ken Davis, 50 years.*

## Members Rally for Apprentice Rotation

L.U. 159 (i), MADISON, WI — We held a pin ceremony and hosted a retirees' holiday luncheon, where many acquaintances were renewed and many stories were told. Special shout-out to these retirees on their milestones: Jane Liess, 40 years; Gerald Miller, 60 years; and Kenneth Frederick and Allen Mulderink, 65 years. Congratulations, everyone!

Efforts continue to reinstate our apprentice rotation to ensure they are exposed to diverse work experience. Many Local 159 members have attended JATC meetings in support of rotation and cited negative effects they are seeing without it. The Code of Excellence is now part of second-year apprentices' night-school curriculum, taught by the business manager and agents.

We continue to advocate for overdue raises for members who are state employees. Raises were approved on paper, but legislative action is still needed. Republication Wisconsin State Senator Chris Kapenga likened the raises to “something out of communist Russia,” asking how everyone could be paid the same wages, the hypocrisy being that all our state senators are also paid the same for doing the same “job.”

A shout-out to all our instructors: They always go above and beyond. We cannot thank them enough for all they do for the betterment of Local 159!

*Sue Blue, B.M.*



*Instructor Mike Wetak working with an exam prep class.*

## Going the Extra Mile for Local 245

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — As we navigate into our 120th year, we'd like to recognize a very intricate part of our local. Stop and take a minute to think about all the hard work that goes into running a local union; many of us forget to recognize who does all of the behind-the-scenes business and planning.

Local 245 would like to thank and recognize our administrative assistants Lisa Tracy and Amanda Parker for their hard work throughout the year. In addition to their administrative commitment, Lisa and Amanda organize our local union membership functions like the well-attended Family Toledo Walleye Night and the Toledo Mud Hens baseball games. The time and effort put into these events for our membership is very much appreciated and deserves recognition. During the holiday season, both Lisa and Amanda continued to give

back to our membership by putting time and effort into our December (holiday) membership meeting, from decorating to making a delicious meal for our membership. We are truly thankful and blessed to have Lisa and Amanda on our team. All of us at Local 245 are proud of their creativity, professionalism and willingness to go that extra mile, and the local would not be what it is today without them.

As of this writing, negotiations with Energy Harbor at the Davis-Besse nuclear power plant had spanned over a year; these negotiations have concluded and the membership employed at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station will have an opportunity on Jan. 6 to vote on the tentative agreement reached by the parties. Walleye Power Bay Shore Plant negotiations are still ongoing, and Local 245 will continue to negotiate for our membership and their families for as long as it takes to reach an agreement that we can recommend. We have dates scheduled for upcoming bargaining sessions to begin with the city of Rossford Fire & Rescue Department, Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative and Nelson Tree Service.

Most importantly, please continue to follow all safety rules and safe-work practices. Stay healthy and be safe. Thank you to all of our members for working countless hours SAFELY.

*Brian Gendaszek, P.S.*

## Greeting the Seasons

L.U. 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ — The holidays always bring tradition with them and our local union hall was glad to welcome back an old friend after a year's absence from his traditional indoor visit. Yes, Santa was back, perched on his ornate throne inside the union hall along with his diligent helper (Terri), listening attentively to the Christmas wishes of the children and grandchildren of our membership. The union hall was once again filled with the joy of the holiday season as hot chocolate, candy canes and beaming, smiling faces were in abundance. After telling Santa their hopes for the holidays, each child was directed straightaway to a sprawling gift table where they selected a special gift from the local to take as a token of remembrance from their special evening with Old Saint Nick! Santa even managed to convince a few of his most capable helpers to brave the chilly night air and bring holiday cheer to our member's streets and avenues, announcing their arrival with strobe lights and air horns! These special helpers and all the other good souls who made celebration come to life all deserve our thanks. Without them, Christmas at the hall simply wouldn't be.

*Brian Jacoppo, P.S.*



*Paddy Wright, son of Shannon and Mike Wright, gives a thumbs-up to Santa at Local 269's union hall.*



Local 313 retirees gathered for a Christmas luncheon in December.

## The New Role Models

L.U. 313 (i&spa), WILMINGTON, DE — The real strength of our local was on full display at the retirees meeting this past December. We're talking about our members being back together socializing, energized and engaged. The retirees miss the camaraderie from when they used to work together, so being able to capture a little of that is always a nice fix.

A solid showing from longtime members reflects the actions of an organization that is still thriving. It also has the making for a lot of laughs and some tall tales. When the fresh faces show up each Christmas, it always leads to new versions of old stories to be recalled and embellished. Next time, you decide: What's funnier, the story or the guy telling it?

Collectively the old hands have seen it all; and with the GM and Chrysler jobs closed down and shipped south, we miss the big job shutdowns that used to bring gangs of us to work together. Newer members have lost that chance to learn from having so many seasoned mechanics all under one roof. Tricks of the trade are important, but to hear the local's history could be even more so.

A quality product has long been the calling card of Local 313's best. Maintaining high standards and becoming the new role models is our path forward.

Thank you to all who stay involved. This keeps us strong.  
Be well!

Bruce W. Esper, P.S.

## Our Mission: To Secure a Better Life

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — We honor those members who passed away in 2021: Alton Anderson, John Brown, LeRoy Fickert, James Howard, Michael Lazor, Lemoine Nadeau, Kevin Petersen, Donald Scovill, Charles Ulrich and Robin Zernechel.

We recognize one individual for saving a life:



Local 347 held its first meeting in January at their new union hall in Ankeny, Iowa.

First-year apprentice Walker Schreiber saved his cousin's life during a deer hunt. His cousin experienced a seizure and collapsed while crossing a stream. Once back on the shore, it was determined that Walker's cousin was not breathing. Walker used his recently learned CPR training from the JATC, and after clearing



Brother Brian Kenney, former business manager/financial secretary of Local 455, celebrated at a surprise retirement gathering with (left to right) Brian Robinson, Jonathan Kaczmarek, John Beaudoin, Brian Kenney, Daniel Hamel, Robert Blanchette, William Freeman and Todd Neumann.

the water from his cousin's lungs, he began breaths and compressions. Soon, his cousin was breathing again. Thank you, Walker.

We appreciate the lessons history can teach us. Minnesota-born author, Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951), published a novel, "Arrowsmith," in 1929. It was about a doctor battling a pandemic on a Caribbean island. In 1935, he wrote, "It Can't Happen Here," the story of a fear-mongering dictator who was elected president of the United States and trampled on democratic norms while boasting patriotism and a return to traditional values. These stories were fiction. The reality is that we need to support the IBEW's mission: To secure a better life. As Minn. Gov. Floyd Olson (1931-1936) said, "The rights labor has won, labor must fight to protect."

Tom Small, P.S.

## A New Hall for Local 347

L.U. 347 (em,i,mt,rtb,rts&spa), DES MOINES, IA — January 2022 marked the historical record of our local, with the first general membership meeting in the new hall. This new hall, proposed more than a decade ago, has finally come to fruition. The new building at 6809 SE Bellagio Court, Ankeny, Iowa, is the product of the efforts of the building committee: Aaron Haug, Terry Pohlman and Scott Gardner, with the blessing of the membership. This facility provides our membership with a structure to be proud of and should serve the brothers and sisters of Local 347 for many years to come. It can be seen from I-35, but if you're in the area, stop in and look around.

A combined 2021 and 2022 Pin Party & Recognition Ceremony will be held on Mar. 12. The event will be in the Bishop Ballroom at Prairie Meadows in Altoona, Iowa.

Local 347, along with Locals 55 and 499, will host the Eleventh District Progress Meeting, tentatively scheduled for June 20-23 at Embassy Suites in Des Moines. Opportunities for local volunteers will be available.

The option of allowing retirees to return to work for a maximum of 600 hours is to be extended into 2022. Please contact the hall if interested.

The work outlook for Local 347 continues to be positive.

"The labor movement means just this: It is the last noble protest of the American people against the power of incorporated wealth."  
— Wendell Phillips, 1871

Mike Schweiger, P.S.

## Brother Brian Kenney Retires

L.U. 455 (em&u), SPRINGFIELD, MA — Our local held a surprise retirement gathering for Brother Brian Kenney, who was the business manager/financial secretary. Brian was a 38-year member of the IBEW upon his

retirement. The names of the people in the photo (from left to right) are Brian Robinson, Jonathan Kaczmarek, John Beaudoin, Brian Kenney, Daniel Hamel, Robert Blanchette, William Freeman and Todd Neumann. Congratulations to Brother Kenney on his retirement!

John J. Beaudoin, B.M.

## Giving Back at the Close of 2021

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rts,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Our local's members finished out 2021 in a good way, giving back to the community and helping those in need. Our members and contractors donated nearly 15,000 lbs. of canned goods as well as over \$1,500 in monetary donations to a local food bank. The food and money donated will help those who are struggling during these trying times. Thank you to the members who donated.

To close out the year, members were called upon to take down the stringers on Monument Circle. Indianapolis is the host city for the College Football Playoff National Championship, and we were asked to take the stringers down two weeks early on Dec. 31. While this is a recognized holiday, we had nearly 100 members show up to help up accomplish this task in record time. Thank you all who helped and gave up some of your holiday.

Wishing all of you a happy and healthy 2022!

Blake A. Andrews, B.R./Treas.



During the holiday season, Local 481 members and contractors donated nearly 15,000 lbs. of canned goods and more than \$1500 in monetary donations to a local food bank.

## Vote and Support PLAs

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — Our Children's Christmas Party was held on Dec. 4 at the Sid Cutter Pilots' Pavilion. It was a bigger venue than we have used in the past, and it was a much-needed change as we had outgrown our previous site. The committee once again outdid themselves, with lots of food, plenty of games for the kids and adults and a visit from Santa Claus. Thank you to all that put this successful event together.

In one of their final actions before leaving office, two of Albuquerque's councilors sponsored legislation requiring PLAs on public works projects expected

## BROTHERHOOD OUTDOORS OPEN SEASON IN 2022



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## LOCAL LINES



IBEW members celebrated at Local 611's annual Children's Christmas party, where there was holiday fun for both adults and kids.

to cost at least \$10 million and that employ workers from three different crafts. A general contractor who successfully wins applicable city projects must use a PLA that governs all construction work. Over the past three fiscal years, the city has had six projects that would have met those requirements. PLAs do not prevent nonunion companies from winning bids if they enter into the requisite PLAs.

Intel in Rio Rancho has begun to ramp up; B&D Industries has been putting in calls to help man the \$3 billion-dollar project, and they might start paying an incentive in the near future.

On behalf of the local, I would like to send condolences to the family and friends our members who recently passed away: Bahe Begay, Charlie E. Brush, Philbert Grey and Michael R. Martinez.

Don't forget to attend your local meetings and to get out and vote at election time.

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.

## Unions Share

L.U. 683 (i&ptc), COLUMBUS, OH — Our local joined the Central Ohio Labor Council at the St. Stephen's Community House for the 67th annual Christmas Cares/Union Shares event Dec. 18-19. This event helps feed approximately 3,000 families in need around central Ohio for the holidays. This is always a great opportunity for our apprentices to put in community service hours and for our members to volunteer as well. We would like to thank all of the members who participated in this great event!

Our jurisdiction will be in need of hundreds of inside wireman in 2022. At the time of this writing, we have open calls that are filling at a slow pace. With the OSU Medical Center Tower continuing and multiple data centers coming out of the ground, we could have hundreds of open calls at the time of this article printing. There also is a utility-scale solar project in our jurisdiction with a signatory contractor that will need manpower in late spring/early summer. I would like to encourage our traveling sisters and brothers to continue taking advantage of the opportunities in the local.

Mike Morey, Pres.



Local 683 members hard at work at St. Stephens Community House.

## Back to Work With Optimism

L.U. 697 (c,es,i,mt&se), GARY AND HAMMOND, IN — During the holiday season, there was a welcome feeling all around the local. Our very own Santa came to visit us here at Local 697 and provided that joyous holiday atmosphere for the families. A spe-

cial thanks to Santa and his team of Christmas helpers!

It's time to welcome a new year, and 2022 has started off with repeated uncertainties. But one thing that has been evident here in northwest Indiana is that we are back to work and want to continue in that optimistic direction. We have various projects all around the jurisdiction. Along the lakefront, U.S. Steel, Cliffs and BP refinery are at a steady pace with continued maintenance and smaller upgrade projects currently underway, with a strong schedule for 2022. There are several school corporations in the jurisdiction, and health-care systems with new facilities under construction as well. I look forward to growing our membership with all the optimism of the work ahead. Mark your calendar for the spring blood drive on Mar. 25.

Joree Richards, B.M./F.S.



Steve, Kara, Andrew, Luke, Mark and Henry Soderquist visit Santa as part of Local 697's Christmas celebration.

## Rising to the Occasion

L.U. 1245 (o,u,t,em,catv,lctt.govt&pet), VACAVILLE, CA — While most families hunkered down amidst one of the biggest snowfall months in history, thousands of our local members have been working tirelessly alongside other first responders on the massive storm response operation. Many have sacrificed time with their own families over the holidays to assist those in storm-ravaged communities. "In this season of giving, I am continuously inspired by our selfless members who truly exemplify our union's core values," remarked Business Manager Bob Dean.

In a landslide election victory, workers at the California Independent System Operator have voted 46-11 to join Local 1245. Based in control rooms located in Folsom and Lincoln, these workers are the nerve center of the power grid, serving 80% of California and portions of Nevada, which comprises one-third of the Western Interconnection. CAISO facilitates over 28,000 market transactions every day to ensure enough power is on hand to meet demand.

As the utility landscape continues to change, Local 1245 is committed to providing members with the skills they need, particularly as automation becomes more pervasive. Unmanned aircraft systems, or drones, are a prime example. In recent years, utilities have increased their use of drones to carry out certain work that has traditionally been done by



Local 1245 member Tyden Wing, a PG&E journeyman lineman, works to restore power in the Soda Springs area in mid-December.

Photo by Local 1245 member John Storey

IBEW members. Three years ago, Local 1245 launched a pilot program to train a small group of linemen to perform this drone work, rather than let the work be outsourced to nonunion operators. In the fall of 2021, we initiated another round of drone training at our new Woodland JATC training facility.

In Outside Construction, the work outlook continues to be strong in both Northern California and Nevada.

Read more at [ibew1245.com](http://ibew1245.com).

Rebecca Band, Communications Dir.



Local 1347's Ray Fowee, Scott Smith, Marcus Greer, Andrew Kirk, Brad Evans and Patrick Kallaher donated teddy bears to Cincinnati Children's Hospital in December.

## Giving Back at Cincinnati Children's Hospital

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,ptc&u), CINCINNATI, OH — For the fifth year in a row, our local had the opportunity to donate over 100 teddy bears to the beloved and well-deserving children at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Dec. 2021. We hope these small gifts can really make a difference for those that are staying at the hospital during the holiday season. If our membership has the ability to spread a little cheer, we are going to do so! With that being said, we wish to also extend a thank you to all of those working hard within the medical field. Here's hoping for good health and wellbeing going forward.

Andrew Kirk, B.M.

## What Leadership Looks Like

L.U. 1547 (c,em,i,lctt,o,ptc,t&u), ANCHORAGE, AK — Business Manager Marcie Obremski and Assistant Business Manager Doug Tansy presented 56-year IBEW member Knute Anderson a plaque in recognition of his years of service to our local at the U102 Fairbanks general meeting. Brother Anderson served 39 years on the Executive Board, 28 years as president of the Executive Board, 27 years on Alaska Electrical Health & Welfare Trust, 23 years on Alaska Electrical Pension Trust, two years as vice president of the Executive Board, six years as Executive Board treasurer and three years as Executive Board recording secretary, U101 Wireman representative and U101 recording secretary. Thank you, Brother Knute, for all of your work on behalf of Local 1547. This is what leadership looks like!

Melinda Taylor, Communications Dir.



Business Manager Marcie Obremski and Assistant Business Manager Doug Tansy present 56-year member Knute Anderson with a plaque in recognition of his years of service.

## Pride in Membership

L.U. 1837 (rtb&u), MANCHESTER, ME — Members of our local at Sinclair Broadcasting WGME-TV 13 in Portland, Maine, have approved a new three-year contract agreement with substantial raises in 2022 for all members in all job classifications, ranging from 5.2% all the way up to 49.9%. Most members will see a wage increase of at least 7% in 2022, followed by an additional 5% over the next two years.

During negotiations, when the company's initial wage offer fell far short of what the union negotiating team was seeking, members voted overwhelmingly to reject Sinclair's offer and authorize a strike. Eventually, the company found more money and improved their wage offer, finally showing the appreciation for the value of their employees that they had expressed across the bargaining table. "I am proud of our membership," said Chief Steward Jack Amrock. "They had the courage to say, 'No, this is not good enough!' While we didn't get everything we were looking for, we have laid the foundation for the future."

Members at Gray Television WABI-TV 5 in Bangor also ratified a new contract. They will receive wage increases of at least 5% total over the next 18 months.

Matthew Beck, B.R.



Chief Steward Jack Amrock hands a contract ballot to WGME-TV News Photographer David Hill after the union negotiating team recommended approval of the new three-year agreement.



# RETIREEES

## Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon Returns

RETIREEES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER — After many telephone calls made by our Chairman David Torres, we were able to gather enough members to put together another Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon at the Leewood Golf Club. The ongoing pandemic, causing the cancellation of our regular meetings, made it very difficult to bring our members together. Unfortunately, we only had 52 attendees, but the good side of that number was the ease of maintaining proper social distancing.

Brother Ted Jadus — who always does this, but rarely gets the recognition — brought our American flag and chapter banner and set them up in the dining room.

Again, we had our accordionist, Brother Steve DiDonato, entertaining us with Christmas music to the delight of the crowd. Our 50/50 raffle to benefit the Fisher House Foundation was won by Leonora Hightower, who promptly donated her winnings to the FHF.

This year, only four members were awarded “Gold Member” status, having reached the age of 80. Of these members, Bill Brkich and Dick Mills were in attendance. Dominic Malandro was unable to attend due to illness, and Michael Helwig was awarded posthumously. Business Agent Richard McSpedon presented the awards.

*Dick Mills, Treas.*



Local 3 Westchester/Putnam retirees David Torres, Dick Mills and Bill Brkich with Business Agent Richard McSpedon.

## A Big Donation to Toys for Tots

RETIREEES CLUB OF L.U. 3, SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER — From Dec. 1-24, 2021, our Vice President Lou Cohen and volunteers from the South Jersey Local 3 Retirees helped the U.S. Marines in the annual Toys for Tots, located in Hazlet, N.J. More than 125,000 toys were donated, sorted and sent out to various charities in N.J.

The club’s holiday party was held on Dec. 15, 2021, at the IBEW Local 400 hall. We had a hot and cold buffet. Our raffle winners were Joe Cronin Hector



Local 3 South Jersey Retiree Club President Anthony Savarese stands with Vice Presidents Lou Cohen and Charles DeSaro, with Marine Sgt. Mark Wilson of the Red Bank Armory and members of the South Jersey Retirees Club.

Jordan and John Ninivaggi. A great time was had by all. Stay safe!!

*Anthony Savarese, Pres.*

## Keeping the Zoom Option

RETIREEES CLUB OF L.U. 26, WASHINGTON, DC — This past year has been another challenge, but with the help of Zoom, we have been staying touch with our retired members. It has gone so well that although we are now able to meet in-person, we have kept the Zoom option. This has allowed retired members in other areas of the country to stay connected like never before!

Thanks to the technology that Local 26 added before the pandemic, we were able to easily share our in-person meetings with distant members: A small unseen benefit to the cloud that still hangs over us all! We held our annual raffle and drew the winners at the November meeting, still adding Zoom for anyone who wanted to watch.

In October, we were able to resume the annual Retired Members Crab Feast. Luckily, the weather was better than expected and the crab feast was held outside and catered. We had more than 60 people sharing stories over a delicious meal.

The need for medical equipment has not gone away during the pandemic. Now that doctors can perform more elective surgeries, the need for recovery equipment remains.

So, although we are still in a pandemic era, we must move forward. We are trying new ways to cope. By now, we hope you have all had your booster shots. The loss of life continues, but we are still hoping for a better time in 2022. In the meantime, stay safe, wear your face masks and keep the 6-foot rule

for separation! Until we have a cure, it’s the best way to lower your risk and the risk for everyone around you!

*Susan Flashman, P.S.*

## Remembering Richard Panagrossi

RETIREEES CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — Our last meeting of 2021 was our Christmas luncheon held on

Dec. 8, 2021. We had a great time, and we hope to see more retirees when we resume our meetings on Mar. 9, 2022. Most of us wore our new “Local 35 Retiree” hats that were given to us at the meeting.

Retired Second District International Representative Richard Panagrossi passed away recently. I knew Richard as the business manager of Local 90, then as an international rep. and then as he was appointed to the Connecticut State Board of Mediation and Arbitration and the Connecticut Board of Occupational Licensing.

I also knew Richard as a friend because of an unusual circumstance. In July 1999, I had open-heart surgery for a valve replacement. About three months later, the president of Local 35 asked me to reach out to Richard because he was going to have the same procedure and had questions. From that day, we became friends, calling each other from time to time during our gradual recuperation with our new mechanical valves. We would also see each other at IBEW events and retirement dinners, at times listening to our tickers. Later, in 2008, he was coincidentally at my niece’s wedding via a mutual friend. I was surprised and happy to see him. He was a genuine person in all respects, and I will sincerely miss my friend.

We would also like to recognize our members who passed away during 2021: Michael Amenta, Charles Bradley Sr., William Broughton, Frank DelMastro, Tito DiBenedetto, Gerard Gosselin, Munere Haddad, Greg Marsh, Dennis Murphy, Richard O’Neil, Gershon Sosin and Benny Zarrilli. Our condolences go out to their families.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy new year!

*Kenneth R. White, P.S.*



Local 134 grieves the loss of Richard Sipple (Jan. 3, 1944 - Jan. 3, 2022).

## Supporting and Honoring our Veterans

RETIREEES CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — As we enter into the new year of 2022, we still find ourselves fighting to stay healthy during the rising coronavirus cases and deaths all over the world. Please do all you can to stay healthy.

Our club tries to do its best to support and honor all our veterans. Our veterans give up so much to protect our freedoms. They leave their families to serve, they leave the safety of our boarders to serve and take the ultimate risk for service — loss of life. Our club donates to the Honor Flight Chicago for our senior veterans. We participate in the annual Memorial Day Ceremony by donating a wreath to place at the Mount Emblem Veterans Memorial for fallen soldiers. Business Manager Don Finn started the first annual Veterans Day Luncheon, held Nov. 11, 2021 to honor our

local’s veterans and their families. Many Retirees Club veterans were in attendance.

On Dec. 4th, 2021, Local 134 Business Representative Jim Valleyfield got together with the Retirees Club Vice President Keith Beris and took donations, buying socks, t-shirts and undergarments. This haul filled five trucks and was escorted by Keith Beris and the Local 134 Motorcycle Club to the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center for homeless veterans through the “Socks for Soldiers” program.

On Oct. 25, 2021, the Retirees Club appointed to its Executive Board myself, Sue Kleczka, as present commentary & press secretary and James Duffy, following the passing of two board members in Sept. 2021. I have the honor of being the first woman retiree in the club’s history to sit on the board.

I regret to end with sad news: the passing of Richard Sipple on Jan. 3, 2022. Rich was a member of the IBEW for 59 years, retired on Jan. 1, 2008. He served as president of the Retirees Club from 2012 — 2014. Rich stayed very active in our club, and he was a very fun guy. He got the club tickets for the annual Honor Flight Chicago Hockey Classic games, as well as tickets for his hometown Schaumburg Boomers summer baseball games. He and his wife Diane played a big part in setting up our December holiday parties. Rich will be missed by all.

*Sue Kleczka, P.S.*

## Continuing Community Service in the Pandemic Era

RETIREEES CLUB OF L.U. 353, TORONTO, ON, CANADA — Our budget for 2022 has been approved, and Local 353 South Unit (Toronto) has not been able to meet due to our size (usually 110-120 attending) and Ontario guidelines. But our North Unit (Barrie) has had two breakfast meetings with 27 attending in November and 37 in December. Thanks, John Hawkins.

On Jan. 5, 2022, Ontario returned to Step-2 lockdown, with schools closed as well as restaurants, bars and gyms. We continue to hope and plan for reopening by thinking outside the box. Normally, we participate in two Kidney Clothes drives each year (spring and fall), but with our hall closed and no meetings held, this has not happened for two years. Still, somehow, bags of used clothing gathered in our storage room, so thanks to Holly DeJong and Wayne Lawrence, who drove them to Kidney Clothes Depot with notes attached that they were from Local 353’s retirees. The Kidney Foundation acknowledged this donation. This is an example of how to continue community service during these trying times.

In 2022, if we are able, our pin and award breakfast should acknowledge 108 50-year, 74 55-year, 16 60-year, 26 65-year and 6 70-year members for years of service.

*Robert Rynyk, Pres.*

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RETIREEES continued on page 18

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RETIRES

Thanks for Years of Service

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — Hello everyone: We hope you are all doing well and staying healthy. As of now (Jan. 2022), it looks like we will not be starting retiree meetings until September. The office at the union hall has nothing to do with this, so please do not contact them for information.

A pin ceremony was held in December, and we want to congratulate and thank everyone for their years of service to the union.

We are sad to report that we have lost the following members since my last article: Carl R. Allman, William J. Driggers, Dymon B. Gardner, William B. Hirschi III, Clifford E. Kelley Sr., Bradley S. Michels, Scott L. Robertson, Thomas G. Rodgers and George E. Snowden. Our condolences go out to all their families and friends.

Diane Gibbs, P.S.



Local 756's Robert R. Steele and Steven E. Gibbs were both present at the December 2021 Pin Ceremony and received their 50-year pins. Congratulations!

Happy Retirement, Brother Hamilton

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 1042, SANFORD, FL, CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER — We would like to announce that Rick Hamilton is retiring after 51 years of faithful service. Rick came to Florida Power & Light right out of high school as a helper and learned and grew within the company through the years. A certified journeyman who finished his career as a restoration specialist, Rick spent the past ten years working at the Sanford Service Center. Please wish Brother Hamilton all the joy and happiness that life has to offer in the next chapter of his life as he enjoys his golden years!

Ellen Stephenson, P.S.



Local 1042 member Rick Hamilton is retiring after 51 years of IBEW service.

In Memoriam

Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in January 2022

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
3	Ambrosino, M. A.	10/20/21	86	Bates, W. D.	10/28/21	313	Hankins, D. A.	10/22/21	673	Hackathorn, B. J.	10/6/21
3	Asselta, V. J.	5/18/21	86	Incavo, J. J.	10/19/21	317	Boyd, W. K.	8/24/21	676	Miller, D. L.	10/15/21
3	Caravana, A.	10/4/21	86	Plant, D. E.	8/22/20	322	Stidham, R. H.	9/16/21	683	Evans, E. E.	10/22/21
3	DeSena, H.	11/27/21	86	Welzmueller, O. J.	7/4/21	332	Bull, G. L.	10/10/21	683	Shearer, D. E.	10/17/21
3	Dorsey, M. S.	10/17/21	98	Staskiel, L. J.	11/27/20	332	Davis, J. C.	10/5/21	697	DeRosa, A. J.	2/3/21
3	Kaner, J. P.	7/1/21	98	Varallo, D. J.	10/2/21	340	Billings, C. P.	9/27/21	701	Bailye, W.	12/3/21
3	Kronyak, J. N.	9/25/21	99	Freitas, M. J.	10/4/21	342	Tuttle, P. A.	9/24/21	701	Huber, F. H.	8/27/21
3	Light, B. T.	11/12/21	102	Cook, J. H.	10/13/21	347	Mintle, W. R.	10/9/21	712	Tate, S. J.	9/8/21
3	Mahabir, L.	10/5/21	102	Ferrer, H. C.	9/13/21	349	Edwards, K.	5/24/21	716	Johnson, A. A.	6/26/21
3	Mundsinger, P. D.	4/10/20	103	Langton, J. V.	8/4/21	351	Corson, R. L.	10/25/21	716	Johnman, S. R.	10/21/21
3	Olshansky, M.	10/22/21	103	Meade, R. J.	9/27/21	351	McCord, J. B.	11/21/21	716	Rasmussen, C. C.	3/27/18
3	Putlock, A. C.	7/30/21	103	Murphy, S. A.	7/23/21	353	Delcarlo, L.	11/1/21	716	Riley, J. D.	6/30/21
3	Roberts, W. H.	10/31/21	103	Rose, W. J.	10/16/21	353	Drozdownski, E. V.	10/21/21	725	Piper, S.	9/9/21
3	Ruiz, F.	10/21/21	103	Roth, J. E.	7/29/21	353	Scott, J. P.	11/7/21	725	Piper, C. E.	7/29/21
3	Velazquez, H.	9/19/21	105	Ferrusi, N.	10/29/21	353	Thomson, J. M.	12/8/21	743	Lingeris, P. T.	10/4/21
5	Roth, J. W.	11/3/21	110	Dreher, D. J.	12/17/21	357	Anderson, G. W.	7/6/17	743	Maurer, J. L.	10/21/21
5	Wiegand, A. J.	10/6/21	110	Wamhoff, J. E.	10/12/21	357	Hall, J. E.	10/13/21	768	Mastas, M. R.	9/14/21
6	Hammons, J. S.	10/30/20	111	Carter, T. E.	10/10/21	357	Metzler, R. T.	11/5/21	769	Cowan, R. L.	10/15/21
6	Koepke, S. A.	4/7/21	112	Groves, G. L.	9/20/21	357	Sideri, R. K.	11/20/21	769	Rivera, J. W.	10/6/21
6	Miller, K. M.	2/22/21	112	Tiwater, R. A.	8/15/21	357	Wilkes, T. R.	8/15/21	769	Wilson, F. G.	10/3/21
9	Dougill, J. W.	2/18/21	113	Bustamento, R.	3/23/21	369	Baker, M. F.	10/22/21	776	Johnson, J. M.	10/7/21
11	Farris, R. D.	10/10/21	124	Weeks, K. D.	10/23/21	369	Bom, L. M.	4/11/21	776	Sullivan, J. E.	11/4/21
11	Hatcher, D. P.	6/12/21	126	Breidegam, M. F.	10/15/21	369	Ellis, D. B.	8/25/21	804	Bettiol, P. C.	12/12/21
11	Keller, M.	9/2/21	126	Harchak, F.	10/5/21	369	May, H. W.	2/16/18	890	Guetzlaff, G. L.	9/4/21
11	Sanocki, R. J.	9/12/21	126	Rogers, R. J.	10/14/21	369	Parsley, F.	4/28/21	903	Campbell, E. E.	10/13/21
17	Meharg, J. R.	2/2/21	129	Hebebrand, D. A.	12/3/19	379	Pruitt, R. D.	9/28/21	915	Brander, D. N.	11/1/21
18	Dau, J. J.	3/8/20	130	Candebat, W. R.	4/24/21	388	Klumpyan, T. B.	10/12/21	915	Coller, J. A.	12/2/20
18	Escamilla, R. F.	9/23/21	131	Ross, J. E.	6/10/21	388	Makuski, C.	10/10/21	917	Newton, J. W.	9/22/21
20	Bolton, B. R.	10/5/21	134	Dilegge, C.	12/5/21	402	Benson, G. J.	9/29/21	993	Lucas, G.	10/18/21
20	Carter, L. R.	10/31/21	134	Mecler, E. T.	9/6/21	424	Miccolis, A.	7/13/21	995	Mayeaux, E. S.	3/7/21
20	Cuddy, R. L.	1/25/21	134	Mims, E. A.	7/9/21	424	Sleightholm, W. H.	5/30/21	1141	Brandt, H. P.	10/10/21
20	Hicks, G. W.	10/6/21	134	Miranda, R. J.	11/14/21	424	Szopko, J. W.	7/16/20	1141	Opp, E. A.	12/3/21
20	May, C. F.	10/15/21	134	O'Malley, E. H.	10/1/21	426	Haakenson, H. L.	10/30/21	1141	Veef, J. B.	4/30/21
22	Carey, J. E.	12/10/21	134	Villasenor, J. A.	10/2/21	429	Fields, M. A.	10/18/21	1316	Harrington, J. H.	8/16/21
24	Colbert, J. A.	9/25/21	134	Whitlock, J. J.	9/16/21	429	Maxwell, G. B.	9/22/21	1319	Kinney, R. C.	9/20/21
24	Conner, H.	8/22/21	141	Myers, D. W.	11/21/21	429	Walker, J. A.	11/15/21	1379	Angerer, W. H.	10/5/21
24	High, J. N.	10/19/21	143	Wolfersberger, L. G.	11/4/21	436	Cline, B. A.	9/9/21	1393	Lynch, D. F.	9/26/21
24	Patterson, C. E.	10/29/21	145	Brossart, T. D.	12/10/21	449	Hensley, J. L.	11/23/21	1516	Dwyer, C. K.	9/3/21
24	Weber, N. C.	10/17/21	145	Streets, D. L.	10/9/21	456	Spencer, C. M.	10/5/21	1547	Craig, J. S.	10/23/21
25	Crennan, K. P.	9/29/21	153	Cromer, B. H.	10/28/21	465	Adams, K.	8/14/21	1547	Nicolai, P.	11/10/21
25	Stern, M. A.	10/14/21	153	Hoffer, J. A.	9/8/21	465	Welch, B. E.	3/28/20	1579	Baker, J. E.	8/20/21
26	Raddie, D. R.	10/5/21	159	Hyatt, D. L.	9/29/21	466	Mairs, G. G.	6/17/21	1593	Klindworth, D. L.	9/14/21
35	Marsh, G. J.	10/24/21	159	Ruhnke, D. G.	10/5/21	474	Helms, B. G.	11/29/15	1701	Wood, R. E.	10/15/21
35	Zarrilli, B.	10/20/21	164	Connor, R. J.	4/24/21	477	Ellis, R. D.	10/18/21	1852	Keagan, J.	7/10/21
38	Clark, F.	9/19/21	164	Karwowski, P.	4/11/19	479	Smith, J. K.	9/23/21	2085	Perreault, J.	5/11/20
38	Gum, D. K.	10/17/21	175	King, D.	10/6/21	479	Young, T. K.	9/18/21	2085	Woodall, R. J.	10/9/21
38	Kuharik, R. J.	10/5/21	175	Miller, T. D.	8/28/21	479	Youngblood, D. T.	9/30/21	2150	Goehring, D. M.	10/9/21
41	Drew, J. W.	9/29/21	175	Smith, J. A.	10/21/21	481	Goodwin, J. L.	9/24/21	2270	Hasty, G. J.	11/2/21
41	Piraino, R. A.	10/22/21	176	Scheri, L. J.	10/19/21	490	Markiel, A. M.	9/14/21	I.O. (5)	Palumbo, R. A.	10/8/21
41	Smith, D. C.	10/23/21	177	Anderson, J. E.	5/21/21	490	Tebbetts, R. A.	10/9/21	I.O. (97)	Tripi, C. P.	8/27/21
42	Jackson, R. B.	9/23/21	177	Macks, K. R.	9/20/21	494	Brzezinski, G. J.	8/8/21	I.O. (108)	Dostal, A. R.	10/12/21
44	Black, R. A.	10/1/21	212	Cunningham, W. E.	10/24/21	494	Lisowski, R.	6/20/21	I.O. (134)	Bailey, R.	8/31/21
46	Adams, B. A.	11/7/21	212	Rieselmann, N. G.	9/9/21	494	Masarik, L. E.	8/31/21	I.O. (134)	Brocato, E. E.	11/8/21
46	Britton, G.	8/8/21	213	Flynn, M. R.	10/17/21	505	Dunnam, L. N.	8/19/21	I.O. (134)	Kiriluk, D. M.	8/12/21
46	Hernandez, J. E.	11/7/19	213	Hillier, R. W.	10/7/21	518	Snyder, C. E.	8/22/21	I.O. (134)	May, G. G.	10/4/21
46	Lafranchi, F. S.	10/6/21	223	Bowers, M. R.	4/5/21	530	France, D.	9/4/21	I.O. (238)	Garren, W. M.	10/16/21
46	Wilbur, T. V.	9/3/21	223	Sutton, D. E.	9/20/21	558	Cartee, B. R.	11/30/21	I.O. (441)	Hallerbach, R. J.	5/20/21
48	Strobel, W. F.	8/9/21	229	Wineberg, R. L.	10/5/21	558	Poole, T. M.	10/29/21	I.O. (547)	Fitch, T. L.	7/20/21
55	Houston, D. L.	9/1/20	254	Gardener, S. P.	10/19/21	569	Myron, K. R.	4/8/21	I.O. (677)	Adams, D. D.	9/1/21
57	Schlehuber, K. W.	7/25/21	254	Hunsperger, B. C.	9/22/21	586	Larose, R.	12/14/21	I.O. (760)	Foust, J. M.	5/31/21
58	Plotzke, G. A.	11/25/21	258	Morgensen, T. H.	10/5/21	586	Michels, R.	10/20/21	I.O. (769)	Dorough, J. B.	10/25/21
58	Thiesmeyer, J. L.	10/16/21	258	Thiessen, R. W.	4/30/21	595	Anderson, S. A.	10/29/21	I.O. (2021)	Nunn, G. E.	7/18/21
66	Daniels, R. D.	9/21/21	269	Dawson, F. J.	10/22/21	595	Lewis, L. S.	9/27/21	Pens. (686)	Cusanelli, P. E.	8/7/21
66	Washmon, J. C.	10/23/21	271	Knight, B.	11/19/20	595	Nicholas, M. C.	6/17/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Arbogast, J. E.	5/22/21
68	Doughman, H. L.	8/19/21	278	Alba, C.	10/15/21	596	Jaggie, B. D.	9/4/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Burke, W. T.	5/24/21
68	Gray, R. E.	11/20/20	288	Miller, T. J.	12/4/21	602	Carothers, J. W.	8/6/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Carr, L. J.	12/10/21
68	Halverson, R. M.	10/23/21	291	Rivas, S. H.	7/28/21	606	Shaffer, P. A.	10/18/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Economos, C. A.	9/15/21
70	Kimberlin, T. A.	10/25/21	292	Leavey, W. T.	10/11/21	607	Chervanick, T. M.	10/21/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Hilburn, J. L.	8/5/21
71	Wisecup, L. D.	10/26/21	292	Sandberg, G.	10/30/21	611	Begay, B.	12/12/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Krob, T. P.	9/20/21
72	Hobbs, J. W.	9/23/21	295	Allen, C. M.	12/19/21	613	George, C. F.	8/23/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Leither, G. N.	10/11/21
73	Hoffman, R. N.	12/9/21	301	Daniels, H. D.	10/6/21	613	Jordan, L. J.	9/4/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Lindh, J. F.	10/10/21
77	Orcutt, T. D.	10/24/21	304	Volkenand, C. G.	1/14/21	640	Hulsey, B. H.	10/13/21	Pens. (I.O.)	McGowan, C. F.	11/28/21
80	Mumford, J. W.	10/17/21	306	Hoppe, R. R.	12/3/21	647	Wiedower, J. H.	10/4/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Navarro, J. M.	2/1/21
81	Campbell, J. P.	10/25/21	307	Hinebaugh, J.	10/11/21	648	Von Stein, R. C.	10/26/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Stout, J. J.	6/20/21
82	Earley, R. E.	10/20/21	309	Gass, J. A.	9/20/21	666	Stover, J. W.	8/26/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Streubel, L. E.	3/18/21
84	Hay, P.	12/13/21	309	Sowell, D. C.	8/21/21	666	Willis, G. W.	7/1/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Zawislak, W. J.	10/26/21
84	Johnstone, R. H.	5/1/21	309	Weir, C. J.	10/20/21	668	Karlzen, S. L.	11/7/21			

# GROUNDED IN HISTORY

## The Brotherhood's Lesser-Known Founders

Henry Miller and J.T. Kelly are the names most associated with the founding of the IBEW in 1891, but eight other men also put their lives and livelihoods on the line for the grand idea of an electrical workers union during that first convention.

This month, we highlight the lives of Brothers William Hedden and Charles J. Sutter and show our gratitude for their contributions to all that we have today.

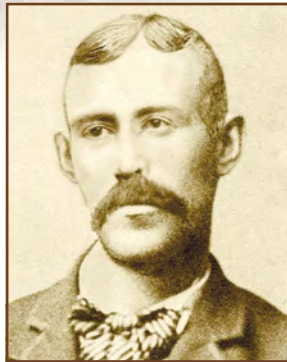
### William Hedden

William Hedden was born in Iowa in 1870. He arrived in St. Louis as a teenager, where he quickly learned the trade as a cable splicer. When Charles Kassell organized American Federation of Labor Local 5221 in 1890, Hedden was one of the first to join.

In January 1891, Local President Henry Miller appointed Hedden to a committee responsible for promoting the idea of a national organization. Hedden helped the committee prepare a circular letter, which was mailed to electrical workers in every major city in the country. That November, Hedden was chosen by 5221 to serve as a delegate from St. Louis, along with Miller and J.T. Kelly, at the first IBEW Convention. During the convention, Hedden served on the Charter & Supplies Committee. When Local 5221 transitioned into IBEW Local 1, Hedden remained a member for the next two years.

In 1893, Hedden moved to Brooklyn, N.Y., and joined Local 34 as a cable splicer. A few years later he joined Local 87 in Newark, N.J., and became a foreman for the New York and New Jersey Telephone Company. In March of 1902, the local went on strike demanding a \$3 daily wage and an eight-hour workday. The *Electrical Worker* reported on the strike saying "the Telephone Company is getting desperate. ... They called in a [nonunion] gang of groundsmen for Foremen W. Hedden and H. McGill to go out to climb. Hedden and McGill refused to take them out and quit. All the boys are sticking like leeches, and it is the cleanest strike we have ever had."

Hedden passed away in Newark in 1928 at the age of 58, causes unknown. He was survived by his wife, Jennie, and son, William Jr.



William Hedden

### Charles J. Sutter

Charles J. Sutter was born and raised in St. Louis in 1869 and eventually entered the trade as an inside wireman. With the organization of AFL Local 5221 in 1890, he joined and was elected its first treasurer. The other officers included J. T. Kelly as president and John Hisserich as financial secretary. As a result of the circular letter sent out in the beginning of 1891, eight unaffiliated locals authorized delegates to attend the first IBEW convention that November. One of these locals was from Duluth, Minn., which opted not to send a delegate but to have a proxy represent them instead. Sutter was chosen for the role.

At the convention, Sutter served on the Constitution Committee alongside J.T. Kelly, T.J. Finnell, and F.J. Heizleman. He was also among the nominees for grand secretary-treasurer but lost to Kelly. According to the proceedings, it was Sutter who presented a drawing to be used for an IBEW "emblematic button," which was unanimously approved. The drawing was of a left hand, with a jacket sleeve and cuffed shirt, grasping 22 lightning bolts that would become the seal of the IBEW we know today.

After the convention, Sutter became a member of Local 1 and continued to work in the field.



Charles J. Sutter

In 1893, he made the transition to employer by going into business with fellow brother John Hisserich. They operated "Sutter & Hisserich" in St. Louis and provided, according to a city directory, "electrical engineers and contractors for electric light and power plants" with a special emphasis on "wiring residences for light, bells, and burglar alarms." His business stayed in operation for the rest of his life, eventually changing its name to "Charles J. Sutter Inc." During this time, Sutter became a prominent member in the St. Louis electrical community. He joined the board of directors for the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) in 1906, where he served as chairman of their Labor Committee and as the state director for Missouri.

Sutter died on Feb. 8, 1930, at the age of 60. He was survived by his wife, Bertha, who continued to operate his business as its president-secretary. ■

For more on how to support the IBEW's preservation of its history, visit [nbew-ibewmuseum.org](http://nbew-ibewmuseum.org). Have an idea for this feature? Send it to [Curtis\\_Bateman@ibew.org](mailto:Curtis_Bateman@ibew.org).



*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:

Letters to the Editor, *The Electrical Worker*, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

Or send by email to: [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org)

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50 / 50 - cotton / polyester, preshrunk long sleeve t-shirt.  
Extra bright color for enhanced safety and visibility.  
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100% cotton - charcoal long sleeve t-shirt with IBEW logo on back and RENEW / NextGen logos on shoulders.

*These items and more are now available at your IBEW Online store.*



# WHO WE ARE



Photos courtesy of the United Way of the Midlands

## Omaha Members Lace Up the Boxing Gloves for Charity

IBEW members perform the highest quality work, often in stressful situations. Many honorably served their country in the military. Still others perform countless hours of community service. Each of these reflects positively on the IBEW and its membership.

But it's not often that members choose to give back to their communities from a boxing ring with an opponent intent on knocking them out. For Dave Boulrier and six of his brothers and sisters from Omaha, Neb., Local 22, it was a choice they are glad to have made.

"That's something you don't deal with every day, going up against someone who wants to knock your head off as much as I do to them," said the 35-year-old Navy veteran, now a low-voltage technician for Miller Electric in Omaha.

Boulrier was one of the stars of Blue Collar Boxing, held Nov. 25 as a fundraiser for the United Way of the Midlands and the Nebraska Center for Workforce Development and Education. He knocked out his opponent — a member of the Ironworkers — in 48 seconds in a light-heavyweight bout, earning some good-natured bragging rights among trade unions in southeastern Nebraska.

"I've always wanted to challenge myself," he said. "When I was in the Navy, we always challenged ourselves in this way."

The evening featured a series of three-round fights pitting members of unions in and around Omaha against each other. Holly Finch, Kristine Van Beek, Adam Darlington, Jarrod Barnes, Joe Wolf and Ben Novak were the other Local 22 members who fought on the card.

They didn't just show up the night of the fights and throw on a pair of gloves

and a headgear. First, they took part in months of training, mostly at a gym set up by officials from participating unions that included veteran boxing trainers. They weren't allowed to coast.

It wasn't easy, but each said they left the ring that night with a tremendous sense of accomplishment, noting that many who signed up for the event didn't even make it through training. The adrenaline they felt entering the ring before a cheering crowd was unlike anything they've ever experienced.

**"Knowing our brothers and sisters put in all that time and training for a good cause really is an inspiration to all our members, including me, and cheering them on brought all of us together."**

— Local 22 Business Manager Barry Mayfield

"It was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life," said Finch, a former college softball player who left the sport due to an injury and now is a fourth-year apprentice. "It was really intense, especially in the summer. I was working in a warehouse and going from that into a boxing class and then into an apprenticeship class was very draining. But it was so worth it."

Finch ended up fighting Local 22 sister Van Beek because they were two of the three women who signed up for the event.

Van Beek, a construction electrician, had only been a Local 22 member for a couple of months when she got an email asking for volunteers. She thought it would be a great way to get involved in the local. In hindsight, she didn't realize exactly what she was getting herself into, she said.

Still, she'd like to do it again.

"I thought it was awesome," said Van Beek, who credited her coach, Joe LaPuzza, for helping her work through the difficult times in training. "I wound up losing but I thought it was a pretty great event."

For some, training for boxing was an extension of things they routinely do. Boulrier, for instance, has long practiced the martial art jiu-jitsu.

For others, it was a reminder of how great it was to be back in a competitive atmosphere. Novak, a journeyman inside wireman, qualified for the Nebraska state

sickened him, even though he lost a decision to a member of the Plumbers and Gasfitters.

"I gave it a shot," he said. "I lost [the use] of my right hand in the first round but there was that competitive edge and I couldn't quit. There's that "don't quit" deal and it's for a good cause."

Injuries also slowed inside apprentice Jarrod Barnes, both on the night of the fight and for a few months afterwards.

Barnes got his arm caught in the armpit of his opponent in the opening round. When he tried to pull it back, he badly injured his shoulder and was forced to undergo surgery afterwards that kept him off the job until February.

Barnes loved the experience leading up to the fight, and like Novak, formed a close relationship with his trainer, Bill Novak [no relation], who fought professionally nearly 50 years ago.

"I lost my father at a pretty young age and I've always kind of craved that father-son relationship," he said.

Yet, he isn't sure he'll try it again because he doesn't want to risk being off work for so long.

"I loved it so much," he said. "But at this point of my life, I just don't know if I can afford it."

Novak and Boulrier both said they will be back for next year's event.

"Losing was a dose of humble pie but it also lit a fire," Novak said. "I'm going to do it again. I can't leave on a losing note."

Boulrier said he plans to learn from his mistakes — which, considering he won in just 48 seconds, can't be a long list — and return next year.

United Way officials in Omaha told

local media they were hesitant about using an inherently violent sport as a fundraiser but that it has been a success. This year's event drew more than 2,000 fans, participants from nine unions and raised more than \$320,000 — about \$100,000 more than the initial event in 2019. The Blue Collar program planned for 2020 was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It brings different people to the table who want to help their community and it's a really fun event," Shawna Forsberg, president and CEO of the United Way of the Midlands, told Omaha television station KMTV. "It's actually incredibly family-friendly. People have a really good time here."

Local 22 Business Manager Barry Mayfield came away proud of his fighting members.

"Knowing our brothers and sisters put in all that time and training for a good cause really is an inspiration to all our members, including me, and cheering them on brought all of us together," Mayfield said. "Like many locals across the United States, we've been a longtime supporter of the United Way. Strengthening that relationship is another reason I'm so proud we were part of this." ■