

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1893

CONSTRUCTION • UTILITIES • TELECOMMUNICATIONS • MANUFACTURING • GOVERNMENT • BROADCASTING • RAILROAD

Printed in the USA

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Vol. 16 | No. 9 | September 2022

## IBEW News

### Rebuilding History

Oregon Local Lights Up 'Track and Field Heaven' **3**

### St. Louis Gives Back

Local 1 Volunteers Changing Lives One Home at a Time **20**

## In This Issue

Editorials **2**

My IBEW Story **2**

Grounded in History **5**

North of 49° **6**

Circuits **7**

Politics & Jobs **9**

Transitions **10**

Local Lines **12**

Retirees **16**

In Memoriam **18**

Who We Are **19**

# Toronto Boomtown

## BUILDING TALLER, GROWING STRONGER



The Greater Toronto Area has been transformed in the last decade as dozens of skyscrapers have been built, many by members of Local 353. The One, pictured at center above, will be the tallest building in Canada when it opens next year and the country's first "supertall," surpassing 300 meters in height.

## THE IBEW'S 2022 Photo Contest

Deadline: Nov. 1 • Details on pg. 2

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO 1032  
LONG BEACH, CA

The fastest growing skyline in North America isn't where you might guess.

Since 2009, no city in the United States — the birthplace of the skyscraper — has added more tall buildings to its skyline than Toronto. And nowhere is a local union working harder to wring market share growth from a boom than Toronto Local 353.

Since 2005, the Greater Toronto area has added 77 buildings over 100 meters (about 330 feet), and more than 100 are currently under construction. The next closest is New York City with only 75. Incredibly, nearly 300 more skyscrapers have been proposed in Greater Toronto.

But the really dramatic changes are in the buildings that are even taller. Between 1978 and 2004, only five 150-meter-plus buildings were completed in Toronto, according to the Council on Tall Buildings.

Then, seven were finished in 2019 alone. Six more opened in 2020. And eight more were completed last year. By the end of this year, a remarkable 16 more are expected, projects that will completely change Toronto's skyline forever.

There are 10 projects, either proposed or underway, that will top out above 300 meters, including Canada's first supertall, the 336-meter, IBEW-built The One.

## IBEW Canada is 'Open for Business'

— First District International Vice President  
Russ Shewchuk

Like The One, nearly all the new construction, more than 90%, is either pure residential or mixed-use.

"The younger generation looks at the world differently. They're more laid back; their free time is more important than anything else. They don't want to commute or mow the lawn. A condo is easy to lock up and head out. And to head out on foot, you need to be downtown," said Local 353 Business Manager Lee Caprio.

As every construction worker quickly learns, construction is a cyclical industry. You do as much work as possible in the highs and consolidate during the lows.

The same is true for local unions. Local 353 has been at virtually full employment for nearly a decade, but market share has not kept pace. Non-union contractors have been growing, and Caprio, who has been in office for just over a year, is working with newly elected First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk and Construction Council of Ontario Executive Secretary-Treasurer James Barry to stop the slide and to turn an unprecedented boom into a just-as-unprecedented reclamation of market share.

"I want to wave the 'Start your engines flag' and say 'Let's go.' We have the expertise and the manpower. We are open for business for all contractors coast-to-coast," Shewchuk said. "Our contractors should not be afraid to bid on any job. We will work with clients and owners to make the numbers work."

TORONTO BOOMTOWN continued on page 4

FROM THE OFFICERS

# Workers Have the Power



**Lonnie R. Stephenson**  
International President

**R**ising costs have dominated the news over the last few months, driven largely by high gas prices. But not many of those news reports have talked about the massive increase in workers' power that's happened during the same time.

In August, workers' wages were reported up a remarkable 5.2% over this time last year. That's an incredible number, and it's a result of high demand for people to fill open jobs.

Just last month, we learned that the U.S. unemployment rate has fallen to 3.5%, the lowest it's been in half a century.

Coming off two years of pandemic-related slowdowns, our economy is on the move despite the pressures of price increases and fears stoked by politicians who are eager to see us fail to improve their political prospects.

As I write this, the Senate just passed one of the most important pieces of worker-friendly legislation of my lifetime, the Inflation Reduction Act, and I look forward to having good news to report when I write to you next month.

When passed by the House, it will affect so many people in this great union, putting our members at the tip of the spear in building America's energy future, revitalizing American manufacturing, lowering prescription drug costs and more.

Just last week, Congress passed the CHIPS Act, which will invest heavily in bringing microchip manufacturing back to America, protecting our national security and creating thousands of jobs for IBEW members in the process. Already, our members are preparing for construction of massive new chip plants in Ohio and Texas.

Even as I write, gas prices have declined for seven straight weeks, easing some of the pressure we've all felt at the pump and in our day-to-day shopping.

These massive improvements could be overshadowed by grocery bills that are slow to come down or panic among the talking heads on television news, but make no mistake, rising wages and demand for labor puts working people in the driver's seat.

It's even more critical in our core industries, where demand for skilled electricians, lineworkers and more is through the roof. It's why we recommitted to making organizing our top priority at our convention in May. Even if some sectors of the economy cool, President Biden's infrastructure bill and these new pieces of legislation will ensure decades of work for just about every branch in the IBEW.

The future is in our hands, and the labor movement and collective bargaining give us the power to demand our fair share. It's up to us to seize this opportunity to grow and to gain even more strength while our labor is at a premium.

I'm as confident as I've ever been about the prospects for IBEW members and their families, and I think you should be too. ■

# Be an Everyday Organizer

**E**very September we celebrate Labor Day, but most of us probably don't spend a lot of time thinking about how we are living out the ideals behind the holiday on a daily basis.

Labor Day's roots in the U.S. and Canada trace back nearly 150 years, but the importance of labor and of workers joining together in union has never been more relevant than it is today.

In July, the National Labor Relations Board reported that over the previous nine months in the U.S., workers had filed 56% more petitions for union elections than in the same period last year. That's amazing news!

That's 56% more workplaces where employees sought the power of unions to improve everything from wages and benefits to simply having more transparency in scheduling.

Many of these new workers seeking unions are young people in traditionally nonunionized industries who are just now recognizing the value of collective bargaining, but plenty of them are workers, buoyed by a strong job market, who are willing to stay and fight for better conditions in jobs they want to make a career in.

Maybe they're willing to stick their necks out for a union because they know people are hiring, but that's exactly what they should be doing when times are good.

And times are great for union organizing. Unions are popular, and workers' value to employers is at a premium — hiring is hard. So, now is the time for working people to lock in the protections of a union contract.

For those of us already lucky enough to be a part of the IBEW, this is our opportunity to go out and grow the movement. I always say, I wear a lot of hats in the IBEW, but the most important one is that of organizer.

This union lifted me out of a childhood where we didn't have a lot of things we wanted or needed, and it placed me firmly in America's middle class. IBEW membership has made all the difference for my family and me.

I want that same thing for every worker looking for a fair shot at a better life, and this Labor Day I hope each of us will commit to being organizers every day.

Being an everyday organizer doesn't mean you need a walk list or jobsite leaflets, although if you're up for it, I'm sure your local union could use the help.

It might mean volunteering for community events with your local or just talking to someone in line at the grocery store looking for a better opportunity. Capitalize on the opportunities you've got, and look to create new ones.

Every working person deserves a voice on the job, and it's up to each of us to help them get it.

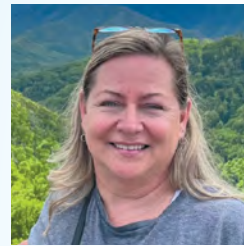
Happy Labor Day! ■



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

## My IBEW STORY

**Regina Campbell, Journeyman Wireman**  
Folsom, N.J., Local 351



“I was working in an office typing and answering phones and working a second, part-time job as a cashier and customer service representative to make ends meet. My goal was to put myself through college, but I realized quickly that I would never be able to afford it.

My father was a subcontractor who installed HVACs for Sears. He told me that kind of work would be ‘too heavy’ for me. But he always had an electrician following him to hook the HVACs up, so he suggested I go into electrical work.

I enrolled in a course at a vocational school in our area.

Local 351 contacted the school and asked if any women were interested in applying for its apprenticeship program. I was 19 and had no idea what a union was but my dad told me to pursue it. ‘Let them pay for your education,’ he said. ‘Then get your contractor’s license and work with me.’ I was nervous when I went for my interview but pushed through it and never looked back.

I planned to leave after finishing my apprenticeship, but I began to understand and appreciate the IBEW, and I’ve been a member for 38 years. I’ve never had to worry about money, even during lean times. I had three children later in life and have been able to raise them as a single mom. Being an IBEW member has shown all of them how to be a responsible adult, both ethically and financially.

I’m close to retirement now and I am working with our local’s president to form a women’s committee. I think it’s important to mentor young members, both men and women, on the importance of being an IBEW member. I’ve been through many changes during my career but not one regret in following this path, and I want to leave my local better than I found it.”

Share your story at [ibew.org/MyIBEWStory](https://ibew.org/MyIBEWStory)

## THE IBEW'S 2022 Photo Contest

The 2022 IBEW Photo Contest is here, and with it a chance to show your union sisters and brothers what being a member of the greatest union in the world means to you. So, grab your cameras and smartphones and get to it! We want to see your best shots of 2022. See below for rules and details, and as always, contact us at [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org) for more information.

See official rules and submission instructions at [IBEW.org/photocontest](https://ibew.org/photocontest).

**Entries MUST be submitted electronically** via the Photo Contest link on [IBEW.org](https://ibew.org). Please contact the Media Department at [media@IBEW.org](mailto:media@ibew.org) or 202-728-6102 with additional questions.

Enter Today!

Deadline: Nov. 1

1<sup>st</sup> Place: \$200

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: \$150

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: \$100

Honorable  
Mention: \$50

# Oregon Local Lights Up 'Track-and-Field Heaven' on Historic Stadium Site

For 99 years at historic Hayward Field, fans cheered from a pair of wooden bleachers as world-class runners, throwers and jumpers drew crowds, broke records and made Eugene, Ore., famous as Track Town USA.

Today, a spaceship-like stadium rises from those hallowed grounds. And like all of the finest, state-of-the-art buildings in North America, it has the IBEW's fingerprints all over it.

"It's a remarkable structure," said Curtis Crane, one of about 250 members of Salem, Ore., Local 280 who worked on the project between 2018 and 2021. "It was called a renovation but it was really a complete rebuild from the ground up."

From its debut at last year's Olympic trials to July's World Athletic Championships, fans, competitors and media have swooned, calling the reimagined venue "mind-blowing," "jaw-dropping," "a work of art" and "track-and-field heaven," among other raves.

"Here's the little state of Oregon and it's got the best track-and-field facility in the world," Local 280 Business Manager Drew Lindsey said. "And there's a whole city underneath that thing that people don't see."

That includes below-ground tracks, training facilities for every discipline — even ceilings high enough for world-record pole-vaulting — spaces for sports medicine and recovery, enviable locker rooms and amenities galore, all of it surrounded by artwork and displays celebrating a century of track-and-field tradition.

Signatory contractor EC Electric led the \$270 million project's vast and complex electrical work, farming some of it out to other IBEW contractors to meet a formidable deadline: the Olympic trials originally set for summer 2020.



*The Hayward Field job was a family affair for EC Electric foreman Megan Denton, whose father and brother also were part of Local 280's team.*

From the start, electricians worked six-day weeks, 10 hours a day, with other crews coming in at night, a pace that slowed down only slightly when the pandemic pushed the Olympics to 2021. Days were even longer for foremen such as Megan Denton and Christina VanLeeuwen, who carpooled 45 miles south to Eugene, arriving by 6 a.m. and staying at least 12 hours.

"I pretty much put my home life on hold for two years. If I had a day off, I was sleeping," Denton said with a laugh.

From the stadium's show-stopping basement to futuristic seating hugging a nine-lane track to an LED-lit 188-foot tower resembling an Olympic



torch, IBEW crews wired, installed and innovated on a grand scale.

Crane, an EC Electric field supervisor, said the project required out-of-the-box thinking — literally.

"There really aren't any right angles," he said. "Pretty much everything about the building was different than the norm."

Sometimes even suppliers were stumped when crews sought guidance working with custom materials designed for a structure like no other. Denton and VanLeeuwen respectively called those situations "guess and checks" and "one-offs," challenges specific to the job.

"You'd call the manufacturer with questions and say, 'This was made for this facility, and you don't have any suggestions?'" VanLeeuwen said, citing the intricate work of fitting handrails with tiny LED puck lights as an example.

She also was part of the team tackling EC Electric's single biggest challenge: lighting Hayward Field Tower, which anchors the stadium's entrance and is large enough at its base to enclose a 4,000-square-foot interactive museum. A metal-paneled skin featuring images of Oregon track legends wraps the exterior.

"We invented a previously unknown mounting system for it," said Crane, who led the tower project. Crews installed 678 luminary strips to encircle the tower, each strip two feet long with 24 red, green, blue and white LEDs that can project virtually all colors and create an animated light show.

Eugene's second-tallest structure, the tower was an instant icon. Sports Illustrated described it as "almost unfathomable. It gleams on sunny afternoons. At night, it can be lit up, like the Empire State Building."

The original Hayward Field opened in 1919. The athletes made famous there are legion, but its DNA is inseparable from two of them: long-distance phenom Steve Prefontaine and his University of Oregon coach Bill Bowerman.



*Before and after: The futuristic rebuild of legendary Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore., took three years and employed more than 250 members of Salem Local 280, whose handiwork was seen by millions of viewers in July during the World Athletic Championships.*

Prefontaine, or "Pre" as he is still known today, was just 24 when he died in a car crash on a hill overlooking Hayward Field in 1975. Bowerman died in 1999, some 40 years after pouring rubber into his wife's waffle iron to cobble a better running shoe. In the early 1960s, he teamed up with a business-minded, middle-distance runner he'd coached by the name of Phil Knight and Nike was born.

"We felt the weight of history, and we were very proud to be part of it," Lindsey said. "A legacy project on this scale is something that comes along once in a lifetime — if you're lucky."

For Crane, there's a personal connection. A longtime Eugene resident, he'd attended meets at Hayward and used to run its bleachers for fitness. They've been replaced now by more than 12,000 ergonomic-friendly seats, protected by secure entrances that don't allow for casual use of the stadium.

But that doesn't stop the curious from wanting a look.

"I go there frequently now to assist the facili-

ty operators and there's a never-ending stream of people who come up and try to get in," Crane said. "It's a pilgrimage for them. It's fun to see how excited they are about the location and its history and importance in the track and field world."

Denton was a freshman journeyman in fall 2018 when she was assigned to crews laying PVC pipe, preparing the site for concrete pours. A few months later, she was promoted to foreman. Her father Tim Miller and brother Jacobb Miller also were part of the Local 280 team.

Talking about the project, she exudes delight. "As hard as we worked, it was so much fun," Denton said. "With the championships and people all over the world seeing the stadium, it's really cool to think that 'I was right there and I climbed that and I pulled that wire.' We were everywhere in that building."

*Find photo galleries, videos, and more about Hayward Field's legacy and rebuild at [hayward.uoregon.edu](http://hayward.uoregon.edu).*

Continued from page 1

## Toronto Boomtown: Building Taller, Growing Stronger

### Top Down, Bottom Up and Bid on Everything

Historically, Local 353 has dominated industrial, manufacturing and commercial building construction.

While the pandemic, supply chain constraints and rising fears of a recession have throttled both new commercial and building renovation work, it has barely slowed the decade-old condo boom.

Buildings go up when they can't spread out. Huge areas of the Greater Toronto Area are zoned for single-family homes only, and protected farmland rings the city where near-in suburbs and Lake Ontario don't.

Because Toronto's high-density corridors like Downtown Core, Yonge and Eglinton, The Golden Mile, Don Mills and Eglinton and North York Centre allow greater building heights, they are getting denser by the day.

Since 2015, there have been more tower cranes in Toronto than any other city in North America. At peak there were more than 200; today there are still more than 125, far more than second-place Miami, according to the RLB Crane Index, which tracks construction cranes in the 14 most important North American metropolitan areas.

Unfortunately, Caprio said, nonunion contractors were allowed to grow, first in the smaller, lower-cost and lower-margin residential construction market, and within the last few years, into downtown.

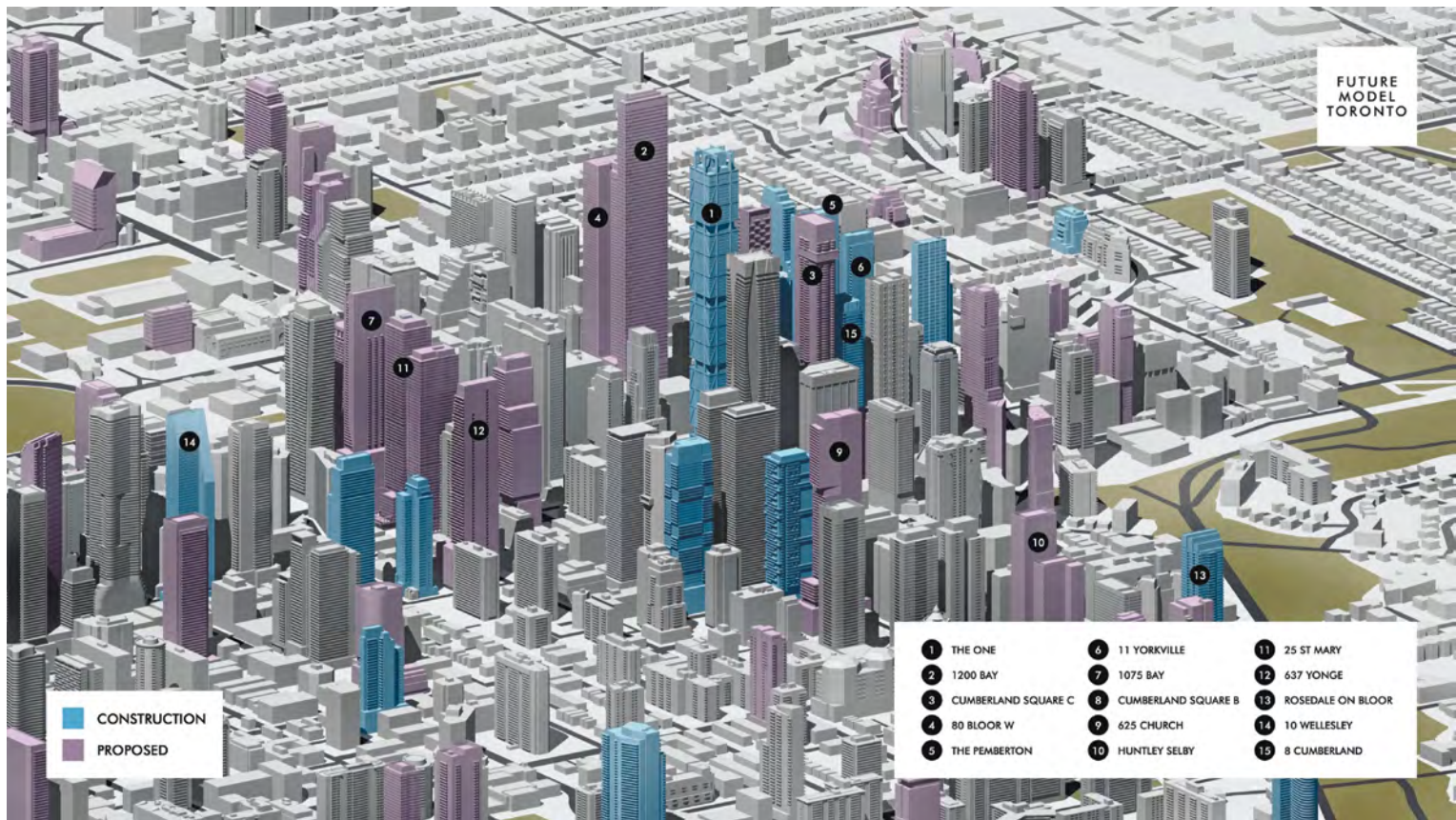
"I was just at the International Convention in Chicago, and I wish we were like them where every crane was union, but we just aren't," he said. "But that is the goal we have set."

The struggle to push up market share is largest outside the downtown core, Caprio said, where there were no buildings over 20 stories when he first started out.



Credit: Menkes Development

Inner suburbs that had low union density are also booming, and Local 353 is winning huge projects like Festival Condos in Vaughan.



Above: Toronto has more construction cranes in operation (225 earlier this year) than any city in North America, and it has for more than a decade. More than 100 buildings over 100 meters are under construction and 300 more have been proposed.

"Now there are 75 approved in Vaughan alone," Caprio said of the suburban center a half-hour north of downtown Toronto. Vaughan's population has doubled in the last two decades, making it the fastest-growing municipality in Canada in those years. It's a similar story, Caprio said, east from downtown along Highway 401 from Scarborough to Oshawa.

The largest nonunion high-rise contractor has quadrupled in size since 2010, Caprio said, and the largest commercial contractor has tripled in size over that same time frame.

Throughout the pandemic, he said, worker-safety initiatives implemented by provincial authorities slowed production but kept his members safe. But they were regularly ignored by nonunion contractors. Limits on the number allowed in skip hoists and mandatory COVID tracking slowed down work but kept people safe, and union contractors adhered to the rules.

"Out of a seven-hour day, they got only six hours of production just due to people getting in and out of the jobsite. Nonunion contractors didn't follow those rules, and the Ministry of Labour couldn't have looked into it. There weren't enough inspectors. It punished people doing the right thing," he said. "It should have been the best time in our history, but we kept getting held back."

The stubborn stall of market share created a desire across the membership to try new things.



The M-City complex in Mississauga is one of multiple multi-tower developments Local 353 members are building in the Greater Toronto area.

"There has been a real embrace of change in Ontario and across the First District," Barry said.

And, both Caprio and Barry said, while organizing is never easy, it is never easier than in a boom.

"Ten of the 11 Ontario locals have travelers right now. The opportune time to call owners is when they are struggling to staff a job," Barry said.

Market share, though, Barry said, only grows out of developing that relationship and creatively working with them to make up the price difference for a union workforce.

For Barry, investment in education is the key long-term differentiator for the IBEW in the province.

Foreperson training, for example, is

a vastly underrated way to improve bottom lines and a crucial IBEW advantage they have worked to expand with the Electrical Training Alliance.

Barry has also, for the first time in recent memory, won funding from the Conservative provincial government to train low-voltage workers, a sector that has been almost entirely dominated by nonunion contractors.

"We priced ourselves out of the work, if I'm honest," he said, citing jobs that went partially to the IBEW but where security, communications and internet wiring get subbed out.

The improved relationships with the government have also been crucial when bids have been let for the billions of dollars in infrastructure projects in the province.

"Sound practices translate into market share," he said. "When we work collaboratively with government, it is starting to bear fruit."

It isn't all education and phone calls with owners and politicians though.

The hard work is being matched, he said, with organizing. There are 10 provincial organizers focusing solely on low voltage. Eighteen months ago, there were none.

But even there, things are being done differently.

Caprio said they aren't interested in returning to the old days of "Turn 'Em or Burn 'Em" — where if a top-down campaign was rejected, union reps would use any tool in the bag to disrupt a nonunion contractor. It may have felt good, he said,



Credit: Mirzahi Developments



Credit: Concord Apex, Inc.

*Original plans for The One, under construction above, were changed to add dozens of meters after another IBEW-built project, the Concord Sky, left, threatened its claim to the tallest building in Canada.*

Festival Towers and Mobilio Condos projects, Chiappetta said.

“Organizing is a battle every day,” Chiappetta said. “The volume of work in the Greater Toronto Area has given rise to opportunities for start-up companies like never before. We are holding our own in 353 — work hours annually have been consistent — but the nonunion side is growing at a faster clip presently and it is a threat.

“There is so much room to grow and we want it all,” he said. “It’s a harsh reality that the nonunion construction industry in the Toronto area is bigger than most locals in North America. We have to stay sharp, stay focused and be more diligent than ever when it comes to organizing.”

Caprio echoed the call for even greater effort. The big projects his members are working on now are just a starting line, he said, but the opportunities for growth are endless.

It’s easier to recruit new members from the nonunion side when you have work and can promise a higher wage, after all. The trick, he said, is to be in such a strong position in the market that when things turn — as they always do — that you’re strong enough to ride it out.

“It’s simple: We can’t afford to let them get bigger,” he said. “We erode their work over the next year. Then we suffocate the nonunion in any coming recession.”

That is what it takes to achieve permanent growth, Barry said.

“Market share takes decades because it isn’t about organizing, it’s about how you keep it. That is the fundamental and critical piece,” he said. “Stats are great all and all, but it all comes down to relationships.” ■

but it often permanently alienated what could have been future partners.

And it isn’t necessary.

For example, this year, Local 353 negotiated a \$3/hr one-shot raise, effective May 1. Caprio had a bunch of rate sheets printed up and they have been leafletting nonunion jobsites. “We told them, ‘IBEW got a \$3 raise. Make sure you do, too,’” Caprio said.

The good news is that the strategy is working.

After a Local 353 signatory contractor won a bid for part of a six-building development called The Well, the major nonunion contractor who’d been awarded another part of the job refused to work onsite with the IBEW, Caprio said.

“The reason the base building and condo side of it is all our work is that this big nonunion company didn’t want to work alongside us. They knew we would strip them so fast,” Caprio said. “Their workers would walk across the imaginary line between our work and join us.”

The difference is not so pronounced on the site with smaller nonunion contractors doing tenant work, but at least for the major projects, the results are already showing. “We have organized 22 shops in the last 18 months,” he said.

Recent inflation and the clear wage gap between IBEW and nonunion electricians has been a driving factor, said Local 353 Member-

ship Development Representative Tony Chiappetta. “The nonunion side has never been more receptive to our message, and we’re working hard to reach all of them.”

## The Wins

Even though there is opportunity for growth, there are plenty of current victories to celebrate, prestige projects built with IBEW hands.

The biggest is The One, which will be the tallest building in Canada, between 300 and 340 meters tall. Developers recently filed a request to allow additional height when it looked like another development might steal its “tallest building in the city” crown.

When complete, The One will finally take the title from First Canadian Place, which has been Canada’s tallest building since 1976.

Signatory contractor OZZ Electric, one of Local 353’s largest, won the bid for the project along with four of the other nine largest projects in the city: the 299-meter Concord Sky, 260-meter M3 at M City, 240-meter 160 Front Street West and the 231-meter Concord Canada House 1.

Local 353 members will also be working on the 243-meter CIBC Square II office building, the six-tower Transit City Condos,

## GROUNDING IN HISTORY

### A Century of Progress

On June 17, 1914, the last pole in a telephone line stretching across North America was set. A generation before it wasn’t possible to take a train across the United States, but in 1914 it was possible to have a conversation with someone a continent away. Few inventions in history have altered our lives as much as the telephone, and the IBEW was involved at every step.

IBEW linemen strung the wires, IBEW craftsmen built the phones and IBEW technicians maintained the switching machinery. By 1914 the IBEW had successfully organized an enormous network of operators required to run those switchboards and it was primarily women who led the way.

In 1897, Mary Honzik of Cleveland, Ohio, formed Local 80, made up entirely of women telephone operators. But because of employee turnover and intense anti-union pressure, the local was short lived. It wasn’t until 1912 that Julia S. O’Connor organized the first permanent local union of telephone operators, known as Sub Local 1 of 104 in Boston. This unique local, as O’Connor stated, “came into existence almost entirely as a result of the hardship and burden imposed by the long and irregular working hours, and the then-infamous double shift, known as the split trick,” where operators were required to work two shifts in a day with a three-hour unpaid break in between.

Sister O’Connor was born in Woburn, Mass., in 1890 to Irish-immigrant parents. After graduating high school, she began working as a switchboard operator and in 1910 moved to Boston to begin her organizing efforts. By 1912, as she later recounted, Sister O’Connor and her fellow workers “decided we belonged in the IBEW and met with [organizer] Peter F. Linehan who came to the city to help organize. The spirit for organization took hold and hundreds of members were initiated at each meeting. Within just a few short weeks, seven or eight hundred girls were organized; and the union made its first demands.”

The demands were high but necessary for the worker’s health and safety. In 1913, with over 1,500 members to its name, Sub Local 1 of 104 pressed for the abolition of the double shift, an 8-hour day, the establishment of a board of adjustment and a pay raise. They won on all counts. With its Boston victories, O’Connor spread the organizing movement throughout New England and the Midwest. Responding to union pressure, the telephone companies were among the first in the U.S. to codify the 8-hour workday and to establish grievance review boards and standard pay scales.

This success of the telephone operators coincided with IBEW’s rapid growth nationwide. Between 1913 and 1919, our union saw the greatest leap in membership in its history — from 23,500 to 148,072. During this time, the U.S. also entered World War I, which saw the American telephone network come under government control. Sister O’Connor had the honor of serving as labor’s only representative to the national board, presided over by Postmaster General Albert Bursleson, which set telephone workers’ wages and supervised their working conditions.

At war’s end, O’Connor continued the fight for better wages and working conditions. In the summer of 1919, she led a massive strike which shut down phone service up and down the East Coast for almost a week. It was a wild success and the union’s demands were met. This not only accelerated local organizing activity in the telephone industry, but it prompted the IBEW to set up a department at the International Office devoted entirely to telephone organizing and support. On Sept. 15, 1919, at the IBEW’s 15th Convention, the formation of the Telephone Operators’ Department was announced and Sister O’Connor was named its director, a position she held until her retirement in 1939.

Always willing to promote and defend the rights of workers in electrically related fields — from telephone operators to utility workers — the IBEW had become a progressive mechanism of positive change. This Labor Day, we honor Sister O’Connor as a champion of that change. ■



**“Julia O’Connor was an IBEW trailblazer. Women in the early 1900s weren’t supposed to be outspoken leaders, but Sister O’Connor didn’t listen to conventional wisdom. Instead, she organized 800 fellow telephone operators and helped pave the path to the 8-hour workday.”**

— IBEW Museum Curator Curtis Bateman

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

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

## Free Course in B.C. Provides a Low-Barrier Introduction to the Electrical Trade

As job opportunities in the electrical and other building trades continue to expand throughout Canada, fears of a possible skilled-worker shortage continue to grow along with them. In British Columbia, for example, some estimates say that nearly 64,000 new tradespeople — including thousands of electrical workers — will be needed over the next 10 years.

To help capture this work for the IBEW, and also to help head off a potential crisis of electrical employment in that province, a longtime collaboration of Victoria Local 230, Kamloops Local 993, Nelson Local 1003 and the Electrical Contractors Association of British Columbia — collectively, the Western Joint Electrical Training Society — has developed an innovative program called Workplace Alternative Trades Training.

“We sat down with local contractors and talked about what’s necessary for new people to know about electrical work,” said Adrien Livingston, a member of Local 230 who serves as executive director of Western JETS, describing how the program was developed.

From those discussions emerged WATT, a free, three-week electrical pre-apprenticeship program that’s designed to further boost interest in the IBEW’s already successful pre-apprenticeship programs by “creating a low-barrier entry to the electrical trade,” Livingston said.

Funded in part by grants from the federal government’s Skilled Trades Awareness and Readiness Program, WATT specifically targets interested people who may have historically had difficulty in gaining access to Canada’s electrical foundations courses, either because of the expense or the time commitment required.

The program’s efforts are focused on increasing accessibility to the IBEW’s electrical apprenticeships for young people, especially women, along with persons from other traditionally under-represented populations, such as people having disabilities and those from Indigenous and newcomer populations.

“We talk with each [applicant] in depth about what they’re getting into,” Livingston said.

Successful candidates are then provided, free of charge, with the basic tools of the trade plus other necessities such as steel-toe boots. Basic living expenses and transportation can be covered as needed, too.

“Graduates come out [of the program] with real, hands-on skills,” Livingston said, along with certifications in such basics as first aid, fall protection and electrical safety.

These successful participants are then recommended for a registered, IBEW-sponsored apprenticeship and are eligible for work placement with an IBEW signatory contractor. And the union’s connection doesn’t stop at the end of the three weeks: For a year afterward, with guidance from journeymen IBEW electricians and instructors, graduates have an opportunity to further develop the technical and academic skills they will need in electrical foundations programs. This ongoing mentorship and support helps graduates stay on track toward eventually becoming Red Seal-certified journeymen electrical workers themselves, with rewarding union jobs and benefits.

So far, the WATT program has been working well, Livingston said. Of the hundreds of young people who have been through the program since its 2019 inauguration, about 10% have



come from Indigenous groups, 15% have been newcomers and 20% of participants have been women, he said.

Support networks have been especially crucial for women, Livingston said.

Past WATT graduates often serve as mentors who help women students locate tools and workwear appropriate for them.

“Recruitment and retention are also extremely important,” Livingston

*Western JETS’s WATT program makes apprenticeships more accessible for people from traditionally underrepresented populations.*

said, noting that about 80% stick with the electrical trade as a career. Constant feedback from employers and communication with contractors helps to continuously improve the program, he said.

“The WATT program demonstrates the IBEW’s ongoing commitment to bringing greater equity, inclusion and diversity to electrical work,” said First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk. “It’s helping us get the word out, in British Columbia and beyond, that the electrical trades are open to everyone.”

Learn more at [wjets.ca/watt](http://wjets.ca/watt).

## Cours gratuit sur l’introduction du métier d’électricien est offert à tous en C.-B.

Alors que les débouchés dans les métiers de l’électricité et dans d’autres métiers spécialisés continuent d’augmenter, la crainte d’une éventuelle pénurie de main-d’œuvre qualifiée continue de croître. Il est estimé en Colombie-Britannique qu’au cours des dix prochaines années près de 64 000 nouveaux gens de métiers seront nécessaires, dont des milliers d’électriciennes et d’électriciens.

Afin que la FIOE puisse profiter de cette débouchée d’emploi, et pour éviter une crise potentielle de l’emploi dans le secteur de l’électricité dans cette province, une collaboration de longue date entre la section locale 230 à Victoria, la section locale 993 à Kamloops, la section locale 1003 à Nelson ainsi que l’Electrical Contractors Association (association des entrepreneurs électriciens) de la Colombie-Britannique collectivement avec le Western Joint Electrical Training Society (société conjointe de la formation en électricité de l’Ouest) ont mis sur pied un programme innovateur appelé Workplace Alternative Trades Training — WATT (formation alternative pour les métiers en milieu de travail).

« Nous nous sommes réunis avec les entrepreneurs locaux et discutés de ce que les nouveaux arrivants devaient savoir sur le travail électrique », déclare Adrien Livingston, un membre du local 230 qui siège au poste de directeur exé-

cusif au Western JETS, décrivant comment le programme avait été élaboré.

WATT a vu le jour depuis ces discussions. Un programme préalable à l’apprentissage offert gratuitement d’une durée de trois semaines conçu pour susciter davantage l’intérêt au programme préalable à l’apprentissage de la FIOE déjà couronné de succès « en offrant un cours sur le métier d’électricien accessible à tous », mentionne Livingston.

Financé en partie grâce à des subventions du programme de sensibilisation et de préparation aux métiers spécialisés du gouvernement, WATT vise essentiellement les personnes intéressées qui ont connu des difficultés à accéder au cours de bases en électricité au Canada, soit en raison des frais ou le temps qu’il faut consacrer à la formation.

L’effort du programme vise à accroître l’accessibilité au programme d’apprentissage en électricité de la FIOE pour les jeunes, surtout les femmes, ainsi que les personnes issues d’autres populations traditionnellement sous représentés, comme celles en situation d’handicap, la population autochtone et les nouveaux arrivants.

« Nous discutons en profondeur avec chaque candidat pour leur dire dans quoi ils se lancent », dit Livingston.

Les candidats retenus reçoivent alors gratuitement des outils de base du métier, et d’autres nécessités comme des bottes de travail à embout

d’acier. Les dépenses minimales de la vie quotidienne ainsi que le transport peuvent également être pris en charge si nécessaire.

« Les diplômées et les diplômés terminent le programme avec de vraies compétences pratiques », fait part Livingston, ainsi qu’une certification dans les formations de base telles que les premiers soins, la protection contre les chutes et la sécurité en électricité.

Les participants qui ont réussi le programme sont ensuite recommandés à un programme d’apprentissage enregistré et parrainé par la FIOE et sont éligibles pour un placement professionnel auprès d’un entrepreneur signataire de la FIOE. Et la connexion du syndicat ne s’arrête pas à la fin de la formation de trois semaines : avec l’encadrement de la part d’un compagnon électricien et d’un instructeur de la FIOE, pendant une période d’un an, les diplômés auront l’occasion de développer davantage les compétences techniques et académiques qui auront besoin pour les programmes de base en électricité. Ce mentorat en continu et ce service de soutien leur permet de rester sur la bonne voie pour éventuellement devenir eux-mêmes compagnon électricien certifié Sceau rouge avec un emploi syndiqué valorisant et des avantages sociaux.

Jusqu’à présent, le programme WATT fonctionne bien, mentionne Livingston. Parmi les centaines de

jeunes qui ont suivi le programme depuis son inauguration en 2019, environ 10 % d’entre eux proviennent des groupes autochtones, 15 % d’entre eux sont de nouveaux arrivants, et 20 % des participantes et des participants ont été des femmes, dit-il.

Le réseau de soutien a spécialement été important pour les femmes, fait part Livingston. Les anciennes diplômées et les anciens diplômés du programme WATT siègent souvent à titre de mentors pour aider les étudiantes à trouver des outils et des vêtements de travail appropriés pour elles.

« Le recrutement et la rétention sont également extrêmement importants », déclare Livingston, faisant observer qu’environ 80 % d’entre eux choisissent de faire carrière comme électricien. Les commentaires constants des employeurs et les entretiens avec les entrepreneurs contribuent à améliorer le programme sur une base continue, dit-il.

« Le programme WATT démontre l’engagement continu de la FIOE à apporter plus d’équité, d’inclusion et de diversité au travail électrique », déclare le vice-président international Russ Shewchuk. « Cela nous aide à véhiculer le message dans la Colombie-Britannique et au-delà que les métiers de l’électricité sont accessibles à tous. »

Plus d’information à [wjets.ca/watt](http://wjets.ca/watt) (anglais seulement).

# CIRCUITS

## Boston Local Donates Van to Technical School

Students at Boston's Madison Park Vocational Technical High School can now practice their electrical skills in the community with a new van and supplies, thanks to Local 103 and the area chapter of the National Electrical Contractors' Association.

"This is a great opportunity for the students to get out of the classroom and get exposed to a real-life working experience," said McDonald Electric contractor Tom Cooney, who also sits on the board of Madison Park. "The sense of accomplishment they will experience from having done something in the community will last for years. And that feeling is far greater than any classroom or shop assignment experience."

When Cooney heard that Madison Park, Boston's only technical high school, had a need for a van and supplies, he knew to turn to Local 103. The partnership between the school and the local runs deep, with a number of members also claiming alumni status. One of those members is Business Agent Renee Dozier.

"We stay in constant contact with the school, and it's our love language to give and serve," Dozier said of the generous donation.

The van, which came with a Madison Park-branded decorative wrap, was full of roughly \$10,000 worth of supplies, courtesy of NECA. The supplies included Milwaukee battery-powered tools like drills, band saws and cable cutters, electricians' hand tools, gang boxes and branded shirts and sweatshirts.

"The students were just thrilled to see all the new equipment they'll have the opportunity to use and, of course, we as instructors appreciate how it will enhance our lessons," said Michael Norris, a Local 103 member and instructor at the school, to the Dorchester Reporter. "The donations are really going to go a long way for Madison Park's electrical program."

The van will allow the students to get out into the community and practice what they're learning in the classroom and the shop. Whether it's working with Habitat for Humanity or at a local senior center, the students will get the chance to do some authentic work, Norris said.

"It's the piece that was missing from our curriculum," Norris said. "This way they're not just sitting around doing doorbells."

Norris, who teaches juniors and seniors, says it's particularly beneficial for freshmen and sophomores since they don't get to work in the field until their junior year.

"The sophomores are itching for more," he said. "With the van, we can go to the next step."

Since Madison Park is the only technical school in the city, it acts as a



Students at Madison Park Vocational Technical High School were the recipients of a van and supplies, courtesy of Boston Local 103 and the area chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association.

feeder for Local 103's apprenticeship program, with junior and senior students getting the opportunity to work with IBEW signatory contractors like McDonald Electric. And starting in the fall, they'll also get the chance to have a mentor through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, something Cooney will be a part of.

"I'll get the opportunity to mentor a junior in the electrical program through his or her senior year," said the 35-year IBEW member. "The hope here is that they will graduate and get into Local 103 and hopefully work for McDonald Electrical Corporation."

Norris said the program has grown from 40 students to 80, thanks in large part to Local 103's support. The van is just the latest demonstration of its commitment to seeing the Madison Park students succeed. And by supporting the school, they're also supporting the community.

"Local 103 is committed to the future of our industry as well as the future of our community. They go hand in hand," said Business Manager Lou Antonellis. "One can't be successful without the other." ■

## DOL Report: The Pandemic's Toll on Working Women

Working women were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new report from the Department of Labor.

"This report is a pivotal achievement," said Labor Secretary Marty Walsh in the foreword. "It helps us gain an accurate picture of women's work lives during the pandemic. Knowing of these challenges, we at the department are working hard to improve the workplace realities of women, particularly the most vulnerable, including Black and Hispanic women and others disproportionately impacted by the pandemic."

Titled "Bearing the Cost," the report details how many of the dispari-

ties that have long impacted women in the workplace only worsened during the pandemic. For the first time since data began being collected in 1948, women lost more jobs than men during the depths of the COVID-19-related economic crisis. More women also left the labor force entirely during the pandemic, and at its worst point in April 2020, women's labor force participation was the lowest it's been since 1985.

Women of color tended to be impacted the worst. Throughout the crisis, Black and Hispanic women faced unemployment rates significantly higher than white women and have experienced a slower recovery. Women's unemployment being higher than men's was driven largely by the experiences of Black and Hispanic women, with Hispanic women having the highest measured unemployment rate at 20.1% in April 2020 of any major group by gender, race or ethnicity. White women's unemployment stayed below 6% from October 2020 through the end of 2021, while Hispanic women did not reach those lows until September 2021 and for Black women it was not until November 2021 — roughly a year later than white women.

While the data is limited and not always separated by gender, the report found that American Indian and Alaska Native workers had an unemployment rate of 28.6% in April 2020, up from 6.1% a year prior. For Asian women, where data is also limited, the unem-

ployment rate peaked at 16.6% in May 2020, but the report noted that subgroups of Asian women experienced different vulnerabilities pre-pandemic, leading to varying experiences during the crisis.

According to the study, two primary factors contributed to women bearing the brunt of the pandemic's dire employment situation. First, women — who have always performed the majority of unpaid family caregiving — coped with greater challenges managing work and care, from dealing with their children's remote schooling to caring for disabled and older family members who lost access to critical care services.

Second, women were overrepresented in industries that experienced the pandemic's worst job losses, like leisure and hospitality, as well as education and health care. The report breaks down the factors contributing to this into supply side and demand side. On the supply side, the report notes that social norms often push workers into stereotypical jobs for their gender, race or ethnicity. For example, in 2019 women made up 95% of childcare workers, an industry that lost more than one-third of all jobs between February and April 2020. Conversely, women made up just 2% of electricians, an essential job in the critical trade sector.

The report also points to fewer network connections and mentors for women, especially in male-dominated jobs.



A new report from the Department of Labor looks at the disproportionate toll experienced by women during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Mentoring and networks are extremely important," said Tarn Goelling, director of IBEW's Civic and Community Engagement Department. "If we want parity, the women of today need support, especially in male-dominated fields."

The demand-side factors noted in the report are workplace discrimination in areas like recruitment, selection, hiring and promotion and hostile workplace cultures. This is a finding backed up by a survey from the Institute for Women's Policy Research of women in construction. In that report, more than four in 10 respondents said that they have seriously considered leaving the industry. For those individuals, discrimination or lack of respect was the most cited reason for wanting to do so.

Goelling says IBEW constituency groups like women's committees and the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus are ways to combat that discrimination and lack of representation.

"When we have affinities with each other, there's a comfort level and you can establish trust," Goelling said. "You have fellow members who understand where you're coming from, sister to sister."

Goelling in particular noted the importance of the networking and mentoring opportunities available through groups like the EWMC and women's committees.

"They create places where you can really feel like family," she said. "We need that space to be able to lean on our union siblings."

There's also IBEW Strong, the union's diversity, inclusion and equity initiative to increase the number of historically underrepresented groups like women and people of color.

"Every job we represent should be representative of the communities we work in," Goelling said. "Just about everywhere in the U.S. and Canada, women are 50% of the population, so our jobs should reflect that, whether they're in construction, utility, broadcasting or any other branch." ■

CIRCUITS continued on page 8

## CIRCUITS *continued*

### Lineworker Scholarship Aims to Diversify Workforce

Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47 has partnered with Edison International and Southern California Edison to offer a lineworker scholarship aimed at making its workforce more diverse and inclusive, in particular by recruiting more Black participants.

"This program allows for great financial opportunities and the beginning of generational wealth in the Black community," said Local 47 President Tyrone Chamois, who was involved in the initial planning of the program. "It provides a path for the next generation to be better off than the previous one."

Launched last year, the 12-month program provides tuition, tools and the support services needed to complete the required training at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College. Part of a larger diversity and inclusion initiative at SCE, the initial focus of the four-year pilot program is on recruiting Black participants, who are currently underrepresented in the workforce, with 10 scholarships awarded per year.

"We are proud to launch the new Lineworker Scholarship program as part of our continuing commitment to increase our workforce diversity," said Kevin Payne, SCE president and CEO. "SCE serves one of the most diverse areas in the nation and having our workforce reflect the communities we serve is a priority for us."

Chamois, who is also an electrical crew foreman with SCE, is part of an employee resource group called Black Men Initiative, which met with the leadership group at the technical college to start the initial discussions around

starting the program for Black applicants. He was also involved with determining how to apply the funds from Local 47 and SCE.

"The purpose was to make sure each successful candidate has the financial help to be successful. Not just with tuition but also with things like transportation and daycare costs," he said.

Chamois says he hopes to increase the footprint of the program, in part by providing more scholarships.

"I want to see this spread like wildfire through the African-American community," Chamois said. "I want to bring awareness to this industry and the great careers that are available."

The \$1 million scholarship program is funded by Edison International shareholders and Local 47 and awards up to \$25,000 per recipient. An agreement with local charity Brotherhood Crusade will help with support services like housing, transportation and childcare.

"It's very important to allow these individuals the ability to commit to the program and not have to worry about how they'll make ends meet," said Local 47 Business Manager Colin Lavin.

Graduates will be eligible for a groundman/groundwoman entry-level position at SCE once they complete the Powerline Mechanic Certificate program, obtain a Class A driver's license and complete any SCE pre-employment requirements. All jobs will be located within SCE's 50,000-square-mile service area.

Chamois says the program isn't just beneficial for the scholarship recipients, but for Local 47 and SCE as well.

"There's no better way to be involved than to provide tangible opportunities that benefit members of

the community," he said. "With this scholarship program, Local 47 and SCE can establish themselves as leaders in the community that provide a real financial boost." ■

### Milwaukee Partnership Opens Doors of Opportunity

John Bailey III has not had an easy life. He's twice been incarcerated and recently completed a 10-year prison sentence.

But with the help of Milwaukee Local 494, a prominent community partner and a leading signatory contractor, Bailey has his IBEW membership card and is on the job. He said he realizes it could turn his life around and is determined to take advantage of it.

"Doing all the stuff that I did, going through all the hardships, I never really gave myself a chance on anything," he said. "When I learned about this opportunity, I felt like I should at least try it."

Bailey, 45, is a graduate of the Social Development Commission's Absolute Advantage Program, which teaches construction skills and safety requirements with its own instructors and help from the city's trade unions, including Local 494. The commission works to improve the lives of Milwaukee residents living in poverty.

Local 494 Assistant Business Manager John Jacobs represents the Milwaukee Area Labor Council on the group's Board of Commissioners. Jacobs and other Local 494 officials helped Bailey land a job as a construction wireman with longtime signatory contractor Lemberg Electric, making him an IBEW member.

"He wrote on his application, 'This is something I hope to make a new life from,'" Jacobs said. "That just gave me chills when I read it, and I put it in my speech to the program's graduates. It was a pretty powerful statement."

Bailey has been working on a jobsite at the former offices of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel newspaper. The building is being converted into student housing for a local technical college and a high school. His goal is to eventually enter the Local 494 apprenticeship program and become a journeyman wireman.

"I could see myself doing this for the next 20 years," he said.

Making the transition from incarceration to a productive life is difficult for many former inmates. Studies have shown that nearly two-thirds are arrested within three years following release and nearly 50% return to prison during that period.

Robert Nunn, a program instructor for the commission who is serving as Bailey's mentor, noted Bailey is making \$23 per hour as a construction wireman. Earning a living wage is a tool that



Credit: Milwaukee Social Development Commission.

*Milwaukee Local 494 member John Bailey III, whose work ethic is turning his life around.*

helps a former prisoner successfully reintegrate into everyday life.

Plus, there's the pride and dignity the job brings, something that is lacking for many clients when they come to the commission for assistance.

"When John came in and graduated, I had to hold back my tears," Nunn said. "You're talking about a guy who had been incarcerated for 10 years. For him to go out and make that happen was such a special moment. His message to the other graduates was: 'If I can do it, you guys can do it.'"

The program not only helps individuals turn their lives around, it also makes good business sense for the IBEW and its signatory contractors.

Like in many American cities, construction projects that receive public funding in Milwaukee are required to fill a certain percentage of the work with city residents. The commission's program makes it easier for contractors to meet those requirements while also meeting their goals — and the IBEW's goal — of diversifying the workforce with traditionally underrepresented groups, Lemberg President Mark Chappel said.

"You're checking off a lot of boxes," said Chappel, who went through Local 494's apprenticeship program and still pays his membership dues. "The city is getting what it wants, city residents are doing the work and we're getting the people we need."

"Quite frankly, our industry needs this," he added.

Local 494 deepened its involvement with the program in 2019, when the labor council asked Jacobs to fill an open commissioner seat. He said he was immediately impressed by how prepared the students were, especially considering the background many came from. Each completed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's 10-hour training certificate, for instance.

Jacobs said he and other Local 494 members told them about the importance of finishing the more advanced 30-hour course from OSHA. Many of them are doing that.

"I've stressed not just to the instructors and the staff, but to the students, that by now having OSHA 30, you've given yourselves a leg up on the competition and what employers are

looking for," he said.

Three graduates of the program have been hired and become Local 494 members, Jacobs said. Others have joined other trade unions. Jacobs noted that he's spent much of his IBEW career working as organizer. Local 494's work with the commission is a continuation of that, he said.

"Let's put it this way: It certainly fits our narrative to go and create a more diverse pool of not only applicants, but members themselves," Jacobs said.

"My favorite hat to wear of all the hats within the IBEW is organizer," he said. "When you see someone realize what they have in front of them — and you say it to them all you want — but once they get to experience it and understand what you have, that's a high for me."

Business Manager Dean Warsh commended Jacobs and other Local 494 members who have volunteered to work with students in the Absolute Advantage Program — and for making them feel welcome on jobsites when hired by signatory contractors.

"Programs like this are essential in making the IBEW stronger now and in the future, addressing the shortage of skilled construction workers and allowing our signatory contractors additional flexibility in bidding for jobs," Warsh said. "But what's really satisfying is that we are giving these men and women a chance to better their lives. We've always talked about the power of IBEW membership. This gives more people a chance to experience how that literally changes someone and their loved ones."

Chappel noted that he serves on the local JATC committee with both Warsh and Jacobs. The cooperation between that committee, Local 494 and NECA Milwaukee makes opportunities like this possible, he said. He's spoken to Bailey's foreman on the job — and he reports that Bailey is doing well.

"He's obviously very green, but he tries really hard at all the tasks assigned to him," Chappel said. "He's always on time and a pleasure to have on a crew. He's attentive and safety conscious and, for his experience level, he does very well." ■



*Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47, in partnership with Edison International and Southern California Edison, is offering a lineworker scholarship geared toward recruiting more Black residents.*



# THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

## Siemens USA's \$54M Investment Promises More IBEW Manufacturing Jobs

Members of the IBEW were front and center — some physically, others virtually — for President Joe Biden's White House announcement in March of Siemens USA's plan to invest \$54 million to expand its manufacturing facilities, growth that promises to bring at least 300 new jobs to the company's IBEW-represented workplaces in California and Texas.

"President Biden a year ago was talking about bringing jobs back to the United States," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said at the White House. "Good-paying manufacturing jobs, and more importantly he says, union jobs. That's why we are here."

Siemens makes components that support a variety of technologies, including electric vehicle chargers, computer circuit boards and the file servers that fill data centers. The company's planned expansion will send about \$40 million to Pomona, Calif., to build a brand-new hub where Los Angeles Local 1710's members will manufacture electric vehicle charging stations.

"Siemens is in a very logistical area near L.A. Harbor; it's very convenient," said Local 1710 Business Manager Amalia Arroyo. In addition to the company's switchgear manufacturing facility where about 100 IBEW members work, along with a warehouse employing another 25 or so members, "Siemens owns a large piece of empty property next to their existing Pomona facility that's available and ready to build on," she said.

Another \$10 million is earmarked for the Grand Prairie, Texas, facility, where Fort Worth, Texas, Local 220 members will see a 25,000-square foot expansion of facilities to make low- and medium-voltage switches used in such places as health care facilities, data centers and industrial sites.

"We make a lot of stuff for the federal government, for data centers, and for Tesla. We get around," said Local

220 Business Manager Joshua Worthey, whose local covers 51 counties in Texas and represents about 1,000 workers in a broad mix of disciplines, including outside linemen.

"We've had our ups and downs in recent years, but this is another sign that things are improving," Worthey said.

Introducing Biden was Local 220 shop steward Johnny Le, a self-described introvert who credited the IBEW Government Affairs Department with helping him find the right words to say during his remarks.

"When my parents fled communist Vietnam with nothing but the clothes on their backs and hope of a better life, they never envisioned one day their son would be introducing the president of the United States," said Le, a nine-year IBEW member who also serves as an interpreter for the Asian community at Siemens. "My story and so many others of first-generation Americans would not be possible without the important pro-worker, pro-union policies that President Biden and his administration support."

Being in the limelight like that was tough, Le said later, although Biden helped put him at ease, he said. "I didn't know the details of the event or even my role until I got to D.C. I thought I was just a chance to meet the president," he said. "If it helps bring positive attention to the IBEW, it's worth it."

"When I got elected, I said I wanted to rebuild America," said Biden, who virtually toured both Siemens plants before the event. "This is what I was talking about. I want to see a lot more stories like this one."

Local 1710's Kevin Wilson, a 26-year Siemens employee, spoke with Biden while leading the president on the virtual tour of the Pomona plant.

Stephenson, in his remarks at the White House event, called attention to the video screens on both sides of the stage, which showed a live feed of gathered Siemens workers in Grand Prairie and Pomona.

"They are the ones doing the heavy lifting, the work, day in and day out, producing for this country and making us a better country because of it," he said.

Also speaking at the event were Siemens USA Chief Executive Officer Barbara Humpton and White House "Made in America" Office Director Celeste Drake.

Manufacturing Director Brian Lamm said he is optimistic that this news also could help IBEW organizing efforts in other Siemens facilities around the U.S., especially those in heavily anti-union states.

"The IBEW has a great relationship with Siemens. I'm really excited about this," Lamm said. "I think it's great news for the IBEW, a big deal. These are jobs that will last for decades."

Stephenson agreed. "The IBEW is proud to partner with Siemens to advance manufacturing careers in this industry," he said. "These are union careers that won't just rebuild our infrastructure, but our middle class as well. I'm excited by Siemens' announcement that it is investing in American manufacturing to make electrical equipment that will help strengthen our energy infrastructure while also putting us on the road to a clean energy future." ■

## NLRB Seeks to End Captive Audience Meetings; Employers Sue

As the National Labor Relations Board considers cases that could lead to a historic ban on captive audience meetings, employers are attempting a preemptive strike by suing the board's top lawyer.

General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo has asked the to board reverse precedent and rule that the mandatory meetings, one of the most potent weapons used to derail union organizing drives, violate federal labor law.

Her directive in April, among the boldest of many groundbreaking initiatives from her office over the past year, drew outrage from management-side lawyers and business groups claiming that she was attacking free speech.

Abruzzo argued from the beginning that critics have it backwards.

"This license to coerce is an anomaly in labor law," she said in a memo. "It is inconsistent with the Act's protection of employees' free choice and based on a fundamental misunderstanding of employers' speech rights."

Seeking to block her guidance as unconstitutional, a group of staffing firms in July filed a lawsuit against Abruzzo in the conservative U.S. District Court in eastern Texas.

The NLRB hadn't commented as of early August. Instead, the Biden-era agency continues to focus on game-changing moves to protect workers' rights after decades of attacks that hit new levels of hostility in recent years.

While board precedent has "tolerated" forced meetings in the past, Abruzzo said the 1935 National Labor Relations Act is unambiguous, citing



Captive audience meetings were used recently against workers in Wisconsin and Illinois during a winning campaign to organize with the IBEW.

sections 7 and 8 that are the basis of all unfair labor practice complaints.

"Forcing employees to listen to such employer speech under threat of discipline — directly leveraging [their] dependence on their jobs — plainly chills employees' protected right to refrain from listening," she said.

Section 7 guarantees the right of workers to join unions and bargain collectively. Section 8 makes it illegal for an employer "to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed in Section 7" and lists in explicit detail what that includes.

"The language in the law is crystal clear," said Jammie Ouellette, executive assistant to the international president for Membership Development. "It is infuriating to think about how flagrantly employers violate it. They've gotten away with it for decades with minimal consequences, if any, because the courts and even the NLRB at times have interpreted it too loosely."

"Now we've got an NLRB that is on the offense like never before against employer abuses, and captive audience meetings are the union-buster's No. 1 weapon," Ouellette said. "Sitting through a captive audience meeting is psychological torture. Most of our future members sit through them daily during an organizing effort."

The battle isn't only being waged at the federal level. This spring, Connecticut lawmakers passed a hotly debated state ban on captive audience meetings, the Protecting Employee Freedom and Conscience Act. It bars employers "from coercing any employee into attending or participating in a meeting concerning the employer's views on political or religious matters."

A similar law has been in place since 2010 in Oregon, where the Worker Freedom Act prohibits "firing, punishing or threatening workers who refuse to sit for 'employer-sponsored' meetings" that are held to convey religious or political views, which includes union organizing.

The Oregon law survived a federal court challenge filed two years ago by the NLRB itself during the era of the board's virulently anti-union general counsel Peter Robb, whom President Joe Biden fired as one of his first acts of business on Inauguration Day 2021.

Studies show that captive audience tactics are nearly universal among

employers whose workers seek to organize. With union campaigns making headlines daily at some of the nation's most prominent companies, banning the meetings could be especially significant now.

The NLRB reports that union representation petitions more than doubled between Oct. 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022 — rising to 1,174 from the 748 filed during the same period the previous fiscal year.

Reversing precedent will require the board to rule on a new case related to captive audience meetings. Several cases are being considered.

Abruzzo is seeking to forbid the meetings in two types of situations involving anti-union speech: when workers are "forced to convene on paid time" or are "cornered by management while performing their job duties."

"In both cases, employees constitute a captive audience deprived of their statutory right to refrain, and instead are compelled to listen by threat of discipline, discharge, or other reprisal — a threat that employees will reasonably perceive even if it is not stated explicitly," she said.

Her original memo has generated no shortage of hyperbole from management-side attorneys and journals claiming the NLRB is infringing on employers' free speech.

Imposing the "long-overdue protection of employees' right to refrain will not impair employers' statutory or constitutional freedom of expression," Abruzzo argues. She cited a 1944 Supreme Court ruling that said while employers are within their First Amendment rights to persuade workers regarding unions, coercion is over the line.

But the courts were awash at the time with cases attacking the NLRB's prohibition on forced attendance. Overall, the rulings weakened the provision years before the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 eroded other workplace rights.

One of the principal cases involved the IBEW and workers trying to unionize at Virginia Electric & Power Co. in 1940, as cited in a 2004 law journal's report on captive audience meetings.

The NLRB ruled in the employees' favor, finding that company speeches and bulletins unlawfully interfered with



President Stephenson joined President Biden at the White House to hear Siemens USA's big investment news.

POLITICS & JOBS continued on page 10

## POLITICS & JOBS *continued*

their organizing drive. However, the Fourth Circuit refused to enforce the board's order, a decision the Supreme Court affirmed.

Report author and labor lawyer Elizabeth J. Masson called the anti-worker ruling a "watershed in labor law, signaling that employers need not remain neutral during the union election process."

"Coming just six years after the NLRA's enactment, the Court's holding was in stark contradiction to Congress' declared national labor policy of encouraging the procedure of collective bargaining as essential for a free and democratic society," she said.

Some 80 years later, International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said, the pendulum is finally swinging back in its intended direction.

"President Biden pledged to be the most pro-worker, pro-union president we've ever seen," he said. "The actions of the people he's appointed to protect workers — at the NLRB, the Department of Labor and across his administration — are proof of it." ■

### Idaho Strengthens Penalties for Assaulting Utility Workers

Idaho utility workers have been assaulted, threatened and shot at, and that's not everything. Now, they have a new law to protect them, and it's thanks in part to powerful IBEW testimony and a willingness to find common ground with a Republican-dominated Legislature that took the time to listen to unions.

"This is about hardworking people who are in harm's way," said Seattle Local 77 journeyman lineman Kyle Beierle, who was involved in the lobbying effort. "This bill isn't union versus nonunion, it's a bill for people who are just doing their jobs. And it's been a long time coming."

On March 25, Gov. Brad Little, a Republican, signed Senate Bill 1321 into law. The bill adds utility employees to a list of personnel who are protected with enhanced punishments if someone commits assault or battery against them, putting them in the same category as law enforcement officers, judges, corrections workers, emergency dispatchers, firefighters and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation employees.

The law, which went into effect July 1, was sorely needed according to testimony from IBEW members and other affected workers. They've had dogs unleashed on them, shotguns brandished, death threats made and vehicles used as weapons, to name just a few of the incidents presented to legislators before the bill passed.

"We have sheriff's office reports from Grangeville to Grandview to Rigby. This is occurring across the state, across different utilities, and it does seem to be increasing in frequency," Idaho AFL-CIO Government Affairs

Director Jason Hudson told the Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee. "I have talked to several people who have been in the industry for many, many years across the state and almost universally what I hear is, there's always been problems out there, but in the last five years it's gotten a whole lot worse."

A similar bill passed in neighboring Washington in 2019, but Idaho is not Washington, says Seattle Local 77 Assistant Business Manager Mike Brown. Washington is the third most union-dense state in the country, whereas Idaho has had right-to-work since 1985.

"It's not favorable in Idaho and hasn't been for a long time," Brown said of the state's political climate. "We're usually just playing defense."

But a few years ago, Brown, Beierle, Hudson and then-Local 77 Political Director Sean Bagsby got together to strategize about how they could do more in the deeply red state where Local 77 has jurisdiction in the northern region.

"For years we heard we couldn't get anything done," Brown said. "We were done with that mentality."

So, they started looking for ways to build bipartisanship and in particular make inroads into the Republican party, which holds 84 of the state's 105 legislative seats. One way they did that was by attending Republican political dinners. They even bought tables and made sure to donate at a level that would require the local's name to be read aloud from the stage.

"We got some stares, but we just kept going," Brown said. "We're just people, just working people. We wanted to let them know that we're not a bunch of heathens because we're in a union."

Their plan didn't work overnight, but it did work. Eventually they built those relationships and that led to the utility assault bill, with Republican sponsors in both the House and Senate.

"Local 77 was the driving factor in making these protections for public utility workers a reality," Hudson said. "They committed to the idea, invested the time to work together with the Idaho AFL-CIO to build a plan, and then had the patience to stick to the plan even when things sometimes seemed to be moving slowly."

From there, it was the personal stories of those who testified and lobbied the legislators, including IBEW members, that ultimately brought the bill over the finish line.

"The testimony of our members was massive," said Brown, who was among those who spoke to the Legislature and once had a person threaten him with a chainsaw.

One story that stood out came from Local 77 member Eric York. In 2018, the Idaho County Light and Power lineman was held at gunpoint — after being hit in the head with the barrel of the gun so hard that it drew blood — and forced to give up his utility truck. The man who committed the assault got barely more than a slap on the wrist, with a sentence of just 30 days in

jail to be served at his leisure and 100 hours of community service.

"I'm really not familiar with addressing legislators or anything like that, but I wanted to help get the bill through," York said. "It's nice to know that we have more protection now, and that people might actually refrain."

Local 77 member Ben Cook also testified, and then stuck around after to speak to as many members as possible.

"I felt that it was beneficial for the legislation to put a face on the bill so they weren't just reading a piece of paper," said Cook, who also told a story of having a gun pulled on him.

Local 77 was joined in its efforts by Salt Lake City Local 57, Boise Local 291, and Pocatello Local 449, all of which have members who would be impacted by the new law, in addition to workers from other unions like the Communications Workers of America and the Plumbers and Pipefitters.

"The beauty of this bill is that it's not just a lineman's bill, it covers anyone regulated by a utility commission," Beierle said. "We did this for all of us."

Idaho joins 15 other states in increasing penalties for assault against utility workers. And while Washington is one of those states, Beierle and Brown said they used Tennessee's passage when lobbying since it's politically more similar.

"We never mentioned Washington. Ever," Brown said.

The lobbying team was also run out of Local 77's Spokane office on the state's eastern side, closer to Idaho, with Idaho people leading the charge.

"Idaho can be kind of a territorial place. It doesn't want to follow the lead of Washington," Beierle said.

The membership, which Brown estimates is about 45% Republican overall and closer to 90% in Idaho, also likes the bipartisanship.

"Before, they'd complain about the local's Democratic support. Now they're getting more engaged," Brown said.

Those members aren't the only Republicans who are more engaged with Local 77 either.

"Now the legislators come to us. They know we can get things done," said Beierle, who also serves on the Idaho Labor Council. "We're seeing who we can work with, and it's a strategy that's paying off."

They even got a bill signing, the first for a labor organization in over 20 years and the largest thus far in Gov. Little's term, with 25 people in attendance, Beierle said.

"This was a huge milestone," said Brown, who got the governor's pen from the ceremony.

Local 77 is paying back that GOP support too. They endorsed Little in his re-election bid.

"It's probably unheard of in the labor world," Beierle said. "But ultimately labor is nonpartisan. We have to reach across the lines." ■

## TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

### Thomas Reid



First District International Vice President Thomas Reid retired in June after nearly 35 years in the IBEW.

Reid's decades-long union journey followed a somewhat meandering route. While he was in trade school, he took on electrical work with a nonunion contractor that ended up being organized by Kingston, Ontario, Local 115 while he was there. The local told Reid that he would have to start his apprenticeship all over again if he wanted to join the union, something that Reid was unwilling to do — at least at first.

A series of gigs in the often-unfair world of nonunion work, however, soon made Reid realize that the advantages of an IBEW-based career would be beneficial not only for him but also for his wife, Kathy, and the family they were starting to build. By then, Reid said, the IBEW also had made it easier for him and workers in similar predicaments to join up, and he was initiated into Local 115 just before he turned 24.

Reid quickly became active with his local, starting out as its recording secretary in 1987. In 1990, he was elected to Local 115's executive board. Throughout this period, Reid was the local's chairman for his hometown Belleville unit, and he also served on Local 115's organizing committee.

In 1993, the IBEW's Construction Council of Ontario hired Reid to serve as an organizer. Reid's early-career experience working with nonunion contractors turned out to be especially useful for his work with the CCO, which now represents about 18,000 union workers from 11 construction locals across the province.

Reid's organizing successes with the CCO soon caught the attention of then-International President J.J. Barry, who in 1998 appointed Reid as a construction and industrial organizing international representative for the IBEW's First District, which encompasses all of Canada.

There, Reid also was the union's representative on the General Presidents' Maintenance Committee for Canada/National Maintenance Council for Canada, an alliance of industrial maintenance building trades that negotiates and administers multi-trade agreements for maintenance work on industrial facilities.

Matt Wayland, a First District international representative who also serves as Canadian Director of Government Relations, recalled meeting Reid sometime around 2004 or 2005, while Wayland was an apprentice with St. Catharines, Ontario, Local 303.

"Tom likes to keep things light-

hearted," Wayland said. "He likes to joke around, but he really knows his stuff."

In 2013, then-First District International Vice President William Daniels asked Reid to join the district's office in Mississauga to work as Daniels' executive assistant. When Daniels retired five years later, International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, with the backing of the International Executive Council, appointed Reid to fill the vacancy.

Now in retirement, Reid looks back on his career with satisfaction. "Organizing is the fundamental basis of the labour movement," he said. "It's highly important for our district to try to get organizing back on track."

"I am proud of my body of work," he said. "I especially liked focusing on our more diverse branches such as Utility and Manufacturing. I did the best that I could."

He said he also has appreciated the IBEW's increasing emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion, which he supported by backing the RENEW/NextGen initiative and by encouraging greater outreach to women and persons from marginalized communities.

"As an I.V.P., Tom always liked to know what was going on in the district — with the staff, the locals, and the members," Wayland said.

Reid is now looking forward to spending more time with Kathy; their daughters, Kate and Meagan; their son, Peter; and their six grandchildren. Peter, Reid noted, is now a Red Seal journeyman wireman himself with Local 115 and already active with the IBEW, having recently helped organize a golf tournament in his unit.

"Retirement has been good for me so far," said Reid, an avid motorcycle enthusiast who remains deeply involved with the Canadian Superbike Championship series, the highest level of motorcycle road racing in Canada.

"When I think of Tom, I think of his grandkids and his motorcycles," Wayland said.

Reid, in fact, owns 14 motorcycles, he said. "Eight or nine are road-worthy, vintage rally bikes," he said. "They're just a lot of fun."

Please join the officers, staff and membership in wishing Brother Reid a long and happy retirement. ■

RETIRED

### William "Bill" Martindale



Capping an organizing career that began more than three decades ago, International Representative and First District Organizing Coordinator William "Bill" Martindale has retired, effective Sept. 1.

izing Coordinator William "Bill" Martindale has retired, effective Sept. 1.

## IBEW MEDIA WORLD

In addition to your monthly issue of *The Electrical Worker*, check out lots of other IBEW-related content online.

### www.ibew.org

Get the latest IBEW news, including an electronic version of this and previous newspapers, at [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org).

### YouTube

At [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](http://YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker), learn how an IBEW career lifted the family of Indianapolis Local 1393 Ivan Sierra-Vargas from poverty to a comfortable, middle-class lifestyle.

### Vimeo

Birmingham, Ala., Local 136 recently hosted brothers and sisters from all over North America for the 77th annual IBEW Bowling Tournament. Catch the highlights at [Vimeo.com/IBEW](http://Vimeo.com/IBEW).

### HourPower

This year's Fourth District progress meeting added a networking "Industry Night" to help strengthen and build relationships among IBEW members, contractors and customers. [IBEWHourPower.com](http://IBEWHourPower.com) has details.

### ElectricTV

Check out [ElectricTV.net](http://ElectricTV.net) to see how membership growth has fueled Honolulu Local 1186's efforts to build a new off-grid, solar- and battery-powered training center and union hall.

"Bill might just be the longest serving organizer in IBEW history," said Regional Organizing Coordinator Rod McVicar, who's known Martindale for over 10 years. "He knew how to handle any situation that came up."

Brother Martindale, a native of Sarnia, Ontario, located on Lake Huron near the Michigan border, began his IBEW career as a construction and maintenance electrical apprentice with Toronto Local 353 in the summer of 1973, working for Lockhart and McKay Electric. He was initiated into Local 353 in April 1975. In 1990, he was hired as a local union organizer and three years later assumed the dual role of provincial organizer through the Construction Council of Ontario. Martindale was then hired as the ROC for eastern Canada in 2007, a position he held until being reassigned to district organizing coordinator in 2013.

"Everybody loves Bill," McVicar said. "He's always that guy you want to call first, whether it was a good day or a bad day."

Despite his decades of organizing, McVicar says Martindale was always open to new ideas.

"One thing that always impressed me about Bill was his willingness to take on a new challenge," said McVicar, who worked in the same region as Martindale. "Many organizers become set in their ways and don't want to learn new skills as an organizer. Bill was not that guy. If there was a new method for getting cards signed, Bill was willing to take on that challenge and make it work."

Martindale has been described as a patient, knowledgeable, even-keeled person. Someone to call on when you needed a steady hand.

"Bill was the ultimate diplomat," said Gord Nye, a retired organizer who worked on various campaigns with Martindale. "He had such a decorum about him. A real people person who could relate to anybody. He treated everybody with dignity and respect and commanded that in return."

Both McVicar and Nye also commented on how thorough Martindale was when it came to meeting preparations, and he earned a reputation for taking meticulous notes.

"He was always prepared for any meeting, interview, whatever it was. He took them all seriously," McVicar said. "Bill would always bring his A game."

Retired Local 353 Business Manager Joe Fashion, who hired Martindale in 1990, says that Martindale exemplified the ideals of the IBEW.

"You couldn't ask for a better employee," Fashion said. "He was dedicated, there's no doubt about it. And always upbeat with a smile on his face."

When not organizing, Martindale also played baseball and hockey for the local IBEW leagues.

"He was a good player. We won a lot of championships during that time," Fashion said.

Martindale says he doesn't have just one organizing moment that stands out to him.

"An organizing win is often a long-term commitment to a group of workers that you have never met before," Martindale said. "Any time there is a successful campaign, and the group enjoys the benefits of collective bargaining, it makes the long hours and stressful situations worthwhile."

Martindale says he'll miss the interactions and friendships he developed with his brothers and sisters throughout the building trades.

"I will take the IBEW culture and countless memories with me wherever I go," Martindale said. "My most enduring memories will be of the good humor and positive energy of my friends and co-workers in Canada and the U.S., and the many laughs we shared together."

As for what Martindale plans to do in retirement, he said there's really just one requirement.

"I'm looking forward to lots of leisure travel with my wife, Lori, that doesn't include business suits," he said.

On behalf of the officers, staff and members of the IBEW, we wish Brother Martindale all the best in his well-earned retirement. ■

#### RETIRED

### Gary Osborne



Gary Osborne, whose career as an admired IBEW organizer began by converting nonunion electricians in western Kentucky and boldly taking on lawbreaking contractors, retired Sept. 1 after 43 years with the union.

As Fourth District organizing coordinator for the past decade, Osborne employed skills and strategies he'd been honing since his days as organizing director of Owensboro, Ky., Local 1701 in the early 1990s.

"Gary is one of my favorite people that I have ever worked with," said Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper. "The value he brings to our district, helping our local unions be more effective in organizing and recruitment, can't be overstated."

Osborne grew up in Owensboro, the son of an IBEW lineman-turned-wireman. His father's second career piqued his interest, and he enrolled in electrical courses at his high school.

After graduating, he worked briefly for a former IBEW member who'd left to run a nonunion shop. Even so, the boss treated him well and was supportive when Osborne signed on with Local 1701 as an apprentice in 1978.

"He told me, 'I wouldn't dare try to hold you back.' He was either glad for

me getting into the IBEW or glad to get rid of me," Osborne said with a laugh.

As an apprentice and young journeyman, Osborne said he "could be outspoken at union meetings, all about wanting the local's market share to grow." But he wasn't otherwise involved until deciding to run for the executive board in 1989.

"You find out the workings of the union are a little more complicated from the inside," he said. "It was an eye-opener."

While still on the board in 1993, he was hired as the local's first full-time organizing director, work he continued as the local's president and eventually business manager. After six years at the helm, he joined the international staff in 2010 as a state organizing coordinator in Kentucky and Ohio and moved to his district job two years later.

During his tenure as business manager and an officer in the city's building trades council, Osborne sent a memorable letter to the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce — one still circulated by IBEW locals and leaders.

The council belonged to the Chamber, which was backing a 2005 push for a right-to-work law in Kentucky, a campaign that failed at the time.

"It's one of my favorite stories about Gary," said International Secretary-Treasurer Kenny Cooper, who worked closely with Osborne during his time leading the Fourth District. "He sent them a letter saying he wanted to stay a member of the Chamber and continue to enjoy the benefits they offered but didn't want to pay any dues."

The Chamber wrote back, explaining that they can't operate without dues and any exceptions would be unfair to other members.

Osborne agreed with gusto. He suggested in his response that "perhaps we may work together to fight off legislation that allows freeloaders to participate in organizations without paying the required dues."

"They really had egg on their face," Cooper said. "It was brilliant. He added a tool to the toolbox for all of us."

It was Cooper's decision as Fourth District vice president to promote Osborne to district organizing coordinator. "I'd seen his talents," he said. "Gary had a knack for talking about the things that we bring to the table at the IBEW, and he was persuasive."

He'd had a lot of practice at Local 1701, where he formed a team of member-organizers who salted nonunion job sites. At one point, he said, electricians who were recruited into the local comprised more than half of its 300-plus members.

"He's one of the best organizers I've ever seen," said Tim Blandford, one of Osborne's successors as business manager and his friend "since we sacked groceries together as teenagers."

Osborne's methods rattled the area's nonunion contractors. "They were scared to death to bid any big jobs because they were afraid they were going to get salts, and I was one of them," Blandford said.

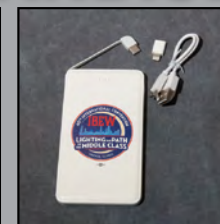
Osborne also aggressively pursued unfair labor practice charges against contractors who violated their workers' organizing rights.

"He didn't back down from them at all," said Blandford, who got a kick out of seeing his friend in action at regional National Labor Relations Board hearings. "I learned a lot from him about doing that kind of work, a lot about labor law. He encouraged all of us to take labor law classes."

Osborne said he'll always be a union man and that retirement won't stop him from talking to potential members about the value of joining the IBEW. But after years on the road, he's eager to catch up on projects around the house and enjoy time with his wife, Patricia, and their grown daughter, Heather.

The IBEW thanks Brother Osborne for his decades of service and wishes him a long, happy, and healthy retirement. ■

## IBEW MERCHANDISE



#### LADIES TURQUOISE V-NECK T-SHIRT \$13.00

100% Certified ring spun organic cotton turquoise v-neck shirt. Shirt is semi-fitted for the perfect length and fit. Features convention logo on left chest.

#### CONVENTION CHALLENGE COIN - SILVER \$5.00

Limited edition commemorative challenge coin in silver finish. Available only while supplies last.

#### PORTABLE POWER BANK \$10.00

5,000mAh rechargeable power banks. Built in micro USB cable and additional USB output port. Comes fully charged in a clamshell package and features full color convention logo. Designed to charge cell phones and tablets.

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

[www.ibewmerchandise.com](http://www.ibewmerchandise.com)

# LOCAL LINES

## Elect Friends of Labor

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,ptc,rts,s,se,spa, st&ws), ST. LOUIS, MO — With the summer primaries behind us, we turn our attention to the fall election and campaigning for labor-backed candidates. You've heard the phrase "this election is the most important election." I cannot remember a time when this refrain has as much riding on it as it does right now. Please get involved and donate money, time and effort in supporting candidates that are friendly towards the labor movement and our issues.

On Sat., Sept. 17, we will hold the ninth annual Electrical Workers' Local 1 Sporting Clays Classic, a fundraiser for our relief fund. This event is a favorite for members, their families and friends.

United We Stand, Divided We Fall

Kyle Hunter, P.S.

would like to congratulate all the members who have volunteered to hold these positions in our various units for the next three years. The local's strength comes from this type of membership involvement and it is greatly appreciated by all.

Robert Corona, P.S.

## LCTT Tree Jamboree

L.U. 17 (catv,em,lctt,o&u), DETROIT, MI — On June 25 our local held our annual Tree Jamboree at our training center, where we hosted over 500 members and their families. This climbing competition gives our members the opportunity to showcase their skills in five events: work climb, belayed speed climb, ascent event, throwline and aerial rescue.

The competition is divided between journeymen and apprentices. For the first time, we added a women's division as well. The winners in each division will be proudly representing Local 17 at the Michigan Tree Climbing Championship in September on Belle Isle in Detroit, where we look to capture the "Corporate Cup" for the third year in a row!

Congratulations to the following individuals, who are shown in the accompanying photo: journeyman men's division — Cody Schwartz (first), Jacob Kropik (second), Nathan Gillihan (third); journeyman women's division — Sara Routheaux (first); apprentice men's division — Christian Nederveld (first), Randon Seres (second), Jacob Davis (third); and apprentice women's division — Ebonie Knight (first).

James Shaw, B.M.



Local 35's apprentices gathered for a photo to celebrate graduation.

## Hartford Electricians JATC Graduation

L.U. 35 (i), HARTFORD, CT — The Hartford Electricians JATC held its annual end-of-year graduation event for the apprentices. Local 35 celebrates "Top Apprentice" Daniel Spellman and all the apprentices' bright futures with the IBEW. The graduates can be seen in the accompanying photo, above, and include Dylan Tresselt, Top Apprentice Daniel Spellman, Ramon Acosta Jr., Jordan Burns, Jeffrey Kent, Training Director Chris Brown, Brandon Beaupre, John O'Hara, Tyler Sebastiao, Aaron Ottowell, Nicholas Johnson, Ryan Harakaly, Jake Beaudry and Jake Mokrzecki. Congratulations to the class of 2022!

Kenneth R. White, P.S.

## You've Only Just Begun

L.U. 41 (i,se,es,em&spa), BUFFALO, NY — Happy (almost) fall, sisters and brothers! As the school year begins and we look forward to our upcoming 125th anniversary celebration, there is hope on the horizon. There may be a slight slowdown in work this winter as we see projects being interrupted due to material delays, but there are projects that continue to move forward, including Great Lakes Cheese, Foster and Crosby Halls at the University of Buffalo, Genesee County Jail and Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

We got back on track and held our fifth-year apprentice graduation on June 3. It was great to celebrate all the apprentices' hard work and give recognition to the future of Local 41. The following awards were given at the event: the Dr. Anthony Renzi Award for highest five-year average was given to Abigail Kankiewicz; the David McNamara Award for second overall highest average was given to Benjamin Boncore; and perfect attendance for the entire program was also given to Abigail Kankiewicz.

Awards were also given to our upcoming apprentices who had the highest average this year: Charles Nigro Jr. (first year), Brandon Miller (second year), Jeffrey Dombek Jr. (third year) and Paul Foster (fourth year).

Congratulations to all; it's a lot of hard work and stress, but it will be worth it in the end. The learning has only just begun. Be safe and test before you touch.

Gregory R. Inglut, P.S.

Congratulations to these skilled members who placed in Local 17's Tree Jamboree!



## Preparing to Discharge?

Train While on Active Duty!

Local 11 is proudly announcing its training opportunities with VEEP at the Electrical Training Institute facility.

## Local 11 Partners in Training with NECA, VEEP

L.U. 11 (em,i,rts&spa), LOS ANGELES, CA — Along with our NECA chapter partners, our local is proud to announce that we have become a training center for VEEP, the Veterans Electrical Entry Program. We will conduct our first cohort course of instruction starting Oct. 3 and running through Dec. 2 at our training facility, the Electrical Training Institute. This effort has been a year in the making, and we felt that we could do more for our transitioning service personnel than just accepting ten VEEP direct-entry graduates per year. We have also invested in advertising this opportunity at one of our nearest military installations, Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. We are excited for this opportunity and look forward to training and graduating electricians to ultimately bring them into our membership or send them to locals across the nation.

We recently held our unit elections and



Congratulations to Local 41's apprentices: (front, left to right) Matthew Lycett, Michael Russo Jr., Matthew Waldmiller, Benjamin Boncore, Abigail Kankiewicz, Bradley Kopacz, Leonard Pfohl Jr., Michael Ferraro, Timothy Sullivan Jr.; (back, left to right) Dylan Seufert, Christopher Robinson, Troy Desing, Dylan Wojtkowski, Dylan Wagner, Joseph Difiglia, Anthony Lindsay and Corey O'Leary.

## 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	(rtm) Radio-Television Manufacturing	(u) Utility
(em) Electrical Manufacturing	(mow) Manufacturing Office Workers	(ws) Warehouse and Supply	(uow) Utility 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.

## Work Safe & Buy Union

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — On June 14, Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin was hard at work during a full-house meeting, answering questions on our next bargaining.

Our recent work developments are summarized below:

- For SCE, the second day of the power production meeting regarding the company's proposal to consolidate steam, hydro and Catalina into one unit took place on June 29. With respect to SCE construction field forces, we are close to finalizing paragraph "M" with several classification updates for wages and responsibilities. After several meetings, we came to an agreement with the company on June 6 for all overtime paid at double-time rates for certain line classifications.
- City of Riverside — We are still in the mediation process.
- City of Colton (electric) — We await a response from the city's lawyer on our latest proposals to finalize the MOU.
- City of Banning (utility and general) — Negotiations have started, and meetings are scheduled through July.
- City of Vernon — Negotiations continue; for outside line, new agreement passed with over 85% voting "yes."

Aug. 5 was our scheduled IBEW Dodger night, and we hope you attended and had a great time.

We're sad to report the deaths of Douglas Arendt, Robert Loughlin, Jim Olberding and Rodney Williams, a Local 57 member working in our jurisdiction. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

*Mitch Smith, P.S.*



Local 47's Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin answers questions on upcoming bargaining at a June parent-body meeting.

## Scholarship Golf Outing

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — Our election of officers was held June 10 with the results as follows: Business Manager/Financial Secretary Robert Wedell, President Robert D. Colby Jr., Vice President Clay Davidson, Recording Secretary Stacey Heckman and Treasurer Daniel Haney. Our newly elected Executive Board members are Brian Abraham, Christian Benad, Chris Blount, Ryan Brewer, Brian Courtwright, Shateveon Goforth, Jon Lovel, John McCray, Clint Plummer, Wayne Reel, Matt Simpkins, Tony Smeathers and Darren White.

This year's scholarship golf outing was a great success, and 15 scholarships were awarded. The winning team was Bob Baker, Dan Brewer, Mark Danneberger and Jason Scoles; the second-place team was Jason Dashner, CJ Lowder, Jason Lowder and Joe Lowder. Jerry Henery, Anthony Moore, Paul Moore and Chad Schweighart received the coveted dead-last team trophy. Congratulations to the following scholarship winners: Ella Armstrong, Krista Copples, Reya Corley, Tre Corley, Eric Gilmore, Shateveon Goforth, Teri Jones, Brook Kitner, Cole Kitner, Dayevion Meek, Callie Morgan, Kyler Parks, Morgan Shreves, Lillian Valledares and Kolby Weiss.

After a two-year coronavirus hiatus, our annual picnic resumes Sept. 24 at the hall. We look forward to seeing you there!

*Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.*



Local 97 wishes retiring President/Business Manager/Financial Secretary Ted Skerpon a wonderful retirement.

## Brother Ted Skerpon Retires

L.U. 97 (ptc&u), SYRACUSE, NY — We are glad and sad to announce the retirement of President, Business Manager and Financial Secretary Ted Skerpon. Ted started with our predecessor company, Niagara Mohawk, 36 years ago. He has held positions with the local for the vast majority of those years, starting as a steward before moving to his first officer role on the Executive Board in 2001. Following that term, he was elected treasurer for two successive terms (2004 – 2010) and then four successive terms as business manager (2010 – 2022).

This spring, Brother Skerpon announced that he would not seek another term and instead ease into retirement. During his tenure as business manager, he navigated a strike at Nine Mile Point Nuclear generating station that was ultimately profitable for our members (although he did get arrested along the way). Among the many other challenges he faced was representing a workforce that was deemed essential during a pandemic. In addition, he chaired the New York State (NYS) Utility Labor Council for several years and sat on the Executive Board of the NYS Association of Electrical Workers, the NYS Climate Action Council and the Just (energy) Transition working group. His leadership of Local 97 and in the labor movement within NYS is unprecedented. His knowledge and experience, and that of his staff, is irreplaceable. May you enjoy a long and happy retirement, Ted!

*Dan Machold, P.S.*

## Membership, Contractor Base on Upward Trend

L.U. 103 (cs&i), BOSTON, MA — Over the past several months, our Organizing Department has been aggressively pursuing nonunion contractors in our jurisdiction. The hard work and determination have been reaping rewards. We are proud to announce that since January, Local 103 has increased our contractor base by 12 and our membership by more than 680.

In addition to Platinum Protection Systems, Syntegra Mechanical, Atlas Electric Construction, Kelso Burnett Co., Breiter Planet Construction, EH Electric & HVAC, Stewart Electrical Contracting, Glass Electric Company, BD Boston Electrical, Staff Electric and Smart Green Solar, a major victory was the organizing of Annese Electrical Services, a respected greater Boston electrical contractor for more than 35 years. Welcome to all of our new contractors and members.

Local 103 recently held our apprentice graduation, and we congratulate our newest journeymen and technicians as they move forward in their electrical and telecommunications careers. Our most diverse apprentice class was recently initiated, adding 350 first-year apprentices to our membership.

Another successful pin night was held in June. Congratulations to the 1,500 members who were honored for their years of service in the IBEW. A special congratulations goes to William Cormay, who received his 79-years-of-service pin at the event.

*Jimmy Fleming, P.S.*

## Local 125 Celebrates One of Its Own

L.U. 125 (lctt,o&u), PORTLAND, OR — Business Manager Travis Eri and President Larry Browning were proud to represent the IBEW at the 29th AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. On June 12, Local 125's Liz Shuler was elected president of the AFL-CIO. Fred Redmond was elected secretary-treasurer.

"It was an honor for Larry and me to witness Liz's election," said Eri. "We were proud to stand with Lance [Shuler], a Local 125 journeyman lineman, on this day. It was certainly an opportunity we didn't want to miss."

It's no secret that workers across the country are organizing, which will strengthen our labor movement. Even industries like ours, with strong union density, must take nothing for granted. U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, a former building trades union leader, has said, "It's your time right now, for the labor movement to get off our ass and do our job. ... You can't sit on your ass and think it's going to come to you. You need to go out and get it."

Let's get ready to organize by educating, communicating and engaging folks about the labor movement. It's our time!

*Marcy Grail, A.B.M.*



Local 125 journeyman lineman and proud father Lance Shuler with President Larry Browning.

## Work Improving for Local 141

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Work in our jurisdiction is slowly improving, with 71 members currently on Book 1. We anticipate this number to be much lower when this article prints, as there are sizeable outages planned for two large industrial sites in our local.

Local 141 is pleased to introduce our latest journeyman wiremen: Congratulations to Keith Burge, Colton Campbell, Kyle Groves, Brian Murphy, Jason Perry and Cole Roberts. May they have a



Instructor Justin Klempa with Local 141 apprentice graduates (left to right) Kyle Groves, Cole Roberts, Colton Campbell, Brian Murphy, Jason Perry and Keith Burge.

long and fruitful career in the IBEW!

Three members from Local 141 attended the IBEW 40th International Convention, held in Chicago in May, returning with all the latest news and information from the international union.

The Local 141 Social Committee is busy planning our summer picnic and golf scramble, and plans are underway for an outing to a minor-league baseball game for our members.

Please stay safe and healthy!

*Kurt "Bug" Reed, P.S.*

## Eventful Summer for Local 237

L.U. 237 (i&r), NIAGARA FALLS, NY — Local 237's union elections were held on June 16, with a total of 128 valid ballots counted. The results are as follows: Business Agent John Scherrer; President Craig Horrocks; Vice President James Bailor; Recording Secretary David Felice; Financial Secretary Thomas Aurelio; Treasurer Paul Williams; Executive Board members Frederick Dumais, Cody Samol, Joe Scrivano, Jamie Swartz, Michael Walter and Jeffrey Yuzva; Examining Board members Joel Masters, Timothy Sheehan and Kenneth Smith; Alternate Delegate Craig Horrocks. Congratulations and much success to all!

On June 24, we celebrated the graduating apprentice class of 2022. The graduation dinner and awards ceremony was conducted at Brickyard Brewing Company in Lewiston. Top apprentice honors went to Matthew Ventry, who received a commemorative watch, \$100 Graybar gift certificate and gear, 12-volt Milwaukee cordless drill and Klein meter and side cutters. Perfect attendance honors went to Ryan Clark, Chad Gailor, Kevin Robinson and Matthew Ventry, who were each awarded a \$50 Graybar gift certificate. Again, we would like to congratulate all of our newest journeymen on their hard work and accomplishments.

Local 237's summers are typically full of events that many members and their families look forward to attending. Two of these events, the Motorcycle Run and Family Picnic, took place on Aug. 20. We will see two more events being held on Sept. 10: the Golf Outing and Stag Picnic. The Golf Outing is free to members and will take place at the Shawnee Golf Course in Sanborn; the Stag Picnic will be for our first-year apprentices at the new union hall in Niagara Falls. To round out the summer, Brother Andy Janese will be hosting the 7th annual IBEW 237 Disc Golf Tournament on Sept. 24 at Joseph Davis State Park in Lewiston. All of these events are a great way to build and strengthen brotherhood among members, revel in camaraderie and celebrate what we have all worked hard to achieve.

*Brandon Lum, P.S.*

## Happy Labor Day

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — Our local hopes that everyone is enjoying the summer and spending quality time with their friends and families. Thank you for always working hard to keep each other safe and looking out for one another.

We also wish everyone a happy Labor Day. It

## LOCAL LINES

is easy to forget that this holiday is a day to honor the hard work of the members of organized labor. It took a lot of blood, sweat and tears shed by those who came before us to help us become the union that we are today.

We hope to see everyone at the Labor Day Parade in downtown Toledo this Sept. 5 at 9 a.m. If you'd like to participate in the parade, please give the hall a call to get signed up.

We would like to congratulate the seven new members from the Power Systems Institute (PSI) program that were sworn in at the June union meeting. Remember to take the time to train these new members and pave a path even better than you had. Let's close out 2022 strong, and I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Brian Gendaszek, P.S.



Local 245 delegates President Brian Gendaszek, Business Manager Shane Bauman, Ken Kurtz and Joel Reeder with newly elected Fourth District Vice President Gina Cooper.

## Brother Glenn Isaacs Retires

L.U. 265 (I,mt,rts&spa), LINCOLN, NE — Our local celebrates the retirement of Brother Glenn Isaacs. Brother Isaacs has been an IBEW member since August of 1980. He completed the four-year apprenticeship and was awarded journeyman status in March of 1984. Having served as a local union organizer from January 2003 to July of 2011, Brother Isaacs has been a source of inspiration and advice. He made it a point to educate his fellow brothers and sisters on the things that got us where we are today, why we enjoy the rights we have, how we got those rights and why our fight must remain steadfast. Brother Isaacs has spent his life in service of the IBEW and all that we stand for. Whether it be through news reports, letters to the editor, on-the-job conversations or over a meal, Glenn could spark a conversation both productive and meaningful. Local 265 would like to wish Brother Isaacs many great years of retirement.

Local 265 has been busy. We have had several unfiled calls for weeks/months. The work outlook seems to be increasing as well. Organizing efforts have been ongoing, and we have seen some good success in recent months.

Justin Petty, A.B.M.

## Dinner with Friends

IBEW Local 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ — The local puts on many worthy and laudable events during the course of the year, though there is one particular event in June that many of our members have circled on their calendar. This would be the annual dinner honoring our retirees, and once again this year's event did not disappoint. After a cocktail hour and hor d'oeuvres the honorees were escorted into the dining room with bagpipes playing. After being recognized by the membership for their years of hard work and dedication to the organization, all were seated and enjoyed a top-notch dinner with an open bar for ongoing refreshments. Lively conversations, hearty laughter and good-natured ribbing were the order of the night, and there was plenty to go around. After dinner, cigars and libations were enjoyed on the outdoor patio while old acquaintances were renewed and new friend-

ships were forged.

As the night wore on, handshakes and "good nights" became more prevalent as brothers and sisters made their way out the door and headed for home. Some you may see the next day on the job. Some you may not see until next year's dinner. And some, sadly, you may never see again. These are the reasons why so many members make it a priority to attend.

Brian Jacoppo, P.S.

## Vote 'Yes' to Illinois Amendment 1

L.U. 309 (i,lctt,mo,mt,o,rts,spa&u), COLLINSVILLE, IL — On Nov. 8, Illinois will vote to amend the state's constitution. Amendment 1, the Illinois Right to Collective Bargaining, would guarantee a fundamental right to collective bargaining and preempt "right-to-work" laws, which prohibit collective bargaining agreements that require union membership as a condition of employment. Vote "yes" and make Illinois the first state to permanently block future right-to-work laws.

Currently, inside work is strong and looks to remain positive, despite occasional supply deficiencies. On the utility side, System Council U-5 is continuing negotiations with Ameren Illinois.

After a lengthy hiatus from social gatherings, Local 309 is pleased to transition back to scheduled events with our union friends and families. On Aug. 19, families were invited to a Gateway Grizzlies baseball game and party. On Sept. 5, Local 309 will march in the Labor Day parade. On Sept. 30, we will host our annual PAC golf tournament. And finally, we are delighted to present the 50-year-dinner to our retirees on Nov. 5.

Carlos S. Perez, R.S.

## Tri-State Kids Fishing Day

L.U. 317 (i,lctt,o,rts,t&u), HUNTINGTON, WV — At the end of 2021, we were once again able to host our annual toy drive at our local, which ensured that many children across the community had presents to unwrap on Christmas. Despite cold and rainy weather, the Christmas spirit prevailed with a high turnout of members and volunteers from our community coming together. We would like to thank everyone who came out and volunteered their time for such a worthy cause. Local members included Business Manager Shane Wolfe and his wife, Glenna, alongside their sons Samuel Wolfe (apprentice wireman) and Brody Wolfe; President Clay Mitchell; Vice President Lance Moore; Ryan Adkins (JW) and his son Wyatt; Kevin Wells (JW) and Tucker Watts (apprentice wireman). There were also several volunteers from our community: Matt Simms (Dixon Electric); Tom Bralley (Pritchard Electric); Lisa Harper (Hatzel & Buehler Electric); and representatives from TCR Country radio station, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Huntington and St. Joseph's High School.

More recently, after receiving donations from Local 317 LLMCC; Locals 369, 575 and 968; Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 83; and Boilermakers Local 667 we once again hosted our Tri-State Kids Fishing Day. This is the first time since 2018 that we have been able to host this event due to COVID-19,



Local 317's members, friends and families gathered for the IBEW-sponsored Tri-State Kids Fishing Day.

and it turned out to be a great success. This year we gave out over 160 fishing poles to the children that attended and provided lunch for over 400 people. We hope to continue with this event year after year as it seems to be popular with the community.

Shane Wolfe, B.M.

## Brotherhood of Hearts and Minds

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — Happy Labor Day, brothers and sisters! This day we celebrate the successes of organized labor and the rewards that union membership offers us. We also remember Patriot Day this month. On Sept. 11, 2001, the IBEW lost 21 members from Local 3 (17) and Local 1212 (4), at the World Trade Center attacks. Sadly, 343 NYC firefighters died at Ground Zero.

Our international union covers approximately 738 locals representing 42 IBEW trade classifications. Check out the tramp guide (Local Union Directory) for a glimpse of the IBEW's range. We are a brotherhood and sisterhood that is larger than any one of us, but individually we can make a difference. Get involved in the local's activities. Care for others in need. Give respect when respect is due. Belonging to the union can be more than just going to work each day. The IBEW is a brotherhood of hearts and minds.

Keep America Strong — Buy "Union Made in the USA."

Tom Small, P.S.

## Celebrating Labor Day

L.U. 347 (em,i,mt,rtb,rts&spa), DES MOINES, IA — After two years of sparse social gatherings, with no Labor Day celebration or parade, the Des Moines Labor Community is planning a full blowout of a parade. Plan on attending!

As reported in the last Local 347 entry, EP2 has been hiring Afghan refugees. The new hires see the value of belonging to the union and representing their bargaining unit. Since the last report, their numbers have doubled and they are now at 50. Local 347 wishes to extend a welcoming hand to all.

The new union hall is being received as a big

improvement for Local 347. The reaction of the members and staff has been positive by a large majority. If you haven't attended a meeting in a while or taken a tour of the hall, stop by and check it out.

The Eleventh District Progress Meeting was held June 22 — 24 in Des Moines. One message driven home during the meeting is that cultural diversity is a priority of the IBEW. That is how organized labor comes to exist. Raising the pension benefit was also discussed.

The work outlook in Local 347 continues to be positive. Apple's Project Morgan is on the cusp of taking off.

*If hard work were such a wonderful thing, surely the rich would have kept it all to themselves.* — Lane Kirkland

Mike Schweiger, P.S.

## Celebrating Local 357 Apprentices

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — The Electrical JATC of Southern Nevada is pleased to announce that the 2022 annual graduation ceremony was held on May 14 at the Local 357 union hall. Training Director Madison Burnett and Assistant Training Directors Douglas Ziegenhagen and Matthew Apfel had the honor of presenting this year's 51 inside wiremen and eight installer technicians. Guest speaker Rep. Dina Titus addressed the apprentices and guests. A dinner sponsored by the Southern Nevada IBEW/NECA LMCC followed the ceremony later that evening at the Culinary Academy of Las Vegas.

David A. Evans received this year's award for Outstanding Apprentice Wireman. Ryan T. Finnegan received the Installer Technician Outstanding Apprentice award. The Mike Laux award (for most union meetings attended) was awarded to three graduates: Jose G. Gonzalez, Jessica A. Ritchie and Melanie R. Zavala. The Clyde Green Sr. Memorial award (highest GPA for minority students) went to Manuel Limon and Kristy K. Yegge. Perfect attendance awards were presented to Nathaniel S. Black, Jessica L. Dougherty, Manuel Limon, Jermond K. Nicholas, Kristy K. Yegge and Melanie R. Zavala.

Thanks to Amanda Rooth for her work on this article.

Julie-Ann Peebles, P.S.



Congratulations to Local 357 apprentices, who graduated on May 14 with honors.

## How to Save a Life

L.U. 459 (catv,ees,em,govt,mt,ptc,so&u), JOHNSTOWN, PA — Our local proudly presented the IBEW Lifesaving Award to Brothers Bret Vanderpool and Travis White. Employed at Penelec/FirstEnergy Corp. in Towanda, Penn., these two journeymen linemen, along with former Local 459 member Gene Rockwell, were involved in a routine line repair when they noticed smoke coming from a nearby residence. They did not hesitate and sprang into action as they grabbed a ladder and saved two residents from their burning home. Brother Vanderpool climbed in the house and fought smoke and flames to bring an elderly fire victim to the window and carried her down the ladder. This selfless act of bravery serves as an inspiration to all in the IBEW, and we at Local 459 could not be prouder of our union brothers' actions on that day.

Barry Hixson, B.M./F.S.



Brothers Travis White, Barry Hixson (business manager), Bret Vanderpool, and Gary Hummel (shop steward) from Local 459 display their Lifesaving Awards.

## Top-Notch Awards

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rts,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — After a couple years off due to the pandemic, the Top-Notch Standards of Excellence Awards resumed in May. The statewide event brings together the different unions and industry partners alike to recognize those crafts that stand out above the rest. Local 481 took home a couple of the top awards: the Labor Management Award and the Union of the Year Award, which together highlight the local, its membership and the progress made in the union electrical industry over the past couple of years. Without the support of the membership and the time and talents given on behalf of Local 481, this award would not have been possible. Thank you to the members of Local 481 and keep up the good work! Your participation makes it all possible.

In August, we celebrated the accomplishments of the graduates at our apprenticeship banquet. All the graduates over the last couple of years were able to walk across the stage and be recognized by their peers and family. Congratulations to all the new journeymen wiremen and journeymen installer technicians! Good luck as you take the next steps to become the next generation of the IBEW.

Blake A. Andrews, Bus. Rep./Treas.



Local 481 took home two awards, the Labor Management and Union of the Year Awards, at the statewide Top-Notch Standards of Excellence in May.



Congratulations to Local 601's inside and telecom graduates: (front row, left to right) Wyatt Beesley, Michael Witt, Jeff Deem, Jesse Cogdill, Justin Wise and David Ruff; (back row, left to right) Rick Mingee, Tui Lynch, Chad Marshall, Ron Becker, Jared Orcutt, JC Ducey, Jordan Mueller, Jason Cain, Cameron Finn, Jarrett Clem and Bob Withers.

## Best and Brightest

L.U. 601 (i&rtb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL — Our local would like to dedicate this article to its graduating class of 2022. Local 601 continues to turn out the best, brightest and finest electricians that you'll ever see on any jobsite. We're sure that this class will lead future generations of apprentices to success just as they were led themselves.

The inside graduating class of 2022 is Wyatt Beesley, Jason Cain, Jesse Cogdill, Jeff Deem, JC Ducey, Cameron Finn, Chad Marshall, Jordan Mueller, Jared Orcutt, David Ruff, Justin Wise and Michael Witt. The telecom graduating class 2022 is Eli Benfield, Dominik Harmon and Brock Tackitt.

Congratulations to the class of 2022 and the many more to come.

Luther Baker, P.S.

## Local 611 Work Boom

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — Brothers and sisters, I apologize for not having an article in the last few issues. As of this writing, our local has been booming with work. Los Alamos, Facebook, Sandia and Intel have all been putting in calls, and most calls have not been filled due to a shortage of electricians. If you know of anyone with electrical experience or anyone who wants to be a part a great organization, have them call our union hall or our JATC.

This year, Local 611 will have three picnics, in Albuquerque, Farmington and Carlsbad; if possible, please make every attempt to attend one of them.

Under our PLA agreement, the local picked up a \$7-million project with the county and two through the city; McDade got the Los Altos project and B&D picked up the airport project.

Our local was the only private-sector union that lobbied to push through the Healthy Workplace Act (HB-20). Our members now receive one hour for every 30 hours worked up to 64 hours a year; our administration did a great job helping to



New members of Local 611 are sworn in at a recent meeting.

get this bill passed.

On behalf of the membership, I would like to send condolences to the family and friends of Nestor Armijo, Victor L. Barncastle, Victor Batchelder, Brandon Bibiano, Sean M. Bishop, Willie L. Bortisser, George P. Bowen, Katherine Katz Chavez, Thomas E. Ferdinand, Thomas Furlow, Arthur Galdon, Angelo Herrera, Archie L. Hogue, Jimmy D. Hook Jr., Justin L. Law, Doug Markey, Donald Marshall, Murry S. Maxwell, Thomas Noblett, Charles "Chuck" Nunnelley, Murfin Paul, Ken R. Richardson, Jon A. Rowland, William "Peewee" Stallings, Lonnie Sutton and Art R. Torres.

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.

## Congratulations New Journeyman!

L.U. 683 (i&ptc), COLUMBUS, OH — On May 13, our local's annual apprenticeship banquet was held. We would like to congratulate the 52 new journeymen inside wiremen and six new journeymen installer techs for their hard work and commitment throughout their apprenticeships.

The Chuck Bland memorial fish fry, one of Local 683's longest-running traditions, returned to its traditional first Friday in June. This year's event likely had the highest turnout in its long history, helped by the great weather. I would like to thank the fish fry committee for putting in the long day: Their hard work made the day a great success.

As in past updates, our work outlook continues to be outstanding, and we continue to have calls coming in. There are two new data-center sites, in addition to ongoing sites, that are in the beginning stages of work. Project Cypress, the Franklin County



Local 683 held a banquet for its 52 graduating journeymen inside wiremen and six journeymen installer technicians (not pictured).

Jail and the OSU Medical Center have been driving the majority of the calls at this time. We expect the need for manpower to continue for some time, and I would again like to thank our traveling brothers and sisters for helping to fill these needs.

Mike Morey, Pres.



DTE workers (from left) Scott Steymans, Paul Avila and Manuel Medina are all smiles after winning their IBEW 1245 union election on April 19.

## Welcome DTE Members

L.U. 1245 (catv,em,govt,lctt,o,t&u), VACAVILLE, CA — The employees of DTE Energy Services at the University of California — Berkeley Cogeneration Plant voted to join our local this spring. Their NLRB union election in April marked the culmination of an organizing drive that began early this year. This is a notable victory for a group who have long sought stability and positive change at work, and Local 1245 is pleased to welcome these dedicated workers.

The outside line members of Locals 1245 and 47 ratified a new agreement this spring, which represents the largest total package increase ever bargained for this agreement. The total compensation package for journeymen amounts to 25.87% over five years, an average of 5.17% a year. All other classifications receive a total compensation package of 16.76% over the term of this agreement, with an average annual wage increase of 3.35% a year.

A crew of Local 1245 members from the Sacramento Municipal Utility District SMUD volunteered to travel to Navajo Nation to turn the lights on for families who have waited far, far too long. Nearly one in three families living on the Navajo Nation reservation — around 15,000 households — do not have access to electricity in their homes. They account for 75% of all unelectrified homes in the United States. This is the second time a crew from our local has participated in the "Light Up Navajo" initiative, which launched in 2019.

After a two-year pandemic-induced hiatus, the

**HAVE YOU MOVED?**

Notify us of an address change

[www.ibew.org/ChangeMyAddress](http://www.ibew.org/ChangeMyAddress)

or call 202-728-6263

## LOCAL LINES

PG&E/IBEW 1245 West Coast Lineman's Rodeo returned this spring, with more than 20 apprentices and around 60 journeymen linemen participating in this time-honored tradition. The rodeo showcases the unique, exceptional skills that linemen utilize in the field every day — but in this case, they're in a simulated environment with hundreds of spectators cheering them on. Local 1245 is home to some of the most elite lineman's rodeo competitors in the nation, and they were thrilled to show off their abilities once again in this friendly-yet-fierce competition.

*Rebecca Band, Comm. Dir.*

## Where Do We Go From Here?

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,ptc&u), CINCINNATI, OH — On May 31, the William H. Zimmer generating station along the banks of the Ohio River produced its last megawatt of electricity. This 1300-megawatt plant started construction in the early 1970s as a nuclear plant. Before construction could be completed, public outcry forced a change in direction, and this station is known as the world's first nuclear-to-coal conversion.

After coming online in 1991 as a coal-fired plant, Zimmer has seen many changes in the power industry. Even though ownership passed among several companies throughout the years, one thing has remained a constant for this plant: the IBEW. With the first Local 1347 members coming onboard in 1974, Zimmer has been a source of excellent union jobs for the area, employing literally generations of families through parents, children and grandchildren. This closure has been a blow to not only our union brothers and sisters, but also to all the contractors, suppliers and surrounding communities. In these times of uncertainty, every plant shutdown creates a weaker electrical grid in our country. It appears that this situation will continue, creating even more demand on all members of the IBEW to keep providing leadership and stability for our future.

*Andrew Kirk, B.M.*

## Sister McMaster, Tradeswoman Hero

L.U. 1547 (c,em,i,lctt,o,ptc,t&u), ANCHORAGE, AK — Local 1547 is extremely pleased to share that our local's wireman apprentice Jackie McMaster has been selected as one of NABTU's Tradeswomen Heroes for July 2022!

Jackie was accepted as a wireman apprentice into the Alaska Joint Electrical Apprenticeship in early 2020. She has worked construction in Juneau since she started the program and receives glowing reviews from journeymen she has worked with. Jackie balances motherhood, a demanding job and required out-of-town classroom assignments while still finding time to frequently volunteer at IBEW events and attend monthly general meetings in Juneau.

*Melinda Taylor, Comm. Dir.*



Local 1547 wireman apprentice Jackie McMaster was selected as one of NABTU's Tradeswomen Heroes in July.

# RETIREES

## Successful Seminars at LIEC

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SUFFOLK CHAPTER — Our chapter was invited by our union to spend three days at the Long Island Educational Center in June. When we arrived we were greeted by the pension director of our union, Maureen Steiger, who told us a little about the history of the LIEC. Our chapter chairman, Richard Duva, welcomed everyone and explained that we would be attending seminars on Tuesday and Wednesday, which turned out to be very interesting and informative. We also heard from a speaker who explained Finance 101 and Erica Vines, a nutritionist from our union.

On Tuesday we had a catered barbecue lunch, which was delicious. Our thanks to Kevin Conley, our entertainment chairman, for all his hard work. After the barbecue, we had a dessert bar with make-your-own ice cream sundaes.

In his closing remarks, Richard Duva reminded everyone how important it is to stay active politically and back the union to preserve our benefits. His wife wished everyone a safe and happy summer.

Thanks to Frank Bono for bringing out some of his games. We had lots of fun. Our June meeting was very well attended, as we had our usual traditional catered luncheon. The chairman asked for a committee report. Kevin Conley spoke about our upcoming holiday party, and he indicated that he would have more information at our September meeting. The chairman reminded everyone about attending and marching in the Labor Day Parade and congratulated our new officers: Ray Palumbo, treasurer, Beatrice Constantine, financial secretary and Kevin Conley, entertainment chairman.

*Harvey Goldman, P.S.*

## Trip Planning Resumes

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 26, WASHINGTON, DC — Brother Rick Warner has already started to schedule post-pandemic trips. One went to Delaware Park and another to the Canadian Rockies. If you are interested in joining an event or have a suggestion, please give Brother Warner a call at 240-472-0438. Currently he is looking into a trip to the Suez Canal for 2023.

If you want to hear about upcoming travels in 2022, attend our meetings on the second Saturday of the month at noon, September through May. In the meantime, the local's picnic was held this year in Virginia and Maryland. In August, we sent out our annual raffle tickets to help support our medical equipment program and the notice for the



Volunteers help to inventory hospital beds and more for Local 26 Retirees Club's medical equipment program.

annual October RMC Crab Feast.

We are lending out more items for our medical equipment program! We had a great group of volunteers helping to inventory the items we keep in a sea container (in addition to a room in the union hall). We tested all the electric hospital beds and more.

*Susan Flashman, P.S.*

## Local 35 Retirees Speak at Graduation

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — As retired union electricians, our chapter is involved with the Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans. The organization is an affiliate of the Connecticut AFL-CIO and has a seat on its Executive Board. It takes part in testifying at the state Legislature, interviewing candidates for state offices and lobbying for just causes, and it is very active in protecting the rights and benefits of retirees. The organization is in the process of helping to pass H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, to lower drug prices of people covered by Medicare and private insurance. It also fights to protect the right to vote for seniors and strongly opposes the TRUST Act, which would cut Social Security and Medicare benefits. Representatives from the Local 35 Retirees Club were fortunate to attend the convention of the Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans.

Congratulations to the Class of 2022 apprentices. President Dennis Machol and I attended the graduation and spoke regarding the fact that we're a brotherhood that takes care of each other throughout our careers. We emphasized safety on the jobsites and encouraged graduates to adhere to the integrity of their trade when obtaining their Connecticut electrical licenses. We stressed that this is not just a job — it's a career that they should be proud of.

*Kenneth R. White, P.S.*

## Service Pins Awarded at Retiree Luncheon

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — Greetings, brothers and sisters: Hopefully everyone is staying safe and healthy. Summer and the heat are upon us here in the Midwest. Make sure you stay hydrated and don't overheat.

On Apr. 8, the local held our retiree luncheon. It was great to see everyone again and welcome some new retirees. This was the first luncheon we have had

in the last couple of years. The following retirees were awarded service pins for 2022: David Clark, Carl Ferguson, George Fuller, Michael Kennedy, Jim Morton, Ron Shisler and Hobart Woody (50 years); Victor Kimmi and Dave Singmaster (55 years); Keith Query (65 years); Dave Switzer (70 years); and Eldon Judd (75 years). Congratulations to all!

The 34th-annual crappie tournament and fish fry

was held on Apr. 30. As usual, there was a great turnout. A lot of fish were caught, a lot of fish stories told and a good time was had by all.

A huge thank you to Local 53 and its staff for both of these events. It takes a lot of planning and a lot of work to put them on. The retirees certainly appreciate it and look forward to them every year.

There is still a group of retirees meeting for lunch on the second Thursday of every month at the Lumberyard Bar & Grill in Urich, Mo., around 11 a.m. We welcome anyone who would like to join us.

*Bob Stuart, Pres.*

## Local 58 Club Recruiting New Members

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 58, DETROIT, MI — August was the 50th anniversary of receiving our charter to become one of the first retiree groups in the IBEW. On Oct. 10, 1969, a meeting was held that marked the beginning of the Retirees Association. In August 1972, the association was granted a charter. Our main focus is to provide social and fraternal activities for our members. The local union is assisting us with a recruitment campaign to reach out to new retirees. We also welcome working members of the local as associate members.

This past spring, Treasurer Ray Owen was among five inductees into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame, housed at the Air Zoo Aerospace & Science Museum in Kalamazoo, Mich. As a World-War-II pilot in the Naval Air Corps, Ray was stationed on the aircraft carrier the USS Wasp and he flew missions in China, Japan and the Philippines, piloting a F6F Hellcat. Congratulations, Ray.

Let's continue to keep our attention on politics. This is an important time in our history, when we must be vigilant to protect our democracy and continue to make voices be heard. Remember, grass-roots organizations are important groups that drive change.

*Pat Nuznov, P.S.*

## Retirees Appreciated

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TX — On May 7, our retirees were treated to an "Retirees Appreciated Day" hosted by our local and Executive Board members. All who attended had a really good time. An opportunity was given to the retired

Go  
Green

Get your  
**ELECTRICAL  
WORKER** delivered  
each month *via email*.

It's convenient & helps cut  
down on paper waste. Go to  
[www.ibew.org/gogreen](http://www.ibew.org/gogreen)  
and sign up today!

Scan with a  
QR reader





members to be interviewed on tape on their views and experiences related to their work and their local, which will be shown to active members. After lunch, the Executive Board members and active members enjoyed listening to the stories of the “good ole days” from the retirees. To round out a perfect afternoon, Executive Board Chairman Koby Lee and board members hosted their concept of bingo games. There were a whole lot of laughs and fun going on. Speaking on behalf of the Local 60 retirees, we would like to take this time to say thank you to all of our local members, staff and the Executive Board for your thoughtfulness.

Another special thanks from the retirees club members goes to Brother Roman Sanchez for his very, very generous donation to the club’s coffer. The funds will go towards a catered meal on Sept. 8.

*Sandy Rogers, P.S.*

## Brother Gogola Speaks at Club Meeting

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — The club had a very interesting guest speaker at our April 13 meeting: Mike Gogola, a business representative and lead organizer for Local 134. In 2017, Business Manager Don Finn asked Mike to organize the unorganized, and he took on the task and did such a great job. He visited job sites and nonunion shop owners and was able to strip workers from non-union contractors using the IBEW’s set of organizing standards. Mike had success in adding 62 new shops and 427 new members, including A, C and CTA card holders to our local since 2017. Thanks, Mike: We appreciate your great efforts.

At our June 8 luncheon, we honored our members with 50-75 years of service: John A. Butler, Kevin M. Calkins, Robert Glover, Wing G. Mah, John D. Mehoney and Richard R. Noble (50 years); Thomas J. Boyle, Gregory R. Buss, Raymond D. Cardia, Richard E. Dohrn, James W. Dragon, Arthur D. Gorski, James J. Husa, Frank B. Mancinelli, Clyde A. McKay, John P. McNulty, William T. Meyer, Richard H. Petersen, David M. Prokop, David A. Thomas, Dick J. Wells and John Stenson (55 years); Ronald R. Carlson, Richard F. Dorgan, John S. Kern, Allen D. Kruger, Bernard F. Martin, James D. Novak, William C. Vanderveen, Kenneth W. White, James A. Withers and Thomas Withers (60 years); Thomas Giranio, James A. Leverenz, Robert F. Lichtenvoot, Victor E. Moreno, Frank Rubino and Robert E. Weil (65 years); Anthony Cecola, Joseph A. Koenig, Joseph C. Millonzi and John E. Peterson (70 years); Gilbert J. Artery and Burton H. Van Wetering (75 years). Thank you to all our honorees.

As summer comes to an end, here’s hoping everyone had a fun and safe season.

*Sue Kleczka, P.S.*



*The June Local 257 Retirees Club dinner at the Claysville Store, owned by IBEW member Mark Hooibrink and his wife Laura.*

## Elections have Consequences

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 212, CINCINNATI, OH — It is with great reluctance that I bring politics into this article; however, with the midterm elections just two months away, it is vitally important for union members and their families to support candidates friendly to labor and labor causes.

For far too long, union working people have chosen to ignore helping their own family’s welfare in favor of hot-button issues that are never solved but used to panic the conservative voters. Our families deserve better than this. Hard-fought victories by labor will be on the chopping block if our political opponents win the Congress. The middle class loses ground every time this happens.

For the first time in my life, labor has leverage in the supply-and-demand equation with more jobs than workers, thanks to the baby boomers reaching retirement age of 65 at the rate of 10,000 every day.

It is time to rebuild the middle class, and this will only happen with a Congress favorable to our plight. We cannot let this opportunity slip through our fingers. Failing to vote can have disastrous consequences for our families.

*Robert Schaefer, P.S.*

## Dinner and a Show

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 257, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The June retiree dinner was held at Claysville Store with 53 members and guests in attendance. Claysville Store is located just off the Katy Trail in Hartsburg, Mo., and it has been owned and operated by Local 257 member Mark Hooibrink and his wife Laura since 2002. The family-style restaurant provided excellent fried chicken with all the fixings and homemade desserts.

Condolences are sent to the family of Charles R. Bates, age 85, who passed on May 4. Charley entered the IBEW upon discharge from the U.S. Army. Over the years, he worked in many areas of

the country until he retired from Local 257 in 2000. A memorial service with military honors was held on May 21 at Amvets Post 153 in Mokane, Mo.

Plans are underway at the time of this writing for the Retirees Club to attend “Dreamgirls” at the Lyceum Theater on July 20. The Broadway musical is based on the successes of R&B acts like the Supremes and the Shirelles. We hope everyone who joined us had a great time.

*Connie Hamacher, P.S.*



*Local 351’s Retirees Club officers are: (left to right) Harold Mead (R.S.); Karen Valentine, Joe Alesandrini, Kathy Hamilton (all Exec. Comm.); Dick Riffert (V.P.); Lynda Mead (Treas.); Rich Trasferini (Pres.); Andy Helsel (Bus. Agt.); Bob Campbell (Exec. Comm.).*

## New Officers Installed

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 351, FOLSOM, NJ — We have been a busy group! Late last year, we took a wonderful bus trip to the beautiful Longwood Gardens to see the Christmas light display. Our group also had a visit from agents Andy Helsel, Steve Gandy and Steve Demateo at our Christmas luncheon. At our March luncheon, we were visited by friend and brother Rep. Donald Norcross, who represents the First District of New Jersey. He keeps us well-represented in Washington.

We have another bus trip planned to see the show “David” at the Sight & Sound Theater in Lancaster, Pa. Our new slate of officers were installed at our July meeting by Business Agent/Executive Board Chairman Andy Helsel. See the accompanying photo for the newly installed members and the installing officer.

*Harold Mead, R.S.*

## 51 Members Have 50 Years at IBEW

RETIREES CLUB L.U. 353, TORONTO, ON, CANADA — On June 7, Retirees Club executives were elected at our luncheon meeting with 93 retirees in attendance. Thanks to Ron Hart for his past service as treasurer.

On June 22, Local 353’s Retirees Club hosted our annual pin award breakfast for members with 50 years of service or more. With 161 attendees, 51 received their awards. There are now over 1,150 living members’ names printed in the program.

The coronavirus has played havoc with our event planning so far this year. Some of our vendors have gone out of business, but we are looking forward to our annual exchange visits to Local 105,

Hamilton; Local 303 in St. Catharines; and Local 804, Kitchener.

Again, thanks to Local 353 working members trustees for providing coverage for retirees travel and benefits from their wage package increase. We believe that this is just one of the reasons our local continues to grow, as does our Retirees Club.

Our retirees e-mail list continues to grow and we now send out reminders of meetings, notice of events and the Local 353 e-newsletter.

*Robert Rynyk, P.S.*

## Attention All Local 640 Retirees

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 640, PHOENIX, AZ — The future course of the GARR (Golden Age Roadrunners) Club, specifically created for the purpose of fostering friendships between retired members, is in jeopardy. We appeal to all retirees to attend our October breakfast meeting to elect new officers and discuss the future of this club. It is imperative that we discuss the finances of the club and what options we have for handling them in the future.

We usually meet in the Local 640 hall on the third Friday of the month, October through May. Our next breakfast meeting is scheduled for Fri., Oct. 21 at 9 a.m. Continental breakfast will be served free of charge. Memberships can be renewed or new memberships can be taken at that time. PLEASE COME — ALL RETIREES ARE WELCOME!

*Ann Naddeo, Acting Sec., and GARR Board Members*

## Happy Retirement Brother Burris

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 1042, SANFORD, FL, CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER — We would like to announce that Wes Burris is retiring after 35 years of keeping the lights on! Wes began his lineman career journey down south in Homestead, Fla. Wes moved his family up to central Florida back in 2004 and brought his passion for his work and his fellow man with him to make Local 1042 his new home. Please wish Brother Burris smooth sailing as he retires his hooks and picks up his fishing pole!

*Ellen Stephenson, P.S.*



*Local 1042’s Wes Burris celebrates being retired, not expired.*



*Congratulations to Local 134 retirees celebrating their years of service: (seated, left to right) John P. McNulty (55 years), Allen D. Kruger (60), Thomas Withers (60) Ronald E. Weil (65), Gilbert J. Artery (75); (standing, left to right) Arthur D. Gorski (55), Anthony Cecola (70), John S. Kern (60), John Stenson (55), Jim J. Husa (55), Richard R. Noble (50), Richard F. Dorgan (60), Bernard F. Martin (60).*



# WHO WE ARE

## Minnesota Member Wins Advocacy Award

**S**t. Paul, Minn., Local 110 member Robin Chuhel has been advocating for women in the trades for her entire career. This year, she finally was recognized for it.

"I was shocked," Chuhel said. "I didn't think I'd win any award. There are so many women doing such great things. I feel very appreciative to have won this honor."

Minnesota-based Women Building Success, an organization founded in 2017 to recognize and promote the achievements of women in union construction trades, awarded Sister Chuhel with its Advocate of the Year award, given out at its annual event held on June 1.

"She has not only taught the women in our local how to be better in our industry, she has taught the whole industry how to be better for women," said Local 110 Business Manager Jamie McNamara in his submission letter nominating Chuhel for the award.

Chuhel, an Air Force veteran, joined Local 110 in 1994 after completing her military service. The journey person's electrical work at St. Paul Public Schools, where she also served as a steward, was a good place for her to recruit, train and help retain as many women in the field as possible, McNamara said.

"From day one Robin dedicated her time in the construction industry to making sure everyone who entered the trades felt welcome and was treated with dignity and respect," McNamara said.

Chuhel also served for close to 20 years in a leadership role on the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee, where she had a hand in hiring.

"She was always advocating, sometimes loudly, for better pay and benefits for apprentices, professing that it is our job to make sure our apprentices are the best trained, most diverse, and well-rounded electricians in the state," McNamara said. "She felt a responsibility to ensure that everyone that applied to be an electrician had a fair shot at lifting their families into the middle class like she had done for her own."

Chuhel knows first-hand how a career in the union construction trades can change the trajectory of a family, having raised four sons on her IBEW salary.

"I was on welfare before I found the IBEW," she said. "My life, and my sons' lives, changed so much when I was accepted into Local 110. I could finally take care of my kids and not have to worry about money. I felt like I was free."

Chuhel retired last September and says she mostly misses the people she worked with, as well as the work itself.

"I loved being an electrician," she said. "I've had to start walking more



St. Paul, Minn., Local 110 member Robin Chuhel, top left, was awarded Advocate of the Year by Women Building Success for her decades of work advocating for women in the trades.

now just to stay in shape. I never feel like I'm moving enough."

While Chuhel says true equality in the trades probably won't happen in her lifetime, she is hopeful for the future.

"The women today feel like they can do anything," she said. "This generation is so much more open and willing to speak up. They feel like they belong more. And why not? We're 50% of the population. It's time to let us in."

Chuhel, who was also a member of Local 110's women's committee, credits McNamara and the local's other leadership with being open and inclusive when it comes to supporting women members.

"Jamie's a great guy. He was my first teacher too," she said. "Having a good business manager that truly accepts women makes life a lot easier. You might run into a big, fat, closed door along the way, but if that door is at Local 110, they'll let you in."

The WBS event, hadn't been held as an in-person ceremony for the last two years because of the coronavirus pandemic, had about 250 tradespeople in attendance, said Minneapolis Local 292 Assistant Business Manager

Jennifer Mudge, who helped co-found the organization.

"As a woman in the construction trades, I went years working without any other female electrical workers or other tradeswomen," Mudge said. "Events like these provide an opportunity for women in my area to meet and connect with other women in the trades, and that is incredibly valuable."

Mudge also noted the importance of IBEW locals being involved with groups like WBS.

"Being involved with a positive secondary organization like WBS only helps with retention of women in the IBEW," Mudge said. "And having IBEW sisters winning awards shows we have strong, smart and driven women within our union who are deserving of recognition."

The event, which also gave out awards for Journey Worker of the Year and Apprentice of the Year, included a recorded video message from Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

"When our tradeswomen succeed, our economy succeeds," Klobuchar said. "And when our economy succeeds, America succeeds." ■



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

*The Electrical Worker* was the name of the first official publication of the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in 1893 (the NBEW became the IBEW in 1899 with the expansion of the union into Canada). The name and format of the publication have changed over the years. This newspaper is the official publication of the IBEW and seeks to capture the courage and spirit that motivated the founders of the Brotherhood and continue to inspire the union's members today. The masthead of this newspaper is an adaptation of that of the first edition in 1893.

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Fourth District  
**William W. Riley**

Third District  
**Michael D. Welsh**

### THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

**Lonnie R. Stephenson**  
International  
President

Fifth District  
**Frank Furco**

Fourth District  
**Gina P. Cooper**

Editor  
**Lonnie R. Stephenson**

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

Sixth District  
**Dean E. Wine**

Fifth District  
**Brian K. Thompson**

**Matt Spence**

### INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Eighth District  
**Tom N. Griffiths**

Seventh District  
**Steven Speer**

**Alex Hogan**

**Curtis D. Bateman**

**John Sellman**

**Erin Sutherland**

**Asifa Haniff**

**Ben Temchine**

**Sean Bartel**

**Colin Kelly**

**Rix Oakland**

**Colleen Crinion**

**Michael Pointer**

**Janelle Hartman**

**Joe Conway**

**Emily Welsh**

### INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

Chairman  
**Christopher Erikson**

Eighth District  
**Jerry Bellah**

Ninth District  
**John J. O'Rourke**

First District  
**Joseph P. Calabro**

First District  
**Russel N. Shewchuk**

Tenth District  
**Brent E. Hall**

Second District  
**Myles J. Calvey**

Second District  
**Michael P. Monahan**

Eleventh District  
**Mark D. Hager**

Third District  
**Daniel L. Shirey**

### 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)

©2022 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The Electrical Worker (print)  
ISSN 2332-113X

The Electrical Worker (online)  
ISSN 2332-1148

All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. on Union-made paper.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Electrical Worker*, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

The Electrical Worker will not be held responsible for views expressed by correspondents.

Paid advertising is not accepted.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40011756.  
Canada Post: Return undeliverables to P.O. Box 122  
Niagara Falls ON  
L2E 6S8.



# Local 1 Volunteers Changing Lives One Home at a Time



IBEW electricians light up skyscrapers, theme parks, stadiums and other mega-projects, but sometimes the most fulfilling job is as simple as rewiring a broken socket or brightening a dark room in an aging home.

Just ask any of the hundreds of St. Louis Local 1 members who've spent a spring Saturday over the past two decades making badly needed electrical repairs at low-income homes through a community program called Rebuilding Together.

"It's one of my favorite outreach projects that we do," said Tim Cleveland, foreman at one of 15 houses the organization selected for 2022. "It fills my heart. And it's a blast."

His fellow journeyman and friend Aly Martinez marveled at the difference they're able to make in a matter of hours.

"To see the look on their faces, to show them that 'now there's a working light in your laundry; you don't have to carry a flashlight down to wash your clothes' or 'now you can plug your phone into the outlet next to your bed without worrying about sparks or fire,'" Martinez said. "I'm just so thankful that I can do that for them."

Smiles, hugs and plates of cookies are some of the instant rewards. But this year, the Missouri Community Service Commission offered its gratitude as well, presenting a Show Me Award to Local 1 and its NECA partners at the Electrical Connection.

Together they've donated more than \$2.3 million in labor and materials over the past 19 years.

The true value is priceless, as Reggie Moore found out in April.

An Army Reserve veteran who was disabled several years ago in a car accident, Moore, 63, knew that his 600-square-foot brick house urgently needed repairs he couldn't afford.

High on that list, all electrical outlets on the main floor were defective. "I had extension cords running everywhere," he said. "It definitely was a fire hazard."

But until Cleveland and his team showed up with their tools in April, Moore had no idea the extent of the dangers inside his home, including exposed wires in his kitchen that turned out to be live.

It chills him to think about the what-ifs. "My grandchildren at any time could have touched those wires," he said. "Thank God they didn't."

The wires were part of a perilous mess left by an inept repairman who took Moore's money and ran.



"We see this all the time," Local 1 Business Manager Frank Jacobs said. "People hear a good pitch from a so-called 'handyman' who has no business trying to make electrical repairs. They leave behind hazardous conditions that we are frequently called upon to repair and bring up to code."

Rebuilding Together stressed that point in nominating the Electrical Connection for the state award.

"The repairs and upgrades vary — a new ceiling fan, light fixture or bathroom vent, improvements to electrical panels, new switches and sockets," they wrote. "But it is the trained eye of the skilled electrician that uncovers the most critical issue needing repair: faulty wiring."

Volunteers inspected every nook and cranny of Moore's home, repairing what could be fixed and installing fresh wiring and lighting fixtures wherever needed. That included a new bathroom in Moore's basement that other trades workers finished on a subsequent weekend.

"Used to be that all trades went on the same day," Cleveland said. "You'd end up working on top of each other."

He laughed, saying that even now, "it kind of looks a little mayhemish when you get 10 guys in one home and everybody trying to do something."

Moore's gratitude was clear as he talked

about the IBEW and other Rebuilding Together partners, whose gifts of labor and materials improved and secured his home like never before.

"I feel so blessed," he said. "There was a time that I could help people and do things myself to keep my home up. But physically I just can't do it anymore. And I didn't have the funds. Prices are going up, materials are going up. I just didn't have the funds at all."

Six miles north of Moore's neighborhood, Martinez served as foreman at a ranch-style home that ached for repairs.

In addition to upgrading wires and receptacles, volunteers installed new lights in her basement, kitchen and other rooms, swapped out floodlight bulbs, made sure motion sensors worked, put a ceiling fan in her dining room and replaced one with drooping blades on the back porch.

Martinez found a kindred spirit as she chatted with the homeowner, who, like Moore, was disabled in an accident.

"She has the same kind of attitude that I do — that you get up and do what you can and if it's not everything, that's OK, because you can get up tomorrow and try again," Martinez said.

Her own struggles and resolve made for a unique path into the IBEW in her early 30s. She

*An army of St. Louis Local 1 volunteers took care of every possible electrical repair and upgrade for 15 low-income homeowners this spring as part of their community's Rebuilding Together program. Local 1 and its NECA partners recently were honored with a Missouri "Show Me" award for 19 years of service to the annual project.*

was living in Atlanta, raising four children, going through a divorce and taking any and every job she could, from fast food and waitressing to selling cars, even a stint as a corrections officer.

A neighbor in similar straits had been nudged to consider the trades. When she headed to Atlanta Local 613 to apply, she suggested Martinez come along.

"I said, 'Yeah, that sounds great. I've always loved to work with my hands — I'm kind of afraid of electricity, but OK,'" she said with a laugh.

She got over it, was accepted quickly and launched a career that still thrills her. Eight years ago, she took it on the road, moving her family to St. Louis. Today she is president of Missouri Women in Trades.

Cleveland was one of her first friends at Local 1. His path into the IBEW was more traditional, influenced by a father who was an electrical engineer at Bell Telephone and an uncle who was a journeyman wireman. After four years in the Navy seeing the world, he joined his brother as an apprentice.

"It's grown to my uncle, older brother, myself, my younger brother, two other uncles, two cousins my daughter is now an apprentice and I have a nephew in there was well," he said. "It's a family affair."

Other than four years working with a Local 613 crew in Afghanistan, Cleveland has been a steady Rebuilding Together volunteer since the IBEW came aboard in 2004. Martinez has taken part nearly every year since her move; this year her daughter, a third-semester apprentice, was part of her team.

Helping seniors, people with disabilities, single mothers like she was, or others in need reminds Martinez how far she's come.

"I was there. I was struggling. I was on welfare and food stamps and had people judging me with my kids," she said. "I know what it's like to not have the money to do the things that need to get done. To be able to give back, to serve my community and represent the union that makes it possible for me to have the job I have and love, it's amazing." ■