

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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## Thank You, Lonnie!

### International President Lonnie R. Stephenson Retires After 7 Years of IBEW Growth

Nearly a half century after starting his inside apprenticeship, International President Lonnie R. Stephenson leaves behind a larger, stronger, more unified Brotherhood. Stephenson is pictured above protesting the federal government shutdown outside the White House in January 2019.

## My IBEW STORY

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

See page 2

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LONG PRAIRIE, ILL.

Lonnie R. Stephenson retired Jan. 4 after seven years as international president, capping an extraordinary nearly five-decade career that took him from Rock Island, Ill., to the heights of American power.

The International Executive Council unanimously selected Secretary-Treasurer Kenneth W. Cooper to replace him. Sixth District International Vice President Paul Noble was appointed secretary-treasurer.

The question at the beginning of Stephenson's connection with the IBEW in the mid-1970s wasn't how high he would rise but whether he would even be let in the door.

Stephenson almost went to college to become an electrical engineer. A chance conversation with an IBEW electrician performing a service call at the grocery store where Stephenson worked changed his path.

That electrician told him he should apply for the apprenticeship program at Rock Island, Ill., Local 145, even though his chances of being selected were small because he had no friends or relatives who were members.

Yet he was part of a 12-man apprenticeship

## CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP

class in 1975 and was initiated one year later.

Nearly five decades later, he steps down with the IBEW a stronger, bigger and more secure union than when he was appointed president in 2015, having guided it through a period of unprecedented chaos and uncertainty.

"It's been the honor of my life to serve the members of the greatest union in the world and advance the cause of trade unionism in the electrical industry," Stephenson said. "As hard as it is to step aside, I am confident the IBEW remains in good hands."

As he steps down, the IBEW has more "A" members than at any time in its history. And each year, thanks to the IBEW Strong program he shepherded, that membership looks more like the communities it serves.

Stephenson was the Sixth District interna-

tional vice president before becoming president. At the time, the IBEW was going through a cultural transformation started by former International Presidents J.J. Barry and Edwin D. Hill that included mixed job classifications and requiring all construction locals to hire full-time organizers. It was a move those men saw as necessary to reverse the losses in membership and market share.

Stephenson was known as a progressive local leader, committed to the Brotherhood's new direction as an aggressive organizing union but also a consensus and relationship builder. He was someone who could steady the IBEW, consolidate the changes and make them permanent.

"Lonnie leaves the IBEW more certain of its future, with better prospects and more friends than it has had in decades," Cooper said. "Electrical workers are the key workforce for the technologies that will drive the future of our economy. A decade ago, it wasn't clear that those jobs would be good, middle-class, union jobs. Lonnie's work makes that choice ours. We have the resources, we have the law on our side, and we have the opportunities. The future is ours to seize."

STEPHENSON *continued on page 3*

## FROM THE OFFICERS

# A Lifetime of Gratitude



**Lonnie R. Stephenson**  
International President

**B**rothers and sisters, this is the last time I will be addressing you as international president, and I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the IBEW and our members.

Retirement wasn't an easy decision, but it was one I made with my wife and partner, Dawn, that we were ready to finally enjoy the fruits of nearly 50 years in the IBEW. It's a dream each of us started with, brothers and sisters, and for many of us the reason we joined the union trades in the first place.

Our decision was made easier knowing that my dear friend and brother, Kenny Cooper, is ready and able to take the reins of this great Brotherhood and lead it into the future. The IBEW is in good hands with Coop and incoming Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble, and I'm confident that they'll continue the great work we started together.

Most important, I'm confident in you, our members. Your hard work and dedication to this great union, to one another and to future generations of IBEW members means the greatness of the IBEW has never been dependent on one person. The spirit of the IBEW, the strength of the IBEW, is in your commitment to being the best of the best, day in and day out.

Whether I was walking into the White House or the Capitol or any other place I'd never have dreamed of being invited as a young wireman from Rock Island, Illinois, I was never under the illu-

sion that any of it was about me. It's the power of 775,000 of you standing with me that earned the respect of whoever I was talking to.

That's because you do the work that makes North America work. Period. Every industry and technology of the future is made by you, built by you, maintained by you, and they know it. You prove it to them every day.

As I approach retirement, I've been thinking a lot about my great friend Jerry Kavanaugh, who asked me to join his staff at Local 145 more than 30 years ago. I learned so much from him, and when he asked me to run to replace him as business manager five years later, it was one of the great honors of my life.

I've always said being a business manager is the hardest job there is, and I hold so much admiration and respect for so many of the great local leaders I've met along the way. Your contributions are not lost on any of us at the International Office.

I'm proud of our accomplishments during my time as international president. Legislative victories like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS Act — combined with our commitment to the IBEW's Code of Excellence — will put our members to work for decades. The American Rescue Plan and the Butch Lewis Act saved the pensions of millions of union retirees. The IBEW Strong program and our relentless focus on organizing will ensure that the IBEW continues to grow and evolves to look more like the communities we serve.

But it's the relationships, with folks in the IBEW and the larger labor movement, that I'll cherish most about my time as a leader in this Brotherhood. So many of you have had a profound impact on the man and the union leader I've become, and the opportunities to meet and build relationships both inside and outside the IBEW have been incredible.

I've gotten asked for a long time, as international representative, vice president and most recently as international president, "What does it take to get your job?" And here's the answer I always give: I have no idea.

This is because the opportunities available to you in the IBEW are limitless, and if you show up every day ready to work and you do your job as well as you possibly can, you never know where your career will take you.

At my core, I'm just an electrician who got to go on an incredible ride because of this amazing organization. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve you these last seven years. ■

## Thank You, Brother

**I** am so honored to serve as your new international president. It has been the privilege of my life to work for this union in whatever capacity was called for, from steward all the way to president, and I promise you that I will always put our members and their families first.

I plan to talk more about my vision for the IBEW in the next month's Electrical Worker, but I want to take this time to thank my partner and tool buddy, Lonnie Stephenson.

There is no better sign of an effective leader than when they leave things better than they found them.

And Lonnie has left the IBEW bigger, stronger, more diverse and more influential than it was seven years ago.

From the day he first came to Washington, he put organizing at the center of everything the IBEW did. The results speak for themselves: Nearly seven years of consistent growth and the most "A" members in our history.

And we are organizing not just harder but smarter, thanks to his investments into up-to-date technology for the Membership Development Department.

Thanks to his dedication to the Code of Excellence, our union is deeply respected both on the worksite and in the boardrooms of some of North America's biggest companies, creating tens of millions of dollars of work for IBEW members.

And because of his commitment to implementing the IBEW Strong program, diversity, equity and inclusion are now at the top of every local's agenda. And that's bringing more women and people of color into the IBEW than ever before.

Lonnie was always clear that the IBEW was never about one person. It's always been a group effort, and he built an incredible team from the field to the International Office that will continue to ensure a bright future for our union.

I can't thank him enough for inviting me to join his team and serve with him over these past 5½ years as secretary-treasurer.

For me, Lonnie is more than just a co-worker. He's a good friend and a wise leader, and I will miss our daily talks.

But knowing Lonnie as well as I do, I know he won't be a stranger. Once you get the IBEW in your blood, it is there for life.

Here's to a long and enjoyable retirement. On behalf of the officers and staff of the IBEW, thanks for everything you've done for our union, Lonnie. ■



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

## My IBEW STORY

**Fernando Rodriguez,**  
Retired Journeyman Wireman  
San Bernardino, Calif.,  
Local 477



“I was raised in a barrio in South Colton, Calif., 60 miles east of Los Angeles. My grandparents came to the United States from Mexico and I didn't speak English until I began attending elementary school. After graduating from Colton High School in 1965, I enrolled in San Bernardino Valley College and worked part-time before being drafted into the Army in 1968.

After being honorably discharged two years later, I enrolled in a local junior college, worked part-time for an electric supply wholesaler, and started roping houses on weekends. I received my associate degree and landed a job as an electrical helper. This was my first real job, but after three years, I realized something better had to be out there.

That's when I reconnected with a customer from the electric supply wholesaler. He personally gave me an application for Local 477's apprenticeship program.

I applied and was admitted. Once I started working, I realized this was what the doctor ordered. I became a foreman the day after I passed my journeyman wireman's exam. I went on to become a general foreman and was active in my local, serving as treasurer, assistant business agent and organizer. I was elected president in 1996 and served in that role until retiring in 2002, but I wasn't finished working. I started teaching in the apprenticeship program for both Local 477 and Riverside, Calif., Local 440 and still do to this day.

My wife and I have a son and daughter who are both journeyman wireman. We also have sons-in-law and nephews with those letters "JW" on their dues receipts and we have a grandson in his fourth year of the apprenticeship. I have another grandson who is a freshman in high school and a straight-A student. He already knows what he wants to be: a journeyman wireman.

The IBEW not only changed my life. It changed the lives of so many people I care about. I give thanks to all the great mentors and outstanding craftsman I've had the honor of knowing throughout my journey.”

**Every member in every branch has a story to tell about how the IBEW has improved their life both on and off the job. Tell us yours today for a chance to be featured here.**

**[ibew.org/MyIBEWStory](http://ibew.org/MyIBEWStory)**

# Thank You, Lonnie! *International President Lonnie R. Stephenson Retires After 7 Years of IBEW Growth*

▼ *Continued from page 1*

## Bringing the Light Back

This is in no small part because of the unique political relationship Stephenson built with President Joe Biden.

Biden regularly mentions Stephenson, the IBEW and its members in his public speeches. No sitting U.S. president had ever spoken in person at an International Convention until Biden did so in Chicago in May of last year.

“President Biden wasn’t just willing to talk about unions,” Stephenson said. “He backed up his words with actions, helping to pass the most pro-worker, pro-jobs legislation since the New Deal.”

Stephenson didn’t write the Butch Lewis Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act, or CHIPS and Science Act, but he was as responsible for their passage into law as anyone not on Capitol Hill or in the White House.

Together, those four bills represent a sea change in the American economy. For decades, millions of jobs were sent overseas or to right-to-work states. Every other major indicator for workers was down, too: wages, benefits, dignity and respect. The sun was setting on the American Dream.

The IBEW and Lonnie Stephenson committed to bringing the light back.

## Lessons From the Quad Cities

Stephenson’s belief that organizing is the only way to benefit working families came out of his experience in the Quad Cities spanning Illinois and Iowa along the Mississippi River, where he had a front-row seat to the United States’ industrial might.

When he joined the apprenticeship of Local 145 in 1975, Moline was an agriculture industry powerhouse, home to John Deere’s world headquarters, as well as facilities for industrial giants Alcoa, Caterpillar, Case and International Harvester.

Stephenson rose through the leadership ranks at Local 145. He was elected vice president in 1984 and then president in 1987. During his two terms as president, he came on staff as an



*International Secretary-Treasurer Kenneth W. Cooper (bottom right) will serve the remainder of Stephenson’s term.*

assistant business agent in 1991, a position he held until his election as business manager in 1996.

He had a unique insight into so-called right-to-work laws, which allow employees to receive the benefits of union membership without paying fees. His home local has jurisdiction in Illinois, one of the most worker-friendly states in the nation, and in Iowa, which has a right-to-work law.

While it did not hinder the local’s ability to organize in Iowa, Stephenson said, it was an ever-present reminder of its necessity in all parts of the local’s jurisdiction. He was an extremely aggressive organizer. While he was business manager, his local grew from 700 members to 1,100.

Stephenson also understood early the necessity of building broad coalitions to turn political success into good jobs.

While business manager, he led a joint effort with local business leaders to pass a \$5 million bond initiative to rebuild the waterfront in Davenport, Iowa. The scale is astronomically differ-



ent, but the waterfront revitalization and the \$1 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law share a common political philosophy: Public policy using public money should benefit working families.

“It showed firsthand how good public policy could result in good union jobs,” Stephenson said. “It also taught me that when organized labor works with lawmakers and the business community, everyone, including the community, benefits.”

Stephenson was finishing his second term as business manager in 2002 when he was appointed by then-International President Hill as an international representative assigned to the Sixth District, covering Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

When Stephenson was appointed vice president in 2010, no state in the Sixth had a right-to-work law. But a poisonous stew of fury over the Great Recession and shameless gerrymandering delivered a terrible midterm election for pro-labor candidates, and putting statehouses across the U.S. into the hands of the far right.

Stephenson joined the battle across his district, but ultimately more than half of the states there — Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana — passed right-to-work laws.

These setbacks made clear to him

that if labor had a future, it would need to organize everything — the work, the workers and the politicians.

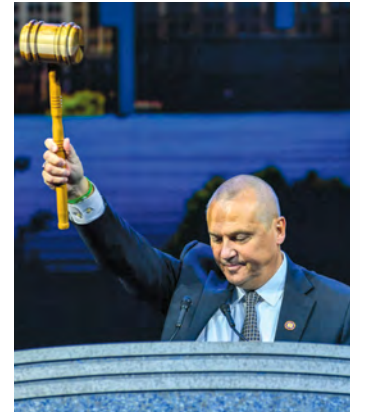
## A Story of Growth

The IEC chose Stephenson, with his reputation for organizing success and strong political instincts, to finish Hill’s term in 2015. One year later, he was elected by acclamation to a full five-year term at the 39th International Convention in St. Louis. He was reelected by acclamation at the 40th convention in Chicago last May.

For a brief overview of some of what Stephenson and the IBEW accomplished in the next seven years, see the accompanying timeline.

The national legislative accomplishments are important, but Stephenson made clear that their primary value is that they support the top priority of the IBEW since its birth in 1891: organizing the entire electrical industry and working for its growth.

The infrastructure, CHIPS and inflation reduction laws are set to bring hundreds of billions of dollars of new work and tens of thousands of new IBEW members in entirely new industries, including grid-scale battery storage manufacturing, installation and



*Stephenson was twice elected president at International Conventions, most recently in spring 2022.*

repair; semiconductor factory construction and maintenance; electric vehicle infrastructure; and more, on top of a massive expansion of distribution and transmission projects.

The bills have prevailing wage included at the legislative level for the first time ever. The telecom, utility, construction and manufacturing branches all will likely see dramatic increases in wages and work for decades.

The CHIPS Act has already led to the signing and then expansion of the largest project labor agreement in the union’s history, an agreement with Intel for its Ohio semiconductor plant that could amount to a \$100 billion investment. A \$100 billion Micron semiconductor plant in upstate New York followed weeks later, along with nearly a dozen more announced new chip plants and expansions of existing facilities across the country.

Stephenson’s presidency saw the continued support and professionalization of the IBEW’s investment in organizing so that when the work arrives, the union has the capacity to staff it. The IBEW now has hundreds of full-time organizers at the international and local levels. It has new teams like the Workforce Recruitment Task Force and new tools like Action Builder that give the IBEW more ability to reach nonunion electricians and manage organizing campaigns than at any time in its history.

The results are clear. After decades when the IBEW was closing or amalgamating locals, Stephenson chartered six new locals: Upper Peninsula, Mich., Local 906; Chattanooga, Tenn., Local 911; Baltimore Local 410; Atlanta Local 1997; Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Local 1974; and San Juan, Puerto Rico, Local 787.

The IBEW also expanded the Code of Excellence to nearly every branch during his presidency. It is a statement of our confidence in the members and transforms conflicts into cooperation.

The best example of this is the Code of Excellence program Stephenson signed with the Tennessee Valley Authority, the nation’s largest government-owned power provider. Grievances filed there have plummeted in the years since.

**STEPHENSON** *continued on page 4*



*The working relationship between Stephenson and President Joe Biden was one of the most productive in American labor history.*

# Thank You, Lonnie! *International President Lonnie R. Stephenson Retires After 7 Years of IBEW Growth*

▼ *Continued from page 3*

And most importantly, the IBEW grew. During his tenure, the IBEW has grown by an average of 4,000 new members every year and added 9,000 members in 2022, the largest single-year growth in generations.

And while total membership has grown, “A” membership has grown faster, to the highest it has ever been. The IBEW is within shouting distance of reaching 700,000 total active members again, a milestone likely to fall in early 2023.

To make sure that no one else hears what he first heard, that you need a friend or an uncle to get a shot at an apprenticeship, Stephenson — though he will not take credit for its creation — supported the development of the IBEW Strong program.

The program’s premise: To transform unions’ rising popularity into permanent growth, ranks and leadership must draw from the entire workforce, especially historically underrepresented groups. Through IBEW Strong, Stephenson made the commitment mandatory. “I’m in my job because I got opportunities along the way. Every member deserves that opportunity,” Stephenson said at the program’s launch in 2020.

He didn’t just speak but acted, appointing the first female international vice president, the Fourth District’s Gina Cooper, in 2020. “This is a great moment in the history of the IBEW,” Stephenson said at the time. “While I’m proud to appoint our first female vice president, it’s not the reason I chose Gina for this role. It’s because she is eminently qualified, having worked with nearly every branch, and has been a key part of the success we’ve had in the Fourth District.”

Obviously, many of these projects were started before Stephenson was appointed, and all of them were the result of many hands and hearts pulling in the same direction.

“The idea that there is a self-made man anywhere is always a lie, but it is especially untrue in the labor movement. And Lonnie is a very humble man who resists taking credit more than most,” Cooper said. “But the ultimate decisions here were his. Ideas and movements like IBEW Strong came from the members and staff, but it was always his choice what to raise up into the light, what to put our resources and goodwill behind and then call us together to push.”

When Stephenson was first appointed as an international representative, he said his greatest concern about the position, really the worst part of the job, was living out of a suitcase and a hotel.

As he traveled across North America, he always thanked his IBEW brothers and sisters for putting their trust in him. And then he thanked his wife, Dawn.

“Whatever gratitude people have toward me, extend a lot of that to Dawn because none of this would have been possible without her love and support all these years,” he said.

Stephenson plans to retire with Dawn to Cape Coral, Fla., to live near Dawn’s parents and roll his suitcase to the back of the closet to gather dust.

Please join the officers wishing Brother Stephenson a long, healthy and peaceful retirement. ■



## STRONGER, Year by Year

### 2016



► Stephenson is elected by acclamation at the 2016 convention.

### 2017



► Baltimore Local 410 is chartered, bringing in nearly 1,500 Baltimore Gas and Electric workers.



► The Henry Miller Museum opens in St. Louis.



► Kenneth W. Cooper is appointed international secretary-treasurer.

### ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

663,916 ●

### 2015

► Lonnie R. Stephenson is appointed international president on May 27.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS *Leaders reflect on Stephenson’s presidency*



#### President Joe Biden

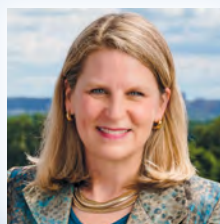
Lonnie Stephenson is a friend, a wireman, and most importantly a hell of a fighter on behalf of working men and women across this country. I’ve known Lonnie a long time, and I’ve always said there’s nobody

I’d rather be in a foxhole with. Lonnie and the IBEW have been indispensable allies in the fight to build an economy that grows from the bottom up and the middle out — including rebuilding American infrastructure, creating good union energy jobs, unleashing the power of American manufacturing, and protecting the hard-earned pensions of union members and retirees. I know that even in retirement, he won’t stop fighting for unions and the middle class they helped build. Congratulations, Lonnie. I’m proud of you, pal.



#### Hakeem Jeffries, U.S. House Democratic leader, New York:

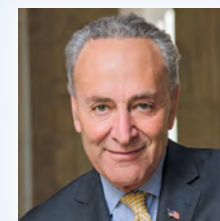
It’s been an honor to work with President Stephenson in the fight to save pensions, restore our nation’s crumbling infrastructure and bring good-paying domestic manufacturing jobs back home. He is a dedicated public servant who has worked tirelessly for IBEW members, and I congratulate him on his much-deserved retirement.



#### Liz Shuler, President of the AFL-CIO, member of Portland, Ore., Local 125

President Stephenson has always had a unique ability to see around the corner. Whether he was endorsing President Biden before anyone else, building out the infrastructure necessary to grow the ranks of the IBEW or investing

in programs like IBEW Strong to make our union more welcoming to women, people of color and young people, he’s always seemed to be a step ahead. Thanks to his forward-thinking vision, the IBEW is stronger now than it was seven years ago and will continue to thrive well into the future.



#### Chuck Schumer, U.S. Senate majority leader, New York

Lonnie Stephenson is one of the most dedicated and hardest-working labor leaders I’ve ever met. And he is one helluva human being, too. He is a ferocious advocate for

working people — and we worked together to pass a historic infrastructure law, to modernize our energy grid, and to make sure it’s union labor that transforms our economy to clean energy and builds the chip plants of the future. He will be sorely missed and leaves behind a proud and profound legacy of accomplishment.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

693,704



2022



▶ IBEW signs the largest PLA in its history, for a \$100 billion Intel microchip plant in Ohio.



▶ Stephenson, as a delegate to the AFL-CIO's 2022 convention, nominates fellow IBEW member Liz Shuler for election as president.

▶ Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Local 1974 is chartered for about 100 Manufacturing Branch members who work for BAE Systems.



▶ The IBEW charts San Juan, Puerto Rico, Local 787, representing nearly 800 workers at LUMA, the island territory's electric utility.

2018



▶ Stephenson and St. Louis Local 1 Business Manager Frank Jacobs (pictured) are among the IBEW brothers and sisters who successfully campaigned to reject right-to-work legislation in Missouri.



▶ The IBEW and the Tennessee Valley Authority sign a landmark Code of Excellence agreement.

2020

▶ Chattanooga, Tenn., Local 911 is chartered to represent security officers at three Tennessee Valley Authority nuclear facilities.

▶ Stephenson implements the IBEW Strong program, part of the union's ongoing diversity and inclusion efforts.



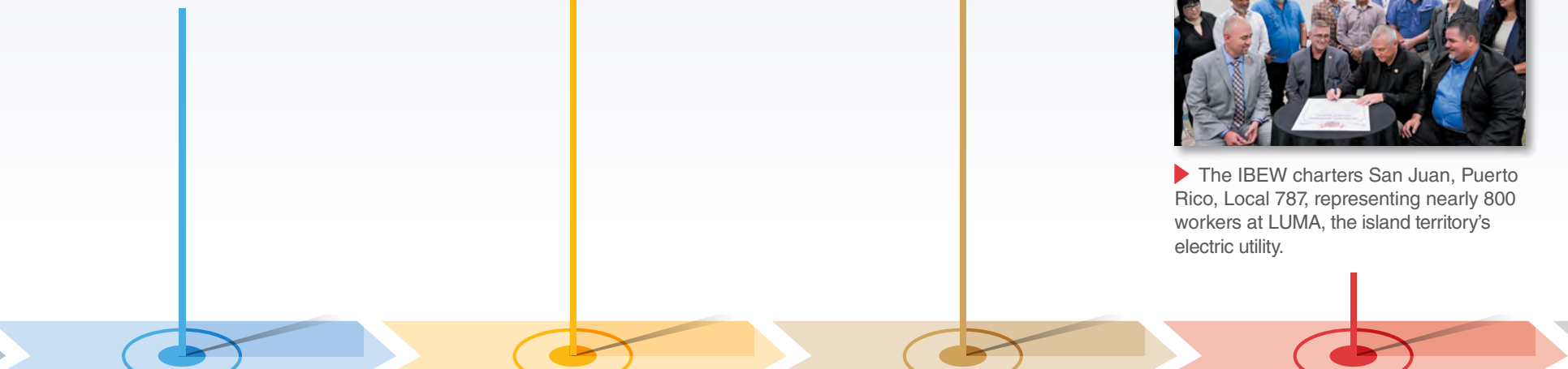
▶ Gina Cooper becomes the first woman to serve as an international vice president.

▶ Stephenson is there as Biden signs the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

2019

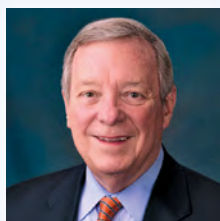


▶ Atlanta Local 1997 is chartered, representing almost 700 gas employees of Atlanta Gas Light.



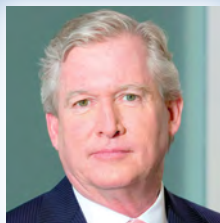
**Rep. Donald Norcross of New Jersey, Member of Folsom, N.J., Local 351**

Lonnie R. Stephenson is a worker's labor leader. His tenure as international president has been marked by a fierce commitment to fair working conditions. IBEW is larger, stronger, and more diverse than ever before, thanks to Lonnie's commitment to the working men and women who are the backbone of the American economy.



**Dick Durbin, U.S. Senate Democratic whip, Illinois:**

Illinois and this nation were lucky to have had such a friend of working people in Lonnie Stephenson. It was a first for me to hear a sitting president — Joe Biden — speak about unions by name, and that was IBEW and Lonnie Stephenson. I will miss working with Lonnie, but I take comfort in knowing Lonnie leaves a legacy of service to the labor movement.



**Chris Crane, Exelon CEO**

Lonnie Stephenson has been a strong and effective partner with Exelon in keeping the lights on in all our service territories. He was a worthy adversary in making sure his locals negotiated good contracts for members and he still leaves a strong legacy of teamwork. I am grateful for the chance to have worked with him.



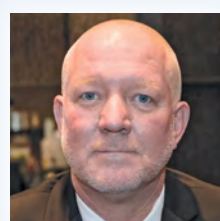
**Jagmeet Singh, leader of Canada's New Democrats**

Lonnie loves his union because he loves its members. And Lonnie's leadership has not only created jobs — for decades, he's been working hard to make sure electrical jobs are good jobs, that pay a fair wage and include strong protections for workers. As Lonnie passes on the torch to Kenneth Cooper, Canada's NDP wishes him a long, joy-filled retirement. He can relax and enjoy, knowing his legacy is IBEW Strong.



**Kirk Davis, president of National Electrical Contractors Association**

President Stephenson has been an invaluable partner to NECA. Together, we have strived to increase and improve safety training to better the lives of our contractors and make them more successful. I have observed a steady improvement in labor relations and working conditions over the last several years thanks to President Stephenson.



**Sean McGarvey, president of North America's Building Trades Unions**

Lonnie Stevenson helped us defend and protect jobs, wages, safety and training for building trades members at a tumultuous time. He helped protect the interests of our membership through a divisive election in 2016 and then a Congress and administration that were hostile to working families. He then led us on the offensive, electing the most pro-working-family Congress and president in our nation's history.

# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

**A**s 2023 begins, newly elected and reelected pro-worker leaders across the nation are being sworn in as members of Congress, state legislators, governors and local officials.

There's also a historic workers' rights law on the books in Illinois and the promise of similar, headway in Michigan and other states where union-friendly lawmakers gained seats in the 2022 midterm elections.

None of it would be happening without IBEW members and their brothers and sisters in America's union movement.

Turnout among union members and their allies, spurred by labor's get-out-the-vote efforts, was the difference between winning and losing on Nov. 8. The difference between building on the Biden administration's pro-worker agenda and watching it evaporate.

Pundits and pollsters may have underestimated the strength of the union vote when they predicted a red wave. Neither did the political party that is home to the anti-worker, rights-stripping caucuses in state capitals and Washington, D.C.

"Union turnout has too often been low in too many midterm elections, with devastating consequences for working people," retiring International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "This shows what is possible when union members exercise our power and vote in our best interests."

"In 2022, we turned that on its head. We didn't get everything we wanted, and we know the narrow GOP majority in the U.S. House will go out of its way to cause trouble for us," he said. "But we made tremendous strides that give us a bigger voice and more power to fight back."

Labor's ground game was something to behold. Under the AFL-CIO's umbrella, more than 100,000 volunteers hit the streets and the phones, including IBEW members in every state.

"Electricians and plumbers, grad students and service workers, entertainment workers and laborers, and so many others stood shoulder to shoulder day after day to ensure that every union voter in America knew how important this election was to our collective future," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, a member of Portland, Ore., Local 125.

Collectively, Shuler said, union volunteers reached 7.7 million voters, contact that was critical to slender victories in many races:

- In Michigan, union members accounted for an estimated 210,000 net votes for Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, while electing enough pro-worker candidates to flip both houses of the legislature. With that trifecta, state leaders are poised to repeal "right-to-work." (See story on page 7.)
- Minnesota also gained a pro-worker trifecta. Union voters made up half the margin of victory for incumbent Gov. Tim Walz, of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, while holding on to the House and winning a majority in the Senate.
- In Georgia, union voters twice over made the difference for U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, casting enough ballots to spur his run-off against Herschel Walker and electing him outright on Dec. 6.
- In Nevada, a union army pushed Democrat Catherine Cortez Masto over the top, ensuring a pro-worker majority in the U.S. Senate once her race was called four days after Election Day.

Nationwide, not a single state legislature chamber held by Democrats flipped to the GOP — something no party in power has achieved in the midterm elections since 1934.

Candidates made frequent use of labor halls on the campaign trail, touting the ways the Biden administration's job-creating investments in infrastructure and manufacturing are helping their states already, with lots more to come — as long as voters stayed the course.

Another emphasis was the high stakes for workers' rights, which are at long last back at the forefront of the political conversation.

At a rally in Wisconsin supporting Gov. Tony Evers — another beneficiary of union turnout — an IBEW leader said it "scares the hell out of me" to hear the hostile rhetoric of anti-worker candidates like Evers' opponent.

"Those of you who know me are probably sick and tired of me telling you that every election is the most important of your lifetimes, but this one honestly is," said Jim Meyer, assistant business manager of Milwaukee Local 2150. "It's vital that we elect folks who will stand up for workers' rights, to elect the right folks to build and grow our movement."

Voters in neighboring Illinois took a giant step in that direction, passing the landmark Workers' Rights Amendment that adds language to the state constitution guaranteeing the right to organize and bargain collectively. (See story to the right.)

Beyond the worker advocates elected Nov. 8, union voters sent many of their own to office, from local and state government all the way to Congress — in the IBEW's case, electing New Jersey Rep. Donald Norcross of Folsom Local 351 to a fifth term. Among scores of other IBEW victories around the country, two of the members elected to statehouses are featured on these pages.

Stephenson urged more members to think about throwing their hats into the ring for races coming up later this year and in the 2024 general election.

"You don't have to run for Congress or even your state legislature to make a difference. We need union voices at all levels of government, because every one of them is making decisions and setting policy that affect us," he said. "We're off to a great start in 2023. Let's keep the momentum going."



Workers in Illinois won an extraordinary victory on Election Day, writing the right to organize in the state constitution, a win Gov. J.B. Pritzker celebrated with the IBEW.

## 'Biggest Day in Illinois Labor History': Voters Pass Massive Workers' Rights Law

**I**n a resounding victory for workers' rights, Illinois voters enshrined the right to organize in the state's constitution in November 2022. A majority of voters approved adding language that guarantees the right to organize and collectively bargain, whether the person is in a union or not.

More than half the states have "right-to-work" laws, and nine have written it into their constitutions. Illinois is the first to add a prohibition against right to work.

"This is the biggest day in Illinois labor history in my life. Ever, actually," said Chicago Local 134 Business Manager and Fifth District International Executive Council member Don Finn.

"If you have something better, let me know, but none of us can think of anything."

The amendment does more than simply outlaw right to work. First passed by the Illinois General Assembly in 2021, it states that all employees have a fundamental right to organize and bargain collectively "for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours and working conditions, and to protect their economic welfare and safety at work."

Starting Jan. 1, any individual in the state can file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Labor. Under current law, Finn said, at-will

employees without a collective bargaining agreement cannot.

"I don't care if you are at Amazon, Starbucks or the cleaner down the street. You should have the rights to demand better safety, decent wages and a union," Finn said. "We have had people fired for speaking the word 'union.' Not anymore. Any person at any workplace has the right to explore joining a union."

In a state with about 900,000 union members, more than 2 million people voted for Amendment 1, otherwise known as the Workers' Rights Amendment.

It is the first and most important step by organized labor to transform unions' increasing popularity into permanent change, he said. And he urged every IBEW state conference to take a good hard look at the playbook built by Illinois organized labor to get Amendment 1 passed.

"We are at 79% in the city of Chicago — that is a high number for free-throws," Finn said. "It tells me there is desire for us, and we need to act on it right now."

Finn said Local 134 focused its own efforts in two directions — first to other trades, and then within the IBEW to align the state's many locals. The primary outreach tool was

member-to-member canvassing that targeted thousands of doors and tens of thousands of phones.

"We have been on this for eight months. Every local played a part: manufacturing, telecom, railroad, utility, all of us, everyone — I mean everyone — stepped up. It's not one local did more, one local gave more. We collectively put this thing to bed," he said.

The message to his members was this was beyond party and wasn't about just passing a few new laws.

"This takes the power away from whoever is in power in the Capitol. We don't want legislators to poke their nose in when we negotiate for safety, tell us when, whether and how we have a right to organize. It's not their business," Finn said. "This is about us, working people, and we are sick of states around the country putting their thumbs on the scale for billionaires and corporations. If you aren't going to help us, at least stay out of our way."

Obviously, opposition was well-funded, but Finn said its message simply did not get traction. Not in a post-pandemic world where profits are skyrocketing, unemployment is low, inflation is high and workers know who was "essential" and who just pretended.

"They spent millions, but we way outworked them," Finn said. "In the last 30 years, we have been the punching bag for every type of legislator. Now we are on the offensive. We are getting things passed. It is a new day for labor in Illinois." ■



# Wins in Michigan Could Mean Farewell to State's Right-to-Work Law

The political adage “Elections have consequences” is about to be put on display in Michigan in ways that could benefit IBEW members and all working families, including a potential repeal of the state’s so-called right-to-work law.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was reelected and Democrats won control of both the state House and Senate, giving the party total control of the governor’s mansion and the legislature for the first time since 1984. They also held on to the attorney general and secretary of state positions.

“It’s like asking Santa for a pony, and instead you get a Dodge Barracuda,” said Michigan Political Director Joe Davis, a member of Lansing Local 352. “You wake up and it’s there, and it’s an amazing feeling. Everything came together for us.”

The election puts Michigan in position to repeal the right-to-work law that went into effect in 2013. Right-to-work laws allow employees to enjoy the benefits and protections of a collectively bargained agreement by a union without paying fees.

“Right-to-work, the union-busting law, we’ll repeal that,” Dayna Polehanki, a state senator from Livonia, told Detroit television station WXYZ.

No one is sure how fast it may happen. The legislative session begins Jan. 12. But law makers have realistic chance to tackle right-to-work, as well as several other initiatives that would benefit the state’s workers, such as making prevailing wage a permanent part of state law again.

“We have an opportunity to help all the residents of the state, whether they are organized and represented or not, and fix what has basically gone wrong for the last 40 years,” Detroit Local 58 registrar Jeannette Bradshaw said.

Michigan wouldn’t be the first state to repeal a right-to-work law, but it hasn’t happened in generations. New Hampshire repealed its law in 1949, two years after it was passed, and attempts to reinstitute it have failed since.

Indiana passed and signed into law a right-to-work bill in 1957 that was repealed in 1965. The GOP-dominated legislature and governor’s office passed and signed a new right-to-work law in 2012 that remains in effect.



Above, IBEW and other unions members rally for Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. At left, volunteers campaign for pro-worker candidates in the state.



“We need to look out for everyone, not just ourselves,” Bradshaw said. “If we do that, we can show the state we’re not just in it for us and really leverage our political power.”

The victories in Michigan took a lot of work by union members, including those in the IBEW. That included getting out a vote for a successful ballot initiative in 2018 that created more balanced legislative districts and took away some of the advantages that anti-union legislators had gerrymandered into the process.

Those new districts were in play for the first time in 2022.

“Having the ability to have competitive districts throughout the state allowed us to have the success we did,” Davis said.

Yonkers noted that the five campaigns the IBEW prioritized and put additional resources behind all won. Those were four statehouse races and the U.S. congressional race to reelect Rep. Elissa Slotkin, who has been a labor advocate while in Washington.

“We obviously backed them with our money, but more importantly with our membership,” Yonkers said.

Yonkers noted that polls showed that at least two-thirds of Michigan’s union members voted for Whitmer.

“Voters here understand we need a government similar to what we have with President Biden, who doesn’t have a problem talking about unions,” he said. “I think we have that.”



IBEW members in Michigan knocked on union doors to turn out the vote for Whitmer and other pro-worker candidates.

Right-to-work advocates have made no secret that the laws are used to undermine the influence of unions and their ability to advocate on behalf of their members.

“The first thing I would like to see, in my opinion, would be a right-to-work repeal,” said Geoff Yonkers, a business representative for Muskegon Local 275 who was one of the IBEW’s leaders in the Michigan campaign.

Other issues the legislature is expected to address include:

- The re-institution of project labor agreements, which ensure that highly skilled construction workers are paid a fair wage on the state’s public projects. It also makes it harder for less-scrupulous employers to exploit workers by classifying them as subcontractors as opposed to full-time employees.

“Economically, they really are beneficial to labor, and they don’t hurt nonunion contractors unless you’re a contractor who doesn’t follow the rules

in the first place,” Davis said.

- The elimination of the so-called pension tax, part of a GOP tax overhaul in 2011 that scaled back or eliminated most exemptions taxpayers could take on their pensions.
- Changing a law that requires public-sector union members in Michigan to fill out membership fees paperwork annually, another effort from the state’s GOP-controlled era to weaken unions.

## In Iowa, Local 405 President Cruises to House Seat

Not every election is a nailbiter. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Local 405 President Jeff Cooling didn’t have to face an opponent in his Democratic primary or the general election for the District 77 Iowa State House of Representatives seat.

It is a sign of the respect Cooling has won since he topped out of his apprenticeship a decade ago. In addition to being president of Local 405, he is vice president of the Hawkeye Area Labor Council, which represents 26 counties in east-central Iowa, and the 11th District member of the RENEW Advisory Council.

When it came time to find a replacement for state Rep. Kirsten Running-Marquardt, who was retiring after 12 years, Cooling cleared the field clean.

“It has a lot to do with strength and solidarity of the labor movement in the area and the respect the IBEW has in Iowa politics,” Cooling said.

The seat representing this area, even with a redistricting in 2022, has been held by union members for as far back as Cooling could remember. Run-

ning-Marquardt came from the SEIU, and before her it was held by a retired 405 member. Before him, it was an organizer from the meatpackers.

Because his election was so anticlimactic, Cooling spent much of the campaign season door-knocking for other people.

The recipe for winning in a red-leaning state isn’t complicated, he said. “You have to outperform what is at the top of the ticket. It is not so difficult to knock on a few thousand doors. But it is what swings elections. Meeting people at their front door is the only place minds change,” he said.

One candidate he walked with, Elizabeth Wilson, was running against an anti-labor Republican in the next district over. He canvassed for her, and she won by fewer than 500 votes.

The Iowa state House session only runs from January to April, and Cooling expects to return to the tools when the session ends. He said he is eager to push for legislation that will help working people, but most of his work will be stopping the Republican caucus’s worst ideas for workers.



Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Local 405 President Jeff Cooling was one of many IBEW members who won elections this fall.

“We have been successful in the past, though last year we weren’t as successful. We stopped some of the really bad language, but we only do that by working with the majority. What I learned throughout the campaign is if I didn’t reach out to a group, someone else did. They will learn about us from [Republican Gov.] Kim Reynolds or from us. We have to go to them and give them our story.”

ELECTION continued on page 8



IBEW members gather to knock on doors for state House and Senate candidates.

# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

▼ Continued from page 7

## IBEW Member Elected to Idaho State House

**N**ate Roberts, a Pocatello Local 449 journeyman inside wireman and a first-time candidate, won his election to the Idaho state House of Representatives in a narrow vote.

Roberts will join a resolute, but small, opposition, determined to find ways to protect the working people of Idaho.

Roberts won his election by 112 votes out of more than 14,500 ballots cast.

“Those votes came from our get-out-the-vote operation, I’m convinced,” he said about the door-knocking and canvassing operation he ran with huge help from his brothers and sisters in Local 449, the Firefighters Local 187, and the Idaho state labor federation.

Idaho is a glowing coal of red — Republicans have controlled both houses of the legislature and the governor’s mansion for 28 years.

But Roberts, a Democrat, had a simple message at every door he knocked on: There should be more than just lawyers representing us.

Roberts topped out of the Los Angeles Local 11 inside apprenticeship in 1997 and has been a member of Local 449 since he moved to town in 2017.

He had never been much involved in politics until he was elected registrar of Local 449 in 2018, he said. As part of that position, he started attending Bannock County Democratic Party meetings.

“The party was run by a retired steelworker, and he just pulled me in deeper and deeper,” Roberts said.

Roberts was appointed District 29 party chair in 2019 and started attending union days in the state capital, Boise, and meeting and connecting with the relatively small group of state Democratic leaders.

After the state House seat was lost in the tidal wave of Trump support, the Democratic caucus began to push Roberts to consider running.

What convinced him to say yes was three days he spent in the Capitol sitting in for his predecessor, a lawyer



*Pocatello Local 449 journeyman wireman Nate Roberts walks toward the Idaho state Capitol in Boise, where he won a House seat in November as a first-time candidate. Roberts, a Democrat in a Republican-dominated state, said he is determined to find common ground on workers’ issues, such as ending the lowest-bid system that rewards shoddy contractors.*



“We will have some successes ... working with anyone who will work with us.”

— Nate Roberts, newly elected to Idaho House

“We need to connect with those who will listen to us. And we need to support them to moderate the bills that come out of the House,” Roberts said. “We will have some successes, but that comes through working with anyone who will work with us.”

Roberts said his opponent called him within a week and admitted he lost but wouldn’t concede.

“There was no concession, no real congratulations from him, but that comes as no surprise, sadly, these days,” he said.

with a seat on the judiciary committee. Roberts was there during a debate about state executions.

“That was heavy. To sit in that room making decisions on how someone lives or dies — an electrician in a room of lawyers — was an amazing weight of a decision. Working people need to have a voice in that room,” he said.

Roberts will have few allies when he gets to office. The Idaho Senate will have 28 Republicans and seven Democrats, while the House will have 58 Republicans and 11 Democrats.

Because of redistricting, though, there will be many new faces in the House, and Roberts is determined to stop the worst anti-worker legislation.

He will have at least one potential partner. Josh Wheeler, from signatory

contractor Wheeler Electric, won a House seat as a Republican.

Together, Roberts hopes, they might change the state’s “lowest bidder” contracting system that benefits out-of-state contractors who cut corners and wages.

Idaho is due to get at least \$500 million in federal funding for broadband and \$30 million for electric vehicle infrastructure along the interstates, and Roberts thinks that might be a good place to start.

“Lowest bidder doesn’t mean lowest cost. Could we shift that to a best-practice process instead? Add some local-hire language?” he said. “It will be good to have Josh in the Republican caucus. I hope we can work on that together. That is what it will take to get passed.” ■

## San Diego Votes to Remove Ban on PLAs

**S**an Diego voters on Nov. 8 approved Measure D, which overturned a ban on project labor agreements in the city.

The measure passed by nearly 12 percentage points. The ban dates to 2012, when Republicans controlled city government. The city now has a Democratic mayor, and all nine seats on the city council are held by Democrats.

San Diego, with a population of nearly 1.4 million people, had been the largest city in the United States that

banned PLAs. The measure’s win will make the city competitive for state and federal projects, a high priority after the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act were passed by Congress and signed into law by Biden.

The IBEW’s signatory contractors will be more competitive in bidding for contracts against nonunion competitors, who pay lower wages and offer less quality for taxpayers. That will be a major boost for San Diego Local 569, which plans to expand its apprenticeship classes.

“Make no mistake, this was a top priority for all our members,” Local 569 Political Director Gretchen Newsom said. “They walked door to door every single Saturday and Sunday for more than two months. We phone-banked, we text-banked, we pulled out all the stops for a successful campaign while the other side was spending a lot of money against us.”

There’s also some symbolic value in the vote. San Diego will host the next International Convention in 2026. ■



*San Diego Local 569 members prepare to canvas in support of Measure D, which repealed the city’s ban on project labor agreements.*



## Ohio IBEW Bikers Rev Up Campaign Trail

The Toledo Local 8 motorcycle club proudly led the way during the final week of Rep. Tim Ryan’s 2022 race for Senate, roaring into rally sites and revving up crowds just in front of his campaign bus. A champion for workers, Ryan personally invited the club to escort his bus, with fellow IBEW and building trades bikers joining in as they crisscrossed the state. “We were honored to do it,” said Assistant Business Manager Bill Box, pictured far right with a mix of Local 8 members and steelworkers. He described it as a thrill from start to finish, from the cheering crowds to the fun of tossing around a football with the candidate and his son on road breaks. While the Ohio Senate race outcome was a “kick in the gut,” he said, he felt privileged to be in the front row when Ryan conceded late on election night, a speech that drew national praise for its graciousness and respect for democracy. “It was hard on us, but he made us proud,” Box said. “We’d absolutely do it again for another worthy candidate who puts workers first.” ■



# California Rescues Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Station From Planned Closure

California's last nuclear power plant was rescued from closing its doors Sept. 1 when the California Legislature approved a \$1.4 billion plan to keep the plant alive.

The rescue came as part of a \$40 billion package that will fund extensive improvements to the state's power grid and accelerate its move toward the electrification of nearly everything in the state.

Passage of the bill came after months of lobbying from the IBEW in California, spearheaded by the home of most of the 1,500 men and women who work at Diablo Canyon, Vacaville Local 1245.

"This is an enormous deal. It cannot be overstated how big a deal for our state for our energy portfolio," said Local 1245 Business Manager Bob Dean.

The plan will fund the cost of recommissioning the plant after a half decade and hundreds of millions of dollars spent to decommission it. If the utility is unable to secure the necessary state and federal permits, the loan will be forgiven.

On Nov. 21, the U.S. Department of Energy announced it would back the recommissioning plan with an additional \$1.1 billion from the Civil Nuclear Credit program created by President Joe Biden's 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Law.

It was dramatic turnaround from just six years ago when PG&E announced its plans to shutter the 2.3 gigawatt plant. Coming only three years after the closure of the state's only other nuclear plant in San Onofre, the announcement was met with horror from the IBEW and cheers from most of the state's politicians and environmentalists.

What followed was a brutal half-decade of record heat waves that turned California, Oregon and even Washington state glowing red on weather maps for weeks at a time. The heat wilted power lines, sparked calamitous wildfires and stressed the Western Power Pool to the breaking point.

Year after year, California teetered on the brink of blackouts, and at times and in some places, tipped over into darkness. There simply wasn't enough power on the grid to meet the load and there was no more power that could be carried or found.

There was a solar building bonanza after San Onofre closed and the decommissioning at Diablo Canyon began. Thousands of IBEW members deployed from the Mojave Desert-based local halls, but it was not even enough to replace what would have been lost from nuclear, let alone enough to meet the increasing demand. Transmission projects to bring generation from the wind-rich central spine of the U.S. and solar from the vast deserts of Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada, were little more than mirages that never seemed to get closer.

As summer 2022 burned and the state's struggles to match limited gen-



Credit: John Storey

eration to increasing load worsened, reality set in for lawmakers, Dean said.

A year's long, slow-burning and low-profile lobbying campaign came out from the corridors of power and erupted into a sea of purple across the state capitol campus.

For years, Dean and Assistant Business Manager Hunter Stern had whipped votes quietly.

"This wasn't just an issue for our members. We had heatwaves from the Mexican border to Canada and rolling blackouts," he said. "Me and my staff reached out to the governor's office, to legislators and mayors and said 'You can't run the state without Diablo. Are you willing to open negotiations to go from decommissioning to relicensing?' Eventually we started getting political support because, this is the 21st century. Lights have to go on."

The challenge was the decommissioning was six years underway. Licenses with the state land commission and the famously independent-minded Coastal Commission would have to get approval, as well as licenses from NERC and FERC, federal regulatory agencies with timelines that don't simply bend because there is an emergency.

"Once the governor came on board, and decided it was a good idea, we started working overtime," Stern said. "We took the lead because it was our members at stake, sure, but we are a California local. We are not Big Coal; we are the stewards of the grid, citizens in all corners of this state and we want clean, safe and reliable power."

Despite the power emergency,



Credit: John Storey

there was still a significant opposition to the rescue plan. After a series of mishaps and disasters, PG&E was possibly the most unpopular company in California since Enron. Opponents tried to frame saving Diablo Canyon as a handout to the most infamous name in the state that would hurt poor communities who would have to foot the bill.

In the past, this plus nuclear fear-mongering, might have carried the day. But the normal rules don't apply when life isn't normal.

"We went to progressives and said if there are blackouts it won't be

the rich people who suffer. When [the wealthy community] of Montecito faced wildfires, they paid for private firefighters. They saved the town. When our members build microgrids with back-up generators, we build them in the wealthiest neighborhoods where every house has back-up batteries," Dean said. "There is a huge environmental and social justice argument to save Diablo Canyon, and it changed minds. Even legislators who spoke out against this bill voted for it in the end."

On the day the bill came up for a vote, the time for quiet pressure was over

*Members of Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245 flooded Sacramento to save Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant, the last baseload carbon-free powerhouse in the state. Legislation supporting Diablo Canyon will also upgrade the grid, prevent wildfires and turbocharge the plan to electrify the state's economy.*

traditional Local 1245 organizing was put into effect. Legislative offices surround the Capitol in Sacramento, and most lawmakers walk across the grounds to vote. Purple-shirted Local 1245 members lined the walkways, greeting and high-fiving the ones who were on side, and cajoling whoever wasn't.

"We lined the entire path," Dean said.

As the vote neared, the volunteers filed into the gallery above the State Senate floor. The votes were not even close.

"Once we got to the tipping point, the opposition melted away," Dean said. "There was a trigger this time: you will be in the dark."

The rest of the legislative package may turn out to be just as important, Stern said. There are billions of dollars for undergrounding of transmission and distribution, electrification of the existing building stock, electric vehicle infrastructure and more.

"It is the electrify everything act. It is a decade and half of work for us," Dean said. "We will even get transmission built for the first time in a decade. I didn't think it was possible, but I am convinced." ■

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

## IBEW Members Restore Power After Hurricane Fiona

IBEW members worked around the clock to restore power to Atlantic Canada after Hurricane Fiona battered the region in late September.

"This storm surpassed anything I've ever experienced," said St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Local 1620 Business Manager Don Murphy.

While Fiona was technically a post-tropical storm when it made landfall in the maritime region, it still hit with the intensity of a Category 2 hurricane, causing heavy rain, fierce winds and a destructive storm surge. It also knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of people and felled countless trees.

Local 1620 members worked night and day from Codroy Valley to Rose Blanche and Port aux Basques in southwestern Newfoundland, where residents dealt with extreme wind, flying debris and sea water that washed ashore, sweeping roads, houses and even an apartment building out to sea.

"The loss is unfathomable. We dealt with whole lines washing away, buildings getting swept away beside us, customers in shock and town workers overwhelmed," Murphy said. "Still, I think everybody did an excellent job under the circumstances."

Local 1620 members worked long hours splicing conductors to restore power, performing emergency switching, isolating washed-out lines and removing live wires from the roads so people could evacuate from the tidal surge.

Crews were also hard at work further south in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia where Fredericton, New Brunswick, Local 37 member Mark Maillard worked. The powerline technician started at home in New Brunswick then moved up to Nova Scotia to help with efforts there, where even the military was brought in to help.

"When we got to Nova Scotia it was different. It was pretty bad," said Maillard who also serves on Local 37's executive board. "There were a lot of customers with power out."

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Local 1928 powerline technicians worked in various locations, including hard-hit Prince Edward Island. They were responsible for primary and secondary line restoration, pole and transformer replacement, disconnecting services that required customer repair, tree removal, reconnecting services post-repair as well as emergency disconnection at the direction of police and firefighters. Non-powerline technicians performed feeder and damage inspections, assisted with customer care due to extremely high call volume, relocated supplies across depots and provided 911 dispatch assistance.

"Fiona simply did not compare to previous storms," said Local 1928 Business Manager Jim Sponagle of the storm that's been called the largest hurricane in Canadian history.

Maillard says they spent a lot of their 16-hour days dealing with fallen trees, including some on fire. Once they were able to get the main power on, they were then able to move on to single customers, some of who went without power for a week or longer.

"We were like a whole caravan, tackling outages," Maillard said.

Among the caravan were tree trimmers from Quebec who only spoke French. Fortunately, Maillard knows a little of the language, so they were able to communicate and make sure everything was done correctly and safely.

"They were excellent," he said. "They made it look easy."

Maillard noted that it was very much a group effort, from the tree trimmers to the traffic controllers to customer service representatives all pitching in.

"It was a team effort for sure," he said.

Maillard said the effort was well run and that customers were largely thankful to see them, like the man who

approached them at a gas station to give them \$100 in Tim Horton's gift cards.

"I don't know of any other job where that happens," he said. "It's really something to get that kind of reception."

There was also the woman on a farm who had been without power for two weeks.

"She had chickens and goats running around, and a rooster in her arms that she was holding like a cat," Maillard said. "Then the lights came on and she was almost in tears because now she could cook a Thanksgiving dinner. The work you do has an impact on people. And only so many of us can do it. I take a lot of pride in that." ■

*IBEW utility crews helped restore power in late September after Hurricane Fiona made landfall, causing historic levels of damage across Atlantic Canada.*



## Les membres de la FIOE rétablissent le courant après l'ouragan Fiona

Les membres de la FIOE ont travaillé jour et nuit pour rétablir le courant dans le Canada Atlantique au moment où l'ouragan Fiona a abattu la région en fin septembre.

« Cette tempête a surpassé tout ce que je connais », déclare le gérant d'affaires Don Murphy de la section locale 1620 à Saint-Jean de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador.

Même si Fiona était en principe une tempête post-tropicale lorsqu'elle a touché terre dans la région des Maritimes, elle a tout de même frappé avec un ouragan de catégorie 2 causant ainsi de fortes pluies, des vents violents et des ondes de tempêtes destructrices. Elle a aussi privé l'électricité à plus d'une centaine de milliers de personnes et a abattu d'innombrables arbres.

Les membres de la section locale 1620 ont travaillé jour et nuit depuis la vallée de Codroy jusqu'à Rose Blanche et Port aux Basques situé au sud-ouest de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador. Les résidents devaient faire face à des vents violents, au vol de débris et à la montée du niveau d'eau de l'océan, aux voies d'accès détruites, les maisons de même que les appartements se sont retrouvés dans l'océan.

« La perte est insondable. Nous avons dû faire face à des lignes de courant en entier emportées par l'eau, des édifices emportés à côté de nous, des clients sous l'effet de choc et des travailleurs de la Ville dépassés par les événements »,

mentionne Murphy. « N'empêche que le tout le monde a fait un excellent travail malgré les circonstances. »

Les membres du local 1620 ont travaillé de longues heures à épisser des conducteurs pour rétablir l'électricité, à isoler les lignes électriques endommagées et à enlever les fils sous tension des routes pour que les gens puissent évacuer les ondes de marées.

Il y avait des équipes qui travaillaient d'arrache-pied plus au sud du Nouveau-Brunswick et en Nouvelle-Écosse où le membre Mark Maillard du local 37 de Fredericton du Nouveau-Brunswick travaillait. Le monteur de lignes a commencé dans sa ville au Nouveau-Brunswick et a continué jusqu'en Nouvelle-Écosse pour venir en aide, le service militaire a même été mobilisé pour aider.

« Quand nous sommes arrivés en Nouvelle-Écosse, c'était différent. Ça s'annonçait mal », dit Maillard qui est membre du comité exécutif du local 37. Beaucoup de clients étaient privés d'électricité. »

Les monteurs de lignes de la section locale 1928 de la Nouvelle-Écosse ont travaillé dans diverses régions, y compris l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard étant durement touchée. Ils étaient responsables du rétablissement de la ligne primaire et secondaire, le remplacement des poteaux et des transformateurs, le débranchement des lignes résidentielles qui nécessitaient des

réparations du client, l'enlèvement d'arbres, le rebranchement des lignes résidentielles une fois la réparation effectuée ainsi que le débranchement d'équipement en situation d'urgence sous la direction de la police et le service d'incendie. Les autres travailleurs effectuaient du travail sur les équipements brisés, ont aidé le service à la clientèle en raison du très haut volume d'appel, ont aussi relocalisé des matériaux dans divers entrepôts et ont prêté assistance au service d'urgence du 911.

« Fiona ne peut simplement pas être comparée aux tempêtes précédentes », ajoute le gérant d'affaires Jim Sponagle du local 1928 en parlant de la tempête étant qualifiée d'être le plus grand ouragan de l'histoire canadienne.

Maillard nous informe qu'ils consacraient beaucoup de temps de leur journée de travail de 16 heures à faire face à des arbres tombés, dont certains étaient en feu. Une fois avoir réussi à rétablir le courant principal, ils étaient en route pour aider les clients, dont certains n'avaient pas de courant depuis une semaine ou plus.

« Nous étions comme dans une grande une caravane à s'attaquer aux pannes », mentionne Maillard.

On trouvait trois émondeurs du Québec dans la caravane et ils ne parlaient que le français. Heureusement que Maillard connaît un peu la langue, ils pouvaient donc communiquer et de s'assurer que tout se faisait correcte-

ment et en toute sécurité.

« Ils étaient excellents », dit-il. « Ils donnaient l'impression que c'était si facile. »

Maillard fait remarquer qu'il s'agissait beaucoup d'un effort collectif, des émondeurs aux contrôleurs de la circulation jusqu'aux représentants du service à la clientèle, tout le monde a mis la main à la pâte.

« C'était sans doute un effort collectif », dit-il.

Maillard nous partage que l'effort était bien organisé et les clients étaient grandement reconnaissant de leur présence. Un homme les a approchés à la station d'essence et leur a offert une carte-cadeau d'une valeur de 100 \$ de Tim Horton.

« Je ne connais pas un autre emploi où cela peut se produire », dit-il. « C'est vraiment quelque chose d'en recevoir autant. »

Il y avait aussi une femme qui habitait sur une ferme et elle était privée d'électricité depuis deux semaines.

« Elle avait des poules et des chèvres qui couraient partout et un coq qu'elle tenait dans ses bras comme un chat », mentionne Maillard. « Puis la pièce fut éclairée et elle était presque en larmes, elle était maintenant en mesure de préparer un repas à l'occasion de l'Action de grâce. Le travail que vous faites a une influence sur les gens. Et peu d'entre nous peuvent le faire. J'en suis très fier. » ■

# CIRCUITS

## In Annual Showcase of Skills, IBEW Electricians Again Bring Home ‘Ideal’ Awards

IBEW apprentice and journeyman wiremen once again took several top honors at the annual Ideal National Championship, held Nov. 4-5 in Tampa, Fla.

Organizers estimate that more than half of those competing in Florida were IBEW members — including Milwaukee Local 494’s Tom Kennedy, who won the journeyman category along with a \$60,000 cash prize.

The wireman competition, which gets recorded for an eventual television broadcast, is produced by electrical toolmaker Ideal Industries to reach viewers who may be considering a career in the trade. The event, Kennedy said, “is a great example of what goes on in the field every day.”

In the months leading up to the championship, nearly 35,000 union and nonunion electricians competed in qualifying rounds throughout the U.S. and Canada. These rounds helped whittle the field down to the more than 140 men and women who arrived in Tampa not only to showcase their inside wireman skills on framed mockups of small homes during tightly timed heats, but also to take home some of the more than \$180,000 in cash and prizes.

“No matter how much you prepare, there’s things that don’t go as planned, so you see the obstacles and overcome them,” said Kennedy, who has been an IBEW member since 1991 and is now a full-time instructor at Milwaukee’s Joint Apprentice Training Committee center. This was his second time competing in the nationals.

The second-place winner in the journeyman category was Greg Anliker of Elgin, Ill., Local 117, who has been a regular participant — and, more than once, a winner — since Ideal began the competition in 2016.

For the 2022 event, challenges ranged from routine circuit breaker box wiring to installing an electric vehicle charger, a hot tub and a solar panel, with judges watching for things such as accuracy, workmanship and safety, all in line with the National Electrical Code.

“They’re judging code compliance and quality of work, not just who’s fast-

*Milwaukee Local 494 member Tom Kennedy came in first place in the journeyman category at the seventh annual Ideal National Championship in November in Tampa.*



est,” Kennedy said. “The clock is just there to play with your head.”

The national competition combines the thrill of a live sporting event with the pressure of television cameras that are constantly roving and watching contestants’ every move, all for a TV show that aired on the CBS Sports channel in December and, at press time, was expected to be available for viewing on the channel’s streaming platform.

On the event’s first day, journeymen and apprentices were split into two groups each. While one group would receive a pre-event briefing and then head to the convention center floor to compete, the other remained under a strictly supervised sequester, to help keep competitors from gaining an unfair advantage by watching and learning from the other group’s work.

By mid-afternoon on the first day, increasingly challenging contests had helped slash the journeyman and apprentice fields to 30 each. By day’s end, two more 45-minute rounds trimmed the groups to 10 each.

The 2021 event in Nashville featured, for the first time, a pro-am teams competition, which was announced in advance to give journeyman-apprentice pairs a chance to practice working together. In Tampa, no pro-am had been officially scheduled; rather, organizers



*Jordan Finfrock of Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 took top honors in the competition’s apprentice category. Finfrock’s father, Chris, and brother, Riley, also competed.*

surprised competitors by announcing that a five-team, one-round pro-am heat would take place the following morning. A drawing paired select journeyman and apprentice semifinalists who had performed well but had not advanced.

Taking home second place in the pro-am category — along with a \$5,000 cash prize — was an IBEW team: Alec Perkins, a journeyman wireman from Des Moines, Iowa, Local 347, and Syracuse, N.Y., Local 43 apprentice Tom Ladd, whose face-down name card had been picked up by Perkins.

“Everything kind of just clicked” on Saturday morning, said Perkins, who had competed in the Ideal Nationals twice before as an apprentice. “We didn’t really talk till our briefing. We were mostly calm about it.”

“We tried to connect a little bit, maybe for an hour,” Ladd said. “We chatted about strengths and weaknesses. We both understood everything, and we communicated great.”

On the convention center floor, Perkins said he worked out with Ladd how to best divide the work. “Tom knocked it out of the park,” Perkins said. “Our teamwork was good. We just jumped in.”

“I thought it was a blast,” Ladd added.

Later, another round of apprentice and journeyman competitions took each of those fields down to five contestants.

After one final contest, the competition’s winners and runners-up were announced during a Nov. 5 award ceremony.

The winner in the apprentice category was Jordan Finfrock of Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575, who said the contest challenged his skills.

“I’d never hooked up a hot tub before,” said Finfrock, who still made it look easy as he worked. This was Finfrock’s second win in the apprentice category; he also took home the top prize at the 2019 competition. Finfrock has since completed his apprenticeship and is now a journeyman wireman.

The electrical trade was not Finfrock’s first career choice, he said. “I started doing welding and hated it, so I decided I was going to try electric,” he said.

Finfrock’s Local 575 was well represented in Tampa: His father, Chris, a journeyman, and his brother, Riley, a fourth-year apprentice, along with another apprentice, Devin Silfer, all competed at the nationals.

Elliott Phillips, a member of Wichita, Kansas, Local 271, came in second place in the apprentice finals, taking home \$20,000.

Like most of his fellow IBEW competitors, Finfrock plans to compete again in 2023. “We always have fun,” said Finfrock. “Friends get to see each other every year there.”

Local 347’s Perkins agreed. “You develop friendships and stay in touch,”

he said. “There’s lots of good networking. It’s an amazing event.”

This time around also marked the return of electricians from Canada to the competition since before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, with nearly a dozen making the trip to Tampa.

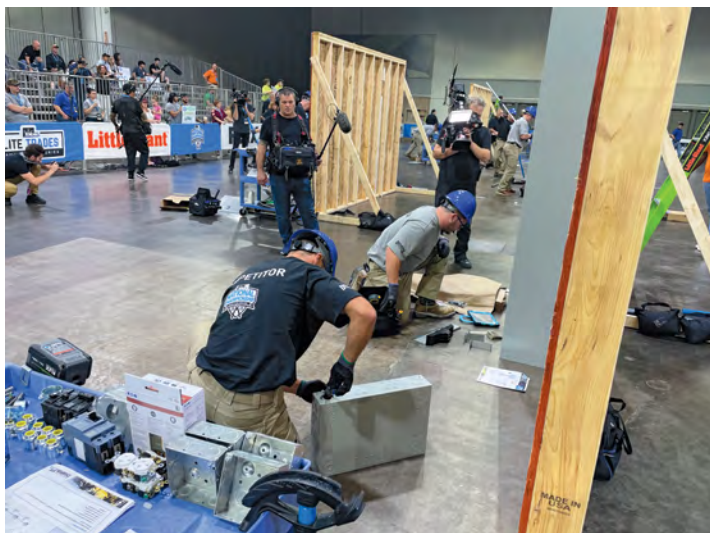
Organizers describe the Ideal nationals as a celebration, honoring the electrical trade and the men and women who work in it by showing their work as both rewarding and exciting.

“One thing about the event is that there’s no ill feeling between union and nonunion,” Local 494’s Kennedy said. “We’re all there to improve our skills and show our love of the trade.”

“While no job is completely recession-proof, the skilled trades provide better job security than others during an economic downturn,” said Ideal Electrical North America Vice President and General Manager Carmen Cardillo. “You can make an excellent living in the trades without incurring student debt along with the satisfaction of knowing that you’re contributing something vital to society.”

Founded in 1916, Ideal is a family-owned business that has become well-regarded for its electrical tools, testers, and wire connectivity.

*Live streams of the 2022 Ideal nationals can be viewed anytime at [facebook.com/IDEALindustries](https://facebook.com/IDEALindustries).*



*Des Moines, Iowa, Local 347 journeyman Alec Perkins, left, and Syracuse, N.Y., Local 43 apprentice Tom Ladd placed second in the pro-am category.*

# TRANSITIONS

## RETIRED

### Jeff Miller



IBEW Accounting Department Director Jeff Miller retired Jan. 1 after three decades of dedicated service at the International

Office in Washington, D.C.

Brother Miller began his IBEW career in 1994. He came to the Accounting Department as a manager after many years in the public accounting field as a certified public accountant. A year later, he became the director. In 2010, he was also appointed to the position of international representative by then-International President Edwin D. Hill.

"He's seen everything," said Mark Cerulla, who replaced Miller as department director. "Jeff is extremely knowledgeable and brought a lot of industry knowledge with him."

Miller served in many capacities throughout his years advising the IBEW officers on operations and financial decisions.

"I was honored to be at the table during important decisions and worked to implement the programs that affected the IBEW and its members," he said.

A member of Washington, D.C., Local 121, Brother Miller served under seven international secretary-treasurers, directly responsible for the financial controls and reporting to the IBEW leadership.

"I always took seriously my responsibilities as a vital part of running a large international union and gave the officers the timely information they needed to lead the IBEW forward," Miller said.

In retirement, he says he looks forward to more quality time with his family and traveling.

On behalf of the officers and staff of the IBEW, we wish Brother Miller a long and happy retirement for his many years of service. ■

bilities quickly," Miller said. "His background and experience have been and will be a great addition to the department and the IBEW as a whole. He will take the department to new levels, and I feel good about leaving it in his hands."

A lifelong Marylander, Cerulla graduated with an accounting degree from the University of Maryland in 1995. He was hired as a senior accountant at the Electrical Training Alliance the following January and promoted to comptroller four years later. In addition to those duties, he was named director of operations in 2011.

Cerulla's aptitude for accounting came as a surprise to him as a young adult. Growing up, the only numbers that interested him were on a scoreboard.

A star guard on his high school's basketball team, he went on to practice with pros from the Washington Bullets — now the Wizards — and followed friends into Europe's semipro leagues, playing in Portugal. At 6'4" tall, he said, "I was the second shortest on the team."

When he returned home, he started a landscaping business and signed up for an accounting class.

"When I took that class, it kind of clicked," Cerulla said. "It seemed like second nature to me, the math and numbers and organization of it."

Cerulla will lead a staff of six who oversee the IBEW's financial operations and prepare the annual audit. "We reconcile all the money that comes in and goes out," he said, listing some of the department's myriad duties.

Saying he's "huge into technology," he's excited about the evolving ways it can create efficiencies and assist staff. "I'm going to learn all that it can do and put that to use," he said. "We'll take a fresh look at how we gather and process our numbers."

While leaving a job he loved was a tough decision, Cerulla said he's been bowled over by the IBEW's warm welcome.

"I feel like I left one family for another family," he said. "It's been a nice transition." ■

## APPOINTED

### Adrian Saucedo



Adrian Saucedo, who's been organizing with the IBEW for nearly 20 years, has been assigned to be director of inside construction organizing in the Membership Development Department, effective Nov. 1.

"Adrian has a caring and creative mind, and he brings fresh ideas and concepts to the team every day," said Assistant to the International President for Membership Development

Jammi Ouellette. "We are extremely lucky to have someone of his caliber on the team."

Born and raised in Houston, Saucedo joined Local 716 right out of high school. He topped out in 2000 as a journeyman wireman and says he would have been content to stay in that career, but others got him involved in the union, attending meetings and even serving as a steward.

"It's why I'm such a big proponent of mentoring," Saucedo said. "Because my own mentors and other people saw potential in me and helped me get to where I am today."

In 2003, Saucedo was hired on as an organizer at Local 716 by then-Business Manager John Easton. Easton now serves as an international representative in the IBEW's Seventh District.

"John went out on a limb for me. He saw something in me," said Saucedo, who's a first-generation IBEW member. "He told me that he wanted someone young and bilingual. He believed that you needed to look like the people you were organizing, and about 80% of construction sites in Texas are Latino."

Saucedo, who is the first Latino director of inside construction organizing, came to the International Office in 2015 as an international representative who split his time between the Manufacturing and Membership Development Departments. He then moved exclusively to Membership Development in 2017. And while he misses being on the tools, he says nothing compares to organizing.

"We change people's lives with organizing," Saucedo said. "It's addicting. Once you change someone's life for the better, you want to do it for everybody. It's like I found my calling."

Among Saucedo's accomplishments is the organizing tool Action Builder, which he worked with the AFL-CIO to develop.

"Adrian is one of the foremost experts on the AFL-CIO's cutting-edge tool Action Builder," Ouellette said.

Action Builder builds on other organizing tools but is designed specifically for labor and puts everything an organizer needs in one shared database that can be accessed from a person's phone or other device. It keeps track of everything, not just people but employers, permits and whatever else might come up.

"I just used my own real-life organizing experience," Saucedo said. "It's what I would've wanted in the field to make my job easier. I used to carry around a bunch of binders. Now it's all at my fingertips."

Saucedo says Action Builder has exploded across the field and now has about 1,200 IBEW users in the U.S. and Canada.

As for what he hopes to accomplish in his new role, Saucedo says that he sees the IBEW's current challenge as its opportunity.

"With a labor-friendly administration in the White House, some mega projects on the horizon and our IBEW

leadership focused on organizing, there's a big opportunity to grow the IBEW," he said. "We have to meet the manpower demands. It's exciting and it's motivating. I see it as a tough but good challenge to have, and I'm proud to be a part of it." ■

## DECEASED

### Miller Ross Hudson



Retired Tenth District International Representative Miller Ross Hudson, a passionate advocate for the IBEW and all unions in

the South, died in Joelton, Tenn., on Oct. 29. He was 77.

Brother Hudson, who went by his middle name, was raised by a single mother on Nashville's East Side. He served as a Navy Seabee for 18 months during the Vietnam War before returning to the Music City, where he became a member of Nashville Local 429 in 1965 and topped out as an inside wireman four years later.

Mike Hudson, one of Ross' three sons, said his father had an opportunity to attend college because of his athletic ability. But he decided on another path after watching his mother fight to provide for him and his three brothers.

"He told me he went into the trades because he would never be poor," said Mike Hudson, a graduate of Local 429's apprenticeship program who now works at Nashville International Airport and installs home entertainment systems. "He would always have something to fall back on and that people needed."

The elder Hudson got involved in his local union almost immediately, serving in various positions. He was elected business manager in 1975, just short of his 30th birthday, making him Local 429's youngest-ever business manager. He was reelected once before being brought on to the then-Twelfth District staff in 1981, where he served as an international representative until his retirement in 2003. (Tennessee became part of the current Tenth District after a legislative realignment in 1998.)

Brother Hudson served as a service representative to IBEW local unions in all branches. Mike Hudson noted that it wasn't the easiest time to do it. Not only was the South an area that was historically hostile toward unions, but the federal government during the Reagan administration was becoming increasingly hostile toward them, too.

"He let everyone know that unions were a great thing when everyone was saying they were a bad thing," he said. "They allowed you to put food on your table. You might go home tired and dirty at the end of the day, but you have a way of life."

Bobby Emery, who later served as a Local 429 business manager, has known Hudson nearly his entire life. Hudson was a close friend of Emery's father, also a Local 429 member.

Even in retirement, Hudson was quick to help at Local 429. Emery said he was especially valuable on arbitration and grievance cases, helping members who were unfairly disciplined win back lost wages and other benefits.

"Ross was very giving, very kind," said Emery, who now works for Rosendin Electric, a longtime IBEW signatory contractor. "He was always wanting to help people provide a better life for themselves. He was very dedicated to standing up for people who couldn't quite stand up for themselves — not just in the IBEW, but all the building trades."

In addition to his IBEW duties, Brother Hudson served as president of the Nashville Central Labor Council. He was a member of the Tennessee Prevailing Wage Commission and Metro Nashville Building Trades Appeals Board. He also was a longtime member of the Shriners.

In retirement, he enjoyed the outdoors and was an avid fan of the NFL's Tennessee Titans and Vanderbilt University's football team. He enjoyed talking politics and remained a loyal Democrat until his death. He also was a self-confessed prankster who enjoyed having a good time.

"He was so jovial, and it was really later in life where I saw that," Emery said. "He was always so happy and had a crooked little smile like he was up to something. But he was a great guy who would give you the shirt off his back. If he cared about you, there was nothing he wouldn't do for you."

Besides his son Mike, Hudson is survived by his wife of 37 years, Sandra; sons Jeff and Mark; stepsons Carroll and James Moore; and five grandchildren. Scott Hudson is employed by the Tennessee Valley Authority and is a member of New Johnsonville, Tenn., Local 1749.

The officers and staff send their condolences to Brother Hudson's family and loved ones during this difficult time. ■

## APPOINTED

### Mark Cerulla



Mark Cerulla, who worked with the IBEW for years as comptroller at the Electrical Training Alliance, has moved to the union's staff

as head of the Accounting Department.

Newly retired Accounting Department Director Jeff Miller, who held the job since 1994, began training Cerulla in October to ensure a smooth transition.

"Mark has stepped in full speed and has been picking up the responsi-

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## DECEASED

## James G. Stuart



Retired Fifth District International Representative James Stuart, who remained as active through 25 years of retirement as he

had been during his 51-year IBEW career, died on Nov. 10. He was 94.

In 1945, shortly after his graduation from Mary Persons High School, Stuart went to work for Georgia Power, working first at the Arkwright Plant and later at the Plant Harley Branch. He was initiated into Macon Local 896 in 1946.

Stuart's career in the electrical trades was put on hold, however, when he was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. From 1950 to 1953, he was a member of the 27th Infantry Regiment in the Army's 25th Infantry Division.

A story in the Monroe County Reporter noted that Stuart was wounded twice while he was fighting overseas — first, by a hand-grenade booby trap, and then later, by a 50-caliber

machine gun hit. He was awarded Purple Hearts for each incident.

After recovering from his injuries and returning stateside, Stuart resumed his work as an IBEW activist in Macon, serving on Local 896's safety and negotiations committees and joining its executive board in 1954. Three years later, he became vice president, and then, in 1957, he began an 11-year run as business manager.

Stuart also served on the Macon Federation of Trades and Labor Council, and he was a member of the committee that managed the pensions of IBEW members who worked for the Southern Company.

In 1968, then-International President Charles Pillard appointed Stuart as an international representative for the union's Fifth District, which services members in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Puerto Rico. Stuart's first year in this role was spent working on the temporary organizing staff in Louisiana and Texas as part of the IBEW's Gulf States Organizing Campaign. (Shortly after Stuart's appointment as an international representative, Local 896 merged with Atlanta Local 84.)

"He did have a big hand in organizing at the local," said retired Local 84 Assistant Business Manager Mark Spivey, who came to know Stuart well

after Stuart's appointment as international representative. "He was real easygoing; he could talk you into doing almost anything."

When Stuart was home from district work on weekends, he raised hybrid tea roses. His family wrote that he would often give away vegetables he grew at home and would plow patches for people who wanted a garden of their own. "He really loved to garden," said Spivey, remembering his friend fondly.

Throughout his life, Stuart was active in several organizations, such as Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Woodmen of the World and Habitat for Humanity.

He was also busy politically, having worked on candidates' campaigns with the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Party of Georgia as well as chairing Monroe County's Democratic Committee.

A devout Baptist, Stuart was a leader in his local church, serving as a deacon and singing in the choir, and he also worked with Gideons International.

Even in his down time, he could scarcely sit still, enjoying baseball, football, quail hunting and golf.

"You almost never caught him in a bad way," said Spivey — noting, however, that Stuart was an effective leader who

could be stern when he needed to be.

Following Stuart's retirement from the IBEW in 1997, he became active with Georgia Power Ambassadors; the Lions, Kiwanis and Exchange clubs; the American Legion; and Meals on Wheels.

Stuart's family wrote in his obituary that he even made himself available to drive people to dialysis and cancer treatments.

"He was big time in his community," Spivey said. "Anybody needed help, he was there. I think it was his life's hobby" to do that, he said.

People noticed. Stuart's obituary notes that, in 2004, he was named a "Straight from the Heart" honoree by Macon's WMAZ-TV. He was awarded a plaque by the Central Georgia Council Ocmulgee District of the Boy Scouts of America in 2014, and, in 2017, the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce named him "Citizen of the Year."

The Reporter wrote that, most recently, Stuart led efforts to place a memorial to Monroe County military veterans near the county courthouse.

Stuart is survived by his wife of 71 years, Evelyn, as well as four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Please join the entire IBEW membership in sending condolences and best wishes to Stuart's family during this difficult time. ■

## 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 news for and about IBEW members, including a web version of *The Electrical Worker*, at [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org).

## YouTube

Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245's Pam Pendleton credits the IBEW for helping her become the first female foreman in her department at PG&E. Check out her story: [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

## Vimeo

Holding the 2022 Women's Conference in Washington let U.S. members meet with their congressional representatives and Canadians to visit their country's embassy. Watch the recap at [Vimeo.com/IBEW](https://www.vimeo.com/IBEW).

## HourPower

Members from Honolulu Local 1186 are working on Wai Kai, a recreation destination on O'ahu. Take a virtual trip to the tropics via [IBEWHourPower.com](http://IBEWHourPower.com).

## ElectricTV

Four locals in the Pacific Northwest are building a massive indoor facility for hotwork simulations and for tree-trimmer training. Get details at [ElectricTV.net](http://ElectricTV.net).

## THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS &amp; JOBS

## Biden: IBEW Exceeded Challenge to Register Credentialed EV Charger Installers

Over the summer, President Joe Biden issued a "talent pipeline challenge" to ensure that jobs geared toward rebuilding the country's infrastructure will be filled by the highly trained men and women of the building trades.

International President Lonnie R. Stephenson pledged that the IBEW would certify at least 10,000 electricians by August through the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program.

**"Our high-quality training is what sets us apart."**

—International President Lonnie R. Stephenson at White House "talent pipeline challenge" event

In November, the White House announced that the IBEW had exceeded that pledge, with more than 12,500 members boasting certification in the EVITP, a 20-hour course for journeymen wiremen that's offered at many of the IBEW's training facilities.

"I'm pleased that our members stepped up like this, but I'm honestly not surprised," Stephenson said. "Our high-quality training is what sets us apart, and our members recognize that training is what helps us prepare to capture work that leads to good-paying, union jobs for thousands of men and women."

Part of the push behind the White House's challenge is the nearly \$5 billion under Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help build a national network of 500,000 charging stations located along "alternative fuel corridors" by 2030.

The administration has consistently indicated a strong preference for the EVITP, so much so that it was the only training standard listed by name in new federal rules issued this year regarding construction of EV charging stations.

At a special White House meeting Nov. 2 to talk about the challenge, President Stephenson was among the labor leaders who were invited to attend, and he was the only one mentioned by Biden in his remarks.

"When I started to run for the presidency this time, the suggestion was, 'Biden is too green; he'd never get unions to stick with him,'" the president said. "One of the first guys I called was Lonnie."

During his campaign, Biden said, his lengthy conversations with Stephenson helped the two men reach an understanding of how "the future of labor is in the



Boston Local 103 apprentice Abigail Jean-Baptiste demonstrates electric vehicle charging station training for President Joe Biden at the White House.

future" and that focusing on a range of issues from climate change to advanced manufacturing would be crucial to the country's economic recovery.

"I just want to thank you, Lonnie, and all the union presidents that are here, for stepping up," Biden said. "It wasn't easy to step up as boldly as you did. I really mean it."

Biden was introduced by Alyssa Cruz, a fourth-year, second-generation apprentice from Chicago Local 134.

"As the youngest of three and the only girl, I was not expected to follow in my father's footsteps," Cruz said. "I got to college on a scholarship and worked for a few years before I realized that I wanted what my dad had at the IBEW: income that put me and my brothers through college, a union pension, health care and the satisfaction that comes from seeing an empty lot and then working to build something from the ground up."

In September, the Department of Transportation announced that it had approved a deployment plan for the vehicle charging network, with all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico gaining access to funding to build out the network. ■

# LOCAL LINES

## Happy New Year, Brothers and Sisters!

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,ptc,rts,s,se,spa,st&ws), ST. LOUIS, MO — We had an enthusiastic return to our annual Greg Booth Ride for the Relief Committee. Like many events, its irregularity was due to the lingering pandemic. The enthusiasm and rekindled memories were good for the soul. The money raised was put to good use, assisting members in need.

Our local's RENEW chapter hosted a chili cookoff and rib fest. It was a tasty success — in a word, "SMOKIN'." Funds were raised for our Electrical Workers Minority Caucus to support its year-round mission of collecting and distributing coats to those in need in the community.

Please hold accountable our newly elected or reelected federal, state and local officials, and make sure they are closely aware of the necessity of a unionized workforce. Unionized workers are essential for our economy to remain the envy of the rest of the world. Politicians who want to weaken or eliminate unions' rights to exist and negotiate collectively need to know they are misinformed. Have an attentive ear, an instructive tongue and an informed mind. Be vigilant, active and engaged — united, we stand!

Kyle Hunter, P.S.



From left, Ninth District International Representative David Jones, Local 11 Business Manager Joel Barton and International President Lonnie R. Stephenson.

## Local 11 Visited by President Stephenson

L.U. 11 (em,i,rts&spa), LOS ANGELES, CA — This past October, we had the honor and pleasure to host International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, who addressed a packed auditorium filled with over 1,700 apprentices. President Stephenson spoke of the infrastructure bills that President Joe Biden passed this year that would bring billions of dollars' worth of work for electricians throughout the country. He also spoke about the importance of politics, how our vote matters and

why we need to get out the vote for labor-friendly candidates. President Stephenson was joined onstage by the chief executive officer of NECA, David Long. During his stay in Los Angeles, President Stephenson was taken to the Intuit Dome, future home of the NBA's Clippers, and SoFi Stadium, home to the NFL's Rams and Chargers. He visited our 144,000-square-foot Electrical Training Institute in Commerce, Calif., where we explained the innovative ways we were able to reduce our carbon footprint by saving energy through photovoltaics, battery storage and other cost-effective measures. The apprentices were delighted when the IBEW's international president walked into their classroom, and it was noted that not all are similarly privileged in the experience. The apprentices had great dialogue with President Stephenson on his vision of the IBEW's future. To end his visit with Local 11, President Stephenson joined and spoke at our general meeting. We greatly appreciate the time President Stephenson spent with our members at Local 11.

Robert Corona, P.S.

## Congratulations, and Thanks for Your IBEW Service

L.U. 43 (em,i&rs), SYRACUSE, NY — Congratulations to our retirees for the many years of hard work, dedication and service to our local. Wishing all of you a wonderful and healthy retirement: Peter Anderson, Lonny Bornstein, James Burke, William Cmaylo, James Harkness, Brett Hart, Guy Hudson, William Iseneker, Ernest Jones, Mark Konseck, Mark Leska, Steve Lincoln, David J. Martin, Mark Mattox, Edward Mortimer, Gary Murphy, Paul Petell, Jack Pryor, Frances Righi, James Roach, Luca Ruggiero, Michael J. Smith, David Sterio, James Stewart, Byron Sullivan, Glenn Sweeney, Loren Sweet, David Teachout, Bradley Theune, James Walters, Andrew Watkins, Kenneth Williams Jr. and Thomas Williams.

We thank the following members for their years of service to the IBEW: William Butler and Earl Kneuss (75 years); Louis Opera (70 years); Alan Davenport, Joseph Granato, William McDonald, Herbert Peryea and William Thompson (65 years); Dale Cook and William Fuelleman (60 years); Richard Abbott, George Brown, William Clarke, Lynn Cohen, James Driscoll, Peter Dulcich, Joseph Duplessis, Michael Gallagher, Gary Gentile, Douglas Gosch, John Gosek, William Gwilt, Robert Kuzawski, William Methot, Phillip Nardell, Roger Reath, Flavio Righi, Joseph Sanderson, Ronald Sheffield and Leonard West (55 years); James Baran, Michael Bittner, David Darrow, Raymond Keough, George Meilak, Richard Ostrander, Michael Ravesi, Dana Rech, Raymond Vivlemore, Thomas Waldau and David Zielinski (50 years).

Congratulations to our 2022 first-year



Local 43's first-year apprentice class, who were sworn in at the September union meeting.

apprentice class, who were sworn in at our September union meeting. Choosing the IBEW Local 43 apprenticeship program as a career offers many rewarding challenges in life. Best wishes for a wonderful career.

Jeff Cassano, P.S.

## Local 47 Updates and Events

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters! Our Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin was hard at work at the Oct. 11 parent-body meeting answering questions on our SCE bargaining. Here are some updates:

- SCE — Triston Mends Arbitration — The arbitrator sustained the grievance and ordered the grievant to be reinstated with full back pay and reduced the discipline to a letter of reprimand.
- SCE — New Steward Training was held for the first of three groups of 10 on Sept. 27; the next two sessions were held on Oct. 12 and Nov. 2.
- SCE — System and Substation Operator — Paragraph M bargaining began in early October.
- City of Banning — Utility and General Units — Negotiations continue.
- City of Anaheim — General Contract and Professional Management — Bargaining started at the end of October.



Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin speaks about SCE bargaining at a parent-body meeting Oct. 11.

Upcoming events at the time of this writing: The 20th annual Local 47 Members' Memorial Golf Tournament is scheduled for Nov. 21, our local's Christmas party is scheduled for Dec. 17, and Local 47's Steward and Safety Conference will be held March 25.

We are sad to report the deaths of Gabriel Banuelos, Charles Burnett, Dave Crocket, Kenneth Ensmen, Brian "Ducky" Mallard and Victor Venegas. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union!

Mitch Smith, P.S.

## Congratulations to Local 51 Rodeo Competitors

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — With deepest sympathy, we report that the following active members passed away in 2022: Kirk Brimberry, Craig DeBoer, Pamela Dean, Jeffery Parkerson, Matthew Parsons, Justin Somogyi and Richard Thomas. The following retirees have also passed: Robert Almasi, Lyle Antonio, Harold Ayers, James "Jim" Bartley, Dennis Brown, Howard Brue, Thomas Cliff, Bret Cochran, David "Doc" Ellis, Harold Ernst, Bradford Eustice, Fredrick Grimm, Larry Hayes, Jack Hicks, James Jiles, Richard "Bud" Johnson, Roy Jordan, Gary Kukuk, Edward Libby, Floyd Libell, John McGrath, Rodger McKeon, Crystal McWilliams, Robert "Bud" Norton, Mark Peterson, Hubert Schuman, David Sennett, Johnny Ray Sronce, Claude Vezina, William "Bill" Webster, Edgar Willcutt and Gloria Woods. Rest in peace, brothers and sisters.

Congratulations to our members who competed at the International Lineman's Rodeo in Kansas and the AIEC Lineworker's Safety Rodeo in Illinois. Happy New Year!

Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.

## Submitting Local Lines Articles

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd local number schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via our online form. For deadlines and questions, please visit [ibew.org/media-center/submitting-local-lines](http://ibew.org/media-center/submitting-local-lines) or email [locallines@ibew.org](mailto:locallines@ibew.org).

We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are made by our editorial team. Please adhere to a 200-word limit.

If you have an idea for an Electrical Worker story, please contact the Media Department at (202) 728-6291 or [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org).

## 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.

## Working Safely in the New Year

L.U. 55 (c,lctt,o&u), DES MOINES, IA — Hello, brothers and sisters! As I write this article, I'm looking outside, and it is a beautiful day. I always enjoyed going to work on days like this. I think back to all the wonderful guys I worked with and how they all pitched in to train me.

Where would we be without that passed-down knowledge? Where would we be without safety rules? I was fortunate to always be around safe people at work. I climbed poles until I made journeyman, and then I thought I would get to work out of a bucket truck, but it was an Elliot Hi Reach with a steel cage and four insulators under it. It was safer to be in my hooks! Now as I drive around Ankeny, Iowa, I see so much brand-new equipment for our young workers.

Happy retirement to Bo! Work safe, and Happy New Year from Local 55.

*Myron Green, P.S.*

## Local 103 Holds DEI Summit for Electrical Construction

L.U. 103 (cs&i), BOSTON, MA — Our local recently held its inaugural Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Summit for Electrical Construction. Participants learned about new public sector policies and regulations and what is required for increasing DEI on projects, as well as how to integrate best practices for DEI in planning, proposal responses and bids. Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program has hit the ground running and has been nothing short of successful.

We are proud to announce that we have partnered with six-time Super Bowl champions the New England Patriots. As part of the partnership, Gillette Stadium concourses and in-game video boards will be adorned with the IBEW Local 103/NECA Boston emblem. Members have been powering the stadium since its opening in 2002 and are playing a key role in the construction of the stadium's new \$225 million north end zone expansion project.

The midterm elections are behind us, and Local 103's endorsed candidates were victorious in their bids for the highest offices in the state. For the first time in our history, Massachusetts has elected a woman as governor, Maura Healey. Massachusetts has also elected its first all-female executive team of Healey, Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll and Attorney General Andrea Campbell, who becomes the first Black woman to win a statewide office. Our members worked tirelessly for our endorsed candidates, and we could not be prouder of the outcome.

*Jimmy Fleming, P.S.*

## Local 129 Prospers with Steady Work

L.U. 129 (i), LORAIN, OH — As we move forward into the new year, work remains steady for our Book 1 members. The general work outlook remains



*Local 129's softball team won the Flight G bracket in the 50th annual IBEW Midwest Tournament in Cleveland, Ohio.*

promising, and we are cautiously optimistic that 2023 will be very busy.

Our annual golf outing was Aug. 27, with a record 110 participants. All enjoyed a day of fun, food and brother/sisterhood. A special thanks to Business Manager John Novak and his crew for hosting a fantastic event.

The annual Fun Ride brought together our many motorcycle enthusiasts. Brother Deven Peterman provided the much-appreciated organization for the event.

Our softball team had a successful run by winning the Flight G bracket in the 50th annual IBEW Midwest Tournament in Cleveland. Kudos to Brother Jared Ochs for putting our team together and to Local 38 for a classic venue!

Local 129 recognizes our 2021 apprenticeship class. These new journeymen have not only been proficient in their training — they also stand out as model wiremen and foremen.

The 2021 class members are Frank Ball, Ryan Everman, Rick Hamm, Joe Hembree (Outstanding Apprenticeship awardee), Bryan Osbourne, Josh Papuga, Bradley Ralston and Eric Spasos.

Thanks to our JATC, which works continuously to provide top candidates, nurtures the learning process and ensures the future of Local 129.

*Paul Kress, P.S.*

## Local 131 Welcomes New Contractors

L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rts,se&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI — The work outlook is steady in Kalamazoo. Pfizer's MAP project has 30 men working on it. Manpower is being supplied by Hi-Tech Electric, KEI Electrical Construction and Lakeland Electrical. Moore Electrical has multiple projects throughout the Pfizer complex. Gun Lake Casino is expanding to include a 15-story hotel and an aquadome, which is coming in 2023.

I want to welcome new contractors Gen 3 Electric and Pemberton Davis Electric. We also welcome Nitro Electric, Shaum Electric, Schwartz Electric and Gurtz Electric from Chicago into the local.

New retirees are Gary Lasecki (July), Randall Horneber (August), Steve Bowker and David Miller (September), and Kevin McGuire and Suzanne Bus (November). Thank you all for the many years of service — we are stronger because of you.

New Member Orientation for the first- and second-year apprenticeship classes will be held Feb. 4.

Several of our members went to the Douglass Community Center and updated several rooms with receptacles, switches and data ports. This effort was led by President Leroy Crabtree, Robert Edmonson and Beau Hendrick. Twenty apprentices and several journeymen showed up to help.

*Morris A. Applebey, B.M./F.S.*

## Local 141 Sees Steady Work and Events

L.U. 141 (ees,l,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Work in our jurisdiction has improved dramatically, with 25 members on Book

1. We've had to go into Book 2 as well to man the calls in our local. Many thanks to the travelers who help to fill these job assignments.

In August, Local 141 held its annual Family Picnic and Golf Scramble at Wheeling Park. Again, the 141 Social Committee did a fantastic job assuring that the members and their families had a great time. Congratulations to Adam Combs, Frank Gregorcic, Aaron White and J.T. White for winning the 2022 Golf Scramble!

October and November were busy months for Local 141 as we prepared for the November midterm elections, as well as all of the holiday festivities planned by the Social Committee and enjoyed by members and their families.

Local 141 is saddened to report the passing of Brothers Fred Russell, Job Sorge and Kevin Van Camp. They will be deeply missed.

Please stay safe and healthy!

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



*From left, Local 141's Golf Scramble winners Aaron White, Frank Gregorcic, Adam Combs and J.T. White.*

## Local 197 Works Hard to GOTV

L.U. 197 (es&i), BLOOMINGTON, IL — At the time of this writing, we are a week away from the November elections. Here in Illinois, we have been working hard, informing members and other voters to vote YES for the Workers' Rights Amendment. The amendment would set the national standard for supporting workers and protecting their rights to bargain. We will continue to work hard until the polls close to get a win on the amendment; we thank our members who have volunteered their time to help get the message out.

After the last couple of years of the pandemic, we haven't been able to have a Christmas party for our membership. At the time of this writing, we are happy to bring back the tradition on Dec. 9 with a party planned at the hall, where we look forward to having good food and drink and honoring our latest service pin recipients.



*Santa and Mrs. Claus paid a visit to Local 237, giving gifts and cheer to members' families.*

As we move into winter, our work picture looks steady. We wish everyone a safe and healthy holiday season!

*Mike Raikes, B.M./F.S.*

## A Happy New Year to All

L.U. 237 (i&r), NIAGARA FALLS, NY — Happy new year, brothers and sisters!

With the school year well underway, the apprentice classes and our members have been putting our new union hall and training facility to good use. The extra space allows for more hands-on lab work and the ability to host more union-related events. We're also proud to announce that we have a new part-time training director, Kurt Bingham.

Work in the area is steady and looks to remain so throughout the winter. We still have several large ongoing jobs, such as those at the New York Power Authority and Lockport Memorial Hospital. Amazon's proposed five-story, 3 million-square-foot fulfillment center was approved in the town of Niagara, but the project has yet to break ground.

We'd like to congratulate members Andy Janese and Jonathan Litten for taking first place in the Local 237 Disc Golf Tournament, held in September.

The holiday season and new year bring several more events to our members and their families. Our annual Kids' Christmas Party took place at the new hall Dec. 3. Gifts were purchased from area union-built stores and given out to members' children. This event has been going on for over 45 years. We were fortunate enough to have Santa and Mrs. Claus in attendance thanks to Brother Bill Anterline and his wife, Cheryl.

The Venison Dinner and Big Buck Contest will be held Jan. 16 at the American Legion on Ward Road in Sanborn, N.Y. Good luck to all of our hunters. Local 237's Dinner Dance will be Feb. 18 at Niagara Riverside Resort; be sure to keep an eye out for more information.

We wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. Stay warm and safe this winter!

*Brandon Lum, P.S.*



*Local 197 members and family rally with Illinois Speaker of the House Chris Welch about the Workers' Rights Amendment: (left to right) Eric Riddle, Anna Peasley, Tom Peasley, Mike Raikes, Matt Strupp, Stevie Anthony, Speaker Chris Welch, Sara Strupp, Don Armstrong and Sara Hennigh.*

## LOCAL LINES

## Thanks for Safety and Support

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — Our local hopes everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was great seeing everyone at our holiday union meeting. In January, we will have our annual Toledo Walleye hockey family night in downtown Toledo. From all of us at Local 245, we want to thank you for working safely and to thank your families for all their support.

*Brian Gendaszek, P.S.*

## The Union Steward

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — Welcome, 2023! A steward, by definition, is one who is actively concerned with the direction of the affairs of an organization. The steward on your jobsite is the representative for the union, the members and the shop. An effective steward must be flexible because he or she will be pulled all three directions, usually at once.

## The Union Steward

Who is this guy of lowly pay,  
with haggard look and hair of gray?

He gets no rest by day or night.

He's always wrong. He's never right.

He does not have a law degree,  
but goes to bat for you and me.

Though seldom has he been to college,  
he must possess the widest knowledge,  
of labor grades and when to grieve,  
vacation pay and sickness leave,  
of overtime and who's to do it,  
the how and the which and the why and the when,  
and all the problems known to men.

If, with the foreman he agrees,  
then he's a rat who's got weak knees.

If to the men, he tries to cater,  
he's branded as an agitator.

The guy who has to take this slop,  
is called the STEWARD of your shop.  
(Anonymous)

Interested in steward training? Call the hall at (507) 282-7081. Be the one to make a difference.

*Tom Small, P.S.*

## Local 357 Volunteers at Street Teens Facility

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — Our members continue to serve our community, this time for Street Teens, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting homeless, abandoned and at-risk youth. Our Local 357 members volunteered their time to install lights and GFCLs that were greatly needed at the facility. The materials needed to complete the work were donated by several of our union contractors. The project was supposed to take two days but was completed by our team in a single day.



*Local 357 members volunteered their time to install needed electrical updates for the local Street Teens facility in Las Vegas.*

That's how Local 357 gets the job done! Because the work was finished ahead of schedule, there was minimal disruption to Street Teens' services.

Street Teens has provided services in a compassionate environment while empowering youths to take charge of their futures since 2001. This community service is run by an all-woman team.

A special thanks to all those who were involved in getting this important work done.

*Julie-Ann Peebles, P.S.*

## Congratulations, Local 449 Graduates and Retirees

L.U. 449 (i,o,u,rtb,rts&spa), POCATELLO, ID — Our local turned out nine apprentices as inside journeymen wiremen this year. We would like to congratulate Denim Hanson, Jacob Hill, Timothy Judge, Jeremiah Manning, Dakota Peck, Pedro Rivas, Dalton Sears, Westyn Thompson and Danan Wood. We wish each of you a long and prosperous career.

Congratulations to our recently retired Brothers Rick Chase, Ned Jones, Leon Peterson, William Sheaffer and Neil Tillotson. You have earned it, and best wishes to all of you!

In memoriam: Brothers Benny Beck, William Blake, William Eason and Frank C. Hulse. They will be truly missed. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their family and friends.

*Clay Hirning, B.M.*



*From left, third-generation IBEW member Dale Jolley with Brian Jolley (25 years of service) and Denis Jolley (60 years of service).*

## Thank You, Travelers

L.U. 453 (govt,i,rtb,rts&spa), SPRINGFIELD, MO — Our local is proud to welcome third-generation member Dale Jolley and to present Brian Jolley with his 25-year service pin and Dennis Jolley with his 60-year pin. We also greeted our new first-year class of 23 students, which makes a total of 60 in the program.

Work is good in the jurisdiction, with several projects ongoing. We are especially proud to be involved with the replacement hospital being built at the Fort Leonard Wood Army base. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our traveling brothers and sisters for helping us man this work in our jurisdiction. Your work is appreciated!

Our Brotherhood Committee put together a great Trunk or Treat for Halloween, and our Wireman's Benefit Fund is raising money for Brother Michael Gray, who is recovering from a broken leg. Stay safe, and try to make the regular meetings, which are on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

*Troy Schindler, P.S.*



*Local 481 members inspect and repair the stringers for the annual Circle of Lights Celebration in Indianapolis.*

## Local 481 Members Make Circle of Lights

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rts,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — This past October, our local's retirees once again came together to inspect and repair the stringers for the annual Circle of Lights celebration. Once all the stringers had been inspected and were confirmed to be working properly, our members got together Nov. 12 to install the lights on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in downtown Indianapolis. This marked the 60th year that Local 481

started the holiday season by volunteering their time and talents to bring this treasured tradition to the Circle City. Our members have been a part of the Circle of Lights since its inception and look forward to bringing joy to families and friends for many years. The next time you're in the Indianapolis area around the holidays, make sure to swing by the Soldiers and Sailors Monument and enjoy the work of your fellow IBEW brothers and sisters.

We're hoping that everyone had a good holiday season and wish you all a great 2023. Let's make this year better than the last and continue to prove that IBEW is the best union around!

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



*From left, Local 499 Business Manager John Dunlap, Life Saving award recipient Tom Flanery and Business Representative Jim Carroll.*

## Brother Thomas Flanery Receives Life Saving Award

L.U. 499 (u), DES MOINES, IA — Our local would like to congratulate Thomas Flanery on receiving the IBEW Life Saving Award. Tom was out early on the morning of March 30, 2022, in West Des Moines, Iowa. He was replacing a streetlight head when he heard a crackling noise. He lowered his bucket truck and noticed a house had smoke and fire com-

ing from it. At this point he called 911 to report the fire and then went up to the door to try to alert anyone in the house. No one answered the door, so he ran around the house and knocked on the windows, at which the family awoke. The outcome was commendable as he was able to get the family out safely, including two adults, a 13-year-old child, two dogs and a cat. The West Des Moines fire marshal was impressed with the actions Tom took that morning to save the lives of the family in that home.

*John Dunlap, B.M.*



*Local 601's RENEW Committee built brand-new bag sets for use in their fourth annual Bags Tournament in September.*

## RENEW Committee Holds Annual Bags Tournament

L.U. 601 (i&rtb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL — The RENEW Committee held its fourth annual Bags Tournament at the union hall Sept. 24. The event this year set a standard for all future Bags Tournaments: This was the first time the committee built brand-new bag sets to be used for all tournaments. Signatory Contractors and Electrical Supply Contractors were given the option to sponsor a set for a one-time fee, and the committee managed to get every set sponsored by the time the tournament came around.

Earlier in 2022, we lost a third-year apprentice and brother to an automobile accident. He was the son of another IBEW member, and the committee memorialized him at the tournament. Another third-year apprentice and friend made a bag set out of leftover lumber the two had been working on. The final match was played on this set, with his father throwing the first bag.

Though life may be tough at times, Local 601 encourages all members to reach out to someone when it becomes to be too much for any one person to handle. Let us all head into this new year having each other's backs when it's needed most.

*Luther Baker, P.S.*





*Congratulations to all of Local 611's graduating apprentices!*

## Local 611 Celebrates 30 Apprentice Graduates

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — This year's Apprenticeship Banquet graduated 30 new journeymen and journeymen. This year's graduating apprentices are Aaron Anaya, Eric Anderson, Matthew Baca, Bo Beebe, Bryce Burkholder, Gary Chandler, Anthony Cordova, Matthew Davis, Michael Duran, Raymond Galvan, Ernie Garcia, Gregorio Garcia, Adam Goetz, Sean Hands, Victor Ingrassia, Anthony Johnson Jr., Lucas Lionberger, Adan Martinez, Michael Montoya, Michael Moya, Joseph Reed, Bianca Rivera, Emilio Sanchez, Michael Sandoval, Austin Tibbetts, Patrick Torres, Jedediah Tratechaud, Christopher Trujillo, Ignacio Vargas and Fernando Vega-Martinez. Congratulations to all of the graduates.

This year's recipient of the C.S. Mitchell award was Jesse Logan, and the Apprentice of the Year was Lucas Lionberger. Congratulations to both apprentices, and good luck to Lucas at the regional competition.

Kenny Ortiz was named Mentor of the Year. Great job, Kenny, and keep up the good work.

I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving, a very merry Christmas and a happy new year; and for those who do not celebrate Christmas, I hope you enjoyed a happy winter break.

On behalf of Local 611, I extend condolences to the friends and families of Eugene Carney, Shane Doyle, Mason L. Lacy and Duncan MacDonald.

Don't forget to attend your union or unit meetings.

*Darrell J. Blair, P.S.*



*Local 683 members Robert Lockwood and Robert "Fuzzy" Farrington with their 65-year service pins.*

## Celebrating a New 25-Year Class

L.U. 683 (i&ptc), COLUMBUS, OH — Our local celebrated the new class of members with 25 years of service at our annual dinner held at Hollywood Casino. This 64th annual dinner was well attended as always. Brothers Robert "Fuzzy" Farrington and

Robert Lockwood were in attendance to receive their 65-year service pins. Congratulations to all of the members who received service pins and to those who received their retirement plaques.

At the time of this writing, we are coming up on an election that could have major consequences on the future infrastructure investment, voting rights and the pro-labor agenda in this country. I am hopeful that our friends have held on to power in D.C. and experienced gains across the states.

We continue to have calls coming in on a daily basis. Even with projects wrapping up, there is still a great need for journeymen wiremen and data techs, with more jobs beginning in our jurisdiction. We do not anticipate any slowing down in the near future — an increase is assured with large projects in the area breaking ground this year.

*Mike Morey, Pres.*

## Brother Shawn McDonnell Appointed SOC

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — With the long Florida summer behind us, our local managed to come out of the destruction wrought by Hurricane Ian largely unscathed. However, we are acutely aware of the danger that passed us by and stand ready to assist any of our brothers or sisters to our south who require it.

On Sept. 5, Local 915 held its annual Labor Day picnic in partnership with the West Florida Central Labor Council at the Suncoast Youth Conservation Center. It was attended by Local 915 members, our brothers and sisters from neighboring locals, and union members from other trades and industries, as well the labor-friendly candidates running in the general election. The highlight of the event was fishing off the pier at the center. It was built with more than 600 volunteer hours of labor, which were donated by members of various local unions. Kudos to the WFCLC for organizing a successful event.

It is with immense pride that I congratulate Brother Shawn McDonnell on his recent appointment as a state organizing coordinator in the Fifth District. He served Local 915 with honor and integrity, and I am sure that he will do amazing things for the rest of the Fifth District.

*Brian Nathan, P.S.*

## Teddy Bear Delivery to Cincinnati Children's Hospital

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,ptc&u), CINCINNATI, OH — For the sixth year in a row, our local had the opportunity in December to donate over 100 teddy bears to the beloved and well-deserving children at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. [See photo, bottom, right.] We hope these small gifts can really make a differ-

ence for those who are staying at the hospital during the holiday season. If our membership has the ability to spread a little cheer, we are going to do so! With that being said, we wish to also extend a "thank you" to all of those working hard in the medical field. We wish everyone good health and well-being in the new year.

*Andrew Kirk, B.M.*



*The 2022 graduates of Local 1547's fifth cohort are (front row, from left) Jacob Paress, Chase Kortum and Veronica "Ace" Acedevo; (back row, from left) Logan Minick, Jonathan Stephan, Kevin Shea, Jacob White, Jacob Parker, Terrance Hall, Sungho Cho and Adam Clark.*

## Local 1547 Celebrates Graduates from VEEP

L.U. 1547 (c,em,i,lctt,o,ptc,t&u), ANCHORAGE, AK — Fourteen members of the armed forces recently graduated from the Tom Cashen Training Facility as part of the pre-apprentice Veterans Electrical Entry Program. Two graduates will remain in

Alaska, while the others will pursue training in the Lower 48. The Local 1547 VEEP program began in February 2019, and thus far more than 53 transitioning military members have gone through the training. The graduates of this year's fifth cohort are Veronica "Ace" Acedevo, Sungho Cho, Adam Clark, Terrance Hall, Chase Kortum, Logan Minick, Jacob Paress, Jacob Parker, Kevin Shea, Jonathan Stephan and Jacob White.

*Melinda Taylor, Comm. Dir.*

## Vogle Project Nearing Completion

Local 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — Over the past several years, our local has played a major role in the completion of Unit 3 and the soon-to-be completed Unit 4 of the Vogtle nuclear power plant.

First, I would like to congratulate our members on a job well done. Although this project was the first nuclear powerhouse to be constructed in more than 30 years and we basically had to train an entire nuclear workforce, my members stepped up to the challenge.

In October, fuel was loaded in Unit 3. The fuel-load process is important for the startup, and this process will continue to provide jobs for our members as sometimes the best people to assist startup are those who built it.

In closing, I would like to thank the membership for the great craftsmanship that I see when I visit the various jobs. I would also like to thank our traveling brothers and sisters for helping when we were in need of man-

power on our jobs. To all the travelers who moved on to make room for our local brothers and sisters after a recent layoff at Plant Vogtle: That sacrifice is what brotherhood looks like, and I truly appreciate what you did for us.

Until next time, God bless!

*Will Salters, B.M./F.S.*



*From left, Patrick Kallaher, Ron Kippler, Jimmy Bell, Kyle McMahan, Andrew Kirk, Steve Harms, Ray Fowee, Robert Allen and Phil Schreiber delivering teddy bears and holiday spirit to Cincinnati Children's Hospital.*

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# GROUND<sup>ED</sup> IN HISTORY



IBEW membership cards through the decades (top left to bottom): 1896, 1919, 1892, 1960 and 2010.

## What's in a Membership? It's Complicated.

Visitors to the IBEW Museum are often struck by the wide variety of membership cards or "tickets" on display. The dizzying array of letters and numbers, most of which are no longer in use, raise plenty of questions and tell the story of the IBEW and its members over the last 130-plus years.

"A" membership was established in 1891 and was the only type of membership available until 1935. The earliest membership ledgers in the museum archives are all titled "Alpha Index" in reference to this membership type. In 1922, the IBEW created a pension plan through the Electrical Workers Benefits Association (EWBA) where members could participate by paying an additional monthly fee.

"B" membership was established in 1935 by a referendum vote. This allowed the unorganized workers in utilities and manufacturing plants to join the IBEW with a lower admission fee and per capita tax by excluding them from the death and pension benefits.

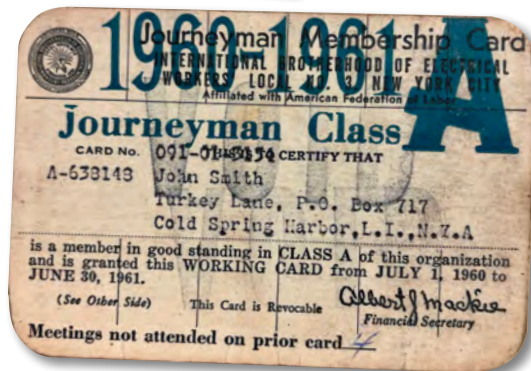
"BA" membership was established in 1946 by action of the 22nd IBEW Convention. These members were granted equal rights to that of "A" members, such as the ability to vote at Conventions, but did not participate in pension benefits. Because of the inherent overlap, "B" membership was discontinued in 1953 and each member was transferred to "BA."

"OA" or "Over-Age" membership was established in 1937 for those who were 55 and older at their time of initiation. Due to age, these members were ineligible to participate in pension benefits but they could receive death benefits after only six months of service. This type of membership ceased after the 1991 Convention when death benefits were combined with the EWBA to create the current IBEW Pension Benefit Fund.

"AI" or "A-Insurance" membership was created specifically for members in Michigan and Kansas who, because of state insurance laws at the time, could not participate in the EWBA. As a result of the merger of the EWBA into the IBEW Pension Benefit Fund at the 1991 Convention, all "AI" members became "A" members.

## Membership Card Numbers

In relation to membership types, another frequent question concerns how the membership card number system works. Starting in 1891, card numbers were comprised of 4, 5, or 6 digits. In 1905, letter prefixes C, D, E, and X began to appear on new cards, again followed by 4, 5, or 6 digits. The letters did not symbolize anything and were only for sorting purposes.



Starting in 1935, "A" and "B" members were given the prefixes A, C, D, E, or X followed by a number beginning with 1 or 2. "BA" members also used the prefixes but their digit portion began with the numbers 3, 4, or 5. Duplicate card numbers were given the prefix W.

In 2001, a digital membership database was created at the International Office and ushered in an age of "smart" cards. Local Unions are now sent packets of membership cards, each comprised of a 7-digit number beginning with 6, 7, or 8. This system has eliminated the need for prefix letters and prevented duplicates.

Throughout our history, IBEW membership cards have appeared in different shapes, sizes, and colors. The same goes for cards outside the membership category, such as transfer cards, military cards, and dues receipts. But what ties each of these together is the value they represent. An IBEW card was never about a piece of paper; it was the promise of a more dignified life, a ticket to the middle class for millions of workers and their families, and an assurance that no matter what hardships came your way that you were not alone in the fight. This is what an IBEW card symbolized to our founders, and what it still does today. ■

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).



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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

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### HOW TO REACH US

We welcome letters from our readers. The writer should include his or her name, address and, if applicable, IBEW local union number and card number. Family members should include the local union number of the IBEW member to whom *The Electrical Worker* is mailed. Please keep letters as brief as possible. *The Electrical Worker* reserves the right to select letters for publication and edit all submissions for length.

#### Send letters to:

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

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

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## WHO WE ARE

*‘Honored and Thrilled’:*

# IBEW Sisters Shine in Presidential Spotlight

**T**he twinkle in President Joe Biden’s eye and delight on his face said it all: Once again, an IBEW member had knocked his socks off.

It happened twice in the span of six days in mid-autumn when two rock-star IBEW sisters joined the elite but growing club of members to introduce the president at public events.

Shawni Davis and Alyssa Cruz first had to process the familiar shock, even disbelief, at being invited. Was this their business managers’ idea of a joke?

But in the blink of an eye, they were addressing rows of dignitaries and media, speaking from a podium with the presidential seal that they’d soon hand over to the most powerful man in the world.

**“This means hope. It means good paying union ... jobs for years to come.”**

— Local 43 member Shawni Davis, hailing an incoming semiconductor plant

“I was so honored and thrilled,” said Davis, a Syracuse, N.Y., Local 43 journey-class wirewoman and electrical contractor. “I was up there for eight minutes but had no idea it was that long until someone sent me the video. It flew by.”

Punctuating their remarks with radiant smiles and infectious laughs, the women heralded Biden’s labor bona fides — the promises made and promises kept around workers’ rights and good, union jobs fueled by historic investments in American infrastructure and manufacturing.

For Davis, the occasion was Micron Technology’s game-changing announcement Oct. 27 that it will build a \$100 billion complex of semiconductor plants near Syracuse.

“This means hope. It means good-paying union construction and manufacturing jobs for years to come,” she told her audience in central New York. “So, selfishly, I’m really excited about it.”

Cruz’s turn came six days later in the East Room of the White House, where Biden spoke about expanding the talent pipeline of skilled trades workers who are crucial to the nation’s infrastructure boom.

“I went from never speaking publicly in my life to introducing the president,” said Cruz, a fourth-year appren-



*Chicago Local 134 apprentice Alyssa Cruz (above, at the White House) and Syracuse, N.Y., Local 43 journeywoman Shawni Davis (at left, in her hometown) took turns introducing a delighted President Joe Biden at events in late October and early November.*

tice at Chicago Local 134. Yet she wasn’t nervous — not at first.

“Everyone kept telling me, ‘Don’t worry, you’ll be OK,’ and I’m like ‘I’m fine,’” she said. “And then I went into the Blue Room and freaking Joe Biden walks in and I couldn’t feel my legs.”

While they waited there, Biden brought out his inner prankster to put her at ease. “He said, ‘Are you ready to introduce the president?’ Then he looks around and goes, ‘Where is the president?’ and I died.”

In an anteroom at Syracuse’s Onondaga Community College, Biden made a beeline toward Davis when he saw her IBEW shirt. “If it wasn’t for the IBEW, I wouldn’t be president today,” he told her, gratitude he never fails to express.

Other VIPs in the room also chatted her up, including New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, U.S. Sens. Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, and Micron CEO Sanjay Mehrotra.

“There were so many bigwigs,” Davis said. “Any other time, I’d be, ‘Oh my god, such-and-such is here,’ and I’d

be pulling out my phone. I took a couple of pictures, but I couldn’t fangirl as much as I wanted to.”

She and Cruz had fans, too. Their audiences cheered the sisters’ pride in the IBEW, their passion for their work and the paths they took getting there — life stories that started off worlds apart but led to same place.

Davis grew up in a Syracuse housing project raised by a devoted mother and grandmother who were role models for hard work, strong character and a zest for life.

Her grandmother’s success running a soul-food restaurant when Davis was young was one of her inspirations for launching Luminary Electric in 2020. Not long afterward, she lost her grandmother to COVID-19.

“She had the biggest smile in the world, and I can just imagine hearing her say how proud she is, if she could have seen me introducing the president,” Davis said.

Davis never imagined being an electrician until she was well into her

ber to introduce Biden the following week. “I’ve got the perfect person right here in front of me,” he told them.

“I’m really proud of the job she’s done,” Finn said. “The Cruz family, obviously they have a great reputation throughout Local 134, and she’s upholding that. She’s what the future is all about.”

Davis also went to college, studying psychology at Syracuse University until leaving school to care for her mother while she battled breast cancer. Today, her mother is a 20-year survivor.

The detour led Davis to spend time in Florida with her father, an HVAC technician who changed her life when he took her along on a job that required minor electrical work.

“All I knew was that you flipped the switch and the light came on,” she said. “It was fascinating to see how it all came together. I told my dad, ‘This is fun, I want to keep doing it,’ and he told me to go back home and join the union.”

Davis started calling Local 43’s training hall persistently, finally breaking through in 2008.

“Local 43, they welcomed me, and with some borrowed tools I was able to work my way up, starting as a helper, then as an apprentice, then as journeywoman electrician,” she told her audience. “Now, I am the first Black woman master electrician in the region.”

It was Business Manager Alan Marzullo, then the local’s membership development coordinator, who loaned Davis the tools she couldn’t afford. He saw something special in her from the start.

“She was dynamic,” he said. “I looked at her and thought, ‘This is someone who does whatever she sets her sights on.’ I knew she had the heart and the drive to get through our program.”

Marzullo laughs, describing how he “had to take the phone away from my ear” when he called Davis with the big ask barely 36 hours before Biden’s visit. “She was saying, ‘Al, are you pulling my leg?!’”

At the Micron event, he couldn’t have been prouder. “She hit it out of the park,” he said. “No, it was more than that. It was a grand slam.”

Davis, who lives with her wife, Tonya, and their new blue-nosed pit bull puppy, Rocky, already was well known in Syracuse before sharing a stage with the president. A community activist and businesswoman, she’d been featured in the media for her achievements and is a sought-after speaker in area schools — invitations that have soared in recent weeks.

“I tell students, ‘I grew up on these streets, I went to these schools,’” Davis said. “I want them to know that they have the same options and opportunities and that if I was able to take this path and succeed, they can, too.” ■

20s. Neither did Cruz, not even with her father and five uncles comprising a brotherhood within the Brotherhood of Local 134, all able to raise their families comfortably in Chicago’s suburbs.

“I am the first female Cruz to join the IBEW,” she said to wild applause at the White House. “I am proud to represent the next generation of skilled tradeswomen and -men who will power America’s future.”

Growing up, Cruz insisted to her father that she wanted to work in an office. She went to college and studied business, tutoring fellow students in calculus along the way, and spent five years in the financial sector. As her uncles began to retire, it dawned on her how well set they were, thanks to the IBEW.

Soon, the young woman who’d “never picked up a tool in my life” was a Local 134 helper and then an apprentice. “I love it,” she said. “Never in a million years would I want to do something else.”

Her experience in finance and insurance led Local 134 Business Manager and International Executive Council member Don Finn to appoint her as the first apprentice to serve as a pension fund trustee.

She was with Finn at an employee benefit fund conference in Las Vegas when he got the call asking for a mem-