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How a Local Turned a Years-Long Fight Into a Victory for All Canadian Workers

The law in Canada couldn't be any clearer: Workers have the right to form unions, and companies must negotiate with them when they do.

But the nearly 240 telecom workers who voted to unionize with Vancouver, B.C., Local 213 found out exactly how far it can be between the promise of the law and what it delivers.

About 1,900 days passed between the vote in 2017 and a precedent-setting decision by the Canadian Industrial Relations Board that construction giant Ledor's slow walk to a first contract wasn't just trying to break the union but was breaking the law.

After almost 1,200 days of fruitless, demoralizing, dismissive "negotiations" that led to 160 weeks on a picket line, the CIRB ruled for first time in at least 40 years and only the seventh time in Canadian history that an employer was not bargaining in good faith and the CIRB would impose a first contract.

The hard-fought win, which came at a significant cost to Local 213 and the Ledor workers in time and money, laid bare just how broken worker's rights are in Canada and provides a momentum boost for worker-friendly legislation like a national ban on the use of scabs.

WE WON'T BACK DOWN

President's column, page 2

"We didn't just outlast them, we outsmarted them," said Local 213 Assistant Business Manager Robin Nedila, who served as lead negotiator. "We knew they were going to stick-handle their way through the laws, do just enough to make the union spend all its money, give up and go away. But they didn't reckon on us having the resources, ambition, and, at the end, plain fury. We said it again and again: You don't [expletive] do this in B.C."

That the ruling was so starkly critical of the employer and yet took so long is a devastating indictment of the state of Canadian workers' rights, said Local 213 Business Manager Jim Lofty.

"The board should have been the referee four years ago, and we could have picked a different fight," he said. "How many groups have died not even starting a campaign because of the playbook these multibillion-dollar companies have? If

we get 100 members, that's a win, sure, but we spent these years and funds to change the whole labor code and win thousands of new union members across Canada."

'We Knew It Wasn't Normal'

Justin Li never thought about a union when he joined Ledor Technical Services in 2009 as a residential installer, but by the time fellow tech Dustin Brecht started looking for a union to help them organize in 2017, Li was thinking of little else.

"There were little drives before then. Murmurs, but no one ever contacted me directly," he said. "I was ready to listen this time."

There had been pay cuts before, but now they were swallowing a near-20% slash. LTS blamed Telus, the provincial telecom company they contracted with, but Li didn't buy it.

"LTS was known for having some of the highest margins in the business. They just didn't put up a fight for us. They just caved in," Li said.

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FROM THE OFFICERS

We Won't Back Down



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

As many of you know, I've set a goal of 1 million members for our Brotherhood in the next five years. That would make us larger than we've ever been and about one-third larger than we are today. How are we going to do that? First, we're going to organize more than ever before: by sharing the story of being a union worker to the nonunion workers and educating employers on the value that being a part of the best-trained, most-qualified electrical union in the world brings to their lives and their businesses. We're just going to do it a lot more aggressively.

But we know not everyone sees the world the way we do. Some employers and contractors are never going to shake the tired old idea that unions are a problem to be fixed or gotten rid of. And in those instances, I have news for them: The IBEW is not going to back down from a fight when the livelihoods of hard-working people are on the line.

I'm talking about fights like the one Vancouver, B.C., Local 213 got into with the telecom giant Leducor a half-decade ago. They took on not just a multi-billion-dollar company in a low-union-density industry, but the entire Canadian

labor code. After years of struggle, they won a precedent-setting ruling from the nation's labor board that spelled out in no uncertain terms that Leducor was in the wrong.

Too many companies think they can cross every line and break every right our predecessors in the labor movement fought to get, of course with the approval of some union-busting lawyers.

Leducor was given the choice to follow the law and make a profit or break the law and make a little more, and it didn't hesitate to break the law and then fight us for nearly 2,000 days to keep its fist closed.

I'm not saying it's easy. I know that Local 213 Business Manager Jim Lofty, his staff, and the men and women in the First District had some difficult nights and some genuine worry that this fight was too big for them to wage.

But they didn't have to do it alone. When their need was greatest, the IBEW, the building trades, and dozens of unions and locals across Canada came through with \$300,000 to keep the fight going.

No one else but the IBEW could have taken this to the very end, exhausted every avenue and then beaten them at their game. We could not have done it alone, but the labor movement turned to us to pick up the spear.

And now the First District is looking at the realistic possibility of national anti-scab legislation.

Labor unions' popularity has grown in the last decade as working people see how vulnerable they are, but the union movement needs to do more to capitalize on this sentiment.

If we are going to represent nonunion workers' trust, we have to work hard for all hard-working families.

We have to prove to them that their fights are our fights, and can be won. ■

Keeping Our Promise

As your international secretary-treasurer, there is no more important job than ensuring that every IBEW member enjoys the full fruits of their labor.

That's why I am committed to continue strengthening our benefits programs. Programs like the National Electrical Benefit Fund have lifted generations of electricians into the ranks of the middle class.

No one gave us pensions and other economic benefits when the electrical industry started. For the IBEW's founders, their first goal was a death benefit.

It was the most pressing need in an industry as dangerous as the early electrical industry. But over time, as we added more members, we expanded those benefits, transforming electrical jobs into the middle-class jobs they are today.

Pensions and affordable health care are increasingly rare in the private sector today. But while much of corporate America has run away from its retirement obligations, the IBEW continues to invest in ours.

Like the IBEW, the NEBF grows stronger every year. Under the watch of my predecessor and now international president, Kenny Cooper, it grew by more than \$4 billion, earning an average investment return of more than 7%. That puts the NEBF in the top 10% of the best-performing Taft-Hartley plans in the nation.

There are two key reasons it's been so successful. First, the IBEW continues to add members, growing nearly every year for the past decade. Second, we've stuck with the tried-and-true strategy that has helped us survive and thrive through upturns and downturns alike.

We invest our money in secure portfolios that don't just return a profit but result in good union jobs that keep our industry thriving.

For example, between 2012 and 2020, the NEBF and National Electrical Annuity Plan invested more than \$6 billion in more than 835 union-built real estate and construction projects.

And we continue to develop new programs to ensure every member's health and retirement security, most recently the IBEW/NECA Family Medical Care Plan.

Like our pension funds, this plan continues to expand while providing affordable and comprehensive health care coverage to an increasing number of IBEW families.

One of the IBEW's founding objectives is to "seek a higher and higher standard of living" for electrical workers. Our benefit programs are how we put those words into action.

Since this union's founding, generations of IBEW leaders have upheld the promise of economic security for electrical workers across the nation. I look forward to working with you in the years to come to keep that promise. ■



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

My IBEW STORY

Pam Pendleton, foreman
Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245



“I grew up in Watts, California, a very rough neighborhood. My mother was a single mother for a long time, doing the best she could to raise us. I'd seen a lot of loss, a lot of tragedy. I decided that I wanted something different, so I joined the Navy. My first airplane ride was to boot camp. It made me realize that there was something else out there.

The uncertainty of leaving the Navy was stressful for me. I had several jobs, and I worked for a company that was not union. We had a lot of safety issues and a lot of injuries. No one listened. Then the guys got together and decided to approach the IBEW. I was hesitant at first, but I went home and thought about all the things I'd been seeing, and I couldn't sit back. Someone else was going to get hurt, so I had to do it.

I got on board, and I headed up the campaign. And Local 1245 took me door to door and prepared me. I really appreciate the time they spent with us. As a vet, this is the first time I've felt like I have sisters and brothers again.

I'm the first female foreman to be promoted in my department. I'm really proud of the position I hold, and I'm proud of the support I get from my leadership. I wouldn't be here without the IBEW. People tell me, 'You've got that alpha energy.' I never feel like I'm done. Even if they crack another door, they already know that I'm going to kick it down.

Who I am today only makes me focus on who I can be tomorrow. I know where I came from. I know what I went through, and I know where I am today. And that makes me the strong woman that I call myself today.”

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

Correction

Editor's Note: In the January 2023 issue of The Electrical Worker, the My IBEW Story feature on retired journeyman wireman Fernando Rodriguez misstated Rodriguez's local. It is San Bernardino, Calif., Local 477. The Electrical Worker regrets the error. ■

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'A Beautiful Team'

N.Y. Members Battle the Elements to Build Ice Boom That Protects Region's Power

Every year in late November or early December, media outlets in and around Buffalo, N.Y., report on the installation of a huge ice boom at the head of the Niagara River. For good reason, too. Without the arch and the IBEW members who install it, the entire region could be in harm's way.

The boom has been installed every year since 1964. It forms a natural ice arch that reduces flooding and jams at two New York Power Authority hydroelectric plants, which provide power to about 25% of the state. Any disruption would be catastrophic in an area known for extreme winter weather.

Work begins when the water temperature falls below 39 degrees or Dec. 16, whichever comes first.

Yet, despite the amount of coverage, little is known about the people doing the dangerous work aboard a small barge. High winds are common. Low visibility often is a problem. Plus, the barge is sometimes just one mile from Niagara Falls, which has a vertical drop of more than 160 feet at its highest point.

The barge crew members are the best at what they do and serve their communities at the highest level. Thus, it's no surprise they are members of Niagara Falls, N.Y., Local 2104, which represents NYPA employees in western New York.

Many utility employees routinely perform work in dangerous conditions, but Business Manager Lou Fazzolari said the crew of 12 to 14 workers take it to another level.

"What they do for the electric grid of New York is invaluable," Fazzolari said. "They do a job in the harshest conditions imaginable, 24 hours a day in the worst weather. You can't say enough about them."

Fazzolari described the men — as of now, they are all men, although women have been on crews in the past — as "common, everyday people doing amazing work." He added: "Everyone comes from such diverse backgrounds from different crafts. You have welders, auto mechanics, you name it — and they're all willing to do the work."

That sounds like an apt description of Tom Reynolds.

"Realistically, it's a challenge," he said. "Throughout my career, I always pursued challenges."

Reynolds started as a pipefitter before joining Local 2104 after he was hired by NYPA in 2011. One year later, he joined the boat crew installing the boom as a barge mechanic. He was promoted to engineer in 2017.

He compares the work to what someone might see on "Deadliest Catch," the Discovery Channel series on crab fishing off the Alaska Coast.

Water crashes over the boat. Crew members wear helmets and flotation devices in case they slip. But they do not wear harnesses because it impedes



Niagara Falls, N.Y., Local 2104 members and New York Power Authority employees prepare a portion of the ice boom at the head of the Niagara river. The boom's installation is an annual event in western New York and ensures that ice flows do not interfere with service at two hydroelectric plants that provide 25% of the state's power.



Photo Credits: New York Power Authority

their work while they try to insert a three-inch pin into a 120-pound pontoon.

The primary tools are battery-powered impact guns and hydraulic torque wrenches. They make a socket connection on each end of a 500-foot cable. One end is attached to the lake bottom. The other is attached to the steel pontoons, which are 30 feet long and 30 inches in diameter. About 110 are used to construct the boom.

A crane helps, but crew members still are handling anywhere from 20 to 200 pounds in often miserable weather conditions. Keep in mind that this is in and around Buffalo, where the temperature is routinely well below freezing.

"We do this with a lot of crane assistance," Reynolds said. "But a lot of it is with brute force and ignorance."

When finished, the boom stretches about 8,800 feet — almost two miles — across the outlet of Lake Erie. It is anchored to the bottom of the lake by steel cables that are 2½ inches wide. It is removed by April 1 of the following year as water warms and the level rises.

"The biggest thing is the job is completely dangerous," Reynolds added. "You have unknown forces involved. When you have an ice field that is 500

square miles pushing up against your steel cables, there is no real way to determine how much pressure that is."

Yet Reynolds proudly notes that the crew has never had a catastrophic injury.

"Everyone knows their part ... and you know you have to depend on your union brother right next to you."

— Tom Reynolds, barge engineer

"Everyone understands this is not done by one person," he said. "We're put together like a beautiful team. Everyone knows their part, we move very quickly, and you know you have to depend on your union brother right next to you."

Trevor Ganshaw began working on the boom after being hired by NYPA 21 years ago. He's a second-generation IBEW member and now the lead captain, out giving instructions to the rest

of the crew.

When he started, Ganshaw said, he was struck by the uniqueness of the work. Not only was it like unlike anything else at NYPA, but it involved running a cable between two countries, the United States and Canada.

Now, it's just part of his yearly routine and something he takes immense pride in.

"Let's face it, there are personal differences on every job, where people can't get along," Ganshaw said. "But when you're out there, you have to be in sync with the guys around you. Those times when a cable breaks and something jumps out of the way, you have to act. You have to take care of each other."

Fazzolari said women have worked on crews in the past. A female mechanic apprentice applied for a position but will have to undergo the required training before joining a crew.

Even by the region's standards, western New York had a pretty brutal 2022-2023 winter. Nearly 52 inches of snow fell on the city during a four-day storm just before Christmas. More than 40 deaths were attributed to it. That followed a major storm earlier in December.

But the crews installing the boom got most of their work done without a

hitch. Ganshaw said work was slowed one day because snow had to be cleared off the barge. Other than that, it was a smooth installation season.

"The weather was very cooperative," he said. "We had some of those 70 [mph] winds and we thought the boom might have issues and break apart. But we secured the boats and the lines, and we didn't have any trouble."

As one might expect, there are some financial incentives to working on the boom. Crew members get an 8% pay premium and routinely receive overtime during the process, which takes about 12 days if the weather is cooperative, Reynolds said.

But the value of the work goes far beyond that. Crew members know they are not only doing vital work for the region but are also helping to keep Lake Erie — a key part of a shipping route that stretches from Chicago to the St. Lawrence Seaway to the Atlantic Ocean — open during the winter.

Plus, pulling into Buffalo Harbor and seeing the city's downtown all lit up on a cold winter's night isn't a bad way to end a hard day's work, Reynolds said.

"When you're done and it's successful, you feel a unique sense of accomplishment with all the guys out there," he said. ■

Outlast & Outsmart

How a Local Turned a Years-Long Fight Into a Victory for All Canadian Workers



► Continued from page 1

There were layoffs also, and when there weren't layoffs, the threat was ever present. It was also how they were fired.

It was company practice to schedule a mandatory safety meeting at a hotel. One time, 100 techs, some who had worked at the company for a decade, got the call. Sitting in the parking lot were 100 cabs.

All 100 got a pink slip and a cab voucher and were sent to the void.

A final straw for some was when LTS bid and won telecom contracts out of province and sent the Vancouver-based techs far from home to do the work.

"I wasn't hired to be an out-of-town worker, but they just started sending guys out of town and you had to take it. They said it was to 'help the team,'" Li said.

He found himself in Regina, Saskatchewan, two provinces east and about 1,100 miles from Vancouver.

Brecht said he settled on Local 213 because it already represented workers in the Telecom industry and Nedila came from the industry.

The drive was wrapped up in short order and recognized in August 2017, although Li said the unit was under no illusions that a first contract was going to be quick or easy.

"We just felt that we would go through the normal process. We knew it would take a while and there would be a back and forth," he said. "It was probably the next year that we knew it wasn't normal."

When the company hired one of the most infamous union-busting law firms in the country, the mood darkened. Some of the unit members began complaining, regretting their vote to organize.

"I always asked them what the alternative was. We were already getting layoffs and pay cuts, more work for less money, work conditions never improving and never what they promised," Li said. "I had tolerated this for seven years; would it have gotten better if we hadn't stood up?"

Brecht and Nedila, meanwhile, had been slogging through some of the worst negotiations they had ever seen.

"I've been in hundreds of negotiations, often with companies that really don't want a union and are happy to use all the tricks their lawyers have ginned up over the years to put us off, but I have never felt worse than when I came out of those meetings," Nedila said. "The disrespect. The delay. The endless generalities."

A strike was the last thing they wanted to do, he said. But the mediation was almost meaningless. For nearly 800 days, the two sides came to agreements on small side issues, but LTS would not make a single specific proposal on what really mattered: wages, hours or a closed shop.



Hundreds of people from other unions and IBEW locals lent support during Local 213's five-year battle with Leducor because they knew it was not just a fight for its members, said Business Manager Jim Lofty (above, with megaphone). It was a fight for all Canadians who want union representation on the job, he said.

By July 2019, amid a demoralizing months-long federal mediation program that hadn't even produced a contract offer, the unit voted 79% in favor of a strike. But they held off walking out on the promise that, finally, the offer was coming.

What they ultimately got in September, Nedila said, will go down as one of the worst first-contract proposals in Canadian labor history. Wages would be determined at the sole discretion of the company and could change at any time for any reason and without notification to the union. Hours would be set each morning. And there would be no closed shop.

"When we saw it on paper, it was shocking," Nedila said. "It was completely ridiculous. But after two years, I was just devastated for the men and women. And pissed."

Then the company laid off nearly three dozen workers in the residential installation department, where Li had once worked and where support for the union was highest — complete with fake safety meeting and taxis idling in the hotel parking lot.

There was no need for a unit meeting to consider the offer or hold another strike authorization. On Oct. 1, 2019, they just went out.

"In the early part of the strike, we thought it would be over in a few weeks or even a few months," Li said.

Instead, Li found himself on a picket at Leducor's Vancouver office four hours a day, five days a week until January 2021.

He stopped walking full time only when his application to Local 213's apprenticeship program was accepted. He was one of about 10 LTS strikers who joined the apprenticeship. Several dozen more took jobs working for signatory telecom contractors that competed against LTS.

Legal Breakthrough

While British Columbia has strong protections for workers, including first-contract legislation that can be imposed within a year and anti-scab rules that prevent companies from even temporarily replacing striking workers, telecommunications is one of a handful of industries exempt from provincial laws. For telecom, rail, shipping and a few other sectors, federal labor law is all that matters, and there are no anti-scab or first-contract protections there.

By December 2019, Brecht and Nedila were reduced to combing through the Canadian National Labour Code.

"We were desperate," Nedila said. "We were reading the code line by line, looking for something that was worth a shot. There has to be a way to hold a company responsible."

They found it in Section 80, which involves an appeal to the labor minister that a party to a union drive is not negotiating in good faith. If the minister agrees, they could make a referral to the CIRB to make a determination.

"Our counsel said he had no idea the last time a Section 80 request had been made, let alone when one was successful, but it was at least back in the '80s," Brecht said.

This was their darkest moment, Lofty said. He received permission to solicit funds. Within a year, dozens of locals offered help. Some sent money, and some, Lofty said, just sent messages of solidarity, like "We can't send money, but fight like hell."

"We were an hour away at times, asking if this was the moment we throw in the towel. That money and even just



the messages filled our sails," he said.

The Hail Mary worked. The labor minister referred the Section 80 appeal to the CIRB in March 2020. The hearing was held in April 2022. The ruling was issued in November 2022.

The 72-page CIRB decision was explicit.

"It is the Board's view that the employer's approach to bargaining, particularly since the advent of the strike, makes a mockery of the collective bargaining process. ... [T]he employer's actions resulted in the denial of the representational rights granted in the certification.

"[A]t least since July 2020, LTS has hoped that the union will simply go away ... and that it will be allowed to carry on its business unimpeded by a [collective agreement]," the board continued. "Canadian law is clear. ... The duty to bargain in good faith and make every reasonable effort is a continuous duty from when notice to bargain is given until the final resolution of an agreement."

The board committed to imposing a collective bargaining agreement "as a required correction because the employer did not bargain in good faith. ... [T]here was a failure of the collective bargaining process as a result of the employer's conduct."

But the CIRB has not imposed a first contract yet. It ordered the parties

back to the negotiating table with no strict deadline but it empowered the federal mediator to update her two-year-old report and make a recommendation.

First District International Representative Adam Van Steinburg, who as business manager of Local 213 launched the telecom organizing drive, said the contract should take into account who was hurt and how deeply.

"Many of these workers are new Canadians, immigrants and women, and they were kicked in the teeth and left to bleed for half a decade," he said. "So, standing up out of the dirt and looking Leducor in the eye as equals feels [expletive] good."

Beyond Local 213

More importantly, the resolution of the Leducor case has built undeniable momentum for the New Democratic Party's proposal for national anti-scab legislation, said First District International Representative Matt Wayland, the IBEW's senior political advisor in Canada.

In the NDP's Confidence and Supply Agreement to support Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party minority government in May 2022, party leader Jagmeet Singh made several party priorities non-negotiable. One of them was anti-scab legislation. In other words, if Trudeau's government does not pass it, the NDP is prepared to let the government fall.

The only debate now is whether the Liberals committed to protections for strikes and lockouts or just strikes. Shewchuk and Wayland are clear that they want both. Shewchuk, the First District international vice president, is clear that he wants both.

"Anything less and it's just more loopholes," Shewchuk said. "Look, it is incumbent on us to say: 'You want our support? We want clear answers.'"

Lofty said the saga will give pause to the "robber barons" of Canadian industry.

"They counted on someone walking away: the picketers, Local 213 or the whole Canadian labor movement. We stuck and they lost, maybe for the first time. It's my crusade to get laws passed nationally and in every province," he said. "No business plan that abuses workers should be legal in Canada, period."

Li said he has no intention of returning to LTS or the telecom industry, but he hasn't felt like the fight was for himself.

"We weren't just fighting for our contract anymore. The union was sacrificing so many dollars and resources to keep us going and keep our fight going. We didn't want to let anyone down or just take this," Li said. "We were fighting for workers, all workers everywhere. It was bigger than just for us." ■

Utility Group Presents Former President Stephenson With Prestigious Honor

Former International President Lonnie R. Stephenson's career received a fitting epilogue when the Edison Electric Institute awarded him its rarely issued Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award.

Stephenson was honored during a ceremony in West Palm Beach, Fla., on Jan. 11, seven days following his retirement, for his decades of service to labor and the electric power industry. The EEI represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies, which provide service to about 235 million Americans.

"A strong labor-industry partnership is what enables America's electrical companies to deliver extraordinary outcomes for the customers and communities they proudly serve," EEI President Tom Kuhn said. "Lonnie has worked to make this partnership stronger and more effective than ever. I am proud to call him a friend and am grateful for his partnership and counsel on many of the key issues facing our industry today."

Nick Akins, executive chair of American Electric Power, said Stephenson protected the interests of IBEW members while working with industry leaders to ensure that the transition to clean energy is a smooth one. He praised Stephenson and the IBEW for working with politicians from both sides of the aisle and forging a strong relationship with President Joe Biden's administration.

"There were so many times we reached out to Lonnie in so many ways to help get our message through," said Akins, who presented Stephenson with the award. "Something that's always stuck with me is your ability and your team's ability to step up and help this industry in so many ways."

Stephenson said that even though he has retired, "the IBEW is going to stay committed to the relationship we already have and we're going to build on it." He added, "I can't thank you enough for this honor."

"I never refer to you as our utility employers but our partners," Stephenson said. "We truly are a partnership. As we continue this transition to how we produce energy in the future, it's so important we have that relationship."

Utility Director Donnie Colston said Stephenson was committed to a strong partnership between the IBEW and the utility companies from the time he was appointed president in May 2015 until his retirement.

Most noticeably, those efforts paid off with the passing and signing into law of the Inflation Reduction Act last year. It provides incentives for electric companies to invest in clean energy while ensuring that the work is done by skilled union members. The IBEW worked closely with the utilities to get it passed in Congress while ensuring that working families would benefit, Colston said.

"Clearly, there is no way the industry would have got this done without the help of the IBEW," Colston said. "It was huge."



Credit: Edison Electric Institute

Biden has had a close relationship with the IBEW for decades and a particularly close one since becoming president. He's noted that frequently since

his inauguration, something Stephenson reminded attendees.

"I don't know if you've noticed, but our president is a little biased toward the

Nick Akins, left, executive chair of American Electric Power, presents former International President Lonnie R. Stephenson with the Edison Electric Institute's Thomas A. Edison Legacy Award.

IBEW," he said, drawing a laugh from the audience. "The administration has asked for our counsel on many issues."

That includes former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, who served as the White House's national climate adviser until stepping down in September. She also received the Edison Legacy Award from the EEI.

Stephenson and McCarthy were just the second and third recipients of the honor. Longtime EEI executive David

Owens received the first in 2017.

Stephenson praised McCarthy for protecting the nuclear industry, which provides a clean baseload source while sources like wind, solar and battery storage become more reliable.

He also saluted her for managing the ongoing transition to clean energy with dignity. The Biden administration has acknowledged union members working in fossil fuels will be impacted and is working to provide training and tools for them to transfer to other areas of the energy sector.

"We have to make sure this transition is done in a reasonable way and nothing is off the table," Stephenson said. "We truly are partners in this industry and I'm excited to see where we're going to go in the future." ■

New Manufacturing Charter in Iowa Aims to Make Member Service Easier

In September, the IBEW welcomed Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Local 1974 as one of the union's newest chartered locals, representing hundreds of workers making mission-critical military and GPS products equipment.

"The new charter just made sense," said Eleventh District International Representative Tad Gusta, who services Local 1974, formed after the International Office decided to move out about a third of the members of Coralville, Iowa, Local 1634.

Creating a new local will make it even easier for the IBEW to allocate the resources needed to serve the members. "It will definitely help, getting serviced by people who are familiar with the work they do," added Director of Manufacturing Brian Lamm.

The approximately 200 members of this new manufacturing local represent workers at BAE Systems, one of the world's most advanced defense, aerospace and security companies.

"We produce products that support the war fighter," said Local 1974 Business Manager Stephanie Bails, who started working as an assembly operator in 1996. Having served as assistant business manager and vice president of Local 1634, Bails was a natural choice for appointment as Local 1974's business manager once the charter was complete.

The creation of a new local is among the latest changes that IBEW workers in Cedar Rapids have seen in recent years. In 2018, Rockwell Collins was bought by United Technologies Corp. Two years later, UTC merged with Raytheon, and that summer, BAE Systems purchased Collins' GPS business from Raytheon.

"It's been a really cool and interesting time," Bails said. The changes also included a move to a new workplace.

In November, BAE Systems opened a state-of-the-art facility in Cedar Rapids that's home its navigation and sensor systems business. The more than \$100 million, 278,000-square-foot complex brings together the company's design and production employees in one modern multipurpose facility.

"Our workforce in Cedar Rapids is the heart of our military GPS business, and we want to keep our roots in this community," John Watkins, head of the precision strike and sensing unit at BAE Systems, said in a news release.

The new Cedar Rapids site, with its strong foundation in GPS history, is part of



Heading up the recently chartered Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Local 1974 are (standing, from left) E-board members Kyle O'Connor and Steve Beireis, Treasurer Dave Kahler, Business Manager Stephanie Bails, Vice President Jim Wilson, Assistant Business Manager Ryan Hatfield, (seated, from left) E-board member Roslyn Judd and Recording Secretary Jackson Cue.

a broader strategic investment by BAE Systems to support business growth, manufacturing capacity and workforce expansion. In 1977, engineers at what was then Rockwell Collins received the world's first satellite-sent GPS signal.

"We're fortunate that BAE Systems has prioritized hiring locally and investing in an Iowa-based workforce," said Bails, noting that workers represented by Cedar Rapids Local 405 installed the new building's wiring.

More than 800 BAE Systems employees will work at the new site, and nearly 90% of manufacturing employees at the Cedar Rapids site are in the IBEW, Gusta said. "Even in a right-to-work state like Iowa," he said, "if you service your members, you can have a high membership percentage."

Iowa is one of 28 states where employees are permitted to opt out of paying union membership dues, even when they enjoy the benefits of a union contract. But even if Iowa wasn't right-

to-work, he said, "if you don't service your members, you won't have an active membership. You need to keep them involved, and Business Manager Bails knows and understands the principles of being a good union leader."

"It's a privilege to sign new charters, but it is no more essential than personally organizing a single person, something anyone in the IBEW can do," International President Kenneth W. Cooper said. "I may hold the pen, but each member holds in their hands the future of the union."

Local 1974 was the fifth of six locals chartered under Cooper's predecessor, retired International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, and the local's number has special meaning for Bails. "That's the year I was born," she said, noting how the IBEW favors assigning four-digit numbers to manufacturing locals.

Local 1974's workers expect to stay busy, Bails said, as the GPS technology the team manufactures is in high demand, used by the U.S. armed forces and international allies.

The local's contract with BAE Systems expires in May, Bails said, and negotiations for an updated replacement get underway this month.

Gusta is pleased with the relationship between the union and company and the direction the talks are going so far. "As long as you want to spend the time on negotiations, you can get a good outcome for your members," he said. ■

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Ontario Local Made Recruiting Female Apprentices a Priority. It Paid Off.

In 2017, Kitchener Local 804 — a major construction local in southern Ontario — had eight women among its membership. Leadership decided that needed to be addressed. The local needed to give more people a chance at the life-changing impact of IBEW membership and help meet the need for skilled construction workers.

Brian Jacobs, now the business manager, was on staff as an organizer then. He's pleased to report that the number of women is growing — Local 804 now has 42 women working as members. And Jacobs is convinced that the number will grow at an even faster pace in the future after 13 joined in the past year alone.

"Construction has been a male-dominated profession for the most part from the beginning," said Jacobs, who has been business manager since February 2020. "It's a little intimidating for women to step into that world."

"But the reality is you're excluding 50% of the workforce. That's a whole bunch of untapped skill sets," he added. "Mark and I decided we needed to address that."



Jacobs was referring to Mark Watson, Local 804's previous business manager, who now serves as executive assistant to the First District International vice president.

Jacobs said Local 804's recruiting efforts largely have been targeted at high schools and trade colleges throughout its jurisdiction. He noted that the federal government's Union Training and Innovation

Program provides financial incentives for recruiting historically underserved groups into the trades.

But a large part of Local 804's work is ensuring that women have the skills and support to succeed once they become members. That's why someone like Local 804 training instructor Jessica Gemmell is so important.

Gemmell has been around the IBEW

for most of her life. Her father, two uncles and deceased grandfather are either past or current members. She graduated from Carleton University in Ottawa and joined the workforce before deciding to become an electrician and beginning her apprenticeship in 2012.

"You don't make a lot of money [with a political science degree]," she said. "I was struggling to find something

Local 804's pre-apprenticeship class from summer 2022, which included four women. Training director Peter Caesar is second from the right. Training instructor Jessica Gemmell is second from the left.

that suited my lifestyle. I was looking for something that paid well and that had a pension with benefits."

Yet she's aware that many women interested in a career in the trades haven't been exposed to trade unions — not just as children, but as adults. That's why she enthusiastically agreed when Jacobs and other Local 804 leaders asked her to assist in such efforts.

"Sometimes you feel alone. You might be the only woman on a job site," said Gemmell, now a Red Seal electrician.

"But you're not alone. Most of Local 804's female members now have met me, and they know they can reach out to me," she said. "My advice is to stick with it and

NORTH OF 49° continued on page 7

Le recrutement des apprenties de la section locale en Ontario a été une priorité et a porté fruit

En 2017, la section locale 804 à Kitchener, un local important de la construction dans le sud de l'Ontario, comptait huit femmes parmi ses membres. Le leadership du local a décidé de s'attaquer à ce problème. Le local voulait donner la chance de changer la vie à un plus grand nombre de personnes grâce à l'adhésion de la FIOE et de répondre au besoin de la main-d'œuvre spécialisée dans le secteur de la construction.

Brian Jacobs, maintenant le gérant d'affaires, était membre du personnel comme organisateur syndical. Il a le plaisir d'annoncer que le nombre de femmes augmente, le local 804 compte maintenant 42 femmes membres à l'emploi. Et Jacobs est convaincu que ce nombre va augmenter à une plus grande vitesse à l'avenir puisque 13 membres ont adhéré au syndicat au cours de l'année dernière.

« Dans l'ensemble, les hommes dominant encore les professions dans le secteur de la construction depuis le début », déclare Jacobs, gérant d'affaires depuis février 2020.

« C'est un peu intimidant pour les femmes de s'engager dans ce monde. » « Mais la réalité est que 50 % de la main-d'œuvre est exclus. Il s'agit d'un grand

nombre de compétences inexploitées, » ajoute Jacobs. « Mark et moi avons décidé de nous attaquer à ce problème. »

Il faisait référence à Mark Watson, l'ancien gérant d'affaires du local 804, qui occupe maintenant le poste d'assistant exécutif au vice-président international du premier district.

Jacobs mentionne que l'effort de recrutement syndical du local 804 vise en grande partie les écoles secondaires et les centres de formation professionnelle relevant de son territoire. Il fait remarquer que le programme pour la formation et l'innovation en milieu syndical du gouvernement fédéral accorde un financement pour recruter les groupes insuffisamment représentés dans les métiers spécialisés.

Toutefois, une grande partie du travail du local est de s'assurer que les femmes acquièrent les compétences et reçoivent l'appui nécessaires pour réussir une fois devenue membre. C'est pourquoi une personne comme la formatrice Jessica Gemmell est si importante.

Gemmell fait partie de la FIOE depuis toujours. Son père, ses deux oncles ainsi que son grand-père décédé sont soit membres ou anciens membres. Elle a obtenu son diplôme de l'Université Carleton à Ottawa et a fait son entrée dans

le marché du travail avant de s'orienter vers le métier d'électricienne et de commencer son apprentissage en 2012.

« Vous ne faites pas beaucoup d'argent [avec un diplôme en science politique] », dit-elle. « J'avais beaucoup de difficulté à trouver un emploi qui convenait à mon rythme de vie. J'étais à la recherche d'un emploi bien rémunéré, qui offrirait un régime de retraite et des avantages sociaux. »

Or, elle était consciente que de nombreuses femmes souhaitant faire carrière dans les métiers spécialisés n'avaient pas été exposées aux syndicats, non seulement pendant leur enfance, mais aussi à l'âge adulte. C'est pour cette raison qu'elle a accepté avec enthousiasme lorsque Jacobs et les autres leaders lui ont demandé de participer à de telles initiatives.

« On se sent seule parfois. Tu peux être la seule femme sur le chantier », mentionne Gemmell, maintenant électricienne certifiée Sceau rouge.

« Mais tu n'es pas seule. La plupart des femmes du local 804 m'ont maintenant rencontrée et elles savent qu'elles peuvent me contacter », dit-elle. « Je conseille de persévérer et de s'exprimer. Poser des questions et demander de

nombreux et différents travaux. Ne restez pas enfermées à faire la même chose. »

On n'y parvient pas sans difficulté et le changement est souvent très lent. La section locale 804 compte 1100 membres, les femmes membres représentent toujours moins de 4 %.

Mais Jacobs mentionne que le local est déterminé à travailler et s'attend à ce que le nombre augmente plus rapidement à mesure que le message circule qu'il accueille des personnes candidates de toutes origines et de tout sexe. L'augmentation du nombre de membres dans la dernière année en ait la preuve.

« Il ne s'agit pas seulement de la bonne chose à faire », ajoute-t-il. « C'est également avantageux pour l'économie. Nos salaires sont relativement élevés dans le grand ordre des choses. Les femmes dans le milieu de travail n'ont habituellement pas la chance de gagner ces salaires et ce n'est pas avantageux pour l'économie. »

Il attribue un mérite à l'Association des entrepreneurs électriciens de l'Ontario d'avoir apporté une aide essentielle, telle qu'aider le local 804 dans leur demande de financement pour le PFIMS.

« Nos entrepreneurs se font un devoir de trouver un emploi à chaque diplômé de notre programme de préap-

prentissage, ce qui a été la porte d'entrée principale pour les femmes qui font leurs entrées dans le métier d'électricienne au local 804 », formule Jacobs.

Le local 804 a récemment créé un comité destiné aux femmes. Une grande partie du travail de ce comité est de faire en sorte que les électriciennes d'expérience servent de mentores pour les femmes qui entrent dans le marché du travail, déclare Jacobs.

Il ajoute que les femmes acceptées dans le programme d'apprentissage du local 804 ont prouvé que sur le terrain et en salle de classe sont aussi qualifiées que leurs collègues masculins.

Il reste beaucoup à faire, mais Gemmell a bon espoir. Un exemple de progrès qu'elle donne, le fait que plusieurs hommes n'hésitent pas à s'exprimer lorsqu'ils voient ou entendent quelqu'un agir de manière inappropriée envers une ou un collègue.

« J'ai toujours eu un bon réseau de soutien, pas seulement de la part de ma famille, mais de la part de mes confrères du local », exprime-t-elle. « Ils ont vu que je travaillais d'arrache-pied. Ils ont compris que "si elle peut faire le travail, tout est possible" et à partir de ce moment c'était l'effet de boule de neige. » ■

CIRCUITS

New England Members Upgrade Nuclear Station

speak up. Ask questions and ask for more and different work. Don't get pigeonholed into doing one thing."

Growth does not come easily, and change is sometimes painstakingly slow. Local 804 has approximately 1,100 members, so female members still make up less than 4%.

But Jacobs said the local remains committed to the work and expects the numbers to grow at a faster pace as word spreads that it is welcome to applicants of all backgrounds and genders. The increased numbers in the past year may be proof of that.

"It's not just the right thing to do," he said. "It's also good for the economy. Our wages are fairly high in the grand scheme of things. Women in the workforce traditionally are not getting a chance to earn those wages, and that's not good for our economy."

He also credited the Electrical Contractors Association of Central Ontario for providing essential support, such as assisting with Local 804's application for UTIP funding.

"Our contractors have committed to putting every one of the graduates from our pre-apprenticeship program to work, which has been the primary avenue for women entering the electrical trade at Local 804," Jacobs said.



Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804 training instructor Jessica Gemmill.

Local 804 recently began a women's committee. Much of its work will involve experienced female electricians mentoring women new to the job, Jacobs said. He added that women who Local 804 has accepted into its apprenticeship have proven on the job and in the classroom to be as qualified as their male colleagues.

Plenty of work remains, but Gemmill is optimistic. She cites as one example of progress that many men feel empowered on the job to speak up when they see or hear someone acting inappropriately toward a co-worker.

"I've always had a good support system, not just from my family members, but my brothers in the local," she said. "They saw how hard I was working on the job. They realized that 'If she can do the job, anything is possible,' and it's just snowballed from there." ■

It's been decades since the Seabrook Nuclear Generating Station went online, providing clean baseload energy to customers in New England. And thanks to the work of IBEW members who navigated a long, complex project, the plant now has decades more to go.

"We have safe energy for the next 40 years," said William Perry, membership development manager for Dover, N.H., Local 490. "We are so proud to have this in our state to add to the power grid."

When the Seabrook management team determined that it needed to do an equipment upgrade, it was looking at a costly, yearslong project that could afford no errors. As with anything that is going on 40 years old, there were parts of the facility that had run their course and needed to be replaced. So they went with IBEW signatory contractor State Electric.

"It had nothing to do with who was the lowest bid. They went with the highest qualified," Perry said. "There's a lot of trust there."

For the last five years, roughly 50 IBEW inside wiremen from Local 490, as well as Boston Local 103 wiremen, Boston Local 104 linemen and some travelers, were busy upgrading the remainder of Seabrook's 345-kilovolt switchyard. They installed new circuit breakers, gas-insulated bus systems, relay protection systems, and new structures and foundations as required. And this wasn't work for just anyone off the street. This is a nuclear power plant, where everything is regulated and safety is paramount.

"Safety was always the first step," said Local 103 member Chris Hemenway, who worked as the general foreman on the project. "There was no cutting corners."

And because of that mindset and all the safety measures, they got through the whole project — some 130,000 electrical work hours — without a single accident or service interruption.

"That's very rare," Hemenway said of their achievement. "It's almost nonexistent."

Part of the reason for the impressive safety record was all the training that members received.

"There was a lot of training before

you even set foot on site," said Hemenway, who worked on a similar project with State Electric in Ohio, albeit on a smaller scale. "You had to buy in to some seemingly extreme safety measures. It was a pretty significant mindset."

The workers got training in all the do's and don'ts of working at a nuclear facility, where something that might take just a few people on a regular construction site takes two or three times that many to make sure it's done properly. Even something like loading materials onto a truck required multiple spotters to make sure everything was being watched — the equipment, the tools, the people.

"The IBEW can take a task that sizable and be successful."

— Local 103 general foreman Chris Hemenway

"You could have as many as six people spotting you to make sure no one fell," Hemenway said. "It was about making sure no one was in harm's way."

Perry noted that the workers, some of whom may not have even been born when Seabrook was last under construction, got a generational opportunity.

"This new generation had a hands-on chance to do these installs, and now they can pass that knowledge on to the next generation," he said. "It's very rewarding to hear and see."

An unexpected hurdle that came up after the project started was the COVID-19 pandemic. IBEW members were considered essential, so they had to figure out how to work through protocols like social distancing, the daily cleaning of work areas and masking.

"It added another twist to the whole setup," Hemenway said. "It was logistically more difficult, but we got through it."

In all, IBEW members, working in composite crews, installed four new circuit breakers, 68,000 feet of new cable and 4,400 new wire terminations. They also installed, gassed and tested 9,000 new feet of gas-insulated bus and completed 5,200 existing wire determinations.

"This is one of the largest projects that 490 has worked on in a long time," Perry said of his 325-member local.

For a project that clocked a total of 350,000 manual and non-manual work hours with zero accidents or first-aid cases, it's certainly something to be proud of.

"It's an impressive set of statistics," Hemenway said. "The scope and scale of the project can be overwhelming to look at as a whole, but when you step away it's really impressive. I'm proud to say I was a part of it."

Another example of the high level of IBEW craftsmanship could be seen early on, said Local 490 member James Casey, who worked on a preliminary stage of the project from its earliest days in 2009. The first phase, he said, was to construct a building 52 feet above an existing energized 345-kilovolt switchyard. The building housed multiple breakers, buses and control power, and it was all to be completed and connected to the power plant's existing system, which they would eventually replace in its entirety.

"I do not think that this had been attempted at any nuclear facility in the country or has been since," Casey said. "The fact that this very complex project was completed as safely as it was is something that all the men and women of Local 490 can be very proud of. The craftsmanship was second to none."

There's even new work on the horizon. Perry says the plant has a 345-kilovolt capacitor bank project that went out to bid in the fall of 2022. This is in addition to the work that members get from the yearly scheduled outage for facilities maintenance.

"Our members have a familiarity with the plant that makes them well-versed and well-seasoned," Perry said. "And Seabrook values our workers."

Casey, Hemenway and Perry give credit to the full team for the project's success, including New Hampshire Transmission, the company that hired State Electric.

"NHT is good at hiring people," Hemenway said. "A lot of companies might have gone with the lowest price, but that's not always the best fit. To get the skill, and the personality, you have to pay more, but in the end you're paying for success. You're paying for that professionalism."

As for people who think that unions don't work, Hemenway says just look at what they accomplished.

"It speaks volumes to how the IBEW can take a task that sizable and be successful," he said. "Now the customer is happy, and everybody went home safe."

Local 490 Business Manager Marco Lacasse added: "We know that the resiliency and reliability of the electrical grid is essential and nuclear plants contribute to that by having a baseload that is always available and doesn't fluctuate. Having the best-trained and reliable work force that the IBEW offers is also an essential component to reliability. Reputation is everything in this business. Do what you say and say what you do. It's not an accident to have State Electric along with the IBEW complete this part of the job. Quality is never an accident." ■

Training Program for Foremen Helps Fill Education Gap

The job of a foreman may come with a bigger paycheck, but a key downside to the job has been that it hasn't historically come with an instruction manual.

That's been changing, though, thanks to the decision by the IBEW's Seventh District to create a foreman education and training program called the Foreman's Development Series.

"When you become a foreman, too often you learn on the job, getting tips from here and there," said FDS Executive Director Tom Ross, a retired longtime member of Albuquerque, N.M., Local 611. "You make a whole lot of mistakes and hope you get better at it."

"Our hope is that FDS shortens that learning curve," added Ross, who for many years has worked with the New Mexico JATC and has been overseeing FDS since 2020.

Inaugurated in 2010 and continually updated and refined, FDS stresses active learning via group problem-solving and role-playing exercises. Its training modules are meant to prepare candidates for a variety of real-world construction job scenarios by covering such topics as the foreman's role, material and production management, and labor relations, with current and potential foremen participating alongside experienced journeymen.

CIRCUITS continued on page 8



IBEW members from Dover, N.H., Local 490, as well as Boston Locals 103 and 104 and travelers, worked on a yearslong equipment upgrade at the Seabrook Nuclear Generating Station.

CIRCUITS *continued*



The Seventh District's Foreman's Development Series uses active learning to prepare current and future foremen for real-world construction job scenarios. Pictured above are FDS trainer candidates after a weeklong training session at the Austin JATC last summer.

The seeds of FDS were planted in the mid-2000s. The Seventh District, which services members in Arizona, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, had implemented several programs to aid in expanding market share in the Construction branch. One of these was a comprehensive Code of Excellence program, adopted by all construction locals in the district, that stressed the need for qualified supervision in addition to improved worker productivity. At various Code training sessions, members reported hearing complaints, verified as valid, from contractors about a lack of qualified foremen, something that too often prevented them from staying competitive or bidding more work. "A situation like this affects all of our livelihoods," Ross said.

A study, commissioned in 2004 by the IBEW's industry partners at the National Electrical Contractors Association and conducted by the Electrical Contracting Foundation, backed up the contractors' complaints. It showed that, in a typical union shop model, labor in the field controls productivity and profitability. Yet, more than 90% of construction foremen working in the industry reported having almost no management or professional leadership education and training. Further, barely half of electrical contractors were offering any in-house management training, often because they weren't large enough to have the resources for it.

The study, whose findings were supported by reports from members and contractors, prompted then-Seventh District International Vice President Jonathan Gardner to determine that his district should develop a foreman education and training program. "If we can't expand our market share due to a lack of qualified supervision, we can't go anywhere," he said.

Gardner knew that NECA already offered a lecture program called Electrical Project Supervisor, but the vice president wanted something more widely available, dynamic and interactive that stressed industry best practices. He determined that creating an IBEW-led, best-practices-based education program for foremen would help make contractors more com-

petitive and open to expansion.

"We needed to address these problems with practical solutions," said Gardner, who retired in 2013. "Education and training also improve our image with owners and users."

Working with Rosendin Electric, which offered the use of its training department, Gardner in 2009 formed an FDS committee consisting of Rosendin employees working alongside IBEW members from throughout the district, all of whom had experience as foremen, general foremen, or educators.

"Education and training ... improve our image with owners and users."

— Retired Seventh District IVP
Jonathan Gardner

"We decided that we had so much work coming in the Seventh District that we couldn't wait," said Gary Buresh, then an international representative with the district office who helped lead the committee and later conducted many FDS sessions. "FDS could enhance labor-management partnerships and change the culture of construction."

By year's end, the committee had drafted FDS's first set of class modules, and the program officially rolled out in 2010. Since then, FDS train-the-trainer sessions have been conducted at the Austin Electrical Training Alliance in Texas for IBEW members from all over, usually with 40 to 50 participants in each session. Instructors are a mix of trained active and retired IBEW members, and classes are open to anyone interested in the foreman's program.

Over time, Rosendin departed the committee while various IBEW members from around the country have regularly swapped in to continue teaching these train-the-trainer sessions. It's a

"labor of love" for them, Ross said, with staffers spending weeks on the road conducting these sessions and teaching FDS in their home locals.

FDS is made up of 16 modules, 12 standard and four advanced. Anyone wanting to teach these classes at their JATC, union hall or company is required to take the three week-long train-the-trainer sessions, typically held in February, June and October. At last count, 129 locals representing every U.S. district boasted certified FDS trainers.

Programs and personnel are coordinated by Angie Burris, the Seventh District office's executive assistant.

FDS is set up so that students in their home locals can enter training at any point in the multi-module cycle. "It's a perfect complement for any employer's in-house training program," said Buresh, who retired in 2020. "It's modular, so they take only what they need."

Program materials are updated to account for data and technological advancements. "In the beginning, modules talked about paperwork," Ross said. "Now, we're talking about using software on the job, since every foreman has a laptop or tablet."

"We recognized early that we had to continually monitor the program, and make improvements to accommodate technologies and industry changes," Gardner added. "Tom was the driver; he put the nuts and bolts to it. He really understands productivity."

"We're helping the right people take on more leadership," Buresh said. As word of FDS continues to spread, its positive effects are increasingly noticed. Notably, FDS has been adopted by the National Training Institute.

"We have more confidence in our field and the ability to get the job done," said Guy Katz, director of manpower and safety at Alterman Inc. in San Antonio. "It's not a perfect world on the jobsite, and if you can smooth out some of the hurdles, which this class is doing, it makes it a lot better for everybody."

Learn more at ibew.org/7thdistrict or call the Seventh District office at 817-557-1611 for information on participating locals and enrollment. FDS also will have a booth at the Construction

and Maintenance Conference in Washington, D.C., April 20-22. ■

Alabama Power Members Build House With Habitat for Humanity

IBEW members who work for Alabama Power joined a team of more than 100 volunteers to build a Habitat for Humanity home, a project that was completed in just 10 days.

"We were thrilled to have the IBEW participate," said Alabama Power Service Organization Magic City President Anna Chandler. "It was a wonderful experience, and we could not have done it without their support."

The home was the 25th for APSO Magic City, which partnered with the Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham chapter on the build. APSO is the charitable arm of Alabama Power, which employs IBEW members represented by Utility System Council 19.

"I wanted the IBEW out there," said Keith Gilliland, assistant business manager for U-19. "Our folks have a charitable spirit about them and I'm proud of that."

The build, which they typically do every two years, is the first in four years because of the coronavirus pandemic. The home was built in Pleasant Grove, which was hit hard by a tornado in 2011.

"Alabama Power is big on service," Gilliland said. "They're a good employer. They invest in their community."

Families who qualify for a Habitat home are required to repay a no-interest mortgage, complete 300 hours of sweat equity on their house or another home, and complete 20 hours of home ownership education workshops. The homeowner in this case worked alongside the volunteers, who completed the three-bedroom home at the beginning of November.

"As a volunteer, you get to see someone get the opportunity to experience the joys of homeownership. That's

a pretty powerful thing," said Gilliland, who used to work as a carpenter before joining the IBEW and who volunteered on the build for the first two days. "You get to know them and their children."

As with most Habitat homes, it was built from the ground up.

"You literally start from a concrete floor, and two weeks later it's a lock-and-key move-in house," Gilliland said. "They even had shrubs outside."

Gilliland noted how labor unions can have a reputation for taking care of their own, so working on projects like this gives members a chance to show their commitment to bettering the community as a whole.

"We're always looking for opportunities to put the IBEW in a positive light."

— Keith Gilliland, assistant business manager, Utility System Council 19

"There's so much more to us than that," he said. "We jump at the opportunity to put ourselves out there in the community. It lets folks know we do good things, that we care and can be of service."

Doing projects like these can also serve as a reminder that not everybody is as fortunate as the average IBEW member.

"We're in a good trade. We have good jobs with good wages and benefits," Gilliland said. "We understand that not everyone is in that situation."

Gilliland said he expects the relationship between the IBEW, APSO and Habitat for Humanity to continue with the next build in 2024.

"We're always looking for opportunities to put the IBEW in a positive light," he said. ■



IBEW members volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and Alabama Power to build a new home in just 10 days for a family in need.

Detroit Tree Trimming Program Brings in New Workers, Garner International Attention

Detroit Local 17's tree trimming program is one of only two Labor Department-certified apprenticeships in the country for that line of work. The relationship it has with the Parnall Correctional Facility in Jackson, Mich., makes it even more special.

The IBEW designed a special curriculum and built a climbing structure for the six-to-nine-month program at Parnall, where inmates learn to safely climb trees, use tree trimming equipment and obtain a commercial driver's license.

Participants can join Local 17's apprenticeship class after their release and work as union contractors, reduc-

ing their chances of returning to prison. It also provides a needed talent pool for an in-demand job. About 70% of power outages are caused by trees being damaged or falling, and many of today's trimmers are reaching retirement age.

The program is so successful that it attracted international news attention. The Associated Press recently published a story, photos and video featuring Local 17's work at the correctional facility.

In addition to the program at Parnall, Local 17 runs a Tree Trimming Academy with local utility DTE that focuses on hiring local residents.

"We strive to build an empowered and diverse workforce and are excited to help develop more well-trained and well-paid workers who put safety first," Local 17 Business Manager James Shaw said. "Growing and developing local talent has to be a focus to best maintain safe, reliable energy."



Local 17's tree trimming programs got the attention of *The Associated Press*, which published a news article, photos and video.

Scan this code to see the Associated Press' feature package on Local 17's tree trimming outreach program, including a feature article, photo gallery and video. ■



ORGANIZING WIRE

Boston Local Organizes Convention Center Workers

Workers at Boston's convention centers have been dealing with subpar pay and poor working conditions for years. So when they got the chance recently to join Local 103, a group long known for its experience and for going to the mat for its members, they were all in.

"They wanted more, and they wanted better," said Business Manager Lou Antonellis of the 53 maintenance workers who signed cards to join the local this past winter. "They wanted 103 representation."

The workers, who work for the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, the Hynes Auditorium and Boston Common Parking Co., include electricians, plumbers, carpenters, HVAC technicians and others who do the wiring for all the trade shows, as well as day-to-day operations at the facilities. It's a diverse group of individuals, but they were unanimous in their desire to get better representation.

"We're just here trying to do better for our families," said maintenance electrician Colm McDonagh, who helped with the organizing drive.

Before Local 103, they were represented by the Firemen and Oilers Local 3, a small union without much experience in dealing with construction issues, said organizers Bob Sheehan and Bernie Sharpe, who led the campaign to bring the workers in. Local 103, by comparison, is the largest electrical union in the state.

"Our reputation spoke for itself," Sharpe said. "All the trades know 103."

The roughly 10,000-member local is a powerhouse in the Boston area, with more than 60 contracts outside of its main construction contracts, at places like hospitals, universities and stadiums all throughout the area.

Beyond its size and expertise, though, is the local's commitment to



Boston Local 103 organized maintenance workers at the city's two convention centers and a parking garage, including the Hynes Convention Center, pictured.

serve its members.

"We're very hands-on. We answer the phones and work almost 24/7," Sharpe said. "We know that when members have an issue, they want an answer."

Sharpe and Sheehan said the workers had gone years without seeing a representative from their former union, outside of when a contract was up.

"I think they saw 103 more than they saw their own reps," said Sheehan, who is also Local 103's president.

And, added McDonagh, the convention center made conditions so bad that people started getting dismayed.

"Everyone wanted out," McDonagh said.

But unfortunately, the workers didn't feel like they could turn to their union for all the help they needed.

Had this been a different time,

they probably would have already been Local 103 members. From 1963 to 1988, Local 103 contractor Phelps Electric performed all the electrical work for Hynes, then the only convention center. But after it closed for renovation, through some political maneuvering Phelps was out and the Firemen and Oilers were in. Attempts were made later to get the workers, including when the second convention center was built, but they weren't successful.

Ultimately, what the workers wanted was the same as anyone: better pay, benefits and working conditions. Sharpe and Sheehan estimated that they were probably being paid about 20% less than what they should have been. And they had been working at one point without a contract for a year.

"What they want is basically the lifeblood of the IBEW," Antonellis said.

But before they could join Local 103, or any other union, they needed to deal with their current one. So about half of the members went to a unit meeting last fall to ask to be let go.

"Everybody stuck together," McDonagh said of the effort. "A lot of people spoke up at the meeting."

Surprisingly enough, the local voted to release them.

"We had never heard of that before," Sheehan said.

Once the legal coast was clear to start organizing, Local 103 jumped in and started talking to the workers. What they found was a group ready and eager for new representation.

"We didn't really care how long it took. We just wanted something better than what we had," McDonagh said.

Within a day, they had close to 100% of the cards signed.

"It showed an overwhelming desire to be represented by Local 103," Sharpe said.

For the workers, the choice was easy, said McDonagh, who had previously been a Local 103 member.

"I think we made the right decision," he said. "Everything Local 103 said they're going to do, they've done."

Contract negotiations began in late January, and Sharpe and Sheehan said they planned to start from scratch since the previous contract wasn't worth saving.

"The workers weren't happy with it, so we are essentially writing a new contract based off the input from what the members recommended," Sharpe said. "We're going to make sure they get fair wages and strong language protection."

As for the new members, McDonagh said they're hopeful.

"We have complete faith in Local 103," he said. "We know we're not going to get walked on this 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 latest news about your union, including an electronic version of this and previous newspapers, at IBEW.org.

YouTube

Everybody knows the IBEW logo, but do you know its history? For a deep dive into the Brotherhood's official symbol, check out [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](https://www.youtube.com/TheElectricalWorker).

Vimeo

Tennessee's Blue Oval City project, which involves building Ford's F-150 Lightning electric trucks and their batteries, is the biggest thing that's come to Memphis Local 474. Go to [Vimeo.com/IBEW](https://www.vimeo.com/IBEW) for the full story.

HourPower

International President Kenneth W. Cooper has



been an IBEW member for almost 40 years. Learn more about his history and his vision for the Brotherhood at [IBEWHourPower.com](https://www.IBEWHourPower.com).

ElectricTV

The NECA student chapter at



Penn State University is one of the best places for contractors to find their next estimator, project manager or designer. For more on the program, go to [ElectricTV.net](https://www.ElectricTV.net).

TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

John O'Rourke



John O'Rourke, hailed as a collaborative, kind and driven leader who steered a surge in West Coast membership and signatory contractors, retired March 1 as Ninth District international vice president.

"When you love what you do, it's hard to leave," O'Rourke said. "I'm so proud of this district, so proud of the team we have here in the Ninth — our staff and our business managers. I couldn't have worked with a higher caliber of people."

When he took the helm in October 2014, after 13 years as business manager of San Francisco Local 6 and two years as an international representative, the district had roughly 128,000 members across California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, northern Idaho, Alaska and Hawaii.

Under his watch, the rolls grew by more than 20%. "We're right now on the cusp of 155,000 members," he said, heaping praise on organizers and local leaders.

The warmth and respect are mutual.

"John is truly loved by the Ninth District staff," said International Representative Dominic Nolan, O'Rourke's executive assistant. "He is the most welcoming person. He's laser focused on what he wants to accomplish, but he genuinely wants to hear everyone's thoughts and feedback. He brings infectious energy and positive encouragement to everything he does."

Dave Reaves, O'Rourke's successor, similarly praised his former boss, calling him a friend and mentor.

"John really cares for everyone on his staff and in the district, and he will do whatever it takes to help you succeed," said Reaves, most recently a Ninth District representative and previously business manager of Anchorage, Alaska, Local 1547. "He pushes people to get out of their comfort zones and asks them to find ways to do more, but he's always there for you."

O'Rourke was born and raised in San Francisco, the middle child of seven and son of a city firefighter who helped his children appreciate the power of organized labor.

"My father was an active union member in Local 798, and we'd go out and do door hangers for political action," he said. "We kind of knew the way it worked, the importance of ballot initiatives and things that the firefighters fought for. Their union issues were bread-and-butter issues for us as a family."

As a teenager, O'Rourke hawked concessions at 49ers and Giants games and worked his first union job, clerking at a Lucky Supermarket. Meanwhile, his

older brother was a journeyman wireman at Local 6 and nudged O'Rourke in that direction. He signed on a year after graduating from high school, followed by his two younger brothers.

He is the last of his siblings to retire, but Local 6 is still full of O'Rourkes: his son, Rory; son-in-law; three nephews; a niece; and his daughter, Emily, who is both an electrician and for the past 11 years a firefighter. Now a lieutenant, her father said with pride, she has dual membership in both venerable San Francisco locals.

After his four-year apprenticeship and six years in the field, O'Rourke landed a seat on the executive board while still a "youngster" by Local 6 standards. He went on to serve as vice president and president before being elected business manager in 1999.

His tenure was a whirlwind of bargaining, with the IBEW controlling a high market share of the city's electrical work. On top of construction, contracts included shipyards, transit, city and county workers, the Golden Gate Bridge, and San Francisco's newspapers.

"You'd be done and go, 'Thank goodness that's over,' and then there was the next one," O'Rourke said. "In one week, I could be at three different tables."

Time after time, it paid off. "I loved what I did because the tangible effect was that I put more money in our members' pockets and expanded their health and welfare benefits," he said. "I took great pride in always seeking to improve on what we had. Good was never good enough."

To this day, Nolan said, "Local 6 members talk about the great contracts and benefits he negotiated, and of course they always say how much they miss him."

Union density was another story when O'Rourke moved to the Ninth District staff in 2012 and began servicing locals outside the city that were struggling to sign contractors.

Early on as vice president — he was appointed in 2014, elected in 2016, and reelected last year — he brought together organizers and business managers to develop a policy that gives non-union contractors a trial run.

"I made it a goal to tear down the impediments to signing with us, to take away any reason for contractors to say no," he said. "We made believers out of a lot of them. It's opened the door and given so many workers who were not unionized what we have in the IBEW."

Beyond the financial rewards, O'Rourke said, he's always told would-be members that the IBEW "is an extended family, and if you become part of the IBEW, you become part of that family."

He "lives and breathes" those values inside the union and beyond, Nolan said.

"You can't walk down the streets of San Francisco without someone stopping John because they know him or his family or want to talk to him about the IBEW and organized labor. He knows

everyone," Nolan said. "And he always wants to know how you're doing and how your family is doing."

In his retirement, O'Rourke is looking forward to more fishing, hunting, skiing and motorcycle riding. But he's especially eager for more family time, including activities with his grandchildren, ages 5 and 8, and traveling with his wife, Elaine.

The officers, staff and members of the IBEW thank Brother O'Rourke for his years of dedicated service and wish him a happy and healthy retirement. ■

APPOINTED

Dave Reaves



Dave Reaves, who earned a reputation as an innovative and skillful business manager in his native Alaska and more recently

as a servicing representative on the West Coast, has been appointed as Ninth District international vice president.

Reaves took the reins March 1 from his newly retired predecessor, John O'Rourke, who led the district for eight years.

"I really feel the weight of history in the Ninth District and all that John and Mike Mowery before him accomplished," Reaves said, describing a legacy of growth and inclusion. "My vision going forward is continuing that, pushing the limits of where we can go as the IBEW."

A journeyman lineman out of Anchorage Local 1547, Reaves did telecom line work and outside construction throughout Alaska. He experienced the breadth of the IBEW's sectors as business manager of the eclectic statewide local, which includes wiremen, linemen, tree trimmers, telecom workers, public employees and more.

He led the local for four years until 2021, when O'Rourke hired him as an international representative in the Pacific Northwest.

"I'm able to walk out the door with great confidence," O'Rourke said. "I studied Dave when he was a business manager. You watch, you listen, and I saw a guy who embraced what we do here and who works well with everyone. He's an organizer, he understands the need to continue to grow and to never say, 'This is good enough.'"

Marcie Obremski, who succeeded Reaves at the top of Local 1547, called her longtime friend and colleague "an incredible leader" who is widely popular and respected — from the IBEW to larger labor and political circles to community sports leagues as a football and basketball coach.

"Dave leads by example," Obremski said, describing him as deliberative, fair, inclusive and full of positive energy. "He's extremely savvy and smart, but he's also humble. He

has no ego, zero. He never speaks bad about anyone."

She saw him grow ever more creative and ambitious as an organizer, citing the IBEW's Veterans Early Electrical Entry Program, which originated at Local 1547. Known as VEEP, it is a partnership with the military that allows service members at U.S. bases to train as first-year apprentices during their final six months of duty.

"We're at just the tip of the iceberg with it," Reaves said. "There are 68 military bases in the Ninth District, and other ancillary and federal installations. It's a workforce that's really untapped."

Expanding VEEP is one of his missions as the IBEW nationally takes an aggressive approach to organizing — growth vital to meet the exploding demand for skilled labor as money pours in from the infrastructure bill, Inflation Reduction Act and other job-creating investments under President Joe Biden.

"We've all seen a lot of open calls in all classifications, and to fill that workforce, we're going to have to do things differently and think outside the box," Reaves said.

In the Ninth District, that means building on fertile strategies, such as a program launched by O'Rourke and since adopted by the union at large that woos nonunion contractors by giving them a year to test the waters as signatories.

"They've heard all the anti-union rhetoric, and they're leery," said Reaves, who began using the transitional agreements to win over contractors while he was a business manager. "But once they experience what's in it for them, they see the value of working with us."

A long list of other tactics for growth includes "capturing EV buildout, solar, offshore wind, battery storage, grid modernization and upgrade work, and providing any workforce training needed," he said. "Additionally, we're looking to build certifications for some of the new technologies to make sure that work is done by IBEW members."

Reaves' family is from the Deep South, but his parents put down roots in Alaska when his father was stationed at an Army base there. A musician, his father also performed with the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra and went on to work in the construction industry while his mother worked in the school system and raised their four children.

A star athlete in high school, Reaves attended Southwestern Oregon Community College and Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Ore., on basketball scholarships and studied business and criminal justice. He addition to his love of team sports, he is also an avid outdoorsman whose pastimes include hiking, skiing, hunting and camping.

His path to the IBEW started with a job in the oil and gas industry after college. One day on the north slope of Alaska, he got to talking with his future father-in-law, a Local 1547 lineman who inspired him to apply for an apprenticeship. He was initiated into the union in 1997. "I knew I had found my career," he said.

While Reaves works out of the

Ninth District's San Francisco headquarters, his family — wife, Tricia, and their three sons, one grown and two teenagers — will remain in Alaska for now. He said he's already a practiced long-distance commuter between years flying to far-flung locals across his home state and to and from the West Coast as a representative.

He said O'Rourke and his executive assistant, International Representative Dominic Nolan, have been invaluable tutors, and Reaves is grateful that Nolan is staying on in that role, effectively chief of staff, until his retirement next year.

"I've got big shoes to fill, and that can be daunting," he said. "But it's also exciting."

The IBEW sends its congratulations and best wishes to Brother Reaves as he begins his new job. ■

APPOINTED

Ryan Reithel



Ryan Reithel, an energetic unionist who overcame early adversity, has been appointed senior executive assistant to International Secretary-Treasurer Paul A. Noble, effective Jan. 4.

"Our styles are very similar," said Reithel of Noble. "It's full throttle 24/7. We feed off each other's energy."

Reithel hails from a union family that included workers with the IBEW, Teamster and Boilermakers, and well as Machinist father. "I was born and raised with a blue collar, and I've always been intrigued by the electrical industry and construction," he said.

It was a tougher climb than most for Reithel, a native of Merrillville, Ind. When he was 13, what doctors at first dismissed as growing pains were diagnosed as tumors resulting from Stage 4 Burkitt lymphoma, a rare cancer. After seven months of intensive chemotherapy in Chicago, an hour's drive away, the cancer was declared in remission, and Reithel has been cancer-free ever since.

He took electrical shop classes at Merrillville High School, something that helped him decide that an electrical career and IBEW membership would be a good fit for him after he graduated in 1995. One year later, Reithel was initiated into Gary and Hammond, Ind., Local 697.

"I interviewed Ryan for his apprenticeship," said IBEW Director of Business Development Ray Kasmark, a former Local 697 business manager who sat on the local's joint apprentice training committee at the time. "He was fairly young, but he had worked his way through high school at a union grocery bagging job."

That work experience helped Reithel stand out. "And from there, he did nothing but excel," Kasmark said.

Reithel then worked the tools at Sweney Electric in Merrillville from 2000 until 2008 and was an area foreman before becoming a full-time business representative for Local 697. He also served as an organizer for the local and in 2017 was elected business manager.

He was constantly involved with Local 697, he said, also working volunteer picnics and parades. "I never missed a meeting," he said. "I felt an instant connection with the IBEW."

Among Reithel's biggest accomplishments with the local was helping to leverage the IBEW's Code of Excellence to form a partnership with M.J. Electric that secured jobs for about 200 local members at the BP refinery in Whiting, Ind., at a time when such jobs were hard to find. He also looks back with pride at his local's work on the landmark Centier Bank building in Merrillville.

It was during his time as a Local 697 leader and activist that he met the future international secretary-treasurer. "Paul was the [Sixth District] desk rep, and if you ever needed anything, it was 'better call Paul.'" The two instantly began to develop a good working relationship, he said.

With the approval of International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, Sixth District International Vice President David J. Ruhmkorff asked Reithel to join his district's staff in 2021 as a service representative for Indiana.

When Ruhmkorff retired in 2022, the International Executive Council appointed Noble to fill the vacancy, just a few weeks before Chicago and the Sixth District were set to host the IBEW's 40th International Convention. "My new assignment was to assist Paul," Reithel said. "We worked together three weeks in a row, nonstop."

Reithel added: "He's like a tool partner in the field. We just took on the fires as they were coming."

Kasmak said Reithel's appointment as Noble's senior executive assistant speaks volumes.

"With Ryan, everything's organized. He's detail-oriented and very passionate, but he doesn't get upset at the little things," Kasmak said. "And he's not afraid to innovate, which makes him perfect for the job."

Noble agreed. "You can't get much more of a tryout than helping a brand-new vice president deal with the day-to-day chaos of an international convention," he said. "I knew that Ryan would be up to the task then, and I know he's up to the task of helping me out here and now."

Reithel is enthusiastic about his new role. "What I like about this job is that I'm consistently in motion," he said. "The international secretary-treasurer manages every penny in and out of the IBEW and our benefit funds. There's billions of dollars under his watch."

The transition to life in Washington, D.C., has been smooth for Reithel and his wife, Amy, a dental hygienist

who quickly found opportunities. "Amy is 100% supportive of the IBEW," he said. "I couldn't do this without her."

Reithel describes hunting, the outdoors and their German Sheppard, Gianna, as his "relaxation passions." He's also a lifelong Chicago Cubs fan who developed a grudging appreciation for the crosstown White Sox after the team's star third baseman, Robin Ventura, visited him in the hospital while he underwent his cancer treatment. The two formed a friendship that endures to this day.

Please join the IBEW's officers and staff in welcoming Reithel to the International Office and wishing him well in his new position. ■

APPOINTED Louie Spencer



International President Kenneth W. Cooper appointed Director of Per Capita Membership Louie Spencer to be his

assistant and deputy chief of staff, effective Jan. 4.

"If you would have told me 15 years ago that I would be here today, I wouldn't have believed it," Spencer said. "But even though it was never in my plan, I see it as really just a way to continue to help serve the IBEW."

Growing up in Scottsbluff, Neb., Spencer had little direct experience with unions, although he did learn early what a scab is. During a national strike by UPS employees represented by the Teamsters, Spencer had considered applying for a job as a temporary replacement worker, but his grandmother forbade it. "Like hell you are," she told him. "You are not crossing a picket line. You will not be a scab."

After high school, Spencer spent four years in the U.S. Army, where he was trained as a paratrooper. In 2002, he returned to Scottsbluff and took a seasonal job as an equipment operator with the nearby city of Gering.

Not long after that job became permanent, some of Spencer's co-workers asked him to be part of a volunteer organizing committee. He wound up serving as one of its coordinators. While the nearly unanimous election to join Grand Island, Neb., Local 1597 went quickly, "it took 2 1/2 years and two court appearances to get a first contract," he said. Spencer went on to serve as chairman and chief steward of his bargaining unit.

"That organizing drive was my first practical introduction to what a union was," said Spencer, who was initiated into the IBEW and Local 1597 in 2006.

Having developed a taste for union service and activism, Spencer told Local 1597's leaders that he wanted

to continue to serve the IBEW in a way that put his interests to use, so they began sending him to district progress meetings and training sessions.

"I like helping the IBEW," Spencer said. "For me, it's a passion, not a job. It's a way of life."

In 2010, his local sent him to the AFL-CIO's first Next Up summit in Washington, D.C., for young union members, an experience that helped fuel his passion further. Three years later, he applied to be a lead organizer for the Eleventh District, serving western Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. He was appointed to that position by International President Edwin D. Hill that August.

"I thought he was a great guy who had a lot of energy. He's not afraid to work hard," said Eleventh District International Representative Rich Michel. Michel and Spencer got to know each other when Spencer was at Local 1597, and they became close friends as they worked at the district office on several organizing campaigns.

International President Lonnie R. Stephenson brought Spencer to the International Office in 2017 to serve as an international representative in the Membership Development Department. There, Spencer worked on numerous successful organizing campaigns, such as at DirecTV, Baltimore Gas and Electric, and Atlanta Gas Light.

The following year, Stephenson reassigned Spencer to work in the Per Capita Membership Department, which keeps track of the union's active and retired IBEW members. By 2019, Stephenson had promoted Spencer to department director, where Spencer continued efforts to leverage technology to help keep the department efficient, including implementing the IBEW digital membership application platform.

"Taking care of members is exactly what I wanted to do," Spencer said.

Spencer believes he will be continuing that care through his support of Cooper and Chief of Staff Ricky L. Oakland.

"When I was international secretary-treasurer, Per Capita Membership was one of the departments under my direct supervision," Cooper said. "I saw firsthand what a great job Louie did as that department's director, so I knew he was the right person to help hold down the fort for me now as international president, doing the business of this great union."

Oakland agreed. "President Cooper is on the road a lot," he said, "and when the time came to select someone to help make sure that no part of this union gets overlooked, whether he's at home or away, he and I both were certain that Louie was that someone."

Michel added: "I think he's going to do great in this new job. When he's ready to go, he's ready to go."

Spencer holds degrees in business administration and secondary education and has also studied middle school education. He is an advisor for the IBEW Veterans Committee, a mem-

ber of the Union Sportsmen's Alliance where he enjoys fishing and boating, and he is a diehard University of Nebraska Cornhuskers fan. Spencer and his wife, Jonna, have two children, Kaeden and Macy. Kaeden is a second-generation paratrooper, currently serving in the Army's distinguished 82nd Airborne division.

The officers and staff of the IBEW join the membership in wishing Brother Spencer the best of luck as he takes on this new role. ■

APPOINTED Dave Fenton



Dave Fenton was appointed director of the Per Capita Department, effective Jan. 4. It's a position to which he brings a multitude of experience, from his time as business manager of Brockton, Mass., Local 223 to his appointment as an international representative in the Per Capita Department.

"Dave is one of the most committed IBEW members I've ever met," said Louis Spencer, who preceded Fenton as Per Capita Department director and is now assistant to the international president and deputy chief of staff. "And he's an even better person in general."

Brother Fenton was initiated into Taunton Local 235 in 1987, shortly before it was amalgamated with Local 223 in 1988. He served as both treasurer and president before being appointed business manager in 2009. He then won election three more times as business manager and financial secretary before being appointed as an international representative in 2019.

"When I heard that Dave was asked to be a rep, I said, 'If there was anybody made for that job, it was Dave,'" said Local 223 Business Manager Doug Nelson, who's known Fenton since their time working together in the '90s. "He's computer-savvy, he's good with numbers, and when he gets into something, he gets in deep."

Fenton served for a time in the Construction and Maintenance Department in 2022 but was primarily assigned to Per Capita, where he worked closely with Spencer.

"He has a good attention to detail, and he's really good at finding the small things," Spencer said. "He's also tech-savvy. He isn't afraid of it and will explore new ways to do things better."

As director, Fenton oversees a staff of 17 that processes the monthly reports from locals. The department also keeps track of membership records, processes all payments from locals and members paid directly to the International Office and works with locals on any type of training needed for their officers and staff to process the

per capita for the local.

"You hear new members say, 'Joining the IBEW was the best decision that I ever made.' I heard that many times while I was business manager," Fenton said. "Now, as a part of the Per Capita Department, I'm part of a team that is responsible for all the members' records, from the time that they join until their retirement. We owe it to these members that made a choice to join the IBEW that their history is as accurate as it can be."

Spencer also said that Fenton is a good listener, which is a valuable skill to have in his new role.

"You have to have the ability to talk to people in Per Capita. It's kind of like being an organizer," Spencer said. "He knows how to treat people with respect and dignity, and he focuses on getting the job done."

Fenton comes in at a good time for the Per Capita Department, as it has undergone some major technology changes over the past few years. Those upgrades have helped the locals not only in their monthly reporting but also in the storing of reports and members' records electronically.

"I do enjoy challenges, and I am not afraid to do something different than the way that we have always done it," Fenton said. "I look forward to seeing what other technology enhancements are on the horizon for the department."

Fenton noted how his time in leadership at Local 223 also gave him some good experience for running the Per Capita Department.

"While business manager and financial secretary, it was my responsibility to make sure the payments were sent in monthly. As the Per Capita director, I know what is required by the constitution on reporting and sending in your report as a local," he said. "As someone who has been on the local side, I feel that I will be able to assist other locals with any issues they're having."

Another accomplishment that Fenton can claim from his time as business manager was Local 223's purchase of a new building. They went from a 10,000-square-foot facility without any dedicated training space to more than 33,000 square feet with about 25,000 of that for state-of-the-art training.

"He was instrumental in getting that new building," Nelson said. "It was difficult a lot of the time, but it was one of most important things he did."

Prior to his appointment as an international representative, Fenton was a panel member of the Council on Industrial Relations for five years and served as the Second District representative for the Electrical Training Alliance.

When not working, the Taunton native likes to walk around his new home of Washington, D.C., including the Georgetown waterfront along the Potomac River.

On behalf of the membership, officers and staff, we wish Brother Fenton all the best in his new role. ■

GROUND^{ED} IN HISTORY

Places to Call Home

From its origins in a small boarding house rented by linemen in St. Louis to an 11-story office building in the nation's capital, the IBEW has taken a winding path to its current home during its 132-year history. In the earliest days of the Brotherhood, business was conducted "out of the pliers' pockets of local union secretaries." The same was true for our first grand secretaries, whose homes served as the national headquarters of the destined-to-be world's largest electrical workers' union.

Emilie Building, St. Louis (1892-1897)

After the first convention was held in a St. Louis boarding house in 1891, Grand President Henry Miller traveled the country to charter locals while Grand Secretary-Treasurer J.T. Kelly worked from his St. Louis home. By mid-1892, the union was able to lease space in the Emile Building at 909 Olive St. in the city. When an economic depression erupted in 1893, Kelly helped steer the growing union to better financial footing.

Powers Building, Rochester, N.Y. (1897-1903)

At the 1897 convention, Henry T. Sherman of Rochester, N.Y., replaced Kelly as grand secretary. Following precedent, the union headquarters followed him to his city, where he directed business from his house and later, as conditions began to improve, from a small office in the Powers Building at the corner of State and Main streets.



Powers Building, Rochester, N.Y. (1897-1903)

Corcoran Building, Washington, D.C. (1903-1905)

In 1903, with the election of Frank McNulty as international president, the headquarters were moved to Washington, D.C., in two rooms of the Corcoran Building at Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street NW.



Corcoran Building, Washington, D.C. (1903-1905)

Pierik Building, Springfield, Ill. (1905-1914)

In 1905, the headquarters was moved to Springfield, Ill., where it occupied space in the Pierik Building until 1914. This period is often referred to as the IBEW's formative years, when dissension from within gave the still young union some of its most trying years. In the end, the pressing need for representation on a national scale became a rallying point. Organizing efforts were expanded, and with them came the need for new office space.

Reisch Building, Springfield, Ill. (1914-1920)

In 1914, McNulty moved the national office to the Reich Building, where it remained until 1920. With war brewing in Europe, the organization of manufacturing workers was on the rise and membership in the IBEW nearly doubled. Delegates at the 1919 convention voted to create a permanent headquarters in the nation's capital to meet the growing demand for services.



Reisch Building, Springfield, Ill. (1914-1920)

Machinists' Building, Washington, D.C. (1920-1929)

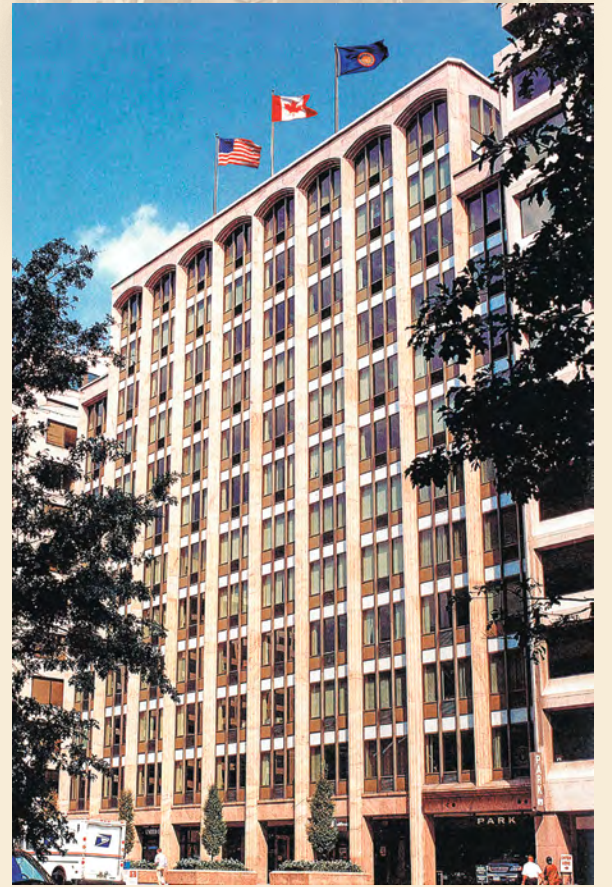
In 1920, the IBEW moved again to Washington, D.C., to occupy the fifth floor of the Machinists' Building. Many of the modern features of the union were introduced during this era, including insurance benefits, a Research Department and the National Council for Industrial Relations. In 1928, the IBEW took the next step and began construction on its own building.

1200 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C. (1929-1973)

In 1929, the IBEW moved into its first organization-owned building at 1200 15th St. NW. For the next 44 years, the building became a symbol throughout North America of strong union representation for electrical workers for the next 44 years. It was renovated in 1935 and 1955, doubling its space. [Photo, top left.]

1125 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. (1973-2005)

In September 1966, the IBEW celebrated its 75th anniversary. In 1971, to effectively meet the challenges of a growing electrical industry, the union began work on a modern 12-story building. In 1973, the second organization-owned headquarters opened at 1125 15th St. NW, where it remained in use until 2005.



1200 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C. (1929-1973)

900 Seventh St. NW, Washington, D.C. (2005-present)

After 30 years, the building on 15th Street was showing its age. In 2003, construction of a new building at 900 Seventh St. NW began under the supervision of International President Edwin D. Hill and was finished in 2005. Today, it holds the offices of our international president and secretary-treasurer and more than 200 staff members.



900 Seventh St. NW, Washington, D.C. (2005-present)

For more than 130 years, the International Office buildings have served as indispensable tools in the IBEW's quest for a better way of life for members and their families. And that quest continues, no matter how far it may take us from home. ■

LOCAL LINES

Local 1 Showcases Winter Safety on St. Louis News

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,ptc,rts,s,se,spa,st&ws), ST. LOUIS, MO — This past winter saw two of our officers, Financial Secretary Dave Roth (on KMOV-TV) and Director of Business and Membership Development John Kahrhoff (on Fox 2), give insightful and timely tips on winter electrical safety, such as how to shed the pack-rat mentality and get rid of old holiday lighting. They also showcased new, safe and cost-efficient lighting and reviewed how to safely care for space heaters.

At the time of this writing, our RENEW chapter is getting things in place for its annual trivia night in March. Last year's was a huge success. Fun, friendship and fellowship are the best reasons to go.

Finally, we want to congratulate retired International President Lonnie R. Stephenson for his tireless commitment to furthering the precepts of this great union. I know that I have never heard a president of the United States mention the IBEW so frequently. Happy Trails, Brother Stephenson.

Kyle Hunter, P.S.

NYC Building Trades Give Relief to Puerto Rico

L.U. 3 (catv,em,govt,i,lctt,mo,o,t,u&ptc), NEW YORK, NY — Hurricane Fiona made landfall in Puerto Rico on Sept. 17, 2022, causing massive flooding and leaving widespread damage across the island. Less than a month later, the founder of HEART 9/11, Bill Keegan, coordinated with Santos Rodriguez of the Building & Construction Trades Council of Greater New York and SOMOS Inc. to dispatch members from New York City's union trades to assist in the recovery of Ponce, on the south side of the island.

Local 3 designated a volunteer delegation led by Santiago Iglesias Educational Society Vice President Rob Martin and joined by New York Electrical Contractors Association Executive Secretary Edwin Lopez, NYECA Assistant Executive Secretary Peter

Rescigno, Business Representative Louis Sanchez, retired Financial Secretary Luis Restrepo, journeyman inside wireman Jason Rivera and retired journeyman inside wireman Edwin Napoleoni. These volunteers restored power to the central air system at a local nursing home, repaired and supported the roof, and performed multiple interior repairs. In addition, work was completed at a community center, including the build-out of classrooms intended to train residents in construction skills, new classrooms on the second floor, and repairs and updates to the on-site daycare facility.

Although there is much work still to be done in the recovery of Puerto Rico, trade unionists worked tirelessly to ensure we left a positive impact on the community in Ponce.

Rob Martin, SIES V.P.



Local 43 Sister Shawni Davis had the honor of introducing U.S. President Joe Biden at a Micron Technology new conference held at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, N.Y.

Local 43 Welcomes Micron, Thousands of Jobs to Clay, N.Y.

L.U. 43 (em,i&rts), SYRACUSE, NY — It is with pride and excitement that we share that Micron Technology Inc. selected central New York's White Pine site for its semiconductor manufacturing facility, which

will create 9,000 new high-paying jobs. This is the largest private investment ever made in New York state history, with up to \$100 billion over the next 20-plus years, and one of the largest industrial manufacturing investments in the history of the United States. The project is projected to start in spring 2024.

Local 43 Sister Shawni Davis had the honor of introducing U.S. President Joe Biden at the Micron press conference, held at Onondaga Community College. We are grateful to our partners, including Sen. Charles Schumer, Gov. Kathy Hochul, Empire State Development and Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon, who have worked to ensure that the necessary legislation, site conditions and community assets were in place to secure this project. Thank you to Business Manager Alan Marzullo and the staff at Local 43 for working with dedication to support this extraordinary project.

Jeff Cassano, P.S.

Local 47 Updates: Holiday Party, Back Pay Won, Upcoming Events

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin welcomed all members and their families to our local's Christmas party Dec. 17.

In the Southern California Edison-Tristion Mends arbitration, the parties have reached a settlement with a favorable decision from the arbitrator. Mends will receive \$130,000 in back pay and be otherwise made whole. The SCE-Carey Newidouski arbitration was settled with Newidouski receiving \$40,000 in back pay and otherwise made whole. SCE-Saddleback District crew discharge cases will be arbitrated Feb. 24. Also with SCE we have a settlement on the elimination of the mainland parking for Catalina members, and members on Catalina will receive an additional \$400 monthly added to their stipend plus \$25 for the next three years. City of Banning-general unit negotiations continue.

City of Anaheim-general contract, professional management and customer service part-time workers negotiations continue.

In upcoming events: Local 47's Steward & Safety Conference will take place March 25, and Local 47's picnic will be held May 6. See you there!

We're sad to report the deaths of Aaron Bonner, Joseph Delgado, Patti Faraone and John Sausedo. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union!

Mitch Smith, P.S.

A New Year With Lots of Work

L.U. 55 (c,lctt,o&u), DES MOINES, IOWA — Hello to all my brothers and sisters. Approximately 150 to 175 people attended our Christmas party, where there were lots of good food and prizes for the kids. It seems that they love face painting the best.

It's a new year with lots of work on the horizon. Our local has been very blessed. Let's pray that our government can get along and get things done for all of us. I travel all over the Des Moines metro area and see our union members everywhere, whether it's underground or distribution or transmission. I see members working with good equipment and doing a very good job. Let's remember to look out for others and to train those who need some help in the trade. Always think safety. Wear those gloves and sleeves. Pay attention to the safety meetings, and we will see you in a couple of months.

Myron Green, P.S.

Local 71's Chance Ruiz Saves a Life

L.U. 71 (lctt,o&rtb), COLUMBUS, OH — Brother and journeyman lineman Chance Ruiz became a lifesaver to Brother Mark Nixon, apprentice lineman, shortly after returning home from working on the East Coast. Brother Ruiz had asked Brother Nixon to

return the bucket truck to the show-up and lock things up for the weekend while he fueled up at the gas station.

Brother Ruiz, rather than heading home after fueling, had a gut feeling that he should return to the show-up, and thankfully he did. When he pulled back in, he noticed right away that something was not



A volunteer delegation from Local 3, HEART 9/11 and the NYC Building & Construction Trades Council assisted in Hurricane Fiona recovery in Ponce, Puerto Rico, on the south side of the island.



Local 47 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin enjoys time with family and friends at the local's Christmas party.

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 or email 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 202-728-6219 or 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	
(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.

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right with Brother Nixon. Brother Ruiz got out of his truck and asked if Brother Nixon was feeling all right; he said he felt out of breath and started toward his truck when he collapsed.

Brother Ruiz caught him and lowered him to the ground, where Brother Nixon was unresponsive. There, Brother Ruiz immediately started performing CPR. After just a few chest compressions, Brother Nixon was revived. Brother Ruiz then started yelling for help; someone heard his call for help and immediately called 911. First responders arrived, and Brother Nixon was rushed to the hospital, where he spent a few days recovering before returning home. Brother Nixon and his family are so thankful that Brother Ruiz followed that gut feeling and returned to the show-up when he did.

Local 71 would also like to thank Brother Ruiz for his calm, fast-acting response in saving the life of Brother Nixon. We are all proud to call you our brother.

Bryan Stage, B.M./F.S.



Brother Chance Ruiz received an IBEW Local 71 Life Saving award. From left: Business Representative Dirk Dozer, Brother Ruiz and Brother Mark Nixon.

First Annual Chili Cook-Off

L.U. 77 (lctt,mt,o,t&u), SEATTLE, WA — On Sat., Aug. 20, 2022, our local held its inaugural Chili Cook-Off and Family Picnic at the Spokane hall. The event was a great way to celebrate getting members and families back together after a two-and-a-half-year hiatus due to COVID. This was the first major event held at the new Spokane hall since we moved in late 2019. Seven teams entered to compete for cash prizes and trophies for first, second and third place plus overall winner. Executive officers from the Spokane Labor Council were there to judge the contestants' homemade chili.

"I got the inspiration when I attended Local 465's chili cook-off a couple years back in San Diego. It seemed like a great way to get our members together," Business Representative Dave Garegnani said.

It was a fun day full of chili, hot dogs, music, fellowship, a water slide for the kids, raffle prizes and even a Kona Ice truck, which made the 91-degree day feel much cooler. At the end of the day, Robert and Amanda McDaniel were the overall winner with their smoked chicken chili. Local 77 is looking forward to this being a yearly event! Thank you to all members who attended!

Dave Garegnani, Bus. Rep.



Local 77 held its inaugural Chili Cook-Off and Family Picnic at the Spokane hall in August 2022.

Local 99 Sends Two Delegates to Tradeswomen Build Nations Conference

L.U. 99 (govt&i), PROVIDENCE, RI — Despite the arrival of the colder months, our local has had no shortage of warmth and brotherhood fostered among its membership. Over the years, our holiday lighting displays have become something that the community looks forward to and cherishes. The help of our members, friends and families made it possible to pull off such a feat in December.

The local also sent two first-time delegates, Sidney Jablonski and Justice Casey, to the Tradeswomen Build Nations conference in Las Vegas in October 2022. Casey and Jablonski were excited to take part in the banner parade and to volunteer their time assisting with the check in for all attendees. These apprentices had the honor of listening to speeches made by many influential people, including former Rhode Island governor and current U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. Sisters Jablonski and Casey were inspired to share their knowledge and encourage their local to continue making positive changes toward equality, diversity and solidarity.

Justice Casey, P.S.

President Biden Visits Local 103

L.U. 103 (cs&i), BOSTON, MA — Our local had a special visitor Dec. 2: President Joe Biden, who was in Boston to thank members for hosting a phone bank supporting the reelection of Sen. Raphael Warnock of Georgia. Biden was introduced by Business Manager Lou Antonellis and greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of union leaders and members. Our efforts paid off, and Sen. Warnock was reelected after a special runoff election. President Biden's visit to our union hall marked the first time a sitting U.S. president visited our local and the second high-profile visit of 2022 after Vice President Kamala Harris visited in August.

We had a busy holiday season at Local 103! Our members donated more than 10,000 toys and articles of winter clothing for those less fortunate, bringing comfort and joy to thousands of children in the Greater Boston area. These holiday drives are an annual tradition that allows Local 103 to give back to the communities where our members live and work.

We're looking forward to a busy spring and summer here at Local 103, with our own local union elections and negotiations for our main collective bargaining agreements.

Jimmy Fleming, P.S.

Welcome, Brother Derek Thill!

L.U. 125 (lctt,o,t,u&ptc), PORTLAND, OR — Happy new year! We hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. As storm season has started, please take the time and use the necessary precautions to perform your work safely.



Local 131 held an enjoyable retirees' Christmas luncheon, where brotherhood across generations was celebrated.

Journeyman lineman Derek Thill has joined Local 125 as business representative for members employed at Portland General Electric. An IBEW member since 1995, he has spent his entire IBEW career at PGE. When Hank Williams' departure created a vacancy, Business Manager Travis Eri reached out to Derek.

Thill loves his trade. "The variety is definitely something I like," he said, "but the teamwork is what we are all about."

He is excited about the opportunity to make some positive changes. When asked what he wants the membership to know about him, his message was clear: "I am a firm believer in the union brotherhood. I will work hard to benefit everyone, and I'll do the best I can every day." Please join Local 125's staff and officers in welcoming Derek to the team!

Local 125's 20th annual Casino Night is March 11. Call 503-262-9125 for more information or to register.

Marcy Grail, A.B.M.



Journeyman lineman Derek Thill has joined Local 125 as business representative for members employed at PGE.

Steady Year Ahead

L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rts,se&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI — The work outlook is steady in Kalamazoo. Pfizer MAP project has 40 people working on it, with manpower being supplied by Hi-Tech Electric, KEI Electrical

Construction and Lakeland Electrical. Flemington Instrument Co. will be starting on the instrumentation package this spring. Moore Electrical has a project at Gun Lake Casino, which is expanding to include a 15-story hotel and an aquadome.

We had an enjoyable retirees' Christmas luncheon. I enjoyed seeing the journeymen from my past. We congratulate the following members for their years of service: Robert Oliver and David Wilder (60 years); Charles Krull, Doyal Northrup, Jerry Ptacek and Russel Sandefur (55 years); and Marvin Akerson, William Decker, James Meech, Joseph Orr, Steven Pierce, Steven Shirk John VanDyke and Mitchell Vankruiningen (50 years). It seems like just yesterday they were telling me what to do.

And thank you, Lisa Page, for the steward's training. The most dangerous man is one with an education.

Morris A. Applebey, B.M.

Local 141 Enjoys Busy Holiday Season

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Work slowed down somewhat heading into the winter months, with 42 members on Book 1. The outlook for 2023 is promising, however, as there are several projects on the books to begin the year.

Local 141 again had a great holiday season, with a retirees' Christmas dinner, children's breakfast with Santa and the Christmas dinner/dance. All of these events were very well attended and enjoyed by Local 141 members and their families. Special thanks to the Local 141 Social Committee for their outstanding work during this busy time of the year and to the Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino-Racetrack for hosting these events.

The Local 141 Motorcycle Club was also busy during the holiday season. While it was too cold to ride, the motorcycle club members focused their activities to charity fundraising, donating \$500 each to the Wheeling Soup Kitchen and St. John's Home for Children.

Local 141 is mourning the passing of Brothers Joseph F. Campbell Sr. and Edward P. Duffy. They will be greatly missed.

Please stay safe and healthy!

Kurt "Bug" Reed, P.S.



Retirees attending the Local 141 retirees' Christmas dinner at the Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino-Racetrack.

Happy Retirement, Brother Bruemmer!

L.U. 257 (em,i,rtb,rts,spa&t), JEFFERSON CITY, MO — We would like to wish a happy retirement to Don Bruemmer! Don joined Local 257 in 1978 and stayed involved throughout his career. In 1986, he was appointed to the apprenticeship committee and later was elected to the executive board, where he became chairman. In 1992, Don was elected business manager, a role he served for 30 years until his retirement in 2022.

The local hosted a retirement party, which Eleventh District International Vice President Mark Hager and his staff attended with numerous NECA counterparts, professionals, members and family to celebrate Don's achievements. Congratulations, Don, and enjoy your well-deserved retirement!

Michael D. Fanning B.M./F.S.



Local 257 Business Manager Don Bruemmer (right) presents his son Dalton Bruemmer his journeyman wireman certificate in June 2022.

Holiday Happenings

L.U. 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ — The holiday season is a time of joy and wonder for many, but it also can be a challenging time, especially for the working families in our communities. The responsibility of providing special times for your loved ones along with providing a living can be a daunting task. Luckily for many of us, our local is there to lend a helping hand in what can be a very hectic time.

Two annual events are holiday traditions within our membership and looked forward to every year, especially by the children of our brothers and sisters. Kicking off the season is the highly anticipated return of Santa to the union hall. Santa and his helpers take up residence in the main meeting room and listen to the Christmas wishes of members' children as their picture is taken by Santa's official photographer. Hot chocolate and snacks are provided, and each child leaves with a present from the hall.

In the following nights, Santa and his twin helpers take to streets in the local's trucks and go



Santa and his helper, Miss Terri, sit ready to hear the Christmas wishes of Local 269 members' young ones.

door to door dispensing candy and holiday cheer. We are truly blessed to have so many caring individuals that help make the holidays a special time for all. Thank you, everyone.

Brian Jacoppo, P.S.

Brother Tim Evans Retires

L.U. 309 (i,lctt,mo,mt,o,rts,spa&u), COLLINSVILLE, IL — This past holiday season, our local hosted its first breakfast with Santa. Children were treated

not only to meeting Santa Claus and his elf but also to a fabulous home made breakfast of pancakes, sausages and eggs. More than 50 toys and \$500 were donated to Toys for Tots, as well. We

send a special thanks to Stephen Erspamer and the many volunteers.

Local 309 rang in the new year with the retirement of Business Manager Tim Evans. As we celebrate this milestone with Brother Evans, we reflect on how much he means to our local. During his 36-year membership, Tim served on nearly every local trust, committee, fund and board. He also started our golf tournament, which continues to generate healthy sums for our PAC. No matter the function — parades, parties, volunteering, etc. — one factor was a constant: Brother Evans was there.

It is because of his dedication and participation that Tim has become the ultimate example for our members. Commenting on his departure, Brother Evans stated: "The IBEW has given me so much and will always be my family." We wish him a wonderful retirement!

Carlos S. Perez, R.S.

Members Passed, Members In Need

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — We remember the following members lost in 2022: Lloyd Alden, Joseph Banholzer, John Bengtson, Robert Haines, David Hesse, Kenneth Jenson, Virgil Kalpin, Kenneth Kramer, Aaron Larson, Earl Lockwood, Richard McLaughlin, Joseph Michel, George Nyari, Shane Rovang, Richard Sandeno, Paul Stowers, Vincent Sturm, Jeffrey Tonne, Michael Tupper, Okley Varney, Kenneth Wetzell and Richard Winkels.

Sixty years have passed since a new statue has been dedicated to the Minnesota State Capitol. In November 2022, a statue honoring Nellie Stone Johnson (1905-2002), a union organizer and civil rights leader, was unveiled. She grew up near Hinckley, Minn., and delivered campaign literature by horseback for the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party. In 1944, she was instrumental in the merger of the Farmer-Labor Party and the Democratic Party to form the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. She was a civil rights adviser to both Hubert H. Humphrey and Walter Mondale.

Worker rights are no less important than civil rights. We must insist on a safe jobsite. The hall can only help the membership if it is notified of any workplace injuries or accidents. Help your brothers and sisters in their time of distress by contacting your steward or union representative.

Keep your neighbors working — buy Made in USA.

Tom Small, P.S.

Local 347 Purchases 1.69 Acres for Special Events

L.U. 347 (em,i,mt,rtb,rts&spa), DES MOINES, IA — To wrap up 2022, our local completed two more real estate transactions. The old union hall was sold to a chiropractic practice for office space. We used the building at 850 18th St. for 60 years as our hall. Centrally located in Des Moines, it served the local well. The second transaction was the purchase of 1.69 acres adjacent to the new hall. The intention for this property is to provide space for special events.

The Iowa Legislature, executive branch and attorney general's office are all controlled by the same political party; thus, they have the power to do whatever they wish. We, organized labor, are holding our collective breath to see what will unfold. They have the power to make beneficial changes for the citizens of this state or to create mischief that will hamper the efforts of hard-working men and women and their children for years to come. Keep your representatives on speed dial.

As I write this, work is plentiful in our local. Book 1 has 33. Book 2 has 64. If you ever wanted to work in a data center, opportunities are available.

Local 347 will have a Pin Party and Recognition Night in the Bishop Ballroom at Prairie Meadows; cocktails at 5, with dinner at 6. The Easter Egg Hunt will be April 8.

To close, a quote from Eugene Debs: "I am opposing a social order in which it is possible for one man who does absolutely nothing that is useful to amass a fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars, while millions of men and women who work all the days of their lives secure barely enough for a wretched existence."

Mike Schweiger, P.S.



Local 379 member Jim Gant (left) being presented with his 70-year service pin and plaque.

The highlight of the night was recognizing Jim Gant with his 70-year service pin. Jim left high school to join the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II. He returned to finish high school and joined the local apprenticeship. Jim was initiated into the local in 1952, where he worked for many years as a journeyman wireman, foreman and general foreman. He eventually became the training director for the JATC in Charlotte in the mid-1980s. Jim also spent several years as a founder, judge and board member for North Carolina state electrical apprenticeship competitions.

It was great to see him at the party and an honor to present him with his award. Jim will always be remembered for his contribution to the local and the JATC. Thank you, Jim, for your many years of service!

Doug McDaniel, R.S.

Members Involved Locally

L.U. 453 (govt,i,rtb,rts&spa), SPRINGFIELD, MO — Our local had a busy 2022, and 2023 looks promising as well. Full employment and open calls have allowed our membership to grow. We have donated time and effort into several areas to promote growth, brotherhood and community involvement.

Attending high school and college career fairs, along with multiple job fairs, has helped us find quality candidates for membership, and our apprenticeship program is training our next group of great journeymen! Door knocking for candidates has allowed us to elect three worker-friendly candidates in the Springfield metro area. Christmas meetings for our members and retirees were well attended and enjoyed by all.



Local 453's Max Indyuskin and family donated time to ring the bells over the holiday season.



New Local 357 members at the November 2022 general meeting.

Local 357 Sees Year of Growth

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — Our local experienced 2022 as a year of growth for the membership. There were 176 electrical workers indentured into the apprenticeship. Of these, 144 were brought in as apprentice wiremen and 32 as apprentice installer technicians. Additionally, we have extended apprenticeship opportunities to another 90 people for the 2023 school year.

Our organizers and the examining board have been working hard to increase our labor force.

With numerous projects on the horizon, 2023 will likely be another excellent year for expansion. We welcome our new brothers and sisters into the Local 357 family, and we wish them all the best.

Julie-Ann Peebles, P.S.

Honoring a 70-Year Legacy

L.U. 379 (i,o,rtb&lctt), CHARLOTTE, NC — On Dec. 17, our local held its annual Christmas party. It was a great night to catch up with all our brothers and sisters. We were blessed to have some of our retirees and members young and old across all units and classifications. We shared in food and drink and had a few laughs.

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Members donating time to ring the bells has allowed us to raise money for needy families in our community. Buying and selling raffle tickets let us raise money to help injured member Michael Gray. The Brotherhood Committee organized our first annual Trunk or Treat event and started planning for the chili cook-off.

We would like to thank the traveling brothers and sisters for helping us power our jurisdiction and hope that everyone had a happy holiday season!

Troy Schindler, P.S.

Celebrating Years of Service, Helping Those in Need

L.U. 481 (c,ees,i,mt,ptc,rts,s,spa&ws), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Local 481 closed 2022 by celebrating our retirees and helping those in need in the community.

We had a nice turnout at our annual Christmas luncheon, with nearly 160 retirees in attendance. Business Manager Jeff Wheeler distributed years-of-service pins during the event, honoring retirees celebrating milestones. Noteworthy recipients were Charles H. Rosebrock and James E. Sommers, recognized for 60 years of service. Congratulations to all the retirees, and thank you for your dedication to the IBEW!

In late December, we called on our members to help those in the community who struggle with food insecurities, and they came through during our annual food drive at the union hall. Despite the cold and rainy weather, our members donated almost 5,000 pounds of food and over \$1,600 to a local food bank. Thank you to all the members who participated and were willing to give back to the community! Your involvement in our local makes us all proud.

Blake A. Andrews, Treas.



Business Manager Jeff Wheeler in his festive jacket and Local 481 retiree Mike Donovan receiving his service pin.

Biden Visits Albuquerque, and Local 611 Pitches In

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — For the first time in 25 years, our local had a Christmas party for the grownups. The event was held at the Convention Center, and it was a full house with lots of prizes, good food and nice IBEW sweaters gifted by Local 611. A huge shout-out to the Christmas Committee for doing such a great job. Hopefully we can make it an annual event. In addition to the adults' Christmas party, we held the annual Children's Christmas party, with lots of food and a visit from Santa. This year, the children's party was held at the hall.

During President Joe Biden's recent visit to Albuquerque, Assistant Business Manager Mark Strand was asked to be part of the president's motorcade. Mark drove the press to each location where the president gave inspiring speeches. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Mark,



Local 611 Assistant Business Manager Mark Strand in front of President Joe Biden's motorcade car.

which he said he will never forget.

Work in our local is still going strong, with a number of daily calls throughout the state.

On behalf of Local 611, I would like to extend condolences to the family and friends of Murry S. Maxwell.

Don't forget, our meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month. Support your local!

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.



Local 613 apprentices enjoy dinner and prize giveaways at the December AMPED event.

Let's Get AMPED

L.U. 613 (em,i,o,rts&spa), ATLANTA, GA — On Dec. 15, our local hosted its third AMPED — Apprentices Mandating Progress Every Day — event for the year. This new program was the creation of Business Manager Kenny Mullins and put into action by Assistant Business Manager Manny Gonzalez.

They started this program not only to teach brotherhood and sisterhood at an earlier point in an apprentice's career, but also to create a sense of fellowship and belonging. AMPED meets quarterly and gives our young workers a platform to air their issues and concerns and have them addressed. Mullins and President Kevin Swanson are actively involved at the events, so apprentices can discuss topics directly with their administration.

At the September meeting, the apprentices elected class presidents for each year, supplying another avenue for any help that may be necessary while promoting involvement among our younger members. AMPED events offer an upbeat and fun atmosphere, with games and dinner followed by open discussions and door prizes. Prizes include Chromebooks, which apprentices use to do schoolwork.

While our retirees got us to where we are, apprentices are our future. With the leadership and skills taught by AMPED, the future of Local 613 is bright!

Ron Nyberg, P.S.

Membership Growth

L.U. 659 (c,catv,em,i,lctt,o,st,t&u), MEDFORD, OR — Our local covers a variety of trades, including utilities, municipalities, line-clearance tree trimming, telecommunications, construction both

inside and outside, and even gas.

We ended 2022 with membership growth of 26% in construction classifications.

Our telecommunications group had membership growth of 19%. This growth is in part because of a 1,200-mile fiber installation project that goes from Brookings, Ore., to Bandon, Ore., and then cross country to Myrtle Point, Ore.

Our line-clearance tree trimming classifications have had membership growth of 16%. This growth is due to the ongoing fire mitigation on utility property.

Our inside wireman group grew by 10%. This growth is attributed to the diligent work done by our organizing team. Motivating the members to take an active role in organizing makes us all stronger — not just as a local but in the Brotherhood as a whole.

United we stand!

James Davidson, A.B.M.

Record Hours Worked at Local 683

L.U. 683 (i&ptc), COLUMBUS, OH — Due to the hard work of our members and our traveling brothers and sisters, our local eclipsed more than 4 million hours worked in 2022, an increase of 1 million hours from 2021. There were

2,500 referrals dispatched in 2022, 1,000 more than in 2021. We are expecting 2023 to be another great year for work opportunities throughout our jurisdiction.

With the Ohio State University Medical Center, multiple data center projects continuing and utility-scale solar projects in their beginning stages, there will be a need for hundreds of inside and teledata wiremen, in addition to the projects we are already working.

We took our annual bus trip to the Cleveland Browns/Cincinnati Bengals game in December. The weather was a little cool but otherwise cooperated for the day. A great time was had, with no shortage of shenanigans on the trip. We are definitely looking forward to the trip next year!

The 68th annual Christmas Cares/Union Shares event was held Dec. 17-18. The Central Ohio Labor Council does a great job coordinating this event every year. There was a full allotment of apprentices, journeymen and retirees on hand to help out. Thank you to all of the members who volunteered their time!

Mike Morey, Pres.

Local 725 Fundraiser for Brother Spears

L.U. 725 (i,rts&spa), TERRE HAUTE, IN — On Dec. 10, our local organized a benefit for fellow member J.T. Spears.

In November 2019, Spears was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. There is no cure. The only options are transplant and treatment. While Spears waits for a suitable donor kidney, he undergoes daily peritoneal dialysis treatment, which can take up to 10 hours per day. Spears worked full time to support his family while undergoing daily treatment until October 2022, when he was informed by his doctor that he could no longer work.

Apprentice John Brick contacted Don Simms to ask how the local could come together to support J.T. Simms, Brick, Cliff Carrithers, Dave Buell and the officers from the hall organized a benefit event.

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 841 donated their facility to host the event. The benefit included a dinner and a silent auction with items donated by local businesses and brothers. Lenny Leclercq donated several handcrafted wallets from his company Irv's Leather, and Travis Runyan donated two handmade knives from his company TR Custom Knives.

Donations are still being accepted via Venmo at @JTSpears-2.

Dickson Hunley, P.S.



Local 915's newly formed Women's Committee (from left): Ashley O'Dell, Shanita Shine, Penni Nichols, Nikki Mullins, Theresa King, Tabitha Hunter, Catherine Weber and Christy Handley.

Happy Holidays From Local 915

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — Happy holidays and happy new year from Business Manager Randall King and the members of our local. We held our annual Christmas party Dec. 10. It was well attended, and a good time was had by all. Door prizes for attendees were graciously donated by our signatory contractors, as well as Local 915.

Sister Tabitha Hunter, supported by King and Local 915 Recording Secretary and President of the Florida State BCTC Theresa King, organized the inaugural meeting of our local's Women's Committee. Sister Hunter said, "We are very excited to get to work in our community and to begin efforts on organizing more women for our trade."



Local 683 members volunteer their time at the annual Christmas Cares/Union Shares event.

At the December general membership meeting, Business Manager King welcomed 45 new brothers and sisters into Local 915. This was the largest swearing-in ceremony we have had in the last few years. It was also the last meeting presided over by Brother Shawn McDonnell as our president. We wish him well in his new role as the state organizing coordinator for Florida.

Brian Nathan, P.S.

1547 Honors Knute Anderson With Coin

L.U. 1547 (c,em,i,o,t,u,lctt&ptc), ANCHORAGE, AK — Business Manager Marcie Obremski is proud to introduce our local's newest challenge coin, honoring retiree and former President Knute Anderson. The Knute coin bears resemblance to Brother Anderson on the front and a dues receipt on the back.

Said Obremski: "Brother Anderson has literally given a lifetime of service to Local 1547. Joining in 1965, he has served in a variety of positions, including shop steward, recording secretary (three years), treasurer (six years), International Convention delegate, business representative (three years), health and welfare trust (27 years), pension trust (23 years), executive board (39 years), and president (28 years). This challenge coin is a befitting way to recognize his unparalleled commitment to our local." The Knute coin is available only to members who pay 12 months of dues in advance.

Melinda Taylor, Comm. Dir.



The Knute coin honors Local 1547's former President Knute Anderson.

75 Years and Counting

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — As our members prepare to celebrate 75 years of our existence, I am happy to report that the start of this era is bright.

First, as we look at the first 75 years of hard work and dedication, Local 1579 has been blessed with large and small projects throughout our jurisdiction. Our local has proven time and again that our skilled workforce and world-class training program are efficient and continue to get better.

Let us never forget those who came before us, those who laid a strong foundation for us to build on. We will continue to improve on what we have learned and continue to learn from our mistakes. We must set the standard as IBEW members so that we may always be desired as the right choice in the industry.

I would also like to congratulate Local 1579 for 75 years of service and commitment to the IBEW and those that employ us and wish continued prosperity to us all.

Until next time, God bless!

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

Local 2351 Steward and Executive Training

L.U. 2351 (u), CHURCHILL FALLS, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, CANADA — First District Representative Ross Galbraith and Training Specialist Kate Buinimasi travelled to Churchill Falls, Labra-

dor, for some well-delivered Steward and Executive training for the local. Twenty of our stewards and eight of our executives received the training along with President/Business Manager Don Lane and Vice President/Chief Shop Steward Mike Brophy. Local 2351 is extremely grateful for the continued support it receives from its dedicated stewards and executive, who continuously represent

our members with vigor and enthusiasm.

A big thank you also goes out to Ross and Kate, as travelling to our remote site has its challenges. The knowledge they gained through this training will serve our members to the fullest.

Don Lane, Pres./B.M.

RETIREES

Toys for Tots

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER — Our local's retirees have been volunteering with Toys for Tots for 20 years, working with the Red Bank Marines. We started in 2003 with Bill Fosgreen as our head volunteer and continue today with Lou Cohen.

From Dec. 1 through Dec. 23, members collected over 50,000 toys. The toys were sorted into age groups and repacked into boxes for donation to various organizations.

On Dec. 21, we held our holiday party at Local 400's union hall. Everyone had a great time!

Nancy Savarese, P.S.



Members of Local 3 South Jersey Retirees' Club work at the Toys for Tots headquarters in Neptune City, N.J.

Wishing You a Happy and Healthy New Year

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SUFFOLK CHAPTER — I'm happy to tell you that we were finally able to have our annual holiday party Dec. 7 at the Meadow Club.

As in the past, there was plenty of fun and lots of laughs, and we had a door prize raffle. The DJ kept the dance floor filled with happy feet. Everyone enjoyed talking with each other and catching up, just like old times.

We were happy to see some of our younger and newer retirees having a good time at the party. One of the high points was the make-your-own sundae bar.

Before we said our goodbyes, chapter Chairman Richard Duva and his wife, Patricia, wished everyone a very happy and healthy new year. The members of our chapter wish all our IBEW members a happy and healthy new year!

Harvey Goldman, P.S.

Holiday Party

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER — Our club was finally able to bring a small group of our members together for our annual Christmas/Hanukkah party after several years of COVID-19 cancellations. Due to the small number of guests, we had the event at a local Westchester County restaurant, rather than the country club where it was held previously.

Our plans for 2023 include our annual fishing trip in the spring or early summer and a four-day stay at the Long Island Cultural Center.

Our biggest challenge right now is getting our membership to begin attending the chapter meetings on a regular basis. At the time of this writing, there are no COVID restrictions on the number of people permitted at our meetings. Meeting attendance is crucial to increased participation in chapter events.

Dick Mills, Treas.

Volunteers Make Good Members

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 26, WASHINGTON, DC — Our club held its annual raffle in November, where we presented several years-of-service awards.

We are continuing our Zoom meetings while holding in-person meetings at the union hall. We are grateful that Local 26 has supported our club with technology that allows us to connect with retired members anywhere. If you are reading this and have

a good email address, let us know so that we can add you to our Mailchimp list!

Our travels have been limited due to COVID, but if you have any suggestions, please contact Rick Warner, our travel coordinator (240-472-0438). We are still hoping to make it to the Panama Canal by 2024.

We have already begun collecting dues for 2023, and it is exciting to see so many retirees renewing their membership in the club! If you are over 50 years old (retired or not), please consider joining our meetings, travels and annual events.

The new year gives us more time to get involved. In 2022, we saw some changes. Susan Flashman retired from being recording secretary and medical equipment coordinator. Jerry Lozupone has become our new recording secre-

tary. We thank him for stepping up to fill this important role. We also had several members offer to help with our medical equipment program: Dick Bissell, Bob Cunningham, Maurice "Grif" Griffin and Bill Koennel. As time passes, we need to remember that younger retirees are needed for all IBEW Retirees' Clubs so that older members can finally relax. Volunteering is an important part of being a good union member.

As we look back on 2022, it is not without deep sadness for the retired friends and family we have lost. We remember them at every meeting with a moment of silence. We are grateful for every year we can share time and swap stories.

Susan Flashman, P.S.

Greetings and Happy New Year!

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — On Oct. 8, our local held an outing at the Colchester Fish & Game Club. We had a great turnout with many retirees and active members. We extend a special thank you to the contractors, who donated some great prizes.

At the Retiree Recognition Banquet on Nov. 6, four past and present business agents were in attendance. We extend congratulations to the 48 retirees who we have not had the chance to recognize due to COVID.

On Dec. 14, retirees had our holiday luncheon at Chowder Pot in Hartford with 21 in attendance, including Dennis Machol, president of the Retirees' Club.

We remember the retirees who passed in 2022: Robert Leech, Richard Lord, Vito Manuzzi Jr.,



IBEW business agents, past and present, attending the Local 35 Retiree Recognition Banquet on Nov. 6: (from left) Michael Nealy, Bruce Silva, Kenneth Leech and John Sardo.



Local 26 Retirees' Club presented a number of years-of-service awards in November.

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RETIREES

Richard Panagrossi (Second District representative), Joseph Sakaitis and Thomas Van Nostrand.

The next Retirees' Club meeting is March 8, and we hope to see some new faces!!

Kenneth R. White, P.S.

Sharing the Good Times

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Here we are in a new year. We hope 2022 was a good one for all.

Local 53 held its annual Christmas party Dec. 16. I couldn't make it due to illness. Members who attended said it was a good time visiting with old friends and making some new ones. The food was good, and the entertainment was enjoyable.

Our local will have its annual crappie tournament April 29 at Truman State Park Marina in Warsaw, Mo. Come and enjoy the fishing, the fish fry, and all of the fun and good times visiting with each other. We hope to see you there.

We are holding our luncheon on the second Thursday of every month at the Lumberyard Bar & Grill in Urich, Mo. We have good times visiting old friends and talking about old times, the present and the future.

Unfortunately, we lost a retired member since our last writing, Lanny Searcy. Rest in peace, brother.

Duane Pearce, P.S.

Local 58 Retirees Launch Oral History Project

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 58, DETROIT, MI — The U.S. House of Representatives in early January took 15 attempts before they could elect their speaker. All of this took several days, delaying the constructive work that these folks were elected to perform. After compromises to pacify the far-right conservatives, the new speaker gave up much of his power. The House has announced investigations into Hunter Biden and other projects that will not move our country forward.

Will we ever see a kinder, gentler Congress willing to accomplish the promised work of our president? Most Americans hold the expectation that good jobs, education, health care, a place to live and schools free of violence should be available to all of us. Let's keep our eyes on Washington and continue to communicate with them about our thoughts and needs — after all, they are there to do "the people's work."

In December, the local kicked off an oral history project to collect stories from our retirees. If you are interested in being a part of this project, call 313-963-3130, ext. 3022, or 586-556-3007 to set up an interview. Where we have come from is an important part of our future.

Pat Nuznov, P.S.

Paying It Forward

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TX — Members at the October Retirees' Club meeting received a great and very appreciated surprise when Business Manager Gary Aiken presented the club with a check. The funds will be used for paying the practice of brotherhood forward with monthly meetings and activities. Members are not family by blood but family through their belief in the IBEW.

Retired members in our memories and hearts, who did not get to celebrate the new year, are Michael Coffey, John Forrester, Tommy Freasier, Robert Garner, Stanley Jenschke, Gerald Katz, Steve Koehler, William Laskowski, Joe Lyssy, Nate Mendoza and Robert "Bobby" Wolff. Rest in peace, brothers.

The Local 60 Retirees' Club meets on the second Thursday, September through May, then takes

a summer break. The meetings take place at the Local 60 union hall (3518 N. Loop 1604 E., San Antonio) starting at 11:30 a.m.

Club members would like to again thank Aiken, active members and office staff for all the attention and respect shown to the retirees.

Sandy Rogers, P.S.



Local 60 Business Manager Gary Aiken presented Retirees' Club President Coy Rogers with a check to pay the brotherhood forward with club activities.

New Facility Offers Services for Retirees

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — Here's hoping everyone had a safe and healthy start to the new year.

On Nov. 12, Local 134 held its annual benefit fair for the first time at the Technical IBEW-NECA Institute. The fair was a success, with free health screenings and flu and other vaccines. Representatives from the Department of Motor Vehicles were also present for our convenience to renew our driver's licenses or state ID cards. As a bonus, attendees got a tour of the new EIT Health And Wellness Center, which is behind the apprentice school in Alsip, Ill. The new facility has a physical therapist who can evaluate and treat a number of ailments and a state-of-the-art vision center. Many services are free or involve small copays for retirees.

We ended 2022 with another memorable holiday party in Memorial Hall at our IBEW home in Chicago. A tasty dinner of corned beef and cabbage, chicken, and potatoes was followed, of course, by our favorite apple pie. President Keith Berls read off raffle ticket winners for 25 \$20 gift cards at Jewel Foods. Congratulations to all the winners.

A special thanks goes to Local 134 President Tim Fitzgibbons and Business Manager/Financial Secretary Don Finn for all their support throughout the year.

Susan Kleczka, P.S.



Treasurer Bernie Martin, with Executive Board members Hector Rivera and Jim Martin, having fun at the December 2022 Holiday Party.

Retirees, Come on Down!

RETIREES' CLUB OF LOCAL 136, BIRMINGHAM, AL — We had a super year of monthly meetings. Thanks again to the local officers and the executive board for their support. Our meetings are on the first

Wednesday of each month. Retirees' Club President Frank Perryman has fed us well over the year: Subs, burgers, BBQ, two fried catfish lunches, and turkey and dressing in November were all good.

We observe a moment of silence for our deceased brothers.

At our December meetings, we collect for Toys for Tots. For the last couple of years, we have awarded service pins to our retirees. Red Farmer got his last year, and more recently Jim Mullinax and Luke Taylor were awarded for 60 years of service. Past visitors to our meetings have included a retired contractor.

We enjoyed visiting with Mike McCain, owner of Southland Electric, whose dad was an IBEW member. It's always a good time seeing our brothers and sisters, and we talk and laugh a lot. If you have retired, come on down!

Bill Roberson, P.S.

Fundraising for St. Jude's

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 257, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — Our retirees attended the annual Christmas Party hosted by our local Dec. 13. Sixty-nine members and guests were treated to a family-style luncheon. Donations are collected annually for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. Retirees collected \$1,205 this year to support St. Jude's mission of saving children and finding cures.

Condolences to the family of Donald Cessna, who passed Oct. 24 at the age of 89. Don was a member of the IBEW for 60 years. He served his country for two years in the Army and three years in the Marines as an artillery mechanic. After his discharge, Don earned an associate's degree from Los Angeles Trade-Tech College. His job as a journeyman electrician took him across the continental U.S. three times, and Don was proud to have been a member of IBEW. Funeral services with military honors were held Nov. 18.

Connie Hamacher, P.S.

Retirees Cruise to Mexico

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 349, MIAMI, FL — Our November cruise to Mexico aboard the Royal Caribbean Harmony of the Seas was well attended. We celebrated Ruth Wolff's 98th birthday, surprising her with gifts, two birthday cakes and champagne.

Excursions included a day of shopping in

Costa Maya and Cozumel — where we rented dune buggies and convertible Mustangs to explore the beach — a snorkeling trip and a traditional Mexican meal with a live mariachi band.

Our Christmas luncheon and gift exchange was held at the 94th Aero Squadron restaurant. Thanks to Candy and Whitey Nelson for a wonderful afternoon of fellowship and many laughs.

Several of our members and their grandchildren attended the children's Christmas party at the union hall. Santa's arrival was the highlight of the party, along with gifts, turkeys and hams.

Our meetings are on the second Thursday of each month at the union hall (1657 NW 17th Ave. in Miami). A brief meeting is followed by a delicious, homemade pot-luck lunch, so bring a dish and join the fun.

Brenda Auer, P.S.

Momentum for Meetings

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — Hello, everyone. Just a reminder that our meetings have started and we are getting momentum each month. We provide sandwiches and drinks at the meetings, so there is no need to bring a covered dish, but desserts are welcome.

Meetings are held at the Local 756 union hall in Port Orange on the second Wednesday of the month at 11:30 a.m. Please note the day of the month has changed. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting!

Diane Gibbs, P.S.

Happy Retirement, Brother Sadlo

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 1042, SANFORD, FL, CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER — Our local would like to announce that Mike Sadlo has retired after 39 years of faithful service. Mike is a triple-ticket journeyman and a dedicated family man who is bursting with pride for his daughters and grandchildren.

When Mike isn't riding into the sunset on his Harley, you will find him having a tea party with his grandkids. Please help us wish Brother Sadlo all the joy and happiness that life has to offer as he enjoys his golden years!

Ellen Stephenson, P.S.



Local 349 Retirees' Club members on a cruise to Mexico: (standing, from left) Bob Parker, Debbie Henry, Earl Chandler, Frank Auer, Charles Pellien, Doyle Rutland, Michal Steele, Marilyn Steele, Whitey Nelson, Jacqueline Wise, Bobby Parker and Kathy Parker; (seated, from left) Ruth Wolff, Janis Pellien, Judi Parker, Brenda Auer, Peggy Chandler, Candy Nelson, Joanne Rutland and Marilyn Wise.

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WHO WE ARE



Hazards & Heroes

From blizzards to tornadoes, floods, and even an earthquake, winter got off to a ferocious start around the country, stealing line workers from their families over the holidays and keeping crews busy for weeks. Mother Nature delivered a one-two punch in upstate New York, with three days of paralyzing snow Dec. 16-18 and a brutal second act that locked down Buffalo and its surroundings over Christmas. On the West Coast, a magnitude-6.4 earthquake punctured gas lines and downed wires in Eureka on Dec. 20, with aftershocks felt more than 300 miles away. But the worst was yet to come in California. Starting New Year's Eve, an atmospheric river brought 10 days of epic rain, snow and wicked winds. Mudslides and wires catching on fallen trees made restoration tricky on slippery hillsides, Vacaville Local 1245 reported. As one PG&E lineman described, "If you put something down, it rolls away. ... We're having to make the trips back and forth from the pole 20 or 30 times because of the amount of stuff that's on the ground." Meanwhile, a series of tornadoes tore through the South, causing power outages from Texas to the Carolinas in January, hitting Selma, Ala., especially hard. "Winter is a testament to the grit and dedication of our utility workers," said International President Kenneth W. Cooper. "They brave the bitterest of conditions to get the power and heat back on." ■

Early winter brought one disaster after another for Vacaville Local 1245 crews at PG&E in California, starting with a Dec. 20 earthquake and 10 days of torrential rain and high winds to kick off January. Above, crews get drenched amid ancient coastal redwoods. At left, repairing wind damage in South San Francisco. Below left, workers dig deep to fix one of the gas leaks caused by the magnitude-6.4 quake in Eureka. Photos by John Storey, courtesy of Local 1245.



Massena, N.Y., Local 2032 lineman Randy Arquiatt left home at 5 a.m. on Christmas Eve for days of repairs in dangerous, frigid weather in upstate New York, where it snowed the entire time his crew was on the road east of Buffalo. "We drove through snow like I'd never seen before," he said. "It was absolutely unbelievable." His photo at left captures two of his Local 2032 brothers at work before sunrise on Dec. 27. Above, a National Grid photo sets the scene.

More than 100 twisters ripped through the South in January, with the deadliest of the storms hitting Alabama and Georgia on Jan. 12. Some of the worst damage was in Selma, as seen at right in an Alabama Power picture showing IBEW crews at work. In the adjacent photo, Montgomery Local 801 members Stuart Smith and David Moore take a break from the Selma recovery to help a child with his bicycle. The company shared it on social media, saying, "Our crews fixed more than power lines today." Customers' comments were filled with gratitude and love for the linemen.

