

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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The boom-and-bust cycles of the electrical construction business will be little more than a memory over the next decade. The demand for electrical workers will outstrip the current supply of electricians across North America until well into the 2030s.

Since 2020, records have been set in segment after segment of the industry. First it was solar and grid storage. Then data centers, airports and semiconductor factories. Rural broadband rollouts, a U.S. manufacturing surge and unprecedented investments in infrastructure followed.

As 2025 starts, everything is in overdrive.

Over the next eight years, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects there to be more than 80,000 new electrician jobs per year, double the rate of growth for any other skilled trade and nearly three times the rate of growth for all other jobs combined.

"As big as we were always thinking, we were thinking too small," said International President Kenneth W. Cooper. "Record demand for our construction members is not in two, three or six industries — it's every industry. It's not most of North America — it's everywhere. A boom of booms."

The size of the opportunity facing the IBEW is nearly impossible to overstate. Last year, the IBEW hit a construction membership all-time high with nearly 460,000 by adding more than 17,000 new members, a record gained.

'A BOOM OF BOOMS'

In the first three months of this fiscal year, the union is already more than halfway to last year's addition.

"We've never had more construction members, and this is the fewest we may ever have," said Adrian Saucedo, director of inside construction organizing. "The best organizing tool there is is to be put immediately to work in a career with better pay and benefits, and we have that everywhere."

Megaprojects

Today, IBEW members are at work on more than 2,700 projects under construction with an estimated total value of over \$650 billion. Construction and Maintenance Director Matt Paules gives another 6,400 projects a 70% or greater likelihood of moving forward within the next 12 months. These projects represent an estimated value of \$805 billion. Almost 5,000 maintenance projects with a value of

\$13.5 billion round out the astonishing picture.

And just 200 of these current or shovel-ready projects account for \$500 billion of the total value. These megaprojects are so large and so numerous that they are distorting the national job market for construction electricians, said Aaron Jones, an international representative who leads marketing for the joint IBEW/NECA Workforce Recruitment Taskforce.

"It is ridiculously easy to underestimate this. There are single jobs that require more electricians than there are in a state, next to another state with a project that needs more electricians than there are in that state. There isn't a shortage; there is a vacuum," Jones said.

Fortune 500 companies are accustomed to competing for sales. They are not used to competing for construction workers, Jones said. But the transformation of the economy will reward developers that act fast, and the bottleneck for most construction projects isn't steel or concrete, Jones said. It's the construction electrician.

"This is double the job growth we've ever seen in our history, and a big part of that — the biggest jobs — are in places that were ghost towns, rural areas and small towns like the one I grew up

THE IBEW DECADE *continued on page 4*

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FROM THE OFFICERS

Our Moment Is Here



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

The demand for electricians over the next 10 years is going to ask a lot of the IBEW and our members, but when we rise to the occasion, this next decade will experience job growth unlike anything this union has ever seen.

I've been optimistic about our future for years, and I'm happy to say that the moment we have been promising is here. As you'll read in this month's cover story, the electrician boom is real, and we have an opportunity before us to meet the moment head-on.

Just on the construction side, there are IBEW members at work on more than 3,600 projects worth more than \$800 billion. There are at least 6,000 new projects on the horizon in just the next 12 months.

When I was a business manager, there were nights I couldn't sleep knowing the pain my members were facing if I couldn't find them work.

Now it's missing the opportunity to transform these jobs into hundreds of thousands of permanent IBEW members that keeps me up at night.

Trust me, this is a much better problem to have.

Between growing demand and the upcoming retirements of longtime members of our trade, experts at the Bureau of Labor Statistics project an average of 80,000 new positions for electricians in the United States every year through 2032. That's 11% growth annually, double any other trade.

We know that for a prospective worker, the IBEW is the right choice. Nonunion offers nothing that can compare to our apprenticeship. No debt. All the training you need to perform any job, anywhere, safely and productively. No temp agency or nonunion contractor offers the freedom of a yellow journeyman ticket, the efficiency, transparency and fairness of the book system, the unbreakable promise of reciprocity.

Customers also know that our signatory partners at NECA, working with skilled IBEW labor, are the easy choice to complete a job on time and on budget with superior safety and craftsmanship.

As we begin 2025, it is enough to know that the most important economic forces of growth — decarbonization, AI, rebuilding infrastructure, and the electrification of transportation and buildings — all rely on our labor.

All the money in the world can't do anything until it goes through labor's hands. Money doesn't pull a single wire, stand up a single pole, finish a single panel or build one transformer.

We do.

We have at least 10 years to turn this advantage into permanent power. Power to improve our paychecks, our benefits and our retirement. Power to build our union and the labor movement. Power to improve our communities and our nations. Together, we'll embrace this opportunity and organize to meet this moment.

Happy New Year, brothers and sisters. Today, it is good to be us. ■

Solidarity in the New Year

A lot is changing in Washington this month, but I couldn't be more hopeful about the IBEW's future as we enter the new year because unions are stronger and more popular than they have been in decades.

Strike activity increased 280% in 2023, and workers showed no sign of letting up in 2024. Emboldened by a tight labor market, nurses, machinists, hotel employees and longshoremen hit the streets to win wage and benefit increases.

And nonunion workers want what we have. Gallup found that 70% of Americans approve of labor unions, and more and more of them are trying to join up. Petitions for union elections jumped by 27% in the last year, more than doubling the number of petitions the National Labor Relations Board received just three years ago.

And leading the way in this remarkable growth are the men and women of the IBEW. Every year for the last decade, we have seen positive growth, breaking new membership records. As we closed out 2024, in nearly every corner of North America, the IBEW is larger than the previous year. In fact, in this fiscal year, we posted the best four-month growth in membership in the last 20 years. This is a testament to our collective efforts and commitment.

We've seen a rapid increase in construction "A" members. And unlike in the past, geography has been no obstacle. In fact, some of our strongest growth is coming in areas where traditionally we have been the weakest: the "right-to-work" South and Southwest.

We have also been organizing more and more manufacturing, telecommunications and broadcasting workers. We see opportunities to build the IBEW in these branches that we have not seen in decades.

Multiple presidential administrations have come and gone since we started this comeback. Some have been friendlier than others.

But while allies in higher office can make things a lot easier — and unfriendly administrations can make things a lot harder — one thing I have discovered over the years is that the IBEW's future is in our hands alone.

The resolve and commitment you have all shown have put us on a path to a bigger and stronger IBEW.

And our continued growth and success depends on all of you.

Above all, it means continuing to make organizing our top priority. The demand for trained electrical workers will likely remain high for years to come, and we need to ensure that the IBEW is providing the workforce our economy relies on.

It also means always upholding our values as IBEW members, especially our commitment to excellence. Our value derives from our dedication to safety, productivity and giving our all every day, and it's everyone's responsibility to uphold that reputation.

Despite the real challenges we face in the year to come, momentum is on the IBEW's and the labor movement's side. Together, we will continue to build a movement for workers' rights and security and for an economy that benefits all of us, not just the wealthy and corporations.

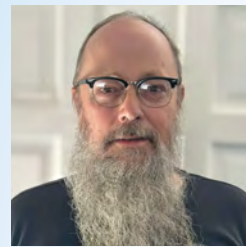
Thank you for your commitment to our great union. ■



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

My IBEW STORY

Randy Ruth, garage foreman
Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47



“I started my career fresh out of high school in 1983 working as a mechanic at an automotive dealership. It was a good job at the time because cars weren't very dependable and you could earn a lot of money if you were willing to work hard. But cars became more dependable as time moved on, and it seemed that mechanics were becoming salesmen to sell customers work that they didn't need.

Additionally, it felt like none of the mechanics in the shop meant anything to the company or its management. There was no one to complain to because their answer to any problem was, “If you don't like it, there's the door.” California is an at-will employment state, which means an employer can terminate an employee at any time without reason. Each day I came to work, I knew it could be my last. Not to mention that after working there for more than 20 years, I had no retirement benefits.

My father was a member of the United Mine Workers of America. We lived a comfortable life, and I remember how well the union took care of our family. I learned about the IBEW when I was hiring on with Southern California Edison and saw how similar it was to the UMWA in protecting and taking care of its members. When I hired on, the IBEW local rep came to the shop, introduced himself and called as soon as I made it through my probationary period.

Since becoming an IBEW member, I know that someone has my back. I can't be abused by management or shown the door if there is something I don't like, and I can speak up when something isn't right or safe. I've also been able to build up a nice little retirement to look forward to one day. Now that my kids are grown, my wife and I are able to go out and enjoy my vacation time and visit places we've always wanted to see. And I've met a lot of fantastic people in the IBEW who have shared their experiences and opportunities with me.

I know there are lots of members who have grown up with the IBEW, people with great experiences to share who are certainly worth listening to. However, I think there is much to be learned from people like me, who spent years getting abused outside of the IBEW and became members later in life. We know how bad it is not to be a member of the IBEW or any union and can fully appreciate the difference.

Before I went to work at SCE and became a member of the IBEW, I felt like my life story only had one chapter to it. I figured that I'd spend my entire life working at the dealership until I was too old to work and then have to live on Social Security. Since becoming a member of the IBEW, I have been able to add several chapters as a technician, lead technician, foreman and as a member of different teams. There are so many opportunities as a member. The only limit is what a person is willing to haul away.”

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

THE METER

\$400 MILLION

The amount companies report spending per year on anti-union consultants. The true amount is believed to be much higher as many employers skirt reporting rules.

See “NLRB's Captive Audience Ban Opens Door to Organizing, but Locals Urged to Act Fast” on page 9.

Cleveland Apprentice's 'Light at the End of the Tunnel' Leads to the White House

Work often kept Maurice Bogard Jr., on the road during the early part of his two sons' lives. They eventually reminded him of that.

"I'd call them, and they would say things like: 'Daddy, we're watching our show. We want to go back and watch it,'" said Bogard, a Cleveland native who still lives in the city.

"That's normal when you think about it," he added. "They were used to me not being there."

That didn't make it any less painful for a hard-working father desperate for another option. It arrived in the fall of 2024, first with the help of an innovative nonprofit, Cleveland Builds, and later with Cleveland Local 38.

Bogard is now a Local 38 apprentice, earning a family-supporting wage and home every night. He's employed by Einheit Electric Construction and working at Progressive Field, home of Major League Baseball's Guardians, on a crew that's renovating the locker rooms and other parts of the stadium before the 2025 season.

And on Nov. 13, Bogard was joined by those two sons — 9-year-old Aiden and 6-year-old Jaxson — on the podium at the White House while being recognized by President Joe Biden.

It was part of the Biden administration's "Classroom to Career" summit, which celebrated the strengthening of the U.S. workforce through the American Rescue Plan, particularly through jobs that do not require a college degree.

Before the ceremony, Bogard, his two sons and his sister, Natasha Johnson, met with the president and first lady. Biden gave Jaxson a cupcake to celebrate his birthday, which was two days earlier.

"It was surreal," Bogard said. "I really don't have words to explain it. They were very down to earth. I didn't expect them to be so normal, I guess. They were very nice."

Bogard's path to the White House had its shares of obstacles before he found his way to Cleveland Builds, a joint effort of the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council and its signatory contractors.

Nearly 10 years earlier, he was working on a computer information systems degree at the University of Akron when he learned that his girlfriend was pregnant. He left school and eventually settled in with a company that specialized in sending workers to employers around the country who needed to add them quickly.

It paid the bills, but the hours were long and Bogard remembers work conditions weren't always safe — not to mention all the time away from his family.

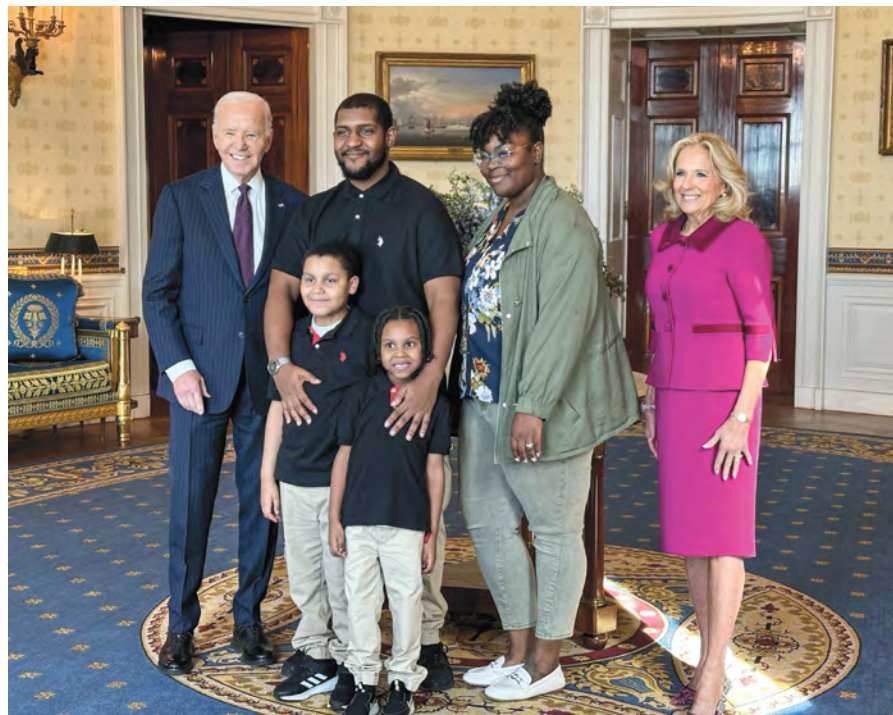
"A lot of the people I worked with had similar life experiences," he said. "We were away from our kids. We were making money to support them, but we were not there physically to support them."

But in September 2023, he got a message from his sister, who is employed by Cleveland's municipal government.

She sent a link about Cleveland Builds, a pre-apprenticeship program that provides residents, particularly women and people of color, with a career path into the unionized trades. Cleveland Local 38 Business Manager Dan Gallagher sits on its board of directors.

Bogard applied, went through the interview process and was selected.

"When I found the program, it was like a light at the end of the tunnel, and I grabbed it," he said. "I was excited to go to class, excited to learn about the trades and excited to be around people who had turned their lives around."



Cleveland Local 38 apprentice Maurice Bogard Jr., was recognized during the Biden administration's "Classrooms to Careers" summit at the White House on Nov. 13. Joining him during a visit with President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden were his sister, Natasha Johnson, and sons Aiden, left, and Jaxson.

Bogard remembered most enjoying his college classes that involved electronics. He was exposed to several trades while taking part in the Cleveland Builds curriculum, but his heart was set on being an electrician.

He went through another interview early the following spring, this one with Local 38's apprenticeship committee, and soon found himself a member of the Brotherhood. Gallagher said members of the committee told him it was a "no-brainer" to select him.

"I like the fact that he's humble," Gallagher said. "He takes things in, but he asks a lot of questions when he doesn't know something."

Bogard said he's made a point through the years of sharing daily affirmations with his two sons. In the days before his interview with Local 38 officials, he stood before a mirror, repeating many of those affirmations to himself.

"I know it sounds corny," he said. "But I think it's important to say to yourself what you want to be. I told myself, 'I am an electrician.'"

Fellow Local 38 member Brendan Lynch, Bogard's foreman at the stadium, gives him high marks on a job that needs to be done quickly. The Guardians play their home opener April 8.

"It's definitely a unique one to start on," Lynch said. "The speed aspect is a little different than a normal job. You're finding ways to teach and also for the apprentices to learn. He's always asking questions, and he shows up on time, which is a good start."

As wonderful as all these experiences are, the White House visit topped them all.

Bogard met former Labor Secretary Tom Perez, who worked as a senior adviser to Biden, at a Cleveland Builds event earlier in 2024. Gallagher also was there, and he remembers Perez joking about how Biden — who touted his appreciation for the IBEW throughout his public career — "has a soft spot for you guys."

Cleveland Builds has received funding as part of the American Rescue Plan, and not long afterward, Bogard learned that the White House reached out to officials there for more information about him and wanted to promote his story. He

thought he might get a mention during the November event but had no plans to attend.

He found out otherwise the afternoon before. Bogard was told to be at the Cleveland airport with his two boys and sister the following morning. Cleveland Builds and the city's Workforce Development Board paid for their trip.

They flew to Washington, went to the White House, spent time with the Bidens and were back in Cleveland by early in the evening.

Biden recounted Bogard's story, and those in attendance responded with a warm ovation.

Bogard himself was by Biden's side on the podium, with his oldest son standing beside him and his youngest in his arms.

"He now has a good-paying job, with good hours, good benefits, a lifelong career, and a sense of dignity and pride to be the father he always wanted to be," the president said. "It's not just him. Millions of workers and families have more opportunities today than they did four years ago in an economy that is growing from the middle out and bottom up."

The microphones twice caught Bogard saying "Yes sir" during the president's remarks.

Gallagher said business in the electrical construction industry remains brisk in Cuyahoga County, where Cleveland is. Many project labor agreements now include benchmarks for the number of workers from underrepresented groups and from the city itself.

That's why the success of Cleveland Builds, and participants like Bogard, is so important.

"His story is incredible," Gallagher said. "The fact that it has worked out so smoothly for him, when it sometimes takes years for people with his background to get this kind of an opportunity, is so important going forward. I'm thrilled he's taken advantage of it."

For Bogard, 33, it all comes back to the two boys. He's now spending more time with them and is hoping he's leaving a legacy, too.

"I truly feel like everyone's parents mean the best, but if they don't have the information, they're not able to pass things on to their children," he said. "Now, I'm able to teach my children a skill, and they're hopefully going to be able to provide for their families way earlier in life."

"I'm working with a great group of guys who love to teach, and I love to learn," added Bogard, who thanked his mother and other family members for their help when he was spending all that time on the road. "I really feel blessed to come to work every day." ■

IBEW MERCHANDISE



HOODED SWEATSHIRT \$40.00

50/50 poly-cotton blend hooded sweatshirt, IBEW silk-screened in white on left chest and full logo on back.

HAND CRAFTED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES PLAQUE \$40.00

Hand Crafted wood plaque measuring 18" in diameter. Features the IBEW Government Employees logo.

HI VIZ LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT \$15.00

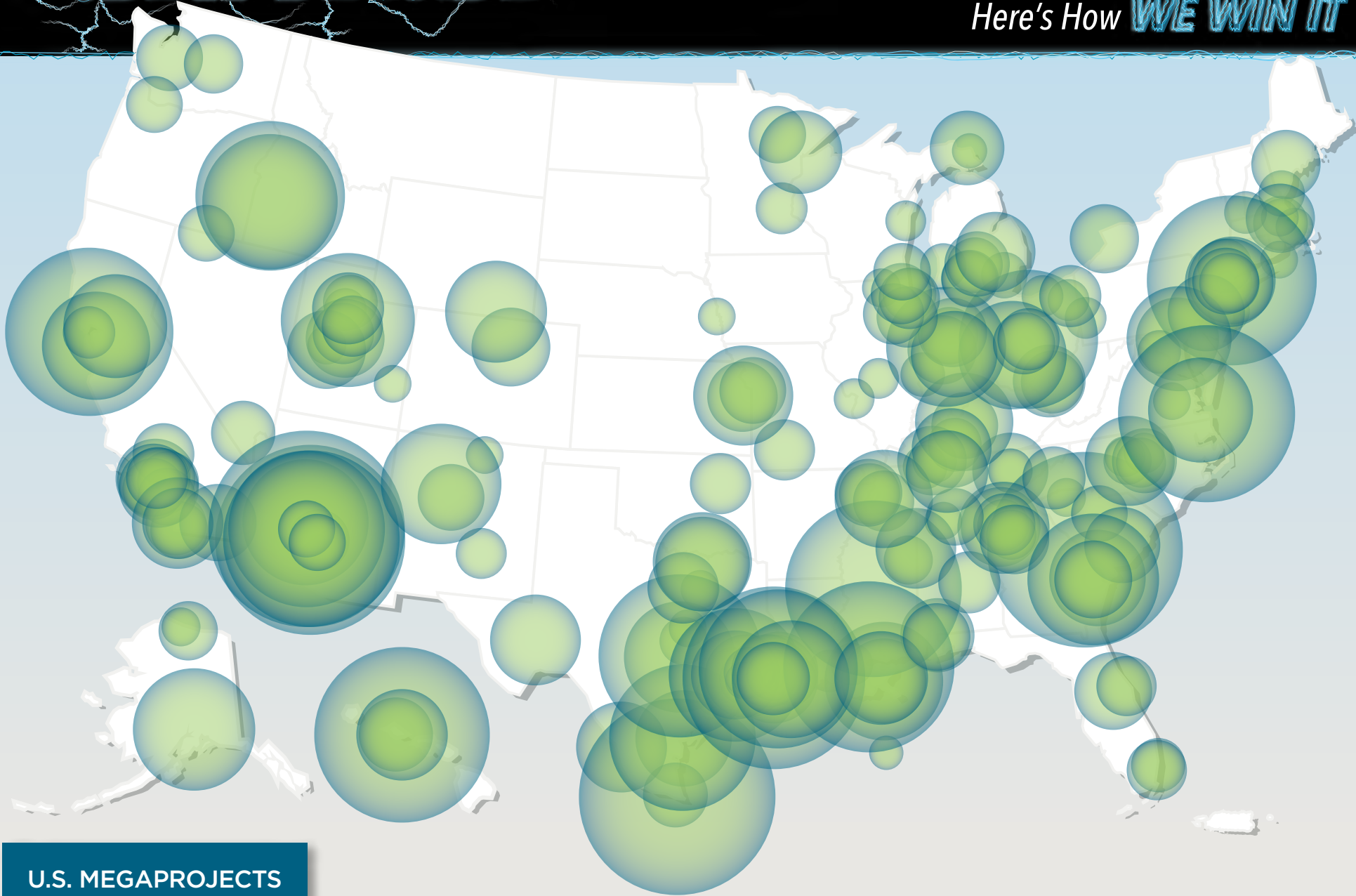
50/50 poly-cotton blend, preshrunk long sleeve t-shirt. Extra bright color for enhanced visibility. Features IBEW initials and fist and lightning bolts on left sleeve.

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

www.ibewmerchandise.com

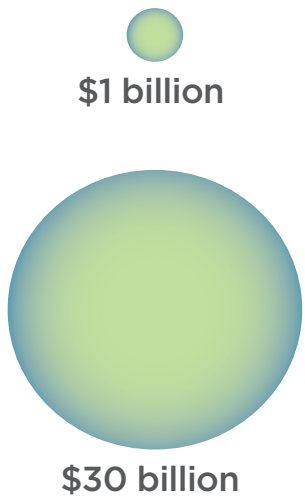
Continued from page 1

THE IBEW DECADE *Electrical Work Is in Demand Like Never Before – Here's How WE WIN IT*



U.S. MEGAPROJECTS

Map shows select billion-dollar-plus construction projects underway or about to start. The bigger the circle, the bigger the project.



Booms have typically been regional and cyclical. For the next decade, demand for qualified electrical workers on just the \$1 billion-plus megaprojects on this map will not only overlap, it will often exceed the supply of union and nonunion workers in their region.

in, where opportunity was stripped away by bad trade deals and offshoring. The jobs are back, but the workforce isn't," Cooper said.

And while this opportunity is unprecedented, there is still a way that the members of the IBEW go through the next decade and come out weaker than they are today.

Given the choice, signatory contractors bid the work with the highest premiums. Companies facing extreme time pressure are only too happy to pay now to earn sooner. And a worker who can travel has any number of online tools to find out which jobs have the highest per diem and how much over scale they pay.

But then the bread-and-butter work — maintenance contracts, tenant improvement, commercial, light industrial and residential construction — falls to nonunion contractors. While it doesn't have the premiums in pay and benefits that the megaprojects do, it dwarfs it in total size.

Megaprojects are only one-seventh of the \$3.5 trillion electrical construction industry over the next decade, Saucedo said.

"During the last construction boom 20 years ago, our membership grew, our pension funds added billions of dollars, and we ended up with a smaller market share," Saucedo said. "The only way we hold onto the gains in wages, benefits and worker power is by growing our market share while we grow our membership and our hours."

And this time, Saucedo said, the IBEW has the tools to do it.

Grabbing the Opportunity

"When a contractor or a customer comes to the IBEW now, the question they always ask is, 'Can you find the workers?'" Cooper said. "I can look anyone in the eye and say no one else is better at it than us."

"We Power America is a joint venture with NECA focused on finding and organizing nonunion electrical workers at scale. Once they are identified, We Power America targets them individually, highlighting specific projects with open calls they can fill."

"Since We Power America launched, we've had 250,000 applications for job opportunities where there are unfilled calls," Jones said. "Just in October, we sent out 290,000 postcards to nonunion electricians. The message was, 'We have opportunities nationwide.'"

But there are two sides to the organizing equation. The first is organizing members and contractors. That is taken care of with We Power America, IBEWYes.org, Helmets to Hardhats, national ad campaigns, targeted ad campaigns, and direct outreach in person or by phone or email.

The second challenge is putting people to work. And the IBEW has been making significant moves there as well.

Since 2020, the IBEW inside apprenticeship program has grown from about 36,000 to more than 52,000 registered apprentices, a 44% increase in just four years. But it's not enough.

In 2023, the Electrical Training Alliance introduced a federally approved plan for a four-year inside

apprenticeship with the same number of on-the-job hours but leveraging more online and computer modeling classes to accelerate classwork and increase how many apprentices each local can indenture.

"It's the same standards, same curriculum, but more apprentices becoming journeymen faster," Paules said.

Then, just in the last few months, Cooper and NECA President David Long announced the most substantial change to organizing qualified electrical workers in decades.

Now, highly experienced electrical workers can immediately sign Book 1 in the jurisdiction where they live and work, with the business manager's approval as long as they have at least 12,000 hours of experience.

There is no justifiable reason to make a foreman, a superintendent or a wireman with years of experience wait if we have an open call now, Saucedo said.

"We are giving business managers and signatory contractors the tools to move the best-qualified nonunion electrical workers into union jobs faster," he said.

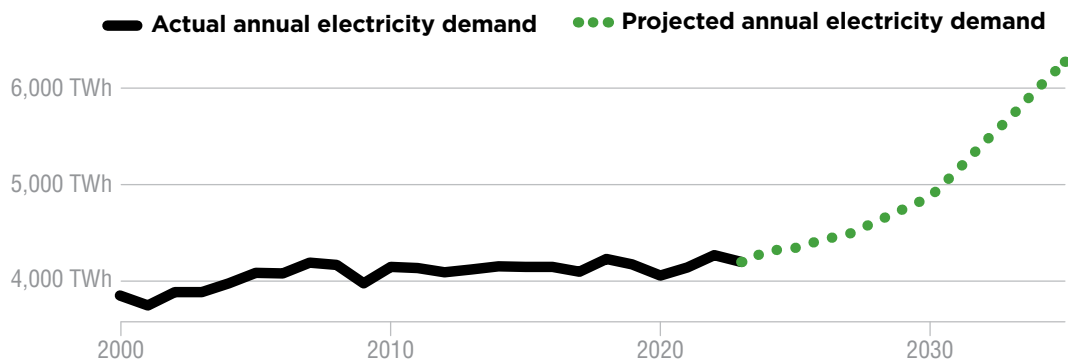
For anyone who has years of experience but hasn't mastered certain specific skills, the Electrical Training Alliance has hundreds of training modules, many of them available online. And no one can match the IBEW's experience in on-the-job training.

"When we meet with contractors, it is very easy for the IBEW to say we are the best at organizing workers, we are the best at training them. What nonunion calls recruitment, we call organizing, and we've been doing it for 130 years," Jones said. ■



IBEW construction members are working on projects now, like this data center, worth \$650 billion. In the next year, Projects worth another \$800 billion are expected to start.

U.S. Electricity Demand (2000-2035)



Source: Department of Energy
 Note: Demand forecasts are from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation as of December 2023 and the high demand growth case in the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's "Pathways to 100% Clean Electricity."

ALL THE TOOLS WE NEED

Organizers: The IBEW has 423 construction local unions in the U.S. Every local has at least one full-time organizer, and most have more, totaling over 1,000. Their work is supported by 49 state and district organizing coordinators. Every year they attend hundreds of job and career fairs; conduct tens of thousands of interviews; and make jurisdictional, jobsite, supply house, vendor and contractor visits.

Apprenticeship: The IBEW and NECA jointly fund and run more than 280 joint apprenticeship training centers. This year, there are at least 52,000 apprentices on the job and attending classes, a 44% increase in only four years. Each year, the Electrical Training Alliance develops dozens of new modules to keep IBEW workers the safest and most productive in the world.

We Power America: Relunched in 2021 by the joint IBEW/NECA Worker Recruitment Task Force, We Power America (wepoweramerica.com) aims to identify and connect with every nonunion electrician in the United States. Tens of thousands of skilled nonunion electricians have applied for work the same way they are accustomed to applying to any job. Local union organizers then have a conversion conversation about the benefits of the IBEW, filling calls for union projects and growing the IBEW. The task force uses extensive hyperlocal and microtargeted advertising to reach hundreds of thousands of electricians across the United States.

IBEWYes.org: Relunched in August 2024 before a national ad campaign during NFL broadcasts, this website is generating thousands of contacts per month from electrical workers and potential apprentices. Every inquiry connects to the IBEW's organizing database available to local and international organizers.

Veterans outreach: Two programs — the IBEW and NECA's Veterans Electrical Entry Program, along with Helmets to Hardhats — target outreach to men and women preparing to leave military service who are interested in joining the construction workforce. The IBEW reached over 11,000 veterans in 2024 alone.

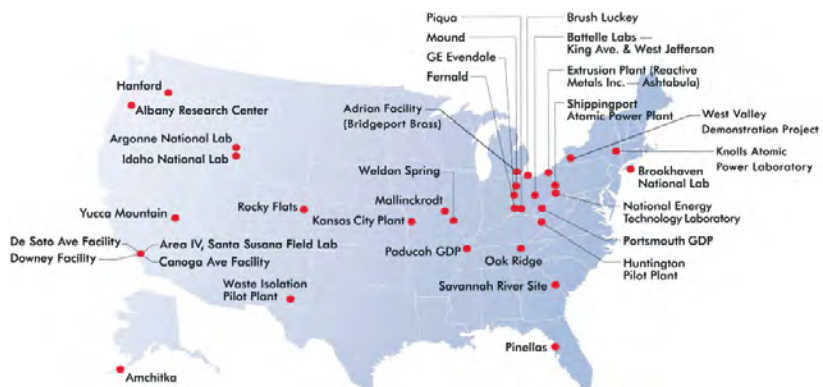
IBEW Strong: The IBEW's core values — solidarity, equality and opposition to oppression of any kind — align with the need to expand the pool of trade unionists. But bringing in workers from underrepresented communities is only half the battle. To retain workers, the IBEW is home to a host of affinity and support communities, including the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus; the Women's and Veteran's committees; and RENEW, the young workers coalition.

Grant funding: Since January 2024, the IBEW/NECA National Labor Management Cooperation Committee, or NLMCC, has provided over \$400,000 in grants to IBEW local unions strictly in support of recruitment efforts like career fairs, sign-on bonuses, advertising, social media outreach and bounty programs, with those local unions matching the funds by more than 2 to 1.

Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed)

Did you work construction on a Department of Energy (DOE) site?

You may be eligible for a free medical screening exam to test for health conditions that may be work related.



"The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program's concerns and diligence are appreciated for the future well-being of our members and retirees."

Dennis Stoltz
 IBEW Local 68 (Rocky Flats)
 Former Business Manager

"This program saved my life. If it hadn't been in place and I hadn't taken the initiative to participate, I wouldn't be here today. My advice to any worker is: Don't Wait."

Guy Sands
 IBEW Local 575
 Former Portsmouth GDP Worker
 BTMed Participant



Photo Courtesy of DOE.

TO ENROLL, CALL 1-800-866-9663 OR VISIT www.btmed.org.

BTMed is part of the Department of Energy's Former Worker Program and is administered by CPWR - The Center for Construction Research and Training, the health and safety research center of North America's Building Trades Unions, with support from state and local Building and Construction Trades Councils. Funding from the Department of Energy (DE-FC01-06EH06004).

IBEW Volunteers Connect Navajo Nation to the Grid



More than 20 volunteers with Electrical Workers Without Borders North America from New York Local 3 — including Tashna Forest, Chris England, Timmy Howard, Tom McCann, Jon Wilson and Doug DiMeo — wired up houses on the Navajo Nation this fall. Navajo Nation has one of the largest populations of Americans without power, and Electrical Workers Without Borders has committed to keep coming back until everyone who wants power has it.

Nearly two dozen families living in the Navajo Nation have electricity for the first time because of the skillful work of volunteers with Electrical Workers Without Borders North America.

Since its founding by International President Edwin D. Hill in 2015, IBEW members have worked on EWWBNA projects in some of the poorest places in the world, including Haiti and Angola.

But a passport isn't necessary to find people who could benefit from the skills of our construction members.

For several weeks last autumn, volunteers with EWWBNA crossed the border into Navajo Nation — the largest reservation in the U.S., straddling the Four Corners region of the Southwest — to help right a terrible wrong right here at home.

Navajo Nation has thousands of homes that have never been connected to the power grid. Median household income is less than half that of the rest of the country, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"We wired up the house for Jenny Cody, who first asked for a connection when her son was 7 years old. He came by while we were working. He's 48," said volunteer team leader Tom McCann, a general foreman and inside wireman with New York Local 3.

McCann and his team of five journeymen — Tashna Forest, Chris England, Timmy Howard, Jon Wilson and Doug DiMeo — stood up poles, installed a meter panel and connected the 100-amp service to, on average, two houses a day over their eight-day visit. For Cody, the house had no internal wiring at all, and the team took care of that, too.

Three other teams of about six volunteers from Local 3 rotated in and out of Navajo Nation two weeks at a time from September to October. Tools were donated by Milwaukee. EWWBNA paid for travel and per diem, and the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority provided food, housing, materials and plans, as well as a project manager and, where possible, apprentices to learn from the IBEW volunteers.

"We are a union that cares for all people," said EWWBNA Chairman Chris Erikson, who is also Local 3's business manager and chairs the International Executive Council. "We have great minds in this Brotherhood, but we have bigger hearts."

It wasn't the first time that IBEW electricians answered the desperate call for help in the Navajo Nation. In spring 2019, dozens of members from around the country headed there for phase one of a mammoth project known as Light Up Navajo. Working alongside the NTUA, they hooked up 233 homes over several weeks. Read more about this effort in the January 2020 Electrical Worker: <https://bit.ly/4iv9jo9>.

When Erikson learned from NTUA General Manager Walter Haase that more than a third of the reservation's 45,000 homes are still not connected to the grid, he immediately saw an opportunity for EWWBNA.

"We are all about going deep and far foreign, but our bylaws allow us to do work in the U.S. where the need is great," Erikson said. "The decision to go to Navajo is that they are a sovereign nation and no kid in the United States should be doing homework by candlelight."

Because the homes are often so isolated — Navajo Nation is larger than 10 states and has only 140,000 residents — the cost to wire up the homes would be \$40,000 to \$50,000 each, Haase estimated.

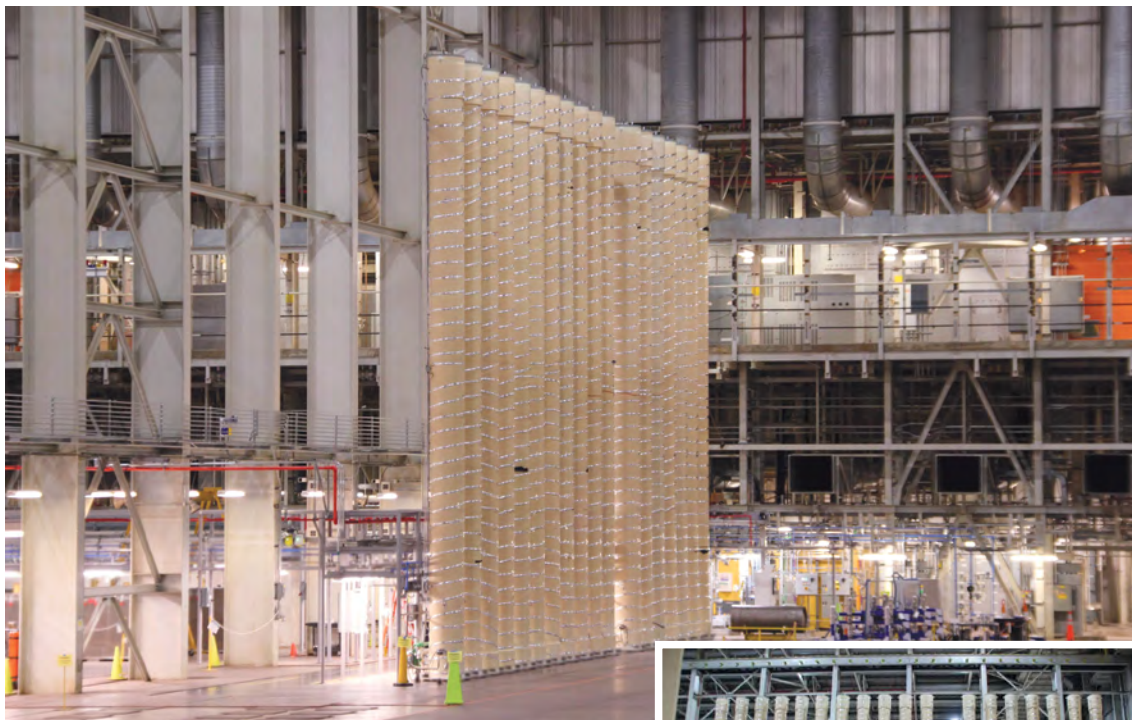
"With substations, distribution and safely wiring up homes and trailers that were never designed to have electricity, it's nearly a billion-dollar problem," Haase said.

At the rate they were connecting houses, Haase said at the 2024 Membership Development Conference, it would take 50 years to connect everyone on the reservation. With the help of IBEW members, donations of tools from Milwaukee and — sometime in the future — grant money, his hope is to get that down to 15 to 20 years.

EWWBNA Executive Director Jim O'Leary hopes to quintuple the number of volunteers next spring and expand the call for volunteers coast to coast.

"We have projects in Angola, Peru and one in a refugee center in Sicily coming up, but this is a priority for us and will be for years," O'Leary said. "It will hopefully be bigger. We want at least 100 volunteers and more the following year. Our goal is to connect everyone who wants to be connected." ■

Ohio Members Fuel Nuclear Energy's Next Generation



Credit: Centrus Energy

Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 members working for Centrus Energy are hoping to get the go-ahead soon to build and maintain hundreds more centrifuges like those pictured here to help meet the country's need for domestically enriched uranium.



The only facility in the U.S. that's licensed to make the special fuel needed to power the next generation of nuclear power plants is fully up and running, thanks in part to the work of dozens of members of Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575.

"There hasn't been an American-based uranium enrichment startup since the 1950s," said Fourth District International Representative Austin Keyser, a former business manager of the local. "This is a project our IBEW team worked hard to secure."

The facility, Centrus Energy's American Centrifuge Plant in Piketon, recently achieved full-scale production of high-assay low-enriched uranium, or HALEU, a version of the naturally radioactive element that's able to power traditional and advanced nuclear reactors. Centrus built its production facility on the site of the former Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and under a license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

In the decades following the Manhattan Project, the U.S. held the world's top spot for nuclear fuel production. Local 575 Business Manager Joe Dillow noted proudly that generations of IBEW members had worked at the diffusion plant to enrich uranium used in the country's first nuclear power plants, as well as in the deterrent atomic weapons that helped the U.S. win the Cold War.

"They dedicated their lives not only to working there but to helping to protect the nation and the world," Dillow said.

Members of the local continued to work there even after the plant closed in 2001, he said.

"Through funding from the government, they were cleaning the place up and looking to maintain some type of industry

there," Dillow said. "We thought the place was just going to be decommissioned and torn down."

By 2013, thanks largely to lower-cost imports from countries such as Russia and China, American industrial-scale uranium enrichment had stopped. At the same time, growing power consumption was leading to increasing interest in the development of small modular reactors, or SMRs, nuclear power plants designed to run on HALEU and be relatively easy to deploy.

Over the last several years, Congress allocated nearly \$1 billion in funding toward SMR development and HALEU production, under such laws as the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, both signed by President Joe Biden.

The federal investments arrived just as Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 disrupted the world's nuclear fuel supply chains. Congress passed a gradual ban on the purchase of nuclear fuel from Russia that's set to take full effect in 2028.

Meanwhile, IBEW signatory utilities in the U.S. and Canada, in collaboration with their respective nuclear regulatory agencies, continue to work on taking SMRs from the drawing board to reality by 2030. (Read more in the July 2023 Electrical Worker.)

"It was critical to get this job done right," Keyser said about the construction and staffing of the Piketon plant, "which is why Centrus chose to employ IBEW workers and others from the unionized trades."

Full production at the plant got underway in October 2023, with the 16 40-foot-tall centrifuges now able to make about a ton of HALEU per year.

"We are proud to be at the forefront of the effort to restore a domestic nuclear fuel supply chain, which wouldn't be

possible without the partnership of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers" and other unions, the company said in a statement.

According to Centrus, the technology is so efficient that about three tablespoons of the fuel is enough to generate a lifetime of electricity for one person. The Energy Department has estimated that several tons of HALEU will need to be produced annually to satisfy commercial and national security requirements.

The Ohio facility can hold nearly 5,800 centrifuges, and there's room on the site for Centrus to build a second plant. The company aims to gradually expand to produce 6 tons of HALEU a year.

Such growth, Keyser said, would mobilize hundreds more IBEW and other union workers in Ohio.

"It helps having people in power who understand how important it is to keep good-paying union jobs in Appalachia, and to help build up communities," Dillow added.

"This plant not only safeguards our national security," said Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper, whose jurisdiction includes Ohio. "It also creates quality IBEW jobs for our members and drives prosperity in the surrounding community—a true trifecta of positive impact."

Dillow said there are other exciting plans for the 3,800-acre site.

"Even if just one or two of those go, it's going to be really, really good for us," he said noting that major projects over the last few years have already helped to nearly double the size of Local 575's membership to about 640. ■

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Edmonton Member Earns National Honor for Safety, Performance

Renee Melnyk found a path into the trades when she completed the Women Building Futures program in Edmonton in 2005.

It's an understatement to say she's made the most of it. Now a member of Edmonton, Alberta, Local 424 and a general foreman, Melnyk was named the Western Canada Craftsman of the Year as part of the Canadian Safety Achievement Awards.

"Thank you to our partner contractor, Stuart Olson, for fostering an environment for growth that has allowed Renee to flourish beyond the tools," said First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk. "We commend Renee on her commitment to safety and congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition."

The annual awards recognize superior safety work performed in Canada's unionized maintenance industry. They are administered by the General Presidents' Maintenance Committee and the National Maintenance Council. Founded in 1952, the two groups represent 13 trade unions across the country in negotiating and administering collective bargaining agreements.

"It's really nice to be recognized," Melnyk said. "I put a lot of hard work into my career. But it's also humbling. I work with such great people. Any one of them could be standing in my place."

Brett McKenzie, a former Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804 business manager and now executive director of the GPMC/NMC, said the importance of electrical maintenance work is often overlooked within the industry.

It keeps facilities functioning following the higher-profile work of building and opening a facility. It helps keep members employed when there is a downturn in new construction.

"They do not get the respect and recognition they deserve," McKenzie said. "This is the expertise we bring to the project every day. We have people like Renee looking after the business that say: 'Safety is No. 1. Safety is non-negotiable.'"

Local 424 Business Manager Mike Reinhart said Melnyk's honor is something for the entire local to celebrate.

"I'm very happy for her," he said. "We're very proud of Renee and her achievements."

Melnyk grew up in the Edmonton suburb of Sherwood Park, where she enjoyed working with her hands. But with no role models working in the trades, she wasn't quite sure how to turn that into a career. She didn't want to take on the expense of college and spent time working in a warehouse after high school graduation.



Edmonton Local 424 member Renee Melnyk was joined by, from left, First District International Representatives Bill Begemann, Cordell Cole and Mike LeBlanc; International Vice President Russ Shewchuk; Local 424 Business Manager Mike Reinhart; and GPMC/NMC Executive Director Brett McKenzie when she was honored as craftsman of the year.

Things changed when she connected with Women Building Futures, an Edmonton nonprofit whose mission is to help women gain economic stability from working in construction.

She came out of that experience convinced that electrical work was right for her but still had to work nonunion commercial in Edmonton for nine years, earning her journeyman ticket in 2009. She joined Local 424 when she was hired by Stuart Olson in 2014.

She headed north to Fort McMurray

to work in the oil sands. Once there, she quickly learned that she had leadership ability and a nose for safety. She continues to work there, and her most recent position was at Stuart Olson's Suncor plant, where she and her crew worked in hazardous energy isolation.

"Safety is at the forefront," Melnyk said. "Everyone I have working under me, I make sure they have their permit training, they have their lockout ticket and they have the confidence to do the job.

"If we fail, people can get electrocuted," she added.

Melnyk appreciates the better pay and the pension that IBEW membership provides. The Brotherhood and its signatory contractors also offer more mentoring opportunities than the nonunion companies she worked for, she said.

"I like to believe I am very organized, a little OCD, almost," Melnyk said with a laugh. "I like things done a certain way. A good supervisor would know the material and meet the needs of the company but also have a good relationship with the people working under them." ■

Share your IBEW news!

IBEW Canada is seeking impactful stories from local unions and members. Please contact Shaina Hardie at Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org.

Une membre d'Edmonton reçoit un prix pour la sécurité

Renee Melnyk a trouvé sa voie dans les métiers spécialisés à la fin de ses études au Women Building Futures à Edmonton en 2005.

C'est plus qu'un accomplissement. Maintenant membre de la section locale 424 à Edmonton en Alberta à titre de contremaîtresse générale au service de Stuart Olson, Mme Melnyk a gagné le prix de l'année à une personne de métier dans l'ouest du Canada (Western Canada Craftsman of the Year) dans le cadre du Canadian Safety Achievement Awards.

« Merci à notre partenaire, Stuart Olson, d'avoir favorisé un environnement qui permet à Renée de s'épanouir », déclare Russ Shewchuk, vice-président international du Premier District. « Nous saluons l'engagement de Renée envers la sécurité et nous félicitons sa reconnaissance bien méritée. »

Ces prix annuels récompensent le travail de maintenance et de sécurité de qualité supérieure effectué dans l'industrie de la maintenance et de sécurité syndiquée du Canada. Ils sont gérés par le General Presidents' Maintenance Committee et le National Maintenance Council. Fondés en 1952, les deux groupes représentent 13 syndicats au pays dans la négociation et la gestion des conventions collectives.

« C'est très agréable d'être récompensée », déclare Mme Melnyk. « J'ai investi beaucoup d'effort au cours de ma carrière. C'est aussi en toute humilité. Je travaille avec des personnes extraordinaires. N'importe lequel parmi eux pourrait être à ma place. »

Brett McKenzie, l'ancien gérant d'affaires de la section locale 804 à Kitchener en Ontario et maintenant directeur exécutif de ces groupes, mentionne que le travail important du travail de maintenance électrique est fréquemment oublié dans l'industrie.

Ce travail assure le fonctionnement des installations après le travail plus important de la construction et d'ouverture des installations. Ce travail permet de préserver l'emploi des membres en cas de ralentissement dans la construction des nouveaux bâtiments.

« Ils ne reçoivent pas le respect et la reconnaissance qu'ils méritent », exprime M. McKenzie. « C'est cette expertise que nous apportons tous les jours au projet. Nous avons ces personnes comme Renee qui s'occupe des affaires et dit : "La sécurité c'est la priorité no 1. La sécurité est non négociable." »

Le gérant d'affaires Mike Reinhart, de la section locale 424 mentionne que la mise en honneur de Mme Melnyk devrait être célébrée par l'ensemble de la section locale.

« Je suis très heureux pour elle », dit-il. « Nous sommes très fiers de Renee et de ses accomplissements. »

Mme Melnyk a grandi dans la banlieue de Sherwood Park à Edmonton, elle aimait le travail manuel. Comme elle a grandi sans modèle à suivre, elle n'était pas certaine de pouvoir en faire une carrière. Elle ne voulait pas l'endettement étudiant et passer son temps à travailler dans un entrepôt après ses études au secondaire.

La situation a changé quand elle est entrée en contact avec le Women Building Futures. La mission de cette organisation à but non lucratif à Edmonton est d'aider les femmes à atteindre une stabilité économique en travaillant dans le secteur de la construction.

Cette expérience l'a convaincu que le travail électrique était fait pour elle, mais devait travailler dans le secteur commercial non syndiqué à Edmonton pendant neuf ans, ce qui lui a permis d'obtenir sa carte de compagne en 2009. Elle s'est jointe au local 424 quand elle a été engagée par Stuart Olson en 2014.

Elle s'est dirigée au nord de Fort McMurray pour travailler dans les

sables bitumineux. Une fois rendue, elle s'est rapidement aperçue qu'elle avait des compétences en leadership et avait le nez pour la sécurité. Elle a continué à y travailler et son dernier poste était à l'usine Suncor de Stuart Olson, son équipe et elle effectuaient la procédure de cadenassage/étiquetage.

« La sécurité est au premier plan », formule Mme Melnyk. « Je m'assure que mes subalternes ont leur permis, leur certification et la confiance pour faire le travail. »

« Si on rate, les personnes peuvent s'électrocuter », ajoute Mme Melnyk.

Mme Melnyk apprécie le meilleur salaire et le fonds de pension que lui procure son appartenance à la FIOE. La Fraternité et les entrepreneurs signataires lui offrent plus de possibilités de mentorat que les entreprises non syndiquées pour lesquelles elle a travaillé, dit-elle.

« J'aime croire que je suis une personne très organisée, presque TOC », qu'elle dit en riant. « J'aime que les choses soient faites d'une certaine façon. Un bon superviseur connaît le matériel et répond aux besoins de l'entreprise, mais aussi entretiens une bonne relation avec ses subalternes. » ■

Racontez-nous vos nouvelles FIOE!

La FIOE cherche des histoires marquantes des sections locales et des membres. Veuillez communiquer avec Shaina Hardie à Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org.

POWER AT WORK

LEGAL VICTORY

NLRB's Captive Audience Ban Opens Door to Organizing, but Locals Urged to Act Fast

Employers lost one of their favorite union-busting weapons in November when the National Labor Relations Board ruled that captive audience meetings are illegal, reversing a precedent set in 1948.

The decision applies nationwide, building on laws enacted in a dozen states to protect workers from being forced to listen to coercive anti-union rhetoric from their bosses.

The catch is that local unions are being advised to act quickly to take advantage of the rule, which is expected to be overturned at some point after incoming Trump administration appointees take majority control of the five-member board.

"The national ban on captive audience meetings will likely survive for most of 2025, giving the labor movement a brief but incredibly important window to organize more freely," said Bob Funk, the executive director of LaborLab, which studies and combats union busting. "We must rise to meet the occasion."

"This is the first time every worker in the U.S. is protected in exercising their freedom to join together in unions — a significant victory that needs to be treated with urgency."

— NLRB Chair Lauren McFerran

The law doesn't prohibit employers from holding anti-union meetings, but it bars mandatory attendance. Companies that discipline, demote, fire or otherwise punish workers who don't go can face unfair labor practice charges and penalties.

In the absence of such consequences, Funk said, roughly half of all union organizing drives are derailed by management's force-fed bombast.

"These inherently coercive meetings are the most potent and frequently used tool of the union-busting industry," he said. "This is the first time every worker in the United States is protected in exercising their freedom to join together in unions — a significant victory that needs to be treated with urgency."

The decision, which also applies to religious and political speech, rose from a case involving Amazon's Staten Island, N.Y., warehouse.

Workers there were subjected to hundreds of captive audience meetings, contributing to the failure of an initial organizing drive and leading to the NLRB complaint. But workers kept fighting and in 2022 became the global giant's first U.S. employees to vote in favor of a union.

NLRB Chair Lauren McFerran joined the board's two other Democrats in ruling against Amazon, putting an end — for now — to a strong-arm tactic employers have used with impunity for 76 years.

"Ensuring that workers can make a truly free choice about whether they want union representation is one of the fundamental goals of the National Labor Relations Act," McFerran said, referring to the

1935 law that enshrined the right to organize and join unions, and instructed the federal government to encourage the practice of collective bargaining.

"Captive audience meetings, which give employers near-unfettered freedom to force their message about unionization on workers under threat of discipline or discharge, undermine this important goal," she said.

Nearly 90% of employers facing organizing campaigns use forced meetings to "intimidate, threaten, and instill fear in workers for the purpose of coercing them to oppose unionization," according to Economic Policy Institute researchers who analyzed NLRB election data.

Further, companies have reported spending more than \$400 million a year on anti-union consultants — an estimate that analysts believe is well below the actual dollar figure due to employers flouting NLRB reporting rules.

Immediately after the Nov. 13 ruling, LaborLab rushed to spread the word through media, social media and letters sent to thousands of union locals and worker advocacy groups.

"We are launching an effort to ensure that every union and worker center in the country is aware of the law," Funk said, noting that even in states with captive audience bans, organizing drives have failed due to lack of awareness.

International President Kenneth W. Cooper urged IBEW locals to jump on the new rule, praising it as the latest of many historic advances for workers during the pro-union tenure of President Joe Biden and his appointees, particularly NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo.

"Right now, thanks to the Biden NLRB, the doors to organizing are open wider than they've ever been in our lifetimes," Cooper said. "We've made enormous progress the past four years, but experi-

EDUCATION

Philly Local Offering Apprentices Fast Track to College, Grad Degrees

Philadelphia Local 98 inside wiremen will soon be the literal masters of the construction industry.

Under a unique and wide-ranging agreement signed with Rowan University, Local 98 apprentices will have access to not only a menu of college degrees and certifications but also a straightforward path to earning a master of engineering management.

The first class of 60 apprentices began this past fall.

"This is an unprecedented agreement that recognizes there is no ceiling to our trade," said Local 98 Business Manager Mark Lynch. "We have two Penn grads and an electrical engineer from Cornell indentured sitting next to guys straight from high school. I want to give every one of them the opportunity to never stop growing."

The New Jersey university is known in the Philadelphia area for its engineering school and ties to organized labor as the home of a construction management program endorsed by North America's Building Trades Unions.

Where Workers Won in 2024

The results of November's elections nationally and in most states will present challenges for workers and unions. But amid the setbacks, there were also worker-rights victories, proof of what labor and social justice allies can accomplish at state and local levels. Here are some highlights:

- **More than a half-million workers in Missouri and an estimated 30,000 in Alaska** will benefit from voter-approved measures to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. In Arizona, voters rejected a measure to lower the minimum wage for tipped workers.
- **In Alaska, Missouri and Nebraska, voters approved measures to expand workers' ability to earn paid sick leave.** Fifteen other states and Washington, D.C., have passed similar laws, a matter of urgency for low-wage workers in the absence of a federal standard.
- **Alaska became the 12th state to end mandatory captive audience meetings,** barring employers from forcing workers to listen to anti-union rhetoric, as well as political and religious speech. Subsequently, the National Labor Relations Board enacted a nationwide ban on the forced meetings. (See adjacent article.)
- **Denver voters overwhelmingly passed an ordinance to grant collective bargaining rights to more than 7,000 city workers.** Colorado lawmakers have extended union bargaining rights to some state and county employees in recent years, but the legislation didn't apply to local governments.
- **In New Orleans, more than 80% of voters approved a "Workers Bill of Rights"** that affirms such rights as access to fair wages, paid leave and health care, and the right to unionize. While the amendment isn't a mandate — state law in Louisiana prohibits local governments from enacting such protections — supporters believe it could guide future policy decisions.
- **Oregon voters passed a measure to make it easier for cannabis workers to organize** by requiring employers to sign a labor peace agreement in order to be licensed to operate. Under the terms, businesses can face fines or be shut down if they interfere with union organizing drives. ■

ence tells us that the fight is about to get a lot harder.

"Sooner or later in 2025, anti-worker appointees will once again control the NLRB, and we know that bringing back captive audience meetings will be one of their highest priorities," he said.

Whatever happens to the national ban, it won't affect the 12 states where legislative action or voter referendums have blocked forced meetings.

Alaska became the latest state, when 58% of voters approved an initiative that also included provisions for a higher minimum wage and paid sick leave. The others with captive audience bans are California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine,

Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont and Washington.

Efforts to pass similar laws are underway in five more states — Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Virginia — where one or both legislative chambers are controlled by pro-worker politicians.

"We are committed to working with our union allies to pass those laws," Cooper said. "Captive audience meetings have deprived far too many workers of their right to join unions and bargain collectively, and we will fight to ban them, and keep them banned, wherever possible." ■



From left: Shawn Duff, Local 98 apprentice training committee chairman; Local 98 President Jim Foy; and Rowan University Provost Tony Lowman sign a landmark agreement that puts topping-out apprentices within a few credits of a bachelor's degree and establishes a master of engineering management degree program.

The announcement of the agreement with Rowan coincided with the opening of Local 98's new union hall and training center in the Navy Yard district of the city.

Under the agreement, every apprentice receives 72 credits for work at the JATC and on-the-job experience. The only required courses are three 12-credit certification programs in

construction management, project management and construction leadership.

"We made sure there are easy on- and off-ramps for students," said Local 98 Training Director Brian Myers. "If you have a kid or don't have

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POWER AT WORK *continued*

money, the programs are attackable. They are online. You can do it when it works for you, so when you top out, you not only have a journey ticket, but you have a college degree for a quarter of the cost and you made money and had health care the entire time," he said.

All it takes to get the bachelor of arts from the engineering school is 12 general education credits.

"Other trades, even other IBEW locals I know of, get closer to 50 credits for the apprenticeship," Myers said. "Our trade is changing from electrical contractors to energy solutions contractors. We are already teaching engineering. So we're not just talking about a college-educated person. That doesn't make you better or more valuable. It's a college degree in our industry."

It will, Lynch said, set Local 98 apart.

"It creates a tier no one can compete with," Lynch said.

Ultimately for Myers, the goal is increasing the value of every member as that change takes hold and accelerates. Trends in the industry mean that, in a few years, less than 15% of the lifetime cost of a building is construction. Buildings are now systems, most of them electrical, that need permanent management, maintenance and upgrades.



"This is an unprecedented agreement that recognizes there is no ceiling to our trade."

— Local 98 Business Manager Mark Lynch

"You can't grab a guy from a parking lot to do that. You need eclectic backgrounds and education to maintain stadiums, hospitals, the pharmaceutical industry and data centers," he said.

That means more meetings with doctors, lawyers and engineers.

"They all have degrees. We have expertise, but when our leaders — foremen, project managers — are on an equal foundation, with a degree in our field and a craft and a journeyman ticket, our value is unquestionable," he said. "And it will expand what is considered our work."

Lynch accepts that at least some of the apprentices may end up in positions that have historically been outside the union.

"The ultimate goal is giving the contractors options to use IBEW more and more," Lynch said. "They are hiring estimators from college with no experience. If we offer them people who wired transformers, why wouldn't you hire them in to be an estimator or onto the project manager rolls?"

The educational program won't be for everybody, but there has been an overwhelmingly positive response, Myers said.

"We attract achievers, the Type A person who will ask, 'What can I do next?'" Myers said. ■

ORGANIZING WIRE



Siemens workers' high motivation to join the IBEW was boosted by Arlington, Texas, Local 220 staffers and enthusiastic workplace volunteers. Pictured are (standing, from left) Local 220 Business Manager Joshua Worthey, volunteer organizing committee member Estevan Avita and VOC Chair Denise Haven, Local 220 office worker Melissa Carnley, VOC member Attela Lewis, Local 220 organizer Jedon Shinpaugh, Keith Sims, Shondricka Guidry, Shameen Ledbetter and Corey Conally; and (foreground) Jhamal Evans and Local 220 Office Manager Tammy House.

'Breath of Fresh Air'

Group Effort Brings in Hundreds of Manufacturing Members in Texas

By a tally of 196 to 29, workers at a new Siemens USA switchgear manufacturing facility in Texas voted Nov. 1 to join the IBEW and Arlington Local 220.

"Everybody's excited, feeling like they're protected and can have a career here," said Denise Haven, a Siemens worker who led the unit's volunteer organizing committee. "The campaign went wonderfully."

The new plant is about 15 miles south of a similar one in Grand Prairie where workers have been represented by Local 220 for several years. In March 2022, some of those IBEW members remotely joined a White House meeting with then-International President Lonnie Stephenson, President Joe Biden and Siemens USA CEO Barbara Humpton. At that meeting, Humpton announced her company's planned investment of more than \$500 million toward production expansion nationwide.

"Switchgear is absolutely vital to the electrification of everything," Humpton told the Fort Worth Report, citing data centers, electric vehicles and charging stations. The company predicts 10% annual data center demand growth over the next five years.

Following Humpton's announcement, staffing at Grand Prairie grew by nearly 50%, and Siemens began building the Fort Worth sister plant, said Local 220 Business Manager Joshua Worthey.

"We were under the belief that the new facility was going to be treated as an extension of the existing facility," Worthey said.

Siemens, however, considered the new plant as separate — and nonunion. The company has a neutrality agreement with the IBEW, though, which meant that it would not interfere with a unionizing campaign at Fort Worth.

"For the most part, they were about as neutral as I think you could see them be on one of these types of campaigns," Worthey said.

Seventh District International Representative Alan Cutler, who services Local 220, noted that Siemens did hold joint unionizing discussions with the IBEW. "It was actually pretty helpful, in that we were able to tell which work groups and shifts were on board" with joining, Cutler said.

Local 220, which represents about 1,000 workers in 51 Texas counties, is involved in outside construction and utility work, as well as manufacturing.

Siemens, meanwhile, expects to hire more than 700 workers to staff the Fort Worth plant by the end of this year and reach 1,300 by 2027. The goal is to manufacture, test and distribute nearly 400 switchgears weekly.

Predictions like these helped fuel the VOC's urgency. "We wanted just to lock in those union protections, get them started," Haven said.

The organizing campaign, which began early last year, benefited from the transfer of nearly three dozen workers from Grand Prairie to Fort Worth.

"We had good participation by people who understand what it means to be in a union," said Local 220 organizer and Recording Secretary Jedon Shinpaugh, mentioning Haven and fellow VOC members Attela Lewis, Gianni Gipson and Fabian Ramirez.

"I felt like on some ends we weren't getting treated fairly," Haven said. "The union helped us out."

Worthey noted that the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the fourth-largest metroplex in the United States and one of the fastest-growing, has low union density. "I see that as a positive," he said. "It means we have nothing but growth potential."

Shinpaugh said some of the Fort Worth hires had been members of other unions. When it came to organizing, she said, "they totally understood what they were doing, and they knew how to do it."

Community enthusiasm for the campaign also seemed strong, said Lead Organizer David Galvan. During a "honk-and-wave" at the plant before the vote, for example, "almost every driver was honking, flashing us the thumbs-up or waving," he said.

This excitement inspired the organizing team to persevere, Cutler said. "I mean, you're going to keep going no matter what, but it gave you that little extra oomph."

"We continued pushing the door knocks, phone banking, and mail and text campaigns — everything we could throw at it," Worthey said.

Volunteers from San Antonio Local 60 and Houston Local 716 also helped, Galvan said, joined from Oklahoma by Lead Organizer K.J. Payton and State Organizing Coordinator Trentice Hamm.

The group effort paid off when it was revealed after the vote that 87% of those eligible to do so had cast ballots supporting organizing with Local 220. The National Labor Relations Board certified the vote shortly afterward.

Manufacturing Director Brian Lamm called the outcome "a breath of fresh air."

"This is a really big win for manufacturing, and all credit goes to the local organizers," Lamm said.

Regional Organizing Coordinator Craig Parkman praised Shinpaugh. "She's a new organizer, and she was being pulled in a million directions," he said. "Jedon was out there talking to the workers in the beginning and throughout the whole process."

The Fort Worth plant's workers were about to begin first-contract negotiations as this newspaper went to press.

"Getting these folks to a contract now is just going to make everybody's life so much better as they continue to bring in employees and expand," Galvan said. ■

CIRCUITS

SELCAT Forges Lineworker Training Agreement With N.C. Community College

A new training partnership in North Carolina aims to help the IBEW recruit more men and women into lineworker apprenticeships and lucrative union careers.

In August, the Southeastern Line Constructors Apprenticeship and Training program added Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington to its stable of schools.

“A lot of line work is still non-union,” said Wilmington Local 495 Business Manager Van Mumford. “We want to make it easier to get people into the IBEW. This is a great program for that.”

SELCAT is accredited by the Electrical Training Alliance and backed by the IBEW and the union’s partners in the National Electrical Contractors Association. Its affiliation with CFCC, as with nine other educational institutions, is set up to help move lineworker program graduates into high-quality IBEW apprenticeships more quickly.

Alvin Warwick, business manager of Winston-Salem, N.C., Local 342, helped facilitate the affiliation, thanks to his 20-year work relationship with John Downing, CFCC’s vice president of economic and workforce development. Downing, a former longtime apprenticeship consultant with the state’s Department of Labor, later helped craft classes for Local 342’s inside construction apprentices at Winston-Salem’s Forsyth Technical Community College before doing something similar at CFCC for Local 495.

“These college graduates spend money to become lineworkers. Let’s bring them in and find a home for them.”

— SELCAT Director Danny Haddad

“John understands the importance of the IBEW,” Warwick said. “He told me, ‘We’ve also got a pretty good line school here at the college, and that nonunion companies were often hiring [CFCC] students right out of class.’”

For now, the community college is the only one in North Carolina that’s partnering with SELCAT. Its 10-week program, which has room for 60 students at a time, covers the basics of line work, such as federal safety training, setting and climbing poles, and electrical theory.

By graduation, CFCC alumni earn 1,000 apprenticeship credit hours, and their training allows them to skip SELCAT’s climbing school requirement.

The IBEW values educational partnerships like this, said SELCAT Director Danny Haddad.

“These college graduates spend money to become lineworkers,” he said. “We can’t lose those folks. Let’s bring



Photos courtesy of SELCAT

SELCAT’s recruiting efforts include “lineworker for a day” events at its suburban Atlanta campus, letting students get a feel for what’s involved in outside construction and utility work.

them in and find a home for them.”

About a half-hour’s drive southwest of Atlanta, the state-of-the-art SELCAT boasts a 32,000-square-foot training facility with smart classrooms, labs and dorms, and features indoor and outdoor pole-climbing labs, as well as substation and underground training.

Thanks to outreach to high schools, line colleges and utilities, Haddad said, “we have an abundance of applicants” to SELCAT. When it recently solicited public applications, for example, more than 800 men and women submitted forms online.

The applicant pool is increasingly diverse, Haddad noted. “We’re getting a lot more women applicants.”

Also, a “lineworker for a day” event last fall gave about 50 high school students a chance to climb into a bucket truck, operate excavators and backhoes, experience SELCAT’s simulators and sample the basics of pole climbing.

“This is the kind of stuff that we do to ensure that SELCAT is very well attended and our job calls are being filled,” Haddad said, noting that applicants have a leg up when they receive line work training like the kind offered by CFCC.

Along with North Carolina, SELCAT’s certified teachers use

standardized, up-to-date program materials to train lineworkers in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee, helping to keep the outside electrical industry in the Southeast supplied with highly skilled and qualified workers.

“SELCAT plays a big part in helping to keep up the reliability and strength of the IBEW’s outside construction branch,” said Tenth District International Vice President Brent Hall, whose jurisdiction includes North Carolina. “It’s good to see a school like Cape Fear Community College step in like this to help keep the folks moving into the IBEW’s lineworker pipeline.” ■



The years-long campaign, led by the B.C. Building Trades, included testimony and other lobbying from IBEW members.

No More Porta-Potties: British Columbia Requires Flush Toilets on Construction Sites

British Columbia construction sites just got an upgrade. Thanks to lobbying by the IBEW and other members of the B.C. Building Trades, jobsites with 25 or more workers now must provide flush toilets, a long-awaited improvement to hygiene conditions.

“As a construction worker for just about 40 years, I say this has been a long time coming,” Kamloops Local 993 Business Manager Jim Bicknell said. “We will now be able to attract and keep workers in the industry, especially women who previously left because of deplorable conditions that many companies had, simply because it cut into their profits to provide something better.”

The regulation, which went into effect Oct. 1, calls for contractors to provide toilets that can be connected to a sewer system or holding tank. They are required to use a flow of clean water or a mixture of clean water and chemicals to flush the bowl. The facilities must also have hand-washing facilities and ensure that the washrooms are well-maintained, clean, ventilated and private.

“I love my job, but one of the worst parts of going to work is facing the nasty conditions inside of construction site porta-potties,” said Tiffany Madden, a member of Vancouver Local 213 and board member of Build Together BC, which advocates for women in the trades. “This is a game-changer for the construction industry and could even attract more women.”

It comes when construction is booming in the province and there’s high demand for workers. Providing cleaner and more dignified restrooms is a simple way to attract more people to the industry and keep them, said Brynn Bourke, executive director of the B.C. Building Trades.

The technology already exists. Not only do managers on jobsites often have access to flush toilets, but Quebec passed a similar provincial law in 2015. More hygienic facilities also exist in other countries, as well as industries like film and entertainment.

“I am originally from Australia, where unions have successfully campaigned and won the right to flush toilets on construction sites. So, when I moved to Canada, it was quite the shock

to have to use porta-potties,” said Matt Baron, a Local 213 shop steward.

“These changes will help attract new workers to the industry that may not have wanted to work here before. It’s also one less thing for our sisters to worry about when they’re at work,” Baron added.

The push to get flush toilets on construction sites dates to the 1970s, Bourke said. A new effort took shape amid the COVID-19 pandemic, when British Columbia was one of the only provinces that didn’t halt construction projects.

“Workers carried the economy on their backs during the pandemic,” she said. “We learned a lot during that time, and this is one way to make things safer.”

In the wake of the pandemic, the B.C. Building Trades issued two reports on the issue and launched its “Get Flushed” campaign, which included a petition and testimonials from its members, including the IBEW.

“IBEW members have been fabulous in helping with the campaign,” Bourke said. “They’ve been great ambassadors on jobsites, as well as lobbying and providing testimony.”



Construction jobsites in British Columbia with 25 or more workers now must provide flush toilets, a long-awaited improvement to hygiene conditions.

Among the testimonials were those from Local 993 members Katrina Harris and Alison Klie, who described highly unsanitary conditions, which are exacerbated for anyone who must sit down or deal with a menstrual cycle — not to mention having to do all that while wearing coveralls. There’s also the issue of privacy and having a safe place to use a restroom facility.

“There were many times during my time working on a mine site when I needed a moment to collect myself away from men. The women’s wash trailer was a sanctuary of sorts,” Klie said. “It was clean and warm and private. It was a safe space for me and for many other women I know, some of whom I met in those very trailers. It’s not just about a clean place to go pee.”

The response from members to

CIRCUITS continued on page 12

CIRCUITS *continued*

the new regulation has been overwhelmingly positive, said Bicknell and Local 213 Business Manager Jim Lofty.

“Our members are pleased with the changes but frustrated by how long it has taken for this to be dealt with, especially after the many horrific conditions we saw during the pandemic that clearly demonstrated that this was a health hazard,” Lofty said.

Flush toilets can only help as the construction industry moves toward becoming more inclusive, Lofty added.

“We often hear of people who end up leaving construction for maintenance or other aspects of the electrical trade, or even leaving the trade altogether because of working conditions that force them to make changes,” Lofty said. “Bullying, harassment and discrimination are all things that the industry needs to improve, so that not only young workers, female workers or underrepresented people can improve their workplaces, but all workers can enjoy a respectful place to work.”

The province is in the process of bringing everyone into compliance, Bourke said, focusing on sites that have flush toilets for management.

“It’s eminently possible to implement this,” she said. “It’s a minor expense that will bring a lot of dignity. ■

Alaska Members to Install High-Speed Internet for State’s Remote Population

Providing reliable internet to Alaska’s villages and its rural Indigenous population has long been a challenge, due to the remoteness and lack of infrastructure.

Now, Anchorage Local 1547 members are on the cutting edge of an effort that might finally fix the problem for good.

Members employed by several signatory contractors will begin work later this year on the Alaska Communications’ FiberOptic project, which will provide reliable, high-speed internet to 21 communities along the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers.

That includes installing cable underneath rapidly moving waters that put most of the mightiest rivers in the continental U.S. to shame. The Yukon River, which stretches across the state into Canada, has a drainage area 25% larger than Texas.

“During spring breakup, ice chunks the size of a school bus can just get rolled around in that area,” said Naomi Hewitt, a Local 1547 business representative who has worked in the area. “There’s a lot of water.”

On the northwest edge of Alaska above the Arctic Circle, Local 1547 is partnering with NANA — a corporation owned by the native Inupiat people — to provide a regional broadband area.

Only about 7,000 people live in the 683-square-mile area, which is primarily within the Northwest Arctic Borough in the northwest part of the state. Getting any kind of internet there has been a challenge. The project got a boost with a \$65 million grant from the Commerce Department’s tribal broadband connectivity program.

Work is expected to begin later this year. As with any other project, major obstacles exist. This is the Last Frontier, after all.

Hewitt said that Snowcats — an enclosed-cab vehicle the size of a large pickup truck designed to travel on snow — can only be used during the winter. Otherwise, the tundra beneath is not strong enough to support them without causing ecological damage.

Snowcats transport not just supplies but also modular facilities that serve as temporary homes for workers on a jobsite. “They’re not going to be able to helicopter them home every night,” Hewitt said. “They have to drag a facility for them to shower in. They’re going to be driving down the tundra and saying: ‘All right, we’re parking here. Shut her down.’”

And workers must find a way to bore down into the Yukon River to run the fiber beneath it.

“We have different geographical challenges. We have to worry about the ice and when it thaws out. We have to make sure the fiber is still intact when the ice breaks up.”

— Local 1547 Business Representative J.C. Casquejo

“It’s been done in other places, but nothing like Alaska,” said J.C. Casquejo, another business representative in telecommunications. “We have different geographical challenges. We have to worry about the ice and when it thaws out. We have to make sure the fiber is still intact when the ice breaks up.”

Still, these are good-paying jobs for a well-trained workforce that can handle the sometimes brutal weather conditions. There’s also a sense of pride among Local 1547 members.



Top: Alaska Communications’ Daniel Rosin, left, and TJ Harvey install fiber-grade fixed wireless devices on the Kenai Peninsula. Above, Kristin Barber delivers broadband services in Sterling, an underserved community. All three are Anchorage Local 1547 members.

They are performing high-tech work that will aid much of the massive state, particularly the long underserved Native Alaska population.

Business Manager Doug Tansy said Local 1547’s relationship with Alas-

have a full-time doctor. Getting to one by land is nearly impossible most of the year.

But with state-of-the-art internet access, residents will be able to better access telehealth appointments, which should improve health throughout the communities. The drain of young people looking for more opportunity in other parts of the state or even the continental U.S. might be slowed, helping to preserve the native Alaskan culture.

Tansy noted that Local 1547 already has trained six residents of these communities as drone operators and added them as members. That work will play a role not just in the broadband projects, but all electrical projects in the remote areas.

Local 1547 covers the entire state. It has a proud history in Alaska’s construction industry and has large units in telecommunications, utility, manufacturing and tree trimming.

Staffers like Hewitt and Casquejo work closely with telecommunications partners to ensure that work is done safely. That’s a central tenet of IBEW membership but understandably takes on an even higher level of concern for workers in remote locations facing weather challenges most other workers only dream about.

“What our telecommunications members are doing will bring change to our state’s landscape,” Tansy said. “I really think it’s going to change the ambition of those communities when they have a chance to get an education and grow their knowledge.” ■

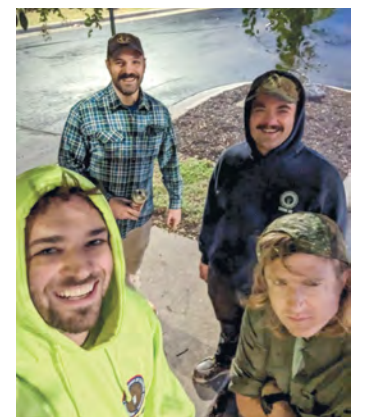
Richmond, Va., Passes Prevailing Wage After IBEW, Building Trades Campaign

In a unanimous vote, the City Council in Richmond, Va., passed an ordinance establishing a prevailing wage for publicly funded construction projects, giving a boost to workers and a win for the IBEW and other building trades.

“This law will help stop the race to the bottom for construction wages and benefits for city work,” said Charles Skelly, business manager of Richmond Local 666 and president of the Richmond Building and Construction Trades Council. “Virginia has been plagued by misclassification and wage theft in construction. This law will help combat the issue and ensure construction workers are paid a fair wage for their work.”

The ordinance, which passed in October, came about in part because of a state law that requires a prevailing wage on state-funded construction projects. That law was amended in 2020 to allow cities to opt in to the requirement that contractors pay a wage that at minimum aligns with the area’s pay scale.

Under the new law, which goes into effect July 1, contractors or subcontractors that pay workers below the prevailing wage will be held liable for the payment of wages plus interest. They will also be disqualified from bidding on contracts until full restitution is made and could even be charged with a Class 1 misdemeanor. The ordinance will apply to city-funded projects valued at more than \$250,000.



Local 666 members before attending a town council meeting on establishing a prevailing wage. Clockwise from bottom left: Griffin Green, Cullen Gaston, Leo Herbert and Chris Anders.

By eliminating incentives for unscrupulous contractors to lowball construction costs, a prevailing wage establishes a level playing field that allows legitimate contractors like IBEW signatories to be competitive and win more work.

“The contractors I work with have all said that this is great for them because everyone has to pay a fair wage rate,” said Local 666 journeyman wireman Griffin Green, who spoke in favor of the ordinance at council meetings.

Creating more opportunities for



Anchorage Local 1547 and Alaska Communications apprentice Dustin Griffith during telecom training in his hometown of Homer.

Photo courtesy of Alaska Communications

Photos courtesy of Alaska Communications

local contractors to get more work also means more money stays in the community, along with more high-paying jobs for workers who live in the area.

“Since we’re close to Washington, D.C., which has a higher wage scale, you can drive like one hour and get paid more,” Green said. “Prevailing wage incentivizes workers to stay in town by encouraging contractors to pay enough to keep them here.”

A state study in 2012 found that misclassifying workers cuts 30% off the labor rate by illegally eliminating required payments for workers’ compensation and other costs like unemployment insurance, Skelly said.

“No legitimate contractor can compete,” he said. “It takes protections away from the workers and undercuts contractors who play by the rules and want to pay a fair wage.”

Thanks to the state law, there are several ongoing state-funded projects with prevailing wage attached, Skelly said, so it stands to reason that IBEW signatories will win more Richmond projects after the ordinance takes effect.

“We are getting more of those

Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois, further found that jobsites in states with prevailing wages are safer. According to the findings, on-the-job fatality rates were 14% higher in states that had repealed their laws.

The ordinance passed unanimously thanks in part to lobbying by the IBEW and other building trades and campaigning for worker-friendly politicians. Skelly said the building trades started making a concerted effort to endorse candidates and help get them into local offices around 2019. It’s paid off.

“It’s been an incredible change to have the council seeking out union opinions and looking to labor for how to build the city,” said Local 666 apprentice Chris Anders, who also spoke in support of the ordinance. “If you want Richmond to grow, this is how you do it.” ■

Hollywood Local Secures Contract Wins as It Marks Century of Solidarity

Hollywood, Calif., Local 40 has a lot to celebrate. The union representing members who work at the major motion picture studios secured historic wins in its recent contract negotiations, all while turning 101 years old.

“These new contracts are the strongest agreements we have negotiated in four decades,” Business Manager Stephan Davis said. “These achievements are the result of our united resolve as members alongside our brothers and sisters in other Hollywood unions and guilds.”

Negotiated in coalition with other unions in the Hollywood Basic Crafts, Local 40 worked out an agreement covering roughly 700 members who work for studios including Paramount, Walt Disney, Netflix, Fox, Apple, CBS, Warner Brothers and Universal. A similar agreement was also negotiated with Universal Studios Hollywood Theme Park, covering about 150 members.

Among the wins were 7% wage increases in the first year of both agreements — the largest increase since 1984. To put this in perspective, over one-third of the membership wasn’t even born the last time the local saw



As part of the Hollywood Basic Crafts, Local 40 worked out an agreement covering roughly 700 members who work for movie studios. The contract wins came on the heels of negotiations between the studios and other crafts like IATSE, as well as the strikes by SAG-AFTRA and Writer’s Guild of America members.



such a significant raise, Davis said.

Members covered under the studio agreement also won June 19, or Juneteenth, as a holiday; a new 401(k); bereavement leave; two additional sick days; triple time after 15 hours worked; and maintenance of health and retirement benefits with no added cost to members.

Theme park members now have improved vacation accrual and subcontracting language. They also maintained their health benefits with no additional costs.

“It’s nice seeing all the hard work pay off,” said Peter Diamond, a member of Local 40 for over 20 years who participated in negotiations. “It’s always great when you keep what you have, and it’s even greater when you gain more for your members.”

The agreements cover multiple classifications, including wiremen, HVAC technicians and sound workers on the studio lot campuses, as well as all of the portable air-conditioning and generator operators on a production when they shoot on location.

The new contracts, ratified by an overwhelming majority of members in August, came on the heels of negotiations between the studios and other crafts like IATSE, as well as the strikes

by SAG-AFTRA and Writer’s Guild of America members, which put pressure on the industry to do better for its less famous workers.

“These historic agreements could not have been reached without the sacrifices of the WGA and SAG-AFTRA members during their strikes,” Davis said. “What they achieved set the tone for our local and the other unions we bargain with.”

“These achievements are the result of our united resolve as members alongside our brothers and sisters in other Hollywood unions and guilds.”

— Hollywood, Calif., Local 40 business manager Stephan Davis

The actors’ and writers’ strikes also played a role in Local 40’s centennial anniversary. The union was formed in 1923 — during the early days of film and before television — but as a show of solidarity with their brothers and sisters on the picket line, Local 40

members delayed the celebration until last summer.

Local 40 celebrated on the backlot of Warner Bros. Studios with a live band, dancing, and Hollywood memorabilia including the Batmobile from the 1997 film “Batman & Robin” and the couch from “Friends.” The party was attended by International President Kenneth W. Cooper, International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble and Ninth District International Vice President Dave Reaves.

“On behalf of all the officers, staff and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, I want to give you my heartfelt congratulations,” Cooper said. “What you’ve done for the last century here in Hollywood is truly amazing.”

Ninth District International Representative Tim Dixon, a former Local 40 business manager, was also on hand and reflected on the union’s history, which started with 12 members agreeing to work for no less than \$7.50 for a 10-hour day.

“While it’s almost impossible for us to comprehend what those founding 12 members went through to form this union, I don’t think there’s any way that they could imagine that Local 40 would survive 100 years, let alone what we’ve achieved in that time.” Dixon said. ■

“Virginia has been plagued by misclassification and wage theft in construction. This law will help combat the issue and ensure construction workers are paid a fair wage for their work.”

— Richmond, Va., Local 666 business manager Charles Skelly

state projects than we did historically,” Skelly said. “This means more opportunities for all of our members.”

Prevailing wage requirements not only raise wages but increase opportunities for apprentices. A study of prevailing wage at the state level found that construction apprenticeship enrollments are up to 8% higher and apprentices complete their on-the-job and classroom training faster in states that have such laws.

The study, conducted by the



Enabled by a new state law, the City Council in Richmond, Va., passed an ordinance establishing a prevailing wage for city construction projects.

LOCAL LINES

Local 15 Celebrates Solidarity at Labor Day Parade

L.U. 15 (u), DOWNERS GROVE, IL — Our local proudly participated in the 2024 Labor Day Parade and picnic and car show in Rockford. President Chris Riser and Vice President Ben Busser enjoyed the day with brothers and sisters of Local 15 and their families. Many members enjoyed walking the route to pass out candy, and others drove their cars, which included rat rods, muscle cars, and vintage cars and trucks. Some members entered their cars in the car show later that day. After the parade, participants from many local unions enjoyed a picnic, activities for the kids and live music.

President Riser stated: “Thank you to all the members who came out to celebrate our labor movement and enjoy the day together, as a brotherhood. I hope our members in attendance enjoyed the day and look forward to having even more members come to the event next year. It is important for the strength of our local union that we find ways, like this Labor Day event, to come together and unite!”

John Richards, Bus. Rep.

Local 43 Honors Recent Retirees

L.U. 43 (em,i&rts), SYRACUSE, NY — We honored our local’s recent retirees and those who have reached milestones for years of IBEW service during our monthly union meeting Sept. 3.

Local 43’s recent retirees are William Alton, Michael Andrews, Todd Best, Steven Carlisle, Larry Coe, John English, Michael Graham, Daniel Hibbard, Gregory Kuhn, Mark Lumia, Joseph Magliocca, Edward Mattes, Michael Nolan, Kenneth Palmisano, Ronald Pennock, Stephen Reaume, Bradford Rombough, Gale Root, Stephen Russell, Zahid Seho, Eric Spies, Gordon Stark, John Touchette, David M. Welsh, Andrew White and Joseph Woods.



Local 15 members and their families attend the 2024 Labor Day Parade in Rockford, Ill.

Members recognized for years of service included Lloyd Barnes and William Gramith Jr. (65 years); Patrick Ryan (60 years); Peter Baker, Richard Block, Robert Brainard, Dennis Breheny, Carlton Brothers, Harold Collins, Michael Collver, Jeremiah Comer, Bernardo Delia, Ronld Fratellone, Mark George, Thomas Huddleson, Thomas Kurak, Rodney Law, Keith MacGregor, Timothy McMahon, Richard Pelkey, Ronald Prebble, James Roll, Dennis Ryan, James Wiley and Richard Wilson (55 years); Frank Amie, Roger Bernhardt, James Bradshaw, Anthony Caputo, Lois Castaldo, Nicholas Cerrone, Charles Elve, Richard Geremski, John Glumpe, John Hunt, Timothy Johnson, William Johnson, Daniel Kelly, Gary Kogut, David Larabee, Donald Morgan, Lawrence Napolis, Nicholas Oppedisano, Joseph Ruggiano, John Salerno, William Shackleton, Edward Straub, Daniel Tice, William Tucker, Richard Waters and Frank Willemsen (50 years).

Congratulations to all our retirees and the first-year apprentice class, who were sworn in as new members!

Jeff Cassano, P.S.

Congratulations, Pat Padilla

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Business Manager Colin Lavin presented Pat Padilla his IBEW retirement watch after 47 years of service. Congratulations, Brother Pat!

Here are Local 47’s bargaining and event updates:

- Southern California Edison — There was an additional day of bargaining for the real time operator desk (RTO) on Oct. 4; we are very close to a stand-alone agreement. Bargaining continues for newly organized group of air operations (Air-Ops). For call center workers, also newly organized, bargaining began in November. Bargaining for construction field forces (CFF) has concluded with an agreement that creates a wage increase and brings the

electricians to parity with the transmission substation electricians.

- City of Banning — Utility and general negotiations continue.
- City of Colton — Electric negotiations continue.
- City of Riverside — Wastewater negotiations continue.
- City of Riverside — Supervisory and utility negotiations continue.

Congratulations from Local 47 to the following retirees: Phillip Gallegos, James Hess, Sherrie Holmes and Dale R. Lilly.

We’re sad to report the deaths of Fernie Carlos, Bryan Cotta, Diane Daleo, Kyle Duncan, James Garrett, Cameron Miles, Courtney Norwood, Jose Regalado, Miquel Reyes and Franklin Soto. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union!

Mitch Smith, P.S.



In October, Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin presented an IBEW retirement watch to Pat Padilla after 47 years of service.

Local 51 New Year Work Picture

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — Our local’s linemen and line clearance tree trimmers traveled to support recovery efforts after hurricanes Milton and Helene. Some crews worked in Virginia, where line trucks could not be used. As a result, crews hiked up Virginia mountains to remove power poles by hand with a helicopter flying in replacement poles.

Other crews worked in Florida, West Virginia, Georgia and South Carolina. Our members carry a heavy burden when trying to restore power quickly, yet they continue to do so in a safe manner.

We had a fun family outing at the Peoria Chiefs game in September. The event was well attended, and we plan to organize another event next year. If you have any suggestions, please contact the hall.

Happy 2025! Line work looks promising this

year, and line clearance tree trimming remains steady. We wish you a healthy and prosperous new year. Attend your union meetings.

Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.

Local 77 Chili Cook-Off in Spokane

L.U. 77 (lctt,mt,o,t&u), SEATTLE, WA — Our local celebrated its third annual chili cook-off in September at the Spokane hall, attracting a lively crowd of members, families and guests. This year’s event featured a car show, adding excitement to the day.

Attendees enjoyed a perfect day filled with food, great music from the local union band Maggie and the Boys, and an impressive lineup of hot rods. The chili competition was fierce, with some of the best homemade recipes on display, but the real winners were attendees who sampled offerings from each team. By the end of the event, many participants left with fantastic raffle prizes, adding to the festive atmosphere.

“This event continues to grow each year, and we have some great ideas already in the works for the fourth annual,” said Dave Garegnani, business representative and event organizer. “We love bringing our members and their families together at the hall for a day of solidarity.”

The winners of this year’s chili cook-off were:

- Patty Garegnani (first place)
- Randy and Lorie Coleman (second place)
- Shelby Prest (third place)

The car show winners included:

- Best in Show: Chad O’Riley
- Most Unique Ride: Rick Ruffle

Overall, it was a fantastic event that highlighted the spirit of community and camaraderie within Local 77!

Dave Garegnani, Bus. Rep.



Local 77 members and families enjoying the chili cook-off at the hall in Spokane, Wa.

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	(uow) Utility Office Workers
(es) Electric Signs	(mar) Marine		

Efforts are made to make this list as inclusive as possible, but the various job categories of IBEW members are too numerous to comprehensively list all.

Local 99's Third Annual Trunk-or-Treat

L.U. 99 (govt&i), PROVIDENCE, RI — Our local held its third annual trunk-or-treat Oct. 26, put together by Brother Jon Porreca with the help of other local volunteers and held at the union hall. Children and adults dressed up in Halloween costumes and showed off their spooky trunks while the kids trick-or-treated.

There were more than 100 attendees at the event, and many additional activities were offered. Movies played inside the hall, and pumpkin carving and painting was hosted outside, with other Halloween crafts available. Food, hot chocolate and a photo booth were provided on this eventful Saturday. Attendees called it a wholesome fun time.

Sidney Jablonski, P.S.



Pumpkin carved by Local 99 Brother Jon Porreca.

Fall Family Fun for Local 103

L.U. 103 (cs,i&ptc), BOSTON, MA — Our local proudly swore in 250 new apprentices and CWs on Oct. 17, marking a significant milestone for the union and the future of skilled labor. This ceremony brought together new members and their friends and family to celebrate a pivotal moment in their careers.

On Nov. 3, a beautiful fall day, 1,500 members of Local 103 and their families gathered at Gillette Stadium for an unforgettable experience. As the New England Patriots took on the Tennessee Titans, the energy in the air was palpable, filled with excitement. This gathering underscored the importance of family within the IBEW community.

With loved ones by their side, members were able to relax and connect with one another outside of their work environments. It was a perfect opportunity to strengthen bonds, share stories and enjoy the company of fellow union members.

James Fleming, R.S.



IBEW Sixth District International Vice President Michael Clemons with members and associates at Palisades nuclear plant.

Local 131's Work Continues to Increase

L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rts,se&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI — At the time of this writing, we are appreciating the warmer days of autumn with the work outlook steady in Kalamazoo. Several projects are keeping the book clear. Travelers are working in the jurisdiction. Palisades nuclear plant is still staffing up. Thank you, President Biden, for all the work you have created for IBEW members.

There are plenty of ways to participate with Local 131. Step up and join RENEW, the Veterans or Women's committees, or the EWMC. We need you to participate to make the local stronger. I would like to start a retirees' group. We all need help as we get older, and who better to help than your brothers and sisters?

The retirees' Christmas luncheon was Dec. 11. Fifty retirees attended. Stories were told, and the tales just keep on getting bigger.

I hope everyone had a joyful holiday season!

The Local 131 apprentice party is scheduled for 131 day (Jan. 31) at 5 p.m. Stop in and introduce yourself. We all remember starting out!

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

Local 237 Welcomes NewSource Electric

L.U. 237 (i), NIAGARA FALLS, NY — Greetings and happy New Year, brothers and sisters.

Local 237 would like to welcome NewSource Electric, a recently organized local contractor, to the IBEW.

Work in our jurisdiction is strong and should remain so throughout the winter. The large five-story Amazon fulfillment center has broken ground and will need additional manpower. Somerset Data is looking to continue with a fifth building for bitcoin mining, as well as an AI expansion. Albion Correctional Facility has lighting and camera projects that are ongoing. Several solar fields are also expected. Please call the hall for additional information.

The annual Local 237 disc golf tournament was held Sept. 21 at Wilson-Tuscarora State Park. Congratulations to brothers Andy Janese and Dan Fiorentine for placing first. Our family Christmas party was held Dec. 14 at the hall, and we would like to thank all those involved for making this event a reality for members and their families.

Our dinner dance will be held sometime in February, so please look out for an announcement to purchase tickets. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Remember to make your conditions not only for yourself, but for your brothers and sisters as well. Have a safe and prosperous new year!

Brandon Lum, P.S.

Local 245 Prepares for New Year

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — I can't believe it's that time of year to look back at 2024 and start preparing for what the new year has to offer. I hope everyone was able to spend time with their families during the holiday season.

Andrew White, one of our Local 245 members from the city of Rossford Fire and Rescue, spent time at Lake Township Safety City, a community event. Students learned about when it is appropriate to call 911; what to do if there is a fire; and when to get low and stop, drop and roll.

As of this writing, Local 245 is in negotiations with Vistra Corp. at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, and at the Bayshore power plant, Rossford Fire and Rescue, and RKR Traffic Control. Outside construction work is steady and increasing rapidly.

Special thanks to all who assisted with hurricane and storm restoration. Your efforts and safe work practices are greatly appreciated!

We're looking forward to another Local 245 Toledo Walleye hockey night in February.

Brian Gendaszek, P.S.

Local 313 Congratulates New Journeymen

L.U. 313 (i&spa), WILMINGTON, DE — Greetings from our local, powering Delaware and Cecil County, Md.

Our local and the Delaware Building Trades organized a Labor Day Parade on King Street in Wilmington. Hundreds of union members, apprentices, families and friends came to the event. It was a great to see everyone there because the past few years have seen the parade affected by the pandemic. We appreciate everyone who came to the event, and we hope for more like it in the future.

Local 313 would like to congratulate those who finished their apprenticeships this year. Good luck to the new journeymen!

A special shoutout to our RENEW program for hosting the annual ugly Christmas sweater party in December, with all proceeds going to Nemours Children's Hospital. They also joined WSTW's radio broadcast for the radiothon/backpack challenge at the Food Bank of Delaware and participated in the fourth annual Bump, Set, Light Volleyball Tournament hosted by SL24: UnLocke the Light Foundation, which educates, assists and supports those battling depression and suicidal ideation.

David Rholetter, P.S.



Local 313 members walk in the Labor Day Parade in Wilmington, Del.

Local 343 Makes Tradition of DNC Delegation

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — Older news deserves credit, too. Last year was not the first time Local 343 was represented at a Democratic National Convention. Some 30-odd years ago, now retired Mike Mansfield was the first member to attend a DNC as a delegate. It was the 1990s, the Clinton years. Union activism and political involvement go hand in hand.

In more recent times (February 2024), apprentice Ray Wicks attended the Mankato Young Workers Town Hall, the purpose of which was to discuss topics that are important to workers ages 18-35. Those issues included representation on the job, individual accountability and personal integrity, concerns and traits of the Brotherhood. Ray was then invited to attend the September 2024 AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention in Duluth as a young worker representative.

Brother Ray may be a young worker, but his IBEW family tree has deep roots. His father, Mike Wicks, is a former JATC instructor. His grandfather is retired member Mike Bambrick Sr., and his great-grandfather is retired member and past apprenticeship instructor Ray Goodew. Family and brotherhood go hand in hand. It will be what you make of it.

Do your part, buy Made in USA.

Tom Small, P.S.



Andrew White with Rossford Fire and Rescue educates children on fire safety at Safety City.

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LOCAL LINES

Local 357's Activities Benefit Members, Community

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — Our local was buzzing with activity this past fall, hosting a series of engaging, informative and fun-filled events. Our annual picnic, held in October, had 100-degrees-plus temperatures, adding to the fun! The picnic is our best-attended event of the year, with more than 200 volunteers contributing to its success. Local 357 committees raise funds during this event through raffles and merchandise sales.

Our Women's Committee also held a special, no-cost raffle for all apprentices who attended the picnic, giving away several gift certificates and a book reimbursement.

We hosted our Health and Welfare Pension Allocation and Benefits Fair the following weekend. While our members voted on important allocation decisions, families were treated to good food, activities and, most important, vital information about the benefits they receive through our providers.

To round out fall activities, we had our annual Gary Pitts Golf Tournament and kids' Halloween party. The golf tournament raises money for the IBEW's Health and Welfare Fund. The Halloween party allows our families to get together and enjoy the holiday in a fun, safe and sane way.

Julie-Ann Peeples, P.S.



From left, Local 357 apprentices Demi Cobar, Jonice Thomas, Marissa Duncan, Stephanie Yuriar and Ashley Armenta; Women's Committee chair Melenie Zavala; and inside JW Venise Karris.

Local 481 Celebrates Circle of Lights

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rts,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Brothers and sisters, our local had a very busy end of the year. Our retirees and members installed the stringers in preparation for another successful Circle of Lights Celebration on Monument Circle. It has been 62 years since the stringers first went up, and Local 481 members have been involved from the beginning. It is a holiday tradition that we and the Indianapolis community look forward to every year. Thank you to all our volunteers!

Holiday celebrations continued as we held our annual holiday luncheon for our retirees and our holiday dinner for the membership at our December union meeting, where we distributed



New Local 481 members being sworn in at the November union meeting.

years-of-service awards to attendees celebrating milestones. Congratulations to all recipients.

In the fourth quarter, more than 100 new members were sworn in to the ranks of Local 481. To the new members, welcome! Please continue your involvement. The IBEW is only as strong as its members who participate. Help to tell our story and work to become the future leaders of our industry.

We hope all IBEW locals had a great 2024, and we wish you an even better 2025! Happy New Year!

Blake Andrews, Treas.



From left, Local 483's Rick Hite, Alice Phillips and Byron Allen at the summer picnic.

Local 483 Goes P.Ink

L.U. 483 (catv,lctt,o&u), TACOMA, WA — Three generations of IBEW business managers attended this year's annual picnic. Their combined time as business managers spans more than 27 years. In the photo above, on the left is retired Ninth District Construction Representative Rick Hite, who was business manager from 1997 to 2005; in the middle is retired Business Manager Alice Phillips, who served from 2005 to 2023; and on the right is current Business Manager Byron Allen, who was appointed in 2023. A great time was had by many Local 483 members and their families at the picnic, and we presented service awards to active and retired members for up to 60 years of service.

Local 483 has participated in our local P.Ink event for three years. Every October, tattoo studios around the country close their doors for a day to create free healing experiences for those who have had mastectomies and seek closure through coverage of their scars with beautiful artwork.

Local 483 Sister Rebecca Erber is the Pacific Northwest organizer for P.Ink. With the help of many of our members, we were able to collect donations and gifts that provided the recipients and artists with wonderful gift bags tailored to this event. This year, our own administrative assistant Kyra Williams designed an amazing Local 483 P.Ink T-shirt that we gifted to each of the participants and artists.

Byron Allen, B.M./F.S.

Local 569 Wraps Year with Halloween, Camping, Holiday Parties

L.U. 569 (i,mar,mt,rts&spa), SAN DIEGO, CA — Our local's groups did great work in their events last October. RENEW's Haunt the Hall Halloween event was a great success, and the kids enjoyed a haunted maze, mummify-your-mommy race, cookie decorating, costumes and lots of candy. Our women's group went on their first three-day camping retreat to enjoy the great outdoors, games, food, relaxing campfires and s'mores.

At the time of this writing, we are looking forward to our holiday parties in San Diego and Imperial counties. We are very grateful to all our members who volunteer to help make our events successful.

Lynn Minor, Bus. Rep.



Local 569 United Sparkies 2024 camping retreat. Photo credit: Cristina Marquez.

Local 601's Labor Day Presence

L.U. 601 (i&rtb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL — Our local once again made a strong presence in the Champaign AFL-CIO 2024 Labor Day Parade. Sporting red shirts with the message "Working Hands Keep America Strong," Local 601 was one of the many unions to show that Champaign is a union-strong city and will continue to be for years to come.

As an indication of Local 601's influence in its community, Business Manager Jarrett Clem was chosen by the Champaign AFL-CIO's Central Labor Council to be the grand marshal of the 2024 Labor Day Parade. We thank our membership and their families for coming out on that beautiful day to represent Local 601, and we look forward to seeing them again next year!

After a few years of slow times, Local 601 is back in full swing with a few open calls. As of this writing, there are 29 on Book 1 and 16 on Book 2. If you want to be on our out-of-work list, we are accepting notifications from your home locals.

Elections will be over by the time this article comes out, so here's a preemptive congratulations



Local 601 members and their families sporting their new Labor Day red T-shirts.

to all of the labor-friendly candidates who were elected! May our union be forever strong.

Luther Baker, P.S.

Spotlight on Local 617 Events

L.U. 617 (c,i,mo&st), SAN MATEO, CA — Happy New Year! I would like to thank the membership, officers, staff and their families for volunteering, attending, participating and getting involved in Local 617 events. Reflecting on 2024, we are grateful for the festivities and celebrations that strengthened solidarity and emphasized the power of community and brotherhood/sisterhood.

Our year of events included the service pin awards banquet, offshore fishing charter, holiday craft fair, clay shooting, Journeyman Motorcycle Club rides, benefits fair, Veterans Committee and EWMC days of service, 50th annual Local 617 summer picnic, Halloween haunted hall, Harvest Fall Festival, ALS Walk & Ride, union nights at various sporting events, Local 617 Retirees' Club luncheon, and the children's holiday party and train display.

We are honored and proud to have received our local charter from the International Office for our Veterans Committee. Thank you to our committee officers and the work they put in year-round to remember, honor and teach.

A huge congratulations to Local 617 Membership Development Representative Francisco Castano, who was presented with the Above and Beyond Award at the IBEW Ninth District Progress Meeting. The award recognizes Brother Castano's commitment to organizing and furthering the purposes for which the IBEW was instituted. Local 617 received the Henry Miller Award for its ongoing commitment to the IBEW's organizing principles, upon which it was founded.

Local 617 is looking forward to the new year and new goals.

Scott Wein, B.M./F.S.

The Sisters of 697

L.U. 697 (c,es,i,mt&se), GARY AND HAMMOND, IN — The Sisters of 697 Women's Committee had a busy 2024. We started off the year with collecting canned goods for a local food drive, with big bins in our union hall's lobby for convenience dropping off items, even if the giver is not a member.

We hosted our annual bowling and bonding night in March, where we were able to relight our momentum after the holidays and cold weather. Some of our sisters attended a STEM event at Williams Elementary School to introduce themselves and explain to future generations what being an electrician is all about and the benefits that come with being in a union.

As in previous years, we volunteered to help set up and tear down Local 697's picnic and sell 50/50 raffle tickets during our time there to help raise money to donate to those in need. We also collected books, toys and necessities for the kids at the Maram Health Center in June and July.

Two of our sisters were recognized this year

for their outstanding dedication to their union. Kim Soto received a \$1,000 prize from Union Plus during its Labor Day sweepstakes, and Sabrina Cordero received a \$500 gift card and plaque for winning the Tradeswomen Heroes Award from the North American Building Trades Unions.

We attended a semi-pro baseball game (the RailCats) near our hall, thanks to our local's sponsorship of the team. This game was great opportunity for a night out for our local.

In September, members also attended the IBEW Women's Conference in New Orleans. Our local took six sisters, and we had a blast bonding and meeting new sisters from all around the world.

Local 697 hosted its annual Halloween at the Hall event, which consist of a trunk-or-treat for members and their families.

We would like to thank our local for its continued support, and we wish everyone a Happy Holidays!

Phil Hernandez, B.M.



Local 1347 members attend the 2024 Lineman's Rodeo near Kansas City.

ing the lights on.

This year was one of pride and hard work for our local, with safety as our top priority. The opportunity to engage with other locals further strengthened our brotherhood. Thank you to the entire team for your unwavering dedication.

Andrew Kirk, B.M./F.S.

Happy New Year From Local 1579



Local 697 members hosting its annual Halloween at the Hall event.

Local 915 Survives Back-to-Back Hurricanes

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — Business Manager Randall King is pleased to report that our local survived hurricanes Helene and Milton largely unscathed. The union hall did suffer some minor damage that is being rapidly repaired. We were proud to see our brothers and sisters helping to restore power across Tampa Bay, as well as in Sarasota and Bradenton. Restoration work continues, and we urge any Local 915 member to contact the hall if they have suffered property damage or loss.

Local 915's delegation to the 2024 IBEW Women's Conference and the North American Building Trades Unions' Tradeswomen Build Nations in New Orleans comprised Sisters Tabitha Hunter, Jolene Brzezinski, Nicole Kocher, Christy Handley and Theresa King. They were joined by Business Manager Randall King as they paraded through downtown New Orleans.

At the September general membership meeting, we held our annual Labor Day cookout. Many brothers and sisters came home from the road to catch up with old friends. President Jonathan Fielder swore in 42 new members and presented Business Manager King with the Organizing Impact Award. This annual award is given to one business manager per district, and Brother King was recognized for his organizing efforts across the IBEW's Fifth District.

Brian Nathan, A.B.M.

Local 1347 Participates in Storm Recovery, Lineman's Rodeo

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,u&ptc), CINCINNATI, OH — The 2024 International Lineman's Rodeo proved to be a challenging event for our local members Cody Nixon and Richard Hill. After completing back-to-back storm recovery efforts from two hurricanes, they drove to Kansas City to represent us in the competition. Their commitment exemplifies the dedication we all share in our profession to keep-

"The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals," wrote Melody Beattie. Let's achieve these goals together.

Mike Greene, Pres.

Continued Progress at Local 1701

L.U. 1701 (catv,ees,i,o&u), OWENSBORO, KY — Our local is blessed with progressive activities. At the time of this writing, Business Agent Ryan Hayden is in negotiations with the county power company to organize its line crews. We wish continued success to Ryan and organizer Andy Daniels.

The monthly union meeting was a packed house of journeymen and apprentices. Local 1701 President Tim Therber began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. Retirees in attendance displayed their new retiree membership cards. (See photo below.) Three new members took their oath of membership. Apprenticeship classes are full and have begun with Jason Sharp, apprenticeship director.

Our members have high employment at this time, with both local and out-of-town contractors having work in our jurisdiction. The local fall picnic was held at the union hall. Executive board member Scott Pagent brought his special blend of burgoo, along with other cooks' variations on grilled chicken, burgers and dogs. Music and games were enjoyed by all.

Rick Thurman, P.S.



Local 1701 retirees Alan Nall, Jerry Howton, Tim Blandford and Estil Woodwood.

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GROUND^{ED} IN HISTORY

Boston History Trail Honors IBEW Sister Julia O'Connor

Visitors to Boston have the opportunity to see and experience much of the United States' history, from the Founding Fathers to Amelia Earhart to the Kennedys. Among the monuments to these famed trailblazers is a tribute to IBEW sister Julia O'Connor, whose work as a labor organizer earned her a spot on the Boston Women's Heritage Trail.



Telephone operator and IBEW member Julia O'Connor blazed a trail for her sister operators at the turn of the last century, fighting for rights like the eight-hour workday and paid time off.

O'Connor was born in Woburn, Mass., in 1890. She started working as a telephone operator right out of high school, and by 1912 was a member of IBEW Local 1A, a "sublocal" of Boston Local 104. Her labor activism extended to her work with the Boston office of the National Women's Trade Union League, part of the American Federation of Labor, a precursor to today's AFL-CIO.

The league was dedicated to organizing women workers throughout the trades. O'Connor served on the executive board and was president from 1915 to 1918, after which she took the helm as president of Local 1A.

As early as 1897, Mary Honzik of Cleveland had formed an IBEW local comprising telephone operators, but employee turnover and intense anti-union pressure caused the local to fold. Boston Local 1A, through the tireless efforts of O'Connor and IBEW organizer Peter F. Lenihan, had a longer run and set off the IBEW to organize not just linemen and technicians, but also the women who operated a revolutionary technology.

Some of O'Connor's early wins for telephone operators included the establishment of a collective bargaining agreement with the New England Telephone Co., an eight-hour workday, abolition of the double shift and paid vacations. But she is perhaps best known for leading a strike of 8,000 fellow operators — all women — in 1919.

The spark that started the strike was in 1918, when the U.S. entered World War I and the government took control of

the telephone and telegraph industries, placing them under the management of Postmaster General Albert Bursleson.

A commission was set up to handle labor relations and was headed by William S. Ryan, an official from the Post Office. The commission consisted of two members from the telephone industry; two from the government; and one labor representative, Julia O'Connor. She resigned after a few months in early 1919, charging that the commission had demonstrated a hostile attitude toward the telephone and telegraph workers.

By April 1919, conditions were ripe for a major labor disruption. As the Boston Women's Heritage Trail notes, switchboard operators at the time were mostly young, single Irish American women and were expected to work at breakneck speed, often on double shifts. They were even punished with detention "as if they were still in high school," according to the trail's website.

After the Ryan Commission failed to

act on demands for wage adjustments, O'Connor led her operator sisters on a five-day strike that paralyzed telephone service throughout New England. With help from the women's trade union league, O'Connor and her team successfully negotiated changes that included a weekly raise of \$3 to \$4 (about \$55-\$73 in today's dollars) and recognition of the right to bargain collectively.

After this successful action, the IBEW created the Telephone Operators Department in September 1919 at the 15th Convention in New Orleans. O'Connor was appointed president, a position she held until 1939, when she left to work as an organizer for the AFL.

Achieving an eight-hour day, a fair pay scale and an equitable grievance system were priorities of the telephone operators nationwide. Responding to union pressure, the telephone companies were one of the first businesses in the U.S. to bring regular hours down to eight and move toward establishing grievance review boards and standard pay scales, breakthroughs that helped unions in other industries make progress on the same issues.

The legacy of O'Connor and her pioneering sisters lives on. The telephone operator's union was spoken of often in the family of Second District International Vice President Mike Monahan, as his grandmother and aunt both worked for New England Telephone as operators.

"IBEW Local 1A was a force to be reckoned with in 1919. Not all strikes at that time were as fortunate," Monahan said. "Henry Miller, Mother Jones and Julia O'Connor were all cut from the same cloth." ■

Visit nbew-ibewmuseum.org for more on how to support the IBEW's preservation of its history. Have an idea for this feature? Send it to Curtis_Bateman@ibew.org.



Leaders of the 1919 Operators strike meet with Boston Mayor Andrew Peters. Sitting are Peters and Julia O'Connor. Standing from left: Bridie Powers, Mary Mahoney, May Matthews and Mary June.



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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

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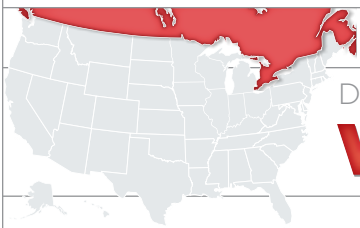
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DISTRICT 1: CANADA

WHO WE ARE

BC Member and Wife Feed Those in Need, Putting ‘People Over Profit’

Kamloops, British Columbia, Local 993 member Tony Pitzoff and his wife, Brigida Crosbie, have been feeding seniors, the homeless and anyone else in need for years, and their business — which operates with the philosophy of “people over profit” — is only growing.

“This work is deeply important to us because it stems from a commitment to serve others and uplift those in need,” said Pitzoff, a journeyman wireman who manages daily operations and a host of other tasks, all for free. “Our vision is to inspire people to help one another, and by working together, we can address challenges like food insecurity, homelessness and isolation, showing that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they unite for a common purpose.”

Crosbie and Pitzoff started Tydel Foods — the name is an amalgamation of two of their daughters’ names, Tyan-na and Delana — in 2020. Back then, it was run out of a truck. Today, they have multiple locations in their town of Chilliwack, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) east of Vancouver.

Tydel is known for serving high-quality meat at affordable prices, but it also offers produce and nonperishable items. Basically, whatever the community needs. And if someone can’t afford it, they’re likely to get their food for no cost. Since its inception, Tydel has provided more than 152,000 free meals to people dealing with food insecurity.



Pitzoff and Crosbie attended the Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Award ceremony where they won the “Inclusive Environment” award for their work with Tydel Foods.

“Their efforts are a testament to the power of community and the difference one family can make,” Local 993 Business Manager James Bicknell said. “Their shop goes far beyond just serving customers — they serve hope and compassion.”

Pitzoff, an IBEW member since 1987, is now semi-retired, giving him more time to focus on Tydel. But the skills he used as a mentor to younger members still come in handy when he talks with customers.



“It’s about meeting people where they are,” he said. “Everybody needs something different, so you need to be a good listener and communicator.”

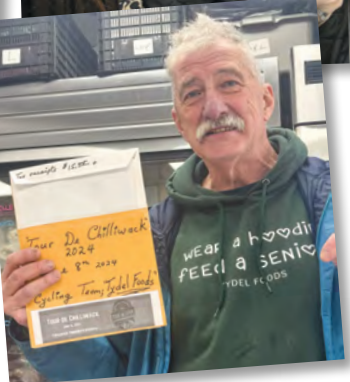
For Crosbie, the work is personal. She grew up in a home that didn’t always have enough food and was homeless for a time about 10 years ago.

“I know how it feels to struggle to make ends meet, and I never want anyone to ever feel that kind of pain,” Crosbie said. “Tydel Foods is a way to give back, ensure others don’t feel that same despair, and provide hope and dignity to the most vulnerable in our community.”

Roughly one in 10 British Columbians live in poverty, according to the province’s Office of Human Rights. More than 26,000 people experienced homelessness at some point in 2021. A significant number are seniors, a group Tydel helps by providing boxes filled with a month’s worth of food for \$125. But in keeping with the store’s philosophy, and Crosbie and Pitzoff’s generosity, if a senior can’t afford it, they’ll get the box for free. So far, Tydel has provided over 31,000 packages to struggling seniors. It also provides free or discounted foods to the surrounding areas of Chilliwack and to schools and daycares.

Since its inception, Tydel has served more than 180,000 people, with a fair amount of regulars stopping in for free soups and sandwiches.

“This work is at the heart of what



we do, bringing dignity, hope and sustenance to those who need it most,” said Crosbie, who worked at Fraser Health, an area health care provider, before retiring and starting Tydel. “We don’t turn anyone away.”

Despite its charity, as well as a host of volunteers, the store is able to turn a small profit, which goes right back into the services provided. (Crosbie’s also known to donate her pension checks toward the effort.) And that’s with selling steaks and other meats for less than the average grocery store. It’s something that Crosbie finds surprising.

“The big thing in my mind is if I could give this price and I’m just a person off the street that’s just an advocate in the community, then how come the bigger box stores can’t give it at a much lower price?” she told the CBC in one of the numerous articles that have been written about their work.

Crosbie and Pitzoff split the duties of running four locations: two stores, a storage space and an office that also collects food and other items.



Kamloops, British Columbia, Local 993 member Tony Pitzoff and his wife, Brigida Crosbie, have been feeding their community in Chilliwack since 2020 at their shop, Tydel Foods. “We don’t turn anyone away,” Crosbie said.

for letters to Santa, with every letter getting a reply.

“For some, the holidays can be a difficult time, filled with uncertainty rather than joy. We wanted to create a magical and wonderful Christmas experience where children can feel loved, cared for and special — even if it’s through a simple letter from Santa,” Crosbie said. “Every child deserves to feel the warmth and excitement of the season, and we hope these letters bring them a sense of joy, hope and belonging.”

Crosbie and Pitzoff said they want Tydel Foods to be known not just as a place that provides affordable, high-quality food but as a catalyst for bringing the community together. By all accounts, they’re succeeding. Customers with the means regularly bring in donations, including children sharing their allowances.

“Ultimately, we want Tydel Foods to be a symbol of hope, compassion and empowerment — a place where everyone feels valued and knows they can contribute to making a difference,” Pitzoff said.

Local 993 is also making a donation.

“Their dedication to uplifting others exemplifies the core values of generosity and solidarity that we hold dear at Local 993,” Bicknell said. “We are proud to stand with Tony and Brigida as they continue to make Chilliwack a better place for everyone.” ■

Crosbie tends to be the face of the organization, with Pitzoff running much of the back end.

“I’m happy to be the strong wheel,” he said. “I call her my celebrity.”

Crosbie and Pitzoff’s benevolence has been recognized by area organizations. In 2023, they received a Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Award, in the “inclusive environment” category, and the Betty Urquhart Community Service Award.

“There are three main elements that we all need: security, housing and food. We knew the biggest impact we could make was feeding people,” Pitzoff said.

In addition to their year-round work, Crosbie and Pitzoff make sure no one goes hungry or neglected during the holidays, offering special meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Last year they provided a dedicated “mailbox”

For more information on Tydel Foods, and to make a donation, go to: www.tydelfoods.ca, or scan the QR code on this page.

