

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1893

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

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International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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IBEW News

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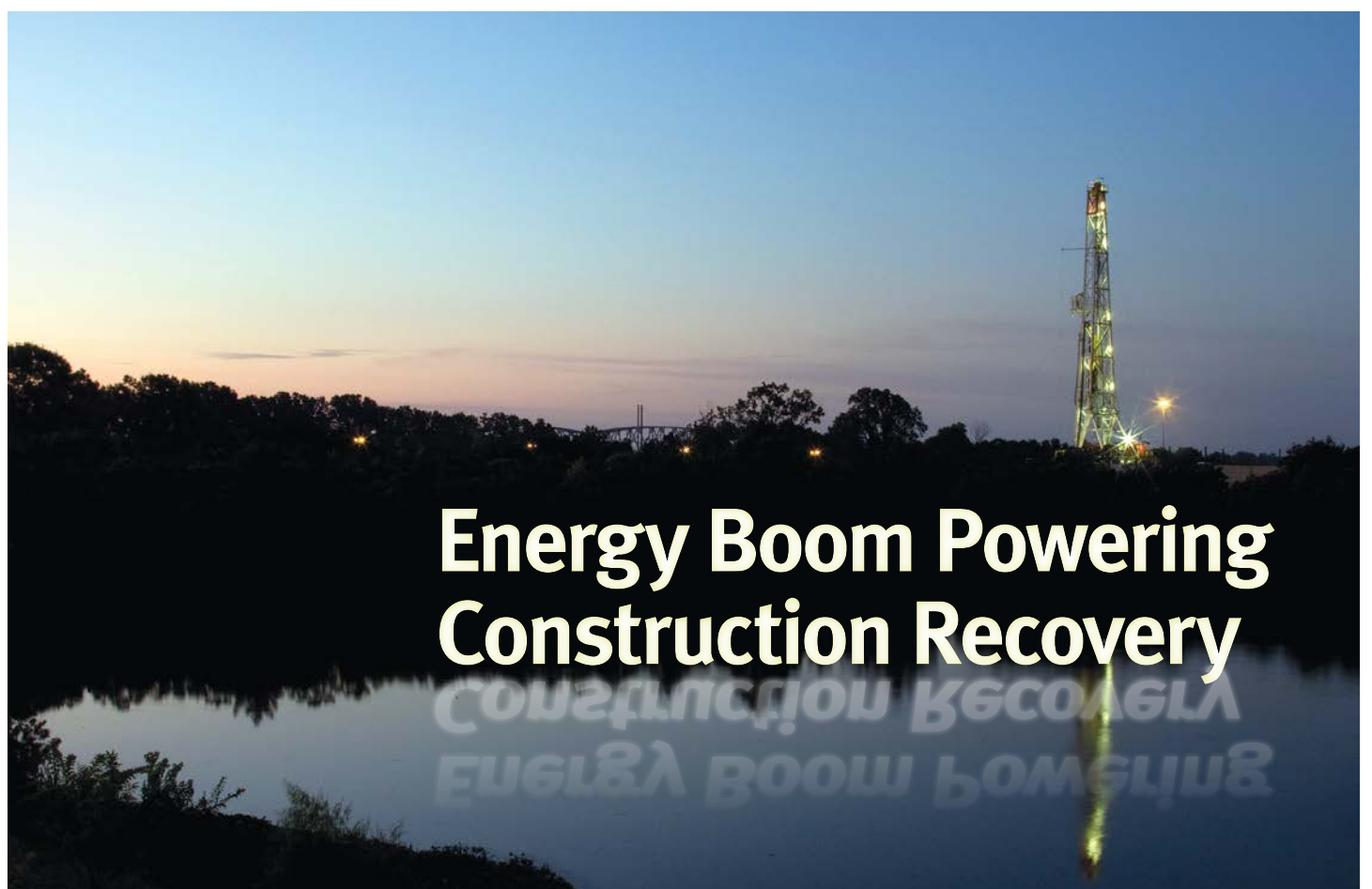
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Who We Are



Energy Boom Powering Construction Recovery

Increased oil and gas production, like from this drilling rig in Shreveport, La., has translated into tens of thousands of new jobs. Credit: Daniel Foster

Better known for its zydeco music clubs and restaurants serving up boiled crawfish, Lake Charles, La., has recently become one of the leaders of the United States' energy revolution—a revolution that has not only radically changed the country's energy portfolio, but has revived a sluggish construction industry, putting tens of thousands of electricians back to work.

Just ask Lake Charles Local 861 Business Manager Jeffrey Sanders. "I haven't been this optimistic since the 1970s," he said.

Every member of his local is working, with an additional 100 travelers in town. "We increased our

FUELING THE COMEBACK

membership by 30 percent since January," he said.

One of the biggest jobs they are working on is the Golden Nugget casino, a 30,000-square-foot entertainment complex and luxury hotel.

But what's really powering the construction boom in Lake Charles is liquefied natural gas, better known as LNG.

"Pretty much all future work in this area hinges on natural gas," Sanders said.

LNG is natural gas that is converted to liquid form for ease of transport. Built a few years ago, the first local LNG facility in the area was designed to receive natural gas imports. But the rapid growth of gas drilling in the U.S. has made exporting—not importing—a lucrative field for energy companies, forcing a major retooling of the facility.

The Lake Charles Liquefaction Project recently received permission from the U.S. Energy Department to export domestically produced gas.

Two other multibillion dollar export facilities are also in the works, including a \$15 billion gas-to-liquids terminal to be built by South African energy giant Sasol.

All in all, more than \$240 billion in natural gas and oil related projects are coming to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, stretching from Brownsville on the Texas/Mexico border up through Florida.

"Oil and gas are such a huge stimulus to the economy," says International Representative Tom Davis, who serves as business development representative for the area.

Industry-related jobs have grown by 40 percent since 2007. And the economic effect extends beyond the oil and gas projects themselves.

"We're seeing new industrial and commercial projects going up to support LNG," Sanders said. "Buildings for power tool shops, vendors to back up these big jobs."

CONSTRUCTION RECOVERY *continued on page 2*

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Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in August 2014

Table with 12 columns: Local, Surname, Date of Death, Local, Surname, Date of Death, Local, Surname, Date of Death, Local, Surname, Date of Death, Local, Surname, Date of Death. Lists names and dates for August 2014.

In Memoriam

Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in September 2014

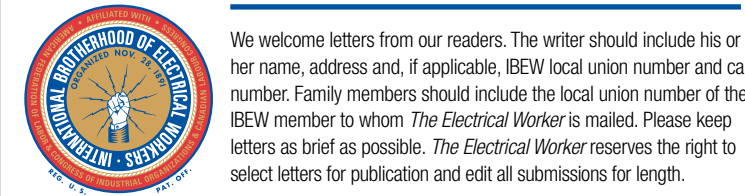
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The Electrical Worker was the name of the first official publication of the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in 1893 (the NBEW became the IBEW in 1899 with the expansion of the union into Canada). The name and format of the publication have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

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

Send letters to:
Letters to the Editor, The Electrical Worker, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001
Or send by e-mail to: media@ibew.org

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FROM THE OFFICERS

A Good Jobs Boom?



Edwin D. Hill
International President

As we report in this issue, the construction industry is making a comeback—a comeback fueled in large part by a resurgent oil and gas industry.

From the Rust Belt to the Great Plains and Canadian Prairies down to the Gulf Coast, North America's energy boom is translating into new jobs for tradesmen and contractors, breathing life into many communities hit hard by 2008's Great Recession.

The steady growth of renewable energy, such as solar and wind, means billions of dollars worth of work for skilled electricians now and into the future.

It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the United States and Canada. Not only can it potentially guarantee energy independence for generations, it could help reverse the "Walmartization" of the economy—the trend of too many low-wage, no opportunity jobs.

Skilled blue-collar labor was once the foundation of the middle class, providing decent wages and benefits, lifting up working families and their communities.

Outsourcing, union busting and government deregulation helped seal off this pathway to the middle class for millions of Americans and Canadians, but the ongoing energy-based construction recovery provides the IBEW and other building trades unions with a unique opportunity to make sure that these jobs are good ones, providing careers for thousands now entering the workforce.

But it won't happen if we don't seize this chance to grow.

From the oil fields of North Dakota to offshore rigs in Texas, too many energy companies are taking the low road, ignoring regulations and relying on low-skilled, low-paid workers to get the job done. It's not a surprise that an oil and gas worker is more likely to be killed on the job than a coal miner. Or that payroll fraud is running rampant in the industry, according to a recent labor department investigation.

What might seem like a money-saving shortcut in the rush to drill can result in poor workmanship, expensive delays and potentially disastrous accidents that place workers and the environment at risk.

We have a lot to offer the industry: the best trained and most competent electrical workforce on the continent. And we have what's needed to attract the right kind of workers in this increasingly labor-strapped market: good wages, benefits and opportunities for advancement.

But only by aggressively promoting ourselves and the work we do to industry stakeholders and the wider community can we guarantee that the energy boom results in a good jobs boom as well. ■

Chutzpah

I t is simple. It is frugal. It is just and obvious, and sadly—but not surprisingly—the opponents of organized labor are fighting against it.

"It" is an executive order signed by President Obama in July that will make it much more difficult for companies to win federal contracts if they have violated federal wage, safety and civil rights laws. (See more on page 20.)

Simple decency provides all the justification necessary: if one part of the government is busy fining you for breaking the law, another part of the government shouldn't be hiring you to do more of the same. What could be more obvious? If you steal wages or endanger the health and safety of taxpayers, their money should be off limits to you.

As I see it, the only reasoned criticism is that it took until 2014. After more than 50 years in the labor movement, I do not usually underestimate the cynicism and greed of anti-worker organizations like the Associated Builders and Contractors. I figured they wouldn't like it but would have the good sense to stew in silence. They surprised me.

ABC officials told *The New York Times* they were "deeply concerned." The order was "heavy handed... may lead to additional costs and blacklisting" and they were "prepared to fight in Congress and the courts." A vice president from the National Association of Manufacturers said companies would be sanctioned "for even minor violations of complex labor laws." The president of the International Franchise Association said it held business to "an unreasonable standard of perfection."

There is a great Yiddish word that came to me as I read this shameful litany: chutzpah. It means gall or nerve, as in, "You've got some nerve." The classic way to explain chutzpah is a person who kills both his parents and begs the court for mercy because he is an orphan.

This is what they are defending: between 2007 and 2011, 49 federal contractors were fined nearly \$200 million for 1,776 wage and safety violations. Included in that list are violations—not unforeseeable accidents, but violations of the law—that resulted in the death of 42 workers. These companies still received federal contracts worth \$89 billion. In 2012. A single year.

They should be embarrassed. That's chutzpah. ■



Salvatore J. Chilia
International Secretary-Treasurer

"LETTERS TO THE EDITOR"

All in the Family

As I reflect the fact that my son, Paterson, N.J., Local 102 member Peter Pagano, will soon retire after 40 years of service, I think about all the time my family has been members of the IBEW. My father, Pete Pagano, was a member of Local 1950 from 1942 until he retired in 1969. He faithfully delivered and sold electrical supplies to our union contractors, who built the plants that supplied our country during World War II, such as General Motors in Linden, N.J., and the Exxon refinery that supplied the fuel for our armed forces.

My own career was with Local 675 (later Local 102) for 40 years, 30 years as recording secretary and delegate to the N.J. state building trades and general superintendent for a large union contractor for 20 years. I retired in 1992.

My son Peter chaired the executive board at Local 102. He worked for a large contractor and became general foreman working on large electrical projects. His son, my grandson, Chris Pagano, just completed his apprenticeship and will become a journeyman, just as his father retires.

My other son, Robert Pagano, has been a member of Local 102 since 2000. He works for as a project superintendent for a large union contractor building substations in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. His son, Jeff Pagano, is a second-year apprentice.

We are all proud union members and would like to thank the IBEW for giving us a good quality of life, and helping us to build a strong America.

Joe Pagano, Local 102 retiree Paterson, N.J.

Coal and Jobs

I just got the Electrical Worker paper. I was a little concerned about the biased words you chose against the Republicans. The Democrats seem to be doing a good job out here in Colorado in getting rid of our coal plant jobs. How come you do not talk about that? It would be nice to hear a more balanced approach in your articles.

Curtis Scott, Local 111 member Denver

[Editor's Note: Brother Scott is right; despite its good intentions, the Environmental Protection Agency's misguided, ad hoc coal policies could do tremendous damage to our members and the reliability of the entire grid. We are using every tool we have to oppose the EPA's clean power plan. We have made our position clear at rallies, in Electrical Worker editorials, and even an op-ed by President Hill in the Wall Street Journal, as well as in public and private meetings. But the only way to support good, middle-class jobs and build a sustainable future for our children would be a bipartisan energy plan and there is no evidence that some lawmakers are interested in that. Our commitment is and always will be to our members and working people and our support goes to whoever carries their banner.]

f From Facebook: Every month the IBEW Facebook page receives thousands of comments from our dynamic and engaged community of members and friends.

Where She Belongs

As a daughter, sister and niece of IBEW members, it only felt right to go into the field. My brothers have treated me well. As a traveler in the '90s, I was taken in by families of brothers and made to feel at home. I found that everyone was there to help each other and learn. THANK YOU, IBEW, and my brothers and sisters.

Christine Matarese, Local 313 member Wilmington, Del.

WHO WE ARE

If you have a story to tell about your IBEW experience, please send it to media@ibew.org.

First Nation Member Brings Passion to Manitoba Local

Chief White Eagle of the American Indian tribe, the Ponca, once said, "When you are in doubt, be still and wait; when doubt no longer exists for you, then go forward with courage."

Growing up in the '70s in The Pas, a town in Northern Manitoba, Carolyn Smeltzer, a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, today a unit chair in Winnipeg Local 2034, was not one to stay still and wait. But courage, a trait inherited from her mother and grandmother, has defined her accomplishments.

After she was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at age 6, Smeltzer's mother and grandmother enrolled her in figure skating, a costly sport that enjoyed scant participation by aboriginals.

By age 12, Smeltzer made the Manitoba Team. The only aboriginal and its second-youngest member, she traveled far beyond the reserve, all the while paying close attention to the language, behavior and intricacies of Canada's dominant culture. "I wasn't afraid of taking chances," says Smeltzer, whose family history spurred her to become an advocate for aboriginal rights.

When Carolyn was two years old, her mother narrowly escaped kidnappers who later, on the same day, murdered Helen Betty Osborne, a young high school student who had left her home in Norway House Cree Nation to attend high school in The Pas. It took seventeen years for two local white men to be charged in the case, which drew a formal apology from the Manitoba government for racial and gender bias in the investigation.

"Aboriginals learned they needed to become politically savvy and educated in order to help others who faced obstacles," says Smeltzer, who, in 1989 at age 18, attended an Aboriginal Youth Conference in Ottawa.

Four years later, Smeltzer, a single mother with three children, heard about a community college program to train computer programmers and systems analysts. She applied and was accepted, but was told she would have to wait two years to qualify and was placed on a waiting list for sponsorship. She nevertheless continued to attend class alongside 31 other students in the program, carrying her infant son on her back until the school approved her grant.

By the program's second year, only four students were left. Smeltzer was the only aboriginal female. Working nights as a network administrator and attending classes during the day, she sent her resume out to dozens of employers. In April, 1995, Smeltzer was hired by



'I didn't really understand my rights as a worker until I became an IBEW member,' says Winnipeg, Manitoba., Local 2034 unit chair Carolyn Smeltzer.

Manitoba Hydro. For the next 10 years, she traveled throughout the province's vast northern quadrant helping to set up computers. "I had to leave my home community if I wanted to leave a life of poverty behind," says Michelle Sentenac, a co-worker. Smeltzer, who is involved in charitable donations and other activities in The Pas,

has increased from an average of two or three to as many as 18. Politics is frequently on the agenda.

"Carolyn even cooks and bakes on her own time to get members to meetings," says Michelle Sentenac, a co-worker. Smeltzer, who is involved in charitable donations and other activities in The Pas,

"I continue to be more and more amazed at the lengths IBEW will take to educate and empower their members."

—Carolyn Smeltzer

In 2005, Smeltzer returned home to The Pas, where she could also help care for her aging mother and grandmother. Previously a member of one of the smaller unions at the Manitoba Hydro, she joined the IBEW, becoming one of 600 members of Local 2034 with First Nations' backgrounds.

"I didn't really understand my rights as a worker until I became an IBEW member," says Smeltzer, who attended the IBEW Women's Conference in San Antonio, Texas, in September and served on a panel about leadership.

"I continue to be more and more amazed at the lengths IBEW will take to educate and empower their members," says Smeltzer. She is carrying on the tradition.

"I plan each meeting for our 34-person unit to ensure that it is well-organized with presentations and handouts to make it more worth everyone's while to attend," she says. She invites Local 2034 Business Manager Mike Velie or the local's northwest area representative to address members. Average meeting attendance

"always goes above and beyond," says Sentenac.

As some Canadian politicians promote anti-union legislation similar to measures supported by the U.S.'s right wing, Smeltzer recalls a quote she brought back from the Women's Conference, "Our cause is the cause of human rights and justice for all workers." How, she asks, can something so simple be so controversial?

She compares the lack of public discussion on a bill to make it harder for unions to win representation elections to the secrecy surrounding an involuntary immunization program that targeted aboriginal youth in government-established schools in the early 1900s.

"I come from the part of society in Canada where we had no say and where the government was our caretaker as in a parent-child relationship," says Smeltzer. "It amazes me still to this day how secretive laws [like anti-union measures] can be put forth, which should not happen in a true democratic society." ■



Executive Order Strikes Blow Against Crooked Federal Contractors

Federal contractors who steal their employees' wages, tolerate unsafe working conditions or fail to pay their taxes may soon be iced out of future federal contracts.

The Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order requires agencies to weigh corporate compliance with not only wage and safety, collective bargaining, family

and medical leave and civil rights laws. Under the order, the companies themselves must include all fines, penalties and judgments against them in their bids.

"I praise the president for issuing this executive order. It is long past time a president took action to ensure fair pay and working conditions for federal employees covered by the Service Contract Act," said the IBEW's Government Employees Department Director Dennis Phelps.

Despite a 2008 law requiring federal contractors stay in compliance with federal law, a study issued by the U.S. Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee in December found that from 2007 to 2012, 49 federal contractors were cited 1,776 times for wage and safety violations and paid almost \$200 million in fines, yet those same companies won more than \$80 billion in federal contracts in 2012 alone.

Even safety violations resulting in the deaths of workers were not a bar to more federal work. The report cited seven companies that were fined for Occupational Safety and Health Administration violations that killed 42 workers won additional federal work.

"Even repeated and serious violations of federal labor laws... do not factor into contracting decisions," wrote the study's author, Iowa's Sen. Tom Harkin.

The most common violation was wage theft, including non-payment of overtime, not giving workers their last paycheck, not paying for all the hours worked, not paying minimum wage, and not paying workers at all. Wage theft has become a prominent issue in Washington recently and is finding political traction in both parties. At the end of July, about the same time as the executive order, the Republican-led Congress approved a Democrat-sponsored amendment to the defense appropriations that would immediately bar contractors that violate federal wage and safety laws. The bill has not been taken up yet in the U.S. Senate.

"For Obama's whole first term, the economic conversation was about debt ceilings and austerity. A bunch of factors, from [the] 'Occupy' [movement] to low wage workers rising up across the country, have made the second term very different," said Change to Win Federation's

Communications Director Paco Fabian. "This executive order is the direct result of individuals taking action together and getting income inequality, not the debt ceiling, on front pages."

"This executive order is the direct result of individuals taking action together..."

— Paco Fabian, Change to Win Federation's Communications Director

Hundreds of IBEW members covered by the Service Contract Act will be directly affected by the executive order, but if the final rule is written broadly, all IBEW government employees might feel changes.

For example, Phelps said that thousands of IBEW members work at privately owned shipyards, contracting with the Navy at Huntington-Ingalls in Pascagoula, Miss., Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. They are not covered by the Service Contract Act, but their employers are competing against nonunion shipbuilders like Austal, which has had multiple accusations of unfair labor and unsafe working conditions filed against it.

President Obama signs an executive order making it more difficult for companies that violate labor and safety laws to win federal contracts.

Because all federal acquisitions are included in the scope of the executive order, Austal could be prevented from doing future work.

"One of the intentions of this order is that upstanding, good actors will take work away from the ones that successfully underbid and then cut corners on safety and wages," Phelps said. "If Austal is found guilty, and there is reason to expect that may happen soon, that work would shift to more reputable contractors like Ingalls and Newport News, which are both union organized."

Nevertheless, there are voices opposing the change. The International Franchise Association's president, Steve Caldeira, said the new requirements would require an "unreasonable standard of perfection" and would create a "blacklist."

Geoff Burr, vice president of federal affairs for the Associated Builders and Contractors—an alliance of antiunion construction companies—said the order was "heavy handed... red tape [that] may lead to additional costs and the blacklisting of some federal contractors."

Even before the start of the public comment period, Burr said ABC had "focused a lot of our energies on how we can roll back these things" and said they would fight the rule in Congress and the courts. In the last year, ABC has also announced it would fight executive orders raising the minimum wage for federal contract employees to \$10.10 an hour, prohibiting discrimination against disabled construction workers and new rules requiring companies to disclose spending on union-busting consultants.

The executive order will now go through a multiyear drafting process overseen by the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council that Phelps expects will take until 2016.

"We will push for the strongest possible rules so that only companies that do right by workers and taxpayers see money from the federal government," Phelps said. ■

IBEW MEDIA WORLD

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

www.ibew.org

Our Web site has news and info not available anywhere else. Visit us to connect with the IBEW on Facebook and Twitter.

And read *The Electrical Worker* online!

YouTube

It's the largest rooftop solar power project in the country — and it's being built 100-percent IBEW. Check out members of Las Vegas Local 357 as they help turn the city's abundant sunshine into green energy for the bustling tourist destination.

YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker

Vimeo

For AEP linemen in southern Ohio, challenges with management over a safety issue didn't break their spirit.



Instead, they voted to join Columbus Local 1466. "It brings a comfort to you, knowing that you're in a brotherhood, and knowing these guys have got your back," says member Eric Madden. Vimeo.com/ibew/OhioAEP

HourPower

Pardon the pun, but "watts new" with electrical products? We have the skinny in a new segment on IBEWHourPower.com!



ElectricTV

With the NFL season in full swing, check out the Jaguars' newest, biggest LED video boards — installed by the NECA-IBEW team, on ElectricTV.net.

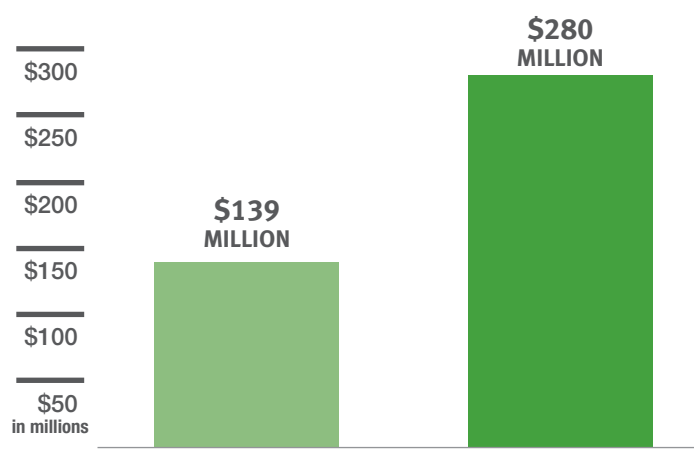


By the Numbers: WAGE THEFT

- ▶ **1 in 5** American workers are employed by a company that does business with the federal government
- ▶ **1 in 5** federal contractors failed to pay overtime and **1 in 10** forced their employees to work off the clock
- ▶ **1 in 3** of the largest penalties handed down for violating federal labor laws from 2007-2013 were given to federal contractors
- ▶ **35%** of the **100** largest federal contractors violated both wage and worker safety laws between 2007 and 2012.
- ▶ **\$2,634** — Average amount lost by low wage workers due to wage theft, nearly 20 percent of their annual income

Sources: U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee; National Employment Law Project; Economic Policy Institute

The Worst Thieves in America Aren't Who You Think



Street, bank, gas station & convenience store robberies (Combined), 2012

Wage Theft, 2012

Source: Economic Policy Institute