

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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## 2020 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

# 'UNREAL' CANADIAN PHOTO TAKES TOP PRIZE

## FIRST PLACE

**Brad Masse**  
Vancouver, B.C., Local 258

**S**ometimes the picture that wins the IBEW's annual photo contest captures a quiet moment. A portrait or a vivid sunset.

And sometimes you get a picture that is the visual equivalent of a Neil Peart's drum solo: Mudslide! Mountains! Roaring river! Fog! Helicopter! Rainbow! Hundreds of thousands of volts! Men dangling hundreds of feet in the air!

Vancouver, B.C., Local 258 member Brad Masse's 2020 winner of his brothers Steve Fyfe and Aaron Seaton preparing to reconductor a transmission pole on the Skeena River is packed with stimulating sights.

Not only did it win the most votes, but it also marks the first time a submission from Canada has won the top prize.

"We were looking up at that valley saying, 'This

looks like Avatar.' I mean, it is unreal," Masse said.

Masse took this picture in September of 2019, a year after a massive mudslide took down a transmission tower, knocking out power to about 8,000 residents in northwest British Columbia around Prince Rupert.

He was part of a crew of 40 IBEW members that stood up the poles. Each morning they drove 50 km from the town of Terrace to the fly yard just outside the frame across the river. Then helicopters hoisted the men onto the tower. Masse asked the pilot to just hover for a second while he took the picture.

"When I took it, I told everyone, 'This will be the best picture of linework, like ever,'" he said.

Video of the project can also be found at [bit.ly/AvalancheRestoration](https://bit.ly/AvalancheRestoration).

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS *continued on page 3*



## FROM THE OFFICERS

# A Hope-Filled Start



**Lonnie R. Stephenson**  
International President

**B**y the time you read this column President Joe Biden will have completed just over two months in office. And I'm happy to report he's following through on the promises he made to working men and women during his campaign.

Last month, we told you about some of the incredible hiring decisions he's made, including Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and Los Angeles Local 11's own Jennifer Kropke, whom he hired to make sure good union jobs are a top priority at the Department of Energy.

As I'm writing this, President Biden is preparing to sign a bill that will pump \$1.9 trillion into the nation's struggling economy, including direct payments to many Americans and a lifeline for struggling cities and states, many of which employ our IBEW sisters and brothers.

In February, I was invited to the Oval Office with some of my counterparts from other unions, and I have to tell you, I'm more hopeful than I've been about the future of our country and the labor movement than I've been in a long time.

You see, Joe Biden gets it. Like us, he came from a working-class family. He watched his father make hard choices to put food on the family's table, and he grew up knowing the value of hard work and sacrifice. He learned early on about the power of unions to lift up people who would stand no chance if they had to stand alone against corporate power and greed. And during the campaign, he promised to be "the most pro-union president you've ever seen."

As we sat there in the White House and he laid out his agenda for a long-awaited infrastructure package, I felt that promise powerfully. Because when Joe Biden says that the work of revitalizing America's roads, rails and bridges, ports and airports will be done union, he means it. When he says IBEW members will be the ones to prepare our energy grid for the next 100 years, he's not just shooting off at the mouth.

When a member of his Cabinet looks a dozen automakers in the eyes and tells them that their next-generation factories and charging networks will be built by union hands, I'm filled with hope. Because I've never seen that before. Not from Republican presidents. Not from Democratic presidents.

The jobs President Biden is talking about are the kind that can take a wireman from first-year apprentice to retirement. The manufacturing jobs he plans to create with his "Buy American" and supply chain executive orders are the sort that will provide for a middle-class life and a secure retirement.

That doesn't mean every decision will go our way, not by a long shot. But Joe Biden cares about working men and women to his core, and he believes in the power of unions just as strongly. And that's a heck of a reason to feel hopeful. ■

# Pensions Prove Who Our Friends Are

**B**rothers and sisters, I wear a lot of hats as your International Secretary-Treasurer, but none is more important to me than my responsibility as steward of the National Electrical Benefit Fund.

Like many of you, a major lure in joining this brotherhood was the promise of a secure and dignified retirement after years of hard work. There have been a lot of other amazing benefits along the way, but that stands out as the great reward at the end of a long career.

For many of our union brothers and sisters in other trades, that promise has been in danger through no fault of their own. Entire industries have been hollowed out as the economy changed, and more workers ended up drawing on pension plans than were paying in. That put some of those plans into serious financial trouble.

I've been talking to you about the Butch Lewis Act for several years, a bill circulating in Congress that would help those plans survive and keep those retirement promises intact. Our friends on Capitol Hill kept introducing this plan, but they kept running into opposition.

You see, many on the anti-union side wanted to see those plans fail. They wanted millions of retired Americans to lose their hard-earned pensions so they could point to their failure as an argument against unions and against defined-benefit plans like many of ours.

The government insurance plan for these pensions has been underfunded for years, and Republicans wanted to tax healthy pensions like the IBEW's into insolvency to make up the shortfall.

But I'm so proud to report that President Joe Biden and Democratic majorities in both the House and the Senate included language from Butch Lewis in the American Rescue Act, the \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan that will fund everything from vaccine manufacturing to extended unemployment payments and more.

I often get asked why the IBEW gets so involved in politics, and the next time I get asked that question, I'm going to point to this pension rescue.

We get involved because the only thing standing between millions of union retirees watching their pensions go up in smoke and the anti-union crowd looking to make an example of them were House and Senate Democrats and a friend in the White House. Not a single Republican voted to save these struggling pensions or to prevent our healthy ones from getting dragged down with them.

Next time you're casting a vote, remember that. We're not liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat at the IBEW. We're for the politicians who stand with us.

After years of working to see sensible legislation like Butch Lewis signed into law, that has never been clearer. ■



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

# L.A. Members Unite Against Racist Jobsite Symbol

**J**aime Rodriguez wasn't expecting to find one of the world's most enduring symbols of hate when he showed up to work the morning of Feb. 23.

The Los Angeles Local 11 inside wireman apprentice was working with signatory contractor Walton Electric on a 5-story low-income housing project in South L.A. when he entered a unit to find a Nazi swastika fashioned from cardboard and tape, presumably made and left there by a member of one of the many trades on the job. The symbol, particularly on a job with an overwhelming majority of Latino workers, was a jarring reminder of the racism and hatred that minority workers have to deal with far too often.



*Local 11 foreman Edgar Aleman, left, with inside wireman apprentice Jaime Rodriguez.*

Rodriguez immediately made his foreman, Edgar Aleman, aware of the swastika, and the enraged

Iraq War Army combat veteran took photos and texted them to the general contractor's superintendent, who eventually joined Aleman to throw out the swastika. The next day, Walton Electric sent a representative to speak to all foremen on the project about the incident and made clear that racial intolerance would not be allowed on the jobsite. Foremen from each of the represented trades later followed up with every worker on the project and announced that whoever was responsible for the swastika would be fired when found out.

Although racist, sexist and homophobic slurs are still far too common on construction sites, they're too often ignored. Brothers Rodriguez and Aleman took action and refused to brush them off.

Aleman recalled a visit to the Holocaust museum in Dallas with his wife, saying, "In situations like this, I refuse to stay silent. I will not be a bystander; I will be an upstander." An "upstander," he said, was a reference to those who supported Jewish families during Nazi occupation. He recited the inspiration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as well, citing a familiar quote. "In the end," he said, "we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

"When I joined the union, I never imagined racism and racist graffiti would be prevalent and tolerated," Rodriguez said. "I joined for all the reasons that are promoted: good pay, health benefits, retirement package, solid representation. I was moved by my foreman's actions. He didn't accept, 'That's how it is,' when I showed him the swastika. He can serve as a role model for others to not tolerate unacceptable work conditions, be they safety or harassment."

When he heard about the incident, Local 11 Business Manager Joel Barton said, "It is disgraceful that this type of desecration and mentality still exists today on our jobsites. We cannot allow the dissemination of racist and inhumane symbols to perpetuate amongst our ranks. I am proud of these members and their employer for standing up and addressing this unacceptable behavior. Let us all strive to accept one another as sisters and brothers and lead us into a brighter future."

International President Lonnie R. Stephenson spoke about the it with Local 11 business agent and organizer Francisco "Paco" Arago, and the two shared their anger over the incident.

"Too many of these racist, divisive acts have popped up on jobsites across the U.S., and it is unacceptable," Stephenson said. "The only way we fulfill our mission to organize every worker in the electrical industry is to welcome our sisters and brothers from different backgrounds and to celebrate those things that make us unique. We all want the same things: safety on the job, to be able to provide for ourselves and our families, a secure retirement, freedom from harassment."

"Each of us joined this union to improve our lives, and racism like what happened in Los Angeles won't be tolerated in the IBEW," he said. "There's so much more that makes us similar than divides us. That's been a theme of the labor movement since we stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Dr. King as he marched for civil rights and workers' rights, and we're committed to removing this kind of intolerance from our jobsites."

"Beyond giving an honest 'eight for eight' to our contractors, our duty as union electricians is to protect our working conditions, enforce our contract on our jobsites and continue to build an unbreakable organization that will better the quality of life of our membership and working families," Arago said. "We cannot turn a blind eye to any type of discrimination on our jobsites, and this action that was taken by our members is a great example of how we play a role. Solidarity is our weapon."

"I want to thank Brothers Rodriguez and Aleman for speaking up and bringing attention to this horrible incident," Stephenson said. "I'm sorry they had to go through it. But this kind of thing can't be swept under the rug any longer. When we see this type of abhorrent behavior on our jobsites, it's our responsibility as union brothers and sisters to stand up and demand that it be stopped." ■



# 2020 Photo Contest Winners

► Continued from page 1



## SECOND PLACE

**Nathan Mendoza** | Denver Local 111

Voters loved helicopters this year. In this shot, 19-year journeyman lineman and foreman Nathan Mendoza said the job he was working here involved lots of helicopter support. Because what they do is so out-of-the-ordinary, he and his crewmates often take pictures with their phones or Xcel Energy-supplied GoPro cameras. While reviewing the day's remotely taken GoPro photos, this one caught Mendoza's eye. It captured him, journeymen linemen George Hollabaugh and Adam Boggio and apprentice Anthony Crane working atop a transmission tower in the picturesque Rocky Mountains.



## THIRD PLACE

**Aaron Brooks** | Rockford, Ill., Local 196

Aaron Brooks is a superintendent for signatory contractor J.F. Edwards Construction. He was working at the Ameren-owned High Prairie Wind Farm in northeast Missouri when he captured this Midwest sunset in the town of Greentop near the Iowa border. "I love old barns and I drove past this one almost every day," said Brooks, who used his iPhone 11 to snap the photo. "I drove past this time with the sun setting and thought, 'This would be such a beautiful picture,' so I picked a spot and shot it."

Look for the launch of 2021's IBEW Photo Contest in May's *Electrical Worker* and on [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org). We can't wait to see what our members are up to in the year ahead. ■

## HONORABLE MENTION



**Mark Perlewitz** | Milwaukee Local 2150

Mark Perlewitz was part of a team of We Energies hydro electricians performing maintenance work at the Chalk Hill Hydroelectric Plant in Stevenson, Mich., when he took this picture with his iPhone. Fellow member Brian Bancroft is using dry ice to clean a generator that is clogged with oil and dust after decades of use.



**Shaena Sullivan** | Seattle Local 77

Shaena Sullivan can look at a worksite and see art. Even "the back of a dirty bucket truck," said the groundman with Seattle Local 77. The copper dead ends and other materials amid debris and a dusting of snow caught her eye when she visited her husband's jobsite last fall — an alley in Spokane where Jake Sullivan, a Local 77 journeyman lineman, was changing out poles. She captured the scene with a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV camera. While still an active member, Shaena has been pursuing photography since being laid off from a utility company. A former firefighter, she said she especially enjoys making "artistic photos of professions that I'm passionate about."



**Daniel Walsh** | Butte, Mont., Local 44

The Mystic Lake Hydroelectric Project sits at the head of a narrow valley, 8,500 feet up in the Sawtooth Range of the Rocky Mountains. Most of the times that Local 44 member Daniel Walsh visits the site to test the accuracy of the intertie meters, he works 1,000 feet down from the dam lake at the generation station. But once in a while, he rides the 100-year-old, 1.6-mile funicular to the head house — just him, the sky and Custer National Forest.



# Walking the Talk: Biden Presidency Ushers in New Era for America's Workers

**B**riskily making good on his vow to be “the most pro-union president ever,” President Joe Biden is acting decisively to balance the scales for workers and affirming their rights with more forceful words than any White House has uttered in generations.

“Every worker should have a free and fair choice to join a union. The law guarantees that choice,” Biden said Feb. 28. “It’s your right, no employer can take that right away. So, make your voice heard.”

His video message came as 6,000 Alabama warehouse workers were voting by mail to decide the fate of a widely publicized organizing drive that management bitterly opposed.

He appealed to all workers fighting those battles, not specifying any one employer. But his tone and timing were unambiguous.

“He went where no president has gone before,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. “He weighed the risks, and he stood with workers.”

Halfway through his first 100 days as president, Biden’s words line up with his deeds.

He began reversing his predecessor’s worst anti-worker policies within hours of taking office, is backing major reforms to undo decades of earlier damage and has placed union members and labor allies in key jobs throughout the administration.

More broadly, he and Vice President Kamala Harris are pushing a bold agenda to combat COVID-19, put money in the pockets of working Americans, and create hundreds of thousands — potentially millions — of union jobs through massive investment in the nation’s infrastructure.

Along the way, he is teaching a nation unschooled in labor history how and why unions are so important.

“America wasn’t built by Wall Street,”



*International President Lonnie R. Stephenson, on couch at left, and other prominent labor leaders spent a February afternoon in the Oval Office discussing infrastructure, job creation and other critical union issues with President Biden and Vice President Harris. Participants said it was the most productive White House meeting for workers in years.*

Biden is fond of saying. “The middle class built this country, and labor built the middle class.”

**THAT WAS** his preamble to the press pool on a mid-February afternoon when he and Harris sat down in the Oval Office with Stephenson and other prominent labor leaders, including AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler from Portland, Ore. Local 125.

Biden’s guests described it as the most substantial White House discussion on behalf of workers in years. “Enormously

productive,” Stephenson said.

They talked about the \$1.9 trillion stimulus package to recharge the U.S. economy through direct relief and programs to sustain a recovery; about buy-American and supply-chain orders to ignite the manufacturing sector; and epic plans for public works.

“We have an incredible opportunity to make enormous progress in creating good-paying jobs, Davis-Bacon prevailing wage jobs, to rebuild the infrastructure of this country in a way that everybody knows has to be done,” Biden told reporters before the closed-door conversation began.

He lamented that the United States lags far behind other developed nations “in terms of infrastructure, everything from canals to highways to airports, to everything we can do and we need to do to make ourselves competitive in the 21st century.”

That includes greater access to registered apprenticeships, which Biden made possible by reversing his predecessor’s executive order favoring substandard Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs.

By undermining training and safety standards and allowing employers to cut apprentices’ wages and benefits, IRAPs posed a direct threat to world-class pro-

grams run by the IBEW and other trades.

The meeting underscored how much apprentices and journeymen alike have to gain from Biden’s agenda.

As his campaign’s Build Back Better platform promised, he wants to spend \$2 trillion on a historic swath of projects ranging from energy, transit and broadband to the urgent rehabilitation of roads, rails, bridges, tunnels and more. That includes a major investment in the power grid that will put tens of thousands of IBEW members to work — projects more urgent than ever in the wake of February’s deadly freeze in Texas.

Specifics are still being hammered out, but Stephenson is optimistic.

“We’re eager to see the concrete details of the infrastructure plan, but we have no doubt about President Biden’s commitment to do it right, and that means union jobs,” he said.

Reinforcing that, Stephenson was invited to a second White House meeting a week later, virtually this time, along with the president of the United Auto Workers and more than a dozen U.S. automakers.

Their hosts, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and top economic and climate officials, told them, categorically, that the auto industry’s transition to clean energy will be driven by good, union jobs.

That includes retooling, constructing and maintaining automobile plants and nationwide charging networks — projects so vast, Stephenson said, “they literally could employ an IBEW electrician from apprenticeship to retirement.”

“They made it clear to the automakers that we’re their partners, not their adversaries,” he said. “They were emphatic about it, and they have the power to see it through because the federal government is going to invest billions to modernize the automobile industry.”



**JAN. 20**

On his first day in office, Biden fires anti-union NLRB General Counsel Peter Robb and names worker advocate Lauren McFerran as board chair.

**JAN. 22**

Signs executive order restoring collective bargaining for federal workers.

**JAN. 21**

Appoints Steelworkers safety advocate James S. Frederick to head OSHA.



**JAN. 25**

Signs “Made in America” order to revive manufacturing and “grow good-paying union jobs.”

**FEB. 2**

Fires all 10 union-busting members of impasse panel failing its duty to federal workers.

## ‘The Most Pro-Union President You’ve Ever Seen’

**In just his first 50 days**, President Joe Biden appointed union members to high office, laid out an aggressive pro-union and pro-worker agenda, accelerated the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and put cash in the pockets of struggling Americans.





Vice President Kamala Harris swears in Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, former governor of Michigan, who has made her objectives clear. At an energy conference March 3, she talked about the urgency of adding “hundreds of gigawatts to the grid,” requiring “millions of jobs — union jobs, with good pay and good benefits... By scaling up emerging technologies, we’re going to put people in construction, skilled trades and engineering to work.”

**AS INFRASTRUCTURE** and related endeavors were progressing in March, the White House won its most urgent battle: getting its sweeping \$1.9 billion American Rescue Plan through Congress.

Biden signed the wildly popular bill into law March 11, one day after the final House vote. Despite bipartisan support from at least 75% of Americans — virtually unheard of for a piece of legislation — not a single House or Senate Republican stood with the narrow Democratic majorities in Congress to pass it.

Checks and direct deposits in the works within days to fulfill the bill’s best-known provision, \$1,400 in direct relief for Americans earning less than \$75,000 a year. Other marquee line-items include extended unemployment benefits, an 85% subsidy for COBRA health coverage for six months and eviction protections.

Arguably most vital to IBEW members, the legislation addresses the endangered multi-employer pension system that millions of unionized workers count on for a secure retirement.

While the IBEW’s own pension plans are in good shape, some unions’ plans aren’t. Republicans are exploiting their troubles to try to bring down the entire system in favor of cheaper, less-stable employee-funded options, Stephenson said.

It’s a battle that the IBEW and labor allies have been fighting for several years, lobbying tirelessly for legislation to shore up at-risk pensions and ensure retirees get 100% of the benefits they’ve earned.

A fix that would keep the system solvent is included in the rescue plan. Biden was on board with it already, but union leaders made sure he knew that it couldn’t be comprised.

“Congress kicked this problem down the road for years, increasing the difficulty and the cost of solving it and putting millions of workers and retirees at risk through no fault of their own,” Stephenson said. “This bill will fix that, and we’re very grateful to President Biden for making it a priority.”

The rescue plan overall marks a profound shift from the previous administration by prioritizing workers, families and



In Michigan Feb. 19, President Biden, joined by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, tours the Pfizer plant that rolled out the nation’s first COVID-19 vaccines. Describing the steps of the precision operation and the workers who carry it out, he said, “We walked by a freezer farm that keeps those doses viable so they can be shipped.” The warehouse he referred to was retrofitted with hundreds of industrial, sub-zero freezers by Kalamazoo Local 131 members.

vices, from groceries and prescriptions to computer chips and car parts.

The bottom line for Biden is this:

“We’re going to use taxpayers’ money to rebuild America, buy American products and support American jobs,” he said.

small businesses over corporations and billionaires.

Its robust investment includes \$130 billion to reopen schools; \$160 billion for COVID-19 vaccines, testing and PPE production; a higher childcare tax credit; funds for public transit; and \$4.5 billion in energy assistance for low-income households, money that will also help IBEW-employer utilities straining under the burden of customers’ unpaid bills.

“We have no time to waste,” Biden said as he fought for the landmark bill. “The people of this country have suffered far too much for too long.”

**THE RESCUE PLAN** lays the foundation for other initiatives “to rebuild the backbone of America,” as Biden put it in January when he signed a “Buy American” executive order for federal purchases.

That order and another a month later are designed to jumpstart the manufacturing sector and prevent the kind of shortages that compound a crisis, such as the life-and-death scramble for protective equipment in the first months of the pandemic.

“The key plank will be, ‘Made in America,’” Biden said. “I don’t accept the defeatist view that the forces of automation and globalization (will stop) union jobs from growing here in America. We can create more of them, not fewer.”

Federal contracts awarded to foreign suppliers went up by 30% in the last administration. Biden said his order sets “clear directives” to minimize waivers for offshore purchasing, which were issued with abandon the past four years.

Now, “If an agency wants a waiver... they have to come to the White House and explain it to us,” he said.

Biden began to shore up and streamline the U.S. supply chain inside his first 48 hours as president, starting with an executive order to coordinate the nation’s scattershot COVID-19 response and activate the Defense Production Act.

He touted its progress several weeks later while touring the Pfizer campus in Kalamazoo, Mich., where Local 131 members retrofitted a warehouse with hundreds of sub-zero industrial freezers to store fragile coronavirus vaccines.

“When we discovered that vaccine manufacturers weren’t being prioritized when it came to scrutinizing and securing supplies they needed, we fixed that problem and got them what they needed,” Biden said. “We also used the Defense Production Act to speed up the supply chain for key equipment, like fill pumps and filters, which has already helped increase vaccine production.”

He broadened the scope Feb. 24, signing a multi-pronged order to sharpen America’s competitive edge and ensure a steady supply of critical goods and ser-

**MOMENTS** after Biden was sworn in Jan. 20, the rabidly anti-union general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board, Peter Robb, received a letter from the new president.

Biden was cleaning house. Resign by 5 p.m. or be fired, he told him, the same choice he gave Robb’s deputy the next day. Together with the GOP-majority board, the pair had done grave damage to workers’ rights in recent years.

They weren’t the only federal executives that he quickly fired for cause before their contracts were up, citing gross failure to live up to their duties to protect workers and consumers.

Their polar-opposite replacements include new NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo, previously the top lawyer at the Communications Workers of America.

She joins an atypically long list of career workers’ advocates — and union members themselves — who are serving at every level of the Biden-Harris administration.

Topping the list is former Boston Laborer and incoming Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, who sailed through his confirmation hearing and was awaiting a final vote by the full Senate as *The Electrical Worker*

**BIDEN PRESIDENCY** *continued on page 6*

## FEB. 17

- Discusses \$2 trillion infrastructure plan and union jobs in Oval Office meeting with International President Lonnie R. Stephenson and other prominent labor leaders.
- Signs executive order to protect building-trade apprenticeships against substandard IRAPs.
- Appoints top CWA lawyer Jennifer Abruzzo as NLRB general counsel.



## FEB. 27

Without a single GOP vote, Democrats in the U.S. House pass Biden’s landmark \$1.9 stimulus bill, including language from the Butch Lewis Act to rescue troubled pensions and protect IBEW pensions from being dragged down with them.

## FEB. 28

Amid a historic organizing drive in Alabama, Biden issues strongest pro-union remarks of any modern president, slamming employer interference in all campaigns and urging workers to “make your voice heard.”

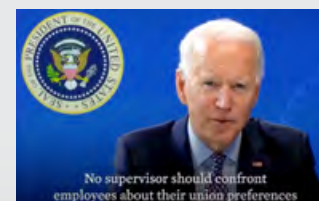


## FEB. 18

Senate committee votes 18-4 in favor of confirming pro-union Boston Mayor Marty Walsh as U.S. Secretary of Labor.

## FEB. 24

Stephenson and UAW President Rory Gamble join Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg as he tells American automakers that jobs in the industry’s clean-energy transition will be good, union jobs.



## MARCH 11

Biden signs the \$1.9 trillion stimulus and COVID-19 relief package, including \$1,400 checks for most Americans.



## Walking the Talk: Biden Presidency Ushers in New Era for America's Workers

► **Continued from page 5**

went to press.

Still officially the mayor of Boston, Walsh is hailed by the city's IBEW leaders as a dream choice to head the Labor Department, a genuine "man of the people" who has never forgotten where he came from.

Other notable hires include James Frederick to head the Occupational Safety and Health Department after 25 years with the Steelworkers; Minnesota building trades executive Jessica Looman as a deputy administrator in the DOL's wage and hour division; and Jennifer Kropke, a deeply rooted IBEW activist from Los Angeles Local 11 who's taken her fight for good, green, union jobs to the leadership team at the Department of Energy.



*Jennifer Kropke, a Los Angeles Local 11 advocate for union jobs in a green economy, is now part of the DOE leadership team.*

Workers even have allies in surprising places, historically speaking, such as Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

A labor economist and chair of the Federal Reserve from 2014 to 2018, Yellen prioritized jobs and wages in the aftermath of the Great Recession. She reaffirmed as much during her confirmation to become the first woman to head the Treasury Department.

"We have to rebuild our economy so that it creates more prosperity, for more people, and ensures that American workers can compete in an increasingly competitive global economy," she said.

**LIKE HE** did at the NLRB to protect private-sector workers, Biden is also salvaging the badly battered rights of federal employees, who were stripped of many union protections the past four years.

On Feb. 2, he ousted all 10 members of the little-known Federal Service Impasse Panel, which resolves disputes between unions and the government.

The previous administration stacked the panel with anti-union appointees who ruled in favor of management nine of 10 times, according to watchdog reports.

The firings came on the heels of a Biden executive order to restore federal collective bargaining rights and other protections workers lost as hostile forces waged war on their unions.

"Federal employees ... are essential to this country," the White House said in an official statement. "Their work transcends partisan politics. But over the last four years they've been undermined and demoralized."

Paul O'Connor, director of the Government Employees Department,

praised Biden's swift — and, he believes, heartfelt — actions on behalf of federal workers, including tens of thousands of IBEW members.

"President Biden believes in them. He knows they're not part of some 'swamp' filled with political hacks," O'Connor said. "They're smart and principled people who keep the country running."

**IT'S THE KIND** of respect Biden has for working people across the board.

He believes unequivocally in their rights — our rights — and he expressed that in a way no modern president has as the embattled warehouse workers were voting in Alabama.

He never named their behemoth employer. He didn't have to. Its anti-union tactics were making global headlines.

"Unions put power in the hands of workers. They level the playing field. They give you a stronger voice for your health, your safety, higher wages, protections from racial discrimination and sexual harassment," he said at the top of a 2½-minute video.

"I made it clear when I was running that my administration's policy would be to support union organizing and the right to collectively bargain. I'm keeping that promise.

"You should all remember the National Labor Relations Act didn't just say that unions are allowed to exist. It said that we should encourage unions.

"There should be no intimidation, no coercion, no threats, no anti-union propaganda.

"No supervisor," he said, wagging a finger, "no supervisor should confront employees about their union preferences.

"It's not up to me to decide whether anyone should join a union but let me be clear: it's not up to an employer to decide that either. The choice to join a union is up to the workers — full stop."

**DELIVERED** from the bully pulpit of the White House, the message brought Biden's commitment to workers into the sharpest focus yet.

"It's a turning point in our national conversation," Stephenson said. "The polls have always shown that a majority of workers would join a union if given the chance, and the odds are much better now that they'll have that opportunity."

He cautions that unions still have formidable enemies and uphill battles to fight. That there will always be political realities to contend with, including today's split Senate and narrow pro-worker majority in the U.S. House

"Not everything will be a win for us," Stephenson said. "There's going to be compromise. There always is. But never in our lifetimes have we had an advocate in the White House as determined to fight for us as Joe Biden is. The difference already is night and day." ■

## Maine Traffic Signal Overhaul Will Be '100% IBEW'



*Traffic signal management across Maine has been largely nonunion for decades. That's about to change, thanks to a successful relationship-building effort across the IBEW's Second District.*

A multiyear, multimillion-dollar project to modernize traffic signals in Maine is set to give the green light to a wealth of work for scores of IBEW members.

"It really is the biggest signal job in the state, and there's more going on than just lights," said Second District International Vice President Mike Monahan. "Our members will also be putting in Bluetooth technology to help driverless cars communicate with the signals in the future."

For the last few decades, traffic signal management in Maine, at the municipal, county and state levels, has been almost completely nonunion, Monahan said, and recapturing that work is a top priority for the state's inside construction locals.

"It sounds like a bunch of intersections are going to be updated, at least to begin with," said Augusta Local 1253 Business Manager Chuck Fraser. "Even though we're busy — from an explosion of solar projects to the construction of a salmon farm — we definitely welcome the chance to bring new work like this into the IBEW."

According to the Portland Press Herald, the state owns around 800 traffic signals but only directly maintains a fraction of those at present, with the rest handled by the localities. The Maine Department of Transportation is looking to take responsibility for every one of them.

Jim and Maureen Dagle, the owners of signatory contractor Dagle Electrical, won the bid to get the work. One of the biggest challenges, they said, will be replacing the relatively old equipment throughout the state.

"Traffic signals even 15 years ago were functional, but they were very simple and not very sophisticated," Jim Dagle said. "Modern traffic signals need to do a lot more, to learn."

Advanced traffic controller systems like the ones planned for installation in Maine can capture and react to real-time traffic and signal data, while detecting and reporting gridlock-causing traffic

problems and monitoring intersections via an always-on internet connection.

Monahan is confident that the Massachusetts-based contractor is the right fit for the job. "I organized Dagle in Boston almost 20 years ago, when I was still at [Boston] Local 103," Monahan said. "Prior to Dagle becoming a signatory contractor, 90% of the streetlight and traffic signal work in the state was nonunion. In large part because of Dagle, it's been flipped upside down, and the IBEW is doing over 90% of that work now."

But that didn't happen overnight, Monahan said. "It's important to emphasize that due to changes with Local 103's referral system, Jim, Maureen and I were able to handpick their workforce, which started with about 10 employees and is over 200 today."

Officials at MaineDOT were well aware of Dagle's successes in the Bay State and encouraged the contractor to bid on its upgrade project. So did Monahan.

"I noticed the IBEW had zero bidders in Maine for this work," Monahan said, a project estimated to be worth \$160 million over 20 years. "Because of our longstanding and successful relationship with Jim and Maureen, I was able to convince them to take a look at it."

Naturally, Monahan also sought the assistance of Local 1253's Fraser and Jim Valente, Fraser's counterpart at Portland Local 567.

"We're always training and trying to organize," said Valente, whose busy local is working on an Abbott Laboratories facility for manufacturing rapid COVID-19 tests, plus an expansion of Portland's Mercy Hospital. "We're looking forward to bringing more union jobs our way."

"Mike absolutely wanted the work, and he wanted to understand what the locals in Maine needed from him to get it," Jim Dagle said. "Chuck and Jim have been really receptive to us, and that's good, because contractors really need the local unions on board to get the work."

Another thing that makes Maine attractive and competitive is that it's one of

29 states that offer a prevailing wage, which sets a fair standard of pay and benefits for contractors and workers that stays in line with what local businesses normally would provide for similar private sector work.

While the IBEW waited for Maine to select a winning bid, the Dagles went ahead and set up a shop there. "We've probably worked on 10 intersections in the state over the last year," Jim Dagle said. "They eventually want to try to take it on wholesale, with more than 100 intersections to start. That's a big challenge."

There are other challenges, too, he said. "Putting electricians to work in live traffic is different from regular inside construction," Dagle said. Start and stop times have to consider commuter convenience, for example.

"You're almost closer to being a line-man than an inside wireman, but that skillset translates well," he said. "With the right labor, these are not big hurdles. The IBEW has the best trained people. You've been teed up to be successful."

Generally, the more tech there is in transportation — such as solar-power arrays and battery storage at the signals — the higher the potential for maintenance work there for IBEW electricians.

"My goal is to have at least 20 IBEW members working at the start, and to grow things out from there," Dagle said. "Normally, you have up to five workers per intersection and if you have a lot of intersections all at once, you can keep crews hopscotching."

And the contractor does not sub out any of his work, Monahan noted. "From backhoe to duct banks, the work will be performed 100% IBEW," he said.

Dagle sees the longtime collaboration with the IBEW as completely positive: "If the union wants the work, they know that the contractors know how to get it. You've got to be able to have that dialogue."

"It comes down to building relationships with employers," Monahan said, "delivering on your promises, organizing more workers and helping contractors like Dagle grow." ■



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

## Railroad Members See Gains in New Deal with Canadian Pacific

**I**BEW members employed by Canadian Pacific Railway have been under plenty of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. One thing they no longer have to worry about, however, is a new contract.

The members, who are part of System Council 11, ratified a 5-year deal in late January. A tentative agreement was reached just before Christmas following 3½ months of virtual bargaining and in-person sessions in Calgary, the site of Canadian Pacific's headquarters, that followed social distancing protocols.

"The pandemic made it very challenging," System Council 11 Senior General Chairman Steve Martin said. "The company used the pandemic as a tactical advantage due in part to the current economic stress. With the support of our membership, we were able to secure improvements on several items with little or no concessions from the previous collective bargaining agreement."

System Council 11 held a strike-authorization vote in November and early December, in which 98% voted to authorize a strike if necessary.

But even with the financial challenges brought on by COVID-19, Martin is pleased the new contract provides for wage increases and improvements in benefits and work rules.

In return, the IBEW's only real concession was to Canadian Pacific's request for the 5-year deal instead of the previous 3-year deal. The company wanted the certainty of a longer-term contract.

But in a sense, that longer contract wasn't a bad thing. Canadian Pacific management was so adamant about it that it was willing to work with the IBEW on other issues, Martin said.

"In the end, the company put enough on the table that we were able to take it to our membership," he said.

The IBEW has long had a relationship with Canadian Pacific, which was founded in 1881 and became a publicly-traded corporation in 2001. It owns about 20,000 miles of track in six provinces and is now primarily a freight railway.

Approximately 365 Canadian members are employed by Canadian Pacific, working in the Signals and Communications Department. The company has expanded into the United States in recent years but this agreement covers only Canadian members. Those members are considered essential employees and have worked throughout the pandemic, making sure vitally important supplies and other goods are delivered.

First District International Vice President Thomas Reid said the agreement was proof that members' solidarity can lead to improved contracts, even during difficult economic times.

"Our negotiators went to the bar-

gaining table with the strong support of members all across Canada and the company recognized that," Reid said. "In the end, after months of sometimes tense negotiations, Canadian Pacific was willing to improve conditions for essential workers during this pandemic."

"Our railroad members throughout Canada, at Canadian Pacific and other companies, have done incredible work to keep our country moving and functioning during a difficult time. I salute them and our negotiating team that led to this contract. It's a win for everyone."

The System Council represents Canadian Pacific employees at eight rail-

road locals across the country. Other members of the bargaining team were System 11 General Chairman Lee Hooper, East Regional representative Bill Duncan, West Regional representative Brad Kauk and Kamloops, British Columbia, Local 2042 Business Manager Randy Roberts.

"This tentative collective agreement is the result of hard work and good faith negotiating between the IBEW and CP," company president and CEO Keith Creel said in a statement when the agreement was announced, before the vote. "We look forward to its ratification and to five years of continued growth and opportunity with these employees." ■

**"Our railroad members throughout Canada ... have done incredible work to keep our country moving."**

— First District International Vice President Thomas Reid



IBEW members in Canada employed by Canadian Pacific Railway ratified a new five-year contract earlier this year.

## Les membres du chemin de fer voient les gains du nouveau contrat avec le Canadien Pacifique

**L**es membres de la FIOE embauchés par le chemin de fer du Canadien Pacifique ont connu beaucoup de stress pendant la pandémie de la COVID-19, toutefois leur nouveau contrat est une chose de moins à se soucier.

Les membres qui font partie du Conseil de réseau no 11 ont ratifié un contrat d'une durée de cinq ans à la fin du mois de janvier. À la suite de trois mois et demi de négociation virtuelle et des sessions en personne au siège social du Canadien Pacifique à Calgary, tout en respectant les protocoles d'éloignement physique, une entente de principe a été conclue juste avant Noël.

« La pandémie l'a rendu très difficile, » mentionne Steve Martin le président général sénior du Conseil de réseau no 11. « La compagnie s'est servie de la pandémie comme un avantage tactique, en partie en raison du stress économique actuel. Grâce à l'appui de nos membres, nous avons pu obtenir plusieurs améliorations sur plusieurs points avec peu ou pas de concessions par rapport à la convention collective précédente. »

En novembre et au début décembre, le Conseil de réseau a tenu un scrutin pour obtenir un mandat de grève voté par 98 % des membres et de l'exercer si nécessaire.

Même avec les défis financiers engendrés par la COVID-19, M. Martin s'avoue satisfait de la nouvelle convention collective qui prévoit des augmentations salariales et des améliorations concernant les avantages ainsi que les règles relatives au travail.

La seule concession que la FIOE devait faire en retour était d'accepter la demande du Canadien Pacifique pour la durée du contrat de cinq ans au lieu de trois ans, comme c'était le cas auparavant. La compagnie voulait la certitude d'un contrat à plus long terme.

Une convention collective d'une plus longue durée n'était pas une mauvaise chose d'une certaine façon. La direction du Canadien Pacifique était tellement inflexible à ce sujet qu'elle était prête à travailler avec la FIOE sur d'autres préoccupations, mentionne M. Martin.

« À la fin, suffisamment de choses ont été apportées à la table par la compagnie et nous avons pu les apporter à nos membres, » dit-il.

La FIOE entretient une relation depuis longtemps avec le Canadien Pacifique, qui a été créée en 1881 et devenue une société cotée en bourse en 2001. Elle possède environ 20 000 kilomètres de voie ferroviaire dans six provinces et elle

est maintenant principalement un transport ferroviaire de marchandises.

Environ 365 membres canadiens qui travaillent dans le secteur de la signalisation et des communications sont à l'emploi du Canadien Pacifique. Dans les dernières années, la compagnie a étendu ses activités aux États-Unis, mais cette convention collective concerne seulement les membres canadiens. Ces employés sont jugés essentiels et ont travaillé tout au long de la pandémie pour s'assurer que la marchandise et d'autres produits de grande importance sont livrés.

Le vice-président international du premier district Thomas Reid dit que cette convention collective fait preuve que la solidarité des membres peut mener à l'amélioration des contrats, même pendant des périodes de crise économique.

« Nos négociateurs se sont présentés à la table de négociation avec le soutien solide des membres de tout le Canada et la compagnie l'a bien constaté, » déclare M. Reid. « En fin de compte, après plusieurs mois de négociation parfois tendue, le Canadien Pacifique était prêt à améliorer les conditions de travail des travailleuses et des travailleurs essentiels pendant cette pandémie. »

« Nos membres du chemin de fer à

travers le Canada, du Canadien Pacifique et dans d'autres compagnies, ont fait un travail incroyable pour veiller à ce que le pays continue de bouger et de fonctionner pendant cette période difficile. Je les félicite ainsi que l'équipe de négociation qui ont participé à l'aboutissement de ce contrat. C'est une victoire pour tout le monde. »

Le Conseil de réseau représente les employés du Canadien Pacifique dans huit sections locales de chemin de fer à travers le pays. Les autres membres qui faisaient partie de l'équipe de négociation sont : Lee Hooper, le président général du Conseil de réseau no 11; Bill Duncan, le représentant régional de l'est; Brad Kauk, le représentant régional de l'ouest et Randy Roberts, le gérant d'affaires de la section locale 2042 à Kamloops en Colombie-Britannique.

« Cette entente de principe est le résultat d'un travail acharné et de négociation de bonne foi entre la FIOE et le CP, » mentionne Keith Creel, le président et le chef de la direction de la compagnie dans une déclaration, lorsque l'entente a été annoncée avant le vote. « Nous attendons avec intérêt sa ratification et des cinq années de croissance et de possibilités continues avec ces employés. » ■



# THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

## Colorado Member Wins Election to County Commission

Eppie Griego fell just a few votes short when he lost his first bid for a seat on the Pueblo County (Colo.) Board of Commissioners in 2012. That didn't discourage him in the least.

Griego, a Pueblo Local 12 member known for his high energy, made himself even more visible. He served on the county's Planning & Zoning Commission. He also figured he had to knock on even more doors in the lead-up to last year's Democratic primary.

"The thing about going door-to-door is you get to talk to real people," he said. "I'm not a real email guy. If you contact me, I'll come to your door and talk to you in person. You'll get to hear the real issues when you're out there."



*Pueblo, Colo., Local 12 member Eppie Griego, right with black mask, being sworn in as a member of the Pueblo County Board of Commissioners.*

The strategy paid off. Last June, Griego won a close race in the primary to fill an open seat. He ran unopposed in the November general election and took office in January, giving the IBEW and all of labor in southern Colorado an important voice in an area with a strong union tradition.

"Having an IBEW member at the table when important decisions are made is vital for working families in our community," said Local 12 Business Manager Tom Kelley, noting that Griego sits on the local's executive committee as well. "I can't think of anyone better suited than Eppie. He's lived here his entire life and his love for the area and its people is obvious. He understands that a strong union movement leads to a strong community for everyone. That's because he's lived that."

Griego is one of three members of the Board of Commissioners, which oversees the county's budget, major infrastructure projects and local government services. Colorado law requires it to have a balanced budget each year. It is a full-time position.

"I have known Eppie and his family for more than a dozen years," said Eighth District Vice President Jerry Bellah, a former business manager at Pueblo Local 667. "I am very proud of him. He has and will continue to be a great representative of the IBEW in our community."

Griego, 62, has been a member of several unions and became a member of Local 12 just seven years ago as a groundman. He later moved up to a ground operator position with a CDL license.

He highlighted his union credentials in the lead-up to the election. That strategy paid off in Pueblo, traditionally a strong union town because the steel industry has had a large presence there.

"I'm out in the community," Griego said.

"Being on planning and zoning really helped me. That's a good commission dealing with land issues, so I was visible."

Griego's community involvement is deep. He and his wife, Rayann, have four grown children and were foster parents to nearly 150 children for more than 30 years until their own son was injured in an auto accident and needed more personal care.

"We enjoyed helping children and moving their lives forward," he said.

He previously was a member of the Laborers, the Steelworkers and the United Transportation Union and was endorsed by several unions in southern Colorado. Rayann is a union member herself. She works as a psychiatric technician and is a member of Colorado WINS, a leading public-sector union in the state.

Here's Griego's advice for any IBEW member thinking about running for office in their communities:

First, get involved in your local union and don't be shy about speaking up during membership meetings, even if your opinion is in the minority. Local unions are a great example of democracy at work, he said.

"In a union meeting, if you believe in something, say it," he said.

And second, look for boards and committees to serve on. You'll not only build confidence in yourself, he says; you'll also get a chance to show people with little exposure to unions just how valuable they can be. Griego especially recommends the local Chamber of Commerce — and the Latino Chamber of Commerce for Latino members like himself — because of its business focus, but he stresses any volunteer opportunity is important.

"There are so many boards in Pueblo as well as in every city across the country," he said. "It's important to get in on them. That's how you get out in the community."

Of course, Griego isn't shaking many hands these days. Even during the campaign, he eventually had to stop handshakes. He learned to speak to people from a distance through virtual technology.

Like many public officials, he's seen some of his plans take a backseat to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, which now includes distributing the vaccines to Pueblo County residents in a timely manner.

Nearly every meeting is now held virtually. When asked what he's learned as a politician, he joked, "To use Zoom."

"But seriously, I am learning something new every day through policy and through my colleagues."

He said he's enjoying the work and wants to make sure the community understands the vital role of unions. A particular area of interest is stressing to Pueblo's younger population that they should explore apprenticeships instead of a costly four-year college if they are interested in working with their hands. Like most of the United States, Pueblo has a shortage of skilled construction workers and electricians.

"I want people to understand the best apprenticeship comes from the IBEW," he said. "You get to work and make a living wage, you learn on the job and you don't get that debt. What could be better than that?" ■

## Training Grants Help Put California Wiremen Ahead of the Curve on Microgrids

Keeping ahead of the latest electrical technologies has helped IBEW members capture work and market share for 130 years. A timely new grant program for electrical storage and microgrid (ESM) system training in California will help members and locals there continue to stay ahead of the curve of the green energy revolution.

The grant program, managed by the California Workforce Development Board, is making available \$1.25 million to help boost training efforts toward the IBEW-led Electrical Storage and Microgrid Training and Certification (ESAMTAC).

"This certification will allow our members to provide customers with an extra measure of confidence that the IBEW electricians who are handling ESM installations will get every aspect of those jobs done safely and properly," said International Vice President John O'Rourke, whose Ninth District jurisdiction includes California.

The IBEW and its partners at the National Electrical Contractors Association have been working over the last few years to put together the ESAMTAC initiative, with input from expert organizations such as the American National Standards Institute, the National Science Foundation and the Electric Power Research Institute, as well as professors at Penn State University.

ESAMTAC also has support from energy storage and battery manufacturers, along with contractors having experience with data centers, where safe battery installation and maintenance are crucial.

Microgrids are becoming increasingly attractive because they can provide power, usually from solar or wind, cleanly and efficiently to places like remote neighborhoods and college campuses that are not connected to the grid. Microgrids often combined solar and wind to generate power with batteries to provide liability.

An effective way to capture work in a new and emerging market like ESMs, O'Rourke said, is to help set the standards for that work and then gain certification in it. Doing so sets IBEW members apart from other contractors who claim, without evidence, that they are qualified to do the work.

"Pretty much every state now has some sort of renewable energy standard that they're trying to achieve," O'Rourke said. "We're trying really hard to make sure all of this work goes to us."

Some of the equipment needed for ESM training can be expensive, though, so having access to the grant money should help offset those costs and encourage Electrical Training Alliance centers in California to adopt the ESAMTAC curriculum.

Johnny Simpson, an international representative in the Ninth District who specializes in green energy issues, compared ESAMTAC training to the certification many IBEW members are getting through another program the union also helped develop: the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP).

"The certification in these things might not help you today, but the IBEW is successful when all of its members are ready for the future," Simpson said. "We have to take every opportunity and put it all together."

The grant money should also help accelerate the eventual growth and acceptance of the ESAMTAC program beyond the state's borders, O'Rourke said. As ESAMTAC takes hold across the U.S., customers eventually will be able to search a national web database to find qualified and certified electricians and contractors, so getting trained and on that list is important for securing that future work.

Certification also helps allay customer fears about the electrical storage component, especially those who worry about possible leaks or overheating, Simpson said. Because it was designed by the IBEW and NECA, the ESAMTAC program fully integrates with our proven apprenticeship classroom and hands-on training, he said.

"Countless IBEW members already have been trained on these systems, in one form or another, as part of their existing apprenticeships and continuing education," O'Rourke said. "ESAMTAC codifies it and helps all of us meet the challenges of staying informed on these evolving technologies."

The \$1.25 million ESM grant from the California Workforce Development Board is part of \$10 million in so-called High Road Training Partnerships awards. ESMs and 10 other projects across various industries have been identified as playing a role in California's efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This first round of HRTF grants come from California Climate Investments funded by the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. ■



*A \$1.25 million grant from the state of California is set to help train and certify more IBEW members to work on electrical storage and microgrids projects like this battery storage facility in the Imperial Valley.*



# Annual Funding Notice for the National Electrical Benefit Fund

### Introduction

This notice includes important information about the funding status of the National Electrical Benefit Fund (“the Plan” or “NEBF”). It also includes general information about the benefit payments guaranteed by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (“PBGC”), a federal insurance agency. All traditional pension plans (called “defined benefit pension plans”) must provide this notice every year regardless of their funding status. This notice does not mean that the Plan is terminating. In fact, despite the difficult economic times and the market losses in 2008, the Plan has substantially rebounded. As a result, the Plan is in sound financial condition and is considered a “green zone” plan (rather than a plan in endangered or critical status). This notice is provided for informational purposes and you are not required to respond in any way. This notice is required by federal law. This notice is for the plan year beginning January 1, 2020 and ending December 31, 2020 (“Plan Year”).

### How Well Funded Is the NEBF?

The law requires the administrator of the NEBF to tell you how well the Plan is funded, using a measure called the “funded percentage.” The Plan divides its assets by its liabilities on the Valuation Date for the plan year to get this percentage. In general, the higher the percentage, the better funded the plan. NEBF’s funded percentage for the Plan Year and each of the two preceding plan years is shown in the chart below. The chart also states the value of the Plan’s assets and liabilities for the same period.

Funded Percentage			
	2020 Plan Year	2019 Plan Year	2018 Plan Year
Valuation Date	January 1, 2020	January 1, 2019	January 1, 2018
Funded Percentage	84.38%	83.32%	85.60%
Value of Assets	\$15,225,779,442	\$14,661,239,692	\$14,371,474,263
Value of Liabilities	\$18,044,256,213	\$17,595,596,103	\$16,788,972,918

### Year-End Fair Market Value of Assets

The asset values in the chart above are measured as of the Valuation Date. They also are “actuarial values.” Actuarial values differ from market values in that they do not fluctuate daily based on changes in the stock or other markets. Actuarial values smooth out these fluctuations and can allow for more predictable levels of future contributions. Despite the fluctuations, market values tend to show a clearer picture of a plan’s funded status at a given point in time. The asset values in the chart below are market values and are measured on the last day of the Plan Year. The chart also includes the year-end market value of the Plan’s assets for each of the two preceding plan years.

	December 31, 2020	December 31, 2019	December 31, 2018
Fair Market Value of Assets	\$16,651,871,261	\$15,623,020,221	\$13,563,686,847

### Endangered, Critical, or Critical and Declining Status

Under federal pension law a plan generally is in “endangered” status if its funded percentage is less than 80 percent. A plan is in “critical” status if the funded percentage is less than 65 percent (other factors may also apply). A plan is in “critical and declining” status if it is in critical status and is projected to become insolvent (run out of money to pay benefits) within 15 years (or within 20 years if a special rule applies). If a pension plan enters endangered status, the trustees of the plan are required to adopt a funding improvement plan. Similarly, if a pension plan enters critical status or critical and declining status, the trustees of the plan are required to adopt a rehabilitation plan. Funding improvement and rehabilitation plans establish steps and benchmarks for pension plans to improve their funding status over a specified period of time. The plan sponsor of a plan in critical and declining status may apply for approval to amend the plan to reduce current and future payment obligations to participants and beneficiaries.

NEBF was not in endangered, critical, or critical and declining status in the Plan Year.

If the Plan is in endangered, critical, or critical and declining status for the plan year ending December 31, 2021, separate notification of that status has or will be provided.

### Participant Information

The total number of participants and beneficiaries covered by the Plan on the Valuation Date was 584,746. Of this number, 272,457 were current employees, 153,498 were retired and receiving benefits, and 158,791 were retired or no longer working for a covered employer and have a right to future benefits.

### Funding and Investment Policies

Every pension plan must have a procedure for establishing a funding policy for plan objectives. A funding policy relates to how much money is needed to pay promised benefits. The funding policy of the Plan is to ensure that the employer contributions to the Plan, coupled with long-term investment returns, will keep the Plan financially secure and permit the Plan to meet all current and future liabilities. The Trustees have determined that the 3% of gross labor payroll contribution rate will continue to satisfy this funding policy.

Pension plans also have investment policies. These generally are written guidelines or general instructions for making investment management decisions. The investment policy of the Plan is to select a diversified investment portfolio designed to balance risk and return, and to hire or contract with professional investment staff and advisers to ensure that the allocation of investments are prudent and that the individual investment funds and managers are achieving the goals established by the Plan.

Under the Plan’s investment policy, the Plan’s assets were allocated among the following categories of investments, as of the end of the Plan Year. These allocations are percentages of total assets:

Asset Allocations	Percentage
Cash (Interest bearing and non-interest bearing)	0.11 %
U.S. Government securities	5.85
Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	3.59
All other	4.48
Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	0.05
Common	19.47

Partnership/joint venture interests	20.04
Real estate (other than employer real property)	0.01
Loans (other than to participants)	0.64
Participant loans	—
Value of interest in common/collective trusts	30.58
Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1.64
Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	—
Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	—
Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	4.84
Value of funds held in insurance co. general account (unallocated contracts)	—
Employer-related investments:	
Employer securities	—
Employer real property	—
Buildings and other property used in plan operation	—
Other	8.70

For information about the Plan’s investment in any of the following types of investments — common / collective trusts, pooled separate accounts, or 103-12 investment entities — contact the Trustees of the National Electrical Benefit Fund, who are the plan administrators, at 2400 Research Boulevard, Suite 500, Rockville, Maryland 20850-3266, or (301) 556-4300.

### Right to Request a Copy of the Annual Report

Pension plans must file annual reports with the U.S. Department of Labor. The report is called the “Form 5500.” These reports contain financial and other information. You may obtain an electronic copy of your Plan’s annual report by going to [www.efast.dol.gov](http://www.efast.dol.gov) and using the search tool. Annual reports also are available from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration’s Public Disclosure Room at 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-1513, Washington, DC 20210, or by calling (202) 693-8673. Or you may obtain a copy of the Plan’s annual report by making a written request to the plan administrator. Annual reports do not contain personal information, such as the amount of your accrued benefit. You may contact your plan administrator if you want information about your accrued benefits. Your plan administrator is identified below under “Where to Get More Information.”

### Summary of Rules Governing Insolvent Plans

Federal law has a number of special rules that apply to financially troubled multiemployer plans that become insolvent, either as ongoing plans or plans terminated by mass withdrawal. The plan administrator is required by law to include a summary of these rules in the annual funding notice. A plan is insolvent for a plan year if its available financial resources are not sufficient to pay benefits when due for that plan year. An insolvent plan must reduce benefit payments to the highest level that can be paid from the plan’s available resources. If such resources are not enough to pay benefits at the level specified by law (see Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC, below), the plan must apply to the PBGC for financial assistance. The PBGC will loan the plan the amount necessary to pay benefits at the guaranteed level. Reduced benefits may be restored if the plan’s financial condition improves.

A plan that becomes insolvent must provide prompt notice of its status to participants and beneficiaries, contributing employers, labor unions representing participants, and PBGC. In addition, participants and beneficiaries also must receive information regarding whether, and how, their benefits will be reduced or affected, including loss of a lump sum option.

### Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC

The maximum benefit that the PBGC guarantees is set by law. Only benefits that you have earned a right to receive and that cannot be forfeited (called vested benefits) are guaranteed. There are separate insurance programs with different benefit guarantees and other provisions for single-employer plans and multiemployer plans. Your Plan is covered by PBGC’s multi-employer program. Specifically, the PBGC guarantees a monthly benefit payment equal to 100 percent of the first \$11.00 of the plan’s monthly benefit accrual rate, plus 75 percent of the next \$33.00 of the accrual rate, times each year of credited service. The PBGC’s maximum guarantee, therefore, is \$35.75 per month times a participant’s years of credited service.

Example 1: If a participant with 10 years of credited service has an accrued monthly benefit of \$600.00, the accrual rate for purposes of determining the PBGC guarantee would be determined by dividing the monthly benefit by the participant’s years of service (\$600.00 / 10), which equals \$60.00. The guaranteed amount for a \$60.00 monthly accrual rate is equal to the sum of \$11.00 plus \$24.75 (.75 x \$33.00), or \$35.75. Thus, the participant’s guaranteed monthly benefit is \$357.50 (\$35.75 x 10).

Example 2: If the participant in Example 1 has an accrued monthly benefit of \$200.00, the accrual rate for purposes of determining the guarantee would be \$20.00 (or \$200.00 / 10). The guaranteed amount for a \$20.00 monthly accrual rate is equal to the sum of \$11.00 plus \$6.75 (.75 x \$9.00), or \$17.75. Thus, the participant’s guaranteed monthly benefit would be \$177.50 (\$17.75 x 10).

The PBGC guarantees pension benefits payable at normal retirement age and some early retirement benefits. In addition, the PBGC guarantees qualified preretirement survivor benefits (which are preretirement death benefits payable to the surviving spouse of a participant who dies before starting to receive benefit payments). In calculating a person’s monthly payment, the PBGC will disregard any benefit increases that were made under a plan within 60 months before the earlier of the plan’s termination or insolvency (or benefits that were in effect for less than 60 months at the time of termination or insolvency). Similarly, the PBGC does not guarantee benefits above the normal retirement benefit, disability benefits not in pay status, or non-pension benefits, such as health insurance, life insurance, death benefits, vacation pay, or severance pay.

For additional information about the PBGC and the pension insurance program guarantees, go to the Multiemployer Page on PBGC’s website at [www.pbgc.gov/multiemployer](http://www.pbgc.gov/multiemployer). Please contact your employer or plan administrator for specific information about your pension plan or pension benefit. PBGC does not have that information. See “Where to Get More Information,” below.

### Where to Get More Information

For more information about this notice, you may contact the Trustees of the National Electrical Benefit Fund, who are the plan administrators, at 2400 Research Boulevard, Suite 500, Rockville, Maryland 20850-3266, or (301) 556-4300. For identification purposes, the official plan number is 001 and the plan sponsor’s name and employer identification number or “EIN” is Trustees of the National Electrical Benefit Fund, 53-0181657.

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# CIRCUITS

## Hollywood Local Offers New Opportunities to Members During Pandemic

The coronavirus has forced millions into unemployment, with many wondering what their next steps should — or even could — be. For two members of Hollywood, Calif., Local 40, the answer came right from their local union.

“We want to be able to provide help to these guys in any way we can,” said Business Manager Marc Flynn. “We know how tough it is out there.”

Local 40 member Rob Siminoski has been with Universal Studios Hollywood for a decade. The stage manager runs all the theatrical shows at the theme park including The Waterworld Stunt Show and the Harry Potter-themed TriWizard Tournament and Hogwarts School Choir. Stage managers are the show runners and primary point of contact between labor and management during day-to-day operations, scheduling breaks for other union laborers like IATSE, and acting as a liaison between the union technical services department and other nonunion contractors.

But despite his 10 years, he’s still got a long way to go before he’ll accrue enough seniority to get a full 50 weeks of work every year. During slow months he often has to take outside work managing nonunion touring shows to make ends meet. And now, with the coronavirus shutting down so much of Hollywood, he’s decided to make a career change, to something still with Local 40 but with more job security.

“Prior to the outbreak, other Local 40 members had encouraged me to look into the apprenticeship program,” Siminoski said. “It seemed like a great way to learn new, transferable skills and get good union benefits.”

While the coronavirus slowed the work picture, the apprenticeship moved forward and Siminoski applied.

“I’m excited to learn the trade, and to work regularly and provide for my family,” he said. “It’s something I wish I had done much earlier in my life.”

Local 40, which was established almost 100 years ago, around the same time

as many of the major studios in Los Angeles, has more than 800 members that work as inside wiremen, motion picture electricians, HVAC and sound workers, stage managers, special effects technicians, audio mixers, and on-set air and power workers, to name a few of its classifications.

“Some of our members have won Oscars,” Flynn said.

Siminoski is applying to the inside apprenticeship, a five-year program with 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and 10 semesters of in-class education. He and his cohort will also learn about electric vehicle charging stations and green energy microgrid systems, ensuring that they’ll graduate with skills to match the new technology of the industry.

The grandson of an IBEW member, Siminoski has been active in the local and credits his involvement to his family’s history of labor activism. He’s served on the negotiating committee, as a steward and has traveled twice to Sacramento to lobby on behalf of pro-union legislation.

“In a way, his lobbying efforts helped create the apprenticeship opportunity that’s now open to him,” Flynn said.

There’s a good chance Siminoski will be joined by another Local 40 member who’s also looking to change gears. Bill Brown has been a pyro technician since the mid-90s, working at places like Universal Studios and Disneyland. But the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, and not knowing when things will get back to normal, or what normal will even look like, got him thinking about other options.

“I hope I never fall into this situation again,” Brown said of the pandemic’s toll on the entertainment industry. “But people will always need electricians.”

Brown has done some electrical work before, and has a degree in electronics, but says he’s eager to get the official certification.

“It’s a little like being a jack of all trades and a master of none,” Brown said. “I’m looking forward to getting a formal training, to have the knowledge and be able to show that I’ve done the work.”

He’s not planning on giving up pyrotechnics altogether though.

“I can still do it on weekends,” Brown said. “Other members have done it that way.”

Like Siminoski, Brown says he’s

thankful to have this chance available to him through his union.

“If the union wasn’t there, I wouldn’t have this opportunity,” Brown said. “Not everybody has something like this available to them.”

Both Brown and Siminoski will be stepping into new careers in an industry they’ve known for years, but one that is, like everywhere else, operating under new COVID protocols. Thanks in part to union negotiations, film sets now have mandatory coronavirus testing, including pre-employment testing, as well as paid sick leave and requirements for masks, social distancing and sanitizer, all enforced by an onsite COVID monitor.

It’s possible that Brown and Siminoski’s apprenticeship will have them pulling wire and bending conduit on a new attraction at Universal Studios, the Nintendo World theme park. It’s one of a number of projects coming up for Local 40, Flynn said.

“There’s work on the horizon,” Flynn said. “There’s a lot going on in the multimedia industry, and there’s also work around the FIFA World Cup in 2026 and the 2028 Olympics.”

Flynn says they’ve had other members transition from different classifications into the inside apprenticeship, and they’ve been successful. And last year, the local was able to find work at neighboring locals for some of its sound members who were impacted by the closing of the Universal Studios theme park.

“Whatever we can do for our members, that’s what we’ll do,” Flynn said. “These opportunities were here before COVID, and they’ll still be here after the virus is contained.” ■

## BC Local’s Inclusion Efforts Take Off

When Kamloops, British Columbia, Local 993 member Alison Klie got to the Royal Inland Hospital jobsite, she saw something very different from just about every other job she’d been to in her 10-year career: another woman.

“My first day at the hospital tower I kept seeing women I knew through 993 and it blew me away,” Klie said. “I have never been on a site with so many women before and I love it. I think it brings a different energy to the job and definitely among the women themselves. I also feel a sense of pride that my union and the company I work for has made this possible.”

The Royal Inland Hospital project, located in Kamloops, has 17% women and Indigenous people working on it, much higher than the usual 3 or 4%. And that’s due in large part to efforts from Local 993 and other British Columbia-based groups dedicated to making the trades more inclusive.

“Having 17% representation is unusual for a jobsite,” said Local 993 Assistant Business Manager Mollie Routledge. “It’s also amazing.”

Recruiting and retaining more people from historically marginalized groups isn’t just good for the new members. It’s also

needed for the construction industry to meet demand in the coming years. According to the BC Building Trades, a large population of skilled trade workers is gearing up for retirement, and an estimated 300,000 Canadian workers will need to be recruited over the next decade to fill the gap. The hospital’s tower project alone, which has contracted with IBEW signatories Houle Electric and ESC Automation, will require over 100 electricians at its peak.



*Kamloops, British Columbia, Local 993 has achieved 17% representation of women and Indigenous people on a recent project, the Royal Inland Hospital, thanks in large part to their efforts at recruitment and retention.*

Getting 17% representation comes in part from doing something seemingly simple: having new members meet other members who look like them. Local 993, which covers northern British Columbia as well as the Yukon Territory, makes sure to have its women officers, who are involved in membership development, meet the new recruits.

“It gives a fresh face to a male-dominated industry,” said Routledge, who co-chairs Local 993’s women’s committee and sits on the board of BC Build Together, a woman-focused campaign of the BC Building Trades.

The local’s women’s committee has been developing a boots-on-the-ground approach, Routledge said, which is currently being used on the Royal Inland Hospital project. New women electricians are given contact information for other women members they can contact for guidance and support.

“Having another woman to talk to, just to say out loud what’s happening, makes a big difference,” said Angie Camille, Local 993’s Indigenous coordinator. “When I first started out, I had no one to talk to.”

As a First Nations member, Camille knows what it’s like to be the only one on a jobsite. She’s also only one generation removed from Canada’s residential school system, a bleak period in the country’s history that involved forced assimilation and abuse of Indigenous people.

“We survived,” Camille said. “And now I can speak to other First Nations peo-

ple, as an electrician with my journey ticket, and tell them, ‘If I can do it, so can you.’”

Camille is also the First District’s representative to the IBEW International Women’s Committee.

“When a vacancy occurred in our District for the International Women’s Committee, I didn’t hesitate to reach out to Local 993. They’ve been doing great work to attract and retain more female and Indigenous workers over the years,” said

First District International Vice President Tom Reid, who nominated Camille last November. “Angie is a passionate member and I look forward to her representing the First District on the committee. She brings a lot to the table.”

Camille’s journey has been far from easy. She’s dealt with everything from being relegated to mostly cleaning work on jobsites and struggling to get enough hours, to being the only Indigenous woman on a site with more than 500 workers, and even death threats. But she made a promise to her grandmother to see it through, and she couldn’t go back on that.

“She told me that I couldn’t quit, no matter what, and that I had to respect myself and the job,” Camille said. “So, whenever I felt defeated, I remembered my grandmother.”

Her grandmother also gave her another piece of advice.

“She told me, ‘They’re more afraid of you being there than you are.’”

The coronavirus has halted much of the outreach that Routledge and Camille would normally do to trades schools and colleges. But the local’s women’s committee is forging ahead with meetings through conference calls and Zoom for mentoring, planning, fundraising and organizing events.

“The thing that really jumps out to me that 993 does well is it offers support and connection for its more marginalized members,” said Klie, who is also a mentor. “Mollie would always make sure to



*Hollywood, Calif., Local 40 member Rob Siminoski, left, is switching careers but staying with his union. In fact, Local 40 is training him for the transition.*

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talk with me at the meetings and make me feel welcome there. Now I make sure to say hi and be friendly to those who are new or seem a little uncomfortable.”

Klie came into the trade by accident. When she told her high school career counselor that she was interested in the esthetician program, she accidentally got the electrician forms instead. But after thinking it over, she decided to try it out and she’s never looked back. It even led to her running for city council and meeting the B.C. premier.

“I’m a more confident person because of what I have experienced throughout my career as an electrician,” Klie said. “Without that confidence I could have never run for council or stood in front of the premier and told him how, as a woman on a nonunion job, I made 3–5 dollars less an hour than my male counterparts.”

Klie has also been invited to speak to the Thompson Rivers University Women in Trades Training class about her experience in the trades.

“I was never a fan of public speaking, but for some reason talking about my job just comes naturally, no matter how many people I’m in front of,” Klie said.

Camille, Klie and Routledge all emphasized the importance of having the support of leadership to create and implement initiatives like a successful women’s committee and mentorship program.

“Our business manager, Glen Hilton, is very supportive of our efforts. He’s always open to hearing our ideas,” Klie said. “As a woman, I have felt more accepted and appreciated as a member of 993 than I have at most of my past jobs and that goes a long way for retention.” ■

## St. Paul Local Leaves No Family Behind in Food Giveaway

Cars stretched as far down the road as volunteers could see as they hefted 30-pound boxes of perishables and loaded them into trunks and back seats outside their Local 110 union hall in St. Paul, Minn.

The well-oiled operation gave away more than 40,000 pounds of USDA-provided food and milk the third Saturday in February, the local’s turn at a dozen such winter events scheduled by the region’s AFL-CIO.

“The labor federation was very impressed by how many volunteers we had and how fast the food went,” said coordinator Logan Beere, a Local 110 journeyman wireman and staff representative.

The marketing campaign that preceded it was a feat in its own right.

Assistant Business Manager Doug Suchanek said members relentlessly emailed, texted and called civic leaders — from the City Council to county commissioners to the YMCA — asking them to spread the word on social media.

They mailed flyers and taped them to walls in the neighborhood’s low-income apartment buildings. Beere even flew his personal drone above the union



*IBEW volunteers from St. Paul, Minn., Local 110 carried out a well-organized drive-through grocery giveaway in February, distributing 1,300 boxes of USDA farm-fresh food and milk to area families.*

hall to record a video that helped people identify the building. It got 2,100 Facebook views.

Determined that no one in need would miss the opportunity, they began promoting the giveaway three weeks in advance, hammering home the what, where and when: Feb. 13.

But winter refused to cooperate, locking Minnesota in a minus-20 deep freeze with wind chills twice as brutal in the days leading up to the event.

Rapidly retracing their steps, they scrambled to publicize the postponement and new date, Feb. 20.

That morning, in much more tolerable 20-degree weather, some 40 eager volunteers arrived to find a refrigerated semi-truck from the Department of Agriculture’s Farmers to Families program waiting for them.

It held 1,300 prepared boxes of fruit, vegetables, meat and cheese, and another 1,300 gallons of milk. Each package contained about a week’s supply for a family of four.

Running a forklift, Local 110 member Ed Nelson began unloading pallets, lining them up in the parking lot as directed by his union brothers and sisters.

By 11 a.m. they were ready to go, waving in 8–10 cars at a time, a steady flow that trickled down over the course of four hours.

Through their protective masks, volunteers asked recipients how many boxes they needed, based on the size of their families and whether they were picking up for anyone else. It was all on the honor system; no other questions asked.

The gratitude was palpable. “Every person that picked up food, literally everyone, said, ‘Thank you so much for doing this.’ Even our own volunteers were thanking us,” Beere said.

A labor newspaper, the Union Advocate, highlighted Local 110’s efforts in a feature about the region’s unions embracing the food distribution program, and quoted Business Manager Jamie McNamara.

“We’re extremely honored to be able to provide food to the East Side of St. Paul,” he said. “The IBEW has a great partnership with the community here, and we’re very grateful to be of service to a

community that’s been so good to us. We look forward to doing another one of these in the future.”

And they will. When impressed and grateful AFL-CIO coordinators asked if the local would be willing to host another event March 27, there was no hesitation.

“It went so well,” Beere said. “Everybody was happy, smiling, feeling good. The volunteers are definitely excited about doing it again.” ■

## Baltimore Members Go Bald to Fight Childhood Cancer

Countless IBEW brothers and sisters regularly give their time and money to worthy causes. But few go to the lengths of some members of Baltimore Local 24, who volunteer each year to allow their hair to be publicly sheared off to raise money in the fight against childhood cancers.

“2021 is our 6th year as an IBEW team,” said Local 24 inside journeyman

wireman James Chwirut, “and our team has grown through grassroots organizing in the local to raise over \$30,000 in those years.”

The money raised goes to the St. Baldrick’s Foundation, a California-based charity dedicated to funding research into the causes of, and potential cures for, childhood cancers. The organization’s first head-shaving event, in 2000, was held in New York City on March 17 — St. Patrick’s Day. (Mash up “bald” and “St. Patrick” and you get the wholly fictitious “St. Baldrick.”)

Chwirut is the captain of the Charm City Wire Nuts, a group of IBEW members comprising Local 24’s St. Baldrick’s team. “Last year, before the pandemic, we had 24 members on our team and raised nearly \$13,000,” Chwirut said. “It was our largest and most successful effort to date.”

The Charm City Wire Nuts — “Charm City” is one of Baltimore’s nicknames — participate along with several teams in the larger Baltimore Heroes event, which has been led since 2009 by volunteers from the Baltimore County Fire Department.

According to the foundation’s website, 73% of St. Baldrick’s fundraising goes to research to find a cure, 23% goes to fundraising, and the remainder pays for basic administration. The charity says that since 2005, it has awarded more than \$305 million to support lifesaving research, pediatric cancer clinical trials and grants to train researchers outside the U.S.

“All of our fundraising culminates in having our heads shaved as a show of solidarity with the kids,” Chwirut said, many of whom lose their hair following chemotherapy treatments used to attack the cancer cells in their bodies.

Last year’s event in the Baltimore suburb of Rosedale took place about a week before the state of Maryland, as well as most of the rest of North America, began canceling large community gatherings in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19.

“We raised enough money that Neil

Wilford, head of Local 24’s Joint Apprenticeship and Training Center, joined the team and got shaved with us,” Chwirut said.

“At first, James approached me about making pitches to our apprentices,” Wilford said. And when Chwirut suggested that more apprentices might sign up to take part if Wilford did, too, the JATC director didn’t hesitate. “If it helps the cause, I’m in,” he said.

The easiest parts for Wilford were registering for the event and showing up. “James guided me along,” he said. “Once it came time, I went up on stage and they just took care of business.”

The day of the event typically is “controlled chaos,” Chwirut said, considering the number of volunteers and spectators on hand. A handful of barber chairs are set up on a stage, and then the hair cutters — workers from Sports Clips, a national St. Baldrick’s sponsor, as well as local barbers — get to work, quickly shearing the head of each fund raiser.

“You have hundreds of pairs of eyes staring up at you,” Chwirut said, “and you know you’re going to look weird for at least a week.”

It wasn’t a terribly dramatic experience for Wilford, though. “I’ve always kept my hair short,” he said. “Really, the biggest problem was that my head was cold.”

“We saw a lot of the kids it benefits there,” he said, along with firefighters, police officers and members of other unions. “Everybody had a good time.”

For this year’s event, the Wire Nuts raised money in honor of Brandon Williams, a four-year inside journeyman wireman from Local 24 who died last October from injuries he sustained in a tragic tractor accident on his property in northern Baltimore County.

“Being bald to Brandon was a mark of pride and honor,” said Dan Berwanger, a fellow Baltimore Local 24 member and one of Williams’ best friends. “He loved wearing all of his St. Baldrick’s shirts every chance he got, and he tried to recruit people to the cause when they asked why he shaved.

“This cause, to him, was worth fighting for,” Berwanger said. “He took extreme pride and joy in knowing even if his efforts only helped one child, it was worth the cold head.”

Even though COVID-19 forced this year’s March 7 Baltimore Heroes event to be largely virtual, Chwirut and his Wire Nuts were able to secure an outdoor space to do some safe, in-person head shaving in the parking lot of Key Brewing Co. in nearby Dundalk. “It’s been harder to drum up support,” he admitted.

Even so, the Charm City Wire Nuts were the fundraising leaders for the Baltimore Heroes event, raising almost \$9,000.

“These kinds of things are great for bringing the brotherhood together, and without regular in-person union meetings, that’s been a challenge,” said Local 24 Business Manager Peter Demchuk. “These days, anything that can get the members together safely is a good thing.” ■



*Local 24 members getting buzz cuts for charity: (standing, from left) Chris Ardoin, John Knauer, James Chwirut, Josh Peters and (seated) Dan Berwanger.*

CIRCUITS continued on page 12



## CIRCUITS *continued*

### Local 948, NECA Combine to Give Healthcare Workers a Lift in Troubled Flint

Healthcare workers across North America have been on the frontlines battling the COVID-19 pandemic for more than one year. Forgive those in Flint, Mich., if these stressful times have felt much longer than that.

For several years, they've been dealing with the impact of a clean-water crisis that brought international attention to the city. There's also been the health challenges brought on by the devastation of the community's once-thriving manufacturing sector.

So, when Flint Local 948 and the Michigan chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association combined to serve meals to staff at all three local hospitals on Feb. 3, it was more than appreciated.

"It's been a huge blessing," Raquel Largent, director of inpatient rehabilitation and therapy services at Ascension Genesys Hospital Center, told Flint television station WJRT. "I mean, it might not seem like a big deal but it does take time. So to be able to just stay on your unit and be able to just kind of take a rest and have a meal brought to you, it's a little thing but it means the world."

That made Business Manager Greg Remington and other Local 948 members feel good on the sunny winter day. Local 948 and NECA purchased the meals from locally-owned restaurants in Flint and volunteers distributed them.

"We wanted to show some appreciation for the workers, but not only that, anyone that pays attention knows a lot of local restaurants have been locked down," Remington said. "This wasn't just for frontline workers but also for those restaurants who we hope are going to make it through this."

Local unions across North America have stepped up to aid healthcare workers during the pandemic. In Flint, Remington had a very public ally in bringing it together in Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson.

Swanson gained national recognition last summer during Black Lives Matter protests in the city, in which he was credited for treating the protesters with respect and helping to defuse a volatile situation. A video of him taking off his riot gear and walking with protesters went viral across the internet and he was inter-

viewed by several national media outlets.

He has had a friendship for years with Remington and other Local 948 members. The first fundraiser during his campaign for sheriff was held at Local 948's hall.

So, when Remington was looking for restaurants to take part, he called Swanson, who had them lined up within two hours. He also agreed to help deliver the meals along with other members of his department.

Remington also reached out to NECA, which jointly administers the labor-management cooperative fund along with the IBEW. A small portion of IBEW members and NECA signatory contractors' fees are put into the fund, which is used to support community service projects.

"We knew the Genesee County area has been hit pretty hard during the pandemic," said Neil Parish, executive director of NECA's Michigan chapter. "We also know there are a ton of people who worked around the clock taking care of our loved ones that got sick. We just wanted to show our appreciation. It's a small gesture in the grand scheme of things but it's nice for the folks doing that work."

Second- and third-shift workers also received meals. Remington noted that Local 948 members helped build the three hospitals in Genesee County and still perform maintenance work at all of them.

"We helped a lot of people who have helped us," he said.

Ann Arbor Local 252 and Lansing Local 655 also have provided meals for healthcare workers in their communities with NECA's help during the pandemic, Parish said.

"We have this money in place and it's ready to go because of the commitment to our communities," he said.

Once a symbol of American automobile production, Flint is a strong union town that has been hit hard by the loss of factory jobs and most of its auto assembly plants. The only one remaining is the General Motors plant that produces the company's full-size pickup trucks.

Swanson made sure to mention the IBEW and the city's union tradition while delivering the meals, saying it developed the city's strong character. He also said it's a continuation of the "Walk with Us" movement he helped start last summer with the protesters.

"We continue to take care of people," he told WJRT. "This was just another example." ■

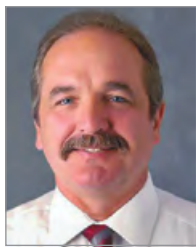


Raquel Largent from Ascension Genesys Hospital Center in Flint, Mich., joined Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson, left, in thanking Local 948 for donating meals to health-care workers.

## TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

### Randy Middleton



Manufacturing Director Randy Middleton, who turned down a management position early in his career and made the IBEW his professional

home, retired April 1 after 40 years in the brotherhood.

Brother Middleton was born in Flint, Mich., where his father, Townsend, was a member of the United Auto Workers. The elder Middleton later moved into management for AC Spark Plug and, during his son's high school years, moved the family to the Milwaukee area after he was transferred to the company's facility there.

The younger Middleton became a member of Milwaukee Local 663 in 1981, when he was accepted into AC Spark Plug's company-sponsored apprenticeship. Not long after becoming a journeyman wireman in 1985, he took a supervisor's test and did well enough that the company offered him a management position — a rare plum for someone so young.

Instead of accepting it, as his father expected, he turned it down.

"He was kind of insulted," Middleton said with a laugh. "But when you're an apprentice, you spend a lot of time following around a journeyman and he plans all the work. You're just a grunt. I told my dad that I wanted to be a journeyman and plan the work. I wanted to apply what I had learned the last four years."

He quickly became an activist. Middleton served as a shop steward and was elected Local 663's financial secretary in 1993. Three years later, he was elected business manager.

"I always had a knack for solving problems," Middleton said. "My dad was not anti-union but growing up in a management household, I heard stories from that point of view and understood it. When I got in the shop, I knew where both sides were coming from and I think that's always worked in my favor."

American manufacturing has been hit hard by outsourcing for decades and Middleton had to carefully manage Local 663's funds. But he relished the job, in large part because of how much he enjoyed negotiating contracts. That skill was one reason he was named an international representative and moved to Washington in 2007. He was promoted to manufacturing director in 2009 following the retirement of Bob Roberts.

"When I get criticism at the bargaining table from the other side, I don't rant and rave," he said. "I don't curse and scream and I don't make a scene. I've learned in 36 years that if you rant and rave, they stop listening to you."

Middleton said his proudest accomplishment was the development of a Code of Excellence specific to the manufacturing branch. The Code was first developed for construction but Middleton, with the support of then-International President

Edwin D. Hill, worked with a 34-member committee that included delegates from all 11 districts along with a handful of international representatives to develop a code that met the needs of manufacturing members and companies the IBEW has contracts with.

That eventually led to the 2014 launch of **ibewmade.com**, a site that lists all products manufactured by members and their employers and helps consumers make more informed decisions on their purchases.

"Randy encouraged everyone to bring their own ideas and build our own program," said International Representative Brian Lamm, who will succeed Middleton as director and was a member of the committee that developed the manufacturing code. "It was a success because of that."

Lamm said Middleton deserves credit for building alliances with European-based unions, particularly those representing workers at Siemens and Electrolux — companies the IBEW does business with in North America.

"That is absolutely huge going forward," Lamm said. "I know I have some awfully big shoes to fill."

In retirement, Middleton will return to the log-cabin home he built just outside Milwaukee, adding, "I'll probably die there." He and his wife of more than 40 years, Therese, have four grown children and 11 grandchildren with another on the way. They plan to spend more time with them while also traveling. Middleton's oldest son, Jason, is a member of Milwaukee Local 2150 after serving four tours in Iraq and Afghanistan as a member of the U.S. Army.

Another high point for Middleton came when he carved a ceremonial gavel from African Mahogany for International President Lonnie R. Stephenson and presented it to him at the 2016 International Convention in St. Louis. The two met while serving as business managers in the Sixth District in the mid-1990s and have been friends since.

"The IBEW is the greatest thing that's ever happened to me and my family," he said. "Career-wise, I never thought I would end up where I am. I truly believe we're the best organization out there. We're well-respected not just in the United States but globally."

The officers and staff thank Brother Middleton for his service and wish him a long, happy retirement. ■

APPOINTED

### Brian A. Lamm



International President Lonnie R. Stephenson has appointed Brian Lamm as director of the IBEW's Manufacturing Department, effective April 1. Lamm, a member of Mankato, Minn., Local 1999, is replacing Randy Middleton, who retired.

Lamm was initiated into the IBEW in

2004 while working at Kato Engineering, a manufacturer of electrical generators.

"I had worked at Walmart through high school," the Mankato native said. "My uncle had been working at Kato. He told me they were doing some hiring and he suggested I apply."

"I wasn't that involved at first," he said of his IBEW membership. "But then I started attending the monthly meetings."

In 2011, Lamm successfully ran for a spot on Local 1999's Executive Board, although at the time, union activism as a career was only one of his pursuits. "I also had decided to go back to school," he said, and he began taking classes at Minnesota's South Central College.

"One of my electives that first year was in the [emergency medical technician] program," Lamm said, and that sparked some interest in him. "So now, I had a choice to make."

Something that helped Lamm select the union path came in 2012, when he attended the IBEW's annual Broadcasting, Manufacturing and Telecommunications Conference, held that year in San Diego. "When [then-International] President [Edwin] Hill addressed the manufacturing session, it lit a fire in me," he said.

Lamm also met Middleton at that conference.

"Brian impressed me from the first meeting. He asked me how to get more people to come to union meetings," Middleton recalled with a laugh. "I said, 'If you could bottle that and sell it, you'd be rich.'"

And while Lamm eventually received an associate degree in intensive care paramedicine, his newfound professional friendship with Middleton and Hill's inspiration convinced him to get more active with his union.

"What I like about Brian is his great attitude. He has an ability to assess a situation," said Middleton, who later asked Lamm to be a part of the IBEW's Code of Excellence Committee. "He doesn't react emotionally, but with common sense. He networks. People seem to gravitate toward him and talk to him."

In 2014, Lamm ran successfully for Local 1999 business manager. "It was a part-time office," he noted. "I worked at the shop all day and then on union business after work on nights and weekends."

That same year, Lamm started a solidarity committee with an eye toward getting the one-shop local's 200-plus members more involved in their community.

"He's big into solidarity, and not just at work. He eats and sleeps IBEW," said Local 1999 Business Manager Paul Woelfel, who has been friends with Lamm since they were both in middle school. "Brian's a character, but I know I can reach out to him whenever I need to. That's just the way he is."

Among the solidarity committee's accomplishments, Woelfel said, was the "adoption" of a section of a southern Minnesota highway, where some Local 1999 members picked up litter several times a year.

"He tried a lot of ways to get us to come together," Woelfel said, such as restarting a long-dormant tradition of



holding annual picnics for members and their families.

Lamm served as business manager until 2017, when Stephenson appointed him to be an international representative in the Manufacturing Department.

“It was tough at first,” Lamm said. “I had never lived anywhere other than Mankato.” To stay active and help make friends in his new city, he joined a D.C. kickball league. “It took a little while to make the transition, but this is home now,” he said.

Before most large gatherings were stopped early in the COVID-19 pandemic, he regularly attended Washington Capitals games a few blocks from the IBEW’s International Office. “Being from Minnesota, you’ve also got to be a hockey fan,” he said.

Lamm also serves as a member of the IBEW’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

As director of the Manufacturing Department, Lamm plans to keep a steady course. “I want to carry on what Randy’s been doing,” he said. That includes continuing to build stronger connections with other unions in the manufacturing trades, a move that has helped break down barriers to organizing at manufacturers with both U.S. and European operations.

“I expect he’ll be here at the I.O. for awhile,” Middleton said.

Please join the officers and staff of the IBEW in wishing Brother Lamm great success in his new role. ■

## RETIRED

### Dan Gardner



International Representative Dan Gardner, a third-generation wireman who rose to prominence in Oregon politics before joining the IBEW staff in Washington, D.C., retired April 1.

Gardner had moved from the state Legislature to serving as Oregon’s elected labor commissioner when he was hired away by the union’s political department in 2008, a journey he began as a summer helper at Peoria, Ill., Local 34.

Topping out as a journeyman wireman in 1984, he carried on a family tradition that started with his grandfather and extends to his father, uncle, cousins, nephews and his own son.

“I thought about being a lawyer, but I hated school,” Gardner said with a laugh. “From the time I was about 15 being a journeyman was all I wanted to do.”

Gardner headed west in 1986, following his older brother to Portland, Ore., and Local 48. He spent the better part of a decade as a foreman and general foreman on Nike’s ever-expanding global campus.

He dove into Local 48’s political action committee early on and served as chair before moving into leadership as recording secretary and vice president.

He was initiated into state politics when he fought an attempted repeal of Oregon’s prevailing wage law. Teaming

with Portland Local 125 activist Liz Shuler — now secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO — Gardner helped lead a grassroots campaign to defeat the referendum. “We won overwhelmingly,” he said.

Building on that victory and other pro-worker activism, Gardner ran as a Democrat for the Oregon House in 1996, winning the seat that now-Gov. Kate Brown had vacated to run for the state Senate.

Twice reelected, he served as minority leader during his third term and led his caucus on a historic five-day walk-out that derailed a lopsided GOP redistricting plan. It was the first major walk-out by lawmakers at any U.S. statehouse since 1924.

When he hit now-defunct term limits in 2002, Gardner ran to head Oregon’s nonpartisan Bureau of Labor and Industries. He won 59% of the vote in a four-way race and was reelected in 2006.

His roles as a legislator and commissioner meant he both championed and enforced laws protecting workers’ rights, safety and livelihoods. He helped improve the prevailing wage law and the state’s minimum wage, a fight he won by way of a

ballot measure that raised the hourly rate and tied it to the Consumer Price Index.

“I went from being one of three chief petitioners who got it passed to being the guy in charge of adjusting it every year,” Gardner said.

He loved nearly everything about being a public servant save for the paycheck, lamenting lightheartedly that, “I could have made a whole lot more as an electrician.”

Midway through his second term at the labor bureau, the IBEW made him an offer he couldn’t refuse: a chance to return to his trade union roots and bring his political skills to the nation’s capital.

Gardner was made for the job, said Utility Director Donnie Colston, who previously worked with him in the political department.

“Dan is the best communicator,” he said. “He can talk for hours about politics anywhere in the country in a way that makes you want to listen. Like he’s telling a story. He has vast knowledge, and he remembers everything.”

In 2015, he and Gardner spent six weeks door knocking at IBEW homes in Louisiana, leading up to a runoff election

for the U.S. Senate seat then held by Democrat Mary Landrieu. Colston marveled at his friend’s success at the doors.

“For him it wasn’t just, ‘please take the time to vote,’ but, ‘this is why you should vote,’” he said. “He’s very relatable. He makes friends wherever he goes.”

Colston saw the same dynamic when Gardner accompanied him to Capitol Hill. “When I moved to Utility, he’d go with me to talk about legislation and regulatory matters. He’d built relationships with so many members of Congress. All of them know Dan.”

Gardner spent long days on the Hill making the IBEW’s case for everything from energy policy to job safety to workers’ rights legislation.

In the battle for the Affordable Care Act, he persuaded Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley to sponsor an amendment to apply the employer mandate to contractors with at least five workers and \$250,000 in annual payroll.

“It was a really big deal for the building trades,” Gardner said, even though enraged nonunion contractors ultimately prevailed. But years of effort on another

Obamacare front finally paid off when Congress repealed excise taxes on gold-standard health plans, like those negotiated by unions.

Choosing to take a breather from politics during the Trump era, Gardner spent his later years at headquarters in the Safety and Health Department.

He worked on national safety standards for construction sites, line-clearance tree trimmers and other IBEW jobs and was consumed much of the past year by the pandemic. He tracked COVID-19 developments and met frequently via Zoom and conference calls with counterparts at the AFL-CIO and building trades associations to share research and strategize.

Gardner has returned to Portland to enjoy his retirement near his grown daughter, his journeyman son, and a wealth of old friends who comprise a who’s who of Oregon politics. He doubts he’ll run for elective office again but is eyeing opportunities to be a voice for workers on state boards and commissions.

The IBEW thanks Brother Gardner for his years of service and wishes him well in his future pro-worker pursuits. ■

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

### Birth of The Electrical Worker

On Jan. 1, 1893, the first issue of The Electrical Worker was published. The iconic photo of our 10 founders graced its cover. It had a publication run of 5,000 copies, two of which are held in the archives of the International Office. The Worker has been published monthly for the 127 years since, making it one of the world’s oldest labor publications. But it wouldn’t have been possible if not for the tireless effort and dedication of our first Grand Secretary-Treasurer, James T. Kelly.

Kelly began his electrical career as a wireman in Towanda, Pa. He moved to St. Louis in 1890, where he met Henry Miller, a lineman from Texas. The two men proved to be a powerful team in the cause of unionism. In September of 1890 they chartered American Federation of Labor Local 5221 for St. Louis electricians. In November of 1891, they founded the IBEW, with Miller elected president and Kelly as secretary-treasurer. With Miller traveling the country organizing locals, Kelly was left to manage the books. In the first year of operations, he drafted our constitution and ritual book, maintained per capita receipts, and oversaw the engraving of all charters. In 1892, at the 2nd IBEW convention, Kelly submitted a motion to create a monthly journal paid for by advertising space and a 25-cent dues assessment. The vote in favor was unanimous and Kelly added yet another title to his resume, editor-in-chief of The Electrical Worker.

In the very first issue, Kelly set an ambitious goal for the IBEW’s new publication.

“The Electrical Worker, edited and published by men who have devoted the best years of their lives in the hazardous work of their craft, who understand the needs and requirements of the electrical workers, will be a fearless champion of their rights and ever watchful of their interests.”

The concerns of the working class were often drowned out by the power of gilded-age newspaper bosses. The Worker was determined to change that. The first issue featured a column from AFL founder Samuel Gompers, tips for locating troublesome arcs in power stations, and a description of a security camera prototype called a “photo-electric detector.” And at the back of the issue, comprising only two pages, were 11 articles submitted by locals from around the country, representing a quarter of the 45 locals in existence. This was the earliest appearance of Local Lines, a feature Kelly believed would unite our mem-



Founding Secretary-Treasurer  
James T. Kelly, 1891-1897

bership in common cause for it was where the voice of the worker was paramount. Henry Miller believed this as well and stressed the importance of the role of Press Secretaries in the first issue:

“The Press Secretary is the local representative of The Electrical Worker and should furnish the paper with all the latest electrical news in his vicinity; the condition of trade, new work, extension of plants, etc. We should aid our grand secretary-treasurer in every way we can to make The Electrical Worker a success by sending from time to time an article on some practical subject.”

But the goal to unite members from across the country soon come under threat with the financial panic in the fall of 1893. Unemployment rates skyrocketed and the IBEW lost over half of its membership and with it, a primary source of its funding. With the IBEW close to collapse, Kelly chose to mortgage his household effects and sell his building association stock to keep the organization afloat. Thankfully, it was enough for the IBEW to weather the storm. The Worker stayed in publication and by the 1895 convention, the IBEW balance sheets were in the black. It was Kelly’s belief that the Electrical Worker was what kept the IBEW going through those troubled times. He stated at the 1921 convention, “We could not have managed to keep our Brotherhood intact through these early years if it were not for our magazine.”

While our world has changed in the 127 years since the Worker’s first issue, certain themes have always run through its pages. Each issue seeks to keep members informed of the latest in electrical technology and safety, to emphasize the importance of political action by labor, and to give voice to each local union. One of those voices came from A.M. Ryan, press secretary of Cleveland Local 16, who submitted this inspiring message in the first issue:

“Looking into its future, I cannot refrain from making a prediction that the Worker will pave the way and make the rough places smooth for many an organizer. Through it, workmen of our craft who are not yet with us will see that the Brotherhood is not a dream, or a passing shadow but an organization founded on principles beneficial to the working class in general and the electrical worker in particular.”

Let us hope that Brother Ryan would be proud of what The Electrical Worker has become today: A testament to the perseverance of our brotherhood, and a celebration of its members who keep the dream alive. ■

Does your local submit Local Lines articles regularly? Visit [IBEW.org/LocalLines](https://www.ibew.org/LocalLines) for submission guidelines. Also, visit [NBew-IBEWmuseum.org](https://www.nbew-ibewmuseum.org) to help support the Electrical Workers Historical Society.



## WHO WE ARE

# Local 3 Retiree Reflects on Breaking Barriers for Women

It's been a while since Eleanor Rogan has sold any electrical supplies, but she remembers those years fondly, thanks in large part to the IBEW.

"Going to work was like going to family," said the New York Local 3 retiree. "That was a good deal."

Rogan worked for Kennedy Electric as a sales representative at a time when no other women were doing so. She had women coworkers in the office, but in the field, it was just her and all-male engineering departments and designers. Like a lot of women from her generation — she's now 91 — she didn't give much thought at the time to what her rarified role meant for future generations of her gender. She was too busy making sales. Still, she knew that she couldn't play by the same rules as her male counterparts.

"I couldn't be buddy-buddy with the clients like the men could," Rogan said. "I had to figure out a different way of how to get them comfortable with me. But eventually we'd get there."

She had help from Kennedy Electric, which gave her clients like Bloomingdale's, Lord and Taylor, and Marriot. Places where it wasn't quite so unusual to see a woman.

"They were very strategic about where they put me," Rogan said. "There were some clients who wouldn't go for it, complaining that they couldn't swear around me, so I went to a lot of department stores."

Regardless of the client, Rogan says she always did her homework. She knew her products inside and out, and her clients knew that too. When the Empire State Building first started using colored lights, it was Rogan who provided them. If somebody needed a special cable, she got on the phone and called around until she found it, sometimes even saving the customer money. If they needed a new



New York Local 3 retiree Eleanor Rogan, pictured in the bottom right corner of the group with her coworkers dressed in green, worked for Kennedy Electric as a sales rep back when no other women did.

design, she went out of her way to make sure they got what they wanted.

"It's a matter of personal repertoire," Rogan said. "You had to get their trust and get them comfortable with you, then you'd get the orders."

One thing she did was to bring plastic containers of hard candy with her when she'd visit her clients. The sweets were so popular, she said, that she had to bring separate batches for each department because they never shared them.

"It was a calling card," Rogan said. "A little personal touch."

Part of the job involved taking clients to lunch, and of course paying for the meal. But during Rogan's time, it was practically unheard of for a woman to take on that role.

"I doubt any of those men had ever allowed or even thought of allowing a woman to pick up a check, but there was no way my mother was going to let the client pay," said Rogan's daughter, Barbara.



Sometimes she'd work out a plan in advance with the maître d. Other times she'd use a little humor.

"Sometimes I'd joke with them and say, 'How else would I get all these handsome men around me if I didn't pay?'" Rogan said.

Once Rogan had established a rela-

tionship with her clients, and they no longer felt embarrassed about having a woman pick up the tab, she ended up making lasting friendships, and even got to know their families. On one occasion, she was able to help an old client who was out of work land a new job, as chief engineer at Lord & Taylor. He never forgot that, Rogan said. Even when they talked on the phone years later, he immediately recognized her voice.

"She's a nice person and relationships matter," Barbara Rogan said. "She brought what women often bring to the job, heart as well as brains."

There's little doubt that her mere presence was enough to make an impact, as evidenced at a GE conference she once attended.

"I remember a man telling me that he'd never even thought about having a woman as a sales rep until he saw me," Rogan said. "He said it really opened his eyes."

Of course, not all days were victories. During her more challenging moments, Rogan said she was usually able to shake it off and keep things in perspective.

"If I was having a hard day, I'd look at it like, 'OK, that is what it is. And it's just for the moment.'"

But there were also times when being a woman may have been an asset.

"Sometimes a guy would just start telling me his life story. I don't know if it

was guilt for the gushing or just feeling better after, but a lot of times those calls would end with a sale too," Rogan said.

The New York native jokes that she started working for Kennedy Electric before the computers did, and remembers when the machines took up an entire air-conditioned room. A lot has changed since then, both for women and electronics, and she says she's glad that she got the chance to blaze a few trails.

"They just didn't know what to do with a woman back then. They had to learn how to get used to me. But I enjoyed breaking barriers," she said.

The example she set influenced her daughters too, said Barbara Rogan.

"My parents had three daughters and told all of them that they could be whatever they chose to be. We didn't need telling though, because we'd seen our mother walk the walk," said Barbara. "We learned early that there's no such thing as men's work or women's work. You use your capabilities and you don't let other people's assumptions stand in your way."

Rogan's advice to women going into sales comes down to the basics: know your product, enjoy the company and be aware of the competition. And don't be afraid to push for what you need.

"You have to be sure of yourself. And if you don't know the answer, just say, 'let me make a call,'" Rogan said. "It can be a little scary sometimes, but you don't let anybody see."

Rogan says she's fortunate to have had the IBEW in her corner, including now in her retirement.

"I've always dealt with lovely people at the IBEW," she said. "There's never been a time when they haven't been able to help me. I have nothing but kudos for the union."

Sometimes she misses her old job though, especially the camaraderie and talking to people.

"It was a lot of fun while it lasted," Rogan said. "I made a lot of friends. And if I opened a door or two for a few more women, that's a great thing." ■



## IBEW MERCHANDISE

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

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# In Memoriam

## Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in February 2021

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	Local	Surname	Date of Death
1	Bruns, B. L.	7/2/19	46	Jameson, W. C.	11/14/20	134	Todd, P. E.	11/28/20	379	Deas, W. D.	7/5/20	569	Linzey, G. W.	9/28/20	876	Martens, D.	10/23/20
1	Einspanier, R. J.	4/22/20	46	Rush, J.	9/30/20	136	Duke, W. B.	11/27/19	401	Wright, F.	9/13/20	570	Dawes, H.	12/16/19	915	Herman, J. F.	9/10/20
1	Haarmann, P. J.	10/28/20	47	Ortega, L. M.	10/2/20	145	Robinson, D.	11/18/20	413	Norris, M. R.	12/14/20	586	Steele, D. M.	9/27/20	952	Jones, J. L.	5/1/20
1	Johanningmeier, J. C.	12/12/20	48	Bilodeaux, M. L.	5/25/20	150	Lahey, S. R.	8/19/20	413	Renz, W. J.	12/12/20	595	Tompkins, J. L.	11/11/20	952	Woodruff, G. H.	9/1/20
1	McDonald, J. D.	12/2/20	48	Jodrey, M. D.	11/23/20	150	Lubkeman, J. H.	11/18/20	424	Placatka, L. E.	10/13/20	601	McClain, J. C.	1/10/21	993	Larsen, H.	11/20/20
1	Naes, R. L.	11/2/20	48	Kato, K. T.	11/6/20	153	Laplace, D. R.	11/16/20	429	Hall, J. L.	11/10/20	602	Stultz, R. B.	9/24/20	997	Earl, M. C.	10/13/20
1	Quinn, W. V.	11/20/20	48	Lawson, W. S.	10/16/20	153	Overmyer, D. A.	11/9/20	429	Warren, W. A.	5/29/20	606	Paradiso, R. D.	8/21/20	1015	Cruz, J.	10/6/19
1	Rieder, C. R.	11/25/20	48	Watkins, L. L.	8/20/20	153	Rohleder, J. K.	11/28/20	443	Emerson, B. W.	11/28/20	613	Payne, H. B.	8/28/20	1116	Qasim, N. I.	12/5/19
1	Taylor, R. W.	11/22/20	57	Roberts, B. H.	10/15/20	160	Hanson, B. A.	12/15/20	443	Sanders, F. W.	10/19/20	613	Rzeczkowski, L. L.	11/21/20	1141	Hockert, J. C.	12/1/19
1	Tesreau, R. D.	11/3/20	58	Marois, R. H.	10/9/20	164	Cairo, A.	9/16/20	443	Vardamaskos, J.	9/24/20	613	Salguero, R.	11/15/20	1186	Napuunoa, G. K.	8/22/20
1	Wecke, M. W.	11/22/20	58	Martin, R. J.	10/8/20	164	Metje, M. D.	9/11/20	446	Phillips, B. R.	9/22/20	613	Smith, W. O.	1/15/21	1205	Perry, B. J.	12/1/20
1	Wright, E. A.	12/13/20	58	Parsons, R. G.	6/8/19	175	Hartman, K. J.	10/21/20	449	Jenkins, R. L.	12/28/20	624	Halas, J. K.	9/25/20	1253	Doiron, N. M.	12/26/20
2	Knees Kern, R. D.	11/11/20	58	Richter, E. P.	8/16/20	175	Henderson, M. J.	11/26/20	453	LeJeune, K. M.	11/14/20	625	Mackenzie, O. R.	10/9/20	1253	Fish, P. W.	11/8/18
3	Benyahmeen, A.	11/7/20	68	Muir, L. L.	9/5/19	176	Baker, R. L.	9/29/20	456	Emerick, F. D.	11/7/20	640	Cristy, A.	11/30/20	1379	Klingborg, R. Y.	11/17/20
3	Brophy, A. J.	12/31/20	68	Sayles, N. R.	10/2/20	176	Price, G. N.	12/8/20	456	Jacobs, R. M.	9/28/20	640	Easter, J. M.	9/29/20	1426	Nelson, J. E.	8/26/20
3	Brown, V. F.	9/10/20	68	Waechter, K. F.	9/1/20	180	Maher, K. D.	1/2/19	461	Cramer, R. W.	9/13/20	640	Flores, P. P.	9/2/20	1426	Slette, L. O.	5/1/20
3	Canagata, H. E.	12/25/19	70	Comer, L. P.	7/22/20	191	Taylor, M. R.	8/22/20	465	Boulter, D. E.	10/2/20	640	Manring, B. P.	11/23/20	1547	Davis, W. J.	12/20/20
3	Capobianco, R. A.	12/19/20	71	Fichtner, D. K.	8/16/20	193	Stanley, S. T.	10/14/20	474	Bland, R. L.	8/26/20	649	Clayton, G. F.	10/20/20	1547	McClure, H. E.	12/22/20
3	Cavallo, V. C.	3/28/19	73	Aga, C. R.	12/5/20	213	Fleming, J. W.	11/1/20	474	Phillips, B. R.	9/22/20	665	Wilkins, W. K.	11/8/20	1547	Sams, R. C.	8/25/20
3	Chiarella, W. J.	5/9/20	76	Shofner, R. E.	8/9/20	213	Hellwig, H. J.	6/26/20	477	Holden, W. S.	12/11/20	666	Carson, S. E.	9/17/20	1579	Storey, M. F.	8/2/20
3	Davey, A. J.	10/26/20	77	Hunter, V.	3/26/20	213	Sinclare, R. B.	8/15/20	477	Lamberson, J. R.	11/11/20	666	Eggleston, L. J.	1/7/21	1583	Stoeffler, R. R.	10/7/20
3	Davidson, V. M.	10/20/20	80	Harris, C. G.	11/4/20	222	Smith, M.	6/25/20	479	Jowell, M. W.	6/29/20	676	Stephens, W. H.	4/8/20	1856	Rivers, D. J.	1/31/20
3	De George, A.	10/30/19	80	Hicks, J. C.	6/29/20	222	Williams, W. R.	10/5/20	479	Parker, D. R.	11/7/20	683	Scheel, S. R.	12/29/20	2048	Thomas, K. O.	7/22/20
3	DeNichilo, S.	5/21/20	80	Marlin, D. E.	10/26/20	226	Baldwin, R. R.	11/5/20	481	Hedge, R. A.	4/1/20	688	Laughrey, D. J.	12/12/20	2085	Miller, J. J.	9/28/20
3	Dillon, T. E.	8/1/19	81	Barrett, R. J.	12/9/20	226	Roepke, R. D.	9/30/20	488	Melfi, L. A.	11/24/20	688	Useton, J. L.	9/28/20	I.O. (441)	Schlect, G. E.	11/19/20
3	Eagan, F.	8/4/19	81	Sukel, R.	1/18/21	231	Pallesen, R. D.	11/18/20	488	Secchi, R.	10/9/20	697	Maness, J. T.	10/22/20	I.O. (602)	Luna, L.	11/3/20
3	Friedman, T.	10/23/20	82	Burkhardt, J. T.	10/30/20	237	Christman, G.	10/31/20	494	Hornung, G. E.	11/11/20	697	Seliger, C. W.	11/15/20	Pens. (136)	Cummings, G. L.	10/14/20
3	Gilman, A.	5/10/20	86	Cappotelli, D. R.	11/22/19	242	Costley, J. L.	1/1/21	494	Jurgenson, J. P.	12/10/20	701	Hook, M. A.	8/15/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Altman, J. H.	10/14/20
3	Harding, T. E.	9/16/20	86	Holmes, G. T.	11/2/20	258	Daoust, M. L.	6/2/20	494	Oppitz, W. A.	11/24/20	702	Dawdy, D. W.	9/23/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Fisanick, M.	11/6/20
3	Harris, M. G.	3/8/20	89	Culver, D. R.	10/1/20	258	Noll, W. A.	10/14/20	494	Ruetten, G. W.	9/22/20	712	Hricik, R. F.	11/10/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Hyndman, S. W.	1/14/20
3	Holle, J.	11/4/20	90	Dunlop, D. M.	12/5/20	269	Jones, W. S.	8/3/20	494	Stutzman, L. R.	12/18/20	716	Burleson, G. D.	9/6/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Johnson, O. G.	11/11/20
3	Lowery, T. J.	4/11/20	90	Picard, R. J.	3/12/20	270	Tweed, F. R.	9/23/20	502	Wallace, M. S.	10/26/20	716	Key, H. K.	4/12/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Murphy, F. J.	7/20/20
3	Lynch, R.	10/1/20	98	Brown, A. L.	9/27/19	288	Bright, D. W.	11/18/20	508	Shaw, A. J.	7/24/19	725	Black, R. J.	11/30/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Olson, R. L.	6/21/20
3	Maglio, F.	6/10/20	98	Kostik, J. A.	7/14/20	292	Klobe, J. A.	4/30/20	520	Wilder, D. R.	11/21/20	725	Franklin, J. D.	8/8/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Pepler, T. H.	1/16/21
3	McCrosson, J. J.	4/2/19	98	Pautenis, J. C.	1/4/21	302	Collins, T. R.	10/13/20	529	Jungwirth, M.	10/18/20	738	Hooton, J. L.	8/23/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Robinson, J. J.	9/21/20
3	McGraw, J. L.	12/2/19	98	Powers, G. T.	12/21/20	302	Johnson, T. E.	9/3/19	532	Leifert, R.	11/27/20	753	Jennings, C. R.	12/7/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Rowe, R. G.	11/1/20
3	Nandlall, R.	4/17/20	100	Shorte, E. L.	11/9/20	302	Kuchins, D. M.	9/14/20	547	Bentele, N.	8/16/19	760	Collins, G. S.	11/2/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Shirlow, T. E.	10/17/20
3	Pearce, W. C.	4/17/20	102	O'Donnell, J. P.	7/14/20	302	Merritt, F. W.	11/2/20	549	Robinson, J. O.	10/4/20	804	Sutton, D.	8/2/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Speir, C. L.	9/18/19
3	Potashnik, I.	11/13/20	102	O'Rielly, B. C.	9/24/20	304	Swaney, J. K.	8/30/20	551	Hansen, F. R.	2/28/20	804	Wozniak, M. A.	8/25/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Treadway, B. L.	10/31/20
3	Rossomando, J. A.	3/4/20	103	Burt, W. R.	10/7/20	305	Brandenburg, S. R.	12/17/20	551	Holben, E. A.	10/15/20	816	McMillen, J. W.	11/9/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Waggoner, J. M.	12/21/20
3	Santangelo, R. L.	3/29/20	103	Manzi, W. M.	4/21/19	306	Douglas, M. B.	11/18/20	558	Rhoden, J. A.	11/25/20	861	Landry, D. J.	9/29/20			
3	Thompson, A. L.	11/19/20	105	Dawson, D. T.	12/24/20	306	Ess, J. C.	4/29/20	558	Walker, R. H.	12/8/20	861	Pitts, C. W.	11/8/20			
3	Timberman, M. V.	7/21/19	105	Ryce, J.	12/19/20	309	Andrews, J. R.	11/11/20									
3	Trainor, B. T.	2/16/20	105	Teeple, R. B.	1/3/21	309	Baczewski, S. D.	11/25/20									
3	Vaccaro, J. W.	8/23/20	111	Underwood, D. F.	11/26/20	309	Braden, R. F.	11/23/20									
3	Vierno, R. W.	6/5/20	112	Ray, S. E.	12/8/20	309	Hilmes, A. A.	11/5/20									
3	Viggiano, B.	9/27/20	113	Claus, W.	9/18/20	309	Viner, J.	12/3/20									
3	Weiser, M.	9/3/18	120	Draisey, A. R.	10/26/20	313	Manlove, L. W.	11/2/20									
5	Bardonner, J. R.	8/14/20	120	Fullerton, C. D.	1/15/21	317	Waite, A. J.	9/24/20									
5	Krupitzer, W. H.	10/6/20	124	Bennett, D. C.	9/5/20	322	Melton, W.	10/28/20									
5	Tillman, W. E.	9/15/20	124	Standeford, S. G.	1/10/21	322	Snyder, L. L.	12/2/20									
6	Aherne, D. A.	6/30/20	125	Bartlett, J. H.	11/17/20	329	Gibson, J. F.	10/23/20									
6	Passanisi, M. R.	7/2/20	125	Craig, D. E.	5/15/19	343	Blommel, J. H.	12/16/20									
8	Rutledge, R. E.	5/16/20	125	Newby, C. W.	8/8/20	343	Wheeler, E. M.	12/18/20									
8	Spratt, D.	1/16/21	125	North, C. Z.	10/19/20	349	Herrera, R.	8/4/20									
11	Caire, M. J.	1/8/20	125	Perth, L.	11/5/20	350	Tate, B. L.	11/21/20									
11	Harrington, J. S.	10/13/20	126	Straw, T. K.	11/6/20	353	Aprile, G. J.	1/1/21									
11	Kurachi, W. S.	5/25/20	127	Carrel, R.	1/11/21	353	Beko, S. F.	11/22/20									
11	Needham, J. D.	3/13/13	129	Johnson, J. E.	8/20/20	353	Loquercio, G.	10/17/20									
11	Waheed, M. H.	10/24/20	130	Ford, J. T.	10/20/20	353	Snelgrove, S. W.	12/1/20									
13	Matter, G. S.	1/25/20	130	Gardner, G.	11/25/20	353	Stavroukous, L.	1/4/21									
16	Clem, C. E.	9/22/20	134	Blietz, R. A.	11/3/20	353	Wilson, D. E.	12/23/19									
17	O'Connor, J. J.	2/2/20	134	Campion, J. J.	11/17/20	354	Cook, W. W.	11/21/20									
20	Hays, C. C.	10/28/20	134	Conroy, M. J.	9/30/20	354	Price, C. M.	7/8/20									
20	Jones, G. L.	11/17/20	134	Feinberg, A. S.	10/30/20	357	Baca, K. A.	12/5/20									
22	Jones, L. R.	10/18/20	134	Kirchman, C. E.	11/2/20	357	Daniels, C. P.	10/30/19									
25	Stonitsch, J. J.	7/24/20	134	Knauss, J. F.	11/3/20	357	Holland, R. A.	11/6/20									
26	Gallagher, W. P.	9/19/20	134	Madsen, N. T.	11/1/20	357	Koon, B. L.	10/17/20									
26	Hartman, H. R.	11/14/19	134	Matej, A.	9/26/20	357	Tuttle, R. W.	1/16/21									
26	King, L. W.	8/30/20	134	Mattiaz, P.	11/9/20	363	Habedank, R.	6/26/19									
34	Eble, A. J.	10/21/20	134	Mitchell, S. D.	9/14/20	364	Apple, W. J.	9/15/20									
34	Seiler, K. A.	11/19/20	134	Payette, D. W.	9/16/20	364	Niesen, R. J.	10/4/20									
34	Ulrich, A. C.	11/16/20	134	Ray, R. L.	8/26/20	369	Carter, W. T.	11/20/20									
38	Kudla, J. R.	12/1/20	134	Rybka, R. T.	9/18/20	369	Hertle, C. A.	10/5/20									



# LOCAL LINES

## Serving the Community With Light

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — Our members were once again able to demonstrate their abilities and bless clients of the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center through the 27th annual Ritz's Fantasy of Lights. For more than two months, volunteers hauled, set up and maintained displays that allowed the center to raise \$240,167, which is the highest total to date. This year approximately 17,466 vehicles (including horse-drawn carriages) toured the event. These funds will help to underwrite up to 4,803 sessions of physical, occupational and speech therapy for tri-state children and adults who couldn't otherwise afford these life-changing services. Since its inception, Fantasy of Lights has generated over \$3,890,000. Local brothers and sisters have also contributed their time to building a much-needed storage facility for the lighting displays.

Also, in service to our community, Terry Bennett, David Green, Paul Green and Mark Tooley recently completed a volunteer lighting retrofit at the Gibson County Senior Center.

Many thanks go to Bryan Diehl, Greg Hebbeler, Ryan McRoberts, Nick Vaught and Brandon Wongn-gamnit for their efforts to negotiate a fair and equitable contractual bargaining agreement that will serve the needs of the membership and promote the unionized electrical industry.

Donald P. Beavin, P.S.

## JATC Awards Outstanding Apprentices

L.U. 20 (i,u,t&em), GRAND PRAIRIE, TX — The North Texas Electrical JATC held its annual Completion Dinner at the Hilton Arlington on Sept. 4, 2020. Awards are presented to apprentices for outstanding on-the-job and school performance. Taken into consideration are the apprentices' grades, attendance, job evaluations, attitude and community involvement.

Local 20 and the North Texas chapter of NECA each give an award to a graduating apprentice for an overall outstanding performance. Both the NECA Outstanding Apprentice Award and the IBEW Outstanding Apprentice Award went to Daniel R. Burgos.

In addition, the following were awarded: Local 20 Gold Pliers Award — Joseph Barkell (1st Year), William Rematore (2nd Year), Andrew Carnes (3rd Year) and Preston Pack (4th Year); NECA Achievement Award — Joseph Barkell (1st Year), Salim Amara (2nd Year), Andrew Carnes (3rd Year) and Jordan Werry (4th Year); Local Union 20 Federal Credit Union Award — Michael Rowe (1st Year), Daniel Rivera Alsina (2nd Year), Roger Rosillo (3rd Year), Preston Pack (4th Year) and Anthony J. Kottaridis (5th Year).



*IBEW Local 20, North Texas Electrical JATC graduates at the Apprenticeship Completion Dinner: (seated, left to right) Brian Quintero, Jose Lara, Jasmine Williams, William Mosqueda, Gabriel Ortiz Hernandez and Orlando Rangel; (middle row, left to right) Gerri Jackson, Daniel Burgos, Julian Flores, Marco Solis and Josue Silva; (back row, left to right) Agustin Vera, Anthony Kottaridis, Roger Ewing, Erasmo Rodriguez, Owen Pierce, Brandon Brashier and Nathan Keesee.*

The Ft. Worth Local Union 116 Federal Credit Union Award went to graduating apprentices Daniel Burgos and Anthony Kottaridis. Recipients of the Perfect Attendance Award were Daniel Burgos, Roger Ewing, Anthony Kottaridis, Jose Lara, Brian Quintero, Orlando Rangel and Marco Solis.

Price Warwick Jr., B.M./Pres.

## Tool and Boot Sale Postponed

L.U.24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — Normally this post would include a picture of those who volunteered at our annual children's Christmas party, which was unfortunately canceled as we continue to battle COVID-19. As winter set in, the work in our area slowed just slightly, and we have a positive outlook for 2021.

We have finished up negotiations with Clear Channel Outdoor, ABM Electrical Power Solutions and will soon start negotiating a new VDV agreement.

This year's tool and boot sale associated with our annual drug-testing program is postponed until the fall. If your card expires before then, call Mobile Medical at 877-201-7474 to find a testing site and time convenient for you.

I'd like to welcome Carmen F. Voso on staff as a service agent. Carmen comes from a long line of Vosos that have served the local throughout its history, and I look forward to working with him.

The vaccines are arriving, and we are turning the corner on what seems to be a never-ending battle with COVID-19, so please continue to protect each other. Stay safe and stay well; we need you to move us all forward.

Peter P. Demchuk, B.M.

## Springtime at Last

L.U. 26 (i,es,ees,govt,em&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — At last, it's springtime in Washington, D.C. The Local 26 Scholarship Committee is reviewing the many scholarship applications and will make a decision in the near future. The winners will be announced in our next quarterly magazine, In Charge, as well as in our next Electrical Worker article.

As of this writing, due to the ongoing pandemic, the annual DAD's Day golf outing and both the Md. and Va. picnics are not going to be held this year. General membership meetings have continued to be canceled, too. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the union hall at 301-459-2900. We hope that everyone is remaining safe, as much as possible.

Best wishes to the following new retirees: Daniel S. Bryant, Kenneth E. Burch Sr., Bradley S. Burns, Luis A. Carrera, Fabien Chiepodou, Eric W. Daum, Anthony F. Donahue Sr., Charles J. Donoghue, Bernard G. Durkin, Henry M. Emory, Michael P. Kemp, John R. Kurty, Dominic Pagani, Dominic A. Paluti, Charles E. Remmers, Michael J. Stone and Estes M. Thompson.

The following members have passed away since our last article: Clarence E. Batson, William S. Crain, Kevin D. Dyson, Warren C. Hogan, Robert L. Moats, Hermitt Mosley and Ronald L. Rohrbach.

George C. Hogan, B.M.

## Downtown Construction Moving Ahead

L.U. 38 (i), CLEVELAND, OH — National Real Estate Advisors (NREA), which is the real estate branch of our NEBF pension fund, has signed a deal with developers to finance a 23-story, 298-apartment-unit building at 10600 Chester Avenue. NREA's involvement makes this project possible and makes it an all-union project. The \$101-million-project is called The Artisan, and Contemporary Electric has been awarded the job.

In recent talks with construction managers from Gilbane Co. and Welty Co., who are managing the new downtown Sherwin Williams tower and the new R&D center in Brecksville, the managers stated that they expect to move ahead with construction of both projects in the fourth quarter of this year.

Dennis Meaney, B.M./F.S.



*Local 38 members working for Zenith at St. Martin de Porres High School: (left to right) Jon Lemons, Cesar Solis, Tim Cheney and Jeff Garbash.*

## Going Digital in a COVID-19 World

L.U. 40 (em,i&mps), HOLLYWOOD, CA — As we continue to battle the virus that has turned all of our lives upside down in one way or another, our local continues to adapt to a new way of functioning. Although we began to improve our digital infrastructure years ago in order to meet our members' needs, COVID-19 has forced us to speed up our timeline to make more improvements. Local 40's digitized system was well on its way before the pandemic with features allowing members to pay dues and reference contracts and current wage rate sheets as well as access health, pension and retirement information. Since the reality of a world under quarantine has set in, we at the local have had to make many other changes to the digital platform to adapt to a contactless society. This includes using the Zoom platform to coordinate meetings, swear in new members and communicate to our members the latest safety protocols and benefit information.

On another note, we at Local 40 would like to recognize our 2020 graduating apprentices: Kevin Butcher, Nathan Daniels, Gary Fried, Aaron Houson,

## Submitting Local Lines Articles

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via email ([locallines@ibew.org](mailto:locallines@ibew.org)) or U.S. Mail. We have a 200-word limit. We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are based on the editor's judgment. Our guidelines and deadlines are available at [IBEW.org/LocalLines](http://IBEW.org/LocalLines). Please email or call the Media Department at (202) 728-6291 with any questions.

## Trade Classifications

(as) Alarm & Signal	(et) Electronic Technicians	(mps) Motion Picture Studios	(rts) Radio-Television Service
(ars) Atomic Research Service	(fm) Fixture Manufacturing	(nst) Nuclear Service Technicians	(so) Service Occupations
(bo) Bridge Operators	(govt) Government	(o) Outside	(s) Shopmen
(cs) Cable Splicers	(i) Inside	(p) Powerhouse	(se) Sign Erector
(catv) Cable Television	(it) Instrument Technicians	(pet) Professional, Engineers & Technicians	(spa) Sound & Public Address
(c) Communications	(lctt) Line Clearance Tree Trimming	(ptc) Professional, Technical & Clerical	(st) Sound Technicians
(cr) Cranemen	(lpt) Lightning Protection Technicians		(t) Telephone
(ees) Electrical Equipment Service	(mt) Maintenance	(rr) Railroad	(tm) Transportation Manufacturing
(ei) Electrical Inspection	(mo) Maintenance & Operation	(rtb) Radio-Television Broadcasting	(u) Utility
(em) Electrical Manufacturing	(mow) Manufacturing Office Workers	(rtm) Radio-Television Manufacturing	(uow) Utility Office Workers
(es) Electric Signs	(mar) Marine		(ws) Warehouse and Supply

*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.*



Thomas Klohn, Gregory Marquez, Kyle Reninga, Michael Robinson, Thomas Rooter, Kent Scaper, Tyler Shannon and Robert Tehee. We thank them for all the hard work and encourage them to become leaders in the labor movement.

Marc Flynn, B.M./F.S.



Sound and Communication Local 46 members banner for fair wages and conditions: Journey Technician Kendra Souder (left) and Apprentice Leigh McDaniel (right).

## Assisting Members During the Holidays

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,mt,rtb,rts&st), SEATTLE, WA — This holiday season we were able to help members in need through our three holiday assistance programs. Our first program, Thanksgiving Meals for Members, was coordinated by Rep. Shannon Hagen. Shannon distributed a total of 55 meals. Our second program, Holiday Meals for Members, was coordinated and distributed by Political Director Keith Weir. Lastly, our Angel Tree Program assisted eight families with Christmas gifts for their children. Local 46 thanks staff for helping our members in need and making the holidays brighter.

Our Anti-COVID Inoculation Plan involved member volunteers creating care packages including sanitizer, Local 46 masks, anti-fog wipes and hard hat stickers. Thank you to all who volunteered their time.

Members of our “900 Strong” Sound and Communication Unit voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement on Feb. 13, 2021. This was the first vote conducted electronically by one of our large construction units. Negotiations were challenging! The unit voted for strike authorization, then rejected NECA’s first proposal. Through it all, the 900 stood strong! Thanks to the solidarity of the unit, plus support from our local’s other units, the Building Trades, labor community and International leadership, they managed to secure a record-setting wage increase of \$12 per hour over three years! This was in addition to many other language improvements with no concessions!

Deva Nelson, P.S. and Warren Shill, Pres.

## Membership Has its Privileges

L.U. 48 (c,em,i,rtb,rts,st&tm), PORTLAND, OR — It has come to our attention that members may not always feel comfortable reaching out to us directly. We are here today to invite you to the discussion.

Tell us how you are doing — what challenges you and your family are facing or any other concerns you may have. If ever there was a time for frank discussion, that time is now. That is why we are putting out the call to all members: We want to hear from you! Remember, we are members, too!

We are union strong. That strength comes from the many voices and contributions of all members. We are here to give back to our members for those contributions, and we will do everything in our power to address members’ concerns — whether that means finding appropriate ways to work through jobsite issues like

discrimination and safety problems or other assistance with insurance or unemployment challenges.

Still waiting for your unemployment check? Please let us know; there are ways we can help expedite the process to help you get your money faster.

Worried about your health insurance running out? We can help you contact Harrison for assistance. You also have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through your Harrison health care plan. Don’t let the stigma of mental health or other health concerns derail your progress. All health care issues are confidential!

These are just a few examples of ways we can assist you. We are here to help, but we need your help understanding what assistance is needed most.

We welcome all voices, so please don’t hesitate to reach out to the hall if you need assistance or have concerns. Our conversations with you are confidential as well.

Here are just a few of the ways you can make your voice heard:

- Attend one of our monthly virtual Town Hall meetings. Details can be found at [ibew48.com](http://ibew48.com).
- Attend one of the constituency group virtual monthly or weekly check-in meetings.
- Contact the hall directly for help with unemployment or health insurance issues (Portland: 503-256-4848; Vancouver: 360-892-0171).
- Register for Race Talks by texting your first and last name to 971-263-0009.

Contact Garth Bachman, business manager/financial secretary directly if you would like to privately discuss any concerns or questions at [busmgr@ibew48.com](mailto:busmgr@ibew48.com).

We look forward to hearing from you and to building new avenues for supporting our members!

Donna J. Hammond, B.R.

## Local 158 Steps Up to the Plate

L.U. 158 (i,mar,mt&spa), GREEN BAY, WI — Our local has had a very busy 2020. A huge thanks goes out to our local sisters and brothers as well as those traveling who went above and beyond in manning our many projects during this terrible pandemic. Once again, the IBEW stepped up to the plate and hit it out of the ballpark. At our peak last fall, we had over 300 electricians working on a new paper machine project at Green Bay Packaging, 180 electricians on a solar farm at Point Beach Nuclear Plant, 80 electricians at Marinette Marine and 300 more electricians at various other projects throughout our local. A busy year for sure.

Once again our local collected nonperishable items during the Christmas holidays for two local charities located in Green Bay, the Freedom House and Golden House. Local 158 members and our retirees donated much-needed items that these two char-



Much-needed items were donated from Local 158 to Green Bay charities during the Christmas holiday.



New members of Local 212 being sworn in at the Executive Board meeting on Jan. 26.

ities were very grateful to receive. We have been doing this for about 10 years now and the gratitude is so great a reward.

Donald C. Allen, B.M.

## The Importance of Staying Engaged

L.U. 212 (i), CINCINNATI, OH — Work remains steady in the tri-state area. We have been sending out Book 2 weekly and expect this to continue for the foreseeable future. We are at \$31.30 currently with \$1.75 raise allocation in June.

At the beginning of the year, our members were eligible for new benefits. As part of last year’s raise allocation, we now have an Eye and Dental plan, which is included in our Health and Welfare Fund.

By now, as everyone has taken a sigh of relief that the 2020 election is over, it’s more important than ever to stay engaged. We must hold our newly elected representatives’ feet to the fire on issues affecting working people. Let them know to pass the PRO Act! The work of our union is not a spectator sport. Get active. Tag, you’re it.

Phil Bovard, P.S.

## Insurance Changes Provide Benefits and Savings

L.U. 236 (catv,ees,govt,i,mo,rtb&t), ALBANY, NY — The warmer weather is rapidly moving in, and with that comes a break from the slow winter work picture we have experienced. A shout-out to our sister Local 43, Syracuse, N.Y., for putting so many of our brothers and sisters to work during this period!

As of Jan. 1, 2021, the decision was made to make changes to our health insurance carrier for the membership, providing considerable overall savings. As

with any monumental change, it was not without bumps in the road. However, the initial wave of concerns has been addressed, and the savings will mean additional benefits available to the members as well as the ability to free up future raises to place in other areas. We appreciate the membership’s patience during the transition and look forward to everyone being able to reap the benefits of the decision.

Thanks to everyone who has been a part of Local 236, and we strive to make it a better place for electricians every day.

Mike Martell, A.B.M.



Local 292 members participate in a Habitat for Humanity Veterans Build project: (left to right) Joe Carlson, Jason Carlson, Matt Marthaler, Kirk Marthaler, Jeremy Weed, Scott Crawford and Travis Rust.

## Negotiations and Contract Votes Ahead

L.U. 292 (em,govt,i,rtb,rts&spa), MINNEAPOLIS, MN — As of Feb. 1, calls for work have continued to be slow. As anticipated, the construction industry in our area is experiencing a lag because of the COVID-19 crisis. Work dried up as existing projects came to an end and new construction slowed amidst a cautious economy. We are looking forward to spring with the possibility of project startups, including some large solar installations in our area.

IBEW Local 292 members will be involved in negotiations this spring for our Inside Construction, St. Cloud-area addendum and the Limited Energy contracts, as well as several other smaller contracts. These contracts will affect an overwhelming majority of our membership. Please keep an eye on your mail, email and [IBEW292.org](http://IBEW292.org) for updates on the negotiating committee’s progress, future meetings and contract votes.

The Veterans Committee participated in a Habitat for Humanity Veterans Build project last fall. This project helped to put a veteran into a home in Sauk Rapids, Minn. The Veterans Committee group is one of several affinity groups we have within Local 292.

Andy Snope, B.R./P.S.



## LOCAL LINES

## Looking Forward to a Better Year

L.U. 306 (i), AKRON, OH — Hopefully, everyone is having a better year so far than we had in 2020. We are all looking forward to things returning to normal so that we can safely return to the many social activities we've had to forgo since the pandemic began.

Yet even as much of the country was in lockdown, construction continued; for as we know, electricians are essential workers. Local 306 was fortunate to have enough work that we were able to offer employment to many from Book 2. Thank you to all the traveling brothers and sisters for their assistance in manning our numerous projects, including the new Amazon Fulfillment Center in Akron.

One good thing that came out of 2020 was that we elected a new president whose ideals seem more aligned with union labor than the last. We look forward to the return of union strength, the promise of more infrastructure projects, help protecting prevailing wage and a partner in the fight against so-called "right-to-work."

On a sad note, we regret to report the many we have lost over the past year. Gone but never forgotten, Brothers: Richard Donley, Morgan Douglas, James Ess, Arthur Goodspeed, Richard Hill, Bennie Jamison, Robert Martz, William Murphy, Kirk Shemuga, John Staton, Michael Sutter, Alvin Tasker and Scott Zack. We extend our deepest condolences to all of their families.

Thomas Wright, P.S.

## Working Our Way Back to Normalcy

L.U. 364 (catv,ees,em,es,i,mt,rts&spa), ROCKFORD, IL — Work remains strong going into the second quarter of 2021. Our Facebook project in DeKalb is rolling right along with over 200 journeyman wiremen onsite; and with the spring weather, we expect more calls to continue to come in for this project.

As of this writing, the Illinois Gaming Board is in the final steps of approving the much-anticipated Hard Rock Casino in Rockford. We have been anxiously awaiting this project, which is years in the making. There are many steps in the process of approving a casino in Illinois, and we have cleared every obstacle to date and will hopefully have some answers soon. With any luck, by the time to you read this work will have already begun.

As we move forward with the COVID-19 vaccination process underway and as we slowly work our way back to some degree of normalcy, Local 364 will be getting back to our highly anticipated member events in the near future. We remain optimistic that by later this year we will be able to hold full membership meetings and events that we were unable to have in 2020.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Brad Williams, P.S.

## Mentor Program Persists Safely Despite COVID Restrictions

L.U. 440 (i,rts&spa), RIVERSIDE, CA — COVID-19 put restrictions in place that would be genuine obstacles for any organization trying to get a new program off the ground — OR it could have been a blessing in disguise. Success can often depend on disposition, and Local 440 was NOT going to let our mentor program be on hold any longer. We officially kicked off the program in November 2019, and we had a few in-person meet-ups on mentor skills-building on the second Saturday of each month and a social hour on the fourth Friday of each month. Then COVID-19 hit, and we were restricted from meeting. Thanks to some outside-the-box thinking and a willingness to participate from our membership, we have been able to accom-



Both (socially distanced) in-person and via Zoom, Local 440 has not given up on finding ways for members to safely meet.

plish the following: 18 mentor meet-ups held (both in person and via Zoom), 9 mentors paired with mentees and 300+ members attending events.

Our program is still in the startup stages but is genuinely off the ground, and we have a legitimate game plan and system in place for our mentor program. If you are interested in participating, please email [Mentor@ibew440.org](mailto:Mentor@ibew440.org) and you will be added to the email list and notified and invited to any and all upcoming events. If you are a local trying to get your mentor program off the ground, feel free to reach out to us for help so you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Bernie Balland, Mem. Dev.

## Blood Banks in Need of Donors

L.U. 494 (em,govt,i,mt,rts,spa&t), MILWAUKEE, WI — Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Across the country, blood drives are hosted by unions, companies, schools and other organizations that are essential to helping meet this constant need for blood.

Throughout the pandemic, IBEW Local 494 has sponsored blood drives and acted as a host for several community drives, saving and prolonging the lives of over 300 patients.

Blood donations are facing a serious shortage due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Mayo Clinic, COVID-19 has caused many hospitals to survive on a one- to two-day inventory of blood instead of the normal two-week supply. This holds true locally, and Local 494 is proud to team up with the blood center to provide a safe outlet for people to make a difference in the community. As blood banks face Coronavirus-driven shortages, donating has never been more crucial.

To help the Versiti Blood Center maintain a reliable blood supply, schedule an appointment to donate blood today and encourage your school, church, civic organization or company to host a blood drive in the future. For anyone wishing to host a blood drive, please contact Tara Blaesing at [tblaesing@versiti.org](mailto:tblaesing@versiti.org).

John T. Zapfel, Pol. Dir.

## Many Milestones Reached in 2020

L.U. 540 (i), CANTON, OH — Our local would like to wish everyone a happy new year and a great start to 2021. We congratulate all members who have reached milestones in their years of service through 2020.

Specifically, we'd would like to recognize the following members, who have reached significant milestones: Edward Evans has 60 years of service; James Abbott, David Blocher, Charles Butterbaugh, Ronald Diezman, Robert Ehret, James Fliger, John Johanning, Louis Lewis, James Lindimore, John Myers, Louis Narduzzi, Glenn Oberlin, Dennis Rooney, Vernon Schaub, Gerald Sinay and Dennis Spencer have 55 years of service; and Jerry Babarcik, Robert Bair, Cecil Ford, Ronald Geiser, William Groh, Robert Houmar, Ronald Keirn, Mark King, Jerry Kurzen, Roger Manse, Jerry Moore and

Robert Zander have 50 years of service.

Local 540 would also like to take a moment to remember the members we lost in 2020.

Here's hoping 2021 brings us all good health and a safe and profitable year.

Rick Waikem, P.S./R.S.

## Making the Most of 2021

L.U. 640 (em,govt,i,mo,mt,rts,spa&u), PHOENIX, AZ — Thankfully, 2020 is done! Our large Intel project has been completed, and we are looking forward to the \$12-billion Taiwan Semiconductor Plant coming around the end of this year. Most of our members were able to continue working last year, but we are at over 200 virus cases since the start of COVID-19, with one casualty.

We are expecting 2021 to remain busy and will be glad when our brothers and sisters can come and help man our work! With a new president in office, we will have a voice in policies that promote and protect labor for the next four years at least. Let's make the most of it! Keep an eye on the International's jobs page as opportunities come up. Stay well and take care of each other.

Tim Wilson, B.R./P.S.

## Negotiations and Organizing Efforts Continue

L.U. 702 (i,o,u,uow,em,mts,rtb,spa,t,catv,lctt,cs,c,es,govt,mt,mo,ptc,se,st,ws,as,et,it,p&pet), WEST FRANKFORD, IL — A HUGE congratulations to our member, Brodie House, on winning the Carhartt + Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) Reel Time Getaway with Mark Zona! This trip is sure to provide Brodie with memories to last a lifetime. We thank him and all of our members for supporting the USA and its purpose.

With sadness, we report the passing of 33-year

member Joe Curry, who was killed in a vehicle accident on Feb. 11, 2021. Joe was a journeyman lineman on Outside Construction who served as a mentor to apprentices and journeymen alike, and he will be sorely missed from our ranks.

We are currently in negotiations for new agreements at Penn Aluminum International, Wabash Telephone Company and also the city of Poplar Bluff for both the police officers and dispatchers.

In Missouri, we continue our organizing efforts and have filed for representation elections at the city of Poplar Bluff for the Street, Motor Pool and Cemetery Departments. At the city of Malden, we are pursuing voluntary recognition with the council for employees in the Electric Department.

As of this writing, our referral books are as follows: Inside Construction — 90, Outside Construction — 48, Line Clearance — 9.

Mark Baker, P.S.



IBEW Local 702 member Brodie House was the proud winner of the Carhartt + Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) Reel Time Getaway with Mark Zona. Congratulations, Brodie!

## Congratulations to the Graduating Class of the Florida East Coast NJATC

L.U. 728 (em,i,rts&spa), FT. LAUDERDALE, FL — Chasing a dream requires efforts, passion and hard work, which our new apprentices possess. Big congrats from Local 728 to the Dec. 2020 graduating class of the Florida East Coast NJATC! Continue to strive, prosper and keep our union strong.

Effie Cruz, Mem. Dev.



Congratulations to 2020 graduates of the Florida East Coast NJATC: (left to right) Seth Stanley, Richard Straughn, Joseph Fiorilli, Jeremy Brown, Devon Hyman, Kemetrius Hibbert, Craig Baker, Alexander Kostyo, Bradley Gondek, Luis Pastrana II and Kevin McDonnell.





On Super Bowl Sunday, Local 824 members held an informational picket outside of Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Fla., demanding a fair contract from Frontier Communications.

## Local 824 Super Bowl Picket

L.U. 824 (ptc&t), TAMPA, FL — On Feb. 7, Super Bowl Sunday, over 500 members and their families held an informational picket outside of Raymond James Stadium demanding a fair contract from Frontier Communications. Our members have stuck with Frontier Communications through a rocky transition from Verizon, the COVID-19 virus and bankruptcy. Our loyalty has been rewarded with retro-aggressive proposals, including the gutting of our active medical benefits during a pandemic, drastic reductions in our 401(k) options and the elimination of our retiree healthcare after a lifetime of service.

The picket was part of a strategic plan because Frontier Communications is corporate partners with the world-champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Raymond James Stadium, where Super Bowl LV was held. We chartered buses to take our members back and forth from our union hall to the drop location. We pulled a permit with the city of Tampa, and we worked with local law enforcement to set a safe drop-off zone to ensure the safety of our members and the public. We also flew an aerial banner over the stadium.

Our position is simple: If Frontier Communications can emerge from bankruptcy and make their executives whole with over \$60 million in bonuses, and if Frontier can get billions and billions of their debt forgiven, then they can make their employees — our members — whole as well.

Keith LaPlant, Pres.

## Reaching Out to Future Members

L.U. 876 (as,catv,govt,lctt,o,t&u), MT. PLEASANT, MI — In an attempt to keep a qualified work force available and reduce our unfilled calls, Local 876 leaders had to think outside of the box. Asst. Bus. Mgr. Mike Cornell developed a PowerPoint presenta-

tion to assist non-members signing Book 4. The presentation shows future members how to track their position, re-sign and bid work — all online — on their phone. The presentation also includes a ALBAT portion, which explains how to apply to apprenticeships. The Book 1, 2, 3 and 4 rules are always followed and never altered. The scheduling of the presentation has reduced the amount of time the local spends putting workers on the book. We can accomplish this safely by wearing masks, keeping social distance and not having more than the allowed number of persons in the room, per pandemic protocol. Bus. Mgr. Chad Clark understood the issues, welcomed Mike's vision and supported the idea: "I can honestly say that Mike Cornell did a great job on this. The program brings value and is a time saver for the local," Clark said.

Chad Clark, B.M./F.S.

## Welcoming New Members, Remembering Lost Ones

L.U. 1340 (i&o), NEWPORT NEWS, VA — As this article is written, the year 2020 has just ended. As we begin a new year, here's a list of new members who joined our local during the past year: Trenton Artis, Curtis Barnes, Michael Coburn, Casey Forrest, Blake Geiger, Ryan Holloway, Kevin Kievecz, Douglas Law, Quiriat Mendoza Lopez, Jake Malcolm, Talon Manibusan, Jey-sen McDade, Kenneth Nusz, Adam Taylor, Clay Taylor, Jacob Vera and Bobby Wood. Please be sure to welcome them.

Sadly, the following brothers passed last year: Robert Hart (Jan. 1, 2020), Michael "Mickey" Cole (Feb. 23, 2020), Randy Simons (May 29, 2020), Tim Mason (Aug. 26, 2020), Guy Warthan (Sept. 7, 2020), Christopher Lockett (Oct. 4, 2020), John Fay (Dec. 11, 2020) and Leo Barbour (Dec. 23, 2020). Please make sure they are remembered.

Jim Avery, P.S.



Local 876 Assistant Business Manager Mike Cornell teaches future members how to apply their skills in trade in a socially distanced classroom setting.



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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Lonnie R. Stephenson  
International President

Kenneth W. Cooper  
International Secretary-Treasurer

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Third District  
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Fourth District  
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Fifth District  
Frank Furco

Sixth District  
Dean E. Wine

Seventh District  
Patrick Lavin

Eighth District  
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Second District  
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Third District  
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Fourth District  
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Steven Speer

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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:

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## THE CASE AGAINST RIGHT-TO-WORK:

# Study Backs Michigan, Virginia Repeal Efforts

Long-shot efforts to roll back right-to-work laws in Michigan and Virginia aren't likely to level the playing field for working people this year, but a new study provides fresh ammunition for pro-union lawmakers in the fight for repeal.

The study, released earlier this year by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, lays out how, on a number of metrics, states with right-to-work laws come up short. From lower wages to less community engagement, states with these deceptively-named laws are failing working families.

Researchers looked at data dating back to 2008 to determine the impact of right-to-work laws on state economies and worker well-being. What they found paints a bleak picture. The 27 U.S. states that have enacted right-to-work laws saw slower economic growth, lower wages, higher consumer debt, worse health outcomes and lower levels of civic participation than states that do not have such laws.

"This new study shows what we've known all along, that right-to-work doesn't, in fact, work," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "It doesn't help people and it doesn't help states. Instead, these laws prop up a corporate bottom line — usually at the expense of the workers that make their profits possible."

That's why labor-friendly politicians in Michigan, where Republicans control both chambers of the Legislature, and Virginia, where Democrats are in charge but face opposition from the conservative wing of their caucus, are pushing to repeal the laws and return their states to what the study refers to as "free collective bargaining" status.

Prospects for actual repeal this year are dim in both states, but legislation has been introduced, and supporters of repeal are pointing to many of the statistics cited in the Illinois EPI report.

According to the analysis, right-to-work states have 3% lower hourly wages on average, 5% less health insurance coverage and 8% less retirement security. For construction workers, the pay penalty rises to 11%. On average, union households earn between 10% and 20% more than non-union households — an income premium that has been consistent since the 1930s.

Free collective-bargaining states also provide more investment in education and worker training, fewer on-the-job fatalities and faster-growing economies. Among the report's findings was that right-to-work states have 31% fewer registered apprentices per 100,000 workers and 50% more on-the-job fatalities. Apprenticeships also grew faster in union-friendly states, providing more avenues to the middle class.

Right-to-work laws may also be hampering efforts to recover from the coronavirus. States with such laws effectively lower the bar in terms of providing livable wages and adequate health coverage, not to mention safe workplaces — all factors in a state's ability to combat the deadly virus that has claimed more than half a million U.S. lives.

"As we seek out ways to value and support the front-line workers who are keeping our communities going during these historically challenging times, there is ample evidence to suggest that right-to-work laws are having the opposite effect," said study co-author, PMCR Director and University of Illinois Professor Dr. Robert Bruno.

For those who claim that limiting collective bargaining is good for business, a state's right-to-work status didn't even crack the top 10 reasons that businesses cited as reasons to relocate. Such factors, the study authors noted, are primarily driven by other considerations like infrastructure accessibility, the availability of skilled labor and quality-of-life factors.

During a February virtual town hall, anti-union Gov. Jim Justice of West Virginia put a finer point on the effectiveness of anti-union laws, admitting that right-to-work and a repeal of the state's prevailing wage have done nothing to boost his state's economy.

"Well, the bottom line to the whole thing is just really simple. We went out and passed a right-to-work law, we got rid of prevailing wage, we built fields all over the place thinking that they will come. They didn't come, did they?" Justice said, referring to the promised employers and jobs that would be lured to the state if lawmakers betrayed its working people.

West Virginia passed right-to-work in 2016. The law was challenged in court, but ultimately upheld by the state's Supreme Court. The state repealed its prevailing wage law the same year.

"When you starve unions, you starve the working class and it hurts us all," Stephenson said. "Whether it's wages that keep you from needing government assistance to make ends meet, or who gets elected — and who gets to vote for them — right-to-work laws have consistently been on the losing side where working families are concerned." ■

## "Right-to-Work" is Wrong for Workers

Construction workers earn **11% less**



There are **31% fewer** registered apprentices



Health insurance coverage is **5% lower**



Worker wages are **3% lower**



Household poverty is **15% higher**



The on-the-job fatality rate is **50% higher**

Source: ILEPI

## THE FLIP SIDE:

# New Hampshire, Montana Are Latest Right-to-Work Battlegrounds

Anti-union lawmakers and their out-of-state corporate backers are working to revive a right-to-work effort in New Hampshire. But the state's working families and union activists hope to deal the effort a similar fate to the recent one in Montana, where right-to-work was beaten back in the Legislature in early March after a wide bipartisan vote.

In New Hampshire, the IBEW and allies worked with Democrats and a handful of Republicans in the state House, many of whom were union members, to defeat a right-to-work law in 2017. But the Republican-controlled Senate passed a new version this year and Republican Gov. Chris Sununu has indicated he will sign it.

In Montana, far-right members of the state's Legislature introduced right-to-work early during the current session, the first in 16 years in which the GOP controlled both the statehouse and the governor's mansion. But the House voted it down 62-38 on March 2, with 29 Republicans joining Democrats to reject the measure.

The vote affirmed the importance of working families in Montana, where unions and labor were integral in building the state's legendary copper-mining industry and have long had greater respect than in most Western states.

IBEW leaders in Montana said it was obvious from the start the proposed law was being pushed by outside groups like the National Right-to-Work Committee.

"I guess I'm not really surprised but just relieved that Montana is the Montana I know and love," said Eighth and Ninth District Regional Organizing Coordinator



IBEW members and allies in Montana rallied successfully against a right-to-work bill at the state Capitol in Helena on March 2.

Bob Brock, whose family has lived in the state for five generations. "We don't like out-of-state money flowing in here from big money interests."

In the Northeast, right-to-work advocates long have viewed libertarian-leaning New Hampshire as an attractive target.

IBEW leaders in the state began taking part in weekly calls with other unions in the New Hampshire AFL-CIO after November's election, said Second District International Representative Ed Starr said. They'll need to convince 12-13 House GOP members to vote "no" if the bill comes to a vote.

Starr said IBEW members are engaged and contacting their legislators, regardless of political party affiliation. They understand that right-to-work laws are designed to suppress wages.

"We're just trying to remind people it's a worker issue," Starr said. "A majority of union members in New Hampshire, never mind the IBEW, are registered Republicans or unaffiliated. It's not a political issue."

Peggy McCarthy, Manchester Local 2320 vice president and a former Republican House member, said she has encouraged members to send thank-you notes to GOP House members who have stood against right-to-work laws in the past.

They face considerable pressure to change their minds from outside the state, and with the hyperlocal nature of New Hampshire's 400-seat House, they only have about 3,000 constituents apiece. Getting even a handful of appreciative notes from those voters is powerful, she said.

"Your constituents are your neighbors," McCarthy said. "You don't have that separation or detachment that politicians have in other states."

In Montana, the IBEW and allies also got to work in November organizing against the laws that drain money and power from unions by allowing free-riders to reap the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement without contributing to its success.

Local unions called their members,

sent out email blasts and reached out via social media, urging them and friends and loved ones to contact their legislators.

That work was ramped up even more after a house committee voted Feb. 26 to advance the bill to the full House. Members met with legislators on Feb. 27 — a Saturday — and then an estimated 1,000 union members showed up at the Capitol to protest on the day of the vote.

"It was awesome," said Helena Local 233 Business Manager Jackie McBroom. "I'm not going to lie. I was scared to death [the bill would pass]. But everyone just came together."

Earlier in February, Helena Local 206 Business Manager James Holbrook testified against the bill. So did officials from NorthWestern Energy, which employs members from Butte Local 44.

"We oppose this bill because it represents the sort of government overreach into the private sector that thousands of our members voted you into office to oppose," Holbrook told the House committee.

Eighth District Vice President Jerry Bellah thanked all IBEW members for their work in defeating the bill but cautioned a similar effort likely will resurface in the future.

"I am so proud of the work that our Montana locals put in during this campaign to defeat right-to-work," Bellah said. "The leadership and members of Locals 44, 206, 233, 532, 768 and 1638 met the challenge head on. The win would not have happened without their teamwork and coordinated effort against this attack on Montana's working families." ■