

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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President Joe Biden toured the Cincinnati IBEW-NECA Electrical Training Center in July to promote infrastructure and jobs. Pictured, Local 212 Business Manager Rick Fischer, Biden, apprentice Courtney Groeschen and instructor Dan McCarthy.

## Showing Up Where it Matters:

# Presidential Spotlight on IBEW Training

**P**resident Joe Biden took his pitch for a massive investment in infrastructure and American labor directly to the workers July 21, touring the IBEW-NECA Electrical Training Center in Cincinnati to learn about what IBEW electricians do every day on the job.

It was the first visit by a sitting president to an IBEW training center since President Barack Obama toured Washington, D.C., Local 26's facility in 2010.

"The Build Back Better plan that President Biden is proposing will be a game-changer for union tradesmen and tradeswomen," said International

**'YOU GUYS ARE THE BEST'**

President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "But we can't overstate how important it is that a sitting president showed up at our training center, asked genuine questions about the work that we do and used the word 'union' again and again.

"No president since Franklin Roosevelt has understood the importance of unions and the labor movement the way Joe Biden does. When he says unions built the middle class, he means it, and he has our backs and respects the work we do. That's a breath of fresh air after a lot of lip service to working people in the past."

Biden's infrastructure plan calls for more than a trillion dollars of spending on roads, bridges, rail, and a revamp of the electrical grid, among many other urgent areas of investment.

A \$1 trillion bipartisan bill passed the Capital Senate on Aug. 10, and the compromised measure was headed to the House when The Electrical Worker went to print. Biden and House Democrats pushed for an even larger investment in American jobs.

Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell threatened to filibuster Biden's initial proposal, which was nearly double the size of the revised plan and included strict requirements that the improvements be done by union workers.

"We're still talking about a once-in-a-generation investment in America and Americans that is desperately needed," said Assistant to the International President for Government Affairs Austin Keyser. "But Republicans in the Senate have fought labor requirements and the size of this bill every step of the way."

Backed by the aggressively anti-union Associated Builders and Contractors organization, Republicans have worked to strip prevailing wage and union-standard training language from the bill on key projects,

**CINCINNATI TRAINING CENTER** *continued on page 3*

## Last Month to Enter

THE IBEW's  
**2021 PHOTO CONTEST**

**Deadline: Oct. 1**  
See page 6 for details

## FROM THE OFFICERS

# Saying Goodbye to a Labor Legend



**Lonnie R. Stephenson**  
International President

Last month we laid to rest a great labor leader and an even greater man, Brother Richard Trumka.

As president of the AFL-CIO since 2009 and secretary-treasurer for 14 years before that, he led the American labor movement through difficult times and incredible victories, and his loss will be felt by the entire labor community.

I first met Rich as a relatively new business manager at Rock Island, Ill., Local 145 in the late 1990s. He came to town for a midterm election event, and I remember his speech well. Rich was an impressive speaker who knew how to fire up a crowd, a skill he'd learned as the youngest-ever president of the United Mine-workers at just 33.

Our paths started crossing more often when I started working for the International Office in 2002. Every time I saw Rich, he made such an impression on me, as he did with so many others. He made a point of getting to know you, treating you as an equal and a friend.

Rich was close with former International President Ed Hill, and he showed his trust in Ed and his love for the IBEW when he asked our own Liz Shuler to run on a ticket with him when he was elected AFL-CIO president in 2009. He and Liz made a great team, and I know she'll work every day to carry his memory and legacy with her as she steps into his very big shoes.

I'll also never forget the friendship and support Rich gave me when I became international president in 2015. He was always full of advice and encouragement, and I looked forward to the "Thanksgiving," or "Merry Christmas, buddy," text messages every holiday. I'll miss them, especially this Labor Day.

Rich lived and breathed the labor movement, and he never lost sight of who he was there to protect. He served the folks he worked alongside in the coal mines of Pennsylvania as a young man, the tradesmen and tradeswomen who built and grew the middle class and the people who struggled week in and week out to put food on the table for their families.

It was that grounding that allowed him to walk into the Oval Office or leadership offices on Capitol Hill and speak truth to power, and it was why those powerful people respected him whether they agreed on things or not.

Most importantly, Rich was a family man. He never forgot to ask about your family, and he loved his with everything he had. Our thoughts are with his wife, Barbara, their son, Rich Jr. and grandchildren Richard and Taylor. The women and men of the IBEW offer our deepest sympathy and gratitude for sharing Brother Rich with us all these years. ■

# Remembering Sacrifices this Labor Day

Happy Labor Day, brothers and sisters!

As we approach the end of summer and the start of the school year, we must stop and remember why Labor Day exists at all: It was set aside to honor you, the working person, and everyone who came before you who worked for a living and gave blood, sweat and tears to build the prosperity our two countries enjoy today.

Recognition didn't come easy, and often the dignity and respect working people deserve are still in short supply. In both the U.S. and Canada, belonging to a union in the early days of the labor movement could have landed you in jail or worse.

Today, we stand on the shoulders of those early union heroes who faced beatings, arrests and even death for standing up for the rights of the working classes, and Labor Day is a small way to remember everything they gave for us and the courage they showed in the face of incredible adversity.

Things like the five-day workweek, health and safety standards, paid time off and secure retirements only exist because of the sacrifices of those who paved the way for us. Please remember that as you celebrate this important day and give some thought to those labor pioneers and to those who still fight for fair working conditions and honest pay today. We owe them all so much.

We recently lost someone who stood up and fought for workers' rights. AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka was not just a friend; he was a tireless advocate for working people and dedicated leader of the labor movement in the U.S.

Brother Trumka grew up in a mining family in western Pennsylvania, not far from my childhood home in Ohio. No matter how far he rose or how many presidents courted his support, Rich never forgot where he came from. On the day he died, he was still a mineworker from Nemacolin, Pa., first — those people were who he fought for every day of his working life. I'll miss his leadership and his friendship.

And finally, this month marks the 20th anniversary of a day that changed so many lives around the world, but especially in the New York area.

In addition to countless family members, friends and loved ones, the IBEW lost 21 brothers from New York Locals 3 and 1212 during the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. As America and the world remembers the nearly 3,000 people brutally killed that day, let us keep the families and friends of those 21 in our hearts. We will never forget them.

Thank you for everything you do for working families, and enjoy a well-earned holiday. ■



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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A History Lesson

I enjoyed reading your article in the July 2021 issue of The Electrical Worker, "Grounded in History: Restoring Lady Liberty," on Pg. 13. I have come to learn how some of the significant damage occurred.

On July 30, 1916, German saboteurs blew up the munitions depot on Black Tom Island in nearby Jersey City, just about half a mile from the Statue of Liberty. That act of sabotage caused significant damage to the Statue of Liberty when shrapnel pierced the right arm and caused it to bend slightly.

If you wish to see a good presentation on this event, I would suggest watching the television show, "What History Forgot," hosted by a Long Island high school teacher.

*David Husing, Local 25 member  
Long Island, New York*

**Editor's Note:** The attack on New York Harbor's Black Tom Island, named for a dangerous rock that was padded with landfill to protect shipping, caused nearly 2 million pounds of small arms and artillery ammunition to go up in flames. The explosion was felt as far away as Maryland and carried out by German spies to prevent U.S. shipments of munitions to Allied powers early during World War I.

**We Want to Hear From You:** Send your letters to [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org) or Letters to the Editor, The Electrical Worker, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

## My IBEW STORY

**Wayne Yonce, Retired Journeyman Wireman**  
Los Angeles Local 11



"I first saw electricity in a high school shop class. The teacher set up a Tesla coil and each student had his turn with a wand drawing long sparks from its copper dome. We learned electrical theory and built soldering irons. The following summer I was hired as an electrician helper at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

When I was 17, I enlisted in the U.S. Navy for World War II. The Navy put me in classrooms for months learning to be an aviation electrician. I was assigned to a carrier aircraft service unit but sent back to school to learn the electronics, mechanics and hydraulics of automatic pilot systems. I spent my last months in the Navy on Johnston Island in the Pacific as the only electrician in a crew of mechanics servicing four-engine transport aircraft.

After the war I bounced around — some college, North American Aviation, the telephone company's linesmen school and at Western Electric doing central office telephone equipment.

I first learned of the IBEW while working plant maintenance. I was going to night school taking classes in theory, code and motor control. The classes were primarily intended for Local 11 apprentices, but it being a public school, I was admitted. The instructor, an executive board member, wrote a very kind letter of introduction and I became a journeyman member of the local's maintenance unit. After maintenance at Douglas Aircraft and Rome Cable I worked construction out of classification, passed the exam and became a journeyman 'A' wireman.

The IBEW benefited my family. One income afforded a full-time stay-at-home mother for my children growing up in a good home. The IBEW benefited me. I had pride in my craft. I had dignity. I was not chained to one desk, one machine, or one employer. I had freedom. I could present my dues receipt to an IBEW dispatcher anywhere in the U.S. Now 95 years old, my working years were an adventure!"

Continued from page 1

## Showing Up Where it Matters: Presidential Spotlight on IBEW Training

including a nationwide network of half a million electric vehicle charging stations.

"That's the nature of compromise," Keyser said. "A 50-50 Senate means that we don't get everything we hoped for, but this bill is still going to mean millions of IBEW jobs for decades."

"What is certain," Stephenson said, "is that President Biden and our friends in the Congress are fighting like hell to make sure the final bill delivers on its promise to invest in the infrastructure and the working people that will boost the American economy for decades to come. And just as important, they're listening to us at every step and putting American workers first."

From the very start of his infrastructure campaign, Biden has lifted up unions and union members, and Cincinnati was no different.

It was also an opportunity for him to sing the praises of the IBEW specifically, as he has done publicly many times.

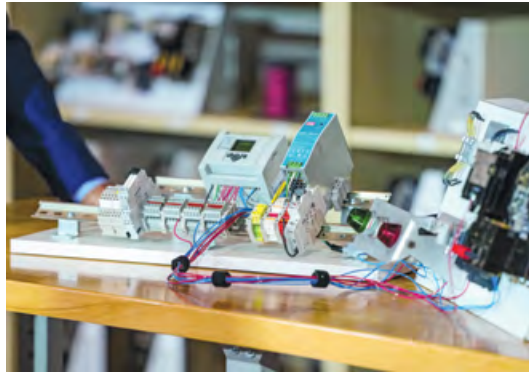
"IBEW is the best," Biden said, chatting quietly with an apprentice and instructor. "I once said at one of your international conventions that if every IBEW guy quit and every single guy on Wall Street who's a trader quit, the traders wouldn't affect much. But you guys, the country would come to a screeching halt."

On a trip to Pittsburgh to announce the American Jobs Plan in March, it was Local 29 lineman Mike Fiore who introduced the president — and charmed him by admitting to being on pins and needles.

"Mike asked me back there, 'Do you ever get nervous?'" Biden said. "What I say to you, Mike: You did a heck of a job. But I'd get nervous if I had to get up in the middle of the night, climb up a telephone pole, replace — in the middle of a storm — a connection that knocked out everybody's electricity, and put a transformer in."

"That's what would make me nervous. So what you did was really good. I couldn't do what you do, pal. I couldn't do what you do."

In April, addressing a joint session of Congress, Biden made sure the nation knew that "Electrical workers — IBEW members" would be installing the charging network for electric vehicles, rev-



**"If every IBEW guy quit and every single guy on Wall Street who's a trader quit, the traders wouldn't affect much. But you guys, the country would come to a screeching halt."**

— President Joe Biden

olutionizing U.S. transportation.

He doubled down on that in May when he toured a Ford factory in Dearborn, Mich. "We're going to put Americans to work modernizing our roads, our highways, our ports, our airports, rails, and transit systems," he said. "That includes putting IBEW members to work installing 500,000 charging stations along our roads and highways, our homes and our apartments. The IBEW is ready to do it, and they can."

Biden has hosted Stephenson and other union leaders at the White House multiple times, including a full afternoon in the Oval Office in February that his guests said was the most productive meeting they'd had there in years on behalf of working people.

He also convened the first-ever White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, a panel of Cabinet members and top staff chaired by Vice President Kamala Harris. It has 180 days to report back on ways that departments and agencies throughout the federal government can encourage the growth of unions and collective bargaining.

One research mission sent Harris and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh — panel co-chair and a card-carrying member of the Laborers — to Pittsburgh Local 5 in June, where they met with organizers from eight unions, including the IBEW.

Walsh has visited numerous IBEW locals on his own since being confirmed in March. And in June, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm toured an IBEW worksite in Nevada and talked with members of Las Vegas Local 357.

"This administration isn't just showing up, it's taking the time to listen," Keyser said. "After every one of these visits, we hear about how it's not just a photo op; it's a genuine opportunity for our nation's top leaders to listen to what it's like for the people tasked with building the projects they're talking about. This level of engagement with the labor movement and with union workers is totally unprecedented."

That was the impression that Biden left with members of Cincinnati Local 212 after his JATC tour.

"He was genuinely interested in what we were learning," said Stephen Randolph, a fifth-year apprentice who explained fire alarm training to the president. "We overheard him talking about the length of our apprenticeships in an off-mic conversation saying 'Five years? That's why you guys are the f\*\*\*ing best.' I felt like he really respects what we do."



*Above: Biden listens as fifth-year Local 212 apprentice Stephen Randolph explains fire alarm training with instructor Jerry Mahoney.*

*Right: Instructor Robert Guthrie shows off part of the center's motor control training apparatus.*



Courtney Groeschen, also a fifth-year apprentice, said everything went blank in her head as Biden arrived at her motor control station. "I was amazed," she said. "I mean, here's the president of the United States talking to me about what I do for a living and he's actually interested."

"It was surprising. He didn't ask me what it was like to be a woman in the construction industry. He just treated me like everyone else, which was refreshing."

Groeschen said the timing of the Build Back Better plan fills her with hope, coming as she's about to top out of her apprenticeship. "This is a ton of work he's talking about, and the IBEW is in a perfect position to benefit from it. It could keep us in full employment for decades."

C-SPAN had full footage of the tour, highlighted by Biden's conversations with apprentices. To view, visit [bit.ly/Biden212Visit](http://bit.ly/Biden212Visit).

Business Manager Rick Fischer said hosting the president was a five-day whirlwind of activity, after the White House called to make the request on a Friday. Soon the local and JATC were crawling with Secret Service, and Fischer spent the whole day the Saturday before the event coordinating with security.

But it was all worth it when he was able to say, "Mr. President, it's an honor to welcome you to our JATC."

The men chatted as they walked through about 200 feet of rooms and hallways to get to the first stop on the early-evening tour.

"He was very, very easy to talk to,

really a regular guy," Fischer said. "One thing I told him along the way was how important NECA is as our partner in the training center and being able to afford the apprenticeship program. I explained that contractors pay 1.8% of their gross wages to keep it running."

Biden was curious at every station, full of questions and praise for students and instructors. And he was in no hurry to leave.

"I was walking him out and he kept stopping and turning to talk about something. All these Secret Service guys were tapping their wrists, like 'hey, we've got to go,'" Fischer said with a laugh. "The whole experience, start to finish, was great." ■



*Vice President Kamala Harris visited Dover, N.H., Local 490 in April, one of several trips to IBEW training centers since taking office.*

# Pro-Worker Majority Restored at NLRB in a Summer of Progress for Labor

The balance of power at the National Labor Relations Board swung from union-busters to union lawyers in the span of an afternoon in late July when the U.S. Senate confirmed President Joe Biden's two game-changing nominees.

All 50 Democrats and a handful of Republicans voted to seat Gwynne Wilcox and David Prouty, bringing an end to four bleak years for wronged workers seeking justice from the NLRB.



New NLRB member Gwynne Wilcox



New NLRB member David Prouty

The confirmations restore a 3-2 pro-worker majority on the Board, capping a landmark July for federal nominees who embody Biden's promise to be the "most pro-union" president ever.

On Day 1 Biden signed the first in a stack of executive orders benefiting workers and boldly fired the NLRB's aggressively anti-union general counsel. Two weeks later, he nominated a card-carrying Boston tradesman to head the U.S. Labor Department.

Now, Secretary Marty Walsh and other new leaders and staff at agencies under the DOL umbrella are steering the institutions back to their roots, reaffirming their statutory duty to protect workers from employer abuses.

"President Biden is booting the foxes from the hen houses as fast as he can, and he's arming his new hires with stronger policy and enforcement tools than we've seen in generations," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said.

"He is literally rebuilding the federal infrastructure that workers and unions depend on. When he talks about 'building back better,' he doesn't just mean roads and tunnels and technology. He means us."

More than any other president, Biden has used the White House bully pul-

## National Labor Relations Act of 1935

Seventy-fourth Congress of the United States of America;  
At the First Session,  
Began and held at the City of Washington on Thursday, the third day of January, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-five.

AN ACT

To diminish the causes of labor disputes burdening or obstructing interstate and foreign commerce, to create a National Labor Relations Board, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

FINDINGS AND POLICY

SECTION 1. The denial by employers of the right of employees to organize and the refusal by employers to accept the procedure of collective bargaining lead to strikes and other forms of industrial strife or unrest, which have the intent or the necessary effect of burdening or obstructing commerce by (a) impairing the efficiency, safety, or operation of the instrumentalities of commerce; (b) occurring in the current of commerce; (c) materially affecting, restraining, or controlling the flow of raw materials of manufactured or processed goods from or into the channels of commerce, or the prices of such materials or goods in commerce; or (d) causing diminution of employment and wages in such volume as substantially to impair or disrupt the market for goods flowing from or into the channels of commerce.

The inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association or actual liberty of contract, and employers who are organized in the corporate or other forms of ownership association substantially burdens and affects the flow of commerce, and tends to aggravate recurrent business depressions, by depressing wage rates and the purchasing power of wage earners in industry and by preventing the stabilization of competitive wage rates and working conditions within and between industries.

Experience has proved that protection by law of the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively safeguards commerce from injury, impairment, or interruption, and promotes the flow of commerce by removing certain recognized sources of industrial strife and unrest, by encouraging practices fundamental to the friendly adjustment of industrial disputes arising out of differences as to wages, hours, or other working conditions, and by restoring equality of bargaining power between employers and employees.

It is declared to be the policy of the United States ... encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining and by protecting the exercise by workers of full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, for the purpose of negotiating the terms and conditions of their employment or other mutual aid or protection.

pit to champion labor, reminding Americans again and again that unions built the middle class.

His nominees, especially for jobs that hold sway over workers, have lived and breathed those values. In June, he chose a former union organizer, Jennifer Sung, to serve on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Her confirmation is pending.

Currently, Sung is a judge on the Oregon Employment Relations Board. A colleague said she's the perfect choice: "She has represented working people. Not many people on the bench have done that."

**AT THE NLRB**, Prouty and Wilcox, the first Black woman to serve on the Board, aren't the only recent newcomers.

In a tie vote broken by Vice President Kamala Harris, the Senate confirmed a third union-side attorney, Jennifer Abruzzo, as general counsel July 21.

Abruzzo most recently worked for the Communications Workers of America but spent 22 earlier years with the NLRB, rising from a field attorney in Miami to deputy general counsel during President Obama's second term.

She even had a fleeting stint as acting general counsel in November 2017 but

was quickly displaced by Peter Robb, a union-busting Trump nominee who cut his teeth helping President Ronald Reagan fire the nation's air traffic controllers in 1981.

Robb's career came full circle when a letter arrived in his inbox moments after Biden took the oath of office Jan. 20. Resign by 5 p.m. or be fired, he was told. He refused.

Lawsuits followed, arguing that Biden acted illegally because Robb had 10 months left in his term. Ruling on one of the cases in July, a New Jersey federal judge disagreed based on language in the National Labor Relations Act.

Robb wielded enormous control over NLRB cases, backed by an equally



New NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo

hostile Board that routinely sided with management.

Under their watch, employers won license to search workers' cars and personal items, eject union organizers from public spaces, more easily withdraw union recognition, thwart protests and disregard the plight of workers at subcontractors and franchises, among other expanded powers.

Senator Patty Murray, chair of the Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee, decried the wreckage in urging her colleagues to confirm Wilcox and Prouty on July 28.

"While Democratic nominees to the NLRB were blocked and anti-worker nominees were jammed through, we saw decades of worker protections reversed," Murray said.

"This has had a devastating impact on workers across the country, who are not only struggling through a pandemic, but who have also seen their rights to strike, organize, and bargain collectively, undermined and constrained in ruling after ruling."

**THE FIVE-SEAT** Board is meant to be split 3-2, tilted toward the party in power in the White House. But for two years during the last administra-

tion, the GOP-led Senate refused to fill Democratic vacancies.

One seat was left open, then two, after member Lauren McFerran's term expired in December 2019. For nine months, workers didn't have a single advocate on a board that was established nearly a century ago to guard their rights.

McFerran, who wrote blistering dissents that exposed twisted logic and vast holes in the majority's decisions, finally won a second term when then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell relented in August 2020.

Biden promoted her to Board chair on Inauguration Day, but she remained the lone Democrat until Wilcox was sworn in Aug. 4. Prouty had to wait for Republican William Emanuel's term to expire Aug. 27.

Wilcox, a partner at a New York law firm representing unions, and Prouty, who hails from SEIU's large mid-Atlantic chapter, have had long careers fighting for workers.

"Ms. Wilcox's experience as a field attorney for the NLRB, as a lawyer representing workers before the Board, and defending health care workers and protecting their rights makes clear that she's got the right qualifications and values for the job," Murray said on the Senate floor.

The president of SEIU 32BJ, where Prouty has represented textile and service workers, as well as baseball players, said Biden hit a home run with his choice.

"Our union couldn't be prouder," Kyle Bragg said. "As much as it saddens us that he will no longer work with us day to day, we are excited to see how his righteous advocacy for workers will help build back up the NLRB as a robust defender of the rights of workers."

Senators Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska crossed party lines to vote for both nominees; Republican Dan Sullivan of Alaska joined them to confirm Prouty.

Abruzzo, who was confirmed as general counsel a week earlier, quickly surrounded herself with like-minded deputies. They include Jessica Rutter of the American Federation of Teachers, and Peter Sung Ohr, who served as acting general counsel between Robb's firing and Abruzzo's arrival.

"It's a whole new day at the NLRB," Stephenson said. "We're not going to win every battle, but at least we know we've got a fair shot from a Board and staff who respect what it says right there in Article 1 of the National Labor Relations Act — that it is their duty to encourage, not undermine, the growth of unions and collective bargaining."

Toward that goal, it was also a busy summer for the first-ever White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment.

Biden created the Cabinet-level panel in April, giving members six months to recommend ways that the federal government at large can promote the values set forth in the Act.

# Wisconsin Sisters Come Together to Build Solidarity

Their field research included a June visit to Pittsburgh Local 5 by the chair and co-chair — Harris and Walsh — who held a roundtable discussion with organizers from eight unions, including the IBEW.

**AT THE DOL**, Walsh finally welcomed his deputy labor secretary in mid-July after a drawn-out Senate debate. Julie Su, previously California's labor commissioner, was confirmed 50-47 along party lines.



Deputy Secretary of Labor Julie Su was confirmed in July.

"Julie Su is a fierce leader who will ensure the (DOL) can deliver on its mission and improve the lives of working people across the nation," AFL-CIO Acting President and Secretary-Treasurer and Portland, Ore., Local 125 member Liz Shuler, said in a celebratory tweet.

Su's former boss, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, called her "a tireless fighter for working Americans and a voice for the voiceless."

New senior staff at the DOL also includes a veteran official and former acting secretary, Ed Hugler, who was brought back from retirement to accelerate hiring, especially in the enforcement ranks.

But there's a long way to go, as Walsh testified at a Senate budget hearing in July.

"The Department of Labor is down about 3,000 employees from where it was four years ago," he told an Appropriations subcommittee. "If we don't have the staff and we don't have the employees to protect the workers, then we can't be on the job sites, we can't be checking wage-and-hour, we can't be making sure people are working in safe conditions."

Laying out his budget requests, he urged senators to help him build on the administration's American Rescue Plan and the American Jobs Plan.

"As a former construction worker, I know how a good job can change your life," Walsh said.

"The department's fiscal year 2022 budget proposes investments in workers and in our country's future: a future of opportunity and shared prosperity, a future of robust job growth and a thriving middle class, a future where workers nationwide get the skills and training that leads to jobs that pay a fair wage without risking their health or safety." ■

All across Wisconsin, IBEW women are coming together in important ways, from recruitment and retention to leadership and visibility, and ultimately making the IBEW stronger for it.

"I'm just thrilled to see all of these amazing women gathering their boots together," said Green Bay Local 158 retired journeyman wireman Marsha Nebel. "The trades have come a long way for women in the years I've been in, but certainly not far enough."

The sisters of Local 158 have recently joined forces with empowHER, a statewide organization that aims to create positive change for women in Wisconsin's construction industry by normalizing women as tradespeople and helping to recruit and retain more sisters to what can be a lucrative and rewarding career. Nebel, who still serves on the apprenticeship committee, is heading up the Green Bay chapter.

In addition to Local 158, other IBEW locals teaming up with empowHER include Madison Local 159 and Milwaukee Local 494.

"I think you could safely say that IBEW women are contributing significantly in helping to take empowHER to the next level and help build a true statewide network," said Local 159 Business Agent Lisa Goodman.

In addition to working with empowHER, Goodman has been active in Local 159's women's group and the Tradeswomen of South Central Wisconsin, the latter of which has become an empowHER chapter and an official subcommittee of the area Building Trades Council. Since the groups had similar aims and partners, Goodman said, they decided to join together instead of "reinventing the wheel."

"This is a story of women in southern Wisconsin who are trying to make a difference," Goodman said. "Each group began on the ground in their metro area, and it makes sense to work together and collaborate."

Goodman says that IBEW women and their trades sisters have been meeting informally for years, sometimes just for drinks and conversation after work. The tradition waxed and waned over time, as often happens, so having the structure and resources of a group like empowHER helps formalize those opportunities while still allowing for a sense of camaraderie and support.

The TWSCW had planned a Women in Construction Open House for March 14 of last year, but the coronavirus forced them to cancel. They quickly shifted to Zoom calls though and were able to keep the meetings going.

"We adapted well to Zooming," Goodman said. "Those monthly meetings definitely helped us all get better acquainted and build our relationships. We even discussed plans for different projects we hoped to do post-COVID."

Now that the TWSCW has formally joined with empowHER under its statewide umbrella, the chapter is now known as empowHER SC Wisconsin. And the new Green Bay area chapter is now NEW empowHER, in northeast Wisconsin.

While IBEW sisters are certainly taking charge, they're quick to point out that the effort is by and for all tradeswomen.

"Part of the beauty of groups like empowHER is that the entire spectrum of women in the trades is welcome to the table," said Local 494 instructor Michele Robinson, who also sits on the organization's board. "I'm a journeyman wireman with 494 and was very much interested in meeting other tradeswomen and knew that I would have to actively seek out those opportunities, as they do not always present themselves on the jobsite."

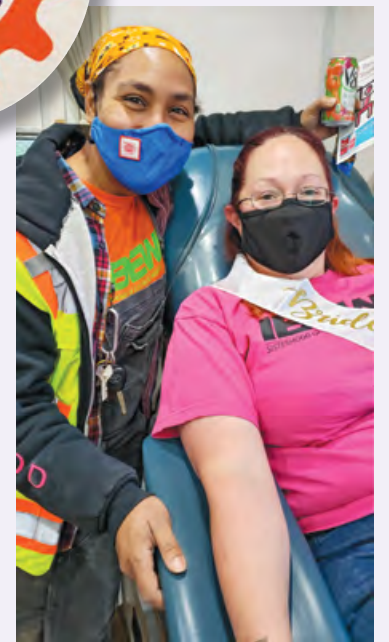
Robinson noted that the Plumbers have a website that can track an interested person from the time they click on a link to the time they become an apprentice.

"This is truly valuable data for what works and what doesn't for recruitment efforts and just understanding all the demographics about who is interested in your trade," Robinson said. "Without this sharing of information, people could trudge along to the same conclusions individually. But what works about empowHER is that we're leading the way in looking at all trades as a cohesive community where we have similar wrinkles to work out."

The all-volunteer empowHER is getting a boost from the Wisconsin Building Trades



IBEW sisters across Wisconsin are coming together to support tradeswomen in numerous ways, including by joining with the statewide women's group, empowHER.



Council, which pledged \$20,000 per year to support its multi-year strategic plan. That plan includes a timeline for doubling women's participation rate in the state from less than 3% to 6% by 2028 and doubling the number of women apprentices by 2024. They're also working on getting women into all levels of leadership throughout the construction industry.

"Our business manager, Sue Blue, is the first woman elected to that position in a construction local in the Sixth District. Having her in charge means our women's voices are always heard," Goodman said.

EmpowHER's strategic plan also includes a focus on mentoring and retention as well as recruitment and cultural competency training, among other initiatives. There's even talk of doing community baby showers to specifically target mothers.

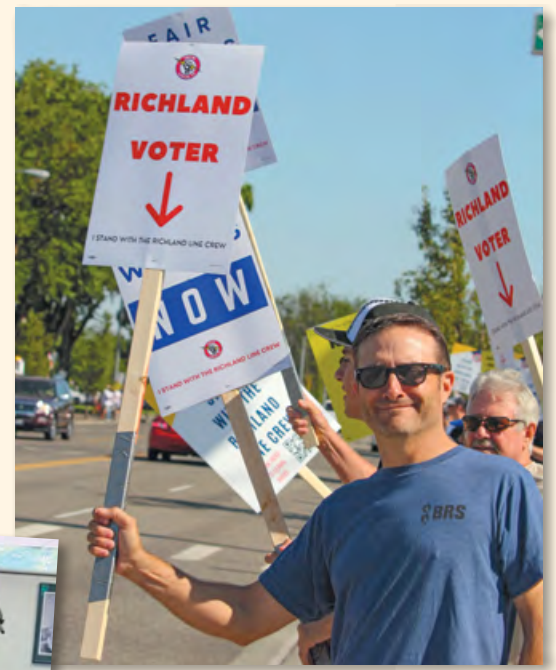
"Tradeswomen groups like these benefit the IBEW — and all the building trades — because we're able to pool our knowledge and experiences to find solutions," Goodman said. "These organizations provide a key voice — one that's still not heard enough — on behalf of an underrepresented sector of the workforce. In a broad, big-picture sense, it helps the industry continue to evolve."

Something that these groups are discovering is that, while recruiting is clearly important, it's only part of the puzzle.

"Recruiting, it turns out, is not the hard part. Women like this work and will choose it," Robinson said. "In fact, Milwaukee Magazine featured one of our female members in its August edition. The beauty of this woman's story is that she always wanted to be an electrician, it's not something she just fell into after doing something else. While this path is nothing new for our male counterparts, I think her story is the future of women in the trades, especially as we reach a younger generation and have visible female role models for them to look to."

As any tradeswoman or ally can attest, much work remains, but by combining forces like these groups in Wisconsin are doing, progress is being made. And as more women's voices are elevated, the trades will only become stronger.

"The conversation around women in the trades is not driven enough by the women in the trades," Robinson said. "People on the outside looking in only see the beginning narrative of the unicorn woman in a field of reluctant men. And while that is valid, it's the low-hanging fruit that will never, ever dig deep enough or do justice enough or give enough credit to the amazing women and supportive men I work with constantly and their otherwise untold stories." ■



# Line Crew Feels the Love in **RICHLAND**

It's been a summer-long shot of morale for 30 Seattle Local 77 line workers in Richland, Wash., where the community has embraced their battle for fair wages. Crying pandemic poverty, city officials have dragged out bargaining since late 2020, despite an infusion of federal relief funds. In June the state's second lowest-paid linemen began knocking on doors, kicking off a bold campaign inspired by their nearby IBEW brothers, the "Ellensburg 6" (featured in July's Electrical Worker). Townspeople jumped on board, requesting hundreds of yard signs, offering support and gratitude on social media, rallying in July (pictured), and directing fiery comments to an obstinate City Council, demanding leaders do right by workers who risk their lives every day. Residents understand that if their expert full-time lineworkers give up and leave, out-of-town contractors will take over. "No matter how dangerous our job is or what we give up in our personal lives, our No. 1 job is to serve this community," journeyman Sam Somes said in a public appeal. "We're asking our friends, family and community to stand with us." To show your support, look for "#IStandWithTheRichlandLineCrew" on social media. ■



Credit: Rally photos by Libby Marlow for Local 77



The 2021 IBEW Photo Contest is here, and with it a chance to show your union sisters and brothers what being a member of the greatest union in the world means to you. So, grab your cameras and smartphones and get to it! We want to see your best shots of 2021. See below for rules and details, and as always, contact us at [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org) for more information.

LAST MONTH  
ENTER NOW

## Photo Contest Rules:

1. The contest is open to active or retired IBEW members only. The person submitting the photo must be the person who took the photograph. Members may enter up to five photos each.
2. International officers and staff are not eligible.
3. Photos **MUST** be submitted as digital files of at least 300 dpi, measuring 1,200 by 1,800 pixels at minimum, in color or black and white. Larger files of at least 2,200 pixels are encouraged.
4. All submissions become property of the IBEW Media Department.
5. Photo entries must have an IBEW theme of some sort, with IBEW members at work, engaged in a union-related activity or featuring subjects conveying images of the electrical industry or the union.
6. If members are featured in the photo, they should be identified. If large groups are pictured, the name of the group or the purpose of the gathering (e.g., a safety committee, a linemen's rodeo, a union meeting) can be submitted in place of individual names.
7. Photos previously published in IBEW publications or on the website are not eligible for submission.
8. **Entries MUST be submitted electronically** via the Photo Contest link on [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org). Please contact the Media Department at [media@IBEW.org](mailto:media@IBEW.org) or 202-728-6102 with additional questions.
9. Up to 15 finalists will be selected and posted on [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org) for final judging by the public. The winners will be featured in a future issue of the Electrical Worker.

# THE IBEW's 2021 PHOTO CONTEST

Enter Today!  
Deadline: Oct. 1

1<sup>st</sup> Place: \$200  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: \$150  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: \$100  
Honorable  
Mention: \$50

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

## N.L. Sisters Use Women's Committee to Bond Over Service to Others

**A**nnMarie Candow and Laura Kieley enjoy performing community service in their hometown of St. John's, Newfoundland. But until the last three years, they didn't think about doing so with their local unions.

That changed when they were introduced to the Women's Committee — Candow with her local union and Kieley at the international level. The two are now leaders in promoting the IBEW along Atlantic Canada's coast and recently helped raise nearly \$2,000 for Stella's Circle, a St. John's nonprofit that aids at-risk adults facing barriers to entering the workforce.

"I had little or no involvement, and to be honest, interest in the union until the women's committee came about," said Candow, who is a clerical employee of Newfoundland Power and a 31-year member of St. John's Local 1620. "When that happened, it felt to me like, 'Oh, this union really does care and wants to move forward.'"

The women's committee came out of a resolution passed at the 2016 International Convention calling for the IBEW to identify, support and mentor women in the workplace. The International Women's Committee was formed not long after and encourages each local union to form a committee among its membership.

Local 1620 did just that in February 2018. Candow now admits she was skeptical it would amount to much. But she said it quickly became clear that Business Manager Don Murphy took it seriously and wanted it to succeed.

Now, she's regularly looking for ways to not only support her sisters at Local 1620 but also important causes around St. John's. Stella's Circle was a good choice because it "focuses on people who might fall through the cracks of society, particularly women," Candow said. The nonprofit assists individuals dealing with mental-health issues, substance abuse, homelessness, illiteracy and re-entering society after serving time in prison.

She found an ally in Kieley, a Red Seal electrician and a member of St. John's Local 2330, which does not yet have a women's committee. Kieley didn't see herself as an activist, even though she served as Local 2330's recording secretary at one point.

In 2018, she was able to attend the International Women's Conference in St. Paul, Minn.

"That's kind of where my mind was changed," Kieley said. "I thought it was going to be something where everyone talked about hating men but it wasn't like that at all. It was all about supporting women in the trades and making sure the IBEW was stronger."

"After that, I decided I wanted to have more of those opportunities, to go to these conferences, to learn how we can show

people what the IBEW is all about."

Kieley is in the process of working with others to form a NextGen Committee at Local 2330. NextGen is an initiative for members under 35 that helps identify and foster the IBEW's future leaders.

Even though they live in the same city, Candow and Kieley had never met until 2019, when they took part in a project that provided feminine hygiene products to women in need.

This year, the two joined forces with Local 1620 member Frances Rideout to take part in a run to raise money for Stella's Circle that raised \$1,935. The run was held individually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kieley enjoys running but Candow and Rideout are hikers and chose to walk.

Kieley and Candow said they receive substantial support from Cheryl

Paron, an international representative in charge of diversity and inclusion for the IBEW in Canada.

"I didn't really feel part of the union for whatever reasons," Candow said. "I'm trying this woman's committee so that is hopefully not the case for other women and fellow clerical workers. We're bridging that gap and trying to make it more interesting for others to be part of."

First District International Vice President Thomas Reid saluted all the women for their service.

"Seeing members who might have been overlooked in the past use their talents to make the IBEW stronger in Canada is one of the most satisfying parts of my position," Reid said. "These women exemplify that and I'm looking forward to them doing more of this work in the future." ■



AnnMarie Candow, left, and Laura Kieley made the IBEW more visible in their hometown of St. John's, Newfoundland, after getting involved with the Women's Committee.

## Des consœurs de T.-N.-L. se servent du Comité destiné aux femmes pour s'unir tout en aidant les gens dans le besoin

**A**nnMarie Candow et Laura Kieley aiment effectuer des travaux communautaires à Saint-Jean de Terre-Neuve, leur ville natale. Jusqu'aux trois dernières années, elles n'avaient pas à l'idée de faire la même chose au sein de leur section locale.

Une fois avoir été introduites au comité destiné aux femmes, cette idée a changé, Mme Candow, au sein de sa section locale et Mme Kieley à l'international. Elles sont maintenant des leaders dans la promotion de la FIOE sur la côte Atlantique du Canada. Elles ont récemment amassé 2 000 \$ pour l'organisme à but non lucratif Stella's Circle situé à St. John's qui vient en aide aux adultes qui ont de la difficulté à s'intégrer au marché du travail.

« Je ne m'étais pas vraiment impliquée, et pour être honnête, je n'avais aucun intérêt pour le syndicalisme jusqu'à la création du comité destiné aux femmes, » dit Mme Candow, une employée de bureau pour Newfoundland Power et membre de la section locale 1620. « Quand ceci s'est produit, je me suis dit "ce syndicat s'en soucie vraiment et veut aller de l'avant". »

La résolution pour créer le comité destiné aux femmes a été passée au Congrès international de 2016 pour demander à la FIOE d'identifier, d'appuyer et d'encadrer les femmes dans le

milieu de travail. Le Comité international destiné aux femmes a été formé peu de temps après et encourage chaque section locale à faire de même.

En février 2018, la section locale 1620 l'a précisément fait. Mme Candow a avoué avec un certain scepticisme que la formation du comité n'apportera pas grand-chose. Elle a vite réalisé que le gérant d'affaires Don Murphy prenait le comité au sérieux et il souhaitait sa réussite.

Aujourd'hui, non seulement qu'elle cherche régulièrement des moyens pour aider ses consœurs au sein de la section locale 1620, mais aussi pour des causes qui lui tient à cœur dans la ville de Saint John's. Stella's Circle est un choix judicieux « parce que l'OBNL est axé sur les personnes qui risquent d'être abandonnées par le système, particulièrement les femmes, » déclare Mme Candow. L'OBNL aide les individus qui ont des problèmes avec la santé mentale, la consommation, l'itinérance, l'analphabétisme et la réinsertion sociale après avoir purgé une peine de prison.

Elle a trouvé une alliée en Mme Kieley, une électricienne désignée Sceau rouge et membre de la section locale 2330 de Saint John's qui n'a pas encore créé de comité destiné aux femmes. Mme Kieley ne se considérait pas comme une militante, même si elle avait occupé le poste

de secrétaire-archiviste au sein de la section locale 2330.

En 2018, elle a participé à la Conférence internationale destinée aux femmes qui a eu lieu à Saint Paul au Minnesota.

« Cette conférence m'a ouvert les yeux, » a-t-elle dit. « J'avais une idée préconçue que nos discussions porteraient sur la haine envers les hommes, mais ce n'était pas du tout comme ça. Il s'agissait plutôt d'apporter de l'aide aux femmes dans l'industrie et par le fait même d'assurer que la FIOE soit plus forte. »

« Par la suite, j'ai donc décidé que je voulais avoir plus d'occasions de participer à ces conférences afin de démontrer aux gens les bienfaits de la FIOE. »

Mme Kieley est en train de travailler avec d'autres personnes pour former un comité NextGen au sein de la section locale 2330. NextGen est un comité pour les membres de 35 ans et moins qui vise à identifier et à former les prochains chefs de file de la FIOE.

Même si elles habitent dans la même ville, Mme Candow et Mme Kieley ne s'étaient jamais rencontrées jusqu'en 2019 où elles ont participé à un projet qui fournissait des produits d'hygiène féminine pour les femmes dans le besoin.

Cette année, elles ont uni leurs forces avec Frances Rideout de la section locale 1620 pour participer à une course

qui avait pour but de lever des fonds pour Stella's Circle, elles ont amassé 1 935 \$. La course a eu lieu virtuellement en raison de la pandémie de la COVID-19. Mme Kieley aime la course, par contre Mme Candow et Mme Rideout sont des randonneuses et elles ont plutôt choisi de marcher.

Mme Kieley et Mme Candow ont dit avoir été appuyées de manière importante par Cheryl Paron, une représentante internationale en charge de la diversité et de l'inclusion au sein de la FIOE Canada.

« Je ne sentais pas que je faisais vraiment partie du syndicat pour toute raison, » dit Mme Candow. « Je fais partie du comité destiné aux femmes en espérant que cela ne soit pas le cas pour d'autres femmes et employées de bureau. Nous tentons de combler le fossé pour le rendre plus intéressant et encourager les autres à y participer. »

Le vice-président international du premier district Tom Reid tient à féliciter toutes les femmes pour leurs dévouements.

« Le fait de voir des membres qui auraient pu être négligés dans le passé, utiliser leurs talents afin de rendre la FIOE plus forte au Canada est parmi les expériences les plus satisfaisantes de mon poste, » déclare M. Reid. « Ces femmes en sont l'exemple parfait, et j'attends avec impatience leur participation dans l'avenir. » ■

# THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

## Kansas Passes 'Move Over' Law to Protect Utility Workers

Every utility worker has one: the near miss, the close call with a distracted driver, the driver who veers at the last second to avoid a utility truck. The encounters that leave a cloud of dust and tire smoke and hearts beating a thousand miles an hour up in a swaying bucket are particularly memorable.

Or maybe it is the worker themselves, eyes on the leaking gas main or up at a lineman, going about their job when a passing vehicle whizzes by a little too closely.

Sometimes, though, they don't make the escape and lives are lost and families broken.

Every state in the nation requires drivers to move over when emergency vehicles — police of all kinds, ambulances and fire engines — are on the side of the road, and more than half have the same protection for utility vehicles responding to outages, emergencies or just plain doing maintenance.

Until this year, Kansas wasn't one of them. Now, thanks to the hard work of former Topeka Local 304 organizer and political lead David Galvin, who was appointed Seventh District Lead Organizer effective July 15, and a bipartisan coalition of state political leaders, Kansas utility workers will be that much safer when they are hard at work.

**“We just wanted legislation that would help workers, the guys in the field, union and not.”**

— Local 304 Organizer David Galvin

For years, Galvin and the leadership of Topeka Local 304, including Business Manager John Garretson, had been trying to get a move over law in Kansas, but without much luck, Galvin said. He had high hopes for 2020, but then the pandemic shortened the legislative session and the bill's sponsor lost his election.

“It had come up in the past and never got traction. Then COVID, then our partner lost,” Galvin said. “We just wanted legislation that would help workers, the guys in the field, union and not.”

Happily, Galvin found a new partner in Ethan Corson, a newly elected state senator from Topeka who had just come over from the staff of the state Democratic Party.

“Together, we wrote the bill,” Galvin said.

But, unlike Corson, most state elected officials in Kansas are Republicans. They outnumber Democrats more than two-to-one in the House and close to three-to-one in the Senate.

Galvin needed to find some friends.

The first was Sen. Mike Petersen, chair of the Transportation Committee.



With its new law, Kansas joins dozens of other states in requiring motorists to move over to protect line crews working on the sides of roadways.

“It was his efforts that got us a hearing and his efforts that won us support,” Galvin said.

SB 167 passed the Senate unanimously in February.

The bill drew some concerns when it headed to the House. The state's peace officers and some municipalities pointed out that, as written, the bill gave utility vehicles the same status as emergency vehicles that carry red and blue flashers and they wanted to avoid any confusion, no matter how unlikely it was that a cherry picker would ever try to imitate a fire engine.

A quick rewrite with House Transportation Committee Chair Republican Rep. Richard Proehl ensuring utility truck flashers kept to shades of amber and red, and the bill was ready for a vote.

The April 8 vote in the Senate was, again, unanimous, but in the House, three out of 122 voted no. Galvin said the three no votes are no on pretty much everything.

“I can't even figure out why they would, but they do,” Galvin said. “But look, most of the Republicans were with us and our members. Even though we may not always agree with those guys, the Republicans deserve the credit.”

About a month later, the bill was sent to Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat whose chief of staff, Will Lawrence, is a member of Local 304 and the local's former lawyer.

Not only did Kelly sign the bill in May, she worked with Garretson and Galvin to plan an event that would bring some needed attention to the new law.

On Aug. 12, surrounded by a flotilla of cable, bucket and gas trucks and, in Galvin's words, “a monster contingent of our utility folks,” Kelly ceremonially signed the bill again.

“She has always been a friend of working families and unions in particular,” Galvin said. “It was nice to get us all together at the local and bring a few local TV stations to get the word out.”

For now, enforcement will be limited to when a sheriff, trooper or local officer is nearby or, sadly, after an incident. There is always the possibility that the law will be amended to allow the use of the near ubiquitous dash cams most utilities are

installing on their trucks or the GoPro cameras many linemen love to mount on top of their hard hats.

“The law provides some measure of added safety as is. If we need to go back and add more teeth, I am happy to think that we have a few more friends looking out for the safety of the worker out there than maybe we're used to. And I hope they would be open to hearing us out,” Galvin said. ■

## Colorado Leads Way in Labor-Backed Energy Legislation

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis recently signed legislation, some of it at Pueblo Local 12, that sets the stage for future labor-backed energy policy.

“We have long maintained that labor can and should be a partner in tackling the climate crisis,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “Legislation like what's been passed in Colorado is a strong example of what that can look like.”

Polis signed SB21-246 on June 22,

making his state the first in the nation to pass an electrification policy with support from organized labor. The Colorado Blue-Green Alliance-backed legislation will help Coloradans upgrade to energy efficient electric appliances, furnaces and water heaters that will also keep their bills low and the air clean. The state's Blue-Green Alliance is a coalition of more than 20 labor and environmental organizations committed to creating clean energy jobs and preserving a healthy climate.

**“This bill could potentially help all the IBEW locals in the state.”**

— Denver Local 111 Business Manager Rich Meisinger

The bill aims to save money by directing utilities to create incentives for households and businesses to upgrade to energy-efficient electric appliances that reduce their bills. This increased efficiency will reduce indoor air pollution while also creating family-sustaining jobs.

“The transition to pollution-free buildings is a once-in-a-generation job creation opportunity for our members,” said Local 68 Business Manager Jeremy Ross. “As businesses and industry take advantage of new rebates and incentives to upgrade to modern and clean electric systems, they create demand for local, qualified electrical workers.”

On June 30, Polis visited Pueblo Local 12 to sign House Bill 1290, which calls for \$15 million for the Office of Just Transition. The office supports coal workers and the communities dependent on those jobs as the state pivots toward other forms of energy, some of which are in the Pueblo area.

“The Office of Just Transition is to make sure that as we transition away from coal to cheaper forms of energy, and we

save money for consumers ... that we don't leave behind those who have powered our state's prosperity for generations,” Polis said.

The law includes \$8 million to implement the transition plan and \$7 million for a newly created fund for a coal transition worker assistance program. The funding, which Polis called a “an important down payment on helping people get the jobs of the future,” will go to assistance programs for workers. Any remaining money would then go towards supporting family and other household members of coal transition workers. The plan also creates a pilot program to test coal transition work support programs.

Denver Local 111 Business Manager Rich Meisinger says the transition will help members employed at coal plants by giving them a pathway to a new job, or to retirement, depending on the member.

“Jobs in power plants are typically cradle-to-grave jobs. Most of our members take these jobs and work at the plants their entire careers. The only skills the worker has are skills that benefit the power plant,” Meisinger said. “Since legislation is forcing the closure of the plants, the government should help those impacted workers. We won't have a just transition if we don't pay for it.”

Polis also signed the Increasing Access to High-Quality Credentials bill, which provides financial incentives for participating school districts and charter schools to encourage high school students to enroll in and complete programs like internships, residencies and pre-apprenticeships.

“This bill could potentially help all the IBEW locals in the state,” Meisinger said. “The money from HB 1290 can go to the creation of new training centers where we can do training for various certifications, including those needed for electric vehicle charging stations.” ■

## A Fan in the White House Has Railroad Workers Hopeful for the Future

A handful of hope-inducing railroad measures and policies have emerged in Washington the past few months, making IBEW members in the union's Railroad branch cautiously optimistic that they could halt the devastating trend of railroad worker layoffs across all crafts in recent years.

“Having Joe Biden, a longtime champion of Amtrak and rail workers, in the White House has really buoyed our Railroad members,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. When he was in Congress, Biden famously commuted almost daily via Amtrak between Washington and his family's home in Delaware.

Biden's Build Back Better infrastructure plan includes tens of billions for Amtrak, freight rail and regional rail systems, money that would mean new jobs, overtime and stability for workers who have increasingly felt the pinch from dramatic cost-cutting in the industry.

In recent years, railroad workers by the thousands, across all crafts, have



Colorado's new energy legislation aims to create good-paying jobs in the energy sector while also meeting climate goals, and does so with the backing of the IBEW and other labor unions.



## CIRCUITS

### Ohio Local Lights Up Baseball's Historic Handshake

The "handshake for the century" has a new statue in Youngstown, Ohio, and Local 64 members helped make it happen.

When baseball legend Jackie Robinson hit a home run in his debut minor league game with the Montreal Royals in 1946, he prompted what ESPN called "a simple act of decency" — a handshake from his white teammate George "Shotgun" Shuba. While that might not sound like much today, it was nothing short of historic 75 years ago. The next year, Robinson broke the color barrier by becoming major league baseball's first Black player. In this pre-Civil Rights era, interracial handshakes simply didn't happen — until George Shuba made it happen when he reached out his hand to congratulate his teammate and Robinson accepted it, both of them smiling.



Credit: Mike Shuba

Youngstown, Ohio, Local 64 members lit up a new statue commemorating the historic handshake between baseball players Jackie Robinson and George Shuba.

"It was a huge moment at the time," said Local 64 Business Manager Jim Burgham. "With everything going on in the country right now, that handshake still carries a lot of meaning."

That game took place in New Jersey, but it's Shuba's hometown of Youngstown that commissioned the seven-foot-tall bronze statue, unveiled on July 17, to commemorate the moment that changed baseball forever. And Local 64 members, working for signatory contractor Dan Santon, installed the lights, including four pole lights to highlight the statue from above and linear LED lighting at the base to provide light from below. Over 30 LED lights were also installed in the face of the concrete seating area surrounding the sculpture.

Those seats are something that Shuba's son Mike said were important to him, so children would have a place to sit on future field trips to learn about their hometown hero.

"The grounds are absolutely incredible. It's one of the nicest areas for teaching children that we're all on the same team in life," Mike Shuba said. "My dad always said that he didn't care if Jackie was technicolor, he was on our team."

Local 64 members also installed LED lights to highlight the names of those who provided funding or in-kind donations.

"It's definitely something we wanted to be involved in," Burgham said. "It's going to be there for a long time and we wanted to do our part."

When Santon first heard of the project, he brought it to the Labor Management Cooperative Committee and they agreed to help fund it through a grant as well as with donated materials and labor. All told, the LMCC gave around \$50,000 to the effort, which cost around \$400,000 total.

"The LMCC likes to do things like this. We're kind of proud of that," Santon said. "Plus, we didn't want the work to be nonunion. Not for something like this."

The statue's unveiling, which was originally scheduled for April but got postponed due to the coronavirus, was part of the Youngstown State University's Festival of the Arts and now sits in Wean Park in the city's downtown area.

"It was a nice ceremony," said Santon, who attended on the rainy Saturday. "It was quite reflective."

Santon grew up in the same town as the Shubas. He remembers when George played, but realized that the younger generations may not and he didn't want that part of his neighbor's legacy lost to history.

"I remember Mike telling me that his dad took all his mementos from his years of playing and put them in two Maytag washing machine boxes. All except for one — the photo of the handshake. That one he kept framed on the wall." Santon said.

"That's the kind of person George was."

For Santon and many others in Youngstown, Shuba's gesture that day embodies some of the best of their town.

"Everyone else did not do it. He stood up because that's the way he was raised in the city of Youngstown," said Mayor Jamael Tito Brown.

The statue, which was cast in Brooklyn in the same place as the two Jima memorial, is the eighth one of Robinson and the only piece to feature another person with the baseball great, Brown said.

"It's nice to be part of a memorial to something so historic, and ultimately about doing what is right," Burgham said.

That so many people helped make the statue a reality is not lost on the younger Shuba.

"It's quite amazing to see all these people coming together. It was a real team effort," he said. "And it's gratifying to know that it'll carry on long after we're gone." ■

### With Help from VEEP, Wisconsin Local Provides an Opportunity for Military Veterans

Courtney Tillman envisioned a life of travel while growing up in northeastern Ohio, especially when she found how much she enjoyed studying foreign languages. She also saw an older sister dealing with college debt, so after graduation, she decided to enlist in the Navy.

Twenty-two years later, in 2019, then-Chief Petty Officer Tillman was nearing retirement and looking to begin life as a civilian along with her husband, Christian, and their three children. She wanted to do something with her hands and performed electrical work aboard ships for years.

Tillman found several organizations designed to help veterans make the transition to civilian life but one stood out: the Veterans Electrical Entry Program, commonly called VEEP, designed by the Electrical Training ALLIANCE with substantial support from Milwaukee Tool. That proved especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic, when VEEP continued to support her while she seldom left the ship she was assigned to, Tillman said.

"They walked me through step by step," said Tillman, one of 49 veterans nationwide who have completed the program in its three years of existence. "They were great. They were always there when I had issues or a question about training."

Once accepted, VEEP participants take part in a seven-week pre-apprenticeship program that helps them determine if they are a good fit for the electrical industry. Tillman, who settled in Beloit, Wis., following her discharge, was honored in a ceremony in late June along with two other veterans — Raymond "Jay" Droessler and Jackson Wildes — who also successfully completed the program and now are apprentices at Madison, Wis., Local 159.

The ceremony drew local media attention, with reports by two Madison television stations. Sixth District Vice President David J. Ruhmkorff attended and was joined by Joshua Johnson, the director of the Wisconsin Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards.

"We had our first VEEP candidate come in two years ago and he really set the bar high," Local 159 Business Manager Sue Blue said in reference to Droessler, a retired Army major. "He's been a really good example of how this can be a successful program for a local union and an individual making that transition from the military to private life. We are happy to offer this opportunity and for the three individuals who have chosen our local."

The program also is designed to meet the skilled labor shortage and is supported by the IBEW and the National Electrical Contractors Association.

"Everybody involved is passionate about what we're doing," said the ALLIANCE'S Greg McMurphy, who oversees the VEEP program.

Added Ruhmkorff: "The IBEW has a

CIRCUITS continued on page 10



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user: Joe Biden

President Joe Biden is a noted railroad enthusiast. The IBEW's Railroad branch members hope that some of his recently announced plans will help end corporate policies that have eliminated thousands of jobs across the industry.

been furloughed following most major rail systems' implementation of something called "precision railroad scheduling." PSR, explained Railroad Director Al Russo, is a radical efficiency scheme that threatens rail workers' safety by drastically slashing jobs, consolidating rail services, and deferring facility and equipment maintenance, all with one accounting goal in mind: to increase profits by dramatically reducing the money a railroad spends on operations.

"Look, no one supports precision and efficiency more than the IBEW," Russo said. "But while the railroads are raking in record profits, our rail members are really hurting — the ones who have lost their jobs plus those left behind who are expected to do more work for the same pay while staying as safe as possible."

Last November, a majority of voters elected not just "Amtrak Joe" Biden but also worker-friendly majorities in both Houses of Congress, and rail is just one of the IBEW-related industries where the union's get-out-the-vote efforts are paying off.

In May, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio of Oregon and Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee Chairman Donald Payne of New Jersey formally asked the federal Government Accountability Office to study how PSR is affecting, among other things, rail workers and the safety and long-term management of the nation's railroads.

"Longer trains, unhappy shippers, and a workforce pushed to do more with less is not a model to chase after — unless you're on Wall Street," DeFazio said. "But we can't let hedge fund managers write the rules of railroading. This study ... will help us find ways to address the impacts [of] this railroad management strategy."

Using PSR, railroads "are also evading federally mandated inspections, neglecting maintenance, and operating fewer but significantly longer trains," said Greg Regan, the president of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, "a move that impacts the safety not only of rail workers, but of the communities through which these trains travel."

The information gathered by the GAO study should help bolster the IBEW's arguments against PSR, said Government

Affairs Director Danielle Eckert. "Right now, the railroads have all the data," she said, "so when we say PSR is horrible for workers' safety, it's mostly anecdotal."

"We know we've had IBEW members get hurt in the wake of PSR while other unions have endured deaths," Eckert said. "Once the GAO collects actual data, we can refer to it over and over again to help our case."

Russo added that IBEW members also can help call attention to PSR's problems by emailing their observations to [PSRSurvey@ibew.org](mailto:PSRSurvey@ibew.org). "It's more important than ever that every single rail member does his or her part to let leaders at the local, system council and international levels know what's going on in their workplaces," he said. "With fewer and fewer of our members out there right now, we need everyone to really step up and do their part to help us stay informed."

Over the last decade, the number of large U.S. railroads in the Class I category has dwindled dramatically due to a rapid series of mergers and acquisitions. This gradual reduction in competition has made it easier for these Class I's to behave like monopolies when it comes to pricing and service. In response, President Biden included railroads in an executive order encouraging competition in a range of transportation industries. Specifically, he called on the federal government's Surface Transportation Board to consider rulemaking that promotes competition and reduces delays in passenger rail service.

On the legislative front, Stephenson, Eckert and Russo have been working closely with the Biden administration and members of Congress to help ensure that any infrastructure bills put forward include provisions that help IBEW members and anyone else who works on, or uses, rail systems.

"With the pressure our members in the railroad industry have been under the last few years, it's nice to know that they've got a friend in the White House and a Congress willing to take a hard look at destructive practices like PSR," Stephenson said. "But just because we have friends in powerful places doesn't mean we can sit back and wait for them to act. This is our opportunity to make railroad jobs great again, and we're going to seize it." ■

## CIRCUITS *continued*



*Madison, Wis., Local 159 apprentices Jackson Wildes, Courtney Tillman and Jay Droessler (front row) were honored following graduation from the VEEP program.*

long history of supporting those who served our country and the VEEP program has only made that stronger. It's taken a lot of work by so many people, but it's paying off. It was a great feeling to celebrate our success in Madison and I look forward to many more celebrations."

Several local unions have participated in the program but Local 159 has become something of a hotbed for several reasons. To begin with, there have been many qualified applicants who wanted to make Wisconsin home after their military careers ended.

Wildes, a retired Marine Corps sergeant, and Droessler both grew up in the state. Tillman grew up near Akron, Ohio, but she and her husband — another military veteran who loves snow, despite growing up Louisiana — thought it would be a good place to raise a family and she had friends in the area.

Local 159 Training Director Jim Cook said the size of the jurisdiction helps, too. It operates nine training centers throughout the state. Milwaukee's 494 is the only other inside local that has its own training center in Wisconsin.

But the most important reason for its growth is that several interested parties — including Cook himself — overcame their initial reservations, he said. For instance, many signatory contractors rely heavily on construction wiremen — commonly called CWs. They are workers who have not been accepted into an apprenticeship but are paid at a lower rate and can complete some lower-level electrical work.

Many contractors were reluctant to give a direct-entry spot to an apprenticeship to anyone, even a veteran, if it came at the expense of a qualified CW who had spent time on a jobsite. Cook said they agreed to give it a try out of respect for the military and when it was assured the ALLIANCE already was vetting the VEEP applicants.

"The IBEW is proud of the VEEP program and justifiably so," Cook said. "But what makes it go really are the NECA contractors willing to give up those spots to a direct-entry program. It's a great feeder program. The best I've ever seen. They are doing electrical work and getting to know if they want to do that as a career."

McMurphy has also seen a change among management regarding the program. He saluted the signatory contractors for doing so.

"People are sometimes averse to change," he said. "They wanted to see what would happen with one person and

it worked out.

"Now, they've bought into it. They were willing to work with some changes, accept that perceived risk, and they found out it was really manageable and not much of a risk."

VEEP utilizes resources throughout the brotherhood. Wildes and Droessler, for instance, took part in pre-apprenticeship training in Alaska while still on active duty through Anchorage Local 1547 and the Alaska Joint Apprenticeship and Training Trust.

Tillman, on the other hand, seldom could leave the ship she was assigned to during the pandemic and became one of the first VEEP applicants to take part in virtual training.

"I just hope [my experience] gives the public more knowledge about how to get a career when you leave the military, especially if you don't want to get stuck at a desk," she said. "If you want to get out in the community and do something with your hands, this is a great path to choose."

Wildes has planned to be an electrician for several years. His father is a member of Janesville, Wis., Local 890 and several other family members have worked in the trades. One of his responsibilities while serving in the Marine Corps was performing maintenance on airfield lighting around the world.

"I always thought it would be really cool to understand how all that worked," he said.

VEEP made the transition to that much easier, he said. Instead of being on his own, he had McMurphy and others to mentor him through the process. And, like many veterans, Wildes found many of the skills he learned in the military transferred to construction.

"You're with the same group of people in the military working and grinding every day," he said. "It's very similar to what I'm doing now."

"In the military, some people call it mass punishment. Others say you win as a team, you die as a team. Whatever you call it, you really learn to work well with others. The work is a collective mission to get the job done."

Droessler, who served two tours of duty in Iraq, is honored to have been Local 159's first VEEP graduate but he's also pleased that it's followed up with another graduate in each of the last two years — first Wildes, who was followed by Tillman. He credits VEEP for making it easier to return to his home state and get the apprenticeship application process while

on active duty before his discharge.

"When you're working in an insanely hot part of a building and tension is running high, maybe a veteran has the temperament to deal with that," he said. "A bad day as an electrician is 50 times better than a bad day in the military. That stoicism, that get-her-done attitude really helps on a jobsite." ■

### Study Shows Benefits of Labor-Pharma Relationship

A new study from the Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association shows how investment in the crucial work of the biotech and pharmaceutical industries is related to a strong, skilled workforce in the building trades.

"The impact of this partnership has only grown over the years," said Director of Business Development Ray Kasmark, who also serves as an IBEW union trustee on PILMA's board. "Labor and industry recognize the strength in this relationship, that strong industry naturally leads to good jobs and a vibrant economy — and life-saving vaccines."

The rapid and successful development of vaccines to save lives from the coronavirus is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the nation's scientific community. But it couldn't have been done without the state-of-the-art facilities, laboratories and manufacturing plants built by the women and men of the building trades.

PILMA's study looks at this as well as



*A new study shows the benefits of a strong partnership between the biotech and pharmaceutical industries and the building trades, including much of the work done to create the COVID-19 vaccine.*

other benefits like community investment, job creation and the funding of pensions and health care in 14 states throughout the U.S. Among its findings is that there were 447 major (those costing \$5 million or more) pharmaceutical and biotech projects that were privately funded and under construction between 2015 and 2020. These projects represent a combined \$23.6 billion in infrastructure investment by the industry.

While 2020 saw many out of work, the opposite tended to be true for the biotech and pharmaceutical industries as the country weathered the coronavirus pandemic. Assuming a standard work week, the data suggests that projects in these fields employed 6,157 full-time construction workers last year and paid at least \$774 million in wages. The study noted that these numbers don't reflect additional benefits like the tens of millions of dollars in health insurance and pension contributions, or the indirect benefits to a region from increased spending in the community, known as the multiplier effect.

In Michigan, one of the states in the study and home to a Pfizer facility in Kalamazoo, the report found that the state's building trades helped drive over \$1 billion in investment on major construction projects. During that same time period, union worker earnings reached more than \$25 million, representing more than 906,000 hours of work in addition to significant funding for union health insurance and pension benefits.

"A research study such as this highlights the opportunities our members have in this industry to train and employ current and future electricians," said Kalamazoo Local 131 Business Manager Brian O'Donnell. "Given the large number of working hours the IBEW has on these projects, securing resources and expanding this industry will no doubt benefit other locals across the state."

"As Michigan looks to diversify its economy, the biopharmaceutical industry — and the skilled union craft workers employed by the industry — help create that growing economic engine. Our members are proud of the work they provided to help bring an end to the COVID-19 pandemic by working on the facilities that discovered and developed the vaccine."

The industry relies on the skills,

training and work ethic of IBEW members from the first ground broken to wiring the labs that create the tests, vaccines and more. In fact, the study showed that electricians worked more hours by far than any other trade classification, with 18.5 million logged. The next closest trade had less than 10 million hours.

Kasmark says that's because the nature of these projects requires an extensive amount of electrical infrastructure to support the production and packaging of pharmaceutical products. There are multiple and redundant power systems and highly sophisticated process control systems that require electrical and instrumentation technician skills to install, commission and maintain.

"There is absolutely no room for error, so it has to be done right the first time, every time. That's why they use IBEW," Kasmark said.

Much of the work in PILMA's report is being done on the East and West coasts. The greater Boston area in particular has become a hub, said Local 103 Business Manager Lou Antonellis.

"We have thousands of members working in this sector," Antonellis said. "It speaks to the quality of IBEW craftsmanship needed to build the highly technical facilities and clean rooms needed for the research and development of the life-saving drugs we're benefiting from today."

While not all pharmaceutical construction is done by union hands, organizations like PILMA are providing a platform for increased relationship building, which can create more job opportunities, Kasmark said.

"Through PILMA we're working towards the goal of proving our value and all that we bring to the table," Kasmark said. "PILMA provides us an opportunity to demonstrate why the best science should be done in the best facilities and built by the best tradespeople."

Kasmark also noted that the high-quality work of the IBEW and other trades has likely helped to keep much of the work on U.S. soil.

"We should all be extremely grateful that our domestic U.S. pharmaceutical industry did not 'offshore' the majority of their production facilities over the past decades as others have," Kasmark said. "Imagine if the COVID-19 vaccine was as scarce today as semiconductor chips are."

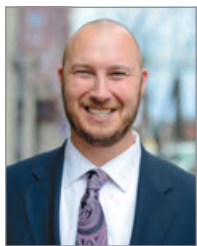
The PILMA partnership also extends to areas like lobbying for legislation and regulations that benefit both parties. Sometimes it's letters of support or opposition for legislation, like pharma supporting Davis-Bacon, which assures union-level pay on government projects, and opposing the problematic IRAP program that would have compromised union apprenticeships. Additionally, the building trades have supported the pharmaceutical industry on drug pricing and intellectual property issues.

The study was conducted by the Institute for Construction Economic Research, a non-partisan network of academic researchers whose goal is to find pragmatic solutions to workplace and labor market issues in the construction industry. ■

# TRANSITIONS

## APPOINTED

### Austin Keyser



Political and Legislative Affairs Director Austin Keyser has been appointed to the newly created position of Assistant to the International President for Government Affairs, effective July 1. As part of the change, the department has been reorganized and renamed Government Affairs.

Brother Keyser took over as director of the Political and Legislative Affairs Department in 2017 and led the IBEW's political outreach and grassroots programs through one of the most contentious and important presidential elections in U.S. history.

"These have been some of the most consequential and challenging years in our brotherhood's history. So much has been at stake," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "Austin's judgment, work ethic and reputation in Washington, D.C., and nationally have been crucial for the political successes we have had."

Keyser played a key role in coordinating with the Biden presidential campaign, including the IBEW's key decision to endorse Biden early in the primary campaign, a decision that built considerable trust, friendship and access in the new administration.

During the transition, Keyser served as co-chair of the Climate, Energy and

Environment Policy Committee and as a senior advisor for policy and appointments throughout the executive branch.

During the campaign, Keyser led the department's outreach effort that trained hundreds of IBEW grassroots leaders and registrars as election outreach specialists, and directly contacted more than 63,000 union members in crucial Midwestern swing states and held more than 150,000 phone conversations with IBEW members.

The department was not only focused on elections, however. Keyser led the IBEW's political fights in Congress and in the regulatory agencies to protect organized labor from the excesses of Trump appointees committed determined to gut worker wage and safety protections.

"Some of our greatest successes were what we stopped: the radical plan to hand apprenticeships over to management, hang struggling pension funds on healthy ones and gut collective bargaining rights," Keyser said. "We took some heavy losses under the prior administration, but we did remarkable work winning enough friends to hold off catastrophe."

Now that the most labor-friendly president since Franklin Roosevelt is in the White House, Keyser said there is real opportunity to win ground back, not just hunker down.

Brother Keyser became a third generation IBEW member when he joined the apprenticeship at Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 in 2001. Even before he topped out, he was tapped to serve in positions normally only held by journeymen, including as a steward and on a standing committee at the local.

He served as assistant business manager, treasurer and membership development coordinator before he was elected one of the youngest business managers of a construction local in 2008 at age 29.

In 2011, he was hired as the AFL-CIO's Ohio director, taking over the entire Midwest in 2014 before coming to the International Office.

"Our highest priorities line up closely to President Biden's highest priorities: rebuild the nation's infrastructure and pass the PRO Act to give more people the chance to benefit from coming together in union," Keyser said. "We have been waiting decades for this chance."

The officers, staff and entire membership of the IBEW wish Brother Keyser the best as he takes on his new position. ■

## APPOINTED

### Danielle M. Eckert



Danielle Eckert has been appointed director of the IBEW's Government Affairs Department, effective July 1. She replaces Austin Keyser,

who was elevated to assistant to the international president for government affairs.

"I come from a working-class family,"

said Eckert, who hails from Homosassa, Florida, about an hour's drive north of Tampa on the Sunshine State's west coast. Her father was a drywall finisher, and after Eckert was born, her parents moved the family back to their native Buffalo, New York, and then later settled in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

After graduating from high school, Eckert joined the Army Reserve in part to gain access to the service's education stipend, which helped her pay for her degree from nearby Mt. Aloysius College, where she studied history, political science and secondary education.

Eckert wanted to become a teacher but discovered how difficult it can be to obtain a permanent, full-time teaching job in Pennsylvania. So, to help support her growing family, she worked as much as she could as a part-time substitute teacher while supplementing her income with a job at a chain convenience store. She excelled so much at her backup job at the store that within just a few years she was promoted to a position in the store chain's corporate office.

Seeing how Eckert was juggling two jobs to get by, one of Eckert's Army Reserve "battle buddies" who worked an IBEW gig at Norfolk Southern Railroad's Juniata locomotive shop in Altoona encouraged her friend to apply for a position there. "I kept hearing how there was good, steady union work there," Eckert said.

Enticed by the security that a union job offers, Eckert took her friend's advice and filled out an application. Norfolk Southern quickly hired her, first as a janitor before moving her over to forklift operation. In 2014, Eckert took, and passed, the test to become a locomotive electrician, which led to her initiation into Altoona Local 2273.

Eckert jumped into union activism right away, at first by planning events and outings for workers and their families, including a massive Christmas party for all the members of the various union locals working in the Juniata shop.

Two years later, Eckert got her first taste of government affairs work when she volunteered to serve as the railroad local's political registrar, setting up meetings with local congressional representatives — "or really, whoever would meet with us," she said.

An impressed Local 2273 Chairman Dan Dorsch encouraged Eckert to run in 2019 for an open seat on the Executive Board. "I didn't think I had a chance," Eckert said with a laugh, "but I wound up winning the election."

"She was one of the best students we ever had here," Dorsch said. "Danni is a very hard worker and a fast learner, and she has a work ethic that can't be beat."

At one time, Altoona's various railroad facilities combined to make up the largest railroad shop complex in the world, employing thousands of workers. But in recent years, most major U.S. railroads, including Norfolk Southern, have adopted a radical efficiency scheme known as precision scheduled railroading, a penny-pinching strategy that has resulted in the elimination of hundreds of IBEW and other union workers' jobs.

"Local 2273's membership has just been decimated by PSR," said Eckert, who was herself furloughed only a few months after winning her e-board election. Dorsch strongly encouraged Eckert to remain a member of the IBEW, however, and with his support and the backing of Third District International Vice President Michael Welsh, she was appointed an international representative in the Political and Legislative Affairs department in 2020.

And after serving more than 13 years with the Army Reserve, Staff Sergeant Eckert finished her contract with the military the same year.

"Even before Danielle started working with us here, I knew that good things were in store for her and for the entire IBEW," said Keyser. "I am very pleased to have such a qualified union sister working on behalf of all of our members, and I'm equally pleased to consider her a friend."

Eckert, who also holds a master's degree in management and leadership from Liberty University, lives with her husband, Jason, and their child, near Washington in Rockville, Maryland.

When she's not working to promote IBEW members' legislative and political interests, Eckert likes to run, work out, camp out, and hang out on a beach.

Please join the officers and staff in wishing Sister Eckert the best as she assumes her new role. ■

## RETIRED

### Joel Bell



Joel Bell, a longtime IBEW leader in Arizona who served as an outside construction representative in Business Development for the last six years, retired effective June 1.

"Joel has an unbelievable understanding of the regulatory processes, which vary greatly from state to state," Business Development Director Ray Kasmak said. "Transmission projects take literally years, if not decades, to go from planning and regulatory to culmination."

"These are long ordeals. He had an intuitive ability to pick ones that had the best chance to come to fruition and where to best put our resources."

Retirement wrapped up a 44-year career for Brother Bell, who got a first-hand look at a lineman's life earlier than most. His father, Ray, was a member of Phoenix Local 769.

"I would spend my summers with him wherever he was working," said Bell, whose parents divorced when he was in the first grade. "He worked construction and I always would go to work with him. Even early on when he worked utility, I always rode with him in the truck on trouble calls."

"I got a pretty heavy exposure to line work and figured out that's what I wanted to do."

That would have to wait a few years,

however. In 1974, when Bell graduated from high school, Local 769 didn't accept an apprenticeship class because of a slowdown in the Arizona economy.

So, he traveled to Alaska and worked as a mechanic for the next three years on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, becoming a member of the Operating Engineers. Bell enjoyed the work but quickly said yes when he was accepted into Local 769's revived apprenticeship program in 1977. He became a member one year later and completed his apprenticeship in 1980.

"I enjoyed the guys and it truly felt like a brotherhood," he said. "Line work is a pretty small world and the people I worked with knew me as a kid."

"When you work as a lineman, you come to an understanding that you put your life, to some extent, into someone else's hands. Whether you're working energized or you're setting steel, it's important you form a pretty tight bond."

Bell was active in Local 769 from the start of his career. He served on various committees and was elected to the Executive Board in 1984. He became board chairman in 1988.

By 1994, Local 769's business manager was nearing retirement and asked Bell to run for his position. He won that election and was re-elected six more times, facing no opposition in any of those races.

His proudest accomplishment was turning around Local 769's struggling financial situation. By 2013, when he left for the Seventh District office, it had \$5 million in the bank and owned its new union hall outright. That put it in a more advantageous position to secure work and organize, he said.

"You've got to be able to fight the fights when you need to," Bell said. "If people think you have the resources, they might not take you on."

In 2013, Bell was appointed a Seventh District international representative, servicing locals in Arizona and New Mexico. He thought he might retire in that role before he was tapped to fill the newly-created position for an outside representative in Business Development in 2015.

"It was interesting because it is a lot like organizing," Bell said. "You talk to a lot of people, you put in the work, and then you think it's just dead and it's never going to happen. That can be disheartening at times."

"Then, a year or two years later, it develops. What you sowed comes back and starts paying off. When you have something that works in your favor after you talk to the right people and get the right projects for members, it's rewarding."

Tiler Eaton, another Business Development international representative who also focuses on outside work, said Bell was "so full of knowledge. You could ask him a question and every time, he would have a fix or a solution for everything you asked."

Eaton, who has known Bell for nearly 20 years, said the respect Bell garnered from the National Electrical Contractors Association and signatory contractors

TRANSITIONS continued on page 12

## Executive Reorganization at the International Office

International President Lonnie R. Stephenson has made organizational and responsibility changes at the International Office.



**Darrin Golden**, who was serving as Senior Executive Assistant to the International President, has been renamed Chief of Staff.



**Sherilyn Wright**, previously Executive Assistant to the International President, has been renamed

Senior Executive Assistant to the International President. The changes took effect July 1.

In addition, the Political and Legislative Affairs Department has been renamed the Government Affairs Department. ■





# LOCAL LINES

## Congratulations to New Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,ptc,rts,s,se,spa,st &ws), ST. LOUIS, MO — Our own Sylvester Taylor has been named director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the IBEW/NECA Electrical Connection. Taylor, a member for 31 years and our current recording secretary, is very active: He is a school board member of the fifth



Local 1 member Sylvester Taylor has been named director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the IBEW/NECA Electrical Connection. (Photo courtesy of Local 1.)

largest school district in the state, Hazelwood School District, and the president of the local's Electrical Workers Minority Caucus. We salute you, Brother Taylor, with best wishes as he continues to give his all for the IBEW.

In other news, the Local 1 chapter of RENEW had a great summer float trip. Many members enjoyed the chance to socialize and cool off in the river away from the confines of work.

We also wish to extend a hearty thank you to the traveling brothers and sisters who helped with the GM summer shutdown.

Kyle Hunter, P.S.

## The Veterans' Club Marches Forward

L.U. 3 (catv,em,govt,i,lctt,mo,o,ptc,t&u), NEW YORK, NY — The Veterans' Club has been officially incorporated as an affiliated club of our local. On the morning



The Veterans' Club has been officially incorporated as an affiliated club of Local 3 in New York, NY.

of Sat., June 19, at the Electrical Industry Center, the Veterans Club held their first open meeting since the start of the pandemic. Fortunately, the club was able to induct officers in a small ceremony in September and marched in the Memorial Day Parade in Lynbrook, N.Y., on May 31.

The room was full for the meeting, which started with the color guard and initiation of Corporal of the Guard Taariq McField. Business Manager Chris Erikson delivered remarks, highlighting the sacrifices made by military veterans and Americans throughout our history. The club's bylaws were voted on and adopted and its constitution was signed by the business manager; President Tom Cleary; club advisors Raymond Melville and Derek Jordan; and club officers Gregory Smith (president), Patrick Glennon (vice president), Rich Kiley (treasurer), Lina Lopez (recording secretary), Artie Neri (correspondence secretary), Brian Doherty (sergeant at arms), John McByrne (apprentice advocate) and Brother McField.

Gregory Smith, Pres. (Veterans' Club)

## Energizing the Southland

L.U. 11 (i,rts&spa), LOS ANGELES, CA — With an understanding that our local's electricians are essential to the very existence of Los Angeles, we never stopped bending pipe, pulling wire, upgrading communications or energizing the Southland. While many across America were sidelined, we endeavored to persevere. Over the last year we did just that, with our inside wiremen generating over 8.8-million-man hours, our Sound & Communications unit putting in more than 1.6-million-man hours and our CE/CWs supplying more than 600K man hours.

We have opened a new South Bay office for Districts 2 and 3 and, at press time, we are nearing completion of our new District 6 offices, allowing secured video conferencing between all district offices covering the 4,500 square miles that make up Local 11's jurisdiction. The membership has shown their appreciation for the leadership of Local 11 with the landslide re-election victo-

ry of Business Manager Joël Barton and President Rusty Roten. They have worked together tirelessly to keep Local 11 moving forward. With a pandemic-less future, the sun is truly shining brightly in Southern California.

Chuck Webb, R.S.

## Local 17 Partners with DTE Energy on Detroit's Tree Trim Academy

L.U. 17 (catv,em,lctt,o&u), DETROIT, MI — In partnership with DTE Energy, our local launched the Detroit-based Tree Trim Academy in April. This collaboration combines Local 17 and DTE Energy's commitment to growing and developing local talent while meeting and maintaining the needs of safe and reliable energy services, including line-clearance tree trimming (LCTT). The Tree Trim Academy will offer an unparalleled, six-week line-clearance tree trimming training program designed to equip graduates with career readiness, safety training and the skills needed to advance to Local 17's LCTT woodsman/apprenticeship program.

In tandem with the city of Detroit Mayor's Office, and in collaboration with Focus: HOPE and Detroit At Work, the Tree Trim Academy will recruit eager applicants from metro Detroit's diverse workforce and train 60 graduates in 2021 to fill the area's ever-growing demand for line-clearance tree trimmers.

James A. Shaw B.M./F.S.

**Editor's Note:** See our story on the Detroit Tree Trim Academy in the August issue of the Electrical Worker.

## Kind Hearts. Fierce Minds. Brave Spirits.

L.U. 37 (c,o,ptc,rtb&u), FREDERICTON, NB — Helping and encouraging the women who need it most is near and dear to the hearts of the members of our local's Women's Committee. Therefore, the committee was thrilled to have the opportunity to celebrate 50 New Brunswick women who are bravely forging a new path for themselves and their children. These strong, brave women have experienced and fled abusive relationships. They are now safely residing with their children in supportive, affordable second-stage housing where they are working hard toward personal and economic independence and a future free of violence and abuse.

To show their deep admiration, members of the committee coordinated and sponsored the purchase of 50 beautiful gift boxes delivered in time for Mother's Day. Each box was filled with made-in-New Brunswick goodies from The NB Box, a local, female-owned company providing high-quality and locally-made



Local 37 Women's Committee member Shilee Little (left) delivering Mother's Day gifts to the executive director of Carol Ann's Second Stage Housing.

products. Placed inside each gift box was a card printed with the words "Kind Heart. Fierce Mind. Brave Spirit." These words truly exemplify the incredible courage, strength and character of these amazing women and their families.

Mary J. Williamson, A.B.M.

## Congrats, Apprentices!

L.U. 41 (i,se,es,em&spa), BUFFALO, NY — We have had a busy summer in 2021, culminating with more building upgrades, including the paving/repaving and striping of our parking lots and a new glass entrance to our union office. Our parking lot work may delay the start of apprenticeship classes for a week or two, but it will be worth it.

Speaking of apprenticeship school, congratulations to all our apprentices. Last session they put in the hard work and finished this difficult year strong by passing and moving up to the next step of their careers. Thank you all for your patience and diligence!

We expect to have a strong work outlook for the rest of this year and next and will continue to work with politicians on getting projects to our area. We are ready to begin booking events so we can get together



President Matt Hilmey swears in Local 41's Sister Liz Shepard for her place on the Examining Board.

## 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	(rr) Railroad	(t) Telephone
(ees) Electrical Equipment Service	(mt) Maintenance	(u) Utility	(tm) Transportation Manufacturing
(ei) Electrical Inspection	(mo) Maintenance & Operation	(uow) Utility Office Workers	(ws) Warehouse and Supply
(em) Electrical Manufacturing	(mow) Manufacturing Office Workers		
(es) Electric Signs	(mar) Marine		

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

next year to laugh and tell stories.

Lastly, congratulations to Liz Shepard on being appointed to the Examining Board. We look forward to having Sister Shepard involved in our local for many years to come!

Gregory R. Inglut, P.S.

## Negotiations and Trip Plans Underway

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters. We have several bargaining updates to report: With SCE, we are currently bargaining for two new positions, dispatch trainer and operator trainer, at the dispatch center; for air operation mechanics, bargaining started in July. With the city of Anaheim, negotiations continue; with the city of Colton, water/waste-water negotiations also are continuing. On the electric side, we had meetings scheduled in July to begin negotiations for the contract for calendar year 2021. For the city of Banning, negotiations continue with utility and general units.

Local 47 did host the veterans' fishing trip on July 30; we are looking forward to planning more fishing trips and golf tournaments, with dates to be announced.

We're sad to report the deaths of Jonathan Cabrera, Ronald Duff, Darrell Jackson, Richard Lua, Clay Teters, Art Wilson and Richard Wilson. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe & buy union!

Mitch Smith, P.S.



The team of (left to right) Colton Beams, Joe Bianco, Mark Miller and Walter Westfall took first place at Local 51's golf tournament in June.

## Ten Scholarships Awarded

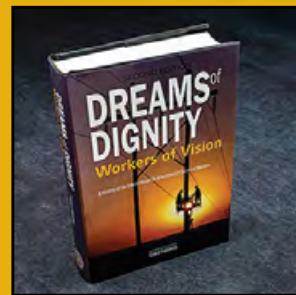
L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — Our annual golf scholarship outing held in June was a great success. The first-place team was Colton Beams, Joe Bianco, Mark Miller and Walter Westfall. The second-place team was Matt Cannon, Kevin Hill, Kyle Hill and John Lindsay. Champaign Signal & Light won the coveted toilet bowl (last-place) award.

Due to the generosity of the IBEW, our members and the companies they work for, we were able to award ten scholarships this year. The winners were as follows: Erin Biccochi (daughter of Beth Biccochi); Tre' Corley (son of Bill Corley); Logan Dirr (son of Jill Dirr); Nathan Gilmore (grandson of Robert Reed); Kara Hyde (granddaughter of Robert Reed); Kelsey Rivara (son of Michael Rivara); Serenity Salinas (daughter of Jennifer Watson); Karen Schaffer (wife of Jeff Schaffer); Caden Shearlock (son of Kristin Shearlock); and Chesleigh Shreves (daughter of Scott Shreves).



Ninth District IVP John O'Rourke swearing in new Business Managers Colin Lavin (Local 47) and Bob Dean (Local 1245) at the California State Association of Electrical Workers conference.

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Mark your calendar for Sept. 25, the date of our annual picnic at the hall. Stay safe, brothers and sisters.

Karlene Knisley, B.R.

## Quality Work Needed More Than Ever

L.U. 55 (c,lctt,o&u), DES MOINES, IA — Hello, brothers and sisters. I'm sad to report to you that we lost a member of our local. His name was Don Huston, and he was a journeyman lineman. He will be missed by all!

It's been around 18 months since the coronavirus pandemic hit the country and brought most things to a standstill. But it never slowed our work down much: We were needed more than ever. In many ways, it was people like you — our brothers and sisters at the IBEW — who helped to save our country.

I am blessed to be retired, and when I drive around the countryside, I see many union contractors doing very good work. I stopped and complimented the crew that is in the picture this month. I had been watching them for over a week and saw they were doing some very nice work. They were meticulous and left each jobsite better than they found it.

Let's all continue to work safely and always think of each other and ask questions if you don't understand something. Never make fun of someone for asking a question! I hope we get to have a Labor Day parade this year!

Myron Green, P.S.



(Left to right) Dylan Tumer, Steve Devoss and Greg Macumber work for Liberty Line Builders, a newer contractor with Local 55 in Iowa.

## Outside Construction Shows Positive Growth

L.U. 70 (lctt&o), WASHINGTON, DC — It's been over a year since new Business Manager James Horton and President Roland Carter were sworn in. Local 70 members are moving in a positive direction in the Outside Construction arena. Thanks to all staff, including Jenny Diggs, Georganna Naglieri and Hannah Williamson (office staff); Gary Helton (Membership Development); Robert Hendricks (treasurer); Levin Jamerson



Due to the collective efforts of Local 70's staff and members, the local is moving in a positive direction in Outside Construction.

(recording secretary); Mika Penvose (business representative); Mike Powers (safety coordinator); Mark Raines (vice president); and Shawn Scott (business representative). Thanks also to the Executive and Examining Boards.

Roland Carter, Pres.

## Celebrating Excellence This Labor Day

L.U. 71 (lctt,o&rtb), COLUMBUS, OH — I would personally like to thank all our members and travelers working out of our hall and all those in the IBEW working across the nation and facing head on one of the greatest global health challenges of our lifetimes. You should all be applauded for adapting to and adopting new state and federally mandated safety procedures while maintaining the highest safety standards and not missing work throughout the pandemic.

Local 71 was able to conduct our 2020 elections, since we are using mail-in ballots, with the following new officers: Business Manager/Financial Secretary Bryan Stage; President Larry Moore; Vice President Todd Kessler; Treasurer Kurt Williams; Recording Secretary Chris Corney; and Executive Board Members Matt Bruggeman, Jason Doran, Dirk Dozer, Walter Gribble, Todd Kessler, Larry Moore and Jay Roessner. We also anticipate sending eight delegates to the International Convention next year.

Brother Richard "Brownie" Helman has helped establish a non-profit organization called Kamp George for Wounded Heroes. Funded by donations, the organization invites families of military, police, fire fighters, first responders, line workers and tree trimmers who have become disabled due to work incidents to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for an all-expenses-paid family vacation. Visit [KampGeorge.org](http://KampGeorge.org) for ways to help out.

Have a safe and happy Labor Day.

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

## Strength in the Face of Adversity

L.U. 97 (ptc&u), SYRACUSE, NY — As this article is being written in early summer and many COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, now is the time to look both back and forward.

None of us had lived through a global pandemic before and no one was prepared for it. The resilience and adaptability that our members showed through it all was impressive. Whether an inside worker learning to work remotely under new challenges or our field and plant workers who remained on the job through it all despite the new hazards it presented: The officers and staff are truly proud to call you our brothers and sisters.

Looking ahead, we are eager to meet again in person with the full membership. We all learned new ways of meeting, be it Webex, MS Teams, Zoom and even old-fashioned conference calls. But nothing replaces in-person meetings, and by the time that you are reading this, absent an unforeseen reversal, our meetings will have been scheduled, if we haven't already held some.

Please continue to work safely; and if you haven't been vaccinated yet, please consider doing so.

Dan Machold, P.S./B.R.

## LOCAL LINES

## Welcoming 350 New Members in Boston

L.U. 103 (cs&i), BOSTON, MA — June was a very busy month at our local. We held our annual Fenway Family Day on Sat., June 12. The weather was perfect. Members enjoyed a complimentary BBQ on the Vineyard Vines Deck prior to the game. Business Manager Lou Antonellis threw out the ceremonial first pitch. Our beloved Red Sox went on to lose 7-2 to the Toronto Blue Jays, but 800 Local 103 members and their families were the clear winners of another great day at Fenway Park.

On June 17, Local 103 welcomed 350 new members. First-year apprentices and CWs were sworn into membership at a ceremony in front of a packed house, including new Mayor of Boston Kim Janey, who greeted the new members and wished them all well in their new careers.

On June 19, we held our Brotherhood Golf Tourney. Another picture-perfect summer day for members to enjoy a little brotherhood over a round of golf. Many thanks to all our sponsors that helped make it happen.

And on June 29, we held Pin Night for over 330 members receiving years of service pins, including 78-year member William Cormay.

It really feels great to be back at it without masks in a post-coronavirus world now that we are fully open. #LetsGetToWork

*Jimmy Fleming, P.S.*

## Staff Changes and Helping Community Resources

L.U. 125 (lctt,o,t&u), PORTLAND, OR — Our local has had another staff change since the last Local Lines. We've said goodbye to Assistant Business Manager Jake Carter. Bill Jepsen has joined the staff as Jake's replacement, noting, "I'm loyal to the IBEW and look forward to representing my brothers and sisters."

We thank Jake for his years of service and wish him the best of luck in his new role as director of Operations at Grays Harbor PUD.

Unfortunately, we were not able to host this year's Pacific Northwest Lineman's Rodeo. Still, both \$20 and \$1 raffle tickets are available. Contact a member of the Rodeo Committee or Local 125 staff for more information. Our support of the Oregon Burn Center never diminishes, and we need everyone's help in ensuring that necessary resources are available to serve our community.

We hope the summer has been good to you and your family. As the season winds down, please stay cut in and don't let any back-to-school activities or last vacations create distractions. In the words of Business Manager Travis Eri, stay safe: Your family is depending on you.

*Marcy Grail, A.B.M.*

## Promoting Pro-Labor Legislation and Celebrating Graduates

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters: As of this writing, the work picture remains slow, with 84 members on Book 1. Our local continues to rely on an abundance of work opportunities in surrounding locals to employ our out-of-work members.

Local 141 members have been very active in recent weeks supporting and promoting the PRO Act, along with other labor unions, local pro-labor politicians, and pro-labor organizations in our region. This much-needed legislation will strengthen the climate for working families for years to come, and reverse a lot of the anti-labor legislation passed in recent years.

We are proud to announce our latest graduating class of inside wireman apprentices. Congratulations



*Local 141's newest journeyman wiremen with apprentice instructor Justin Klempa: (front, left to right) Justin Klempa, Matt Hill, Thomas Orth, Maddison Cumpston, Dylan Johnson, and Andrew Ellis; (back, left to right) Jayson LaRoche, Glenn Bonar, Matthew Gregorcic and Derek Donahue.*

to our newest journeyman wiremen: Glenn Bonar, Maddison Cumpston, Derek Donahue, Andrew Ellis, Matthew Gregorcic, Matt Hill, Dylan Johnson, Jayson LaRoche and Thomas Orth. May these young men and women have a long and successful career in the IBEW!

Local 141 is sad to report the passing of Brother Robert "Bob" McLaughlin. He will be sadly missed.

Please stay safe and healthy.

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

## Business Manager Sue Blue Honored for Leadership

L.U. 159 (i), MADISON, WI — We are grateful that work has really picked up with summer. We now have open calls going into Book 2. We welcome a return to in-person union meetings, swearing in new members and conducting member orientations.

Spring was eventful. U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh made a quick stop in Madison on his May tour, and Business Manager Sue Blue was among those who met with him, pictured [See photo below].

We held a June press conference, spotlighting and welcoming our three VEEP apprentices Jay Droessler, Courtney Tillman and Jackson Wildes. Sister Tillman began her apprenticeship in mid-July.

The Wisconsin Legislature has kept Governor Tony Evers busy with his veto pen, and he signed a budget very different from the one he had proposed. Evers is preparing for a redistricting battle. Under former Gov. Scott Walker, the last redistricting left Wisconsin infamously and heavily gerrymandered.

Congratulations to Business Manager Sue Blue on being recognized by the Daily Reporter for her lead-



*Local 159 Business Manager Sue Blue (left) met with U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh (right) in Madison, WI, in May.*

ership and for paving the way for other women as an outstanding Woman in Construction. Among her accomplishments, Blue is the only woman in the Sixth District ever to have been elected business manager of a construction local.

*Lisa Goodman, P.S.*

**Editor's Note:** See our story on Local 159's VEEP graduates on Pg. 9

## Worth the Wait

L.U. 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ — The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has affected all of us in a variety of ways, ranging from the annoying to the life-altering. One of the groups so affected was the class of 2020 apprentices waiting to be sworn in as journeymen. Many in the class knew that their journey would be arduous, filled with trials and tribulation, but I don't think any of them foresaw the challenges that the pandemic would present when they signed their papers of service and took their original oath to the IBEW.

The apprentices were not alone, however, in their apprehension. Instructors and school staff spent many a restless night grappling with difficult decisions and ever-changing conditions concerning the school and the welfare of its occupants. School Director Jim Stover met the challenge head on and with the help of the teaching staff and administrative assistants, finally bringing the fifth-year class over the finish line. Hats off to all involved and congratulations and best of luck to all the newly-minted journeymen!

*Brian Jacoppo, P.S.*

## Electricians Needed in Washington State

L.U. 191 (c,i,mo,rtb&st), EVERETT, WA — Greetings, brothers, sisters and siblings! We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy! It's looking like we are almost through COVID-19 and opening to regular activities. Local 191 is going to be busy this summer and continuing well into next year. If you are looking for a beautiful state to visit and place to work, come on up and help us fill our calls! You do need a Washington State Electrical License.

If you do come on up, we have a bunch of our summer events scheduled. Come join our local members and fellowship in brother/sister/siblinghood. Wherever you land, we hope you have a blessed rest of 2021.

Help build American and promote solidarity and unity any time life gives you the opportunity! Blessings from IBEW LU 191!

*Randy Curry, Pres.*

## Training Next-Gen Workers for Safety in the Field

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb,&u), TOLEDO, OH — Here's hoping that everyone is ready for some relief from the summer's heat and to welcome fall. It's great to say that things are finally getting back to normal. It's nice to see everyone back at the hall for our monthly union meetings. We're getting ready to participate in the annual Toledo Labor Day Parade as our members will walk the streets of the Glass City.

Work on the outside in our jurisdiction is slow. We continue to receive work from AEP, but all FirstEnergy work has come to a halt. We would like to congratulate the four ALBAT apprentices who recently just passed their journeyman lineman test and wish them the best in the future.

We would also like to congratulate the new lineman, substation and network employees at Toledo Edison on passing their journeyman tests. Starting this summer, we welcome the new class of 2022 that will be spending ten weeks in the field for their summer experience. This is a great way for these future members to learn how we work safely out in the field by observing the experienced and talented members of Local 245.

As of this writing, we wrapped up negotiations with Wolf Creek Federal Services at the NASA Glenn Research Center. Negotiations went well and we reached a tentative agreement that we are proud to take to the members for a ratification vote.

Negotiations with Energy Harbor at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Plant are still ongoing, and we hope to reach an agreement soon. We are preparing for additional negotiations on tele-data agreements and with Nelson Tree Service, the Walleye Power Bay Shore Plant and the Rossford Fire and Rescue Department with the city of Rossford.

Finally, all of us here at Local 245 want to thank everyone for continuing to be safe as we navigate out of the coronavirus pandemic. With respect to the up-and-coming younger generation, please take some extra time to train these new members and continue to work safely.

*Brian Gendaszek, P.S.*



*Local 245 members working on storm restoration on Toledo Edison/First Energy property in Ohio.*

## Apprentice Lineman Helps Save a Life

L.U. 309 (i,lctt,mo,mt,o,rts,spa&u), COLLINSVILLE, IL — On the morning of May 30, our local's apprentice lineman Charles "Chip" Knocke was rattled out of bed to screams of distress from a next-door neighbor. The neighbor's husband had just suffered a severe heart attack. Without hesitation, Chip's wife called 911, and Chip responded by administering CPR for at least twenty minutes until the ambulance arrived. En route to the hospital, paramedics delivered two separate shocks from an AED to revive the man's heart. While this story is exceptional on its own, it is not uncommon among construction workers who are trained as first responders to help those in need. Local 309 is



honored by Brother Knocke's example.

Local 309 is sad to report the passing of David Foree. Brother Foree started as an inside wireman and retired as business manager. Following his service in the U.S. Army, David joined the IBEW and worked tirelessly for the labor movement. A mentor to many and a friend to all, Brother Foree will be greatly missed.

As of this writing, we are delighted that the Labor Day parade and picnic will take place. Come one and all to represent your local union and to show your support for our movement.

*Carlos S. Perez, R.S.*

## Keeping Labor in the Day

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — Happy Labor Day, brothers and sisters! The first Labor Day celebration was held in New York City in 1882. Minnesota first observed a labor-focused holiday in 1885. The Knights of Labor Assemblies arranged a picnic at White Bear Lake, and 3,000 people were reported attending.

The holiday was initially organized to celebrate labor unions and their contributions to the U.S. economy. As the movement grew for a national day off, Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894. Today, Labor Day is often seen as the last break before school starts, the unofficial end of summer or the last day of the state fair.

While celebrating Labor Day 2021, be proud of your IBEW membership. You are a part of the history of the working class. Unions are the "labor" in Labor Day. Keep America Great — Spend It Where You Earn It.

*Tom Small, P.S.*



*(Left to right) Local 441 Business Manager Neal Lauzon, U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, Local 441 Political Director Doug Mangione, Congressman Mike Levin and Congresswoman Katie Porter met in July for a meeting about clean energy.*

## Local 441, Labor Secretary Meet for Clean-Energy Discussion

L.U. 441 (as,i&rts), SANTA ANA, CA — In July, along with local politicians, U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh visited the UC Irvine campus as part of a clean-energy meeting, where he discussed the Biden administration's plan to invest in the nation's workforce through the development of sustainable transportation infrastructure. UCI's electric vehicle charging stations were proudly featured during Walsh's visit, which were built by IBEW electricians with EVITP training.

*Neal H. Lauzon, B.M.*

## Congratulations to a New Class of Journeymen Wiremen

L.U. 449 (catv,em,i,mt,o,rtb,rts,spa&u), POCATELLO, ID — I would like to start by congratulating our newest retirees: Randy Chapman, Daniel Remer, Mike Smith and Bryan VanOrden. May they each have a long and exciting retirement! I know all of them and had the opportunity to work with most of them.

We mourn the loss of retired brothers Neils Christensen, Paul Peak and Gary Prestwich. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families.

We have a new class of journeymen wiremen that have just turned out: Tim Breland, Chris Hardy, Talor Lundstrom, Ethan Robinson, Sye Sweat and Adam Sunderland. I had the opportunity to teach their first-year class and have worked with several of them. They are a great bunch of brothers.

As of this submission, we planned to have our annual picnic, with some of the COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, July 17. Our new journeymen will be getting their certificates there. Aug. 7 was our annual Chukars baseball night.

*Chris Lochridge, Pres.*

## Local 481 Hosts Labor Secretary

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rt,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Our local continues to be a leader in the central Indiana-area labor movement and that was put on display recently. In June, Local 481 had the honor and privilege of hosting U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh for a roundtable discussion. Secretary Walsh came to discuss the American Jobs Plan and the commitment by the Biden administration in making sure that the jobs being discussed and touted are good union jobs. Business Manager Jeff Wheeler, Sixth District International Vice President Ruhmkorff and other labor leaders in central Indiana all gathered at Local 481. They took full advantage of the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any concerns that union members are experiencing. Secretary Walsh assured those present that everything that can be done to ensure that unions are heard and have a seat at the table is a top priority, and no stone will be

left unturned. Local 481 would like to thank Secretary Walsh for the opportunity to host such an event!

Stay safe out there, brothers and sisters!

*Blake A. Andrews, B.R.*

## PG&E Agreement Improves VM Work Conditions

L.U. 1245 (o,u,t,em,catv,lctt,govt&pet), VACAVILLE, CA — Our local negotiated an agreement with PG&E to require all non-signatory contractors performing PG&E vegetation management (VM) work to become signatory to Local 1245 in order to continue getting



*Apprentice climbing class at the new Cal/Nev JATC facility in Woodland, CA, on June 30, 2021. (Photo courtesy of John Storey.)*

this work. As members of Local 1245, the vegetation management inspectors will see a significant and immediate pay raise anywhere from 50 — 100% over their current wage. The agreement also comes with training and enhanced oversight, providing for increased public and member safety in the field. The VM inspectors who are currently employed directly with PG&E will also see a pay increase, and the agreement additionally mandates that the company directly hire an additional 150 employees into these VM classifications.

Work outlook for outside line (OSL) in Local 1245's jurisdiction remains very strong. We don't anticipate any slowdown in this work over the next several years. The new Cal/Nev JATC facility in Woodland, Calif., is now open and classes have begun. A formal grand-opening celebration is being planned for later this year.

Local 1245 is mourning the loss of two travelers who died on the job while working in our jurisdiction. Journeyman lineman John Ostroski from Local 222 in Florida was killed in a vehicle accident, and groundman Jonathan Cabrera of Local 47 died in a mini-excavator accident. We also lost longtime Business Rep. Landis Marttila, who retired from the union last year and passed away from natural causes.

*Rebecca Band, Communications Dir.*

## Local 1347 Continues Partnership with Blackout Tees

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,ptc&u), CINCINNATI, OH — In 2010, Jamie Madden entered into the world of screen printing by selling funny shirts. Blackout Tees was born and virtually exploded overnight, and it has dominated the local screen-print business over the last eleven years. As the company expanded and moved into a retail space, Jamie wanted to branch out with other products. With funny tees, fundraisers, uniforms and

*In June, Local 481 hosted U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh for a roundtable discussion about the American Jobs Plan.*



mobile events, coupled with a successful internet presence, Blackout Tees became the premier screen-print shop in Cincinnati.

Fast forward to 2017. Jamie wanted a way to improve his business for his employees while getting Blackout name exposure nationwide. (You can read about the organizing efforts in "An Organizing Drive That Is A Perfect Fit" in the September 2017 Electrical Worker). After a very successful campaign, Blackout Tees has accomplished what they set out to do: Since organizing, there has been an average of 18.5% raise in wages, with additional benefits that include healthcare, retirement, vacation and bonuses, just to name a few.

On May 12, we ratified another agreement, moving from a three-year to a five-year contract. After the signing, Jamie spoke with Local 1347 members: "I'm proud of where we've been, and I'm so excited for where we are going. We have the best USA-made, union-made products out there!"

We look forward to a very bright future for the folks at Blackout Tees and encourage all the locals around the country to contact them and try their products.

*Andrew Kirk, B.M.*



*(Left to right) Local 1347 members John Carpenter, Jacob Mundy, Sean Murphy, Pat Flaherty, Kayla Mullins and Business Manager Andrew Kirk look forward to a bright future with Blackout Tees in Cincinnati, Ohio.*

## Elected Officers

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — Our election of officers was held on June 26, with the officers sworn in at our July 19 meeting.

Elected officers are: Business Manager/Financial Secretary Will Salters, President Mike Greene, Vice President Alonzo Ingram, Recording Secretary Maggie Senters, Treasurer Sterling Mantlow; and Executive Board members Lee Buoy, Tommie Crabb, Chandra Fussell, Brian Giles, Michelle "Boogie" Kay, Eric Murphey and James Smith. There will also be four delegates that will attend the International Convention with Business Manager Will Salters: Mike Greene, Alonzo Ingram, Wayne Irby and J.R. Richardson.

I would also like to thank the Election Committee for their service and hard work and professionalism in this process: Bruce Gibson (Judge), James Lynch, Toby Mackendree and Patrick McGowan.

As I look at this slate of newly and re-elected officers, I feel confident that Local 1579 will continue to prosper and move forward.

Until next time, God Bless!

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

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# RETIREES

## Be Safe and Enjoy Life

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER — On May 19, the South Jersey chapter held our first meeting since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. It was great to see everyone. On June 16, we held our summer luncheon at the Local 400 meeting hall, where we enjoyed good food and lots of laughs. The rest of the summer we will be planning fishing trips, baseball games, racetrack trips and the Atlantic City Air Show. Be safe out there, and sit back and enjoy life.

*Anthony Savarese, Pres.*

## Remembering Two Brothers Lost

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — Sadly, we have to report the passing of two noted members of our Retirees Club. Gershon Sosin passed away on May 24. He retired in February 1990, and at that time he became president of the Retirees Club and served in that position until 2015. We're very grateful to him for leading the Retirees Club over the years. When he retired, he started a tradition where he would buy pizza for the whole crowd at the monthly membership meeting every 10 years. It was his way of showing his appreciation of being a member of the IBEW.

We also lost Tito DiBenedetto, a very well-respected member of Local 35 who passed away on July 2. Tito served on the Executive Board and as president from 1983 through 1989. He was a general foreman and a project manager on several large projects prior to his retirement in August 2005. He was a true gentleman and will be missed by all.

Our condolences go out to the Sosin and DiBenedetto families.

We look forward to resuming our annual outing this year in August. We hope it will be well attended and look forward to seeing everyone again.

The Retirees Club has begun our monthly meetings again on the second Wednesday of each month at the Elks Lodge in Rocky Hill. We hope to see more retirees joining us!

*Kenneth R. White, P.S.*

## Annual Retirees Dinner to be Held in Newly Renovated Hall

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — Time for another article, though we don't have much to report on at this time. It is our hope that all are doing well.

Local 53 had their annual Crappie Tournament, which reported a good turnout. Everyone had a good time, with lots of good food, great visiting and laughter.

Some of our retirees went on a motorcycle run to Colorado and part of New Mexico. There were eight of them, and they reported that they had a good time and lots of fun. The weather was hot, but no humidity, and they got into a little rain coming home.

Local 53 is going to have our annual retirees' dinner at the union hall on Sept. 23. We sure hope all of you can make it. Back in our newly remodeled digs, it should be a good time.

Our prayers go out for our members and their families who are sick and maybe not doing so well. Our prayers also go out to members who have lost someone in their family.

Sadly, we lost three more retirees: Kenny McMillin, Wendel Morris and Ron Schock. May they rest in peace, having gone home to our Lord and will never be forgotten.

*Duane Pearce, P.S.*



*On June 16, the members of the Local 3 South Jersey retirees met for their summer luncheon.*

## Easing Back to Regular Meetings

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 58, DETROIT, MI — As we move through COVID-19 and vaccinations, our retirees group is easing back into our regular schedule of monthly board meetings, which resumed in July. We are working to put together a picnic in September, and we are doing the work necessary to resume our monthly luncheons, which switch back and forth from the east side to the west side.

Let's continue to be diligent in our support of our elected public servants. While casting our vote is one part of the process, we also need to keep an open dialogue with those we have elected. It's appropriate to make donations to those groups who are working to keep our democracy intact. During these times, let's remember that Social Security is a benefit (not an entitlement) that retired Americans rely on to maintain their standard of living. Reach out and have conversations with friends and family; it's our similarities, not our differences, that can and will bring us together. Let the work continue!

*Pat Nuznov, P.S.*

## A Welcome Return & Joyful Reunion

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — Welcome back! Our club held its first member meeting since March of 2020 on July 14. It was a joy to see everyone again after 16 months. Our meeting was held at the IBEW/NECA Technical Institute in Alsip, Ill. An attendance of 40 members, including six new members, was an above-average turnout. Having all meetings and activities shut down was like having this time stolen from our lives and those of all people around the world.

I've talked to several people refusing to get vaccinated who say this is all political and the government is making us do this. I do not understand — it doesn't matter who the mayors are, who the governors are or who is president. This is a health crisis, and it's not over yet. Please, if you haven't been vaccinated, think of your family and friends and just do it. It doesn't hurt!

Our annual luncheon meeting honoring our members with 50 to 70 years of service for 2020 and 2021, and usually held in June, will be held Sept. 8. This will hopefully put us back on track. Drury Lane Theater in Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., will be back open to kick off their fall season in September with the play "Forever Plaid," and we look forward to a fun outing there on Sept. 30. I



*Local 134 retirees attended a "welcome back" meeting on July 14, with 40 members in attendance.*

sincerely hope everyone stays safe and healthy.

*Sue Kleczka, P.S.*

## Perspective and Gratitude

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 212, CINCINNATI, OHIO — Our Retirees Club has resumed normalcy thanks to COVID-19 vaccines. As of May 2021, we are meeting on the first Wednesday every month at the union hall and have also reinstated our annual July picnic at Fernbank Park on the Ohio River. In August, the annual Local 212 family picnic was held at Stricker's Grove in Ross, Ohio. It is good to see the brotherhood gathering together again!

COVID-19 has had an impact on all our lives; but, thankfully, the newly developed vaccines have proven to be very effective against this dreaded virus that has taken the so many of our fellow citizens' lives and is a scourge upon the entire world. Our deepest sympathy is extended to everyone who has suffered a loss of a loved one during this time.

As survivors of this virus, we have a lot for which to be thankful. One thing to be thankful for is Medicare and supplemental health insurance, which helps our families stay healthy without going broke. Life-saving modern medicine does not mean very much if we cannot afford to pay for it. We wish everyone the best of health and blessings.

*Bob Schaefer, P.S.*

## Making Plans for Our Future

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 257, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — Our first monthly meeting since COVID-19 hit was held on May 25 at Reinhardt Circle — The Legacy Room in Jefferson City, Mo. It was great to see everyone.

It was a long 2020. We are glad it is over and hope the rest of 2021 will be better. We also hope everyone has gotten their vaccines by now; but if you haven't, please get them so that everyone can be safe.

Unfortunately, during this time, we lost a few of our members. They are: David Brunk, Patricia Brunk, Wilma Grothoff and Doyle Maupin. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families, and they will be missed.

Our club has started making plans for the future, such as what trips we want to take. One trip will be to the Lyceum Theatre. Also, on Sat., Aug. 14, Local 257 will host their annual BBQ/picnic.

*Delores Melloway, P.S.*

## We Love to See Your Smiles

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 292, MINNEAPOLIS, MN — After a year-plus of living in a bubble, and with a sense of normalcy returning to us, we are finally holding monthly union meetings. We began in May with COVID-19 safety protocols in place. Now, with all having access to the vaccine and protocols being lifted, it's nice to be able to see a person's face and familiar smile. Retirees are always smiling! We now have a new union hall, and we look forward to meetings and union functions in the new facility. Plans have been made for our summer picnic, which is scheduled for Aug. 12, also at our new hall. Additionally, we have a casino trip planned to Treasure Island in September. I look forward to seeing you all!

*Paul Klesmit, Pres.*

## Celebrating Retirees' Years of Service

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 317, HUNTINGTON, WV — At the first retirees' luncheon since March, members received service pins to celebrate years of brotherhood. Among our members who received pins were Jerry Booth, with 65 years of service, and James A. Smith, with 50 years. There are more service pins to be awarded in the coming months, and we will update our progress in forthcoming Local Lines.

*Jerry Booth, Pres.*



*Local 317 retiree members Jerry Booth (left) holding his certificate for 65-years of service, and James A. Smith (right) holds his 50-years of service award.*

## Election of Officers as Meetings Resume

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 649, ALTON, IL — The outlook for our Retirees Club was impacted by COVID-19, but we commenced meeting at 9:00 a.m. on the last Thursday of each month for breakfast at the Eagles Nest in Bethalto, Ill.

The first order of business was the election of new officers for Local 649's Retirees Club. The following are the results of the election:

- George Stumpee remains in position as president;
- William Gotlib remains in position of vice president;
- John Wagner has been elected secretary/ treasurer; Marlin Wagner stepped down from the position with our sincere thanks for his duties over the years and many thanks to John for assuming duties;
- John Fitzgerald, John Uzzell and Harold Whipple remain in their respective Executive Board positions; and
- Jim Heineman remains in his term as sergeant of arms for the group.

Thank you and congratulations to our remaining and new officers of the club.

Let's keep memories of members who have passed alive!

*Terry Wilhite, P.S.*

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

## Solidarity on Labor Day



Labor Day was officially made a federal holiday in the United States and Canada in 1894 but its origins date back even further. In the late 19th century, as the trade union movement grew, many labor leaders proposed that a day be set aside to celebrate their contribution to society. The first significant event from this effort in the U.S. occurred on Sept. 5, 1882, with a parade in New York City organized by the Central Labor Union (CLU), a precursor to the AFL. More than 20,000 laborers from various organizations all marched in a public display of solidarity.

The event was a major success and continued for several years but was eventually overshadowed by the Haymarket Affair of May 1886, which quickly garnered international attention. Suddenly there was disagreement among trade unions about when a labor holiday should be, with some advocating for the first Monday of September and others for the more politically charged May Day. In 1887, U.S. President Grover Cleveland, concerned about throwing his support to anarchist movements, publicly supported the September option as a less inflammatory alternative.

That same year, Oregon became the first state to make Labor Day a public holiday. By 1894, 30 states had done the same prompting Congress to pass a bill designating Labor Day as a federal holiday. With strong support from the AFL, President Cleveland signed the bill into law on June 28. Since that time, Labor Day parades have become a staple of American life, an unofficial end to the summer where many of our fellow citizens take time to celebrate the hard work and workers that fuel our two nations' economies.

Labor parades in Canada date back even further. The first one of note occurred in 1872 when a group of workers gathered in Toronto to support striking printers. Their protest led directly to the Trade Union Act, a law that confirmed the legality of unions. In May 1882, another Toronto labor celebration caught the attention of AFL Vice-President Peter J. McGuire, who

IBEW members march at the head of the 1981 "Solidarity Day" parade in Washington to protest cuts to federal programs and labor protections, top. Below, a Toronto Labour Day parade held in the early 1900s is a tradition carried on today.

brought the idea to the CLU of New York and helped to organize America's first labor parade that September. With Canadian and American unions working together, labor parades were soon held on the first Monday in September in both countries. In March 1894, unions successfully lobbied Parliament to recognize Labour Day as a public holiday in Canada. It was signed into law by Prime Minister John Thompson that July, less than a month after its U.S. counterpart.

While there have been notable Labor Day parades over the years, none have quite matched the significance of the one that occurred in 1981. On Sept. 19, just over 99 years since the first Labor Day parade, over a quarter million union members marched in Washington, D.C., in opposition to congressional cuts to vital federal programs and labor protection laws. Organized by the AFL-CIO and made up of more than 200 civic organizations, the event was titled "Solidarity Day" and symbolized the largest gathering of labor forces in U.S. history. And the IBEW stood tall amongst them.

Standing in the vanguard of the march were more than 25,000 IBEW sisters and brothers stretching six blocks along Constitution Avenue. It was the largest single gathering of IBEW members, a record that remains unbroken. The demonstration

began at the Washington Monument, moved to the White House ellipse and ended with a peaceful march to Capitol Hill. Once there, dozens of labor leaders and politicians took to the stage to deliver impassioned speeches to the crowd. Included amongst them was IBEW President Charles Pillard, one of the headline speakers for the event. "We strongly object to members of Congress sponsoring legislation that will set back all the protective labor legislation that has been gained for workers over the past 50 years," Pillard said. "The brotherhood is committed to protecting the right for unions to be allowed to indulge in free collective bargaining, to earn fair wages, safety at the job site, a high standard of living, and security for the elderly in their retirement years."

In North American labor history, the significance of the "Solidarity Day" march cannot be underestimated. But the fight to protect those same basic labor rights continues to this day. With every new generation, an appreciation for those rights must be taught and celebrated, not just on Labor Day but every day of the year. ■

For more on how to support the IBEW's preservation of its history, visit [nbeew-ibewmuseum.org](http://nbeew-ibewmuseum.org). Have an idea for this feature? Send it to [Curtis\\_Bateman@ibew.org](mailto:Curtis_Bateman@ibew.org).



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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

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### HOW TO REACH US

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

#### Send letters to:

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

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## WHO WE ARE



# Lightbulb Moments Girl Scouts' 'Electrical Day' Sparks Enthusiasm for the Trades

**B**efore the fun began with hammers and drills and simulated sections of wall, leaders at the Power Girls camp north of Minnesota's Twin Cities had a question for journeywoman Jackie Bobick and her IBEW sisters.

How many of them had been Girl Scouts?

"Nobody raised their hands," said Bobick, a veteran member of St. Paul Local 110. "We didn't even know any women in construction who were."

But future tradeswomen likely will, gauged by the curiosity and glee of Girl Scouts at their camp's first-ever "Electrical Day" in June.

Guided by women from the IBEW and signatory contractors, girls from 4th grade through high school discovered what's going on inside the walls of their homes as they learned to install a light switch and outlet.

"I don't know how many times I heard them say, 'This is so cool!'" Bobick said.

Some of the girls literally jumped for joy when they pushed in a plug or flipped a switch and saw their boards electrify.

"They love to make something work," said Breanne Hegg, vice president of programs for Girl Scouts in Minnesota. "It's so satisfying to see that lightbulb go off on their head."

Other days that week at Camp Lakamaga, the 68 campers learned about construction, tiling, and energy efficiency through sustainable design.

But it was only fitting for a camp dubbed Power Girls that women electricians kicked it off.

"These girls are amazing," said fifth-year apprentice Nikki Heather of Rochester, Minn., Local 343. "They're just full of energy and they want to learn... this is going to be our future."

The camp's picnic tables-turned-worksites were beehives of activity for small groups of girls divided by age. Wearing big smiles and fluorescent safety gloves, they hammered, sawed, drilled and spliced with gusto.

"It's really important that the girls are exposed to this now," Heather said. "It gets the gears going, gets the juices flowing that maybe they want to go into a trade. There are some that are so ready to take on the world."

That's the biggest lesson that every adult involved — women and men alike — wanted to drive home: that no career is off-limits to girls today.

Andrew Colvard, assistant executive director of the St. Paul NECA Chapter, said Electrical Day drew women who span the industry — apprentices, journeywomen, forewomen, project managers and owners.

"It shows that women can do everything in the

electrical trade," Colvard said. "And we certainly need more women in our trade."

Hegg, whose organization has held two previous Power Girls summer camps and has a growing schedule of year-round activities exploring the trades, said the girls can't get enough of it.

"We have struggled to keep up with the insatiable appetite of girls and families for trades programming," she said.

Future events in the planning stage are expected to include field trips to the Local 110-NECA training center.

"The girls value the chance to explore the trades in an environment with other girls, led by women who actually work in the trades," Hegg said. "It's incredibly valuable to see role models, to hear about what their day is like and why they like their jobs."

They got an earful — in the best sense of the word — from women who are passionate about being IBEW electricians and eager for more women to join them.

"Just go for it, don't be scared," Karmen Kjos, a second-year Local 110 apprentice, said. "Everyone is so welcoming. If you're happy to learn and ready to work hard, they take you in with open arms."

Bobick's pride and joy is palpable when she talks about her career, most of which she's spent with

*The teachers were as thrilled as the students as IBEW women helped Minnesota Girl Scouts install an electrical outlet and light switch at "Power Girls" camp in June. Working at picnic tables with small groups of the 68 campers are St. Paul Local 110 forewoman Jackie Bobick at top left, Local 110 second-year apprentice Karmen Kjos at top right and bottom left, and Rochester Local 343 fifth-year apprentice Nicky Heather at bottom right.*

Hunt Electric, the last five years in its solar division

"I've got the best job in the world — great money, a company vehicle, lots of freedom — and I'm really good at it," she says.

Taking a show-and-tell approach with her groups of middle-school girls, Bobick wanted them to know they can be good at it, too, if they choose to follow in her footsteps.

"When I first got there, I had my hot suit gear, my huge rubber gloves and face shield. I told them this is what I wear to save my life," she said.

"I let them climb around in my pickup truck. I showed them all my power tools and how to use them. I said if their mom or dad are doing repairs around the house, don't be afraid to pick up a hammer or drill holes in the wall — well, maybe not if your mom just painted."

Her talent for explaining elements of her trade, breaking them down in a way that students and laypeople can understand, came in handy as the girls tackled the lighting project.

"I could see that spark when they comprehended something, that lightbulb moment," Bobick said.

"I'm so stoked and happy that my local asked me to participate. I'd absolutely do it again. I'd spend a whole week if I could." ■