

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1893

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

Printed in the USA

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Vol. 16 | No. 4 | April 2022

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## BACK TO ITS MISSION

*Labor Board Returns to Putting Working People First*



*The new NLRB is standing with Danville, Ill., Local 538 members fighting to save their young union at Full-Fill Industries.*



### Has the NLRB Lost Its Way?

*A 2019 Electrical Worker cover story shows the striking contrast between now and then, a dark era for workers seeking justice through the previous labor board.*

**THE MERCILESS** conditions at an eastern Illinois cooking-spray factory cried out for a union.

Poverty wages, grueling shifts, daily indignities and policies so punitive that grieving workers burying family members were disciplined for being absent.

With jobs scarce in their once-thriving industrial region, the owners of Full-Fill Industries believed they held all the cards.

They clung to that belief even as workers bravely organized in 2019, becoming members of Danville Local 538. Management refused to bargain, eroding the unit's support with dirty tricks and withdrawing recognition after a year, all the while shrugging off grievances and unfair labor practice complaints.

Employers knew they had little to fear at the time from a National Labor Relations Board openly hostile to workers and unions.

Then Joe Biden took office and immediately fired the board's virulently anti-union general counsel.

With new lawyers and a board majority reflecting the Biden administration's pro-union values, today's NLRB is a sizzling revival of the agency created 87 years ago to protect workers' rights and encourage collective bargaining.

As swiftly as possible, the new team is undoing the wreckage of its predecessors, rebuilding field staff, and going to the mat for workers in ways that were unimaginable in the recent past.

For the struggling Illinois unit, that means a board willing to fight for them in federal court to force their employer to the table.

"Oh man, politics matter," said Local 538 Business Manager Mike Arbuckle. "If you don't think so, look at how the NLRB is standing up for us. They have our backs and that wasn't true when this campaign started. We'd file ULPs and they weren't going anywhere because of who was sitting on the board."

BACK TO ITS MISSION *continued on page 4*



## FROM THE OFFICERS

## A '180' at the NLRB



**Lonnie R. Stephenson**  
International President

**A** little more than two years ago, this newspaper ran a story asking the question, "Has the NLRB Lost its Way?" It was a fair question at the time, and one I'm happy to report no longer needs to be asked.

The National Labor Relations Board was established in 1935 as a part of the National Labor Relations Act, which guaranteed private sector workers the right to join a union, collectively bargain and engage in collective action like strikes. Until then, workers who stood up for themselves on the job could be met with violence, retaliation and more. Attempting to organize a union could be a death sentence.

The NLRA and its enforcement arm, the NLRB, put an end to the worst of that and ushered in a golden era of union organizing and worker empowerment that built the United States into the world's greatest economy.

But the last decade was a tough one for those of us who believed in the original purpose of the NLRB: leveling the playing field for working people. First, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell blocked President Obama's nominees to the board for years, leaving vacant seats and preventing the board from doing its job of enforcing labor law.

Then, the last administration's nominees — McConnell continued to hold the Democrats' seats hostage — set about dismantling decades of established labor practices and allowing wrongheaded employers to run roughshod over the rights of their employees to organize and stand up for themselves.

They were pretty dark times to be a union organizer or a worker seeking the safety and stability of a union contract.

But, boy, what a difference a few years make. On President Biden's first day in office, he fired the NLRB's anti-union general counsel, Peter Robb, and he installed a friend of working families, Jennifer Abruzzo, in his place. He elevated the board's sole Democratic member, Lauren McFerran, to board chair and filled the empty seats with new members committed to the principles established in the NLRA back in 1935.

Today, the NLRB is once again standing by workers and the unions that represent them. Not every decision goes our way, but that's not the point. The NLRB exists to be a fair arbiter in disputes between workers and management, and it has been deeply biased toward big corporations in recent years.

We all know that when the fight is fair workers win. And this NLRB, thanks to some fantastic appointments by President Biden, is finally fulfilling its original purpose again: making sure that working Americans are able to exercise the rights at work afforded to them by the law. ■

## Rebuilding America Right the First Time

**F**or nearly 100 years, both private and public sector customers have relied on project labor agreements to ensure construction jobs are completed on time and under budget. PLAs are essentially pre-hire construction agreements that set working terms, and they're used all the time.

The federal government and private industry have signed PLAs on some of the nation's highest-profile construction projects, from the Grand Coulee and Shasta dams to nearly all of Toyota's U.S.-based manufacturing facilities and SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, home of Super Bowl LVI.

They rely so heavily on PLAs because they ensure workplace safety, a skilled workforce and employee professionalism by establishing uniform standards covering entire construction projects. They also ensure decent pay and benefits for workers by not allowing low-road contractors to undercut wages and standards.

Not only that, project labor agreements often contain provisions on apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs that help recruit women, people of color and other underrepresented communities into the construction industry and building trades.

In February, President Joe Biden signed an executive order requiring PLAs on all federal construction projects over \$35 million. You can read more on Pg. 7 of this issue, but let me summarize it here. The PLA order is an enormous win for contractors, U.S. taxpayers and construction workers alike.

It's just common sense. With the federal government planning to invest more than \$1 trillion in federal dollars in our infrastructure through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we can't afford to waste money or time.

This order will make sure that taxpayer money goes to growing good-paying construction careers that support local communities and our economy, not poverty-level, throw-away jobs.

Opponents claim that PLAs boost costs, but that criticism doesn't hold water. In one study, one of the largest project management companies in the U.S., Bechtel Corp., reported that PLAs did not increase their costs. And in New York, researchers found that a project labor agreement for the New York City School Construction Authority reconstruction project actually helped save taxpayers \$221 million.

Critics also say PLAs unfairly favor unions. But project labor agreements don't exclude nonunion contractors, just those who are unwilling to commit to high standards of value, safety and quality.

Biden's executive order is just another example proving his administration's support for investing in good-paying jobs. But it also shows his fidelity to fiscal responsibility by ensuring that taxpayer money only goes to projects that are completed on time and on budget.

As IBEW members, we are always committed to doing the job right the first time. With this new executive order, the federal government is making the same commitment when it comes to rebuilding America's infrastructure. We are ready to get to work. ■



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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The 'Old' LaGuardia Led Me to the IBEW

Your story about the rebuild of LaGuardia airport [February 2022 Electrical Worker] brought back memories of when I attended the grand opening of the new control tower as a young man. They had a fascinating new device there called radar. As an 18-year-old, the draft was still in effect, so I went looking for military service where I could work with radar systems, and I began a four-year stint in the Navy. When I got out, I followed my father into White Plains, N.Y., Local 501 [later amalgamated into New York Local 3] and began a long career as an electrician, contractor, construction coordinator and finally as vice president of a major bank, where I served as physical properties officer. Today at 92, I am a lifetime member of the IBEW.

*Howard Gelbman, Local 349 retiree  
Miami*

**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

**Christopher Todora,**  
Retired Journeyman Inside Wireman  
St. Paul, Minn., Local 110



“Construction jobs were slow in 1980 thanks to the recession, so after graduating from trade school, I worked as a union millwright/maintenance technician. It provided me with many skills that were extremely beneficial when I started in the IBEW apprenticeship program on my way to

becoming a journeyman/master electrician.

I grew up in St. Paul, Minn., and wanted to work in my hometown, so I applied to Local 110. It was my father, who was a retired Teamster, who encouraged me to apply. He said, ‘When you get to be my age, you will appreciate the benefits and thank me.’ He was a wise man and so right.

I always appreciated the quality of training we received from our JATC. That made our jobs much more rewarding. The quality of our work and the safety of our jobsites were outstanding.

The IBEW wage-and-benefit package negotiated over the years was by far superior over what was being offered by nonunion electrical shops. It allowed for us to save for college and retirement. We used our vacation time on fun family trips every year that my kids always remember fondly.

My wife and I were able to raise two children on my wages while she stayed home when they were younger. They went on to graduate from college, with one even having a Ph.D.

I really appreciated our medical benefits over the years, as life events without it could have been worse. Our IBEW pensions have made retirement planning and retirement so easy. With all the hard work over the years, it's nice to know the IBEW has our backs.

I can think of no better people to tell our story than our retirees, sharing their life-long experiences in our industry and often being able to retire earlier than our nonunion counterparts.

I also cannot say enough about the great sisters and brothers in the field and at Local 110 — celebrating 110 years this year! — that I had the pleasure to work with all those years.”

Share your story at [ibew.org/MyIBEWStory](http://ibew.org/MyIBEWStory)





# A World-Beating Solar-Storage Project is Transforming the Oil-Rich California Desert

*The Edwards-Sanborn project built by Bakersfield, Calif., Local 428 is the largest solar-storage project in the U.S., but likely not for long; combining grid-scale storage with renewables is what green jobs will look like in the next decade.*

**T**he world's largest combined solar and energy storage project is under construction by members of Bakersfield, Calif., Local 428.

When finished in early 2023, the Edwards Sanborn energy project will produce nearly a gigawatt DC from solar photovoltaic panels and store energy with 2,400 MWh of lithium-ion batteries. The first phases, including nearly 800 megawatts of solar generation, opened at the end of 2021.

A decade ago, nearly all renewable energy projects were generation only, and although IBEW contractors were very successful in bidding the work, large projects didn't always translate into large numbers of journey-level work. Times have changed.

The storage component not only increases construction budgets and solves some of the reliability issues of renewables, it shifts crew compositions to higher wage, higher skill jobs. On the Edwards Sanborn project, signatory contractor Mortenson is currently using 425 IBEW members and nearly 300 are journeymen or apprentices. They will install more than 110,000 lithium-ion battery modules, enough to displace more than 307,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

"Those batteries are a different beast," Local 428 Business Manager Brian Holt said. "They are big, heavy, and require extensive knowledge and safety procedures."

The journeymen and apprentices will also install above- and below-ground transmission lines, a conversion station, a substation, operations and maintenance facilities, tie-in lines and connect the solar arrays.

The Construction Wireman-Panelizer classification at Local 428 will hang more than 2.5 million modules on nearly 6,000 acres split between private land near the unincorporated desert town of Sanborn and land leased from Edwards Air Force Base.

When finished, it will produce enough energy to power 260,000 homes.

"Without the CWP classification, we wouldn't have gotten this work. Now, because we have this industry locked down, the storage work is putting a significant number of journeymen wiremen and apprentices to work, and we are even going back now and installing storage on some of those solar jobs that had large numbers of CWs a decade ago," said Ninth District International Vice President John O'Rourke.

Edwards Sanborn is the largest solar-plus-storage, but it is by no means unique. At least 160GW of solar and 13GW of wind are being developed with co-located batteries, according to a study by Lawrence Berkeley National Labs, amounting to almost 34% of solar and 6% of wind currently in the queue.

Across the U.S., nearly 40% of planned solar projects have co-located battery storage. That leaps to 70-90% in California. The No. 1 reason is the falling prices of batteries. In 2017, energy storage cost \$40-70 per MWh. By 2020, it had more than halved to \$20-30 per MWh.

Solar is now the source of nearly 20% of all utility power in California and growing, but it has significant flaws. The most significant is that production is highest and most efficient in the middle of the day when demand is below peak. When people return home after work, power demand rises quickly to the daily high, just as the sun sets and solar goes offline. Adding batteries lets producers hold the low value energy from the middle of the day and sell it when it is most needed, and most valuable.

Holt says the renewable-plus-storage market is transforming Kern, San Bernadino and Imperial counties, the former heart of the oil industry in California, to the heartland of the nation's carbon-free energy economy.

"We will have close to 1,000 openings in the next 12 months, 600 to 650 just on the solar projects we have permitted and let out for bid," Holt said. "We need workers."

Holt said that the CW-Panelizer classification was seen as a temporary designation when it was used for those first grid-scale solar projects in 2013. A decade later some of the same guys have been hanging panels the entire time, he said. In part of the state that has never experienced the booms the coast has, a job that pays 2-3 times minimum wage for anyone with a clean drug test and work boots is compelling.

But it's also a pretty great way for the local to find future apprentices.

"This is hard work in 110-degree heat. There's no place to hide," he said.

And some people grab their opportunity and run.

A decade ago, Thomas Barter was doing one of the worst jobs there is — wearing two Tyvek suits cleaning out petroleum storage tanks in the oil fields outside Bakersfield. Adding insult to discomfort, he was making \$10 an hour.

Barter ran into Holt, long before he was even an assistant business agent, who suggested he come apply for one of the new panelizer jobs. Starting pay was \$15 an hour, and within a few weeks, if you performed, you received additional pay incentives.

"Some weeks it was six 10-hour days; sometimes it was seven 10s throwing panels," Barter said. "I was super grateful."

But then Barter started to watch the apprentices and the journeymen and he realized there was more that was possible.

"It was the swagger they had. The way they acted, the brotherhood. And these guys, they make a ton of money," Barter said. "I remember one time, this

journeyman working on a Sunday said, 'I am making \$90 an hour today.' That's cool! I wanted to do that!"

Of course, there are lots of people who make more money than he did, people on other ladders he could never dream of climbing. But this was different.

"I could reach this bottom rung from where I was," he said.

He hadn't been in school for years, but after his 12-hour days, he started doing algebra again. He did it by hand, with his stepdad, without a calculator.

"No calculator was the part that blew me away. I had to re-learn long division," he said.

But he committed and was accepted into Local 428's apprenticeship program, where the first thing he did was take a pay cut. Some of the people he worked with at the time didn't want that pay cut and stayed where they were.

Today, Barter has been a journeyman inside wireman for almost four years and a foreman for nearly all of it. On the latest job he finished, he and another hand ran more than 100 workers. There, he ran into a guy he used to hang panels with. The project was an online retail fulfillment center. The guy was making minimum wage, working for a temp agency hired by the online retailer to unfold boxes.

"There is no ladder that comes out of that," he said.

When this job finishes, Barter will head to a job installing battery storage on the Rabbit Brush solar project, which the IBEW finished a few years ago.

"The past of Kern country was oil, and that's where I was. Now I am running work for the energy future. That all comes down to the chance I got through the CWP program and the chance I took," he said. "It was uncomfortable, busting my butt in 110 degrees, but to grow you have to be uncomfortable." ■



## Back to the Future

The rush of progress at the NLRB is rooted in the new board's respect for its origins under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act. Here's a glimpse of some of the changes influenced by the Act.

### No Laughing Matter

Business journals are warning companies that the NLRB isn't fooling around, with headlines like this one from March: "Employers Take Notice: The NLRB, the DOL and the EEOC Are Working Together to Combat Employer Retaliation." The piece from the JD Supra news service urges companies to listen to workers, investigate complaints and otherwise be proactive in preventing violations as federal agencies join forces and promise swift action when workers are retaliated against for exercising their rights.

### Smoother Path to Recognition

The term "Joy Silk" is all the buzz among labor lawyers as General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo considers reviving a standard for voluntary recognition that rose from a 1949 NLRB ruling for textile workers. While it's not the same as card check, Joy Silk had the same mission until the Supreme Court killed it in 1969. The doctrine held that employers who lacked a good-faith basis for refusing to recognize workers' request to unionize were in violation of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act and could be forced to bargain.

### Fair Rules at Work

In 2017, the board made it easier for employers to infringe on workers' rights through rules and employee handbooks, affecting everything from strikes to social media, moonlighting, cell phones, gag orders and on-duty conduct. Revisiting that decision topped a lengthy agenda-changing memo from Abruzzo last August. How soon it may happen isn't clear but Bloomberg Law reported in March that "... some lawyers who advise companies said that it's not too early to start reassessing policies to avoid being the test case for the application of that new precedent."

### Equal Time for Unions

Strengthening remedies for wronged workers is high on the board's list of priorities, particularly when it comes to making unlawfully fired employees financially whole. But Abruzzo has laid out a plan to remedy more routine union-busting, including equal time for unions to counter captive audience meetings, reimbursement for organizing costs due to unlawful employer behavior and other actions to derail interference and expand unions' access to workers.

### Hitting 'Em Where it Hurts

As for dollar-sign remedies, the NLRB's year-end fiscal report — covering the first nine months of the board's transition — was impressive. By the numbers, between Oct. 1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021, the board recovered nearly \$57 million in backpay and \$3 million in fines and won reinstatement for 6,307 unlawfully fired workers. The previous year the tally for backpay, fees, fines, etc., totaled \$39.4 million, with just 978 workers offered their jobs back.

### Robust Hiring

The board is rapidly filling vacancies to rebuild field staff and regional offices after more than a decade of erosion that only got worse under Peter Robb, the previous general counsel who cut his union-busting teeth helping President Reagan fire the striking air traffic controllers in 1981. "For the eight years preceding Robb, the agency filled 95% of vacancies in the headquarters and 73% in the field offices," former board Chair Mark Gaston Pearce told a Senate committee last year. "But under Robb, staffing in the field dropped by 144 people, and only 13 people — a mere 9% — were hired to fill these vacancies." One measurement of ramped-up hiring and dedicated spending is the board's reduced backlog. By the end of FY2021, the median age of pending cases was 72 days, down from 85 days the previous year, a 15% drop. ■

## Labor Board Returns to Putting Working People First

Continued from page 1



Colectivo workers in Wisconsin and the Chicago area led the national wave of coffee-chain organizing drives when they voted to join the IBEW last year, overcoming the company's anti-union tactics and its ballot challenge — a decision that depended on a just and fair NLRB looking out for workers' rights.

**THE NLRB** is uniquely important to workers' rights.

Labor and its allies hail the bounty of executive orders lifting up workers that Biden has signed since taking office. And they are pushing hard for Congress to codify the progress by passing the landmark Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act).

But policy and law only go so far without enforcement.

"We can organize workers, we can support them and fight for them in every possible way, but by ourselves we can't make an employer recognize a union and bargain in good faith," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "Only the NLRB can do that, backed by the courts."

The board is both the steward and policing arm of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, a law that was never meant to be neutral.

Its language protects workers and employers alike, but the balance tilts toward the underdog. As spelled out in Section 1, the Act makes it official U.S. policy to address the "inequality of bargaining power" by "encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining and by protecting the exercise by workers of full freedom of association."

Under attack from day one, the law took its first big hit with the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 and has been eroded ever since by Congress and the courts.

How the NLRB interprets and applies the evolving law — with more deference to workers, as the NLRA intended, or as a cudgel for employers — depends on who's in charge.

The party in power in the White House gets three of the board's five seats. By no measure do workers always win with Democrats in control, nor do they always lose under Republicans.

But any sense of fair play went out the window during the previous adminis-

tration, the era of career union-buster Peter Robb as general counsel and a lockstep board majority that twisted precedent, logic, and common sense to arrive at pro-employer decisions.

Meanwhile, one or both of the seats intended for Democrats were left empty for long stretches, largely due to then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's refusal to act on nominations.

It took the Biden presidency and his party's slender hold on the Senate to restore a deliberative board that is serious — and enthusiastic — about its obligation to the NLRA.

General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo was first through the door after being confirmed by the narrowest of margins in July, a party-line 50-50 Senate tie broken by Vice President Kamala Harris.

She quickly began shaking things up with an ongoing series of memorandums making sharp U-turns in policy and advancing new ideas.

The opening line of a memo embracing the goals of the first-ever White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment (see page 6) cut straight to the heart of her ambitious agenda.

"There is no better calling," Abruzzo wrote, "than to ensure that the rights of workers in this country are protected and that violations of their rights are swiftly remedied."

**THE NEW BOARD** majority is made up of Chair Lauren McFerran and members Gwynne Wilcox and David Prouty, both former union-side attorneys who were confirmed by the Senate on the heels of Abruzzo.

Board members serve five-year terms, meaning there is overlap between administrations. The Biden nominees couldn't be seated until two GOP terms expired.

McFerran was appointed by President Obama in 2014 and four years later was the

board's only remaining voice for workers. She used it to full effect, writing blistering dissents of her counterparts' rulings.

Rebuking a 2019 decision against the United Auto Workers, for example, she said it "reflects a failure to engage in the reasoned decision-making required of the board. There is no rational connection between the reasons offered by the majority for rejecting established law and the new approach it adopts here."

She was silenced later that year when McConnell stalled a vote to reseat her for a second term. Until he relented eight months later, the anti-worker bloc had full ownership of the board.

On Inauguration Day 2021, President Biden handed her the gavel. With the additions of Wilcox and Prouty in August, the pendulum's swing was complete.

**THE BOOM** in organizing drives across the country is one of the most visible signs of the board's new temperament.

As workers fight for unions at some of America's most prominent corporations, rulings from regional NLRB offices and the national board are tripping up management schemes to stop them.

That includes the IBEW's campaign at Colectivo Coffee, where baristas endured bitter anti-union backlash to join Milwaukee Local 494 and Chicago Local 1220.

When they voted in April 2021, roughly a year after starting the drive, the result was a 99-99 tie with 16 challenged ballots favoring the union. An NLRB regional director upheld enough of them to put the workers over the top, and the board ruled against the company on appeal.

Colectivo is prolonging the battle with another appeal, but Local 494 Business Manager Dean Warsh isn't sweating it. He has trust in the new board and calls the case officer assisting them "a dream to work with."

He said interactions with NLRB field



staff are markedly different now, even with some of the same people they approached for help earlier.

“They were under pressure to do what they were told to do and now a weight’s been lifted off their shoulders,” Warsh said.

“You can see from the tone of the email that comes back that it’s completely changed from the previous administration to the new administration. You can tell that these people want to be in there fighting for workers and they couldn’t do that for years. They’re relieved to be able to do their jobs again.”

After the NLRB certified the vote Aug. 23, Warsh put out a news release saying he hoped the win “inspires others in the hospitality/service industry to organize a union at their workplace!”

That very day Starbucks workers in Buffalo, N.Y., tweeted their intent to do so.

Now more than 100 organizing drives are underway at the chain nationwide as union supporters chalk up one NLRB victory after another.

**THE DIRECTIVES** from the general counsel’s desk cover a lot of ground, but a similar current runs through all of them: stronger protections for workers and greater consequences for employers who violate their rights.

A February memo doubled down by seeking to expand the use of 10(j) injunctions, named for the section in the NLRA that allows the board to seek relief in court when unfair labor practices call for urgent action.

Now Abruzzo wants to apply them when workers are threatened or otherwise coerced during an organizing campaign.

“Threats often escalate into action, imposing even more burdens and chilling effects on employees,” she said in announcing the strategy. “They are not mere words ... but a prelude to what is likely to come to pass. I believe [they] need to be promptly stopped.”

Abruzzo broached the subject in a December interview with Law360 when asked if the Board has any real power to punish employers under the NLRA.

She said passing the PRO Act would help, but that the NLRB needs to better deploy the weapons it already has. Injunctive relief is one of them.

“I plan on pushing that even further: If there are significant threats — ‘I’m going to discharge you if you continue to seek support of your co-workers to bring a union in here’ — [even] without actually firing that person, I’ve asked the regional directors to send those cases up here for authority to go into court and seek an injunction.”

Abruzzo began her NLRB career in the field, climbing the agency’s legal ladder for 20 years before serving as the chief attorney for the Communications Workers. Union lawyers applauded her nomination to be the board’s top cop but had no idea how bowled over they’d be in just seven months.

“Jennifer Abruzzo has been as aggressive as we’ve seen as a general counsel in trying to protect workers’ rights,” said IBEW General Counsel Jon Newman. “We’re thrilled with her, and every indication is that we’re going to continue to be.”

**MAKING WORKERS** whole financially when they are unlawfully discharged or otherwise harmed is a hot topic for Abruzzo and the board.

But existing language on remedies doesn’t allow for that, and any change in precedent requires relevant, available cases.

Enter six IBEW-represented workers in California who were laid off in 2019 from Thyrv, Inc., a conglomerate that grew out of the original Yellow Pages company.

IBEW lawyers argue that the layoffs were illegal, causing “direct and foreseeable harm” through loss of income and health care, an extra burden for three of the workers who are disabled.

An administrative law judge sided with the company. Now, the union’s appeal has landed at the center of a conversation about “consequential damages.”

McFerran raised the concept in the case of a nursing home that terminated employees’ health insurance without telling them or their union. Workers racked up medical bills they couldn’t pay, leaving one a half-million dollars in debt after emergency surgery.

**“There is no better calling than to ensure that the rights of workers are protected and that violations are swiftly remedied.”**

— NLRB General Counsel  
Jennifer Abruzzo

While the full complement of Democrats wasn’t seated when the case was decided, the company’s actions were too egregious even for the GOP members. But they wouldn’t consider enhanced compensation.

McFerran and Abruzzo make it clear that damages don’t need to be medically related or anywhere near six figures to be consequential. They cite wrongfully fired workers drowning in interest and late fees on credit cards, incurring penalties for tapping retirement funds to cover living expenses, and losing their homes and cars.

They needed a new test case and found one in the Thyrv workers’ appeal. Based on it, the board issued a call last November for amicus briefs — outside opinions of stakeholders and experts.

“I think it reflects a board that is interested in making sure workers are truly made whole when they are discriminated against,” Newman said, “as opposed to limited remedies that don’t deter unlawful employer conduct.”

The timing was unusual given that the board had yet to rule on the appeal, and still hadn’t as of early March. But he said they

wouldn’t be shining a spotlight on the case if they weren’t leaning the union’s direction, clearly seeing its potential to move the goal posts for workers.

Board requests for amicus briefs in other cases are on the rise. Newman said the pace and quantity alone are revealing.

“All those invitations for briefs indicate that the board is interested in overturning some pretty outrageous precedents,” he said.

His assessment of the board’s momentum is widely shared in the legal community. But not everyone is happy about it: The Chamber of Commerce and human resources journals are spilling over with panic among management lawyers and their clients.

**WHEN THE** media reports on the NLRB, it is typically the rulings in brand-name organizing drives that grab their attention.

But standing up for unseen workers who suffer some of the worst abuses from employers is the meat and potatoes of the board’s work.

The IBEW members who produce, pack and ship aerosol food spray at Full-Fill Industries in Illinois know how much that matters.

In November, a core group of them testified before an administrative law judge via Zoom to defend their union against a suspect petition to decertify it.

The company reneged on an agreement to allow witnesses on shift at the time of the hearing to go to Local 538’s hall in Danville. Instead, workers nervously told their stories in a factory office with bosses on the other side of the wall.

But it didn’t stop them from recounting intimidation, lies, unjust firings and management’s audacious and damaging insinuations that the union stood between workers and their holiday bonuses.

“They showed so much courage,” Sixth District organizer Joe DiMichele said. “They rely on these jobs and there aren’t many other options. But they stood up and testified. They’re absolute champions.”

The judge’s ruling Jan. 24 was an epic rebuke, finding no credibility in the company’s side of the story and ordering it to recognize the union, bargain in good faith, rehire activists and cease and desist from a litany of unlawful behavior, including employee surveillance — another stated battleground for the board.

Full-Fill immediately filed to stay the order pending an appeal, the typical delay-and-deny game plan of union-busting employers.

But the NLRB isn’t playing. The regional office in Illinois went straight to federal court for an injunction to force the company to obey the judge’s order no matter how long the legal process drags on.

The union was still waiting on the ruling in early March but had no doubts about the new NLRB’s commitment to justice.

“The board agents, they’ve been outstanding,” said Arbuckle, the business manager. “They’ve seen how egregious the violations are and how much control the company has over these workers’ lives. They’re doing everything they can to give them the respect and dignity they deserve.” ■

## NLRB Who’s Who



The National Labor Relations Board has five seats divided between Democratic and Republican appointees who are confirmed by the U.S. Senate. The 3-2 majority is held by the party in the White House, with the board’s staggered five-year terms overlapping administrations. Some members begin by filling vacancies with partial terms, as the list below reflects. The NLRB general counsel, who plays a critical role in investigating and prosecuting cases and shaping policy, serves a four-year term. This is how the board looks today:



**Jennifer Abruzzo,**  
General Counsel

Appointed by President Biden in July 2021, Abruzzo’s four-year term expires in 2025.



**Lauren McFerran,**  
Chair

First appointed by President Obama in 2014 and named chair by President Biden in January 2021, McFerran’s second term expires in December 2024.



**John Ring**

Appointed by President Trump in 2018, Ring’s partial term expires December 2022.



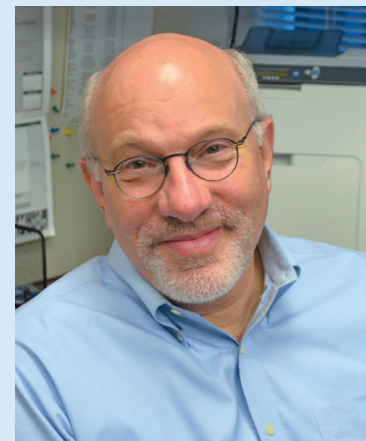
**Marvin Kaplan**

Appointed by President Trump to fill a vacancy in 2017, Kaplan was confirmed in 2020 for a second term that expires in August 2025.



**Gwynne Wilcox**

Appointed by President Biden and confirmed in July 2021, Wilcox’s partial term expires in August 2023.



**David Prouty**

Appointed by President Biden and confirmed the same day as Wilcox last July, Prouty’s term expires in August 2026.



# Biden Administration Delivers Wins for Workers

## White House Emphasizes IBEW Training, Workers in EV Network Rollout

New federal guidance for the creation of a national network of electric-powered vehicle charging stations explicitly recommended that agencies consider the IBEW-NECA Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program as they look to spend billions in funds allocated by President Biden's infrastructure bill, which passed last November.

The move is an important first step in following through on Biden's pledge that America's expanding EV charging network will be built by IBEW members.

"We're pleased that this guidance sets the foundation for the development of national EV charging standards but, more importantly, that it recognizes the need for quality training by specifically mentioning EVITP, which will help ensure the creation of good, union jobs," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson.



Credit: IBEW/NECA Electrical Connection

Besides bringing more IBEW jobs, new U.S. guidance for a national electric vehicle charging network also encourages IBEW-developed worker training by name.

The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure guidance strongly encourages jurisdictions to consider workers' experience and training when applying for a share of the program's funding. "This includes ensuring the workforce is trained in high-quality training programs like the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP)," the guidance reads.

At the Feb. 10 press conference outside Department of Transportation headquarters in Washington, D.C., several Biden administration officials announced that nearly \$5 billion will be made available under NEVI to all 50 states, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, over the next five years to help create the network along designated "Alternative Fuel Corridors." Unions, specifically the IBEW, were mentioned several times during the conference.

"Once we get shovels in the ground to put these chargers up, it is going to mean jobs, jobs, jobs and more jobs," said Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, who related her recent conversation about the coming work with an IBEW apprentice in Virginia named Danielle. "The jobs that are good-paying union jobs all over the country, in every pocket of this country, and the training that goes with [them] is a huge opportunity for communities."

"These new EV chargers will use American parts, iron and steel," said Mitch Landrieu, senior advisor to

Biden for infrastructure coordination. "They'll be installed up and down highway corridors across the country by IBEW workers, and the benefits will ripple out thousands of miles away."

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that there are already about 43,000 charging stations installed across the country. NEVI aims to add half a

million more stations over the next five to eight years, locating them strategically near off-ramps and rest areas and no more than 50 miles from each other.

The specific mention of EVITP in the guidance, however, didn't just happen in a vacuum, said Government Affairs Department Director Danielle Eckert.

"There are other, proprietary training programs

out there that are against EVITP at all levels," she said. Singling out EVITP, though, should help boost jurisdictions' interest in the program, she said, acknowledging the work of the IBEW members who are helping to make sure officials understand EVITP's quality.

"While interest and media attention in EVITP are currently 'hot,' electric vehicle charging system training

## Task Force Charts Course for 'Milestone' Pro-Union, Pro-Worker Federal Policy

The first-of-its-kind task force that President Joe Biden created last year to identify ways that his administration can help empower workers and strengthen unions has returned with nearly 70 recommendations for federal agencies to pursue.

Their 43-page report is a roadmap for bolstering workers' rights and bettering their lives through policies that support union organizing and collective bargaining, goals Biden has championed from the White House bully pulpit like no president before him.

"This is a significant milestone," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "By recognizing and uplifting the critical role that labor unions play in improving the lives of working people, the Biden-Harris administration is once again leading by example and delivering victories for working people."

The catch, as emphasized by labor leaders and the task force itself, is that executive branch policy can only do so much for workers for so long. Lasting protections demand legislation.

"To truly secure the rights of workers to freely and fairly form and join unions, Congress must pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act," Stephenson said.

Officially the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, the panel is chaired by Vice President Kamala Harris and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and comprises 24 Cabinet secretaries, agency heads, and top advisors.

Their report was developed over six months of research and interviews with experts and stakeholders, including unions. Members of the IBEW played a leading role last summer when Pittsburgh Local 5 hosted a roundtable where Harris and Walsh met with organizers from eight unions.

"The number and breadth of ideas presented to the task force is both inspiring and unprecedented," the report states. "The range of policies, practices and programs that can be leveraged is significant."

Making the federal government a model union-friendly employer tops the panel's long list and begins with ensuring that the current workforce and new applicants know their rights and how to exercise them.

It is a considerable hill to climb given that only 20% of the 1.2 million non-postal federal workers are union members. Among them, some 300,000 workers are eligible but have no bargaining unit and more than 835,000 benefit from representation but don't pay dues.

Government Employees Director Paul O'Connor cautions that marked progress will likely demand more direct language than what the Office of Personnel Management has put out so far.

"I see words like 'urging agencies' and 'strongly encourage agencies.' Nothing in the OPM guidance requires agencies to do anything," he said, stressing that the IBEW has long modeled the kind of outreach recommended in the report.



VP Kamala Harris, with Labor Secretary Marty Walsh at left, leads an October 2021 meeting of the unprecedented White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, which recently recommended nearly 70 ways the federal government can help workers join and organize unions.

"The IBEW does a much better job than most other unions when it comes to organizing new employees in federal sector open shops," O'Connor said. "Federal employees need to know their rights. They need to know how and where to access information. And it is always helpful when a president's administration understands the value of labor unions and takes steps to educate employees on those values."

From widespread policies lifting up both public and private sector workers to such agency-specific items as making sure Bureau of Ocean Energy Management wind leasing projects are built with union labor, the list goes on.

It includes expanded online organizing tools, promoting apprenticeships, seating more union members on federal advisory panels, visibly stronger enforcement of and penalties for employers who break labor laws, and more documentation of employers' anti-union campaigns.

Greater transparency and collaboration among agencies are recurring themes. Proposals for financial strategies to help workers exercise their rights and deter employer abuses are another key component.

Among them, the panel recommends asking the Treasury Department to explore tax policies that would restore workers' union-dues deduction and deny employers a write-off for money spent "to impede or inhibit" organizing drives. Also, it urges the government to leverage its purchasing and spending power to promote pro-worker values, from tying federal contracts and grants to labor standards to closing loopholes in Made-in-America laws.

The panel is expected to issue a progress report

later this year, with the caveat that the "recommendations do not and cannot take the place of the robust legislative change that is needed to fix our labor laws."

Several important bills are pending but none is more far-reaching than the landmark PRO Act, which would put teeth back into the badly eroded 1935 National Labor Relations Act. Organizing rights, good-faith collective bargaining, recourse for fired workers, consequences for union-busting employers, and more would become a matter of law rather than policy.

Political and judicial assaults on labor rights began before the ink was dry on the NLRA and are at least as ferocious now, as billionaires bankroll union-busters and help elect anti-worker candidates to Congress and statehouses.

The report juxtaposes the relentless attacks with current polls showing that two-thirds of Americans favor unions — the highest approval since the mid-1960s. And more than half of non-represented workers say they'd join a union immediately if given the chance, as reflected by today's flurry of organizing drives at behemoth employers and in non-traditional industries.

"We face a unique moment when factors have converged to create real opportunities for worker organizing," the report states. "To take advantage of these opportunities, this increased interest in unions must be met by corresponding and responsive changes in government policy and practices, such as those contemplated by the recommendations in this report."

"However, our work serves as a reminder that existing law is heavily tilted against the rights and needs of working people. We need new laws today, just as we did in the 1930s." ■



## Biden Signs Executive Order Requiring PLAs on Federal Construction Projects

has been available from us for 10 years now," said Jason Lunardini, assistant director of the Electrical Training Alliance and a member of Pittsburgh Local 5.

The training alliance oversees and develops curricula for the IBEW's joint apprenticeship training centers, and more than half of the roughly 270 inside wiremen training centers in the U.S. are actively enrolling students for electric vehicle charging system training programs with no signs of slowing down, he said.

The roughly 18 hours of EVITP instruction, for example, covers a wide variety of EV-related subjects, Lunardini said, such as vehicle history, design and structure, not to mention the National Electric Code and the applications of such considerations as load calculation methods and rules.

"JATCs have options for structuring classes to best support their needs and provide training in the most efficient manner for them," Lunardini said. "The ETA has recently rolled out a training course that's even designed to be completely online and self-paced if needed."

NEVI's guidance promoting EVITP certification certainly "levels the playing field, and it also gives us an advantage," said Construction and Maintenance Director Mike Richard. "Having that certification in hand will put our signatory contractors in a better position to get this work," he said.

Business managers should work hard on getting members registered for EVITP certification now rather than waiting for bigger projects to come along, he said, especially given the potential for hundreds of thousands more charger installation and maintenance projects in the future, the majority of them privately funded.

"One four-slot charger bay near a highway exit ramp or a rest area might not seem like a big project," Richard said, "a few days with a few workers at most, a mix of IBEW and other trades. Our locals need to push our signatory contractors to bid that work and make it part of their portfolios so they win the next round of this work."

"We need to continue to claim the work and that requires having a trained workforce," Lunardini agreed. "It's easier to be prepared when there may not seem to be a need than it is to get prepared when there is a need."

The renewed interest in EV charging stations also puts pressure on the IBEW to recruit nonunion electricians into the brotherhood, he said, and to open opportunities to bring in more members as construction electricians and construction wiremen. "All of this is a huge step in the right direction," he said.

The need for EV charging stations is growing rapidly. Some estimates say as many as 18 million EVs will be in use by the end of this decade alone, propelled forward by government regulations, but also by companies like GM and Ford, who are staking their futures on EVs with highly-anticipated vehicles like the new Ford F-150 Lightning and GMC's electric Hummer.

Biden promised throughout his 2020 presidential campaign that the IBEW would be a major player in expanding the EV charging network. "Electrical workers, IBEW members, installing 500,000 charging stations along our highways so we can own the electric car market," the president said at an event in Pittsburgh.

The Federal Highway Administration, which administers NEVI's funds, is set to announce grant approvals by Sept. 30. A second grant program designed to further increase EV charging access in locations throughout the country, including in rural and underserved communities, will be announced later this year, providing the potential for even more work for IBEW members and signatory contractors. ■

**P**resident Joe Biden has signed an executive order that will require project labor agreements on federal construction projects over \$35 million.

"The executive order ... is going to help ensure that we build a better America, we build it right, we build it on time and we build it cheaper than it would have been otherwise," Biden said in a speech to the Ironworkers Local 5 in Maryland before signing the order on Feb. 4.

A PLA is a multi-employer contract that covers an entire construction project or projects and creates a uniform and stable system of labor relations by setting terms like wages, employment conditions and dispute resolution. PLAs are used in both the public and private sectors to help ensure that large-scale projects are completed on time, with the highest degree of quality and in a cost-effective manner.

"These agreements ... they ensure that major projects are handled by well-trained, well-prepared, highly-skilled workers, and they ward off problems. They resolve disputes ahead of time, ensuring safer worksites, avoiding disruptions in work stoppages that can cause expensive delays down the line. And that makes a big difference for the American taxpayer," Biden said.

According to the White House, the order will apply to \$262 billion in federal construction contracting and impact nearly 200,000 workers. It comes on the heels of the passage of the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, and while much of that funding will go to non-federal projects, billions are still expected to go to federal spending on waterways, military bases and other areas, reported Reuters.

"This is a win for working people and taxpayers across the country," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "As our members have long known, PLAs work, leveling the playing field for union contractors against bottom-of-the-barrel operators who pay low wages and deliver even lower-quality work. Now, we have an administration that gets it too and is committed to making sure that federal projects will be completed on time and on budget and by the best workers in the business."

"This order prioritizes safety, value, quality, and on-time delivery of our federal projects, built with a highly skilled and trained workforce — all areas in which NECA contractors exceed their competitors," said David Long, chief executive officer of the IBEW's contracting partner, the National Electrical Contractors Association. "This ensures American tax dollars are going toward federal construction projects that will be completed at the highest standard."

PLAs have been used on private sector and public construction projects for almost 100 years. One recent project is construction of the home of this year's Super Bowl, SoFi Stadium. Companies such as Microsoft and Google have also entered into PLAs for important large-scale construction projects. The agreements are routinely utilized by numerous power companies for a variety of energy projects across the U.S.

In the public sector, PLA utilization on federal public projects dates back to construction of the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State in 1938, the Shasta Dam in California in 1940, and atomic energy and defense construction projects during and after World War II. The Tennessee Valley Authority, which employs a number of IBEW members, has long had a PLA in place for all its construction across its vast site territory.

"When the United States needs something to be built right, we turn to union workers," said Vice President Kamala Harris at the event in Maryland. "Union workers are committed workers, productive workers, efficient workers, skilled workers. They are well-trained



President Joe Biden signed an executive order requiring project labor agreements on federal construction projects costing more than \$35 million.

Credit: NREL via Flickr

and well-prepared to get the big jobs done and to do them right, not to mention on time and on budget."

PLAs often also include provisions on apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs that put those workers on the path to becoming highly skilled, high-earning construction professionals. Pre-apprenticeship requirements in PLAs have helped thousands of women, people of color and veterans access career pathways in the construction industry.

The order is one of many steps the Biden-Harris administration is taking that will improve the efficiency

of federal procurement. Since taking office, the president has called for strengthening "Buy American" rules and secured a reliable supply of experienced, quality workers for federal service contracts. As of Jan. 30, federal contractors in new or extended contracts must pay a \$15 an hour minimum wage, per an earlier executive order.

"This president is showing every day that he stands with American workers and with union members," Stephenson said. "This order is proof of that, and we're ready to get to work building America back better." ■

## IBEW MERCHANDISE



### TERVIS ICE BUCKET \$25.00

Genuine Tervis Ice Bucket with IBEW logo. Features double wall insulation to prevent condensation, lid and tongs.

### GOLF TOWEL \$14.00

High quality black and tan golf towel with IBEW logo and sturdy clip. Measures 15 1/2" x 24".

### HOODED BLUE SWEATSHIRT \$35.00

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

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

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



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

## Canadian Government Promotes Skilled Trades with New Campaign

The Canadian government launched a new campaign on Jan. 31 to help recruit the next generation of skilled craftspeople, including in the electrical trade.

“As Canada experiences more shortages in the skilled trades, it is more important than ever to reach young Canadians from all backgrounds and show them how the trades offer rewarding and high-paying careers: careers that allow you to earn while you learn on the job,” said Matt Wayland, executive assistant to First District International Vice President Tom Reid and Canadian director of government relations. Wayland also served on the campaign’s advisory committee, appointed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

“The IBEW in Canada has grown our national political action program over the last number of years thanks to support from our local union business managers and their PAC members taking an active role,” Reid said. “The IBEW is a trusted source in Ottawa and appointments such as this are a testament to the good work we continue to do together across the First District.”

About 700,000 skilled trades workers are expected to retire between 2019 and 2028, according to recent estimates, creating an ever-growing need to recruit and train thousands of workers to replace them. With Canada still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, skilled tradespeople will continue to be in high demand. According to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, an average of 75,000 new apprentices will need to be hired in each of the next five years in order to meet the demand for skilled journeypersons in Red Seal trades.

“Canada’s workforce needs more skilled trade workers. They have expertise and skills that are essential to our economy and our way of life. When Canadians are contemplating a new career, we want them to consider entering the skilled trades and to understand the exciting, well-paying opportunities that they present,” said Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion Carla Qualtrough.

About one in six Canadians work in the skilled trades. In 2018, half of all journeypersons who had completed a Red Seal apprenticeship program in the top 14 Red Seal trades five years earlier were earning an annual income greater than \$68,750. Some even earn more than similarly situated graduates of university master’s programs. Despite these facts, just one in ten 15-year-old students definitely plans to pursue a trades career, according to a study. And people from equity-deserving groups, like women and Indigenous people, continue to be underrepresented.

“There’s a draught coming of skilled trades because there’s been a drive for col-

lege only for the past 20 years,” Wayland said. “These careers have been almost shunned by parents and counselors. That’s why we want to reach those influencers as well as the youth in their care.”

The \$6 million campaign includes commercials and advertisements on social media targeting teenagers as young as 12 to those in their twenties. The social media platforms include the youth-friendly TikTok, SnapChat, Twitch, YouTube and Instagram. It also ran as part of CBC Radio-Canada’s Olympic coverage.

The campaign targets a variety of skilled trades, from electricians to cooks to hair stylists. It also includes a comprehensive website, [Canada.ca/skilled-trades](https://Canada.ca/skilled-trades), where interested applicants can get all the information they need, from how to join to financial aid. There is even a quiz to see which trade is best for them.

The advertising campaign was devel-

oped with insights and contributions from the advisors, including Wayland. Part of what they did was convene a focus group made up of youth from Western, Central and Eastern Canada as well as Quebec.

“We wanted to find out what they think of the skilled trades and how they got their information,” Wayland said.

The campaign is also targeting underrepresented groups like women and Indigenous people.

“We’re definitely looking to diversify. It’s good for us as well as the contractors, and it just makes for a better organization,” Wayland said.

The ongoing campaign is the only national one of its kind, said Wayland, which allows leaders to learn from the first round and then make improvements as needed.

“I can’t speak highly enough of my fellow advisors,” said Wayland, who was

the only Red Seal member of the committee. “We asked some tough questions and everybody listened. It was about doing what’s right and making sure the campaign is a success. I’m humbled and proud to be a part of it.” ■

*The Canadian government is promoting the skilled trades with a new advertising campaign aimed at the next generation of craftspeople.*

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO BUILD IT!



Canada

L'AVENIR APPARTIENT À CEUX QUI LE CONSTRUISENT!



Canada

## La campagne du gouvernement fait la promotion des métiers spécialisés

Le 31 janvier le gouvernement canadien a lancé une nouvelle campagne afin d’aider à recruter la prochaine génération de gens de métier spécialisés, comme dans le domaine de l’électricité.

« Comme le Canada connaît de plus en plus de pénurie dans les métiers spécialisés, il est plus important que jamais de convaincre les jeunes canadiennes et canadiens de tous les milieux et de leur montrer comment ils peuvent profiter d’une carrière valorisante et hautement rémunérée : une carrière où ils peuvent recevoir un salaire pendant qu’ils apprennent », déclare Matt Wayland, l’assistant exécutif au vice-président international du premier district Tom Reid et le directeur canadien des relations gouvernementales. Wayland a également fait partie du comité consultatif de la campagne nommé par le premier ministre Justin Trudeau.

« La FIOE Canada a élargi ses activités en matière de programme d’action politique national au cours des dernières années grâce à l’appui de nos gérants d’affaires des sections locales et à leurs membres du comité de l’action politique ayant joué un rôle important », mentionne Reid. « La FIOE est une source fiable à Ottawa et des désignations comme celles-ci sont une affirmation de l’excellent travail que nous continuons d’effectuer ensemble dans tout le premier district. »

Selon des estimations récentes, plus de 700 000 travailleurs qualifiés prendront

leur retraite entre 2019 et 2028, ce qui crée une nécessité toujours grandissante de recruter et de former des milliers d’autres travailleurs pour les remplacer. Alors que le Canada se remet de la pandémie de la COVID-19, la demande des travailleurs des métiers spécialisés continue d’être en grande demande. D’après le Forum canadien sur l’apprentissage, il faudra embaucher une moyenne d’environ 75 000 nouveaux apprentis et apprenties chaque année au cours des cinq prochaines années pour être en mesure de répondre à la demande des compagnons qualifiés dans les métiers désignés Sceau rouge.

« La population active du Canada a besoin de davantage de gens de métiers spécialisés. Ils ont l’expertise et les compétences qui sont essentielles à notre économie et à notre façon de vivre. Lorsque les Canadiens songent à une nouvelle carrière, nous voulons qu’ils envisagent les métiers spécialisés et qu’ils aient conscience de toutes les possibilités bien rémunérées et enthousiasmantes qui leur seront offertes », déclare la ministre de l’Emploi, du Développement et de la main-d’œuvre et de l’Inclusion des personnes en situation de handicap, Carla Qualtrough.

Environ un Canadien sur six travaille dans le secteur des métiers spécialisés. En 2018, la moitié des compagnons qui avaient terminé un programme d’apprentissage Sceau rouge dans les 14 principaux métiers désignés Sceau rouge cinq ans plus tôt gagnaient un revenu annuel

supérieur à 68 750 \$. Certains compagnons gagnent même plus que des diplômés de programmes de maîtrise universitaire dans une situation similaire. Malgré cela, un élève de 15 ans sur dix seulement prévoit assurément s’engager dans une carrière dans les métiers, selon une étude, et les membres de groupes visés par l’équité en matière d’emploi, comme les femmes et le peuple autochtone, continuent d’être sous-représentés.

Au cours des vingt dernières années, les métiers spécialisés ont été mis de côté en raison d’une poussée vers les études universitaires », informe Wayland. « Ces carrières ont presque été rejetées par les parents et les orienteurs. Voilà pourquoi nous voulons convaincre ces influenceurs ainsi que les jeunes sous leurs soins. »

La campagne de 6 millions de dollars contient des messages et des annonces publicitaires diffusés sur les réseaux sociaux qui ciblent les adolescents aussi jeunes que 12 ans jusqu’à une vingtaine d’années. Les plateformes de médias sociaux comprennent TikTok, SnapChat, Twitch, YouTube et Instagram tous conviviaux pour les jeunes. La campagne a aussi été diffusée dans le cadre de la couverture des Jeux olympiques du réseau CBC de Radio-Canada.

La campagne vise une variété de métiers spécialisés, des électriciens aux cuisiniers jusqu’à des coiffeurs. Elle comprend aussi un site Web complet, [Canada.ca/skilled-trades](https://Canada.ca/skilled-trades), où les candidats inté-

ressés peuvent obtenir toutes les informations nécessaires, de comment s’inscrire au soutien financier. Il y a aussi un test pour les aider à trouver une carrière à leur image.

La campagne publicitaire a été mise sur pied grâce à des connaissances et à des contributions provenant des conseillers, comme Wayland. Ils ont notamment convoqué un groupe de discussion composé de jeunes de l’Ouest, du Centre, de l’Est ainsi que du Québec.

« On voulait savoir ce qu’ils pensaient des métiers spécialisés et comment ils avaient obtenu leurs informations », dit Wayland.

La campagne cible également les groupes sous-représentés comme les femmes et le peuple autochtone.

Nous cherchons définitivement à nous diversifier. C’est bon pour nous ainsi que pour les entrepreneurs, et ça contribue à une meilleure organisation », déclare Wayland.

La campagne est permanente et elle est unique en son genre sur le plan national, mentionne Wayland, elle permet aux leaders de tirer des renseignements dès le début et ensuite d’apporter des améliorations au besoin.

« Je ne saurais dire assez de bien de mes collègues conseillers », mentionne Wayland, qui était le seul membre du comité certifié Sceau rouge. « Nous avons posé des questions difficiles et tout le monde a écouté. Il s’agissait de faire ce qui était juste et d’assurer le succès de la campagne. C’est avec humilité et fierté d’en faire partie. » ■



# THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

## Iowa Plan to Cut Unemployment Benefits Puts Squeeze on Construction Members

In a potentially devastating blow for Iowa construction workers, including IBEW members, the Iowa state Legislature is likely to pass a bill that will slash the amount of time workers are eligible for unemployment benefits and delay the start of those benefits by one week.

Eligibility for unemployment assistance will end after 16 weeks, 10 weeks less than the current 26 weeks. Workers also will have to wait one week after being laid off before becoming eligible — often the most crucial period after losing a job.

Republicans control all levels of state government and the bill might pass along a party-line vote. Republican governor Kim Reynolds is expected to sign it, despite the protests of IBEW locals in the state and the Iowa AFL-CIO.

However, because of those protests, the bill could be amended and might not be as onerous if it reaches the governor's desk. IBEW members in Iowa are being asked to contact their local legislators to urge them to vote against the bill or work to make it fairer to working families.

As many members know, unemployment benefits are crucial because of the cyclical nature of the construction industry. Workers can earn good wages for weeks or even years but can see that end quickly — and for an extended period — if economic conditions change in their area.

"In the electrical construction industry, we don't always have advanced notice of unemployment," Des Moines Local 347 Business Manager Patrick Wells said. "That is just the industry we're in. That's why our [signatory contractors] pay a higher rate into the state unemployment compensation fund. They know we are expected to face periods of unemployment between projects during economic downturns."

The unemployment system is directly funded by employers, not from other state revenues. There's no indication the funds are suffering. Yet, it appears that Iowa officials want to force people into jobs in which wages and benefits remain low.

That is what Wells and others in the state find particularly galling.

"They [the Republican legislators] don't care if you are in a skilled trade and you'll probably get called back to work after the winter," said Rich Kurtenbach, membership development director for Waterloo

Local 288. "They want people pushed into these lower wage jobs. That's what this is all about."

Fortunately, like many areas of the country, Iowa construction members are near full employment now. Work is steady throughout the state.

But Wells and Kurtenbach each can list several times throughout their careers when that wasn't the case. It can happen quickly and last for a long time. See the economic crises that began in 2008, for instance.

"We had people out of work for over a year during that recession," Wells said. "I was out for several months. I just know how painful this is going to be for hardworking Iowans the next time we face a period of massive unemployment."

Kurtenbach remembers a particularly brutal time early in his four-decade career.

"If I look at what we experienced in the early 1980s, this is going to devastate people," he said. "This is doing away with the safety net."

Wells testified against the bill before a Senate subcommittee, telling legislators that "the businesses that are hiring these people that are forced to take work at a lower wage have no idea what they're in store for because as soon as I have an opportunity to go back to work at my rate of pay, I'm going for it. I'm going to leave these people high and dry and that's not good for everyone."

He and Kurtenbach continue to rally support against the legislation, but they agree that it almost assuredly will pass. Reynolds is viewed as a rising star in the GOP — she gave its response to President Biden's State of the Union address — and is unlikely to do anything to disrupt that.

But they hope in the long run it highlights for members the importance of elections and the need to elect pro-worker candidates, regardless of political affiliation — something that remains vital across the country.

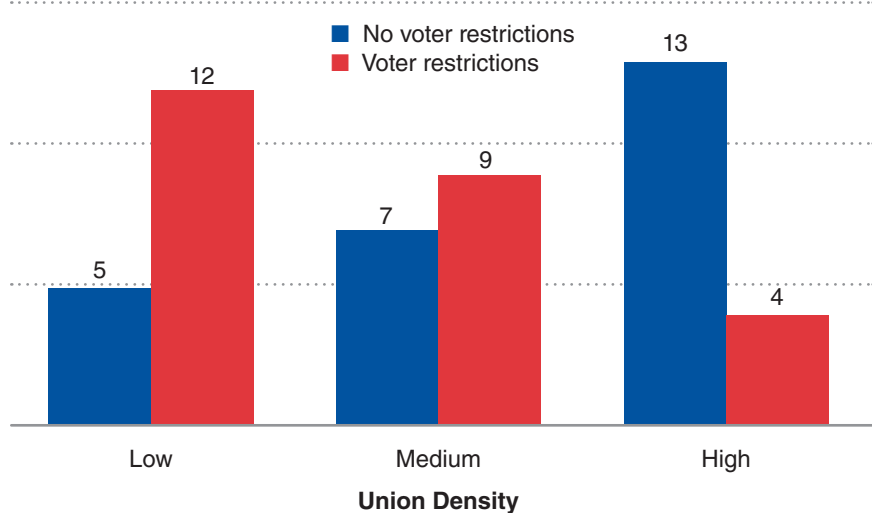
Iowa was once a swing state politically and has a strong history of labor activism, even though it has been a right-to-work state since 1947. Former Senator Tom Harkin was one of the most labor-friendly politicians in U.S. history and is an honorary IBEW member.

But the state has swung to the right during the last decade. The GOP has a 32-18 advantage in the state Senate and added six seats in the House in 2020, giving it a 59-41 advantage. The unemployment bill is just the latest attack on working families.

"The bottom line when talking to members is that elections have consequences," Kurtenbach said. "We need to make sure they are registered and that we're telling them to vote for people we can trust because they look out for us."

## Voter Restriction Bills are More Likely to Pass in Low-Union-Density States than in High-Union-Density States

Number of high-, medium-, and low-union-density states that have passed restrictive voting laws, 2011-2019



Source: Economic Policy Institute

"I respect someone having a different opinion. But when it comes to our ability to represent our members when it comes to safety, working conditions and wages, there is a connection to how they vote." ■

## How Unions Strengthen Communities and Democracy

According to a new report from the Economic Policy Institute, unions aren't just good for members and their paychecks. They're also good for communities as a whole, and even for democracy itself.

"Unions promote economic equality and build worker power, helping workers to win increases in pay, better benefits, and safer working conditions. But the benefits of unions extend far beyond the workplace," said Asha Banerjee, economic analyst at EPI and co-author of the report. "The data suggest that unions also give workers a voice in shaping their communities and political representation."

The study, released in December, documents the correlation between higher levels of unionization and a range of economic, personal and democratic well-being measures.

"In the same way unions give workers a voice at work, with a direct impact on wages and working conditions, the data suggest that unions also give workers a voice in shaping their communities. Where workers have this power, states have more equitable economic structures, social structures and democracies," the authors wrote.

In terms of income and economic protections, the authors found that the 17 U.S. states with the highest union densities have minimum wages that are on average 19% higher than the national average and 40% higher than those in low-union-density states. They also have median annual incomes that are \$6,000 higher than the national average.

Regarding health and personal well-being outcomes, states with the highest union densities have an uninsured (those without health insurance) population that's 4.5 percentage points lower than that of low-union-density states. High-density states are also

more likely to have passed paid sick leave laws as well as paid family and medical leave laws than states with lower union densities.

When it comes to democracy, the authors found that the 17 highest-union-density states have passed significantly fewer restrictive voting laws than the middle 17 states and the 17 lowest-union-density states. Over 70% of low-union-density states passed at least one voter suppression law between 2011 and 2019.

"Through long-standing advocacy and work to protect the right to vote, unions have linked voting rights to workers' rights," said Margaret Poydock, policy analyst and government affairs specialist at EPI and co-author of the report. "Unions play a key role in mobilizing workers to vote, helping to determine which political leaders are elected and what occupational backgrounds they come from."

Relatedly, a study from MIT showed that increasing the minimum wage raises voter turnout.

"We found that people who get a raise because the minimum wage goes up become slightly more likely to vote in the next election," said Ariel White, an associate professor in MIT's Department of Political Science and co-author of a paper on the findings. "Those people, who are low-income, [become] represented a little better in elections than they typically are, because people with low incomes tend to vote less."

The EPI authors noted that the relationship between high union density and higher household incomes, access to health care and paid leave, and fewer voting restrictions also highlights the importance of passing the Protecting the Right to Organize, or PRO, Act. The bill, considered the most significant labor law reform in decades, includes a number of measures that would make it significantly easier to organize. It has the support of President Joe Biden and passed the House of Representatives last year but has stalled in the Senate.

"This study proves what union members have long known, that a stronger workforce translates into more worker power, and that's good for everyone, union or not," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "It's yet another reason to get the PRO Act on President Biden's desk." ■



Des Moines Local 347 Business Manager Patrick Wells, masked and front right, testifying before an Iowa Senate subcommittee.



# CIRCUITS

## Indiana Local Adopts Sea Cadet Division

Lafayette, Ind., is not a place most people think of as a Navy town.

It is an hour and a half south from the nearest sizable body of water, Lake Michigan, and best known in military circles as the home of Purdue University and Saab's jet engine research labs.

When Naval Sea Cadet Corps Lt. j.g. Amy Corbin set out to start a new division of the Sea Cadets in Lafayette, she knew she would need some help and Lafayette Local 668 didn't let her down.

The Sea Cadets is, basically, the Navy's junior ROTC for young people aged 10-18. There are more than 400 divisions with more than 13,000 participants across the U.S.

In 2020, Corbin wanted to start a program in her hometown, Lafayette, and name it after the submarine tender USS Dixon in honor of her father, Petty Officer Dean Cavin, who is a plank owner of the USS Dixon, meaning he was on the crew that first commissioned the ship in 1971. Her goal was to start the Lafayette Dixon Division in time for the 50th anniversary of the ship's launch.

**"I like unions and I like the skilled trades and I wanted a skilled trade ship."**

— Lt. j.g. Amy Corbin

The Dixon also met Corbin's interest in the skilled trades. Corbin's husband and son are union sheetmetal workers and, after falling in love with automotive electrical work, Corbin applied for the Lafayette Local 668 apprenticeship, but family obligations stood in the way.

"I like to do everything, but can't," she said. "But I like unions and I like the skilled trades and I wanted a skilled trade ship. The seamen on the Dixon went in and out of submarines and fixed everything."

Unfortunately for Corbin, after she had recruited a handful of young men and women, they had a single drill and the pandemic hit. She had to shut down all in-person programs and the virtual meetings just didn't work, she said.

Then, her primary sponsor, the Navy Club of Lafayette, was shuttered to protect its primarily older membership.

Two years earlier, when she started her first division in Indianapolis, she went to Local 668 for help and the response was an immediate vote to send financial support. She even convinced journeyman inside wiremen Sam Howie and Brenten Green to make the three-hour roundtrip to teach. Howie was the self-defense and physical fitness instructor and Green taught basic electrical theory.

When Corbin needed help setting up a division in Local 668's backyard, she came back, and again, found a friendly



Sea Cadets sponsored by Lafayette, Ind., Local 668 work on a submersible robot project after classes taught by local members.

audience. In April of 2021 she attended a general meeting, waited until the end of regular business and made her pitch.

The kids need a complete sea bag, which includes four uniforms — two work, a dress white and a dress blues — boots and shoes. They are used uniforms, requisitioned from the U.S. Navy stockpile of equipment returned by seamen leaving the service but they aren't free and the kids are always growing, so she didn't just need four, she needed four in near every youth size for every cadet. Then, of course, there is the money to feed them during drills and gas to get them to trainings, first aid kits, all the camping supplies.

"There is a lot of gear," Corbin said. "Like Boy Scouts but a lot more."

The 668 membership voted to send financial support again.

"I think it was near unanimous," said Local 668 Business Manager Larry Spencer. "It's a great program and Amy is so enthusiastic about unions and her cadets."

It meant the world to them, Corbin said, in ways that might not be visible to civilians.

Corbin said they go to boot camp as part of the basic military education program. And although the drill sergeants cannot touch the kids or use curse words, the experience at Camp Dodge in Iowa is otherwise authentic.

"It is tough there. They are not the nicest people. They do a lot of yelling," Corbin said.

And, well, an incomplete sea bag is a very quick way to get the attention of the drill sergeant. Even civilians know that is exactly not what you want to be doing.

That, she soon found out, was just the start of the local's support.

A central focus of the Sea Cadet program is Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and one of the projects the cadets had to work on this year was building a submersible robot. A key component of the project was soldering circuit boards, which required the cadets to know how to use meters to test their work.

"The Navy loves STEM and IBEW hits hard on it," she said.

Corbin reached out to Green again and he readily agreed to pitch in.

But as the day approached in January, he came down with COVID.

"I asked my Assistant Business Agent Jeremie Pearson to find a replacement. He volunteered and enlisted two others to help," said Spencer said.

Pearson, Organizer Corey Bassett, who is also the Local's RENEW chapter president, and fifth-year apprentice Aaron Cartron assisted the cadets in getting their circuit boards built and soldered.

"We dive them into pools and run them through an obstacle course. They taught the cadets how to use the tools and the meter, and Aaron sat with each kid to teach them to solder their circuit boards," Corbin said.

Corbin said this is also a chance for the cadets to learn about unions. Although more than 1 in 10 students at the Naval Academy are former Sea Cadets and many others choose to enlist, hearing about life in the union trades is an important opportunity for the ones who choose not to.

"Some get all the military experience and think they will enlist, and they don't, and unions are a great plan if they don't," Corbin said. "We had one kid say, 'I can join this? They will pay for me to get a trade, and I don't have to go to college?' It opened their eyes to what is possible and that is what I want for all of them no matter what they do."

And that appreciation means a great deal to Spencer.

"We've worked with many community groups over the years, all good causes. I

wish everyone was as zealous as Amy making our members feel appreciated for the work they do in our community," Spencer said. "She knows what it is all about." ■

## Frustrated Illinois Municipal Workers Turn to the IBEW

After years of watching promises from city officials go unkept, the municipal sanitation, street repair and cemetery maintenance workers of Princeton, Ill., sought help from the IBEW and won a first contract that brings raises, job security and parity with the town's other IBEW-represented employees.

Springfield, Ill., Local 51 already represented two bargaining units in Princeton, a city of 7,700 about 115 miles southwest of Chicago, but Business Representative and Organizer Jared Dooley said the 11 members of the street workers division had shown little interest in joining the IBEW until recently. A string of what they viewed as broken promises from the city, combined with their witnessing the positive relationship between the other bargaining units and Local 51, turned things around.

"They reached out to our stewards and we got together," Dooley said.

Organizing public workers became more difficult after the Supreme Court's Janus decision in 2018, but Illinois law was on the local's side. Business Manager Bobby Wedell said the organizing effort was aided by an Illinois statute that requires public entities to recognize a bargaining unit with 35 or fewer members if a majority of the employees sign cards requesting a union. In most of the United States, a vote still is required.

One of the employees did much of the legwork in organizing the drive until he unexpectedly left for a job in Princeton's police department, which is not represented by the IBEW. But there was enough momentum by the time of his departure that the majority of employees still turned in cards, Dooley said.

Given the local's relationship with the city through its other units, negotiating a first contract, which includes 4%

raises, went relatively quickly.

Still, even with a strong contract in place, challenges remain. The Janus decision allows public employees to opt out of paying union dues, and a minority of the veteran workers have chosen that option.

Dooley and Wedell both hope that when those employees see the difference union representation makes on their job in wages and working conditions, they will change their mind, just as they witnessed through the other bargaining units. After all, that's what brought them to the local in the first place.

"It's a constant battle," Dooley said. "You have to continue to organize. But we feel good about we've done up there."

**"It's a constant battle. You have to continue to organize."**

— Local 51 Business Representative Jared Dooley

Despite the challenges presented by Janus, Wedell thinks the public sector remains an opportunity to get organizing wins for the IBEW and other unions. Many communities have their own electric departments and need to pay competitive salaries to linemen to keep them from moving to larger utilities with better wages and benefits.

That often comes about with union representation, he said.

"In the last few years, with the demand for linemen rising and numbers being down, these municipalities, no matter their size, have to raise their linemen's salaries pretty substantially to compete," he said.

Sometimes, other departments in a municipality see that and wonder why their wages aren't keeping pace. That opens up another organizing opportunity, Wedell said.

"From there, it seems like they say, 'Hey, we want in on this,'" he said. "It's up to us to keep working hard to show these employees that being a part of the IBEW has value, that working together makes a real difference in their day-to-day lives." ■



A view of downtown Princeton, Ill., where municipal street workers recently organized with the IBEW.



# TRANSITIONS

## DECEASED

### Stephen Schoemehl



Stephen Schoemehl, who served on the International Executive Council for nearly six years and led the IBEW's original local union through the economic crisis beginning in 2008, died on July 24 after a brief battle with cancer. He was 70.

After serving in the U.S. Army, Brother Schoemehl was initiated into St. Louis Local 1 in 1972 and served as business manager from 2001 until his retirement in 2011. He followed his father, Fred, into the brotherhood and is one of 12 family members who are either active, retired or deceased members of Local 1.

"St. Louis has had a lot of great union leadership and it's made all of its unions rise to a higher level," said Marie Casey, a longtime St. Louis public relations executive who has worked closely with several unions there, including Local 1.

"Steve was part of that. He was so smart and understood finances very well," Casey added. "Local 1 members still have world-class health care, including retirees. Their benefits exceed those of most corporate managers."

Longtime friend Steve Licari, who worked with him on the job and under him on the local's staff, said Schoemehl "knew which buttons to push in an individual to get the job done. He just had those kind of leadership abilities."

That was evident even on jobsites, where Schoemehl worked as a general foreman before moving into the Local 1 office. He signed job cards with his full name and home phone number, along with the message "any problems, call."

"Everything was in order," said Licari, who served briefly as Local 1's business manager after Schoemehl's retirement. "He knew what was going to happen one week from now. He could plan that far ahead and have his ducks lined up in a row."

Schoemehl served on several Local 1 committees and was appointed to the examining board in 1994. He joined the staff one year later as an organizer and business representative. He was appointed business manager in 2001, elected by the members later that year and re-elected three more times.

In 2005, he was appointed to the IEC by then-International President Edwin D. Hill and was re-elected at the 2006 International Convention in Cleveland. He also served in that role until his retirement.

"He was true blue IBEW," said Boston Local 2222 Business Manager Myles Calvey, who joined the IEC at the same time as Schoemehl and currently serves as its secretary. "You just liked everything about him. As soon as you saw him, he put a smile on your face, but he knew when to be serious."

Calvey, who came up in the telephone industry, credited Schoemehl with helping him better understand issues important to the construction branch, such as the National Electrical Benefit Fund.

"I learned so much being around him and he was tickled to death being a Local 1 guy on the IEC," Calvey said.

Schoemehl faced major challenges in his home jurisdiction. In 2009, at the height of the economic crisis, nearly 50% of Local 1's members were unemployed and signatory contractors were reluctant to take on work. Because of that, he convinced the membership to accept a temporary wage cut. The Local 1 staff also took cuts in pay.

He was criticized by many but the fact that Local 1 is thriving today and maintains relationships with nearly all those contractors shows he made the right decisions, said Matthew Lampe, a retired Local 1 member who was a business representative during that period.

"I was on all the labor-management negotiating committees with him and he was not afraid to make tough decisions and lead us," Lampe said. "He was convinced

we had to take a cut in pay so our general contractors could keep their work."

Schoemehl and his successors at Local 1 also were challenged by Carpenters Local 57, which has tried to capture work Local 1 members have done for generations. The battle continues to this day in the St. Louis area, with Local 1 largely fending off the Carpenters' attempts to undercut it with the use of lower-waged and less-skilled workers.

"He was a good guy who cared about all his members," Lampe said.

Schoemehl is survived by his wife, Cynthia; son Nathan, a journeyman wireman and Local 1 member; daughter Jessica; and four grandchildren. He had leadership roles in several labor and charitable organizations in the St. Louis area, including on the board of the United Way.

Casey said Schoemehl also got Local 1 members more involved in Habitat for Humanity and opened the apprenticeship program to more women and traditionally underserved groups.

He also understood the importance of strong labor-management relations, including with Doug Martin, longtime head of the St. Louis NECA chapter, she said.

"They would fight when they needed to fight and disagree whole-heartedly with a lot of emotion but also find places where they could build bridges," Casey said. "Through that degree of honesty, they broke down any bickering that might have turned into a plague."

The officers and staff extend their condolences to Brother Schoemehl's many loved ones during this difficult time. ■

## RETIRED

### James E. Meyer



Following 44 years of membership in the IBEW, Railroad Branch International Representative Jim Meyer retired effective Feb. 1.

Meyer, a native and lifelong resident of the Washington, D.C., area, was exposed to the electrical trade early on.

"When I was in school, a neighbor was a master electrician, a one-man shop," he said.

In 1978, after finishing high school, Meyer pursued his burgeoning interest and joined Washington, D.C., Local 362, a railroad local representing workers at the Washington Terminal Company (taken over by Amtrak in 1984) and the adjoining Ivy City Maintenance Facility. There, he worked on Amtrak's locomotives and coaches, performing inspections and repairs, among many other tasks, including some work in the railroad's radio shop.

It wasn't long before Meyer got active with the IBEW and Local 362. "I had just started my apprenticeship, not even a year in, and I was asked to serve on the audit committee," he said. "My dad was in the Communications Workers of America, and he told me, 'Always get involved with the local.'"

Shortly afterward, a vacancy came open for recording secretary. "They asked me if I would take it," said Meyer, still an apprentice at the time. "I said yes, but they had to get permission from the international vice president first."

Meyer "was a mechanic who took me under his wing," said fellow Local 362 member Charles Arbogast, who later served as president of the local. "He was very knowledgeable, teaching you the ins and the outs. His work ethic was always 110%."

"The guy was like a pit bull," Arbogast said. "He always had his facts, his information and his ethics. In his union capacity, he was always someone you could count on. If he told you he'd do something, he'd do it."

Meyer was an efficient worker, too, Arbogast said, recalling when Meyer worked for a time as a public address technician. "When he left that job, they put in six

guys [to replace him], and they couldn't put out the same amount of work Jim did," he said.

Meyer rose quickly through the IBEW's ranks, going on to serve as Local 362's financial secretary, as its general chairman and secretary from 1986 to 2004, and then as its local chairman — the Railroad equivalent of business manager — until 2007. He dutifully represented his local's interest through the usual rounds of collective bargaining and negotiating meetings — with at least one notable exception.

"Usually with railroad negotiations, you work as a coalition with the other railroad unions," Meyer said. "But in 1992, the IBEW went alone before Presidential Emergency Board 222."

Under the Railway Labor Act, the president of the United States can call an "emergency board" should a labor dispute threaten to disrupt "essential transportation service."

President George H.W. Bush convened a board after the IBEW and Amtrak reached an impasse on several crucial concerns, including wages, skill differential, work rules and subcontracting. Meyer and the leaders of several other Amtrak-related locals "put together a presentation and got to testify before the board," he said, working with the IBEW Research Department and the union's tenth District, which at the time handled all of the IBEW's Railroad locals. When the rulings largely went in favor of IBEW, "and we got the skill differentials 'technician rates of pay' that acknowledged our members' skill levels, it felt like a big accomplishment," Meyer said.

Meyer also was on the job when Amtrak ushered in high-speed rail, better known as Amtrak's Acela service, connecting 16 East Coast stations from Washington to Boston.

"Amtrak awarded the high-speed contract to Bombardier," Meyer recalled. "That was constantly challenging, for us and for them, because they were not accustomed to working in a union shop."

Another big change came for Railroad members in 1998, when an IBEW constitutional referendum moved the department from its place as the union's tenth District and into an International Office-level department based in Washington.

Meyer had to adjust not only to that change but also to some realignments of the IBEW's railroad system councils. He served for a while as a part-time assistant general chairman for System Council 6, and then later as a full-time assistant general chairman for System Council 7.

In 2007, Meyer was appointed by then-IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill to serve as an international representative in the union's Railroad Department. He held that role for five years before being appointed by Hill to serve as director of the Per Capita Membership Department. Six years later, Meyer returned to the Railroad Department.

The Railroad Department's work kept him busy, Meyer said, although he still managed to find time to volunteer with his church and with the Boy Scouts of America — Meyer achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in his youth.

Meyer said his biggest hobby now is "fixing stuff. I have plenty of things to fix now that I'm retired," he said. He also has more time in retirement to enjoy watching the Washington Commanders play, although he admits it's "taking some time to get used to their new name." Meyer is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Jenny, and their son, John, who also works at the International Office.

"Jim was a great guy to work with," said current Railroad Department Director Al Russo, who has worked with Meyer since 2018. "He saved everything and knew where to find it. His knowledge was by far superior. We were all learning something every day."

Perhaps best of all, "Jim wasn't just a 'yes' man," Russo said. "That's what you want — someone to have their own opinion. It makes your department work."

Please join the brotherhood in wishing Brother Meyer a long and happy retirement. ■

## IBEW MEDIA WORLD

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

### www.ibew.org

Get the latest IBEW news, including the online version of the *Electrical Worker*, at [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org).

### YouTube

Check out the short, shareable videos from your favorite *Electrical Worker* stories — from breaking news to video profiles of the most interesting members of the IBEW — at [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](http://YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker).

### Vimeo

The Canadian Women's Conference was a chance for women from across IBEW Canada to gather, share and learn from one another after two long years of lockdown. See more at [Vimeo.com/IBEW](http://Vimeo.com/IBEW).



### HourPower

[IBEWHourPower.com](http://IBEWHourPower.com) explores the latest offering from a company whose name is synonymous with the electrical trade: Klein Tools' new All-Purpose Electrician Scissors, loaded with features for the skilled electrical worker.



### ElectricTV

Every IBEW member knows that an IBEW/NECA apprenticeship is the best deal in higher education. This month, [ElectricTV.net](http://ElectricTV.net) highlights a study showing more people are getting the message.





# ORGANIZING WIRE

## BC Local Organizes Workers at Coast Mountain Hydro

In near record time and under some trying circumstances, workers at Coast Mountain Hydro have chosen to join with Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 258.

“You couldn’t execute and organize in a more credible fashion than 258 did,” said International Representative Adam Van Steinburg, who assisted with the campaign. “I’m very proud of that local.”

When Lead Organizer Brandon Dyck spoke with the workers at Coast Mountain Hydro in 2016, nothing came of it. But times have changed. The pandemic has caused a reckoning among workers and many want more than what their employers are initially willing to give them.

“I think COVID has caused a lot of people to reevaluate their worth and how their job factors into that,” Dyck said.

In this case, much of what the 26 electricians and millwrights wanted came down to the age-old issues of safety, scheduling and wages. It’s gotten harder to hire the skilled craftspeople needed to do the job, so the company started paying new hires more than what some senior staff were making. And the safety meetings were considered something that was mostly for show. So when the workers reached out last June to Local 258, there was new energy and more momentum pushing for change.

Still, organizing is never easy. The worksite is located in a very rural part of British Columbia. It takes a two-hour plane ride followed by a seven-hour drive just to get there. For that reason, as well as the pandemic, initial contact was all online. But hard work and perseverance got it done. They won the certification vote, which took place in September. But they only won by one vote, suggesting that support was waning. So, Dyck and Local 258 Organizer Ken Mitchell made the trek up to the site for some much-needed face-to-face interaction.

“It was certainly a challenge. With COVID and the remote location, it forced us to utilize every tool we had,” Dyck said. “But you have to meet in person at some point. It’s hard to build trust solely online.”

What they encountered was indeed some mistrust and as well as misinformation. The workers didn’t really know what unions do, so the organizers had to start from square one with education.

“We explained what the IBEW is and how we were there to help them get what they were after,” Mitchell said.

The hydro facility is also on the land of the Talthan First Nations people, so there are agreements that need to be honored. And some of the Indigenous community were worried that the agreement would be taken away or that they wouldn’t be allowed to work anywhere else. There’s also the issue of historical discrimination and abuse of Indigenous people, which needed to be addressed.

“You have to be transparent and approach everything with honesty and integrity,” Van Steinburg said. “You can’t

be seen as not forthcoming.”

Mitchell, who is Indigenous, was able to make some inroads with the First Nations community.

“I told them what the IBEW has done for me and how it’s improved my quality of life,” Mitchell said. “I told them I have a good career because of the IBEW. And I let them know that I wasn’t a salesman. I think that made a difference.”

When the members voted on their first contract in February, it was a different story. It passed almost unanimously. Thanks to that contract, wages are now more equal and the safety committee, which will comprise of labor and management representatives, has real teeth.

“I’m happy there was a solid vote on the contract,” Mitchell said. “That’s how you know the members are happy.”

And now they’ve got a brotherhood to back them up whenever they need it.

“I want to welcome these new members from Coast Mountain Hydro to the IBEW family,” said First District Vice President Tom Reid. “And I want to thank our IBEW Membership Development team, Local 258 Business Manager Doug McKay and everyone on his team involved in this campaign. The First District covers a vast



Workers at British Columbia’s Coast Mountain Hydro have joined with Vancouver Local 258.

geographical area and this is a great example of how we can use different methods of organizing to reach out to workers in rural and remote areas interested in joining the IBEW, but at the end of the day, nothing can replace the importance of a face-to-

face conversation with workers.”

The Coast Mountain Hydro campaign is just one of many currently underway. It’s also the first independent power producer to sign a contract in the province, McKay said, but hopefully not the last.

“We’re hoping this will open the doors to organizing more IPPs,” said McKay, who has about half of his members working for the provincially-owned BC Hydro. “We’re chasing everything we can.” ■

## GROUNDING IN HISTORY

### How Locals Get Their Numbers

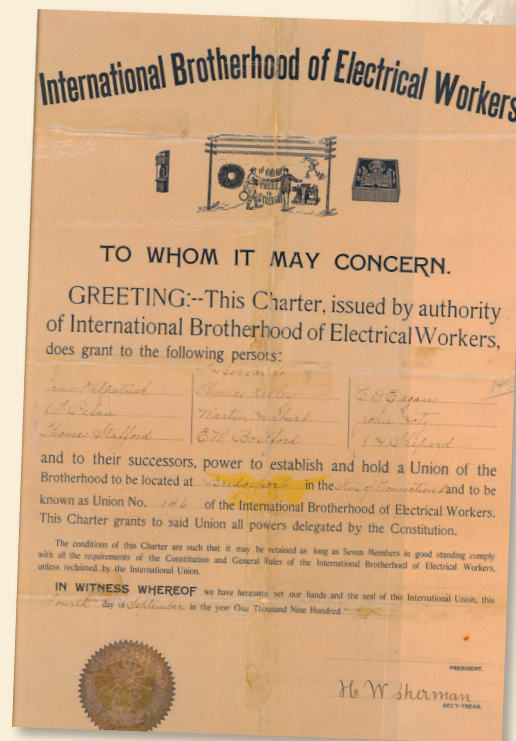
The IBEW has 831 active local unions within the United States and Canada as of March 1. But there have been more than 4,700 locals over the course of our 131-year history.

So, how do locals choose their numbers and what happens to the numbers used by all those inactive locals? The history of local numbers is something the International Office monitors very closely — and for good reason. A local’s number can be a mark of immense pride and a symbol of its culture. Within the brotherhood, members often use their number to identify where they’re from instead of using their city or state.

When the first IBEW Convention adjourned on Nov. 28, 1891, our 10 founders immediately began the work of chartering locals. The delegates from St. Louis, primarily Henry Miller and J.T. Kelly, were first out of the gate by organizing Local 1, followed by Milwaukee delegate E.C. Hartung, who organized Local 2. The next 5 locals were all chartered by Miller during his travels to the AFL convention which met in Birmingham, Ala., that December. These included Local 3 in Birmingham, Local 4 in New Orleans, Local 5 in Nashville, Tenn., Local 6 in Memphis, Tenn., and Local 7 in Louisville, Ky. Toledo, Ohio, Local 8 Toledo was organized by delegate F.J. Heizleman, then Chicago Local 9 by delegate T.J. Finnell. Finally, Indianapolis Local 10 was chartered by Hartung during his trip home.

These first locals were numbered sequentially, with each given the next available number based on when their charter application was received. There were no gaps or skipped numbers. This sequential numbering system continued until our Second Convention, convened in Chicago on Nov. 12, 1892. At that point, 45 locals had been chartered by the founders, with Miller responsible for the lion’s share at 35, followed by Finnell with 5, Kelly and Hartung together with 4, and Harry Fisher with 1. Of those first 45, seven are still active today: Locals 1, 8, 9, 17, 22, 23 and 26. But when the second convention drew to a close, the purely sequential numbering system ended as well.

This was because Birmingham, Ala., Local 3 became the first local to go defunct in November 1892. This was followed by Locals 14 and 29 the next month. Barely a year into its existence, the IBEW had to make a fateful choice: should local numbers be retired or reused? If they were retired, it would maintain the sequential order but could result in



An original IBEW charter issued in 1900.

future locals receiving exceedingly large numbers. Note that the IBEW has had over 4,700 local unions, but there is no Local 4700. The highest number ever assigned was to Valejo, Calif., Local 2376, and that was nearly 50 years ago. Instead, the early officers of the IBEW decided that local numbers could be reused, allowing any newly chartered local to take a free number as its own.

By March 1893, the three defunct numbers had been reassigned to newly chartered locals, starting with New York Local 3 on Dec. 13, 1892. The trend continues to this day. When a local goes defunct or amalgamates with another, its number is placed back in the pool. Newly organized locals can then choose any unused number in the pool or simply select the next sequential number, which today would be 2377.

When an unemployment crisis hit the United States in 1894, the IBEW lost over half its membership and with it, nearly half of its locals. As organizing picked back up, defunct numbers were reused only to be lost again in the next financial panic. This boom-and-bust economy was typical of the era and resulted in many numbers being used over and over again. For example, Local 3 was reused twice more before coming back to New York on Feb. 7, 1900, where it remains today. There are more than 1,150 numbers that have been used more than once. The distinction for the most recycled number goes to 119 and 410, which have each

been reused by 9 different locals. Interestingly, 119 remains available while 410 was chosen in 2017 by the newly-chartered local for Baltimore Gas & Electric workers after their organizing victory there. This also answers a frequently asked question from members. How can young locals have a low number? The answer is simple: the number was available and the organizing members chose it.

There are currently 1,545 unclaimed numbers that have been returned to the pool. The lowest number available is 27. So, for anyone out there involved in a new organizing campaign, Local 27 is yours for the claiming. ■

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



# Annual Funding Notice for the National Electrical Benefit Fund

## Introduction

This notice includes important information about the funding status of the National Electrical Benefit Fund (“the Plan” or “NEBF”). It also includes general information about the benefit payments guaranteed by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (“PBGC”), a federal insurance agency. All traditional pension plans (called “defined benefit pension plans”) must provide this notice every year regardless of their funding status. This notice does not mean that the Plan is terminating. In fact, despite the difficult economic times and the market losses in 2008, the Plan has substantially rebounded. As a result, the Plan is in sound financial condition and is considered a “green zone” plan (rather than a plan in endangered or critical status). This notice is provided for informational purposes and you are not required to respond in any way. This notice is required by federal law. This notice is for the plan year beginning January 1, 2021 and ending December 31, 2021 (“Plan Year”).

## How Well Funded Is the NEBF?

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

Funded Percentage			
	2021 Plan Year	2020 Plan Year	2019 Plan Year
Valuation Date	January 1, 2021	January 1, 2020	January 1, 2019
Funded Percentage	86.51%	84.38%	83.32%
Value of Assets	\$16,003,545,120	\$15,225,779,442	\$14,661,239,692
Value of Liabilities	\$18,499,097,563	\$18,044,256,213	\$17,595,596,103

## Year-End Fair Market Value of Assets

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

	December 31, 2021	December 31, 2020	December 31, 2019
Fair Market Value of Assets	\$18,759,108,420	\$16,772,535,473	\$15,623,020,221

## Endangered, Critical, or Critical and Declining Status

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

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

If the Plan is in endangered, critical, or critical and declining status for the plan year ending December 31, 2022, separate notification of that status has or will be provided.

## Participant Information

The total number of participants and beneficiaries covered by the Plan on the Valuation Date was 607,775. Of this number, 287,304 were current employees, 157,199 were retired and receiving benefits, and 163,272 were retired or no longer working for a covered employer and have a right to future benefits.

## Funding and Investment Policies

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

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

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

Asset Allocations	Percentage
Cash (Interest bearing and non-interest bearing)	0.15 %
U.S. Government securities	6.39
Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	4.43
All other	7.01
Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	0.03
Common	17.14

Partnership/joint venture interests	20.66
Real estate (other than employer real property)	0.01
Loans (other than to participants)	0.60
Participant loans	—
Value of interest in common/collective trusts	28.87
Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1.50
Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	—
Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	—
Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	4.73
Value of funds held in insurance co. general account (unallocated contracts)	—
Employer-related investments:	
Employer securities	—
Employer real property	—
Buildings and other property used in plan operation	—
Other	8.48

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

## Right to Request a Copy of the Annual Report

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

## Summary of Rules Governing Insolvent Plans

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

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

## Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC

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

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

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

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

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

## Where to Get More Information

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

Lonnie R. Stephenson NEBF Trustee	Kenneth W. Cooper NEBF Trustee	David Long NEBF Trustee	Dennis F. Quebe NEBF Trustee
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# LOCAL LINES

## Land of Opportunity

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — Despite harsh weather conditions during tear-down and difficulties with individual fixtures, our local's members were once again able to showcase their skills and contribute to the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center. This was done by dedicating more than two months for hauling, erecting, electrifying and maintaining the 28th-annual Ritzzy's Fantasy of Lights, a much-loved local holiday illumination display. A near-record \$223,141 was raised (including more than \$30,000 in donations). These funds will help provide over 4,400 therapy sessions for area kids and adults with disabilities who might not otherwise be able to afford these life-changing services. Since its inception, Fantasy of Lights has generated over \$4,113,000.

Local 16 has also been actively involved with fundraising for the RallyPoint military veterans' organization. This Memorial Day weekend, the hall is aiding the group by helping to organize, underwrite and provide volunteer staff for a professional bull-riding event that will be broadcast on national television. Many thanks to Brother James Stidham (RallyPoint board member) and all of the IBEW's members who have faithfully served and built this country into a land of opportunity.

Donald P. Beavin, P.S.

## Apprentices Win Big at JATC Completion

L.U. 20 (i,u,t,&em), GRAND PRAIRIE, TX — The North Texas Electrical JATC held its annual completion dinner at the Hilton on June 11, 2021.

Awards were presented to apprentices for outstanding performance including grades, attendance, job evaluations, attitude and participation. Here are the winners for 2021:



The 2021 graduates of Local 20, North Texas Electrical JATC.

- NECA and IBEW Outstanding Apprentice Award: Preston M. Pack
- LU #20 Gold Pliers: Joseph Barkell, Andrew Carnes, Jeannyhun Lam, William Rematore
- NECA Achievement: Joseph Barkell, Andrew Carnes, William Rematore, Michael Teeter
- Local Union #20 FCU: Salim Amara, Zachary Barchak, Jesse Campbell, Shawnda Starr, Zachery Welch
- Ft. Worth Local 116 Federal Credit Union: Zachary Barchak, Preston Pack
- Perfect Attendance: Rene Montoya Acosta, Zachary Barchak, Jesse Burton, Joe Egbers, Kyle Gurley, Ivan Ibarra, Josue Leon, Christopher Moon, William Oxford III, Preston Pack, Joshua Rodriguez, Fernando Rojo, Alfredo Salas, Gabriel Tomlinson, Jordan Werry

In the photo, the following graduates appear: (Row 1) Moises Roman-Morales, Alfredo Salas, Joshua Rodriguez, Byron Chism, Javier Villanueva, Fernando Rojo, Adam Barron, Joe Egbers, Edgar Lerma, Brandon Roblyer; (Row 2) Josue Leon, Julius Humphries Jr, David Gonzalez, Joe Bridges, Cullen Banks, Zachary Barchak, Dana Harris, Preston Pack, Andrew Larosa, Luis Cardenas; (Row 3) Jordan Werry, Rui Wang, Guadalupe Sanchez, Jesus Roman, Christopher Moon, Rene Montoya Acosta, Samuel Marin, Omar Ibarra Jr, Ivan Ibarra, Kyle Gurley, William Oxford III, Jose Ramirez, Austin Robinson, Jacob Stagner and Gabriel Tomlinson.

Congratulations to all Local 20 graduates of the North Texas Electrical JATC!

Price Warwick Jr., B.M./F.S.

## Sign of the Times

L.U. 24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — Our new sign is up, and what a sign it is: 5' tall and 34' in length, with a 20' multi-color static section and a 14' digital LED programmable screen.

The sign was manufactured by our brothers and



Local 24's sign makes its proud union message visible for all to see.

sisters at Triangle Sign & Service. Triangle has been in the sign business for 90 years and currently employs 60 Local 24 members. We would like to thank all those involved with making this possible; your craftsmanship will be on display for years to come.

Welcome to our new VDV members and our newest signatory VDV contractor, ConCor Networks. ConCor is part of the EMCOR family and provides a wide variety of telecom and low-voltage services. ConCor, along with Bluestone Communications, has helped revitalize our VDV apprenticeship program, further enabling us to secure more work in this market for our members and contractors.

These positive changes are a sign of the times thanks to the hard work of our membership, JATC, agents and officers of Local 24.

Live Better/Work Union!

Michael J. McHale, B.M.

## Scholarship Winners to be Announced

L.U. 26 (i,es,ees,govt,em&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — It's springtime in the city, and our local is excited to be celebrating 130 years! The 40th IBEW International Convention will be held next month in Chicago, and Local 26 is looking forward to attending this event. Also, final preparations for our annual golf outing and the Virginia picnic are underway.

The Local 26 scholarship committee is currently reviewing applications and will have a decision on the four winners in the near future. The winners will be announced in our quarterly magazine, In Charge, as well as in the next Local 26 Local Lines article in June.

Best wishes to the following new retirees: Robin K. Lucas, Christopher A. White, John R. Clark, Mario A. Cobarrubias, J.C. Coney, William A. Costanzo, Warren D. Darby, Timothy S. Dittmar, Brad A. Ernest, Brian R. Flynn, James D. Foster, Michael S. Gilheany, John P. Houston, Michael R. Lambert, Chris B. Loda, Michael D. Ponton, George H. Randolph, Gregory A. Roling, Jeffrey W. Russell, Jerry Sanderson, Thomas R. Scott Jr.,

James C. Shea, Frederick E. Thompson, Curtis L. Tolley and Millard E. Voigt Jr.

The following members have passed away since our last article: Leroy Allen, David F. Blanche, William E. Bott Jr., Roy K. Brush, Ronald T. Canady, Paul D. Childers, Arthur I. Citty, Robert E. Coats Sr., Jeffrey S. Cruz, James E. Davis, Timothy D. Downing, David Dugan, Alvin H. Fautleroy, Burnell A. Frizzell, Raymond L. Gans, Marian E. Green, Edward P. Huhn, Willis A. Lockett Jr., Benjamin C. Mann IV, Wayne E. Marish, James C. Moreland, Jerry L. Rexroad, Bradley K. Sherman, Robert L. Singer, Robert B. White and Michael G. Whittington Jr.

George C. Hogan, B.M.

## Good Work Outlook for Local 38

L.U. 38 (i), CLEVELAND, OH — Congratulations to our former Business Manager/Financial Secretary Dennis



Local 38 members and officers wish former Business Manager Dennis Meaney a long and healthy retirement and thank him for his years of service.

Meaney on his retirement! During Brother Meaney's 43-year career, he has served as Local 38's treasurer, organizer, business agent and finally business manager/financial secretary. The sisters and brothers of Local 38 wish Dennis a long and healthy retirement and thank him for all of his years of service.

The new 600,000-square foot Sherwin-Williams

research and development facility in Brecksville, Ohio, recently had an official ribbon-cutting ceremony, and construction is underway. Lake Erie Electric, along with Hunt Electric, continue to increase crew sizes with a completion date in 2024. Sherwin-Williams' new 36-story world-headquarters office building with pavilion and parking garage are moving forward. Zenith Systems, Parsons Electric and J.W. Didado Electric continue to prepare for the massive project, which should start later this year.

At Cleveland-Cliffs steel mill, Lake Erie Electric continues on the reline of C5-blast furnace while Herbst Electric is building the new 80-megawatt steam turbine generator. The electrical upgrades at the Anthony J. Celebrezze Federal Building are being done by Einheit Electric Construction under a project labor agreement.

The work outlook is good. There are several conversions of office buildings to apartments planned in

## 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	(rtb) Radio-Television Broadcasting	(tm) Transportation Manufacturing
(ei) Electrical Inspection	(mo) Maintenance & Operation	(u) Utility	(uow) Utility Office Workers
(em) Electrical Manufacturing	(mow) Manufacturing Office Workers	(ws) Warehouse and Supply	
(es) Electric Signs	(mar) Marine		

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



conjunction with nearly 2-million square feet of new construction planned at the Cleveland Clinic Main Campus in the near future.

Dan Gallagher, B.M./F.S.



Local 40 RENEW Committee members helped with a complete rewiring and new light install at the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Burbank, CA.

### Looking Ahead and Giving Back

L.U. 40 (em,i&mps), HOLLYWOOD, CA — With the strong demand for motion-picture product on new digital platforms, the members of our local have a lot to look forward to in the coming years. This demand has allowed us to capture more and more production work as well as all of the infrastructure work associated with the motion-picture production process, which includes new sound-stage spaces in the greater Los Angeles area. With our motion picture negotiations concluded in early 2022, this work picture includes the addition of newly signed signatories Netflix and Apple Studios. Both construction and production work will continue in the future for Local 40 members.

We also want to take a moment to recognize those that are giving back to the community, our veterans and those in need. This year our Local 40 RENEW Committee members Anthony Moreno, Matthew Lyneis, Jordan Tuason and Eric Steele, in conjunction with second-year apprentice instructor Tyler Lane and Steward Josh Gellar, helped with a complete rewiring and new light install at the Veterans of Foreign Wars located in Burbank. It's members like this giving back to our nation's veterans who display not only the character of Local 40, but all members of the IBEW.

Juan Rodriguez, R.S./B.R.

### Sisters Unite in 46!

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,rtb,rts&st), SEATTLE, WA — Hello sisters and brothers: We know that not every local has a Women's Committee, but we are



Local 46 Women's Committee members (left to right) Nicole Anderson, Gillian Burlingham, Laura Robinson and Connie Adams stand together at the 2021 Seattle picnic.

blessed here in Seattle to have a great one! Our committee is about supporting and mentoring each other throughout our careers as IBEW members.

We currently have 21 members that have paid dues for 2022 and we expect that to go up because some were unable to attend the January meeting. We have more than 60 members on the Women Committee's email list.

One of the missions of the committee is raising funds to send members to conferences like Women Build Nations and for additional training and mentoring for apprentices. One of the opportunities that came from fundraising was a sponsored conduit-bending class in Nov. 2021. Five apprentices received hands-on training and the opportunity to bend pipe, which is additional time outside of regular JATC classes.

Our Women's Committee meets once a month on the fourth Tuesday at 5:30 p.m., and everyone is welcome!

We hope every local will have a Women's Committee at some point to help mentor and encourage women in the trade. Feel free to reach out to our Women's Committee Chair, Sister Deirdre Williams, by phone or text at 360-340-8783, if you need help starting your own committee. Thank you to all who step up and become a big sister to another.

Together we stand!

Stephanie McPherson, P.S.



Local 86 apprentices brought their best holiday spirit and organized a coat and food drive to support a local area church.

### Apprentices Step Up

L.U. 86 (ees,em,es,i,rts&spa), ROCHESTER, NY — Greetings, brothers and sisters: Let's hope 2022 brings us all good fortune. The work outlook continues to show promise. Along with a significant amount of work at our medical centers, we have a couple Amazon projects that we are working on. Several solar fields will be breaking ground this spring and summer. The Rochester City School District is also starting Phase 3 of their school modernization project.

Our apprentices really went above and beyond this holiday season. They helped with letters from Santa after the children's Christmas party

was canceled. They also organized a coat and can drive to help support one of our local area churches. It is great to see the next generation of electrical workers step up.

Michael Bader, B.M.

### A New Class of Success, Safety and Brotherhood

L.U. 104 (lctt,o,ptc&u), BOSTON, MA — We would like to congratulate the 2021 members who have reached retirement: Arthur Andrade, Henry Barry, Dan Blackerby, David Clayton, Larry Cobb, Greg Columbia, John Consoletti, James Davies, Garry Hall, James L. Kornelx, Anthony Kurpis, Frank Napolitano, Stephen O'Donnell, Frank Reczkowski, Roland Richardson, Robert Riendeau, Richard Smith and Joseph Thompson. Thank you all for your many years of dedication to the brotherhood, and we wish you luck and good health in your retirement.

Local 104 would also like to recognize the members we lost over the past year: George Becker, George Carson, Charles Cassie, Frank Coseglia, Roy Davies, Frank Eaton, Charles Enwright, John Geremia, Tom Junta, Brian Loughran, Darrin-Carl Moore, Patrick Murphy, Edward Murray, James Rogers and Roy Voisine. May these members rest in peace.

Local 104 congratulates apprentices that topped out during the 2021 calendar year: Micheal Adair, Brian Adams, Kaleb Allen, Blaine Bishop, John Blanchard, John Boomhower, Gregory Brown, Cody Cook, Gregory Covell, Joseph Crosby, David Cutter, Joseph Davis, Matthew Doyle, Justin Fuller, Seth Gordon, Jonathan Gray, Jordan Green, Matthew Hillman, Steven Lathrop, Antonio Lopez, Christopher McCaughey, Shane McGlone, Joshua Rideout, Tony Rizzitano, Jack Robinson, Jacob Simmons, Levi Smead, Alexander St. Jean, Nicholas Sweatt and Charles Wheeler. Congratulations from everyone at Local 104, who wish you many years of success, safety and brotherhood!

David Moreau, Org.

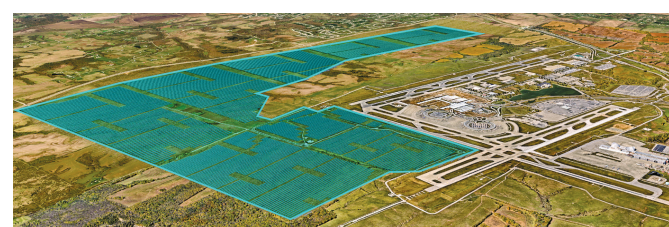
### Lots of Work Ahead

L.U. 124 (ees,em,i,mar,ptc,rts,se,spa&t), KANSAS CITY, MO — With the recent passage of Biden's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the IBEW can potentially secure a lot of upcoming work. Whether it be charging stations or solar farms, Kansas City may just be one of those cities to benefit big from this legislation.

As Kansas City's new \$1.5-billion airport is halfway through its construction, there are additional plans to improve the area. Currently, the city is planning to use 2,000 acres around the airport to install a 300-megawatt solar farm. That would generate enough power for all city buildings and then some. If this project goes through, it will be one of the largest solar farms in the country.

As members of the IBEW, we must do everything we can to secure this market. Renewable energy is the future, and it is prudent that we continue to educate our members to ensure our place within it.

Wade Kiefer, B.R.



The Kansas City International airport offers thousands of acres of undeveloped land, of which 2,000 could be repurposed to build a 300-megawatt solar farm for city use.

### A Year of Membership Growth

L.U. 126 (catv,lctt,o&t), PHILADELPHIA, PA — In 2021, our members demonstrated their perseverance by working through a global pandemic, responding to numerous major electrical outages while continuing to work safely. Many of our members worked long hours throughout the year to ensure projects were completed on time, and our end users have expressed their gratitude for this dedicated workforce.

2021 was another year of positive membership growth for Local 126, a result of Business Manager Muttik's directive to organize new contractors while protecting our existing market share. This growth in membership directly correlates with our strong work outlook, as the demand for utility and commercial work remains plentiful.

Over 250 members and guests attended holiday parties throughout our jurisdiction, and it was a great time to connect to old friends and coworkers. These events helped raise money for our annual Toys for Tots fundraiser. Thanks to everyone who participated, as we were able to raise nearly \$5,000 in donated toys for underprivileged children in our area. We hope everyone has a chance to attend one of the fun events planned for 2022.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the following journeyman lineman who completed their apprenticeships in the second half of 2021. You are the future



Holiday events raised money for Local 126's annual Toys for Tots fundraiser, which topped out at nearly \$5,000 in donated toys for children in need.

**HAVE YOU MOVED?**  
 Notify us of an address change  
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LOCAL LINES

of the IBEW! Congratulations to David Abbadusky, Brent Ammerman, Connor Andrews, Robert Ayala, John Bear, Ryan Campbell, Michael Catsam, Gabriel Coder, Curtis Friend, Jeremy Gartner, Adam Germak, Luke Glass, Cody Halterman, Craig Harris, Silas Hart, Troy Heuer, Cori Hoffmaster, Sean Holohan, Francis Kiefer, Brandon Lex, Frank Lombardo, Shawn Lucas, Robert Miller, Matthew Mitchell, Brett Moser, Garrett Pelton, Steven Piech Jr., George Rosado, Salvatore Serramone, Caleb Smith, Bradley Spilker, Tyler Teets, Evan Watts, Ethan Wheatley, Randall Wilson and Thomas Zucco. Thanks to all Local 126 members who mentored these graduates.

Michael Simmonds, A.B.M.

Welcome to Chicago

L.U. 134 (catv,em,govt,i,mt,rtb,rts,spa&t), CHICAGO, IL — Our local is proud to welcome the 40th IBEW International Convention to Chicago from May 9 - 13. After the temporary postponement of the International Convention in 2021 due to COVID, we are proud to welcome everyone back to Chicago for the first time in 60 years.

The convention will be hosted at Lakeside Center, part of Chicago's mammoth McCormick Place convention complex. The convention is located two blocks east of our Local 134 union hall. Please stop by and say hello during your session breaks.

Throughout convention week, Local 134 will also be offering site visits to our IBEW-NECA Technical Institute, located in Alsip, Ill., a nearby suburb. Teachers and instructors will be available onsite to showcase the latest innovations in renewable energy. On behalf



Taylor High School seniors get a jumpstart on apprenticeship with Cincinnati Local 212's JATC.

of all the members of Local 134, we proudly welcome all the delegates and their families to Chicago.

Donald Finn, B.M./F.S.

Steady as We Go

L.U. 212 (j), CINCINNATI, OH — Work remains steady in our area. Currently, we have 61 on Book 1 and eight on Book 2.

Pictured on this page are eight seniors from Taylor High School who are taking part in our career pathway partnership earning credit towards their first year of apprenticeship. Elder, Roger Bacon and Western Hills High Schools have similar programs. We hope to expand to other schools in the near future.

WHO DEY!

Phil Bovard, P.S.



Local 134 will offer site visits to our IBEW-NECA Technical Institute, located in Alsip, IL, as part of the 40th International Convention in May.

Organizing Picks Up at Local 292

L.U. 292 (em,govt,i,rtb,rts&spa), MINNEAPOLIS, MN — As we head towards spring, calls have been few but steady, and the number on the out-of-work book has been stagnant.

We expect work to pick up this spring and summer. The Minnesota Legislature is expected to pass a large capital improvement bill, which will possibly provide close to \$2 billion in construction

projects around the state. We also expect to see several solar facilities, including the Sherco Solar project begin work. Minnesota is expected to receive \$68 million in funding for EV-infrastructure grants from the federal infrastructure bill passed last fall. These funds are contingent on Minnesota making 20% of the funds and providing plans to implement the work. This is part of the nearly \$6 billion the state is to receive for infrastructure needs from the federal bill.

Organizing has been successful in Local 292, and we would like to welcome our new members from Seagate Technology, Wolfpack Promotionals and several other small electrical contracting firms. Additionally, organizing and educating non-members has increased due to the exceptional work of our Sisters in Solidarity, EWMC and RENEW Committees!

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

Gaining Market Share for LCTT

L.U. 300 (govt,i,lctt,mo&u), Montpelier, VT — IBEW and Asplundh Tree Experts wrapped-up another successful agreement with a responsible wage increase and productive dialogue on how to continue to promote and capture more work for members and Asplundh. The local and Asplundh are collaborating to expand organizing outreach efforts throughout Vermont by jointly advertising and recruiting potential workers/members to join the ranks of Asplundh and the IBEW. Through these efforts we hope to increase Asplundh's presence in Vermont, raise the standards of living and ensure future employment for the IBEW members, and gain more market share in the LCTT sector. Congratulations to the members working for Asplundh and we look forward to your increased support and future discussions to keep this moving forward.

It is negotiation season in Vermont, and some groups have been through, will go through and are currently in the hopper for meeting with management to address wages, benefits and conditions of employ-

ment. I wish all of you great success in developing your strategies and stories that will guide you through the process and make negotiations productive, educational and fruitful. Be well and keep the faith.

Jeffrey C. Wimette, B.M./F.S.

Work Picture, Returning Events & Goodbyes

L.U. 340 (em,i,rts&spa), SACRAMENTO, CA — It is with great sadness that we report the recent loss of former Business Manager Charles "Chuck" Cake. He passed Oct. 26, 2021. His dedication and love for his union was felt by many. Our prayers and thoughts go out to his family.

In other news in our office, we recently hired new Representative Matt Nootenboom as we said goodbye and to our Assistant Business Manager Rustin Johnston, who has joined the ranks of the International staff. A huge congratulations to Brother Johnston; we applaud you and the hard work you put into Local 340.

Despite the expected work delays through winter, our local was fortunate enough that we carried less than 5% unemployment at that time. We hope to continue to thrive in the coming months as well.

While we navigate new territory each season with the current pandemic, we are excited to be planning the return of our annual Membership Picnic at Hagan Community Park. Plans are currently set for Sept. 17, and we hope our members and their families get to enjoy this beloved event.

Please continue to stay safe and healthy.

Robert D. Ward, B.M.



Local 494's Teddy Igiehon and PJ Barki pose with the Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy at Milwaukee's Fiserv Forum.

Local 494 and the 2021 NBA Champion Milwaukee Bucks

L.U. 494 (em,govt,i,my,rts,spa&t), MILWAUKEE, WI — In celebration of all the hard work that organized labor had put into Milwaukee's Fiserv Forum — the house that union labor built and the home of the 2021 NBA Champions — the Milwaukee Bucks invited members of the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades to a special day of recognition and appreciation.

**JOIN US AT A SHOOT OR DINNER NEAR YOU!**

**CLAYS CAMARADADERIE CONSERVATION COOL PRIZES!**

**UNIONSPORTSMEN.ORG/EVENTS**



IBEW/Asplundh line clearance crew enjoy the warm winter day (5 degrees and sunny).



Many union members were able to get their picture taken with the Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy, and two of our hard-working Local 494 members were able to take part in this celebration: PJ Barki and Teddy Igiehon.

Thanks to you both, and thank you to all the hardworking Local 494 members who are giving it their all each and every day.

Dean Warsh, B.M./F.S.



Marco Lopez, Arizona Democratic gubernatorial candidate, took a tour of the apprentice facility led by Local 640 President/Arizona State Political Director Delbert Hawk and Phoenix Electrical JATC Director Shawn Hutchinson.

### Local 640 Projects Ramp Up

LU 640 (em,govt,i,mo,mt,rts,spa&u), PHOENIX, AZ — Hello brothers and sisters: Our work picture is still strong and large projects are starting to ramp up, starting late first quarter of 2022, and the rest of the year is expected to be a busy time.

Our first local union picnic since the pandemic began was held on Feb. 19, 2022, for our members and our traveling brothers and sisters and their families.

As the political season begins, Phoenix Electrical

JATC Training Director Shawn Hutchinson and Local 640 President and AZ State Political Director Delbert Hawk conducted a tour of the apprentice facility for Marco Lopez, Democratic candidate for Arizona governor.

We hope everyone is staying well and that we'll see some of you here in Arizona this year!

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

### Catching Up to a Prosperous Year

L.U. 684 (c,i,rts&st), MODESTO, CA — Work was at a crawl most of 2021, but it picked up in December and should continue in 2022. With multiple Frito-Lay projects, the Gallo furnace rebuild, a couple solar projects, a new fuel refinery, three water treatment plants and other projects to start in 2022, we expect a great year.

The local picnic was back this past fall after being canceled in 2020 due to COVID, and our Local 684 softball team brought a Summer Softball League Championship home in September. Our retiree break-



(Left to right) John Kincanon, Wade Drury, Cotton Roberts, Mike Mendoza (Organizer), Nic Svoboda (Business Rep.), Torrey Newton, Jim Davis, Jerry Roberts and Dave Quesenberry enjoyed time together at Local 684's retirement breakfast.



Local 1042 donated 128 bicycles, helmets and general funds to the Jim Turner Toy & Bike Drive.

fast was held in December at the Old Mill Cafe, and it will continue to be held on the last Wednesday of each month. We look forward to and pray for a prosperous 2022 throughout the local jurisdiction.

Mike Mendoza, R.S.

tributed their time, funds and energy to making this a huge success!

Ellen Stephenson, P.S.

### Local 1042 Gives Back with Toy & Bike Drive

L.U. 1042 (u), SANFORD, FL — For the past 20 years, our local's brothers and sisters have been participating in the Jim Turner Toy & Bike Drive. This past Christmas of 2021, Local 1042 made record-breaking donations: 128 brand-new bicycles, bicycle helmets and \$1,440 in general funds to the city of Debarry Civic Center for the struggling families of this community. Local 1042 would like to say a big "Thank you" to all who con-

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## Summary Annual Report for Int'l Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' Pension Benefit Fund

This is a summary of the annual report for the INT'L BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS' PENSION BENEFIT FUND, (Employer Identification No. 53-0088380, Plan No. 001) for the period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

### BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Benefits under the plan are provided by a trust (benefits are provided in whole from trust funds). Plan expenses were \$186,246,478. These expenses included \$12,383,968 in administrative expenses and \$173,862,510 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries. A total of 528,834 persons were participants in or beneficiaries of the plan at the end of the plan year, although not all of these persons had yet earned the right to receive benefits.

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$2,619,379,456 as of June 30, 2021 compared to \$2,127,645,456 as of July 1, 2020. During the plan year the plan experienced a increase in its net assets of \$491,734,000. This increase includes unrealized appreciation or depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan's assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year, or the cost of assets acquired during the year. The plan had total income of \$677,980,478, including employee contributions of \$89,337,790, gains of \$132,775,147

from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$456,865,535 and other income of \$-997,994.

### YOUR RIGHTS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

1. An accountant's report;
2. Assets held for investment;
3. Transactions in excess of 5 percent of the plan assets; and
4. Information regarding any common or collective trust, pooled separate accounts, master trusts or 103-12 investment entities in which the plan participates.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of the Plan Administrator,

Kenneth W. Cooper  
International Secretary-Treasurer  
900 7th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-4089  
82-4445797 (Employer Identification Number)  
(202) 728-6200

The charge to cover copying costs will be \$14 for the full report, or \$0 per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan

administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan:

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' Pension Benefit Fund  
900 7th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Public Disclosure Room, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite N-1513, Washington, D.C. 20210.

### Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

According to the paperwork reduction act of 1995 (PUB. L. 104-13) (PRA), no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid office of management and

budget (OMB) control number. The department notes that a federal agency cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it is approved by OMB under the PRA, and displays a currently valid OMB control number, and the public is not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3507. Also, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if the collection of information does not display a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3512.

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average less than one minute per notice (approximately 3 hours and 11 minutes per plan). Interested parties are encouraged to send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Attention: Departmental Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N-1301, Washington, DC 20210 or email [DOL\\_PRA\\_public@dol.gov](mailto:DOL_PRA_public@dol.gov) and reference the OMB control number 1210-0040

OMB control number 1210-0040 (expires 06/30/2022)

Note: for small pension plans that are eligible for an audit waiver, see the department's regulation at 29 CFR 2520.104-46 For model language to be added to the summary annual report. ■



# In Memoriam

## Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in February 2022

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
1	Gloyd, E. D.	9/26/21	47	Cabrera, J. J.	5/28/21	131	Russell, A. M.	4/22/21	305	Grider, E. L.	12/11/21	558	Hargrove, J. W.	11/5/21	876	Torres, T. R.	10/5/21
1	Mantese, V. J.	11/13/21	48	Arnold, S. A.	10/26/21	131	Smith, W.	3/29/21	305	Sillaway, J. M.	12/28/21	558	Jones, W. G.	12/22/21	910	Dixon, J.	8/28/21
1	Quest, G. R.	6/7/21	48	Butterfield, G. E.	11/24/21	134	Anderson, P. T.	11/1/21	307	Walters, J. R.	12/2/21	568	Cayouette, G.	3/24/21	915	Munro, J. L.	11/12/21
2	Hemker, D. W.	8/29/21	48	Fortune, L. D.	11/10/21	134	Boyle, T. M.	11/15/21	322	Dewey, J. E.	2/13/18	568	Mastrangelo, G. J.	11/23/21	915	Panabaker, R. J.	12/5/21
3	Burke, J. J.	8/27/21	51	Ernst, H. W.	10/21/21	134	Dunne, J. A.	9/11/21	332	Burnett, P. R.	11/30/21	569	Bobbitt, R. L.	12/5/21	934	Harr, J. C.	1/7/22
3	Burns, J. T.	11/29/21	55	Meacham, A. G.	5/28/20	134	Gaston, G. R.	11/8/21	332	Hernandez, R.	11/4/21	569	Sloan, R. D.	5/15/21	952	Lindsay, M. T.	7/31/21
3	Colleran, B. C.	9/4/21	57	Smith, H. A.	11/3/21	134	Graham, D. J.	11/21/21	332	McLean, G. T.	10/20/21	570	Wyllie, W. G.	11/17/21	952	Rogers, C. W.	6/30/21
3	Condolff, H. P.	11/14/21	58	Archer, J.	11/6/21	134	Grieshaber, H. J.	8/19/21	332	Prather, D. D.	11/3/20	584	Brown, R. D.	10/8/21	952	Turner, P. D.	11/4/21
3	Daly, J. C.	3/13/21	58	Bills, C. L.	6/6/21	134	Hartmann, G. S.	9/25/21	340	Bower, J.	11/13/21	584	Cromartie, S. H.	10/20/21	993	Coxworth, H.	12/6/21
3	Donovan, A. J.	11/30/21	58	Bogues, R. T.	5/1/21	134	Mangelli, J.	11/11/21	347	Sweedee, J. D.	6/27/21	584	Flowers, R. A.	11/8/21	995	Bean, L. O.	8/26/21
3	Ferraro, R. M.	12/14/21	58	Konopka, J. A.	11/23/21	134	McCoy, M. N.	10/4/21	349	Northrup, T. J.	10/17/21	584	Turley, J. M.	9/28/21	1002	Marble, J. D.	12/12/21
3	Fischer, B. M.	11/30/21	58	Volkman, K. D.	11/10/21	134	McLreavy, J. W.	11/11/21	351	Balestriere, P. M.	9/13/21	589	Aiello, M. M.	8/10/20	1141	Barnett, G. E.	10/29/21
3	Gallimore, R. D.	9/15/21	60	Appelt, R. L.	12/21/21	134	Timm, F. E.	10/11/21	351	Cade, G. S.	1/11/21	595	Leonardini, M. A.	10/11/21	1141	Otterbine, J. A.	12/14/21
3	Green, J. E.	5/14/21	60	Engels, R. J.	11/18/21	134	Villarreal, R.	11/1/21	351	Curry, T. L.	1/4/22	595	Pezzi, A. P.	10/6/21	1147	Heineck, W. W.	11/6/21
3	Hairston, T. S.	10/28/21	60	Moreland, D. I.	7/24/21	134	Vogt, J. H.	9/10/21	353	Baric, F.	7/18/18	595	Webb, A.	8/13/21	1186	Higashi, G. K.	10/13/21
3	Johnson, G.	11/14/21	60	Morin, R. G.	10/25/21	134	Zwick, E. C.	11/17/21	353	Corlett, J. R.	11/19/21	601	Davison, A. T.	11/30/21	1245	King, L. R.	9/13/21
3	Jones, J. E.	8/10/17	64	Alexander, J. P.	10/16/21	136	Howlett, M. D.	11/5/21	353	Creglia, F.	10/15/21	601	Rubenacker, P.	9/22/21	1245	Penfold, W. L.	7/9/21
3	Kelly, T. S.	12/6/21	66	Argueta, C. A.	11/23/20	139	Hoodak, S.	4/21/21	353	MacVeigh, R. S.	4/10/18	601	Wood, C. W.	12/6/21	1250	Galbraith, G. L.	6/11/21
3	Lombardi, J.	11/19/21	66	Iselt, D. W.	8/7/21	143	Guyer, R. D.	9/25/21	353	Marini, A.	10/24/21	605	Parish, I. L.	9/20/21	1316	Smith, J. O.	9/23/21
3	MacDonald, J.	5/30/05	66	Redling, C. K.	10/13/21	145	Koster, E. R.	11/14/21	353	McIntaggart, G. H.	12/9/21	606	Knight, R. W.	11/1/21	1319	Stanski, H.	1/5/22
3	Mann, S. R.	9/19/21	68	Earley, S. A.	12/30/21	150	Clark, T. J.	10/15/21	353	Wilson, A. S.	7/21/21	606	Word, J. S.	5/30/21	1323	Leatherwood, T. E.	4/15/21
3	Pastore, M. W.	12/19/21	68	Layton, T.	11/4/21	153	Koch, R. K.	11/28/21	354	Barney, T. R.	10/28/21	607	Raup, G. R.	11/25/21	1340	Narron, J. R.	12/18/21
3	Studley, H. G.	11/9/21	68	Steelman, C. L.	12/21/21	153	Mattix, K. D.	11/2/21	354	Crystal, R. J.	11/3/21	613	Bradford, K. W.	11/20/21	1547	Alexander, V.	12/7/21
3	Susankar, S.	6/3/14	70	Via, E. D.	10/26/21	153	Newton, C. D.	11/18/21	354	George, P. S.	11/20/21	613	Higgins, J. F.	11/28/21	1547	DeLano, G. R.	10/30/21
3	Tobin, S. E.	12/8/21	71	Horn, H. M.	1/8/22	158	Allen, R. J.	12/1/21	354	Larson, E. D.	11/10/21	613	Norris, M.	12/31/21	1547	Faris, C.	3/7/20
3	Votke, C. G.	8/26/21	71	Morton, C.	11/27/21	159	Frey, H. J.	10/22/21	354	Stammen, C. J.	11/22/21	613	Roberson, L. E.	11/21/21	1547	Stolt, W. E.	10/16/20
3	Wasserman, B.	11/13/21	71	Pyle, H. R.	6/4/20	159	Stluka, E. M.	9/1/21	357	Arellano, G. R.	4/11/21	613	Sanders, C. L.	11/3/21	1547	Wood, W. H.	10/28/21
5	Brouwer, C. G.	10/9/21	71	Sorg, V. T.	11/15/21	160	Lundin, H. E.	10/25/21	357	Arreola Cadena, C.	10/27/21	613	Stringfellow, J.	11/14/21	1547	Wood, W. M.	12/20/21
5	Corbin, J. I.	11/1/21	73	Destefano, A. R.	11/20/21	164	Biale, R. J.	10/4/21	357	Downen, J. D.	7/1/21	614	Forrest, B. R.	5/26/21	1579	Thompson, L. I.	10/12/21
5	Todd, J. M.	11/6/21	73	Martson, C. J.	8/13/21	164	Burroughs, S. W.	11/6/21	357	Hill, M. A.	12/10/21	617	Dent, D. G.	7/9/21	1687	Milette, C.	10/21/21
8	Hester, B. E.	9/25/21	77	Genovese, C. E.	10/23/21	175	Allmon, J. W.	1/16/22	357	Wengert, J. A.	2/4/20	636	Thompson, L.	11/22/21	1703	Harris, R. F.	8/20/21
8	Smith, G. R.	11/17/21	77	Lockman, G. R.	1/22/20	175	Doremus, S.	12/10/21	357	Yanuzis, T. R.	5/27/20	640	Hamilton, R. D.	11/22/21	1852	MacDonald, K. J.	8/11/21
8	VanderHorst, S. T.	11/30/21	77	McCombs, A. A.	1/14/22	175	Grindle, J. R.	12/23/21	362	McIntyre, J. E.	11/11/21	640	Offerson, E. L.	10/28/21	1925	Burton, R. E.	12/20/20
9	Pisowicz, J. A.	11/11/21	77	Morris, M.	9/21/21	175	Hawkins, D. W.	11/10/21	363	Capobianco, A.	9/9/21	640	Tilley, D. E.	11/11/21	1928	Steffens, B. V.	11/15/21
11	De Moss, R. G.	12/9/21	77	Morrow, J. W.	11/22/21	175	Hulsey, B. L.	3/6/21	363	Hoffman, C. W.	11/10/21	648	Accorinti, J. F.	2/12/21	1996	Smith, J. K.	8/19/21
11	Dooty, T. R.	5/30/21	82	Baurichter, K. P.	11/23/21	175	Mills, F. E.	10/19/21	363	Marsh, D. P.	11/10/21	649	Meyer, E. L.	2/20/19	2038	Glaser, B.	10/2/21
11	Phillips, R. L.	7/2/21	86	Gmelin, T. M.	8/9/21	176	Egbert, L. G.	11/9/21	363	Stabile, R. D.	11/24/21	654	Gardener, J. E.	3/6/21	2038	Hordichuk, R. S.	6/27/21
11	Trujillo, V.	10/18/21	86	Maier, M. J.	5/24/21	176	Migliorini, W. J.	11/14/21	369	Adams, D. C.	10/20/21	659	Brint, V. D.	11/28/21	2150	Olderman, J. L.	11/11/21
11	Wenderlich, D. M.	10/2/21	86	Murphy, M. S.	12/9/21	176	Robinson, G. C.	11/26/21	369	Bryant, J. E.	7/10/21	659	Gamble, D. L.	12/14/21	2166	Warren, H. G.	11/17/21
16	Hanor, M. A.	10/8/21	86	Smith, R. S.	7/13/21	176	White, L. E.	7/25/21	369	Mudd, J. A.	11/29/21	659	Mello, J. E.	11/10/21	2295	Shields, P.	5/9/21
16	Hargitt, T. P.	10/16/21	97	Dibello, P. C.	6/11/21	177	Gilmore, T. H.	10/25/21	401	Byrne, J. W.	10/10/21	659	Woosley, J. H.	4/16/21	I.O. (3)	Hassell, V. R.	2/27/21
16	Huebschman, W. G.	11/6/21	98	Johnson, B. D.	12/10/20	177	Waddington, J. L.	9/1/21	402	Braun, F.	1/5/22	663	Koepp, J.	11/27/21	I.O. (5)	Karadus, J. T.	9/9/21
17	Brubaker, R. L.	10/11/21	98	Lipp, J. M.	11/19/21	191	Halldorson, E. L.	9/19/21	429	Choate, J. H.	10/29/21	665	Benson, D. L.	11/19/21	I.O. (21)	Charnevsky, J. M.	1/14/22
20	Brown, L. E.	11/10/21	98	Martin, J. E.	11/16/20	193	Richmond, J. R.	12/19/21	429	Jerkins, A. M.	9/26/21	666	Lowman, R. M.	11/20/21	I.O. (21)	Pietrzak, A. M.	12/4/21
20	Haynes, W. R.	11/1/21	98	Puleo, A. C.	11/11/21	194	Webb, G. C.	12/11/21	429	Markus, J. W.	10/24/21	667	Blanton, V. L.	12/1/21	I.O. (134)	Zychowski, T. G.	10/18/21
20	Price, C. R.	9/16/21	98	Warren, D. L.	10/1/21	197	Kraft, M. L.	10/30/21	429	McGrath, C. K.	12/3/21	673	Horton, R. A.	9/7/21	I.O. (233)	Murray, M. R.	11/8/21
24	Ebelein, R. L.	10/17/21	99	Fortier, E.	8/8/21	204	Hartman, J. E.	11/21/21	429	Merritt, J. R.	11/16/21	684	Drummer, J. P.	11/23/21	I.O. (245)	Weir, R. M.	10/18/21
25	Angioi, J. M.	11/19/21	100	Dale, W. C.	7/17/21	212	Judy, C. D.	11/5/21	436	DeClerk, W. C.	11/16/21	684	Gray, W. R.	9/6/21	I.O. (932)	Palmer, D. D.	6/26/21
25	Bryer, H.	11/18/21	102	Erikenoglu, A.	6/8/21	212	Prophet, L.	8/24/21	441	Autrey, T. K.	11/20/21	697	Dubowski, M. A.	12/2/21	I.O. (1205)	Peery, G. F.	7/11/21
25	Comerford, G. J.	6/5/21	102	Heckman, J. R.	10/21/21	213	Kennedy, W. W.	10/20/21	441	Campbell, B. C.	9/25/21	697	Terral, G. R.	11/2/21	Pens. (0)	Linkous, J. L.	12/7/21
25	McDermott, R. J.	10/18/21	103	Crowley, S. D.	7/5/21	213	Torrance, W.	11/26/21	446	Becton, F. B.	10/26/21	700	Nevestich, J.	10/15/21	Pens. (34)	Montgomery, J. L.	8/10/21
25	Mineo, C.	9/8/21	103	Martell, W. R.	11/7/21	223	Bowers, J.	6/25/21	449	Detwiler, E. K.	10/22/21	700	Phillips, K. L.	11/24/21	Pens. (369)	Schroader, T. J.	10/30/21
25	Ollendorf, A. R.	11/5/21	104	Eaton, F. D.	12/3/21	226	Herriman, R. B.	8/27/21	456	Giles, R. A.	10/21/21	701	Chenier, M. D.	12/26/21	Pens. (702)	Felty, G. E.	10/27/03
25	Pekarek, W.	10/31/21	104	Moore, D. C.	10/25/21	229	Mort, J. S.	10/25/21	457	Blais, N.	8/3/21	701	Underwood, S. L.	12/29/21	Pens. (840)	Davis, R. G.	11/28/21
25	Potter, S.	12/5/21	104	Sines, D. L.	10/22/21	236	Duker, M. A.	12/21/21	474	Smith, B. L.	11/11/21	702	Fray, J. F.	10/3/21	Pens. (1788)	Stewart, H. A.	10/18/21
26	Allen, L.	11/22/21	104	Voisine, R. J.	10/11/21	242	Denio, T. H.	9/30/21	477	Bullock, G. D.	6/28/21	702	Morton, L. D.	10/16/21	Pens. (2150)	Moder, J. L.	6/20/20
26	Holland, M. R.	5/6/21	109	Kauzlarich, R.	8/8/21	253	Walton, J. E.	2/6/21	479	Bigler, R. H.	12/13/21	714	Opp, D. L.	12/5/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Balzano, J.	9/18/21
26	Koonce, J. L.	7/22/21	110	Fairbanks, J. G.	9/8/21	258	McNeice, T. T.	8/5/21	479	Holland, J. C.	10/31/21	716	Butler, D. F.	12/4/15	Pens. (I.O.)	Barry, F. N.	11/8/21
26	Lewis, J. R.	9/5/21	111	Gehrig, R. D.	10/10/21	269	Gryziewicz, R. J.	11/20/21	481	Backemeyer, A. H.	5/21/21	716	Leatherwood, D. H.	9/13/18	Pens. (I.O.)	Burke, W. T.	5/24/21
26	Lockett, W. A.	10/24/21	111	Gillilan, D. K.	11/27/21	269	Povio, N. J.	11/20/21	481	Bandy, R. J.	10/20/21	716	Murry, L. E.	10/4/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Clymer, R. O.	8/25/21
26	Steadman, T. R.	8/8/21	111	Lopez, J. C.	12/5/21	271	Bevan, W. D.	3/30/21	481	Shoemaker, A.	10/5/21	716	Neal, T. L.	11/1/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Collins, H. G.	5/21/21
35	Delmastro, F. J.	10/1/21	112	Arend, M. E.	6/24/16	271	Joy, G. L.	1/30/21	481	Stevens, J. R.	11/23/21	716	Robertson, T. R.	11/8/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Flores, J. L.	11/9/21
38	Cooper, J. B.	11/16/21	113	Van Sickle, T. L.	11/17/21	271	Knapp, R. L.	12/8/21	494	Fredrickson, W. T.	11/17/21	725	Thompson, A. A.	10/27/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Gaskins, M. N.	12/22/21
38	Rinicella, J. A.	12/19/21	120	Uren, J. G.	7/14/21	278	Garza,										



# Local 3 Member Gets Break Singing at Islanders Arena



New York Local 3 member Kyle Viverito's singing on the job landed him a gig performing at the new UBS Arena where he was working.

**K**yle Viverito grew up with the IBEW, and it's afforded him a lot of opportunities. But one that he couldn't have anticipated was getting the chance to sing at the new UBS Arena, home of the NHL's New York Islanders.

"It's like my whole life has been leading up to this point. I keep telling people I've never felt so in the zone and prepared for a moment like this. It's like the Kelly Clarkson song when she won American Idol. To me, it's the same feeling," Viverito told [NHL.com](https://www.nhl.com), referencing Clarkson's song, "A Moment Like This."

The New York Local 3 member is a classically-trained tenor who has performed throughout the New York area as well as abroad. He's sung at the Dicapò Opera Theatre in New York, Regina Opera Brooklyn, the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company of Long Island, the New York City Opera, and the Anhaltisches Theater Dessau in Germany. But it was his singing while on the job at the new home to the Islanders that got him discovered by the arena's talent scouts.

Viverito had only been on the job for a few days, doing lighting in the suites and then the Islanders team store, when his coworkers, upon hearing that he'd once auditioned to sing at Islanders games, challenged him to prove his musical mettle. So, he did and sang part of "Arabian Nights." Unbeknownst to him, Richard Browne, a managing partner of Sterling Project Development, a partner of UBS, overheard and approached him. Browne asked for another song so Viverito broke into "O'er the land of the free," belting it out in classic opera style.

Despite the excitement of the moment, Viverito says he was skeptical. This wasn't the first time someone had heard him sing and then promised something only to eventually drop the ball.

"I took it with a grain of salt," said the New York native. "I've learned that these things don't always pan out."

But this one did. A second person followed up and even recorded him. Then the entertainment team reached out with an offer for him to sing at an upcoming

game. What's more, Viverito remembered some of the talent coordinators from two years earlier when he auditioned to sing the national anthem.

"It was like coming full circle," said the Islanders fan.

Initially, Viverito was asked to sing for the second game in an upcoming series, but ended up adding a couple more gigs, including a test game, which is essentially a dress rehearsal for a hockey game.

"I was working 12-hour shifts, so I said why not? I'll be here anyway," said the journeyman wireman.

That also made him the first person to sing the U.S. and Canadian national anthems in the new space, which is located at Belmont Park, home to horse-racing's Belmont Stakes. It's an experience he's not likely to forget anytime soon.

"Singing means everything to me, especially seeing how it affects others," Viverito said.

Next, the team offered him a chance to open up for the band Chicago at its charity fundraiser, which kicked off the opening to the brand new arena.

"That was an experience in itself," Viverito said. "They replaced the ice with a concert stage and standing on that stage in front of thousands of people was an absolute dream come true."

Viverito performed the national anthem there and "Perfect Symphony," a duet originally sung by Ed Sheeran and Andrea Bocelli. He did both parts.

"I had a ton of family and friends there, and it was one of the best experiences of my life — until the next one," he said.

His third gig was singing "New York, New York," during the second intermission of the Islanders-Toronto Maple Leafs game. Viverito noted that it's a Belmont tradition dating back decades. The entertainment staff even made a video of him at work to accompany his performance.

"That moment was incredible. They had footage of me working, doing things like pulling wire, and singing on the giant screen in the middle of the arena while the announcer said, 'Please welcome Local 3 electrician Kyle Viverito.' It was so awesome I can't even put it into words. I

literally jumped up and down."

Viverito's love of singing isn't limited to hockey arenas and opera houses. He also loves the spontaneous songs that he and his coworkers will sometimes break into while working.

"If it's a job that we've all been on for a while and the right song comes on the radio, other members will sometimes sing along," Viverito said. "It's almost like it's contagious. And it can get pretty intense. It's great."

Viverito, who is still working at UBS as a traveler with Long Island Local 25, has also performed at a number of Local 3 events, from rallies to holiday parties.

"My coworkers as a whole generally love my singing," he said. "Ninety-nine percent of the time it's well received."

Viverito started singing around age 14 and eventually went to school at the University of Rhode Island for music performance. During summers he'd work as a helper with Local 3. After graduation he went to Germany for a stint, then returned stateside and started his IBEW apprenticeship.

"I had it in my head at the time to only be a singer, but in my very first year as a summer helper I realized the massive opportunity I would have as a Local 3 journeyman and how it would provide a stable life for my future," he said. "I've come to realize that I really can't have one without the other."

In part, there's the practical issue of what pays the bills, but it's also more than that, says the second-generation IBEW brother.

"The IBEW and Local 3 have been a part of my life for literally as long as I can remember. It's a community to me. They've carried my life through some difficult times and I know every day that I would not have any of this opportunity if it wasn't for the financial stability that Local 3 provides," he said. "The benefits maintain my health, including my vocal health. And the money helps me continue my singing lessons and of course all the other financial aspects of my life, including student loans. I'll always be grateful to the IBEW for everything it's given me." ■



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

### Send letters to:

Letters to the Editor, *The Electrical Worker*, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

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*The Electrical Worker* (print)  
ISSN 2332-113X

*The Electrical Worker* (online)  
ISSN 2332-1148

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Electrical Worker*, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

*The Electrical Worker* will not be held responsible for views expressed by correspondents.

Paid advertising is not accepted.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40011756.  
Canada Post: Return undeliverables to P.O. Box 2601,  
6915 Dixie Rd, Mississauga, ON L4T 0A9.



## WHO WE ARE

# Trailblazing Alabama Member's Passion Is a Blessing for Special Needs Community

**M**a Linda Golden was a proud tomboy growing up in Abbeville, Ala., population 2,400 and deep in the southeast corner of the state. If she wasn't in school, she was outside playing or working under what was usually a hot sun. Her jobs included working in a garden center and a lumberyard.

A young man with special needs named Walter lived down the road from her family's farm. Golden saw him regularly at the church their families attended. He had learned how to pick peanuts and drive a tractor, so he was able to help on his family's farm. He also used to make wooden plaques and give them as gifts.

The two formed a friendship that continues to this day. Thus was born a life-long passion for helping others, especially special needs children and those living with mental illness.

"I always said if I could make a difference in someone else's life in that situation, I would," said Golden, a 36-year member of Dothan, Ala., Local 796 and employee of Alabama Power. "He had a huge impact on me."

Ironically, after long volunteering for work with special needs individuals, Golden had a son with Down Syndrome and autism. Michael recently turned 20, and, if possible, having a child with a developmental disability only reinforced her commitment to the community.

"Ma Linda makes it happen for every child out there in the school system," said fellow Local 796 member Chris Jackson, a transmission lineman for Alabama Power who also works as a Special Olympics volunteer. "It's not just for her child. She takes on every child like they're her own."

In the process, she's become a leader in her community and her union — whether that was her intention or not.

"Ma Linda has a heart of gold when it comes to the lives of those in the special needs community," said Fifth District International Representative Anna Jerry, a longtime friend and also a Local 796 member. "She is a true advocate for the ones who deserve and need it the most. She has been a trailblazer and has persevered both in her work as an IBEW member and in life as challenges were thrown her way. She has always found a way to rise above the difficulties and excel no matter what life brought her."

Golden has been a Special Olympics volunteer for 30 years and led the 2013 effort to reintroduce them in Eufaula, Ala., about 25 miles north of where she grew up in Abbeville and where she now lives.

She has worked with school officials there to introduce ways to enhance special education and vocational learning, including a cooking program where stu-



Photo courtesy of Alabama Power



Photo courtesy of Alabama Power



Dothan, Ala., Local 796 member Ma Linda Golden in training just after being hired by Alabama Power in 1986, top left. On the job today, top right. With her son, Michael, bottom left.

dents use assorted appliances to learn how to cook a nutritional meal and potentially work in a restaurant. It also teaches them time management and math skills and provides physical therapy.

Lynne Hughes, a former special education teacher in the Eufaula school system before recently accepting a teaching position in Georgia, worked closely with Golden to implement many of the programs. She watched in wonderment as her friend approached so many people in the community — from corporate leaders to people she met in a local restaurant.

"She can talk to and laugh and relate with anyone," Hughes said. "They fall in love with her. You don't have to really know her to realize, 'Wow, she's pretty awesome.' She's very determined. 'No' is not an option for her."

Determined has been a central part of Golden's life, including her professional career.

She attended a local community college for a time after graduating from high

school but knew she wanted to work outside. She jumped at the chance when Alabama Power offered her a job and she was hired in 1986. The IBEW has had a long-time relationship with the company and she joined Local 796.

It wasn't your typical hiring, however. Golden was one of the first 15 women hired to work in power delivery by Alabama Power and it drew some media coverage in the state. She stood just 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighed about 90 pounds. The training was sometimes grueling but she was intent on showing she belonged.

She's worked in several roles for the company since — including a stint as one of the local's first female tree trimmers — and now serves as a field service representative.

"I feel like if you go into a man's world, you need to take care of yourself," Golden said. "You need to be able to do the job but also ask for help when you need it. Be open minded.

attitude of, 'Hey, let's make this happen. It has to be special for the kids.'"

Several years ago, when Michael was still a young child, Eufaula schools installed a covering on the path from the main elementary building to the playground so special needs students would be covered in case of rain.

Hughes said Golden noted the pavement still could get wet and slick, especially for students using walkers or wheelchairs. So, she suggested finding a way for those students to exercise inside when the weather was bad. School officials applied for a grant and not long after, Xbox and Wii game systems were installed in the classroom. They may be just video games for some, but they help those students learn motor skills, she said.

Community groups chipped in with donations when Golden and others asked for help so special needs students could be provided with electronic tablets like what other students receive. She's worked with school officials to install home appliances like a washer and dryer so special needs students can learn everyday skills that most take for granted.

"She continues regardless of the resistance and she pushes back in the most wonderful, Christian way," Hughes said. "It's always figuring out how this can happen even if we have these parameters. She's brilliant."

As you might expect, Golden doesn't exactly view herself as brilliant. Instead, she views herself as someone determined to fight for a cause she believes in. She's quick to add she's had plenty of help.

Fellow IBEW members have donated time and money. She said the company has been supportive through the Alabama Power Service Organization, which donated money for equipment for the school programs. The Alabama Power Foundation paid for the return of the Special Olympics to Eufaula. The first edition drew about 40 students in 2013 from three schools. It drew 120 students from 10 schools in Alabama and Georgia in 2019, the last year it was held prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Golden's service doesn't end with her work for special needs children. She also has served as Local 796's recording secretary.

"She's very well known in the community," Jackson said. "Everyone knows Ma Linda. Everyone knows Michael."

All the while, she never forgets the friend who lived down the street, who she still keeps in touch with occasionally.

"If we can educate people about these children, and if they can see what these kids can do and want to do, that is the biggest blessing of all," Golden said. "It's teaching them what our children are all about." ■

"I told the people I work with, 'I'm one of the guys. Just treat me like one. You come to work every day just like me. If there is something you don't like, we'll discuss it and let it go.' Their world was changing, too. It wasn't just my world."

But even while adjusting to the demands of a new career, Golden still found ways to help those who reminded her of that young man who lived down the road.

"Working for the power company and being in the IBEW, I've met a lot of people," she said. "Being out in the community with Michael and being involved with different things has helped educate the community on our children with special needs."

Golden even used her son to convince Local 796 brother Jackson to volunteer with the Special Olympics. He saw the two often outside of work in Eufaula, which sits along the Chattahoochee River on the Alabama-Georgia line and has a population of about 13,000 people.

Jackson and Michael formed a relationship. Ma Linda saw she trusted him more than most adults.

"She asked me to handle him because 'He listens to you,'" Jackson said with a laugh.

"She takes off her best friend's hat [during a Special Olympics event]," he added. "Everyone is on point. There's an