

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1893

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

Printed in the USA

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Vol. 18 | No. 1 | January 2024

IBEW News

IBEW Stacks Up Rodeo Wins
Calif. Linemen Take Top Prize **3**

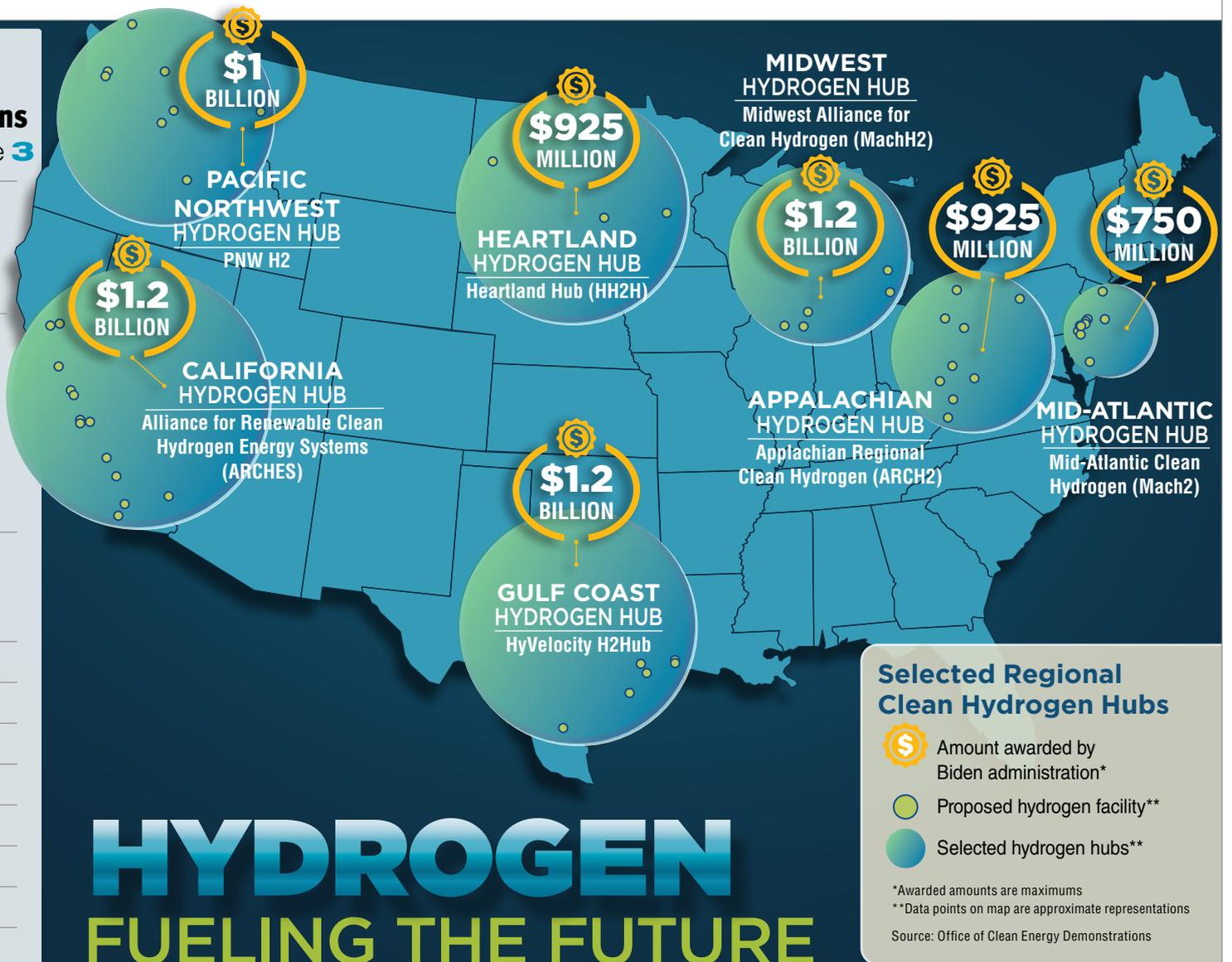
High-Speed Rail Protections
Workers' Rights Assured **6**

Ohio Members Speak Up
Local Wins OT Boost, Earns Respect **6**

'What I Was Looking For'
Mich. Women Find IBEW **7**

In This Issue

- Editorials **2**
- My IBEW Story **2**
- North of 49° **8**
- Politics & Jobs **9**
- Grounded in History **10**
- Circuits **11**
- Transitions **12**
- Local Lines **13**
- In Memoriam **18**
- Letters to the Editor **19**
- Who We Are **20**



HYDROGEN FUELING THE FUTURE

IBEW Members Already at Work as New Industry Powers Up

Selected Regional Clean Hydrogen Hubs

- Amount awarded by Biden administration*
- Proposed hydrogen facility**
- Selected hydrogen hubs**

*Awarded amounts are maximums
**Data points on map are approximate representations
Source: Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations

NONPROFIT.ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1032
LONG BEACH, CA

Hydrogen, the fuel that can burn in turbines and emit only water vapor, was given a \$7 billion push from fantasy to reality, and IBEW members are already at work.

The federal government awarded seven regional hydrogen hubs about \$1 billion each, grants that will spur more than \$40 billion in private and state funding, according to the White House.

"The clean energy transition is not pie in the sky. It is happening right now, and it is being built the right way, with union trades workers getting the lion's share of the work," said International President Kenneth W. Cooper.

Hydrogen is transformational because it can take much of the role of natural gas in the energy ecosystem. It can be distributed by pipelines and burned when needed, but nothing but water vapor comes out of the "smoke" stacks. It also can work in tandem with massive nuclear plants, using

THE HYDROGEN H₂ ECONOMY

See infographic on pages 4-5

excess power during periods of low demand.

For the IBEW, old hands and new members alike, it means tens of thousands of jobs and millions of hours of work, including at former fossil fuel powerhouses.

The hydrogen hub grants were funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by President Joe Biden in 2022, the largest U.S. infrastructure bill ever with the strongest prevailing wage and labor standards of any law to come out of Washington.

The seven projects are in California, the

Mid-Atlantic, Appalachia, the Midwest, the Gulf Coast, the northern Plains and the Pacific Northwest. Together, they will eliminate 25 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions from end uses each year — an amount roughly equivalent to the emissions of 5.5 million gasoline-powered cars.

Most projects are in early stages, but commitments to use labor agreements are in place for at least four — California, Northwest, Midwest and Mid-Atlantic — and IBEW members are already at work on the project in Illinois.

"The IBEW made a commitment that the transition to a clean energy economy would be good for today's working families as well as future generations," Cooper said. "What could be bolder or more optimistic than creating a new industry from whole cloth?"

HYDROGEN continued on page 4

FROM THE OFFICERS

New Year's Resolution



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

For many, the New Year means resolutions to exercise more, quit smoking or lose weight.

Here is another resolution I hope you consider: do your part to build a bigger and stronger IBEW in 2024.

This year is shaping up to be one of our biggest ever. More opportunities exist to expand our reach, bring in more members, sign up new contractors and win over more customers than we have seen in generations.

Legislation like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act mean tens of thousands of potential IBEW jobs in construction and nearly every branch of the Brotherhood.

Interest in labor unions and the trades is higher than ever, especially among the younger generations. People who would have never considered a career in the IBEW just a few years ago are taking a closer look.

Our reputation for excellence is spreading daily in corporate boardrooms across North America, and many CEOs and developers have concluded that partnering with the IBEW is the best path forward for their businesses as well as their workers.

And our political influence continues to grow at every level of government. We are getting pro-worker, pro-jobs and pro-union legislation passed and ensuring the IBEW's place at the table.

But because we are only as strong as our membership, seizing all these opportunities requires everyone to step up and become engaged and educated IBEW members.

First, attend your local meetings, where you can learn what is going on in your jurisdiction and what you can do to build a stronger IBEW. But don't just stop at the monthly meeting. I have been a business manager; I know every local has a lot on their plate. That is why I need you to volunteer and get involved, especially when it comes to community outreach and grassroots political action.

Second, learn what you can do to help organize more workers into the IBEW. We're working with new tools and a new playbook for organizing in 2024, and it's going to take each and every one of us — from my office down to first-year apprentices — doing our part to ensure that we continue to grow to meet this historic demand for electrical workers.

Third, create a culture that is welcoming to everyone. We all come from different backgrounds and experiences, but together, we are one IBEW, and I need all of you to help forge bonds of solidarity with every new member starting on Day 1.

The IBEW is not AAA. It is not enough to just pay your dues every month. We are a trade union. It is not our bank account or staff that makes us strong. It is you, IBEW brothers and sisters, taking ownership, overcoming challenges, and living up to the founding principles of this union.

So, let us celebrate the New Year by rededicating ourselves to the IBEW's mission and work to secure its legacy for future generations.

Thank you for all you do, and thank you for all you will do in this critical year. Happy New Year. ■

A Foundation of Security

Happy New Year, sisters and brothers.

We're blessed in the IBEW to enter 2024 with remarkable opportunities in front of us and the security of the greatest union in the world behind us.

It's that security I want to talk to you about today: financial security for you and your families.

The foundation of that security for our U.S. members is our four benefit plans: the National Electric Benefit Fund and National Electric Annuity Plan pensions; the nonprofit Family Medical Care Plan; and the low-cost, member-focused National Electric 401(k) Plan.

The most important part of my job is making sure all four are strong enough to support you on the job and in retirement. Collectively, it's a working person's fortune that we earned together, pooled together, and use to earn benefits that usually only the most privileged can take advantage of.

These plans are there to give you the peace of mind and stability that everyone needs to chart your future and make loving and responsible choices for your family.

It's a big responsibility, but one I'm so proud to have been entrusted with by you and by International President Kenny Cooper. And thanks to Kenny's choices — not least in helping to oversee the most successful legislative wins in our history, which created decades of work for our members — all four are in great shape.

And they could grow even stronger. Negotiations are ongoing with NECA to increase NEBF pension benefits, and we are optimistic that there will be good news on that this year.

These four programs are so well run, such a comfort and so efficient that they are even bringing in employers, particularly the FMCP health plan. I encourage every local to join the plan. It's an organizing tool for potential members, but it can be even more effective to recruit employers. If you master the numbers and can explain the details to company owners, the FMCP will sell itself and free up critical bargaining leverage to focus on things like wages and other benefits.

The more members we have, the stronger our funds are. And the stronger those are, the stronger that foundation is for your families and the next generation of electrical workers.

It's why we'll be working even harder this year to double down on our successes, grow this union to new heights, and ensure that the people making important decisions about our jobs and benefits do so with working men and women top of mind.

Thank you for all you'll do this year to help us grow the power of the IBEW and protect what we've earned for the generations that follow. ■



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

My IBEW STORY

Ermano Simontacchi
Retired journeyman lineman
New Brunswick, N.J., Local 456



“I grew up in New York City, and I knew by age 22 that a career in building maintenance wasn't for me. Around this time, I moved to Staten Island, and a family friend who worked at Jersey Central Power & Light suggested that I apply to Local 358 and its apprenticeship program. He was an IBEW member with a great career, so I took his suggestion and applied. I was accepted shortly after that into the Northeastern Apprenticeship Training program, or NEAT.

NEAT's quality of training really prepared me to complete and excel at day-to-day jobs. The hands-on work we did, coupled with the safety training we received, made for a really gratifying career choice. After finishing my 7,000 hours of training, I became a journeyman lineman and was on my way to a successful career in the IBEW.

In 2000, Local 358 merged with Local 456 and I met a whole new crew of brothers and sisters. For the next 21 years with Local 456, I took positions for various line contractors such as journeyman lineman, foreman and general foreman. I was also a shop steward. No matter the position, I always learned a lot and enjoyed my time within the Brotherhood.

Along the way, I found the time to get married and have two children. The opportunities Local 456 granted me, along with my strong work ethic, allowed my wife and me to raise our children comfortably and send both of my sons to prestigious universities. They both went on to graduate from college, and I'm the proud father of an electrical engineer and a journalist.

For my final two years working in the Brotherhood, I took to traveling for work, completing jobs in cities such as Atlanta, Milwaukee, Dallas, Cincinnati, Houston and Detroit. Even in those last couple of years, there were things to learn and new friends to make. When I turned 60 in December 2021, I decided to retire after a great 38 years in the IBEW. I couldn't wait for retirement because I knew that the IBEW would be there for me. And I'm still there for the IBEW, too, staying involved with my fellow retirees, traveling together, attending retiree meetings, and celebrating with my brothers and sisters at holiday parties.

Local 456 provided me an exemplary finish to an amazing career, but the trade I learned, friendships I've gained and memories I've made will last me a lifetime. I will always think back fondly, with a smile on my face, about my time spent in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.”

Every member in every branch has a story to tell about how the IBEW has improved their life both on and off the job. Tell us yours today for a chance to be featured here.

ibew.org/MyIBEWStory

THE METER

\$40 BILLION

The amount of private and state-level investment in seven hydrogen hubs across the U.S. expected to be triggered by the Biden administration's \$7 billion package of funding.

See this month's cover story for more.

A Dynasty Returns

Local 47 Members Reunite, Win Lineman's Rodeo

IBEW linemen Brian Wheeler and Toby Claude were part of a dynasty in the world of lineman's rodeo. They competed together on three-man teams that won the best-of-the-best division at the international competition three consecutive times, from 2009 to 2011.

But after the 2012 season, they decided to walk away.

"It had come to a point where we weren't having fun anymore," Wheeler said. "We felt satisfied we had accomplished everything we had set out to do and more."

During the next 12 years, the Montana native worked throughout the West, living in Arizona, Washington and finally Southern California, where he is now a member of Diamond Bar Local 47.

He began his return to competition in 2018 and eventually reunited with Claude, also a Local 47 member. They combined with friend and fellow Local 47 member Curt Norris — who was not part of the first three titles — to win another championship at the 2023 International Lineman's Rodeo, held Oct. 11-14 in Overland Park, Kansas.

"I felt like I still had something to offer," said Wheeler, 47. "I wanted to help a young, talented team reach a similar level that we did. Pass the torch, so to speak.

"But after a couple of successful seasons, the priorities changed. I realized I missed the competition. It helps you get excited about line work. It helps you get excited about the job we do every day. When I wasn't rodeoing, I missed that."

Claude attributed the victory to good communication.

"Knowing the job, knowing how each other works, and being able to shift on the fly and say, 'Let's do this instead of that.' It's all key," he said.

As is often the case, IBEW members dominated the competition in Kansas. They won seven of the 11 divisions, with winners representing Houston Local 66; Charlotte, N.C., Local 962; and Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245. The team of Wheeler, Claude and Norris also won the Journeyman Mystery Event #2 competition and the Journeyman Contractor division.

"I was able to attend this year's International Lineman's Rodeo and seeing highly trained and experienced linemen like Brian Wheeler, Toby Claude, and Curt Norris from Local 47 show off the skills they have learned from an IBEW apprenticeship and the knowledge they have learned in their careers in the trade is truly special," said Ninth District International Vice President Dave Reaves, whose district includes California.

"The IBEW and Ninth District local unions have a great history of success competing at the rodeo, showing our safety and training is second to none."

Wheeler's role was different than during his earlier run of titles. This time, instead of working in the air, he served as the groundman, something he took



Top: Members of Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47 at the International Lineman's Rodeo. Bottom left: Groundman Brian Wheeler, far left, celebrates winning the best-of-the-best title with team member Toby Claude, Local 47 Business Manager Colin Lavin and team member Curt Norris. Bottom right, from left: Houston Local 66 members Darrell Harrison, Matt Sanders and Justin Korenek celebrate their first-place finish in the journeyman IOU competition.

on when he returned to competition in 2018, while Norris and Claude worked the pole in the air. All three were employed by Hot Line Construction when they formed their team.

"I stayed the groundman when Toby, Curt and I teamed up because I had the groundman experience and they have the reach on the pole," he said. "You've got to put your best team in the air. Plus, years of rodeo and playing baseball have taken a toll on my knees and back."

Norris and Wheeler became good friends while teaching at a lineman's training school in Washington state.

"When I first got into it, all I thought it was about was speed," said Norris, a U.S. Air Force veteran who transitioned into line work 15 years ago. "Toby and Brian were some of the fastest guys around when I first started. Now, we're getting older and we're not as fast as we used to be. This win was about communication."

Speed is just one aspect participants are judged on. They also are judged on agility, technique and safety procedures. Experience probably played a factor, too. The three have a combined 64 years of IBEW membership, led by Wheeler with 26, followed by Claude, 23, and Norris, 15.

Like Wheeler, Claude walked away from the rodeo circuit for several years after the 2012 season.

"Personally, I felt like I didn't have anything else to prove," he said. "I still enjoyed it, but I felt like it was time to focus more on work and family."

He agreed to return when he saw

that Wheeler and Norris needed a third member of their team. He had remained close to his old teammate. Wheeler was the best man at Claude's wedding in 2013.

Norris also developed a close relationship with Wheeler in the intervening years.

It didn't come easy. Both had strong opinions on the job. "We did not see eye to eye on anything at work when we first met," Norris said.

But they got to know each other better working at the teaching school and later when they moved to California. They each call the other their best friend.

"He's the most loyal guy I've ever met," Norris said. "He's an incredible person."

Norris had competed in rodeos earlier in his career. He told Wheeler after relocating to California he would like to form a team with him if he decided to return. He also found himself often working on a crew with Claude.

Pretty soon, they all were competing, culminating in the international title.

"I was taught as an apprentice there is always something to do in the air," Norris said. "Whether it's tightening a bolt, loosening a bolt, there's so many things. There's always something that can be done to get the job done right."

All three said there are similarities between rodeo competition and work they do on the job, but not as much as an outside observer might think.

For instance, they'll spend at least eight hours a day out in the field. Rodeo events last two to 20 minutes and are spread out over one day. On

the job, they take pauses to address safety and procedural issues to ensure an entire crew is on the same page.

"The good thing about rodeo and something that helps with our trade in general is we want to do it the safest and most efficient way possible," Claude said. "When you look at an event, you can come up with 88 different ways to do it. When you get back to work, you look at every job and you ask yourself: How do I do this with the least amount of moves and where it is fast and safe?"

Returning to the championship level was a poignant moment for Wheeler. He credits rodeo for saving his career as a young apprentice.

Wheeler said he was struggling on the job toward the end of his first year when a rodeo yard was set up at his training facility.

"I've always been competitive, and that sparked something in me," he said. "By the end of the day, I started competing with the second- and third-year guys."

What he didn't realize at the time was that the company he was working for was planning to fire him the following Monday. Instead, a foreman from the company saw him excelling on the rodeo skills and decided to give him another chance.

He ran with it. Wheeler said that foreman told him the story on the day he topped out.

"Some of the new guys coming in think they're all alone in their struggles," he said. "I've shared that story with them. It helps them move and get more involved in rodeo. It can take a mediocre guy and really make him good."

Norris said being awarded their first-place plaques and the belt buckle that signifies a champion was a special moment.

"When I had a chance to go up there, especially the guys I did it with, it was super special to me," he said. "It's still surreal. It's pretty neat."

Local 47 Business Manager Colin Lavin saluted the three and all the other IBEW linemen who did a terrific job of representing the Brotherhood.

"Being a third generation IBEW member, I grew up going to picnics and rodeo events just like this one," said Lavin, who attended this year's rodeo and the events surrounding it. "I think it's a great time for the brotherhood to get together and showcase their skills for the world to see, with an added benefit of being the top team with bragging rights."

Read more about Local 47's rodeo exploits in *Local Lines* on page 14. ■

2023 International Lineman's Rodeo IBEW Champions

Journeyman Best of the Best Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47

Curt Norris, Toby Claude, Brian Wheeler

Journeyman Pole Climb Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245

Brandon Gloria, David Angove, Jacob Hunt

Journeyman Hurtman Rescue Charlotte, N.C., Local 962

Miles Bell, Jordon Henderson, Heath Burrell

Journeyman Mystery Event #1 Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47

Richard Lopez, Bryan Casas, Marcos Hernandez

Journeyman Mystery Event #2 Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47

Norris, Claude, Wheeler

Journeyman IOU Division Houston Local 66

Matt Sanders, Justin Korenek, Darrell Harrison

Journeyman Contractor Division Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47

Norris, Claude, Wheeler

HYDROGEN FUELING THE FUTURE

IBEW Members Already at Work as New Industry Powers Up

Continued from page 1

Why Hydrogen

Hydrogen is special because it has the potential to solve some of the most difficult problems of the clean energy transition: How do we rapidly grow power generation while keeping it reliable and carbon-free?

Renewable sources like solar and wind are intermittent and require transmission infrastructure that is costly and slow to get approved. Meanwhile, traditional baseload power generation from coal or natural gas, while reliable, contributes to climate change and is increasingly being challenged by regulation. In the case of nuclear, it is clean and highly reliable but exceedingly difficult to build quickly at the scale needed.

Hydrogen has the potential to solve those problems and many others. Its greatest strength is that the only byproduct of combusting hydrogen is water vapor.

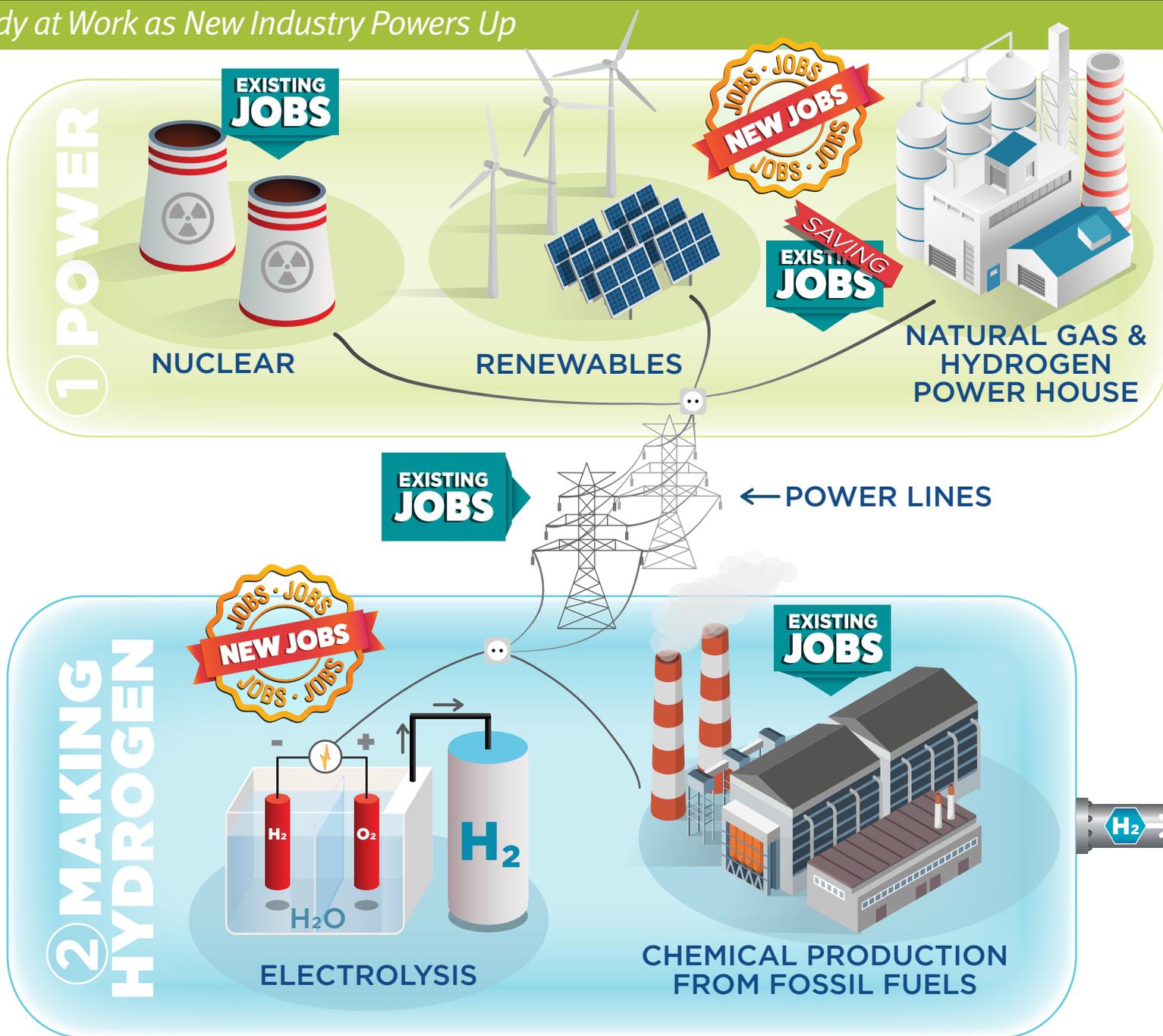
Almost as important, unlike oil, coal and natural gas, hydrogen is straightforward to make and nearly universally available. It requires no deepwater drilling rigs, fracking or mines.

Hydrogen is the most common element in the universe, and with a supply of clean electricity and access to water, it can be made in concentrations and at scale for industrial use.

"We believe the future is our members building hydrolyzers — machines that convert water into hydrogen and oxygen — inside the fence of nuclear plants and shuttered coal powerhouses, vastly expanding the opportunities for working men and women at utilities coast to coast," said Austin Keyser, assistant to the international president for government affairs.

Hydrogen can even offer a clean option for sectors of the economy that are hardest to decarbonize, including chemical, steel and concrete manufacturing; long-haul and heavy-duty trucking; and, potentially, air travel.

The problems are that, as of January 2024, no one makes hydrogen as a fuel at an industrial scale, existing natural gas pipeline systems can't carry it at concentrations higher than about 20%, and only a few power generators can use it as fuel.



Linking the LaSalle nuclear generating station to a hydrogen production facility called a hydrolyzer is a key component of the Midwest Hydrogen Hub, one of seven that received billions in federal funding.

But like most seemingly intractable challenges of the clean energy transition, a good plan, leadership and funding can solve a lot of problems, Cooper said.

"We used to be the envy of the world for our brains and our brawn," he said. "What was invented here was made here, and we changed the world for the better. It's about time we got back to what actually made this country great."

Midwest Hydrogen Hub

Of the seven projects, four are far enough in planning to have labor agreements in place, and just weeks after the government announcement, one is already providing paychecks to IBEW members.

Behind the fence of the LaSalle nuclear generating station, members of Champaign-Urbana, Ill., Local 601 are already at work on the MachH2 project.

One part of the three-state project is a hydrolyzer planned for the banks of the Illinois River. It will run on clean power generated by LaSalle when demand for power is lowest.

"There's no dimmer on a nuke plant. They go full bore 24/7 until they need to refuel," said Local 601 Business Manager Jarret Clem.

Unfortunately for nuclear plant operators, many of them IBEW partner utilities, the paucity of customers during periods of low demand drives the value of that energy dramatically down. One option is massively increasing the stock of batteries and storing that energy.

But batteries have limitations as a storage technology. They require lithium

mines, and many of those mines are not in North America. And batteries are not a great solution for high-temperature, energy-intensive industries like concrete, steel and chemical manufacturing.

Hydrogen could be the answer to each of those limitations, and a nuclear power plant running a hydrolyzer through the night would be a significant victory and a jobs bonanza.

"Nuclear and hydrogen are made for each other, and Illinois is a huge nuclear state," Clem said.

The hydrolyzer itself is still in the planning stage, but the cable raceway inside the plant that will run to a new dedicated substation is already coming together through the hands of IBEW members in Local 601.

"We're booking hours on this project right now," Clem said.

Signatory contractors are bidding the pipe and cable tray from the plant to the new substation, and bidding may start as early as next year for the substation, buildings and overhead powerlines.

Everything inside the utility fence lines is covered by IBEW contracts, and the project has committed to operating under a Building Trades labor agreement

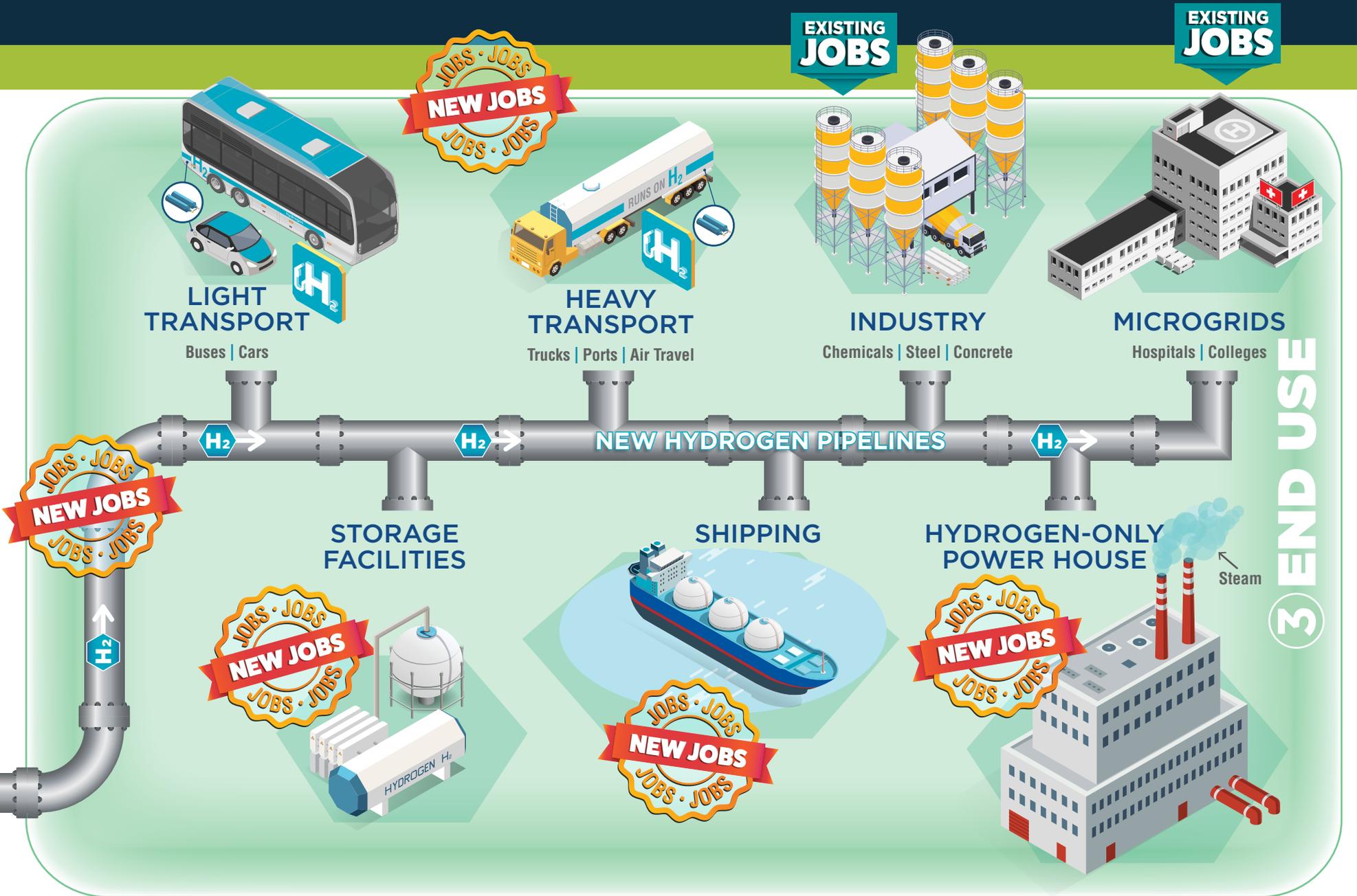
for all the other work, Clem said.

In total, the project sponsors expect MachH2 to generate more than 12,000 construction jobs and 1,500 permanent jobs just on projects directly connected to the hub. It remains to be seen what industries will rise when the hydrogen is plentiful. It's what makes the hub idea so powerful: If you create a density of generators, storage, distribution and customers, new ideas and work are bound to come along.

"When the internet was created, no one had data centers in mind. Now we have tens of thousands of members working on data centers every day of the year," Cooper said.

Clem said he heard people talking about the potential for hydrogen for years. But it was all talk until the Inflation Reduction Act hub program awarded \$1 billion in federal money to MachH2, money that will be matched and eventually exceeded by state and local incentives and private investment.

"This project will mean hundreds and hundreds of jobs for us. I don't know anyone in their right mind who would think there aren't tons of hydrogen jobs for the IBEW," Clem said.



Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub

When Biden announced the grants Oct. 13, he did it from a stage in Philadelphia, which is at the heart of the Mach2 regional hub.

“When I think climate, I think jobs — good-paying jobs, union jobs,” Biden said. The seven hubs, including the one that will take shape along the Delaware Valley from Trenton, N.J., to Philadelphia to Wilmington, Del., will be “American projects, by American workers, with American products.”

Biden was introduced by the business manager of the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council, Ryan Boyer, and was surrounded by labor leaders from the trades, utilities, public employees, and professional and industrial unions.

“Against significant opposition, Joe Biden advanced and signed the biggest infrastructure package in our generation,” Boyer said. “These jobs and opportunities they present will change the trajectory of many of our communities.”

What makes the Mid-Atlantic project different, said Philadelphia Local 98 Business Manager Mark Lynch, is that multiple large employers have announced plans to switch from natural gas to hydrogen power.

“It won’t be a single plant you can point to. It is a regional project, and while some of the work starts next year, the

real work for Local 98 is when the University of Pennsylvania and Children’s Hospital switch to hydrogen,” he said. “And then there will be all the work with (transportation authority) SEPTA, which has plans to use hydrogen in buses and maybe even trains.”

Chester, Pa., Local 654; Folsom, N.J., Local 351; and Wilmington, Del., Local 313 will each get a share of the work, said Tom Lepera, political director for Local 98, and there is a project labor agreement on the whole thing.

Lepera said he expects that the extensive natural gas infrastructure along the length of the Delaware River will be repurposed, expanded and upgraded.

In the early stages, a mix of hydrogen and natural gas can run through existing pipelines and fuel existing turbines, lowering emissions. But as the concentration of hydrogen in pipelines exceeds 20%, new distribution systems will be needed, and that means even more jobs.

Lepera thinks at least 50% of the Mach2 work will be in Philadelphia and just south in Chester.

“I don’t think a new office building is going up in Philadelphia for a decade, so we are always looking for what will put our members to work,” he said. “We are in favor of infrastructure. Hydrogen means more buildings, more growth. Infrastructure always creates the opportunity — and a

cleaner, greener version, all the better.”

Like in Chicago, Lepera said hydrogen production and use has been a topic of conversation for years. He agreed that the IRA was what tipped it from what-if to right now.

“This is an idea that’s been on our radar, but it was Biden’s initiative that made it possible,” he said.

‘A Political Force’

Lepera said that Local 98’s primary role in the application for the project wasn’t in planning or coordinating partners but deploying the local’s deep relationships with local, state and federal political leaders to make sure the application had 360-degree support and the muscle it needed to rise to the top of the stack in D.C.

“When we get behind something, it matters,” he said. “We are a political force in Pennsylvania and nationally.”

It’s at the national level where the IBEW proved most influential, Keyser said.

“The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law isn’t just the most important infrastructure bill in half a century. It is the most important union legislation in close to a century,” he said.

Plenty of infrastructure spending in the past has overlooked improving the lives of working families. Plenty of laws gave lip service to prevailing wages, but in the details and execution created

loopholes the size of train tunnels for businesses to short-change their workers.

Keyser said that didn’t happen this time for two reasons.

First, he said, because the IBEW offered crucial support to elect the most pro-union president in this country’s history, when the bill was written the union was in every room and at every table.

“And second, our members give us the strength and influence so as the law made its way through the bureaucracy and was transformed into a real-world grant program, union involvement was a key part of how the award decisions were actually made,” he said.

Nevertheless, Keyser said, IBEW representatives at the national, regional and local levels are working closely with the Department of Energy to ensure that all of the hydrogen hubs commit to project labor agreements and union neutrality. For their part, DOE administrators have assured Keyser that they are committed to pushing projects in this direction.

Future Opportunities

While the involvement of the IBEW in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, California and Northwest hubs has been exactly as hoped when the union got involved in drafting the legislation, three of the projects — Appalachia, Gulf Coast and Heartland in the

Northern Plains — do not have publicly announced labor agreements yet.

Appalachian hub developers did not reach out to the Fourth District before making their application. Locals were never approached to write letters of support, nor was the Building Trades, said Fourth District International Representative Steve Crum.

The good news, said John Epperly, secretary-treasurer of the West Virginia Building Trades and a member of Charleston, W. Va., Local 466, is that the outlines of a project labor agreement are coming together.

“We are in a negotiations phase, and I think soon we will have appointments to the steering committee and the labor committee for the hub itself, and we will go from there,” he said.

It will be harder where relationship building is only starting after the award, but that is no excuse to give up trying, Crum said.

“For the clean energy transition to be about jobs and justice, a hub always had to come to the Ohio Valley. We needed to restore a bunch of good-paying jobs that had disappeared since we lost steel, industry and coal mines. But we should never stop saying that the only reason those were ever good jobs was because they were union,” he said. “We should not rest until we have PLAs coast to coast, border to border.” ■

IBEW, Other Union Workers Lock In Federal Protections on California High-Speed Rail

Union workers including IBEW members are building — and will maintain — the first U.S. high-speed passenger rail line in California, and now they are assured protections under federal labor law.

This is after the IBEW and 12 other unions with members who work on U.S. railroads signed a memorandum of understanding with the California High-Speed Rail Authority in November.

“It’s an important agreement because it ensures that our highly trained and highly qualified members will continue enjoying good pay and safe working conditions on this project,” said Railroad Department Director Al Russo. “As the railroads continue to develop and expand cutting-edge technology, IBEW members are adapting to perform the kind of work that gets done right the first time and is implemented safely.”

Under construction since 2018, the California network is billed as both the country’s first electrified high-speed rail system and the largest public works project now underway in the U.S. it is being completed in segments, with about 119 miles now being built in the Central Valley region between Merced and Bakersfield.

In December, the project received a financial boost when President Joe Biden announced a \$3 billion federal grant from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help cover construction costs. At the same time, the Brightline West project to link Los Angeles and Las Vegas by high-speed rail — using IBEW and other union labor — was also awarded a \$3 billion grant.

The High-Speed Rail Labor Coalition, representing more than 160,000 workers on every type of rail system in the U.S., applauded the Nov. 17 agreement for spelling out that union workers in California will be covered by such “bedrock federal rail labor laws” as the Railway Labor Act.

“We are proud that this agreement guarantees our right to organize workers, including reasonable access to the jobsite for union organizing, and establishes a pathway to voluntary employer recognition of the union,” the coalition said.

This agreement builds on an earlier project labor agreement between the authority and the building trades, committing to hire highly skilled union workers on the project’s construction side and maintaining fair labor standards overall.

“This project already has helped create thousands of good-paying union jobs,” Russo said. The California High-Speed Rail Authority estimates that more than 1,600 workers are being sent to the two dozen active construction sites each day, and that construction on the overall rail network has been responsible for the creation of more than 11,500 union-represented jobs.

Most of those workers are local. A 2013 community benefits agreement has helped nearly one out of every four jobs go to workers from disadvantaged



communities across the Central Valley.

Russo said this new agreement should help bring in a lot more union workers to the project, with an

estimated 3,000 permanent rail union workers ultimately needed to manage and support the system’s locomotives, station stops and maintenance shops.

“Rail labor will be the ones that build and maintain equipment,” Russo said. “Those will be good rail labor jobs.”

Revenue service on this first system segment is projected to begin as early as 2030, with zero-emission passenger trains, fully powered by renewable energy, capable of traveling more than 200 miles per hour. Later segments are planned to connect the state’s northern population centers in Sacramento and San Francisco to the southern metro areas of Los Angeles and San Diego, along with dozens of Central Valley destinations.

Russo cautioned that none of

these labor wins should be taken for granted.

“It’s no accident that we’re in the middle of the biggest expansion of transportation and infrastructure in U.S. history. These historic investments in rail and good-paying union jobs could not have happened without Joe Biden, one of our most ardent boosters ever,” he said. “I hope we continue to find innovative ways to keep improving on America’s rail growth.”

Visit buildhsr.com to learn more about the project. ■

‘They Needed to Start Treating People Better’ Ohio Manufacturing Members Speak Up, Win Overtime Boost

Oxford, Ohio, Local 2287 Business Manager Pam Combs works alongside fellow members at a Schneider Electric plant in the southwestern Ohio city. She doesn’t have to go far to hear their concerns — and she has had a few herself.

It reached a critical point when the company said it would bring in a large, catered meal to incentivize employees to work overtime. It instead turned out to be a few Jimmy John’s sandwiches, she said.

That may not sound like a huge deal to an outsider. But for a group of employees who felt disrespected and had the data to back it up, it was another slap in the face.

“I told [plant management] they needed to start treating people better,” said Combs, adding she has a good relationship with the plant manager. “It’s that simple.”

“If you want people to come to work, you have to come up with better incentives than this,” Combs added. “That’s not going to float.”

Not long after, they found a solution that should be a win for both sides.

Schneider and Local 2287 agreed to a memorandum of understanding that called for a temporary double-time incentive for all hours worked beyond 40 per week from Oct. 23 until the end of 2023. They previously received only time and a half.

The agreement put more money into Local 2287 members’ pockets in time for the holiday season. It also allowed Schneider to meet the increased demand for products constructed at the facility and time to hire more staff. The company might even add a third shift, Fourth District International Representative Chad Donathan said.



Oxford, Ohio, Local 2287 members and Schneider Electric representatives after a meeting with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in January 2023. Business Manager Pam Combs is fourth from left. Fourth District Vice President Gina Cooper is in the back row, fourth from the right. Fourth District International Representative Chad Donathan is to the far right.

“It’s not only great for our members,” he said, “but it shows just how far this relationship has progressed in the last couple of years. We’ve really been able to fix it.”

Donathan said the employees and Schneider management both did a good amount of listening to each other’s concerns and found a solution that works for both.

“The boom in the construction industry is really feeding this unit,” Donathan said. “It’s way behind on product. This is a pretty rural town, and 250 employees is not something that can be hired in the next day. So we tried to be creative.”

The IBEW has had a long-standing relationship with France-based Schneider Electric, representing employees at many of its facilities in the U.S.

The plant in Oxford, however, is a unique case dating to 2004.

That’s when company officials announced that they planned to close the plant. Employees at the time — with urging from local political officials — agreed to massive cuts in wages, vacation time and benefits to keep it open. They also agreed not to be part of the

national coordinated bargaining the IBEW and Schneider traditionally conduct for new agreements.

“The feeling of being excluded or being treated differently than the employees at the other Schneider facilities was a pivotal point,” Donathan said.

That was true for Combs, who has worked at the Oxford plant for 10 years and been the business manager for eight. The workers scored a victory in 2021 when the company agreed to a new contract that put wages and vacation time in line with employees at a Schneider plant in Huntington, Indiana, about 120 miles away, she said.

Then came news that Schneider was struggling to keep up with orders at the Oxford plant, which builds special products requested by customers that are not normally available on an assembly line.

“We had to present this idea to them,” Combs said. “They kicked it around, and, as I told them, we were to the point of ‘How bad do they need us?’ They keep falling behind. They can’t hire people fast enough for the second shift. For once, the ball was in our court.”

Combs and Donathan both said

they have a good relationship with plant management. Issues related to the 2004 agreement lingered, however, and sometimes slowed progress.

Fourth District Vice President Gina Cooper said the relationship with Schneider at the Oxford facility started to improve in January 2023. That’s when the IBEW and Schneider met with representatives from the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service and devised a plan to better train IBEW’s stewards and the company’s front-line supervisors.

“I am really, really proud of how the relationship with Schneider has improved through better communication and respect,” she said.

Local 2287 has about 230 members, and all are employed by Schneider at the Oxford plant. Combs said she hopes that will grow to at least 300 if the company follows through on hiring more employees.

Like business managers at many smaller P&I local unions, Combs’ position is not full time. She continues working at the plant and finds time for her business manager duties beyond that.

“Pam has gone above and beyond,” Donathan said. ■

Pre-Apprenticeship for Women Brings In More Sisters to Michigan Locals

When you ask Qiana Moore what she likes about being an electrician, she quickly answers “everything.” The critical thinking, the troubleshooting, new challenges almost every day and attaining a lifelong practical skill.

It’s a level of career satisfaction not everyone can claim. And she owes it to a partnership between Michigan’s building trades and a pre-apprenticeship designed for women.

“I’m very pleased with my choice,” the second-year apprentice with Lansing Local 665 said of her decision to leave the pharmaceutical industry after 20 years. “I would have never considered the trades if it wasn’t for Women in Skilled Trades.”

Women in Skilled Trades, or WIST, is a 16-week pre-apprenticeship that uses a multi-craft core curriculum from the North American Building Trades Unions, as well as a few other essentials, to give women in Michigan a taste of the trades.

“We get a lot of women who are interested in the trades but may not be sure which way to go,” said co-founder Tori Menold. “We give them the big-picture overview, and hopefully by the end they can pick the trade they want.”

What began as a one-day event in 2017 has grown into a program with 70 alumna from nine cohorts. Menold said they keep each group small, usually no more than 10 women. They’ve also expanded beyond their hometown of Lansing and now offer classes in Detroit and Flint, with Grand Rapids in western Michigan next up.

In Elizabeth Henderson’s case, she already knew she wanted to be an electrician. She just needed a skills boost. After not getting into Ann Arbor Local 252’s apprenticeship on her first try, she sought out avenues to help her gain the experience she needed. That’s when she found WIST.

“I knew right away it was exactly what I was looking for,” said the first-year apprentice. “I applied instantly and never looked back.”

In addition to the NABTU curriculum, WIST provides strength training with a physical trainer, a 30-hour safety course from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, sexual harassment preventing training, and



Above, WIST’s first Detroit cohort tours IBEW signatory Motor City Electric accompanied by Local 58 members.

hands-on learning opportunities. For the Detroit cohort, who had their classes at Local 58, that entailed visiting a contractor, bending conduit and working with fiber, among other tasks.

“It makes all the difference in the world to get that hands-on aspect of what an electrician does,” said Local 58 Organizer and Treasurer Felicia Wiseman, who helped with hosting the cohort and, along with the local’s Women’s Committee, provided gift bags to the participants when they graduated.

A big part of what makes WIST successful is the environment it creates, Menold said. It’s a safe space to learn something that you’ve never done before without being intimidated by a bunch of journeymen, however well-meaning. And that safe space is bolstered by the



The Lansing cohort visits a LiUNA training center where they earned licenses for boom and scissor lift operation.

sisterhood that develops between the women over the course of the program. Menold said she takes photos of each cohort on Day 1 and then again at the end, and she can see the difference.

“In the first week we were perfect strangers. By the last week, we were having potlucks and supporting one another in our pursuit of a trades career,” said Local 665 first-year apprentice Bailey DeSantis. “It was like family, and it made learning a new and intimidating subject much more comfortable.”

That solidarity of sisterhood goes a long way toward building up confidence, which in turn makes the learning all that much easier.

“For months I spent time with several strong, like-minded women who wanted similar things,” Henderson

said. “We cheered each other on while learning the ins and outs of construction together, and by the end I was confident in my abilities and genuinely felt I belonged within the skilled trades.”

Like Moore and DeSantis, Henderson is passionate about the benefits of her chosen trade and the IBEW.

“I know I’m providing a stable and comfortable life for my family, and a generous pension for my retirement,” Henderson said. “All of these things provide an unparalleled level of security and confidence thanks to my career with the IBEW.”

Having that sense of siblinghood carry over to the IBEW is another benefit. Moore attended the IBEW Michigan Women’s Conference hosted by Local 58 in July, and Henderson is involved



Ann Arbor, Mich., Local 252 apprentice Elizabeth Henderson installs PVC conduit into a concrete wall for a stairwell at the Marriott Vanguard Hotel.

with Local 252’s Women’s Committee.

“The solidarity is everything to me,” Henderson said. “We stand together stronger than we could ever be divided. I think that is one of the most important things we can know as a society, and I’m grateful every day to belong to such a strong union and wonderful local.” ■



Lansing, Mich., Local 665 apprentice Qiana Moore receives her certificate of completion at the WIST graduation ceremony from math instructor Brenda Montgomery.

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Local 213 Members Realize Their Power at Annual 'Education Festival'

The most important moment in improving the lives of working people is when they realize their own power. The challenge for the labor movement is creating that moment at scale.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213 has quietly put together a model to do that, and every local ought to seriously consider something like it for themselves, said First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk.

For the last six years, Local 213 sponsors 100 to 130 of its more than 6,000 members from across its vast jurisdiction to come to Vancouver for what Business Manager Jim Lofty calls an "education festival."

"The content in their classes is very good, but it is also taught at many locals all the time," he said. "What's different is the scale, the time spent, the support for the members and the ambition of it, almost like a revival meeting for labor."

When registration opens each year, anyone can sign up if they are a member, whether for 30 years or 30 minutes.

Lofty accepts that this is not cheap. But there are advantages to the festival model.

"It isn't free to send our reps out to the far corners of the jurisdiction, either," he said. "There are network effects doing it this way that you don't get running a quarterly education program at the hall. It is eye-opening for many members and drives their engagement."

Local 213 Education Director Scott Ashton plans the conference — Lofty calls it Ashton's baby — and for the last several years it has run four separate courses.

Together, Shewchuk said, these courses are "like a new-member orientation on steroids."

The program kicks off with a keynote speaker — this year it was Shewchuk — and then everyone heads to their course.

There is a mental health and first aid course certified by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, though Ashton said most of the government materials were targeted at office workers. Local 213 Assistant Business Manager Christina Brock created a customized course for industrial and construction workplaces.

Former Local 213 Business Manager Adam Van Steinburg, now a First District international representative, teaches a class on grassroots organizing with fellow International Representative Jim Watson.

The last two courses, Ashton said, are actually more like a circuit, a cluster of wide-ranging sessions.

The first is the member education circuit. There is room for sessions on the structure of Local 213, understanding collective bargaining agreements, employment law and activism, and company policies and workplace rights.

"You start off with someone who wants to dip in their toe, and the curtain is pulled back and they see how big the IBEW is and that they are a part of it," Lofty said. "Before you know it, there are two or three people joining committees."

Finally, there is a stewards' circuit with three sessions: the first on grievances, the second on investigations and an entire session on note-taking.

"That is the most requested one I have. It is also the hardest one because I have never seen anyone teach that," Ashton said.

There is no limit to how many times you can attend or which track you have to follow. One member, Ashton said, takes



More than 125 members of Vancouver, B.C., Local 213 gathered for a weekend of solidarity, education and activism that First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk hopes will become a model for the whole nation.

the steward course year after year.

"There are a lot of members who just want to be in the IBEW and want

someone else to carry the mail. They don't complain, they pay dues. That's fine, we need them. But we need more

ways for people to find mentors, to find community, to find their own power," Shewchuk said. ■

Les membres de la section locale 213 prennent conscience de leur pouvoir au « festival » annuel

Le moment le plus important dans l'amélioration des vies des travailleuses et travailleurs est celui où elles et ils prennent conscience de leur propre pouvoir. Le défi pour le mouvement syndical est de créer ce moment à grande échelle.

La section locale 213 à Vancouver en Colombie-Britannique a discrètement créé un modèle pour cette fin, et chaque section locale devrait sérieusement envisager de mettre en place un modèle similaire, déclare Russ Shewchuk, vice-président international du premier district.

Le local 213 parraine depuis six ans de 100 à 130 de ses plus de 6 000 membres provenant de son vaste territoire pour se rendre à Vancouver à l'occasion de ce que le gérant d'affaires Jim Lofty appelle « le festival de l'éducation ».

« Le contenu de leurs cours est très bien, mais il est aussi enseigné en tout temps dans plusieurs sections locales », dit-il. « Ce qui diffère est la taille, le temps consacré, l'appui pour les membres et l'ambition de ce modèle, un peu comme un renouvellement de la foi pour le syndicat ».

Au moment où les inscriptions ont lieu tous les ans, que ce soit pour 30 ans ou pour 30 minutes, toute personne membre peut s'inscrire.

Lofty admet que ce n'est pas donné. Ce modèle a toutefois des avantages.

« Envoyer nos représentantes et représentants à l'autre bout du territoire n'est pas gratuit non plus », ajoute Lofty. « Procéder ainsi donne des effets de réseau qui ne donne pas le même résultat qu'une formation trimestrielle donnée au local. C'est révélateur pour beaucoup de membres et ça favorise leur engagement ».

Scott Ashton, directeur de l'éducation du local 213, organise la conférence. Lofty l'appelle le bébé d'Ashton, et quatre cours distincts ont été donnés au cours des dernières années.

Selon Shewchuk, l'ensemble de ces cours est comme « une séance d'information pour les nouveaux membres sous stéroïdes ».

Le programme démarre avec un conférencier et cette année Shewchuk était à l'honneur, puis chacun se dirige vers son cours.

Un cours de premiers soins en santé mentale est donné par la

Commission de la santé mentale du Canada, Ashton mentionne que la majorité du contenu des cours du gouvernement sont destinés aux personnels administratifs. Christina Brock, assistante gérante d'affaires du local 213, a créé un cours personnalisé pour le secteur industriel et pour le secteur de la construction.

L'ancien gérant d'affaires de la section locale 213, Adam Van Steinburg, maintenant représentant international du premier district, donne une formation sur la base du recrutement syndical, accompagné de son frère et représentant international, Jim Watson.

Les deux derniers cours sont en réalité plus comme des circuits : un ensemble de séances très diversifiées, exprime Ashton.

Le premier cours est le circuit de l'éducation du membre : on prévoit des séances sur la structure de la section locale 213, la compréhension des conventions collectives, les lois en matière d'emploi et le militantisme syndical, les politiques d'entreprises et les droits en milieu de travail.

« Vous commencez par quelqu'un qui tâte le terrain, le rideau se lève et il

constate l'envergure de la FIOE et qu'il en fait partie », mentionne Lofty. « Et aussitôt, deux à trois personnes participent à des comités. »

Finalement, il y a le circuit des déléguées syndicales et délégués syndicaux offert sur trois séances : le premier présente les griefs, le deuxième présente les enquêtes et une séance entière est consacrée à la prise de note.

« Il s'agit du cours le plus populaire. Il s'agit aussi du plus difficile, car je n'ai jamais vu personne l'enseigner », formule Ashton.

Le nombre de participations au cours n'est pas limité ni la piste que vous devez suivre. Année après année, un membre suit le cours de délégué syndical, exprime Ashton.

« Beaucoup de membres veulent simplement faire partie de la FIOE et laisser les responsabilités à quelqu'un d'autre. Ils ne se plaignent pas, ils versent leurs cotisations. C'est bien, nous avons besoin d'eux. Cependant, nous devons trouver des moyens pour que les gens puissent trouver des mentors, de trouver un sentiment d'appartenance, de découvrir leur propre force », déclare Shewchuk. ■

POLITICS & JOBS

IBEW-Backed Law Helps Save NY Local's Pension Plan

The promise of a full and dignified retirement has been restored for members of Niagara Falls, N.Y., Local 237, thanks to the local's determination and IBEW-backed federal legislation that shores up pensions.

Entire industries were hollowed out in the local's Western New York jurisdiction in the past two decades, sending ripples of economic damage through the trades. Local 237 leadership tried putting money back into the pension at different points, but nothing seemed to stop the downward spiral. By 2019, only two options remained: Let the fund go insolvent or make some serious cuts.

"It was a terrible feeling," said Local 237 Business Manager John Scherrer, who ran for office in large part to help rescue the plan. "If our pension would've went away, our local would've went away."

First, the local applied for assistance through the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act, which allows plans like Local 237's that are in critical status to suspend benefits to avoid insolvency. The application was approved in 2020, and membership voted to go ahead with the cuts, knowing it was a necessary, if dire, action to take.

urgently needed without potentially curtailing the fund down the road.

In the end, they received just over \$32 million, enough money to put the pension back on track while also paying back the retirees who had taken cuts.

"I didn't know exactly how it was going to work, but it meant my pension wasn't going to end in 2027," Saph said. "I thank God every day for that."

For retirees like Gerry Manzi, the ARP wasn't just the right thing to do, but it also corrected for outcomes like deregulation and automation that impacted multiemployer pensions like theirs through no fault of their own.

"It's our money," Manzi said. "We negotiated this. You gotta pay the people that are retired."

For a lot of younger workers, the idea of a pension can seem as antiquated as a rotary phone. Only about one in 10 Americans working in the private sector has one.

But public views may be shifting. While they weren't ultimately successful, members of the United Auto Workers called for expanding their defined-benefit plan to those hired after 2007 in their recent contract negotiations.

The job-search platform Indeed found that more people are searching for such a benefit, and more job postings are mentioning pensions.

Organizing successes meant Huntington, W. Va., Local 317 needed to expand its training center, a construction project that has provided work for IBEW members like Nathaniel Caudill, left, and Lonnie Doss.



Reputation, Federal Infrastructure Laws Fuel Growth at W. Va. Local

IBEW locals across the U.S. are benefiting from the historic labor-friendly provisions in the Biden administration's three major infrastructure and manufacturing laws, which incentivize contractors and developers to use union workers.

This includes Huntington, W. Va., Local 317, which is celebrating among its recent wins an agreement with its third traffic signal contractor, Cross Lanes-based Stealth Ltd.

And while Local 317 Business Manager Shane Wolfe attributes much of this accomplishment to the local's decades-long reputation in the community for quality work and thorough training, "that [infrastructure] money helped us make this deal," he said.

Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper applauded the agreement. "Every time our locals close a deal and win new work like this, it's a win for the entire Brotherhood," said Cooper, whose jurisdiction includes West Virginia. "Our leaders worked closely with the Biden administration to make sure strong labor standards were included in these three landmark bills. I'm proud of the business managers who aren't letting these opportunities slip away."

The infrastructure laws' pro-union provisions also are helping the IBEW and other organizations overcome some state-based anti-labor roadblocks. For example, West Virginia's Legislature in 2016 approved a so-called right-to-work measure that allows nonunion workers to enjoy the fruits of collective bargaining agreements without paying a cent toward maintaining those agreements. That same year, the Legislature also repealed the state's prevailing wage mandates for public works projects.

Local 317 has continued to thrive in the face of these anti-union setbacks by touting the IBEW's reputation for quality education and workmanship with contractors like Stealth.

Along with the other two traffic signal contractors represented by Local 317, Specialty Groups Inc. and Pritchard Signal and Lights, Stealth's workers are being tapped by the state to handle signal construction and maintenance work all over West Virginia, where the mountainous terrain and weather extremes can be tough on the components of an outdoor traffic signal system. But a handful of nonunion contractors also get this work.

"Signing on Stealth helps us get more of that market share," Wolfe said.

As infrastructure work — and traffic signal work in particular — takes off across the state, Stealth's owners told Wolfe that they are looking to grow their 20-employee company. "We told them

about our training center, with classrooms and hands-on training," Wolfe said. "We have a signal apprenticeship here, specifically. We will teach them skills they'll never forget."

In addition to traffic signal workers, Local 317 represents members working in inside and outside construction, line clearance tree trimming, radio/television, telephone, and utility. The local's jurisdiction covers 24 of West Virginia's 55 counties, along with 15 counties in eastern Kentucky, 19 counties in southwestern Virginia, and two counties in southeastern Ohio.

Wolfe is also overseeing construction of the local's new training building.

"We outgrew our footprint," Wolfe said. "So we bought up some of the vacant residential lots behind the hall and got them rezoned" as neighborhood commercial.

Local 317's existing office and training center campus have been a prominent part of its largely residential community for decades, he said, enjoying a friendly relationship with the neighbors as well as with the city's leaders — including Steve Williams, Huntington's mayor since 2013 who is running for governor with Local 317's full support.

The expansion building is going in adjacent to the current facility to help handle Local 317's projected workload — from other federally funded infrastructure projects, from work on such things as a new \$3.1 billion steel plant being built near Point Pleasant, and from the ongoing growth and improvements at Marshall University — "one of our best friends," Wolfe said.

The new center also is designed to handle the training of as many as 500 apprentices per year, a dramatic increase from the current 60 per year figure.

"It will be useful for all of our branches," Wolfe said, helping to take away the local's need to outsource some of its training. ■

California Local Adds Major Signatory, With Assist From Biden Clean Energy Law

Braun Electric Co. has long seemed a natural partner for Bakersfield, Calif., Local 428. Now, thanks to a mutual interest in renewable energy and a long courtship, the two are working together.

Braun became a Local 428 signatory contractor in early November, welcoming nearly 100 new members into the union.

"They had been the largest non-signatory in our area for a long time," Business Manager Brian Holt said. "Conversations have been ongoing for years."

California's Central Valley is one of the leading U.S. regions for natural gas exploration. Braun has

"When I was young, I didn't know what a pension was. Now that I'm here, I understand it. Without a pension, you're going nowhere."

— David Saph, Local 237 retiree



"It hurt all the way around," said Local 237 retiree David Naus of the decision to take a roughly 25% cut in benefits that would give the apprentices and younger workers some type of pension in the future. "We were all going to lose something."

For retiree David Saph, a third-generation IBEW member and Air Force veteran, those cuts meant he and his wife had to take a long, hard look at their own budget. They reduced overhead where they could and paid down some debt, but they still ended up selling their house.

"It changed my life a lot," Saph said. "When I was young, I didn't know what a pension was. Now that I'm here, I understand it. Without a pension, you're going nowhere."

Enter the American Rescue Plan. The pandemic relief bill, signed into law by President Joe Biden in 2021, included IBEW-backed legislation called the Butch Lewis Act — championed by labor allies including Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio — to offer relief to certain multiemployer pensions.

Scherrer said the local was initially hesitant to take the aid. It seemed at first that the help would come at the cost of the future health of the fund.

"We didn't want to take the money and leave our apprentices with nothing," Scherrer said.

Seeing an opening, the local submitted a letter during a comment period regarding implementation of the law to explain its situation. Those comments were addressed, and in the final version, certain pension plans, including Local 237's, were allowed to use a different calculation that would let them take the financial assistance they

When the ARP passed, it did so without a single Republican voting for it. It's something Scherrer said he reminds his members of.

"He saved the most important thing to each member — our pension," Scherrer said of President Joe Biden, who pushed for the pension provision and signed the bill into law.

It's a sentiment shared by a lot of retirees, including Naus, who sat on the pension board before retiring in 2016.

"They've all helped us," Naus said of Democratic New York Sens. Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, along with Rep. Brian Higgins, another New York Democrat, who shepherded the bill through their respective Houses in Congress. "Believe in the system. ... There is an end to the tunnel."

With multiple large projects in the area and more coming — thanks in large part to legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the infrastructure law — job prospects for Local 237 are strong and should continue to be so for years to come.

That's good news for today's young workers and the future of the pension plan. Scherrer said the local's fund is earning more money than predicted when it got the aid, and it's bringing in more apprentices than expected. And they've even got a new training center to teach the next generation of members.

"The work is the best I've seen in my whole career," said Scherrer, who started as an apprentice in 1995. "We definitely have a bright future. I got no worries now." ■

POLITICS & JOBS *continued on page 10*

POLITICS & JOBS *continued*

been part of the community since its founding in 1945 and has a long history in the gas and oil industry.

In recent years, the company has shown more interest in renewable energy, likely driven by its contractors and partners seeking more work due to incentives from state and federal governments.

The Inflation Reduction Act signed by President Joe Biden in 2022 — which the IBEW lobbied heavily for — extends tax credits of up to 30 percent for companies investing in renewable projects if they pay prevailing wages and employ workers from qualified apprenticeship programs.

At the state level, a law signed by California Gov. Gavin Newsom added skilled and trained labor requirements to petrochemical work, a boost for trade unions with high-road apprenticeship programs.

These legislative requirements and investments have made it even more attractive for Braun and other companies to partner with Local 428 and other IBEW local unions. In addition to the tax incentives, they get access to highly trained Local 428 members already working with renewables.

“It was a team effort, and I could not feel more proud of the team.”

— Local 428 Business Manager Brian Holt on making Braun Electric Co. a signatory contractor

“The oil and gas extraction business has been shrinking,” Holt said. “We’ve been successful working with developers up and down the state on some [renewable] projects. When the IRA hit the streets, those other developers said, ‘We’re going to go for the tax credit.’”

The agreement included requirements on which Braun electricians immediately qualified to become journeyman or move into Local 428’s apprenticeship program, depending on their experience and training.

Holt noted Local 428 members have seen increasing work opportunities in renewable energy for nearly a dozen years as investor-owned utilities expand their portfolios into renewable energy sources.

Renewables are important but they are just one key piece of the deal. The oil and gas industry is not going away anytime soon. In the near term, Local 428 will pick up maintenance work at oil leases that employ Braun workers.

Holt said conversations between Local 428 and Braun always have been cordial. He noted that talks were ongoing before he took over as business manager nearly three years ago.

He praised the company and its president and CEO, David Morphis, for being receptive to the IBEW. Local 428 Assistant Business Manager Mark Dewey, the Ninth District office and the local NECA chapter also played key roles in getting the deal finished, Holt said.

“Even working on the details of the transitional agreement, it never felt like a negotiation,” he said. “It was a team effort, and I could not feel more proud of the team. We’re looking forward to working with the Braun companies.” ■

GROUNDLED IN HISTORY

Local 3 Lights Times Square

Every Dec. 31, America looks to New York City’s Times Square to ring in the New Year. Among the dazzling lights and electric displays, people across the country watch as the ball is dropped from the roof of One Times Square to begin the countdown.

For over 100 years, the IBEW has played an essential role in this annual tradition, along with some of the most historic displays to ever grace the square.

Wrigley’s Spearmint Gum

On March 28, 1936, a state-of-the-art electronic advertisement for Wrigley’s Spearmint Gum illuminated Broadway atop the International Casino building. Installed by 121 members of New York City Local 3, it was the biggest display ever constructed, reaching the height of a 10-story building and stretching for an entire block on Broadway, from 44th Street to 45th Street.

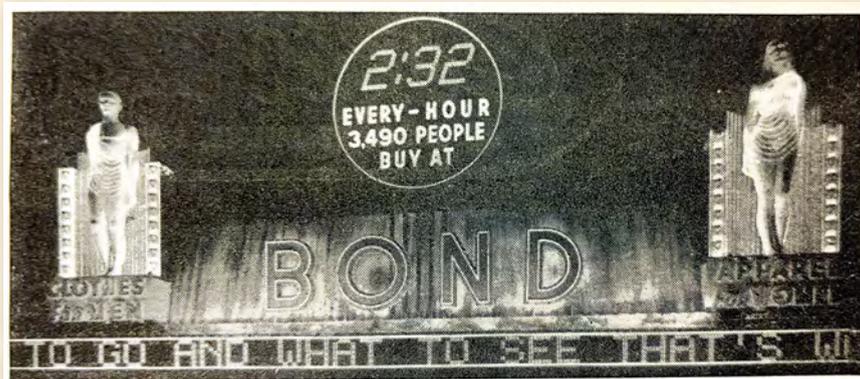


New York Local 3 members built the groundbreaking Wrigley’s Spearmint Gum display atop the International Casino building in Times Square in 1936.

Designed by artist Dorothy Shepard, the sign represented a drastic departure in electrical advertising. “In contrast to other quick-flashing electric signs to hurrying crowds,” an article in the April 1936 *Electrical Worker* read, “the Wrigley display is keyed to a slow-motion tempo with gigantic multi-colored fish, the largest measuring 42 feet in length, appearing to glide about among rhythmic waves of red and green light while bubbles rise to the top.” The wattage required was sufficient to “operate all radios in the United States for two hours.”

Bond Clothes

In 1940, the International Casino building was purchased by Bond Clothing and turned into a retail store. The Wrigley’s display was replaced by a lackluster ad for Schlitz Beer. In 1948, an



The Bond Clothing ad display, built in 1948, sought to outdo the Wrigley’s ad after Bond bought the casino building.

advertiser by the name of Douglas Leigh persuaded Bond’s owner to install a store advertisement that would surpass Wrigley’s and become the most extravagant display in the square’s history.

Completed in July 1948 by members of Local 3, the 75-foot-tall sign featured a 132-foot-wide waterfall with more than a million gallons poured over a 27-foot-high backdrop every hour. Twenty-three electric pumps kept the water in circulation from a 10,000-gallon tank at the bottom.

According to an August 1948 article in *The Electrical Worker*, “approximately one million watts were used in the sign’s operation, which had 21,500 bulbs, 14,000 feet of neon tubing, 270 transformers, 270 branch circuits, 120 miles of wire, and 10,000 feet of high-tension cable.”

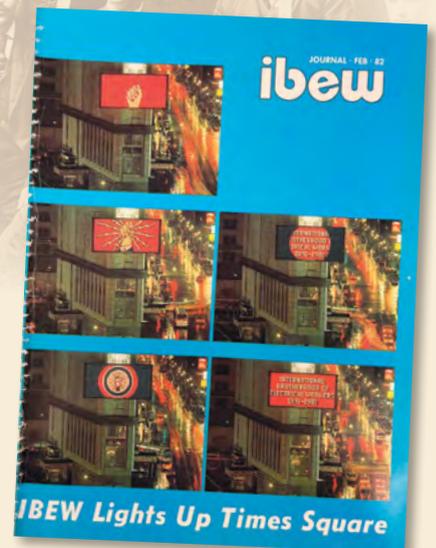
Bookending the waterfall were 50-foot-high male and female figures, cast in concrete and illuminated at night. Beneath the sign was a 287-foot-long “adcast,” containing the longest traveling message sign ever built in a straight line, with letters 6 feet high.



Local 3 member James Torpey ran the “adcast” ticker display in Times Square from 1928 to 1961.

The Legacy of Brother Torpey

From 1928 to 1961, the adcast news display in Times Square was maintained by James J. Torpey of Local 3. Early in his career, Torpey took the job of head electrician for the contractor that built the sign in 1928 and simply never left. Each night, he and two other electricians checked and repaired the switches, connections and components of the sign and set newsroom bulletins in letters. The letters were placed in a frame



The IBEW seal adorned every display screen at One Times Square during the AFL-CIO Centennial Convention in 1982. The IBEW ad ran for 20 seconds every hour.

inserted in a magazine at the end of a narrow track over which a chain conveyor moved them as they would form and break circuits.

According to an article in the December 1966 *Electrical Worker*: “Torpey was most proud of his scoop on August 14, 1945 when, at 7:30pm, he flashed the news *** Truman Announces Japanese Surrender **. The stars were Torpey’s idea and represented the different branches of the armed forces. He remained in his post that day for 23 hours.”

In appreciation of his efforts that day, Arthur Sulzberger, publisher of the *New York Times*, presented Torpey with a 6-foot-high photo of the joyous crowd inscribed: “To James Torpey who told this crowd in Times Square that the war was over.” Brother Torpey passed away at age 70 in 1966.

IBEW Seal Illuminates Times Square

For one week in January 1982, the IBEW seal was proudly displayed on every screen of One Times Square. Seen by millions of viewers during the AFL-CIO Centennial Convention, the digital sequence programmed by Spectacolor Inc. appeared every 20 seconds each hour.

New Year’s Ball

The New Year’s Ball sits atop a specially designed pole on the roof of One Times Square. The ball drop was first held on Dec. 31, 1907, organized by Adolph Ochs, owner of *The New York Times*, to promote the opening of the Times’ new headquarters. The original ball was made of wood and iron, measured 5 feet wide and was illuminated with 100 incandescent light bulbs.

As lighting technology evolved, the ball’s design, maintenance and operation became more complex. Today’s ball is 12 feet wide, weighs 11,000 pounds and features 32,256 LEDs. For the past several decades, it’s been the members of the IBEW Local 3, working for signatory contractor AMA Sign & Electric, who have ensured that this time-honored tradition continues. ■

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

CIRCUITS

'We Were Like Paratroopers': L.A. Local's '2nd Call' Team Steps In to Finish Community Center Project

When it began to look as if the electrical work on Kaiser Permanente's upgraded Watts Counseling and Learning Center in South Central Los Angeles might need a push to get finished by the project's deadline, the site's general foreman knew he could call on Los Angeles Local 11's John Harriel Jr. for some additional help.



John Harriel Jr. chairs Los Angeles Local 11's executive board and volunteers with 2nd Call, which helps adults gain life and career skills.

Harriel, better known as Big John, is chairman of Los Angeles Local 11's executive board and a superintendent and diversity manager with IBEW signatory contractor Morrow-Meadows. He's also a longtime volunteer facilitator with Second Chance at Loving Life, or 2nd Call, a community-based nonprofit organization whose staff members emphasize mutual support while teaching life skills, career classes and trades to at-risk and proven-risk men and women.

"The biggest role of 2nd Call is to provide a pathway for facilitation and mentoring," said Harriel, who often steers conversations toward careers in the trades. Like the IBEW, he said, "No one's turning their backs on someone who spent time in prison or didn't go to high school."

The Kaiser Permanente project's foreman, with signatory contractor Briggs Electric, had worked successfully on a previous project with Harriel and his group of Local 11 members who are also 2nd Call participants, known as the Wolfpack. The foreman knew that the job would get done.

So did Harriel, who understands how a career in the trades can provide a pathway toward a solid middle-class career, not to mention a much-needed second chance. A self-described one-time thug from South Central, Harriel was serving a five-year sentence in an Illinois prison when he was tasked to help an IBEW electrician who was working on site. Not only did Harriel learn a trade through this experience, but he also learned that the IBEW would not hold his past against him. After Harriel returned to Los Angeles in 1997, he was initiated into the IBEW and started working for Morrow-Meadows, eventually becoming a foreman in 2004.

As a volunteer with 2nd Call since soon after the organization was founded in 2005, Harriel has worked with hundreds of people, helping them deal with such things as lifelong trauma, anger and depression while also teaching them personal development and career skills.

"Brother Harriel and the Wolfpack epitomize what the IBEW is all about in their continuous

community involvement and showing how anyone can succeed given an opportunity and second chance," said Ninth District International Vice President David Reaves.

For this Kaiser Permanente job, Harriel and his Wolfpack crew "were like paratroopers coming in. We had a team in place in eight hours," he said. "It was a real testimony to the power of the Brotherhood."

The original counseling center opened two years after the 1965 civil unrest that had been centered in Watts. It provides mental health and educational resources to all families from the neighborhood and nearby communities, even if they aren't Kaiser Permanente members. The company had promised the community that an upgraded facility on 103rd Street would be open by early 2024.

With five weeks to go before Kaiser Permanente's deadline over the summer, the Wolfpack assembled the project's various and extensive punch lists, and then quickly set out to wrap up all the remaining task items, everything from roof lights to conduits, working 10-hour shifts six days a week to get the job done.

"For Briggs, it had been their first time working on this type of project," Harriel said, and the work had been progressing.

"What is beautiful was the relationship we brought to the project," Harriel said, noting that there was no finger-pointing or second-guessing. "We said, 'How can we help?'"

"Kaiser saw this teamwork happening," he added. "That gets us in good graces with Kaiser as a whole."

What also helped is that most of the Wolfpack crew, like Harriel, is from that community, and some might use the building's services at some point. "I never believed in being successful and then leaving my community," he said. "I stay here and help them out."

More recently, Harriel has been helping his Morrow-Meadows colleagues with diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

"We have to get people uncomfortable [to] help people from the community get in leadership positions," he said. "Let's let the tide rise all."

(Learn more about Harriel's journey in the April/May 2007 edition of the IBEW Journal and in the May 2020 and November 2022 editions of The Electrical Worker, all available at ibew.org/media-center.)



Tyrone Burgess, a Los Angeles Local 11 journeyman wireman, tackles another punch list item for the Kaiser Permanente counseling center project.



More than 400 young women and girls attended the Massachusetts Girls in Trades career fair held annually at Boston Local 103's hall.

Boston Local Hosts Trade Conference for Girls

Armed with enthusiasm and curiosity, young women and girls from all around Boston descended on Local 103 for the annual Massachusetts Girls in Trades career fair, an event the local has hosted since 2015.

"Local 103 has made it possible for our eastern conference to happen," said Sarah Adams, program manager for Massachusetts Girls in Trades, or MAGIT. "Especially as we've grown these last seven years and gained momentum, their kind donations of staff and a venue have made all the difference."

Massachusetts Girls in Trades was launched eight years ago by a partnership of educational, governmental and union organizations to encourage girls and young women to pursue careers in the trades. Since its inception, Local 103 has been a partner, offering facilities and other resources for the annual career fairs.

"103 gets to do what we do best, and that's organize," Business Manager Lou Antonellis said. "Our women are actively recruiting and encouraging these students to take a good, hard look at a career in the IBEW for their future. Hosting the event just proves that we're leading Boston's labor movement in diversity, especially when it comes to attracting women to our trade."

In addition to hosting the event, which took place in November, Local 103 had members from its Women's Committee on hand, as well as signatory contractors and instructors, to answer questions from the attendees, about 450 of whom were students. The girls also heard from Chrissy Lynch, the first woman president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and state Sen. Lydia Edwards, who is the product of a union household and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

"Senator Edwards is a force to be reckoned with," said Renee Dozier, Local 103 business agent and a MAGIT steering committee member. "She's strong, she's intelligent, she speaks several languages, and she's not afraid to say 'union' or 'PLA [project labor agreement]'. She's a real example of girl power."

The event, which is free to female high school students and their educators, gave the girls a chance to hear from a panel of tradeswomen about

what a day on the job is like and how they can join. Dozier said the girls came with a lot of questions, proving their interest, and that a number of teachers asked if Local 103 could come out to their schools to continue the conversation — especially the part about women members getting paid the same as their male counterparts.

"The partnerships we form and maintain with our community groups and the schools is really the driving force," she said. "The want and the need are there, so we're happy to facilitate."

The conference, which also had members of Brockton Local 223 in attendance, has grown so much over the years that there is now a second event in western Massachusetts, which included representatives from Springfield Local 7. Adams said they had almost 40 organizations and 26 schools participate in the eastern conference.



Students heard from local women leaders and established tradeswomen including members of Boston Local 103. "I see these young girls and I am excited for their future," said Local 103 Business Agent Renee Dozier.

"I see these young girls and I am excited for their future," Dozier said. "I see them bright-eyed and ambitious and it reminds me of what it was like to be young and open to exploring new ideas, experiences and possibilities. They are potentially choosing a career path here and we're responsible for giving them the right information. And of course, we want that career to be with us."

Dozier said it was particularly helpful to have the Local 103 Women's Committee members there because some of them had come from the area's vocational schools themselves and are now proud journey workers and JATC instructors.

"Some of these girls don't even know the power in the room and how it will affect their future careers, but some of us older ones do, and that part makes me smile," she said. ■

IBEW MEDIA WORLD

In addition to your monthly issue of *The Electrical Worker*, check out lots of other IBEW-related content online.

www.ibew.org

Go to ibew.org for the latest IBEW news, including this and previous editions of *The Electrical Worker*.

YouTube

When work dried up, Local 2330 needed to rebuild. With a renewed commitment to organizing, they made it happen. Check out [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](https://www.youtube.com/TheElectricalWorker).

Vimeo

When Josiah Crowden left the Air Force, he spent years looking for a place he belonged. He found it in Denver Local 111. Go to [Vimeo.com/IBEW](https://vimeo.com/IBEW).

HourPower

San Diego Local 569 is spreading the message about the transformative power of a diverse and inclusive workforce. See more at IBEWHourPower.com.

ElectricTV

There's no better team to tackle the evolving electrical landscape than the IBEW and NECA. Get a glimpse of some recent renewable projects at ElectricTV.net.

TRANSITIONS

APPOINTED

Jennifer Gray



Jennifer Gray has been appointed director of the Civic and Community Engagement Department, bringing extensive

organizing experience to a department ripe with opportunity as the IBEW seeks to expand its ranks among women, people of color and young workers.

"We have to keep opening up the pool of who we recruit," said Gray, who served as the Membership Development Department's director of professional and industrial organizing prior to her appointment on Nov. 6. "And the groups that we focus on in CCE are a great catalyst for that."

Gray said a top priority is to organize around the IBEW's political gains like the passage of major legislation including the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, as well as the union's close relationship with the Biden administration.

"The president isn't afraid to say 'union,' and he's more than happy to say 'IBEW,'" she said. "That's only good for us."

Gray said "the time is now" to capitalize on recent momentum for workers in North America, pointing to high-profile bargaining wins and the most positive public sentiment for unions in decades.

"It hasn't been this way for unions in the entire time that I've been a member," she said. "People are seeing the strength in unions, and that puts us in a great position."

A member of Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245, Gray was hired at Pacific Gas and Electric in 2006 and quickly became active in the local, becoming one of the youngest shop stewards and unit recorders for her Sacramento clerical unit.

The local's leadership soon recognized her enthusiasm and potential, sending her to the AFL-CIO's inaugural Next Up Young Workers Summit and out to work on various campaigns, including a statewide ballot initiative. In 2012, the California Federation of Labor named her Young Trade Unionist of the Year. She also helped start Local 1245's Electrical Workers Minority Caucus chapter and counts the Coalition of Labor Union Women as one of her earliest exposures to the AFL-CIO and the broader labor movement.

In 2011, Gray attended the IBEW International Convention in Vancouver, representing the state of California, where a resolution on young worker involvement was introduced that eventually led to RENEW/NextGen.

"I was part of something larger than just my cubicle, or my job or my local," she said. "I realized that I was part of an organization with the power to fight for me every day. I look forward

to doing that for others."

The Northern California native also represented the Ninth District on the RENEW advisory council and served as assistant business manager at Local 1245 before being appointed to be an international representative in the Membership Development Department in 2018.

Gray said she looks forward to supporting the work of the labor movement's different constituency groups like retirees, LGBTQ+ workers and veterans, and to carrying out the mission of the EWMC and the IBEW's affinity committees like RENEW/NextGen and the International Women's Committee.

"I'm excited and honored. ... It's like coming full circle."

— Jennifer Gray, Civic and Community Engagement director

"It's very empowering to be able to spark the interest of these members," she said. "I'm excited and honored to get back to this work. It's like coming full circle."

Jammi Ouellette, who's known Gray since 2006 when they both started at PG&E and is now executive assistant to the international president, said Gray is in a good position to replicate what she accomplished at the local level.

"I think it's really exciting for her to do this next step, and I expect to see great things," Ouellette said.

Ouellette also noted that Gray, who she described as "driven" and "very detail-oriented," has a strong organizational understanding of the IBEW, which will serve her well.

"Half of being part of a large organization is understanding the structure, and she's a master at that," Ouellette said. "She's bringing some real, tangible tools with her."

Gray said she wants to engage local unions as much as possible.

"We need to share the value of being an IBEW member," she said. "And who better to talk to groups like women and young workers and people of color than other IBEW members who share those identities?" ■

APPOINTED

Joe DiMichele



Joe DiMichele, a key figure in numerous IBEW organizing campaigns during the last decade, has been

appointed professional and industrial director in the Membership Development Department.

Brother DiMichele [pronounced De-MICHAEL] has been an IBEW member since 2014, when he was hired as a Sixth District field organizer and joined Rockford, Ill., Local 364.

But he learned the value of union membership in perhaps the best way possible: by working a series of non-union jobs for the previous 16 years, including as an electrician.

"I know what it's like to walk on eggshells every day," DiMichele said. "I know what it's like to be subjected to unsafe working conditions and if I don't do the work, I'll be terminated and they'll find someone else."

Born in Chicago, DiMichele grew up in suburban Hanover Park, Ill. He took a job as a tire buster for Goodyear while still attending high school and continued to work there after graduating in 1996.

Two years later, on the advice of a friend already working for the company, he took a job working for a nonunion contractor building new homes.

He had to learn quickly. The foreman and journeyman electrician quit on DiMichele's first day on the job.

"The company owner came out and said, 'You guys either need to figure out what you're doing and learn it, or I'm bringing in contractors,'" he said. "So we did. We read the code book. I learned how to bend conduit, and I can proudly say we passed our inspection first round."

DiMichele looks back on that accomplishment proudly. But in the moment, he had a young daughter to support and felt like he didn't have a choice.

"I had just left a job at Goodyear that I had all through high school to do this," he said. "Now I could be jobless with a kid."

DiMichele continued to work construction, both residential and commercial, until the Great Recession in 2008. He worked a variety of jobs after that, including as a truck driver and a construction and maintenance technician on cell towers.

In 2012, he took a job with Nippon Sharyo — a major rolling stock manufacturer based in Japan — at its new facility in Rochelle, Ill.

It turned into a life-changing experience, although not quite the way DiMichele expected.

"I was watching the way they were talking to people and treating them and thought, 'This is worse than [the notoriously anti-union] cell tower companies,'" DiMichele said. "You were not a human being to them. You were a number."

DiMichele was particularly upset when a U.S. Air Force veteran working for Nippon Sharyo was targeted by a supervisor with no experience in the industry and subsequently fired. The fired employee was later admitted to a Veterans Administration hospital after suffering a mental breakdown. [He is

now doing much better.]

So DiMichele reached out to Chicago Local 134, which put him in touch with Sixth District Regional Organizing Coordinator Lynn Arwood. He agreed to lead the volunteer organizing committee at the facility.

Arwood said she was impressed by DiMichele from the moment they met.

"He stepped forward to make changes at the workplace because of his concern for the other workers," she said. "He never really brought up issues that affected him. It was the other workers that were being treated poorly. That really hit home for him."

The Nippon Sharyo organizing drive fell short due to a massive disinformation campaign by the company, which also found fraudulent reasons to fire some employees who were active in the drive. The workers never gained union recognition, and the company closed the facility in 2018 due to a lack of orders.

DiMichele left Nippon Sharyo in 2014. IBEW leaders were impressed enough to offer a spot as a Sixth District field organizer not long after.

DiMichele said it wasn't an easy decision. He mulled it over for three days.

He accepted in the end, and he's glad he did. He traveled across the country, assisting on successful campaigns at DirecTV, Electrolux and BGE. He was named a Sixth District lead organizer in July 2016 and moved to the International Office in Washington, D.C., in August 2022, when he was appointed as a P&I international representative.

"He's always all in," Arwood said. "The most important thing in a lead organizer is representing the IBEW well. They're honest. They show integrity and are committed to those workers. We're holding their lives in our hands because we're trying to organize them. Joe understood that."

DiMichele said he's assuming his position at a good time following the passage of several pieces of federal legislation — most notably the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 — that will allow American manufacturing to grow after decades of jobs being sent overseas.

"The work is ours to lose," he said. "We'll be out there making contacts, knocking on doors and going out looking for contracts."

DiMichele has three daughters — Kayleigh, Madelyn and Sarah — and one grandson, Cade. He and his wife, Melissa, live in Arlington, Va.

"I'm honored to be in this position," said DiMichele, who calls Arwood his mentor. "Every time I was appointed to something, I never thought in a million years something like this could happen to me. I'm grateful."

The officers and staff congratulate Brother DiMichele on his appointment and wish him much success in his new position. ■

HAVE YOU MOVED?
Notify us of an address change
www.ibew.org/ChangeMyAddress or call 202-728-6263

LOCAL LINES

Local 1 Retiree Makes Missouri's Official State Rifle

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,rts,s,se,spa,st,ws&ptc), ST. LOUIS, MO — Missouri has an official state rifle, the Samuel Hawken Plains Rifle. Bob Browner, a Local 1 retired brother, 48-year member and retired gunsmith, played an instrumental role in this achievement. Bob had two driving interests as a teenager: following in his father's footsteps to become an electrician and to become a gunsmith, helping his uncle make high-powered rifles.

He became an apprentice not long after graduating high school, and his gunsmithing led him to join a muzzleloading club. There he met Kieth Neubauer, a master gunsmith who Bob apprenticed under, learning the art of restoration and crafting a variety of weapons.

Being a rifle enthusiast and avid outdoorsman, Bob developed a love of the Hawken rifle. During his career, he has made 50 Hawken rifles. For the nitty-gritty on why Missouri chose this rifle, visit ilovemuzzleloading.com.

Kyle Hunter, P.S.

Local 11 Partners With L.A. NECA

L.U. 11 (i,rts,spa&em), LOS ANGELES, CA — More than \$1 billion in federal clean energy grants is coming to California thanks to our local partnership with Los Angeles NECA, working in conjunction with the State Building and Construction Trades Council, to drive investment in dozens of green hydrogen projects from Lancaster to Long Beach. This funding is part of the bipartisan infrastructure deal passed into law two years ago by President Joe Biden.

This massive influx of funds will spur innovation, reduce carbon emissions and create tens of thousands of construction jobs in the coming years, many in areas often overlooked and underserved. These funds from the Department of Energy will leverage additional private and state funding for an estimated \$10 to \$13 billion in projects, all of which will be covered by State Building Trades project labor agreements.

The Trades Council, Local 11 and L.A. NECA were founding members of the Alliance for Renewable Clean Hydrogen Energy Systems, or ARCHES, which led the federal grant application. ARCHES required each of the proposed projects to enter into a PLA, and the union mandate became a key part of securing the federal funds. California is one of seven hubs to receive federal funding as part of President Joe Biden's H2Hubs program to build renewable clean hydrogen projects across the country.

We are excited to announce that Local 11 has a new phone app for our members. This will enable the local to better communicate with our members and provides a one-stop shop for our members who want to contact one of our affiliate offices. The app will direct our members to the respective websites of our various entities (i.e., the dispatch office to check upcoming calls, Health and Pension Trust, Electrical Workers Credit Union, etc.). Look for the QR code sent out to members or look it up on your phone's app store.

Robert Corona, P.S.

Local 15 Golf Outing

L.U. 15 (u), DOWNERS GROVE, IL — On Oct. 1, our local hosted its inaugural charity golf outing at Ruffed Feathers Golf Club in Lemont, Ill. The event was a huge success. The chosen charity was Cal's Angels, a nonprofit organization fighting pediatric cancer, granting wishes, funding research, and raising awareness for kids and their families battling cancer. Sponsorship donations were accepted, providing funds for food, drinks, raffles and silent auctions.

The day started at 7:30 a.m. with golfers arriving in front of the clubhouse and a shotgun start at 9 a.m. Golfing was over by 2 p.m., followed by dinner in the clubhouse.

Local 15 President Chris Riser thanked members for participating and supporting such a great cause. He expressed the importance of getting Local 15 members together to create camaraderie and a sense of union pride.

On Oct. 12, Cal's Angels President Stacey Wahlberg and Development Coordinator Stacey Vessell came to the Local 15 office where they were presented a check for more than \$35,000 from President Riser! A huge thank you to all of our members who participated in the outing!

John Richards, Bus. Rep.



Local 35 members await their ticket numbers to be called for prizes at Colchester Fish and Game.

Local 35 Annual Outing

L.U. 35 (i), HARTFORD, CT — Our local held its annual outing at Colchester Fish and Game on Sept. 30. This year's attendance was exceptional.

Local 35 thanks the contractors who donated some outstanding prizes to the event. Your contributions made our event that much more special: CT Chapter NECA, Custom Electric, Paul Dinto Electrical Contractors, Ducci Electrical, Electrical Power Solutions, Grove Systems, Mass. Electric, Matrix NAC, McPhee Electric, M.L. Schmitt, Net Services, Northeast Lightning Protection, Ravex Systems and Zenith American Solutions.

We would like to thank Colchester Fish and Game for the use of their facilities and The Butchery for the outstanding food that was catered and much enjoyed.

We also thank Michelle Cleveland and Sharon Landolina for doing an outstanding job of organizing the event and the volunteers who helped set up in the morning, helping make the outing a great success.

We're getting ready to plan next year's outing!

Wishing everyone a safe and happy 2024!

Michelle Cleveland, P.S.

Local 41 Leans Into Holiday Season

L.U. 41 (em,es,govt,i,se&spa), BUFFALO, NY — Happy New Year, brothers and sisters! We kicked off the holiday season in October with our first annual trunk-or-treat at our union hall. We had a little rain, which led to a perfect double rainbow to start the event. Participation was good, with over 15 trunks decorated, giving more than 30 children an extra-fun-filled night.

As I write this, we are planning our kids' Christmas party, where we expect more than 40 kids to receive gifts from Santa and decorate cookies with his helpers. Thank you to all who participate in and help organize these events for our members and their families.

We finished 2023 the same way we started, busy as ever. We predict this trend to continue well into 2024, as we are in full swing at the Great Lakes Cheese plant and looking to hit the ground running on the new Buffalo Bills stadium this spring.

Matthew M. Gaiser, P.S.



Local 41 saw many participants and a double rainbow at its trunk-or-treat!



Local 15 presents a charity check. From left: Bernard Robinson, Lisa Simms, Shawn Wachter, Stacey Wahlberg, Local 15 President Chris Riser, Stacey Vessell, Mike Keating and Jim Collins.

Local 43 Retirees and First-Year Apprentice Class

L.U. 43 (em,i&rts), SYRACUSE, NY — Congratulations to our first-year apprentices being sworn in as new members.

Congratulations to our retiring members for their outstanding service and dedication to Local 43. Happy retirement to the following members: Edward Baker, Odisef Boscovski, Manford Boyle, James Brien, Steven Buffum, Thomas Comer, Kurt Connors, Keith Doran, Patrick Dowd, Lawrence Finlan, Mark Haynes, Paul Ivery, Kenneth Kuhn, Don

Submitting Local Lines Articles

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd local number schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via our online form. For deadlines and questions, please visit ibew.org/media-center/submitting-local-lines or email locallines@ibew.org.

We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are made by our editorial team. Please adhere to a 200-word limit.

If you have an idea for an Electrical Worker story, please contact the Media Department at (202) 728-6219 or media@ibew.org.

Trade Classifications

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

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

LOCAL LINES

Lucas, Michael Panicia, Timothy Pomerville, Daniel Poor, Joseph Pudney, David Ricci, Garth Rice, Jeffrey Schiltz and Robin Wilde.

The following members celebrated years of service with the IBEW: Charles Bateman (70 years); Patrick Alfano, Albert Canale, John Cieri, Victor DeCondo, Richard Dreimiller, Salvatore Russo and David Welsh (65 years); Henry Cargen, James Godden, Michel Murphy, Lawrence Olivia, William Philbin, William Ryan, James Thompson and Lynn Thompson (60 years); William Bernhardt, Luciano Bianco, Carmen Bocchino, William Chetney, David Church, Kenneth Czupryna, David Ford, John Hubalek, John LaPlante, Richard Panicia, Michael Phillips, George Rood and Gary Wulfert (55 years); and Louis Arlotta, George Backus, James Bucklaew, Russell Canestrare, Thomas Carioti, Bernard Coffay, Paul Corbin, Charles Czarniecki, Donald Denblyker, Alfred Desautels, Robert Evans, John Greeley, Christopher Knox, Robert Leroy, Charles Palmisano, Francis Peake, Paul Rouse, George Travis and Charles Zion (50 years).

Jeff Cassano, P.S.

Local 47 Team Wins International Lineman's Rodeo

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin congratulates Team Hot Line, the first-place winners at the International Lineman's Rodeo in Kansas City. Read more on page 3 of this issue.

Here are updates from Local 47:

- Concerning Southern California Edison, arbitration regarding the demotion of Long Beach electrical crew foreman Mike Phillips has been settled. Mike will return to the electrical crew foreman position with full back pay.
- Termination of Ridgcrest construction maintenance accountant Teri Paradise is scheduled for arbitration before arbitrator Anthony Miller.
- The Transmission/Substation System Operator Paragraph M (midterm bargaining) passed; increases will begin Jan. 1.
- Production specialist bargaining will begin once the union and the company agree on meeting dates.
- The organizing vote to certify the Grid Control Center (Real Time Transmission Dispatches) was successful. Bargaining will begin in a couple of months.
- In the City of Anaheim, part-time workers' customer service contract passed and was sent to the city council for approval.

Local 47's Christmas party on Dec. 2 was a huge success.

We're sad to report the deaths of Terion



Local 47 Team Hot Line, the first-place winners at the International Lineman's Rodeo: from left, Brian Wheeler, Toby Claude, Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin and Curt Norris.

Alexander, Grady Coulter (retired), Jason DeWitt, Brennan Eby, Scott Perdew, Paul Racine and Derek Quesenberry. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union.

Mitch Smith, P.S.

Local 51 Members Help Save a Life

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — When gas journeyman Dave Alford saw a co-worker walking toward him in distress, his instincts and safety training instantly kicked in. Dave and several natural gas journeymen at the Ameren Illinois Peoria Operating Center were building a gas regulator station in the welding shop when co-worker Mike Morris indicated that he was choking. Brother Alford attempted to give Mike the Heimlich maneuver before Mike went limp and unconscious. Alford immediately started chest compressions while Brother Joe Sears dialed 911, Brother Curt Nauman monitored Mike's pulse, and Brother Brandon Harris retrieved the nearest automated external defibrillator (AED) and took over CPR while Alford performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, resulting in Mike regaining consciousness.

An IBEW Life-Saving Award has been submitted. The local union is extremely proud of our members who performed the most noble of all services — saving a human life.

It is with a heavy heart we inform you that Brother Tom Peterson passed away in October. Tom was a retired business representative for our local. We all have many fond memories of Tom and ask that you keep his family in your thoughts.

Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.



Assistant Business Managers Rusty McCuen, Shane Nelson and Cody Eigenheer present IBEW orientation for the newest group of Local 55 members.

Local 55 New-Member Orientation

L.U. 55 (lctt,o,u&c), DES MOINES, IA — In 2012, our local's business manager and officers saw a need for a structured orientation early on in the process of initiating members in outside construction. New members often do not have a family history with labor unions, and as they enter this field of work, who better to inform them of union benefits than their local union? Our goal is to educate this new generation of IBEW members about historic struggles and successes of the labor movement and its importance in today's workforce.

Over the years, this orientation has grown to cover all aspects of what it means to be union — not just the hours, pay and great benefits, but the history of Henry Miller and labor issues faced by those before us,

often through tragedy.

Topics covered include the Code of Excellence; IBEW Constitution; local union bylaws; the oath of membership; our union ticket; union membership dues versus working assessments; our contract; working out of jurisdiction; ERTS; union meeting attendance; representation, safety and conflict resolution; buying USA/union/local; and financial stability.

Terri Vitiritto, Treas.

Local 71 Gives Back to Wounded Heroes

L.U. 71 (lctt,o&rtb), COLUMBUS, OH — Richard Helman, a journeyman lineman with our local, started a nonprofit organization called Kamp George for Wounded Heroes in 2018. Kamp George offers all-inclusive vacations in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for disabled veterans and first responders. Kamp George has welcomed nine heroes to date. Visit Kampgeorge.org for more information.

The Wheeling Sportsman Team-Up takes place over three days, with the participation of Heroes to Hunters; the National Wild Turkey Federation, Wolf Creek Chapter; the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife; and the Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area. The first day is fellowship and sighting in guns, and the second and third days are for hunting along with one of the volunteers. Fifty disabled hunters and veterans will be accommodated, and 150 volunteers are needed. Former Local 71 President Danny Harris volunteered, and now Vice President Dirk Dozer volunteers. In 2021, the hunt harvested 34 deer, and this event has made it possible to harvest more than 380 deer since 2001.

Thank you, Local 71 members, for giving back!

Matt Bruggeman, Bus. Rep.



Local 126 member and Army veteran Terrence Gadsby and family at Kamp George.



Local 103 members power the south end zone renovation project at Gillette Stadium.

Local 103 Members Enjoy Gillette Stadium

L.U. 103 (cs,i&ptc), BOSTON, MA — Gillette Stadium, home of six-time Super Bowl champion New England Patriots, debuted its new \$250 million south end zone renovation project in September. This project features a 370-by-60-foot video board, the largest video display in any outdoor NFL stadium. The curved high-definition video board provides the best available game and replay action.

This is the most dramatic improvement to Gillette Stadium since its opening in 2002. It features a completely reimagined plaza heading into the stadium, including a new and enhanced 22-story lighthouse and observation deck overlooking the stadium, 75,000 square feet of year-round hospitality and function space, and new upper and lower concourses and concessions.

This entire project could not be done without the electrical expertise of Murphy Electric and Industrial Control and the hard-working men and women of Local 103. Our members were invited in October for a Patriots away game viewing party in the Putnam Club.

One thousand Local 103 members and their families enjoyed watching the game on the big screen and running and playing on the field. This is another great Local 103 family event to look forward to, part of our advertising and marketing partnership with the Kraft Group and the Patriots. #PoweringGillette #WePlugYouIn

Jimmy Fleming, P.S.

Welcome, Josh Miller

L.U. 125 (lctt,o,t,u&ptc), PORTLAND, OR — With the retirement of Travis Hefely, our local welcomes journeyman lineman Josh Miller to our staff as business representative. Josh has been assigned to Clark Public Utility District, Klickitat Public Utility District, Hood River Cooperative, West Oregon Electric and Skamania Public Utility District.

Josh completed his line apprenticeship through Northwest Line JATC in 2010. He worked at Canby Electric and Portland General Electric, where he was journeyman lineman and foreman. Josh served on numerous safety committees and spent significant time advocating for our members as a shop steward.

"It was time to give back to our union," Josh said. "I am proud to be a journeyman lineman and want to do my part as a member."

The son of a journeyman lineman, Josh grew up with a father who embodied what the IBEW represents. "My dad was active in the union and took



Business Representative Josh Miller, who recently joined Local 125's staff.

time to ensure I was exposed to everything that we are supposed to uphold as IBEW members.” With two children of his own, Josh wants to continue the example that was set by his father.

“We are happy to have Josh join our staff,” said Business Manager Travis Eri. “He will be a great advocate for our membership.”

Marcy Grail, A.B.M.

Local 129 Recognizes Officers

L.U. 129 (i,mt&spa), LORAIN, OH — Work is plentiful here in Lorain, and more is coming. We have a \$2.2 billion expansion just starting at our Ford plant, a 125-megawatt solar field starting next year, a new roller coaster at Cedar Point and many other projects on the books. It looks like we will be very busy for the foreseeable future.

We recently had our brotherhood golf outing, which was a huge success. We also had a Local 129 skydiving event where some of our members, including the business manager, jumped out of a plane at 12,000 feet. Good times were had this summer at the kids’ fishing and picnic outing. The Brotherhood also participated in the local’s third annual motorcycle ride.

We would like to welcome our new officers and thank the outgoing members who have given their dedication and support the past three years. The new slate of officers includes a number of reelected or experienced members along with first-time officers, a mix that will bring a lot to the table. [See photo, bottom left.]

At our July union meeting, the following officers were sworn in:

- President: Leonard Roark
- Vice president: Marius Pride
- Business manager/financial secretary: John Novak
- Recording secretary: Marc Schueszler
- Treasurer: Kurt Kauk
- Executive board: James Adams, Mark Burnette, Mark Day, Jay Hasenflue, Tom Nagy and Earl Wiegand III.

Paul Kress, P.S.

Local 131 Staying Busy, Having Fun

L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rts,se&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI — The work outlook is steady in Kalamazoo. Several projects are keeping the book clear. Travelers are working in our jurisdiction. Gun Lake Casino, the new 15-story hotel and aquadome, has several floors enclosed and is still a cold construction site.

The Halloween party was a huge success. Many stories and the sharing of IBEW values really came through. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped. The retirees’ Christmas party was also well attended. More than 40 members explained to me how good we have it now.

At the Sixth District Progress Meeting, Local 131 member Corey McCulloch gave an emotional and moving talk about his experiences and challenges as a transgender man in the IBEW.

Thank you, Corey, for the inspiration.

Collective bargaining class was held at the Kalamazoo hall for several Michigan locals. Thank you, Lisa Page and C.J. King. This was an excellent class, and you are amazing.



International President Kenneth Cooper, Sixth District International Vice President Mike Clemmons and Local 131 member Corey McCulloch at the district’s Progress Meeting.

We now look forward to the Kalamazoo Jan. 31 annual party (1-31 Day).

Morris A. Applebey, B.M.

Local 141 Work Picture Remains Positive

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Work remains very good in our local, with 13 members on Book 1. Our work outlook through the first quarter is positive. Local 141 expresses our continued gratitude to our traveling brothers and sisters for helping to man our work.

Local 141 recognizes Brother Dan Morris as our newly appointed local union organizer. Dan has been a member of Local 141 for nearly 30 years. He is the vice president of our local, a JATC instructor and previously a Local 141 executive board member. We wish him all the best in his new position.

As of this writing, the Local 141 social committee is busy planning for our holiday festivities. The kids’ breakfast with Santa, Christmas dinner dance, members party and float preparations for several local Christmas parades keep the social committee very busy during the holiday season.

Local 141 is mourning the recent passing of Brother John E. Dusci. Brother Dusci was a disciplined electrician with 59 years of service to the IBEW. He will be greatly missed.

Kurt “Bug” Reed, P.S.



Local 197 second-year apprentice Eric Restrepo donated blood at the local’s biennial blood drive.

Local 197 Wishes Prosperity to All

L.U. 197 (em&i), BLOOMINGTON, IL — Let’s kick off this new year off right, whatever that means to you. For some, it may be starting a new resolution or a

The new officers of Local 129.



new beginning. Let us be supportive of each other’s growth in a good way, ascending to new heights with a prosperous future for us all. Happy New Year from Local 197.

Stevie Anthony, P.S.



Local 245 Business Manager Shane Bauman and Ted Hagedorn celebrate his 47 years as a union member.

Local 245 Welcomes New Members

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — When you sit down to read this article, hopefully you’ve enjoyed spending quality time with your loved ones during this holiday season. I can’t believe that 2023 is over, and we are beginning to navigate through 2024 with many new challenges. We hope that everyone enjoyed the Christmas union meeting and the kids’ Christmas party as well.

At our October union meeting, Ted Hagedorn was recognized with reaching a milestone of 45 years with Local 245. Ted has spent his entire union career at Bay Shore/Walleye Power as a master mechanic maintenance specialist. It’s a great accomplishment, and we thank you for your continued commitment to your brothers and sisters. We would also like to congratulate our newest officers, who were sworn in at the November union meeting.

Local 245 is in negotiations with several bargaining units across our jurisdiction. As of this writing, negotiations are ongoing for a first agreement with a newly organized unit at the City of Bryan Street Department, and we hope to reach a fair and equitable agreement soon.

Additionally, Local 245 is pleased to report that new members working for RKR Traffic Control unanimously ratified their first collective bargaining agreement Sept. 9. Welcome to the IBEW, sisters and brothers.

In closing, let’s celebrate a successful 2023 and enjoy spending precious time with your loved ones.

Brian Gendaszek, P.S.

Local 257 Is Grateful and Growing

L.U. 257 (em,i,rtb,rts,spa&t), JEFFERSON CITY, MO — Our local had an amazing 2023 and expects to



Local 257’s float for the Jefferson City, Mo., Labor Day parade.

continue its growth in 2024. We participated in the annual Jefferson City Labor Day parade with our float and the support of our community and members. We also had our annual family picnic Sept. 16, which is always a fun time for the whole family, with games, activities, prizes, amazing food and — let’s not forget — ice cream.

Our local was happy to present many members with service awards. With plenty of large projects going, more breaking ground and starting up, and an increased market share, the local is grateful for our growth and success.

We continue to swear in many new members each month and almost doubled our new apprentices to the program for a second year in a row to keep up with the growing demand.

Let’s continue to do good work and show our union pride and brotherhood on and off the job. Happy New Year!

JL Stanley, P.S.

‘Organize’

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — Happy New Year, brothers and sisters! This is the month we make resolutions and commit to making changes or improvements in our lives. The International Office has made a resolution to organize hundreds of thousands of new members, covering all branches of the IBEW. With the promise of decades’ worth of new work throughout the country, the ultimate goal is to reach a total of 1 million members. This campaign will bring new policies to local unions and new challenges for business managers and staff organizers.

Organizing those who are nonunion has never been easy, although it is safer today than it was 100 years ago. Joe Hill was a union activist, organizer and member of the Industrial Workers of the World in the early 1900s. He became a popular songwriter and cartoonist for the union. At that time, the IWW was considered radical by business society and law enforcement. In November 1915, Joe Hill was accused of murder on trumped-up charges. His trial was controversial, garnering international attention. Joe Hill was executed by firing squad at a Utah prison.

His last words were: “Don’t mourn for me. Organize.”

Make a resolution to buy Made in the USA.

Tom Small, P.S.

Local 347 Data Workload Surges

L.U. 347 (em,i,mt,rtb,rts&spa), DES MOINES, IA — Our local is in the enviable position of providing for the surging data industry. There are three data companies operating or building in five locations in the Des Moines area. This is a dramatic change for our local in terms of man-hours worked on an annual basis.

In the past, it was common for many of our members to travel to maintain a consistent income. This is no longer the case in Local 347.

LOCAL LINES



With an increasing number of applicants and plenty of local work, it's a fantastic time to be an apprentice in Local 347.

Now we welcome travelers to help with the workload. As mentioned in previous articles, the local has also increased the number of applicants for apprenticeship. This is a fantastic time to be an apprentice in Local 347.

A relatively new approach to recruiting young talent for our apprenticeship and industry is a program known as Interim Credentials. Trevor Stevens of the Des Moines Electrical Apprenticeship is working with Southeast Polk High School and Central Campus to make this curriculum available to students interested in exploring a career in the electrical industry.

Once they have completed the program, these students would be eligible to receive an interview with the apprenticeship committee and earn credits that could be applied toward the first year of apprenticeship. The JATC is willing to make this program available to high schools, community colleges and community organizations. The program can also help tailor high school mathematics and physics classes to the needs of students expressing interest in the electrical field.

The Christmas party was a huge success. Happy holidays!

"Every advance in this half-century — Social Security, Medicare, aid to education — one after another came with the support and leadership of American Labor." — President Jimmy Carter

Mike Schweiger, P.S.

Local 357 Members Electrify Iconic Formula 1 Speedway

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — Our members, working with Dynalectric, had the amazing experience of installing the DAS (distributed antenna system) at the Formula 1 speedway in the heart of Las Vegas.

The DAS includes approximately 100,000 feet of fiber optic cable running between the rooftop and the racecar pit garages. There were twenty 5G antennas installed on the roof directly next to the scoreboards and aerial view screens (which were installed by Bombard Electric).

Local 357 members did all of the electrical work on permanent structures for the project, and

the world saw it in its entirety as the race unfolded. IBEW contractors who worked on the project include Bombard Electric, Communication Technology Services, Dynalectric, Fisk Electric, LC Electric, Live Electric and Summit Electric.

We are grateful to have been a part of one of the most dynamic projects ever to take place in Las Vegas! Thank you to Mike DeCilla and Porfirio Lopez for submitting the photo and for the information included in this article.

Julie-Ann Peeples, P.S.



BlueOval SK Battery Park in Glendale, Ky., where more than 800 electricians from Local 369 work. Credit: Barton Malow-Gray.

Local 369 at BlueOval SK

L.U. 369 (em,es,i,lctt,o,rtb,rts,spa,u&ptc), LOUISVILLE, KY — Work continues to be booming throughout our jurisdiction, and we've got new images of the progress at BlueOval SK Battery Park in Glendale, Ky. We have more than 800 electricians on this project alone, with the need for more in the months ahead. Each plant measures approximately 4 million square feet, the size of more than 60 football fields. Construction is on schedule, and battery production begins in 2024.

We would like to thank all the men and women working on that project and all projects throughout our jurisdiction. Without their dedication and commitment, those projects don't get done. The increased work throughout our jurisdiction has created many opportunities for growth, and we



From left, Randy Rearick, Matt Lockhart, Local 459 President Aric Baker, U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, Bob Stockdill, Brian Baker, Caleb Wilson, Matt Graham and Chris Dunn.

remain committed to taking advantage of those opportunities here at our local.

Edward J. Devine IV, B.M./F.S.

Local 459 Members Meet Sen. Casey at Keystone

L.U. 459 (catv,ees,em,govt,mt,so,u&ptc), JOHNSTOWN, PA — U.S. Sen. Bob Casey toured the Keystone Generating Station, a 1,700-megawatt coal-fired power plant, on Aug. 28 to see our members

keeping the lights on throughout the largest interconnection in the country.

Through many discussions with Local 459 leadership, Sen. Casey has professed his vision of an "all of the above" energy policy for our country and was truly amazed with the technology that keeps these plants running. Thanks to the senator for taking time to meet the members and be

receptive to their knowledge and concerns. Without fossil fuel plants, the country faces a dark future, economically and literally, with impending blackouts.

Aric Baker, Pres.

Local 481 Volunteers for Circle of Lights

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rtb,rt,spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Brothers and sisters, our local had a busy end of the year! In October, our retirees kicked things off by inspecting and making repairs to the stringers for Indianapolis' Circle of Lights. In November, over 300 members volunteered to install those stringers on Monument Circle.

More than 2,000 IBEW members and their

families gathered downtown to watch the world's largest Christmas tree turned on during the annual Circle of Lights celebration Nov. 24. Thanks to our member volunteers, we successfully celebrated the start of the holiday season!

In December, nearly 200 retirees attended our annual holiday lunch and pin ceremony. The event is a great way to celebrate our retirees and the years of service they continue to give to the IBEW. The same evening, we had our annual December union meeting and holiday dinner, where we swore in more than 60 new members. It was a great first meeting for the new members to share in some brotherhood and sisterhood.

We closed the year by hosting our annual food drive, where our members and contractors brought donations for those in need in our community. Thank you to everyone who participated.

We hope everyone had a great holiday season and end to 2023. We look forward to what 2024 brings to Local 481 and all locals!

Blake A. Andrews, Treas.

Local 483 Membership Is Family Tradition

L.U. 483 (catv,lctt,o&u), TACOMA, WA — On Aug. 12, members of our local, along with their friends and families, gathered for our annual picnic. Attendees enjoyed a variety of food accompanied by cornhole, bouncy houses, a balloon artist, snow cones and a caricaturist. At this year's picnic, we hosted our years-of-service awards, with a 50-year award given to retired lineman Dave Kauppila. Dave's stepson, lineman Scott Brennan, received a 25-year pin, making it a family tradition to be an IBEW member!

Membership engagement has been on the rise, with new work groups organized and strong interest in our shop steward training. We are delighted to be able to host these memorable events for our members and their families!

Byron Allen, B.M.



Local 357 members at the Formula 1 headquarters in Las Vegas: from left, Porfirio Lopez, Sam Garcia, Juan Bautista, Marcus Robinson, Isaac Rodriguez, Kyle Rowley, Curtis Ramsey, James Higgs, Mike Grochowski, Mike DeCilla, Steve Andrade, Mark Ayoub, Edward Leyva, Mark King and Joshua Blea.

Go Green

Get your **ELECTRICAL WORKER** delivered each month *via email*.

It's convenient & helps cut down on paper waste. Go to ibew.org/gogreen and sign up today!

Scan with a QR reader





The Local 601 RENEW committee's bags tournament in action!

A Great Day for a Tournament

L.U. 601 (i&rtb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL — Our local's RENEW committee has another successful bags tournament under its belt. This, our fifth tournament, was a very special one for us. We are proud to have come this far as a RENEW committee and hope to do more events to bring our local together.

It was a close final between the last two teams, but an apprentice team won first place this year. The finals were played on a bag board set made by one of the apprentices on the winning team who was a classmate of Caleb Huls.

Caleb Huls was the son of another member, Rodney Huls, and was lost to us last year during his third year of apprenticeship.

Local 601 wishes you all a happy new year! Be ready to "light the path to the middle class" this election year.

Stay Union Strong.

Luther Baker, P.S.

Work in our jurisdiction is still going strong. US Electrical picked up the Walmart job in Clovis, N.M., which sustained damage from a fire in September; they were paying \$50 per hour so they could meet their opening deadline.

As of this writing, Triad has 400 workers on site, but calls are slowing down a bit; B&D has 161 at Intel with more work coming their way in the near future; and Facebook has about 400 on site.

Negotiations with Inside contractors will be starting up in a few months, and hopefully we can agree to a fair contract.

On behalf of Local 611, I would like to extend condolences to the friends and families of Jerry T. Barboa, Robert S. "Turkey" Garcia, Michael J. "Johnny Walker" Jaramillo and George K. Richardson III.

Don't forget to attend your local or unit meetings.

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.

Local 611 Work Going Strong

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving and a great holiday season.



Local 611 members participating in trunk-or-treat.

Happy New Year!

L.U. 683 (i&ptc), COLUMBUS, OH — Our annual 25-year dinner was held at the end of September to honor our members reaching 25 years of service with the IBEW. This year's officers did a great job, and a big thanks is due to club President Andrew Maciejewski, Vice President Brian Engle and Secretary Martha Ward. Congratulations to the new 25-year class and the members who received service pins.

The Local



Local 683's 25-year pin recipients.

683 RENEW committee hosted a trunk-or-treat at the hall in late October, giving our members' children a great place to test out their Halloween costumes and load up on sweets in advance. The turnout was much better than expected, and we look forward to next year's installment. Thank you to the members of the committee who made the event a success.

The work outlook continues to be outstanding in the jurisdiction, with ongoing projects in the area and new jobs coming out of the ground. Our local will be in great need of manpower throughout 2024 and welcomes travelers to help us.

Local 683 hopes everyone had a great holiday season and wishes a prosperous 2024 for all!

Mike Morey, Pres.

Local 915 Business Manager Celebrates New JWs

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — Business Manager Randall King is pleased to report that Tampa has escaped another hurricane season unscathed. The work outlook is strong, with several large projects on the horizon, including a new baseball stadium for the Tampa Bay Rays, a new stadium at the University of South Florida, a new terminal at Tampa International Airport, two hydrogen production plants and the new TECO headquarters building.

Recording Secretary Theresa King was reelected president of the Florida Building and Construction Trades at the annual conference in Orlando. She was also elected vice president at large for the Florida AFL-CIO Conference.

Business Manager King spoke at the annual apprenticeship banquet and led the festivities celebrating our newest journeyman inside wiremen. The Tampa Area Electrical JATC graduated more than 60 apprentices that evening and hosted more than 200 attendees at the banquet. At the October general membership meeting, President Jonathan Fielder swore in 40 new members.

Over the Labor Day weekend, Local 915 hosted the start of the annual motorcycle ride across Florida to raise money to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Over the last decade, the charity motorcycle ride has raised over \$77,000 for this worthy cause.

Brian Nathan, A.B.M.



Local 725 members Skylar Boyll and Aaron Warren organized a trunk-or-treat gathering at the local hall.

Teddy Bear Delivery to Cincinnati Children's Hospital

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,u&ptc), CINCINNATI, OH — For the seventh year in a row, our local donated more than 100 teddy bears to beloved and well-deserving children at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital in December. This year, celebrating our local's 80th anniversary, we were proud to donate the biggest teddy bears since we started this program.

We hope these gifts can make a difference for those who are staying at the hospital during the holiday season. If our membership has the ability to spread a little cheer, we are going to do so! We also extend a thank you to all of those working hard in the medical field.

We wish everyone good health and well-being going forward.

Andrew Kirk, B.M.



Local 1347 donated more than 100 extra-large teddy bears to children at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital in December.

RENEW Committee Hosts Trunk-or-Treat

L.U. 725 (i,rts&spa), TERRE HAUTE, IN — On Oct. 27, our local's RENEW committee celebrated Halloween by hosting its fifth annual trunk-or-treat event at the union hall. Event organizers Skylar Boyll, Aaron Warren and Jordan King were excited to see that more than 10 members participated in decorating their vehicles, dressing up and giving away over 1,000 pounds of candy. Local community members and union members alike all had an enjoyable and memorable evening.

Dickson Hunley, P.S.

MY NAME IS TRAVIS SWAYZE

I'M A HUNTER.

I'M AN ANGLER.

I'M A UNION MEMBER.

I AM USA4LIFE



If you're like so many of your union brothers and sisters, being part of the IBEW and the outdoor community is at the heart of who you are.

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance connects the union and outdoor way of life, uniting outdoorsmen and outdoorswomen to stand together to preserve our outdoor heritage for future generations.

When you join the USA, you don't just become a member. You become family.

Travis Swayze is Business Manager of IBEW Local 112. [Scan the QR code to watch his story.](#)

UnionSportsmen.org





LOCAL LINES

Happy New Year

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — By the time you're reading this, a new year will have begun. Let me wish you all a happy new year, and let us start this year with hope, vigilance and continued prosperity. Our work situation is solid and will be gradually getting even better with the Savannah River

Plutonium Processing Facility moving forward with the construction — and out of the demolition — phase. The Savannah River site and our in-town contractors are holding their own.

Plant Vogtle still employs quite a few electricians between the contractors remaining on the site. Unfortunately, faulty equipment has caused delays for the startup of Unit 4, but Local 1579 and the Augusta Building Trades are working together to swap out the bad for the good and get the unit online.

I would like to thank our delegates to the 2023 Georgia AFL-CIO Convention: Business Manager J.R. Richardson, President Mike Greene, Vice President Alonzo Ingram, and executive board members Chandra Fussell and Tommie Crabb. Thank you all for your time and dedication not only to our local, but to the organization as a whole.

"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who

gets the credit." — President Harry Truman

Mike Greene, Pres.

Local 1837 Member Honored With Labor Hero Award

L.U. 1837 (rtb,u&ptc), MANCHESTER, ME — Matt Beck, who recently retired from his role as a business representative and organizer, was honored with the Lifetime Working Class Hero Award by the Southern Maine Labor Council during the group's Labor Day breakfast Sept. 4. Beck's commitment to labor causes and unwavering support for workers' rights earned him this respected recognition.

For decades, Brother Beck actively championed fair wages, safe working conditions and the importance of unions in protecting

workers. His commitment went beyond rhetoric; he was a visible presence at strikes, rallies and legislative advocacy.

In addition to his official duties, Beck was known for his volunteerism. Whenever workers needed assistance, he was there to organize events and fundraisers and offer support. Congratulations, Matt!

Kaitlyn Hegarty, Bus. Rep.



Georgia AFL-CIO Convention Local 1579 delegates, from left: Will Salters, Mike Greene, Tommie Crabb, J.R. Richardson and Chandra Fussell.



Local 1837 member Matt Beck accepting the Southern Maine Labor Council's Lifetime Working Class Hero Award.

In Memoriam

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	Crader, R. H.	8/15/23	26	Reed, D. C.	10/2/23	105	Davies, W. R.	12/25/20	213	Fuchs, W. A.	5/1/23	424	McEvoy, C. H.	7/26/23	697	Kirkley, J. R.	9/25/23
1	Jordan, T. J.	10/2/23	29	Nogrady, S. C.	10/7/23	105	Kline, L.	7/29/23	213	O'Sullivan, K.	3/3/23	429	Cole, D. C.	10/25/23	697	Vlasich, N. L.	10/21/23
1	Mantia, J. D.	9/11/23	38	Evanko, J. A.	8/25/23	105	Negus, N. J.	10/26/23	213	Tilgner, H.	11/12/22	441	Marion, R. E.	9/24/23	712	Fisher, R. T.	12/18/22
1	McClellan, W. C.	9/29/23	38	Jones, R. S.	10/1/23	110	Haberman, G. G.	9/23/23	233	Herrera, M. A.	9/6/23	441	Markham, M. R.	9/20/23	712	Petcovic, R. L.	10/14/23
1	Missey, D. N.	8/30/23	38	Muzic, E. F.	10/18/23	113	Jellinek, J. C.	3/15/23	242	Roberts, C. F.	9/20/23	443	Renfroe, G. D.	9/20/23	743	Eberle, P. C.	10/14/23
1	Niewoehner, A. C.	9/30/23	38	Tellefsen, J. W.	10/7/23	124	Dick, D. E.	8/26/23	257	Brunk, D. A.	6/27/21	449	Millard, J. R.	8/28/23	743	Strenkoski, K.	9/23/23
1	Wilburn, K. R.	10/18/23	41	Gleason, N. J.	10/25/23	124	Goodman, L. R.	8/30/23	257	Nichols, C. E.	3/5/23	474	Simmons, C. L.	10/6/23	743	Winters, A. M.	10/2/23
3	Amundsen, C. C.	8/13/23	41	Pruski, G. E.	8/24/23	125	Hupp, T. N.	12/26/22	257	Rehagen, J. H.	9/26/23	477	Butler, B.	2/26/23	760	Sebastian, R. L.	10/11/23
3	Becker, N. H.	9/20/23	43	Hill, L. T.	7/31/22	125	King, W. B.	10/7/23	258	Henderson, T. C.	9/12/23	477	Owens, K. D.	2/7/21	760	Smith, J. M.	9/13/23
3	Cassio, A.	9/11/23	46	Camm, C. E.	6/25/23	125	Krahn, R. D.	9/13/23	265	Huenink, L. G.	10/6/23	479	Guilbeau, D. W.	7/27/23	773	Starling, G. B.	10/2/23
3	Cedro, S.	8/2/23	46	Mathis, J. D.	5/20/23	126	Mitchell, F. T.	6/28/21	269	Halcomb, D.	2/26/23	481	Ryker, J. R.	10/12/23	776	Lucas, C. E.	10/25/23
3	Cope, G. M.	8/20/23	46	Sawyer, D. E.	10/18/23	126	Stemple, D. L.	10/16/23	269	Wagner, E. T.	8/23/23	488	Liscinsky, A. J.	7/18/23	841	Wyers, D. M.	3/28/23
3	DeGorter, T.	9/18/23	48	Feggulis, J.	9/28/23	126	Yunkin, R. A.	8/6/23	270	Albert, T. J.	9/26/23	494	Cerny, C. P.	8/10/23	855	Lowery, M. R.	9/13/23
3	Demeo, W. H.	10/3/23	48	Heming, E. J.	7/15/22	131	Edwards, C. H.	7/20/23	271	Smith, J. L.	9/5/23	494	Jacobi, W. R.	7/14/23	861	Fox, H. J.	10/2/23
3	DeMuccio, J. M.	4/30/21	48	Uhrich, W. R.	10/11/23	131	Klocke, P. L.	10/4/23	275	Wirtz, J. J.	9/19/23	498	Pfeiffer, M. D.	10/26/23	861	Lejeune, J. B.	9/12/23
3	Gallardo, L. E.	9/19/23	51	Handley, T. M.	7/20/23	131	Smith, D. L.	10/12/23	280	Anderson, G. W.	9/17/23	520	Enderlin, J. D.	9/11/23	906	Kerry, C.	8/8/23
3	Gherardi, R. W.	7/23/23	53	Bodam, I. G.	4/19/21	134	Andrews, C. A.	7/6/23	280	Andrews, M. D.	9/11/23	520	Sellers, M. A.	7/21/23	917	Kittrell, D. C.	9/9/23
3	Hryniewicki, W.	9/7/23	55	Bandstra, G. W.	9/15/23	134	Brown, G. E.	9/16/23	280	Babcock, L. K.	4/29/23	527	Morales, M.	10/1/23	917	Pennington, J. M.	9/27/23
3	Kempton, T. E.	7/1/23	57	Rhoads, E. G.	5/25/23	134	Caudill, J. C.	9/15/23	280	Chilson, D. A.	1/2/21	530	Izreig, S.	10/23/23	993	Cameron, A. G.	10/11/23
3	Lesniewski, M.	9/8/23	58	Beschoner, K. E.	9/30/23	134	Dutcher, M. R.	10/9/23	280	McGinnes, F. M.	8/22/23	531	Hoover, M. E.	3/17/21	1003	Popoff, W. J.	9/13/23
3	Marshall, W. R.	10/2/23	58	Danko, A.	10/1/23	134	Holt, L. M.	9/28/23	292	Johnson, R. E.	8/22/23	532	McClelland, G. G.	12/18/20	1141	Ley, C. A.	10/22/23
3	Meehan, J. H.	9/15/23	58	Fike, G. F.	5/23/21	134	Jurek, M.	10/11/23	292	Lutz, L. J.	9/9/23	540	Kovac, D. L.	10/3/23	1245	Aitchison, T. L.	9/7/23
3	Meyer, R. H.	9/12/23	58	Kellenberger, G. R.	9/3/23	134	Mattison, R. R.	8/20/23	292	Meuwissen, R. H.	9/29/23	567	Goudreau, N. J.	8/4/23	1319	Houck, R. S.	10/13/23
3	Portelli, G. M.	8/29/23	58	Parkinson, B. R.	3/18/21	134	Olson, R. L.	7/3/23	292	Ratka, V. J.	6/17/23	569	Berkshire, T. H.	10/9/23	1319	Leonard, W. R.	7/5/21
3	Roman, V. M.	9/28/23	58	Ridgell, L. D.	10/31/23	134	Scroppio, P.	2/13/21	292	Sewill, D. B.	6/28/23	569	Chapman, E. E.	10/8/23	1393	Curlin, P. V.	10/9/23
3	Spaziante, R.	1/17/23	58	Toth, C. D.	9/30/23	134	White, M. G.	8/27/23	295	Buck, H. E.	10/7/23	570	Fuller, E. R.	7/7/23	1393	Wiseman, P. R.	10/17/23
5	Hauliska, G.	7/18/20	58	VanLieghe, D. A.	9/7/23	134	Wisniewski, N. A.	1/30/23	304	Stegman, K. W.	9/15/23	586	Arcand, J.	8/24/23	1412	Walls, L. E.	10/5/23
5	Hudock, R. C.	8/19/23	60	Tapia, I.	8/14/23	139	Foster, M. S.	8/8/23	305	Dettmer, G. E.	9/30/23	586	Campbell, C. I.	3/6/23	1547	Fletcher, H. E.	6/1/21
5	Marcheleta, R. D.	9/22/23	60	Villegas, A. G.	2/7/21	143	Cordner, L. J.	10/2/23	306	Hornacek, J. S.	10/6/23	586	Kelly, M. T.	9/7/23	1547	Mittlestadt, C. B.	10/1/23
5	Rost, T. V.	9/23/23	68	Cline, J. L.	3/22/21	143	Malesic, W. R.	9/20/23	306	Wahl, F. R.	10/13/23	595	Hollenbeck, J. S.	9/16/23	1925	Willoughby, J. W.	10/9/23
6	Loughran, J.	8/27/23	68	Larose, R. J.	4/7/23	150	Pasquesi, F. L.	7/12/23	332	Hutton, B. T.	10/5/23	595	Reyes, I. T.	9/29/22	1928	MacDonald, M. P.	9/24/23
8	Garza, S.	7/17/23	68	Lujan, F.	5/18/21	153	Curtis, J. W.	10/30/23	332	Shean, J. J.	9/1/23	606	Latner, D. A.	8/4/23	1976	McNeal, G. A.	9/20/23
8	Pudlicki, J. A.	10/2/23	70	St Clair, J. A.	3/11/23	153	Egendorfer, D. R.	1/1/17	340	Witt, L. W.	8/10/23	613	Anderson, G. C.	9/15/23	2150	Richtig, G. C.	10/28/23
9	Gusich, C. F.	9/27/23	71	Eing, J. L.	7/10/23	153	Prestine, T. S.	7/21/23	342	Wetherholt, W. E.	9/6/22	613	Beasley, C. B.	10/14/23	2220	Dale, G. M.	8/23/23
9	Johnson, F. W.	9/3/23	77	Barnes, F. A.	3/25/23	160	Frederick, J. S.	7/16/23	347	Hall, R. H.	10/21/23	613	Draper, G. N.	9/14/23	I.O. (29)	Anderson, G. L.	10/1/23
9	Norman, R. W.	10/7/23	77	Mell, J. E.	2/23/21	160	Preston, E. D.	9/21/23	347	Jordan, D. P.	10/15/23	613	James, P. H.	9/29/23	I.O. (127)	Gosselin, T. W.	4/21/21
9	Notaro, J. P.	10/18/23	77	Smart, E. M.	8/15/23	164	Gannucci, P. T.	10/11/23	351	Leeds, R. C.	8/13/23	613	Kendrick, T. W.	9/15/23	I.O. (134)	Dwar, M. G.	10/13/23
9	Spizzirri, R. L.	8/25/20	77	Therrien, H. G.	3/16/23	164	Holz, G. W.	9/6/23	351	Mandel, F. J.	10/22/23	613	McMillon, R. L.	8/16/23	I.O. (441)	Smith, R. J.	9/29/23
11	Anglin, J. S.	10/22/23	82	Allen, R. L.	10/17/23	164	Larkin, J. F.	7/24/23	353	Chapman, J. R.	9/19/23	613	Smith, V. M.	7/28/22	I.O. (760)	Lawson, K. D.	9/15/23
11	Gilmore, R. C.	9/13/23	82	Mathews, S. H.	10/13/23	164	McCoy, N. J.	10/5/23	353	Elmer, W. G.	12/16/22	617	Beltran, T. L.	8/23/20	I.O. (1319)	Phillips, A. P.	8/2/23
11	Gonzalez, G.	3/2/21	84	Stephens, H. J.	8/22/23	164	Wint, J. R.	10/4/23	353	Grossi, A.	10/24/23	617	Larson, P. C.	8/17/23	Pens. (I.O)	Adkins, S. T.	9/8/23
11	Jorgenson, J. S.	8/5/23	86	Chamberlain, J. L.	9/6/20	175	Brewer, W. L.	10/24/23	353	Partridge, R. M.	10/12/23	640	McIlrath, D. J.	9/5/23	Pens. (I.O)	Brisbine, R. T.	10/4/23
11	Schmitz, R. D.	9/30/23	96	Morris, A. W.	8/13/23	175	Key, H. B.	8/20/23	353	Phillips, W. R.	8/19/23	640	Santa Cruz, C. E.	9/27/23	Pens. (I.O)	Burgard, J. A.	6/17/23
16	Worman, W. A.	10/13/23	98	Diamond, T. G.	9/8/23	175	Mason, C. R.	10/7/23	353	Simic, I.	10/5/23	648	Chambers, R. M.	12/11/22	Pens. (I.O)	Carlson, J. D.	1/5/17
17	Northrup, K. M.	8/6/23	98	Spurlock, D. R.	8/4/23	175	Talley, J. C.	8/7/23	354	Esplin, D. T.	4/23/23	648	Dixon, R. D.	10/9/23	Pens. (I.O)	Cerny, R. C.	10/10/23
18	Pennestri, M.	9/28/23	99	McGrath, R. L.	9/12/23	176	Miller, J. L.	8/4/23	354	Markland, P. A.	5/31/23	649	Green, K. A.	8/30/23	Pens. (I.O)	Gallier, J. W.	5/9/23
20	Chandler, B. S.	8/23/23	100	Albright, J. W.	4/28/23	176	Van Cleave, E. A.	10/14/23	357	Correll, L. H.	8/23/23	659	Stewart, G. C.	10/20/23	Pens. (I.O)	Hagen, F. C.	7/23/23
20	Flowers, T. W.	9/26/23	102	Bird, W. M.	4/4/20	177	Ingram, J. A.	2/10/23	363	Angelescu, W. F.	9/2/23	659	Watson, H. K.	9/24/23	Pens. (I.O)	McCloskey, P. D.	9/1/23
22	Rhen, R. W.	5/16/20	102	Brill, P. M.	2/5/21	180	Nordahl, M. V.	1/20/23	369	Sandifer, C. E.	9/14/23	665	Loughlin, G. J.	8/19/23	Pens. (I.O)	McLane, J. R.	9/24/23
22	Stigge, P. D.	9/29/23	102	DeCoster, J. P.	2/26/23	191	Lowell, S. A.	2/28/21	379	Reynolds, L. E.	10/23/23	666	Smith, R. J.	8/9/23	Pens. (I.O)	Wetjen, L. R.	10/20/23
24	David, C. L.	7/1/21	103	Daniels, J. A.	9/19/23	203	Berg, K. A.	7/5/23	379	Rouse, M. L.	8/25/22	668	Robbins, M. A.	7/30/23			
24	Dehne, R. C.	9/29/23	103	Hapgood, P. D.	8/29/23	212	Gay, B. S.	9/15/23	400	Elfstrom, R. G.	8/31/23	673	Manteuffel, G.	8/29/23			
24	Vickers, J. C.	8/7/23	103	Lavalle, W. E.	11/24/22	212	Meineke, A. E.	10/2/23	424	Blakley, G. D.	9/20/23	682	Haley, M. A.	8/4/23			
26	Johnson, S. L.	10/14/23	103	Obrien, J. D.	10/10/23	213	Ebenal, M. E.	9/21/23	424	Durocher, W. D.	10/9/23	683	Pinson, M. D.	10/3/23			

This list shows members for whom PBF death claims were approved in November 2023. ■

“LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

Support the IBEW PAC

I worked 36 years as a member of the IBEW, earning a good living. I've been retired 20 years and enjoy a financially good retirement. I wanted to support the IBEW PAC (editor's note: the Political Action Committee, which supports pro-union candidates).

One year ago, I received a request for financial support, and I immediately decided to participate. After some thought, I decided on a monthly payment. If a person has more financial responsibilities, it can be a small amount.

A \$30 monthly contribution amounts to \$360 a year. If 1,000 people do this, it would be \$360,000. Ten thousand people would bring in \$3.6 million.

So when you're paying your utility bills, include a contribution to the IBEW PAC, and consider making it a monthly stipend. If we, the current and retired members of the IBEW, who enjoy the benefits garnered from membership, do not support it, who will?

Walter Kisiel
Detroit Local 58

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



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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

HELP ELECT PRO-WORKER CANDIDATES

The IBEW Political Action Committee supports political action and candidates who will strengthen and protect workers' rights. It also serves as a resource for member organizing during pivotal elections.

Contribute at least \$75 and receive this limited-edition challenge coin celebrating the Biden administration's PROMISES MADE, PROMISES KEPT to working people and the IBEW!

Support the IBEW PAC

www.ibew.org/ibewpac/contribute.org

Contributions can be made only by IBEW members who are U.S. citizens.



IBEW MERCHANDISE

www.ibewmerchandise.com

BEANIE HAT \$7.00

100% acrylic knit hat with embroidered 1" IBEW initials.

LADIES BURGUNDY POLO SHIRT \$40.00

100% polyester, heathered burgundy moisture management polo shirt with IBEW initials embroidered on collar. Wicks moisture away from the body by using rapid dry interlock fabric.

QUILT LINED JACKET \$100.00

12-ounce, 100% ring-spun cotton navy blue duck with quilted flannel lining. Attached hood with adjustable drawstring. Two large front pockets and two inside pockets. IBEW initials with fist and lightning bolts embroidered on left chest.

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

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS	Fourth District	Third District	THE ELECTRICAL WORKER
William W. Riley	William W. Riley	Dennis C. Affinati	Editor
Kenneth W. Cooper International President	Donald B. Finn	Gina P. Cooper	Kenneth W. Cooper
Paul A. Noble International Secretary-Treasurer	Mark H. Cunningham	Brian K. Thompson	Matt Spence
INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	Erly J. Chincio	Michael Clemmons	Tim Lawson
Chairman	Tom N. Griffiths	Christian J. Wagner	Alex Hogan
Christopher Erikson	INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS	Jerry Bellah	Curtis D. Bateman
First District	First District	Ninth District	Erin Sutherland
Joseph P. Calabro	Russell N. Shewchuk	David E. Reaves Jr.	Asifa Haniff
Second District	Second District	Tenth District	Ben Temchine
Myles J. Calvey	Michael P. Monahan	Brent E. Hall	Sean Bartel
Third District	Eleventh District	Mark D. Hager	Colin Kelly
Daniel L. Shirey			Rix Oakland
			Colleen Crinion
			Michael Pointer
			Janelle Hartman
			Joe Conway
			Emily Welsh
			Mike Palm
			Javier Pierrend

HOW TO REACH US

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

Send letters to:

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

Or send by email to: media@ibew.org

©2024 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The Electrical Worker (print)
ISSN 2332-113X

The Electrical Worker (online)
ISSN 2332-1148

All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. on Union-made paper.

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 122
Niagara Falls ON
L2E 6S8.

WHO WE ARE

'The World That's Been Missing' Colorado Veteran Finds His Home in the IBEW

Josiah Crowden tried his hand at all sorts of things after serving out his enlistment in the U.S. Air Force nearly 20 years ago.

His early jobs were a matter of survival — a video game store, a day care center, an awful stint as a prison guard. He was a young veteran doing whatever he had to do to support his wife and child.

But before long, the marriage fell apart and Crowden briefly became one of America's tens of thousands of homeless veterans. Achingly hungry and deeply depressed, he slept in his car until a tax refund and shifts at Chipotle afforded him a tiny apartment.

Today, Crowden is a thriving Xcel Energy utility worker and active member of Denver Local 111, arriving at the local in his mid-30s after years working in sales and real estate as he rebuilt his life.

He knew he'd found his home.

"I was trudging through life, trying to find my place. And some of the things I did were great. But none of it gave me that purpose I once had, where you're on a mission and you're part of something bigger, something greater.

"When I found the IBEW, I thought, 'This is the world that's been missing for me.'"

CROWDEN knows how starved many veterans are for that sense of belonging. Preaching the union message — partial, of course to the IBEW — has become his calling.

"In the military, you're closer than



"I was trudging through life, trying to find my place. ... With the IBEW, the search is over."

— Josiah Crowden, Air Force veteran and Denver Local 111 member

"But if I did, I'd sit there with the lights off."

IN THE YEARS after his return to Colorado, Crowden sold surgical equipment, ran the gaming department at a Best Buy and eventually went into real estate with his second wife, Amanda.

"We're going on 14 years," he says. "She's everything to me, and she's given us two little boys that are absolutely fantastic."

When the pandemic wreaked havoc on the couple's business, Crowden reasoned, "I didn't want my paycheck to be reliant on whether or not someone buys or sells a home."

Looking for more stability, his life changed the day he visited a fellow veteran and watched video of him at work — his friend and another man hooking up to the belly of a helicopter, grasping the cable and being lifted above the landscape into a bright blue sky.

"I said: 'Are you kidding me? What are you doing?' He said, 'Man, I'm a journeyman lineman.'"

Crowden was amazed — by the work, as well as the money his friend earned.

In retrospect, it wasn't the first time he'd been awed by a Local 111 lineman, recalling a childhood memory of an uncle who is still in the field today.

"One day my uncle came over to my grandma's and put on his gaffs and strap, and I watched him hand-over-hand climb up the pole in our back yard," he says. "I thought it was the coolest thing ever."

He called the uncle, who told him, "Go down and sign the books." Soon after submitting his application to Local 111, Crowden began entry-level work.

After gaining experience with smaller electrical companies and contractors, a bit of a rough and winding road that included months away from his family, Crowden was hired by Xcel in August 2022.

Soon, he was at the company's "School of Dirt," having the time of his life learning how to use heavy equipment to dig the gas and electric lines he helps install today.

While he's decided at age 39 not to pursue the path of a lineman, he counts at least 14 other career options through the union at Xcel.

"I'll tell you, with IBEW, the search is over," Crowden says. "This is where I'm retiring."

Then he pauses.

"Let me take that back. I'm not retiring," he says. "I'm here until I'm done. I'm here until the good Lord calls me home." ■

brothers. You're together 24/7. And when you leave, you start looking for that camaraderie and fulfillment and you can't find it," he says.

He is featured in a recent IBEW video, part of the union's outreach to veterans who are looking for a new calling in their civilian lives.

"As veterans, there are three core values — integrity, service before self, excellence in all you do," Crowden says to the camera. "It's ingrained in us from the very beginning. You've got to do your best. You've got to be your best."

Local 111 Business Manager Nate Gutierrez said Crowden is an ideal ambassador, whether one-on-one or speaking at job fairs and meetings, sometimes spontaneously.

Describing one such event, he said, "Unscripted, unasked-for, he grabbed the mike and talked about leaving the military and longing for

something to fill that void.

"His smile, for one, always catches you," Gutierrez said. "His energy, his excitement, his love for the IBEW is contagious."

It's evident that Crowden is as proud and grateful an IBEW brother as those with decades under their belts.

"I have more IBEW shirts than I know what to do with, and I can never get enough swag," he says. "There's so much pride walking around with it, showing it off."

MOST EVERYONE calls Crowden "Chief," a moniker that stuck from his days as a crew chief at the Air Force base in Little Rock, Ark.

He laughs, knowing it can be confusing to people, given his heritage.

"I'm kind of a joyous mix," Crowden says. "My dad, he's a Southern boy, born in Arkansas, raised in Mississippi. Then he joined the Air Force, moved to Colorado, met my mom at church and never went back. On my mom's side, I'm First Peoples of Colorado, a mix of the Apache Chiricahua tribe, Navajo and Ute."

The nickname bothered his bosses at Xcel, who called him into a meeting last spring and asked him to give it up. "They said, 'There are other Native Americans here, and they might be offended.' I said: 'Who said anything about it being Native? I've been 'Chief' for 20 years. My flight crews called me that. I earned it.'" With a steward on his side, Xcel concurred.

But Chief isn't the only title he relishes today.

"The first person to call me 'brother,' the first time it really stuck, was a foreman on my first job. He was 'Brother this' and 'Brother that,' and I said, 'Why do you call everyone that?' "Because that's what we are," he told Crowden. "At the end of the day, you ensure that I go home to my family and you go home to yours."

"I said: 'It's just like the military. It's another brotherhood.'"



Josiah Crowden, his wife, Amanda, and their two sons at church, holding a photo of an African girl the family sponsors. A once-homeless veteran, Crowden strives to pay forward the help he got, while also stressing, "I wouldn't be where I am without God."

SCAN CODE TO WATCH VIDEO

