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IBEW News

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2023
PHOTO
CONTEST
WINNERS

POWER IN PICTURES

From the ground to the sky, from wide shots to delicate close-ups, nothing captures the heart and soul of our great union better than the annual Photo Contest.

Members proved that again in 2023 with a stunning array of images that were difficult to pare down to finalists for online voting. In February, thousands of brothers and sisters cast ballots — one vote per person — for first, second and third place, with honorable mentions awarded in every IBEW branch that had entries.

The top prize of \$1,000 went to journeyman lineman Phil Weller of Seattle-based Local 77, who couldn't resist the symmetry of his crewmates working on transmission lines in rural Washington state — one of those moments in an otherwise routine day, he said, that remind him of the joys and wonders of being a lineman.

Ryan Caulfield of Ventura, Calif., Local 952 won second place and \$750 for a mesmerizing scene he captured at daybreak as he and an IBEW brother were finishing a night shift repairing streetlights and cameras. Third place, with a \$500 prize, went to journeyman lineman Paul Salgado of Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47 for his photo of an apprentice up a pole amid a patch of forest after a storm.

The \$200 honorable mentions pull the lens further back to show the diversity of IBEW members' work. They include a peek inside a New York broadcasting studio, a walk across a vast solar field in Oregon, a California tree trimmer on a colorful winter morning, a rising sun burning off fog above pristine railroad tracks in Manitoba and the intricate work of a crime lab technician in Los Angeles.

International President Kenneth W. Cooper said he's awed by the contest entries, whether or not they were winners. "These photos tell you so much about the IBEW — not just what we do and how we do it but the passion, care and professionalism we bring to our jobs," he said.

He hopes the featured photos inspire members to enter the next contest later this year. "I can't wait to see the 2024 submissions," Cooper said. "While safety and job rules are first and foremost at all times, these days we're all walking around with cameras in our pockets. When and where you're able, it's never been easier to give the rest of us a glimpse of what you do — and you might even win a prize."

See All the Winners
pages 4-6

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FROM THE OFFICERS

Improving the Benefits You Have Earned



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

People have many reasons for joining together in a union, but when Paul and I talk with members, there are three that nearly everyone mentions: good wages, affordable health-care, and a dignified retirement.

In February, we announced three important steps to significantly improve that third goal for our members: the first new retirement benefit since the end of World War II, the first retirement benefit increase in more than two decades and a one-time “13th month” check for folks who are already retired.

It has been 22 years since the NEBF benefit was increased, and we know that is way too long.

The details are spelled out in an article on page 8 of this issue, but we want to talk about why it is so important to improve our retirement benefits and how we had the leverage to accomplish this.

Pensions are increasingly rare in today’s economy. In 1991, 35% of private-sector workers had access to a defined-benefit plan. Last year it was only 11%.

Corporation after corporation shedded their pension obligations, leaving older Americans on their own when it comes to retirement security.

The IBEW and NECA are unique in our commitment to pension plans. While Wall Street focused on short-term profits, our priority has always been the well-being of our members and contractors.

When this union started 133 years ago, the first benefit we self-funded was a death benefit so a dignified funeral wouldn’t put our families in the poorhouse. That Henry Miller, our first president, was buried in an unmarked plot following his death on the job has been a constant spur to action for us as officers. It is a sign of how humble our beginning was and a reminder of where we would be without our collective strength.

When Paul and I meet retirees now, we see women and men who enjoy more comfort and security than our forebears could have imagined.

Today the NEBF is one of the best-funded, most secure defined-benefits plans in the nation, and we owe that to the wise leadership of previous fund leaders, as well as the IBEW and NECA. For generations, we judged its success not on the ups and downs of the market but on the health and welfare of our membership.

We changed our fates. No one did it for us. It is what the people who created this union and fought for these benefits wanted for us. It is why we, today, insist on shouldering the same promise for the future.

The people who retire 30, 50 and 100 years from now should have longer, healthier and more comfortable retirements than we do today. More of the value we create with our work should come to us, and to them.

An individual electrician has the power to bring light and heat where there is darkness and cold. But at the negotiating table, an individual only has the power an employer is willing to grant them.

Now put us together, and we don’t just have the power to make our customers’ lives better, but we also have the power to improve our own lives.

We were able to increase our benefits and create an entirely new benefit, the National Electrical Individual Benefit, because of that collective power. When negotiated at the local level, contractors will pay at least 50 cents for every hour a member works, and when the member retires, they will receive 1.5% of that career-long total every month for life.

Our ability to demand more continues to strengthen because the IBEW is growing bigger every year.

We have seen historic growth in the past decade. We have more “A” members than at any time in our history, and we are making sure that all our members enjoy a piece of that success.

As we continue to organize, and expand both our membership and market share, the fight for better, more secure retirements for all of our members remains our top priority.

There are not many jobs these days that come with a pension. But the unionized electrical construction trade remains a proud exception.

The NEBF is a core reason that for more than half a century, the IBEW has meant good, family-sustaining, middle-class jobs.

And we are committed to reinforcing this critical pillar of the middle class in the electrical industry in the years to come.

None of this would have been possible without your hard work. It is your dedication to excellence and growing the IBEW that allowed us to make this possible.

Thank you for all you do, and please see the article on page 8 of this issue and visit nebf.com for more information. ■



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

My IBEW STORY

Mandy Tullis-Martin, electrical apprentice
Le Sueur, Minn., Local 343



“Before I started my apprenticeship, I was working two jobs: one was in finance, and the other was as a server/bartender. I had been working two jobs for about six years at that point, trying to get by as a single parent of a 3-year-old. I had very little time for my son, and the time I did have wouldn’t go far because I was always so mentally and physically drained. I couldn’t keep going with the way things were.

My dad, an engineer, mentioned the apprenticeship program to my brother, and although he wasn’t interested, I jumped at the opportunity. I was 24 at the time, and I had no idea what an apprenticeship was, or a union. It’s not an option that I had been told about in high school.

I applied for the apprenticeship as quickly as I could and went through the comprehension test and interview, which was the most nerve-racking part of the process. I was the only woman there for an interview, and I didn’t know what to expect. There was a woman apprentice (now a journeyperson) at the hall that day, and even though she was there to talk to the office staff, she ran right over, hyping me up and putting my nerves at ease.

My interview was awesome after that, and I had them all laughing. I walked out of the interview with probably a little too much confidence and told the director that I would hear from him in a week. He called me three days later! Now I’m close to the end of my apprenticeship, and I’m so excited to turn out!

When I started out, I wanted to do something I enjoyed while making decent pay and spending more time with my family. Membership in the IBEW has given me the time to be there for my kids (now two daughters and a son) and my husband. We were able to move into a bigger house, have pets and be together more. I have the confidence to make repairs in my own home.

My son wants to build robots when he gets older, and I now have the financial means to get him into programs that will benefit his future. Being an IBEW sister has given me the opportunity to make an impact in my community by participating in community outreach, doing things like demonstrating to a Girl Scouts troop how to bend conduit and wire simple circuits. I do my best to help with volunteer events, and I love helping with new apprentices on sites, as I was helped on my interview day.

My time at the IBEW has made a huge, positive change in my life. I’m so grateful. I’ve met some amazing men and women on jobs who have really taken me under their wing and have taught me so much. Without them, I wouldn’t have the skills that I do, and I’m very grateful for their time, expertise and compassion. Thank you to my union brothers and sisters! 🙏

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

\$24,000

The potential award for winners of the IBEW Founders’ Scholarship, presented annually to members attending college or graduate school.

For more details and a link to the application, see “Founders’ Scholarship Open for 2024 Entries” on page 10.

'Right-to-Work' No Match for Labor's Preparation, Solidarity in New Hampshire

IBEW, Fellow Unions Chalk Up Another Win in Decades-Long Battle

The IBEW and fellow unions in New Hampshire continued their decades-long winning streak against so-called right-to-work laws in February, when the state's Republican-led House of Representatives soundly voted down the latest version of the bill.

IBEW leaders said personal contact with legislators from union members and retirees was key to the 212-168 victory, with as few as two or three phone calls enough to persuade lawmakers who'd been on the fence.

"When you have a legislature this big, some of the people are really only plugged into the issues that are dear to their heart," said Tony Sapienza, business manager of Manchester, Maine, Local 1837, which has jurisdiction in New Hampshire.

"This is a party issue," he said. "But if you explain to the lawmaker that the law is mislabeled, that 'right to work' is a misnomer and that it actually hurts workers and creates regulation, it's eye-opening for them."

New Hampshire AFL-CIO President Glenn Brackett said labor's margin of victory was the biggest he recalls in his 30-plus years battling right-to-work — starting as an activist member of Manchester, N.H., Local 2320 and rising to business manager before taking on his current role.

He emphasized that personal outreach was crucial, not just in 2024 but over the past decade. "For the last nine years, seven of them have been a Republican House, Republican Senate and Republican governor, and we've been able to beat them back every year," Brackett said.

New Hampshire locals invest time and resources to ensure that their members understand the dangers of right-to-work, which allows workers to reap the rewards of a bargaining unit without paying anything toward the costs of representation. Fewer resources weaken unions' power to negotiate better wages, benefits and safety conditions.

While proponents claim that the laws spur economic growth, data overwhelmingly show less investment, fewer jobs and lower wages in right-to-work states.

"Education is key, making the members aware how directly it affects them," Dover Local 490 Business Manager Eric Batchelor said. "Certain bills out there don't touch their lives, but right-to-work literally goes after their pocket. They need to know how detrimental it could be to their livelihoods."

The local hammers home the message through monthly meetings, all manner of social media, email and regular mail. "Every which way we can other than a carrier pigeon," Batchelor said with a laugh.

Local 490 also invited a group of Republican House members to tour its IBEW-NECA training center, showing them the kind of state-of-the-art investment that healthy unions are able to make in their communities. "They thought it was fantastic," Batchelor said.



At left, above, winding up the latest battle over right-to-work in New Hampshire, state AFL-CIO President and former Local 2320 Business Manager Glenn Brackett rallies an early morning union crowd Feb. 22 outside the Capitol building in Concord. Above right, the IBEW contingent included Local 1837 Business Manager Tony Sapienza, middle, flanked by Local 1837 retirees Rick Simons, left, and Mike Pare.

The creativity, preparation and tenacity that IBEW members and their union allies bring to the perpetual battle drew high praise from Second District International Vice President Mike Monahan.

"Our opponents keep swinging, and we keep striking them out," Monahan said. "All these years fighting the same fight, and somehow our members bring fresh energy and strategies every single time. I couldn't be prouder of them."

He also thanked local and district staff, with a special shout-out to Second District International Representative Joe Casey, formerly Local 490's business manager. "Joe has been fighting right-to-work it seems his whole life," he said. "He remembers fighting it in childhood when his father, Jim, was business manager of Local 490."

The flip side of labor's grassroots efforts was the well-funded campaign bankrolled by anti-union billionaires who routinely interfere with state and local politics across the country.

Outside groups bring their



Above, New Hampshire union members rally outside the Capitol in Concord to urge arriving legislators to vote "no" on right-to-work.

right-to-work crusade to New Hampshire every two-year election cycle, sometimes going multiple rounds. Language in the most recent bill, however, puts an end to the debate until the next Legislature in 2025.

What commonly is knee-jerk advocacy for right-to-work in business circles has softened over the years in New Hampshire, replaced by a mix of views and even staunch opponents.

That wasn't the case, however, for a lawmaker who told Brackett he'd heard from several electrical contractors urging him to vote in favor of right-to-work. "He was looking for a reason to vote 'no' but he hadn't heard from our side yet," Brackett said. "We put the word out and the IBEW buried him in phone calls."

Meanwhile, other contractors have come around to the point of testifying against the bill at the Capitol in Concord.

"When you talk to them about the government having no business getting between private-sector employers and their contracts with workers, that resonates with them,"

Brackett said. "We had contractors from a lot of the trades basically telling lawmakers, 'We like the relationship we have with our workforce.'"

In testimony and one-on-one conversations, labor activists made clear to legislators that existing laws already protect workers from being forced to join unions or pay dues, while allowing unions to collect a smaller fee from non-members to cover the direct costs of representation. Those fees would be abolished under right-to-work, creating a class of union freeloaders.

For Local 1837 Business Representative Kaitlyn Hegarty, the success of members' personal calls to lawmakers and the confidence they gained in the process was a highlight of the campaign.

"Because this is such a divisive issue, I think a lot of our members anticipated hostile phone calls, and they turned out to be very cordial," said Hegarty, who coordinated her local's efforts.

She also noted that the

Legislature's website makes it easy for New Hampshire voters to weigh in on bills and was pleased by how many union members answered the call to do so.

"When they put a bill online, you have the ability to sign in, give your name, and say you're opposing or supporting it," Hegarty said. "It's a really simple action. There ended up being more than 1,400 opposed and less than 50 in favor."

The day of the vote, union members and retirees gathered early outside the Capitol for a rally with an upbeat vibe.

"The idea is to greet the legislators when they're showing up for the day," Sapienza said. "It really feels good at the end of all the work you've done."

Based on the lawmakers who made eye contact and those who averted their gaze, union activists knew the odds were on their side.

"One hundred percent, you could tell how they were going to vote," Batchelor said. "We got a lot of thumbs up, even from some of the red ties." ■

▶ Continued from page 1

POWER IN PICTURES

2023 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Rules for entering the 2024 contest will be advertised in upcoming issues of *The Electrical Worker*, as well as on our website and social media.

“These photos tell you so much about the IBEW — not just what we do and how we do it but the passion, care and professionalism we bring to our jobs.”

— International President Kenneth W. Cooper



FIRST PLACE
(\$1,000)

Phil Weller |
Seattle Local 77

Looking up at his symmetrical IBEW brothers on an X-bracing 50 feet in the air in spring 2023, journeyman lineman Phil Weller knew he had to capture the moment.

He and his crewmates, all members of Seattle Local 77 working for the Chelan County Public Utility District, were in the midst of routine maintenance on transmission lines in north-central Washington.

What Weller saw that morning reminded him that even ordinary days can be extraordinary when you're a lineman, inspiring him to pull out his iPhone 14.

“It’s so awesome to be up there,” he said. “But when you do this every day, sometimes you forget how cool it is. You get views like that on a daily basis, and you’re working with a bunch of fun, hard-working guys. You can’t beat it.”

The fun, hard-working guys he photographed that day are Jessie Nick and Joel McIntosh, Local 77 members for 24 years and 14 years, respectively.

Weller, a Washington native who is married with two children, joined the union 17 years ago. He was attending Boise State University to study radiology when he happened to drive past the North-west Lineman College’s Idaho campus. Intrigued, he did some research and decided he’d prefer working in the great outdoors.

“I feel really fortunate,” he said. “It is hard work, but it’s just so much fun. And it’s one of those jobs that’s not going anywhere.”



SECOND PLACE (\$750)

Ryan Caulfield |
Ventura, Calif., Local 952

Ryan Caulfield had no plans to enter the IBEW Photo Contest when he shot this picture of working partner and fellow Local 952 member David Soo Hoo in a bucket as the sun rose over a Ventura intersection. He took it for Soo Hoo's wife, who wanted photos of her husband on the job.

But Soo Hoo loved the picture and insisted they enter it. It paid off with a second-place finish and a check for \$750. Not surprisingly, Caulfield plans to share the winnings with Soo Hoo, his friend and IBEW brother.

"I was just thinking that maybe this will give her an idea what we're doing while we're at work and she's home in bed," said Caulfield, who has been a Local 952 member for 25 years and is a foreman for Taft Electric, a major signatory contractor.

He and Soo Hoo specialize in repairing and replacing streetlights and street cameras. Most of their work is at night, when it is less disruptive to traffic and people like Soo Hoo's wife are asleep.

Caulfield used an iPhone that he keeps in his safety vest. The intersection is just off a busy freeway, and traffic can be heavy, even early in the day.



THIRD PLACE (\$500)

Paul Salgado |
Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47

In March 2023, Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47 journeyman lineman Paul Salgado was in the Sacramento area with several of his fellow members who were tasked with changing out equipment and restoring power to nearby customers following a storm.

Something about a particular Local 47 apprentice at work caught Salgado's attention: the full-body personal protective equipment, perhaps, with the bright yellow standing out against the relative darkness of the trees in the background.

Salgado pulled out his Sony A6400 and captured the moment that ultimately netted him third-place honors and a \$500 prize in the 2023 IBEW Photo Contest.

After finishing a four-year commitment to the U.S. Navy in 2006, Salgado worked a few jobs before meeting up with a journeyman lineman who recommended electrical work.

"From there, I didn't look back. Being a part of the trade was what I knew I wanted," said Salgado, who was initiated into the IBEW in 2013.

He developed his familiarity with a camera when he had to take time off for an injury. It soon turned into a professional opportunity.

"About two years ago, I moved into media and branding" for IBEW signatory contractor Sturgeon Electric California, he said, serving as a field media adviser and podcast producer. Soon afterward, he placed third in the 2021 IBEW Photo Contest.

In his spare time, Salgado volunteers with veteran organizations to help servicemembers who are transitioning into the civilian workforce, with a special consideration for electrical work and IBEW membership.

2023 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS *continued on page 6*

THE IBEW 2023 PHOTO CONTEST HONORABLE MENTIONS (\$200 EACH)



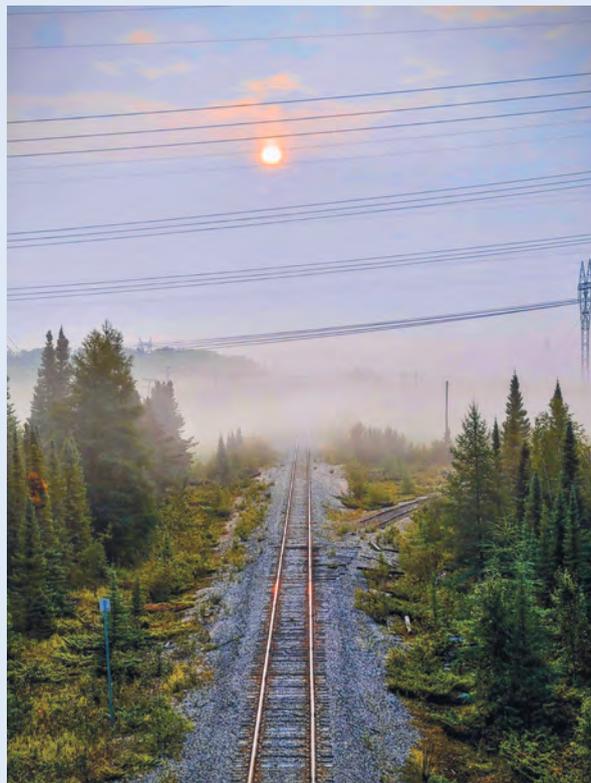
BROADCASTING
Gerard D'Elia | New York Local 1212



UTILITY
Robert Burroughs | Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245



OUTSIDE CONSTRUCTION
Kyle Avery | Hartford, Conn., Local 42



RAILROAD
Jorgen Kaspick | Winnipeg, Manitoba, Local 2034



TELECOMMUNICATIONS
Greg Briggs | Cranston, R.I., Local 2323



GOVERNMENT
Jennifer Emery | Los Angeles Local 11



INSIDE CONSTRUCTION
Kendel Castner | Kennewick, Wash., Local 112

Honorable mention was not awarded in the Manufacturing Branch because of a lack of qualifying entries.

IBEW Signs Billion-Dollar PLA for Southwest Clean Energy Transmission Line



International President Kenneth W. Cooper signs a project labor agreement for a \$1.3 billion, 580-mile high-voltage DC transmission line with executives from project developer Pattern Energy and parent company Quanta Services. It is the largest outside branch PLA in decades.

The IBEW signed one of the largest transmission project labor agreements in history for a \$1.3 billion, 580-mile power line project in the desert Southwest.

Members from Phoenix Local 769 and Albuquerque, N.M., Local 611 are already at work on the 525-kilovolt lines that will connect the 3.5-gigawatt SunZia wind project to customers in Arizona and California.

At peak, close to 600 members will be on the job.

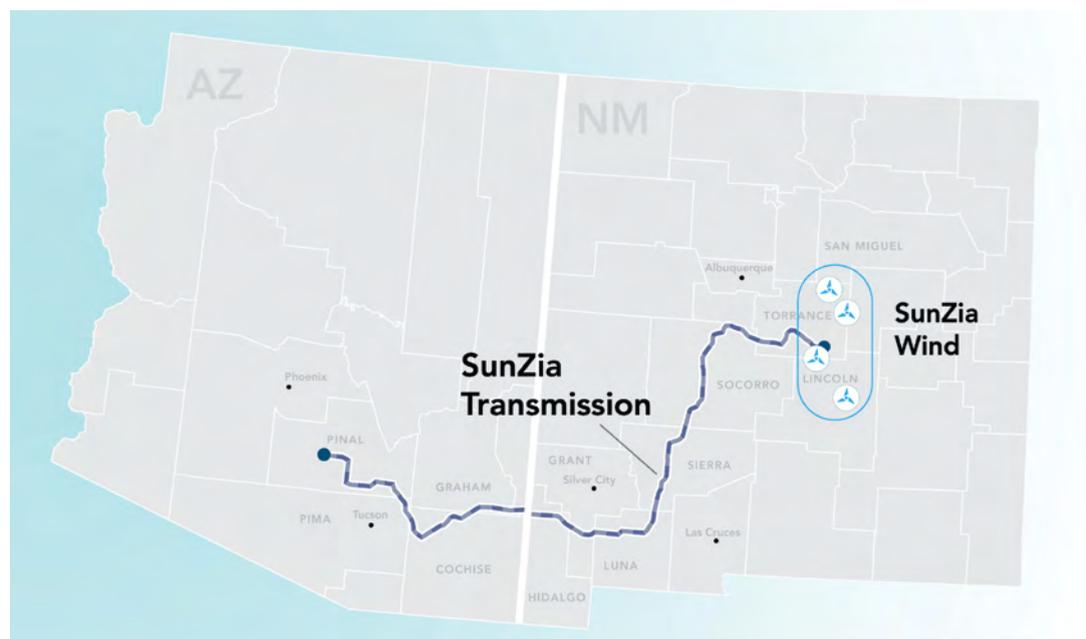
"It is the largest transmission PLA from renewable generation, and it could be the largest transmission PLA in IBEW history," said Outside Construction International Representative George Arhos. "These jobs will create an economic ripple effect throughout Arizona and New Mexico, pouring money back into local communities."

Early work has already started on the power source for the lines, the \$5 billion SunZia project. At peak, SunZia will create more than 2,000 construction jobs and produce enough clean power for more than 3 million homes, developer Pattern Energy said.

The power will come from more than 900 turbines, two HVDC converter stations, 10 substations, multiple operations and maintenance facilities, and more than 100 miles of power lines stringing it all together.

Construction Department Director Matt Paules said the IBEW is in conversations with Pattern Energy to expand the PLA to the entire project.

"I'm optimistic we can find an agreement. We have worked with Pattern before, and the company was recently purchased by Quanta Services, where we have a long and productive history," Paules said. "There is a win-win partnership waiting there for us to find."



The new lines will follow the same right of way as the Western Spirit project, built by members of Local 611 starting in 2021.

Pattern Energy said SunZia will start delivering power to customers in 2026.

The PLA is the result of the many ways and places the IBEW uses its power and influence to create jobs, Paules said.

The primary customers for the energy the SunZia project will generate and carry are in California. For example, one of the first power purchasing agreements for the project was with the Regents of the University of California.

Demand in California for carbon-free energy is driven not just by good intentions but by law.

Under the Renewables Portfolio Standard, the state sets escalating renewable energy procurement requirements for utilities and large energy consumers.

Those standards were passed with the enthusiastic support of IBEW locals up and down the state because they created a market for renewable energy when costs per kilowatt-hour were high. Now that the cost of renewable energy is competitive with carbon-intensive generation, the laws still stimulate the kind of growing demand that developers look for when they contemplate committing several billion dollars to a project, Arhos said.

"Our size and unity give our members a real voice in California politics. That's meant more and better jobs inside the state, but our power in California is creating jobs outside the state," Arhos said. "This is not a part of the country with a lot of outside jobs. Every paycheck deposited in our members' bank accounts is evidence of the power of the IBEW because we are an international organization."

Members from Phoenix Local 769 and Albuquerque, N.M., Local 611 are already working on the SunZia project, which will bring 3,500 megawatts of wind power to the large Western population centers in Arizona and California.

At the federal level, said International President Kenneth W. Cooper, the PLA is another success for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act signed in 2021 and 2022 by President Joe Biden.

SunZia had existed on paper for more than a decade. Shovels are in the ground now because economic realities for these colossal renewable projects changed after those bills were signed, Cooper said.

"Every member of the IBEW knows of a project that was 'coming in six months' for 10 years. That's over," Cooper said. "The work is here because of these laws, and it won't stop coming." ■

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

For the latest IBEW news, including this and all previous editions of The Electrical Worker, go to ibew.org.

YouTube

A local's pension was on the brink, but thanks to the American Rescue Plan, members have a solid retirement plan. Go to [YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker](https://www.youtube.com/TheElectricalWorker).

Vimeo

A coal plant closing could have devastated a Wyoming town, but a new nuclear facility will employ 500 members of Casper Local 322. Visit [Vimeo.com/IBEW](https://www.vimeo.com/IBEW).

HourPower

Hundreds of thousands of new energy jobs could be in the hands of IBEW members — if we take these five steps. See them at IBEWHourPower.com.

ElectricTV

A Detroit Electrical Industry Training Center lab provides cutting-edge instruction to IBEW members in the industries shaping the city. See more at ElectricTV.net.

IBEW Signs Agreement With Other Trades to Protect Solar Work

A new multi-trade project labor agreement for grid-scale solar projects will protect traditional IBEW work and put an end to jurisdictional battles in the sector.

A spate of disputes led International President Kenneth W. Cooper to negotiate with the Laborers' International Union of North America and the International Union of Operating Engineers. The resulting deal will improve efficiencies on the job and prevent union headaches that can lead to bad blood and legal bills.

"Our highest priority was protecting the high-skill, high-wage electrical work that makes up the bulk of the man-hours on these projects," Cooper said. "Contractors want reliable access to a skilled workforce and guarantees that their projects will be eligible for the tax credits in the Inflation Reduction Act. They don't want their projects tangled up in jurisdictional disputes. This PLA protects our work and brings peace to labor."

Additionally, Cooper said LIUNA and IUOE agreed in a separate pact that the IBEW would maintain exclusive jurisdiction for all high-voltage underground transmission projects over 35 kilovolts.

Under the tri-trade agreement for solar projects larger than 1 megawatt, the IBEW will control the installation, connection, wiring and terminating of electrical and data cabling for solar panel modules, transformers, junction boxes and nearly all aspects of battery storage installation outside of concrete work.

IUOE and LIUNA workers will control materials handling, heavy equipment operation, roads and access, and the installation of racking systems and posts.

In total, the PLA designates work assignments for more than 70 job types.

Construction Director Matt Paules, who helped negotiate the agreement, said the work assigned to the IBEW covers about 60% of total hours on most large solar and solar-plus-storage projects.

"Construction technology and processes in the utility-scale solar industry are changing rapidly because developers are adopting any tool that promises faster schedules and lower costs. This agreement will keep union contractors competitive and assigns electrical work to union electricians," Paules said.

The agreement applies nationwide, except in California, where the five-trade consortium California Unions for Reliable Energy worked out its own assignment program in 1996.

"Our intention is that the tri-trade PLA is used on every job, but where there is an agreement already in place, that stands," Paules said.

The unions also agreed to backstop one another if there are open calls they cannot fill.

"We won't be running Gradalls, but



The IBEW has agreed on common language for utility-scale solar project labor agreements with LIUNA and the IUOE. The deal protects the IBEW's traditional work and keeps union contractors competitive in the fastest-growing energy generation sector.

we have plenty of people who can drive a forklift," Paules said. "And if we can't fill a call that doesn't require a licensed electrician, the work won't stop."

The IBEW has been building solar projects for decades, with the type of work depending on the timing and location of the project.

The scale and number of the projects have changed dramatically since the passage of President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan

Infrastructure Law. The bills' tax incentives give employers who hire union workers an advantage, creating a gold rush when contracts are let to bid.

"It's exciting to have all that growth, but the thing about the Wild West is that it wasn't a place you could do business until there was some law and order," Paules said. "This PLA will be like Wyatt Earp coming to town."

This is not the first multi-trade agreement the International Office has signed for renewable projects. The IBEW is party to a five-trade agreement for all onshore wind generation, and in 2019 the union joined an offshore wind pact.

"I am confident this will put the recent spate of jurisdictional scuffles behind us," Cooper said. "This will make it even harder for nonunion contractors to successfully bid this work and, at the same time, encourage unreliable actors in the House of Labor to honor the traditional boundaries between the trades." ■

IBEW Wins Upgraded Pension Benefits for Members

The IBEW and its contractor partners have agreed on a historic package of retirement benefit improvements.

The union and the National Electrical Contractors Association created the first new retirement benefit in at least 70 years, agreed to the first increase in existing retirements benefits in nearly a quarter-century and approved a one-time "13th month" check for current retirees for the first time ever.

The changes were jointly announced by the trustees of the National Electrical Benefit Fund — International President Kenneth W. Cooper, International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble and the leaders of NECA.

"Together, these changes amount to the largest benefits enhancement in the history of the NEBF," Cooper said. "It is a sign of the strength of the partnership between the IBEW and NECA and the wisdom of the trustees who preceded us that we can increase benefits to our members and bolster the solidity and stability of the NEBF."

The NEBF is one of the largest and most stable multi-employer pension plans in the country. While most inside construction members will continue to get their largest pension benefit from their local, the NEBF and the Pension Benefit Fund are critical components to the dignified retirement that was an impossible dream when the union was founded.

Founded just after the end of World War II, the NEBF now manages more than \$18 billion, has more than 665,000 participants and sends retirement checks out to 167,000 pensioners every month.

Introducing the NEIB

For many members, the most significant change in the Feb. 9 announcement was the creation of the National Electrical Individual Benefit.

Like the NEBF, the NEIB is an employer-funded fixed-benefit pension. Yet while the NEBF benefit is based on how long a member participated in the system and is funded by a general 3% fee paid by NECA contractors on all the hours worked by all participating members, the NEIB payout is based entirely on the number of hours a member worked. If two members worked the same number of months but one worked twice as many hours, the benefit of the one will be double the benefit of the other.

Under the language agreed to by NECA and the IBEW, contractors will pay an amount — the minimum is 50 cents — for every hour a member works throughout their career. When that member retires, they will get a monthly check worth 1.5% of that total every month for life.

For a member who works 40 hours a week, 50 weeks a year, for 30 years,

that check would be at least \$450 each month on top of the \$990 they would receive from the newly enhanced NEBF benefit. Unlike a 401(k), that won't fall if the market does.

"The NEIB is a promise, not a prayer," Noble said. "And that 50-cent contribution is the starting point. A local can negotiate with its NECA chapter."

And since the NEIB contributions will be added to the \$18 billion NEBF war chest, the NEBF will grow stronger and overhead costs will barely budge, Noble said.

"These were complex negotiations with NECA and there were many interests to balance. It took time to get here, but I think this is a model of what labor relations can be," Noble said. "There are only so many times when you can stand back after making a deal and say every person involved in our industry is better off now than they were."

NEBF Benefit Increase and '13th month' Check

On top of the NEIB, the trustees approved the first increase in NEBF pension benefits since 2001.

Starting with next year's retirees, the NEBF will send out a monthly check worth \$33 per year of service, a 3.1% increase.

For everyone already receiving an NEBF check or who retires before 2025, they will find a one-time "13th month" check in the mail around Thanksgiving 2025.

The greatest beneficiary of these changes is the member just getting started who will work their entire career banking hours into the NEBF.

And for the many thousands of foremen, general foremen and superintendents the IBEW needs to organize in the coming years to meet the tidal wave of work heading our way — the workers who don't come alone but bring entire teams of journeymen and apprentices with them — this new, more generous pension plan will be a significant inducement.

"As one of the greatest labor unions in North America, we have many great concerns. We are committed to bringing power to working people on the job and in the political arena. We fight for safety on the job and an economy that benefits working families," Cooper said. "And yet, we never lose sight of the primary commitment to increase the benefits we earn with the labor of our hands."

More information and updates can be found at nebf.com, and the details of any individual's retirement benefits are kept in the Online Benefits Portal at onlinebenefits.nebf.com. ■

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Jurisdiction Win in New Brunswick Could Help Locals Across Canada

When a company used legal loopholes and technical trickery to prevent the IBEW from bidding on a project to rebuild a troubled New Brunswick wind turbine farm, the leaders of Moncton Local 1555 fought back.

“Doing nothing, not taking this fight forward, was not an option,” said Local 1555 Business Manager Jeff Morash. “If we rolled over, there would be no coming back from it.”

The problems began in September 2021, when an 80-metre-tall, 3-mega-watt wind turbine — one of 50 built by a nonunion firm about an hour south of Moncton — collapsed following a storm.

After inspecting the remaining towers, the wind farm’s owner learned that the foundations for the remaining 49 — built between 2008 and 2018 — were unsafe and needed to be torn down and rebuilt.

The first contractors approached for the project backed away from it. “They said, ‘It’s not reasonable; we can’t do this for your price,’” Morash said. It would have taken three times the manpower to complete the job in the timeframe the owners wanted, he said.

A few months later, Local 1555 was surprised to learn that a U.S.-based contractor had been awarded the project. “In the span of days, there was a signed voluntary recognition agreement and a new agreement between the contractor and the [United Brotherhood of] Carpenters,” Morash said. “The contractor brought in their own people and started a union local with no members, just for this project, with an employer-driven agreement pretending to be a union contract.”

Local 1555 rushed to object. “The IBEW has an exclusive agreement for construction in New Brunswick,” Morash said. Besides, “nobody was given a chance to bid again on this project.”

The employer had made a curious claim, though. It called the electrical work maintenance rather than construction, Morash said.

In late 2022, Local 1555 filed to have the province terminate the VRA, a necessary step before the IBEW could go after the wind farm work. “Our goal was to stake the claim that this is union electrician construction work,” he said.

The employer tried several ways to delay the IBEW’s efforts and moved to have the local’s motions dismissed. “We can laugh now,” Morash said, “but in the thick of it, we were trying to sift through information, trying to understand how somebody had thought all this out.”

At a June 2023 hearing before the New Brunswick Labour and Employment Board, Morash noted, the IBEW’s opposition couldn’t answer basic

questions, such as when the charter for the Carpenters local was awarded and why the collective bargaining agreement had no end date and made no mention of electrical work.

Several months later, Local 1555 prevailed. The VRA was terminated, and the local’s request to allow the IBEW to go after the work was granted — without a hearing.

“You can be right and justified, but it still could have gone against us at any time,” Morash said, stressing that his 140-plus-member local had no choice but to try. “If we hadn’t, this might have become general practice.”

Morash hopes this situation serves as a warning to other locals and unions.

“It dilutes the power of labour unions and weakens our message,” he said. “As union leaders, we take these things very personally. We’re trying to raise the bar for our workers.”

First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk hopes the Local 1555 case sends a message. “When



The members of Moncton, New Brunswick, Local 1555, led by Business Manager Jeff Morash, successfully argued against a U.S.-based company’s claim that a project to rebuild a rural wind turbine farm should be classified as maintenance instead of construction.

it comes to organizing workers and gaining market share, every fight is worth it, even when it feels like you’re David going up against Goliath,” Shewchuk said.



“This is a small cost of doing business for these large companies.”

“We really credit Russ for changing the IBEW’s message,” Morash

said. “He came in and put a real effort into organizing. It gave us confidence, his energy, looking 10 to 20 years down the road.” ■

La victoire de la section locale en C.-B. pourrait servir d'exemple

Les leaders de la section locale 1555 de Moncton ont riposté au moment où une entreprise a eu recours à des vides juridiques et joué un tour de passe-passe pour empêcher la FIOE de présenter une soumission sur un projet qui vise à rebâtir un parc éolien en difficulté au Nouveau-Brunswick.

« Ne rien faire, ne pas faire avancer les choses, était hors de question », déclare le gérant d'affaires, Jeff Morash, du local 1555. « Si nous cédon, nous ne pouvons plus faire marche arrière. »

Les problèmes ont commencé en septembre 2021 parce qu’une turbine éolienne mesurant 80 mètres de haut d’une puissance de 3 mégawatts, 1 de 50 construite par une entreprise non syndiquée située à environ une heure au sud de Moncton, s’était effondrée après une tempête.

Après l’inspection des tours restantes, le propriétaire du parc éolien a appris que les fondations des 49 tours restantes, construites entre 2008 et 2018, n’étaient pas sécuritaires et devaient être démolies et reconstruites.

Les premiers entrepreneurs sollicités pour le projet se sont désistés. « Ils ont dit que ce n’était pas raisonnable; le projet ne peut pas être exécuté selon votre prix », mentionne Morash. Il aurait

fallu trois fois plus de main-d’œuvre pour achever le projet dans le délai voulu par les propriétaires, dit-il.

Quelques mois plus tard, le local 1555 était étonné d’apprendre que le projet a été accordé à un entrepreneur des États-Unis. « En l’espace de quelques jours, un accord de reconnaissance volontaire a été signé entre l’entrepreneur et la Fraternité unie des charpentiers et menuisiers d’Amérique », exprime Morash. « L’entrepreneur a fait venir sa propre main-d’œuvre et a fondé une section locale sans membres, juste pour le projet, sous un contrat de travail qui bénéficie l’employeur qui prétend être une convention collective. »

Le local 1555 s’est vite opposé. « La FIOE détient un accord exclusif quant à la construction au Nouveau-Brunswick », formule Morash. D’ailleurs, « personne n’a eu la possibilité de présenter une nouvelle soumission sur le projet ».

L’employeur a aussi curieusement prétendu que les travaux électriques relevaient du secteur de la maintenance au lieu de la construction, déclare Morash.

Fin 2022, le local 1555 a déposé une demande auprès de la province pour mettre fin à l’accord de reconnaissance volontaire et pour décertifier le

local des charpentiers, les étapes nécessaires pour permettre à la FIOE de réclamer le travail du parc éolien. « Notre but était d’affirmer qu’il s’agissait d’un travail électrique syndiqué relevant du secteur de la construction », dit-il.

L’employeur a essayé de diverses manières de retarder les efforts de la FIOE et de faire rejeter la motion de la section locale. « Nous pouvons maintenant en rire », mentionne Morash, « mais dans le feu de l’action, nous avons essayé de faire le tri de l’information et d’essayer de comprendre comment ils ont pensé à tout ça. »

À une audience tenue en juin 2023 à la Commission du Travail et de l’Emploi du Nouveau-Brunswick, Morash mentionne que l’opposition de la FIOE ne pouvait pas répondre à des questions de bases comme : quand la charte des charpentiers a été attribuée et pourquoi la convention collective n’avait pas de date de fin et pourquoi il n’avait aucune mention du travail électrique.

Plusieurs mois plus tard, le local 1555 a eu gain de cause. L’accord de la reconnaissance volontaire a été résilié et la demande de certification du local de la FIOE a été accordée, sans audience.

« Tu peux avoir raison avec cause, mais ça l’aurait pu nous être défavorable à n’importe quel moment »,

exprime Morash, en insistant sur le fait que ses plus de 140 membres n’avaient pas le choix que d’essayer. « Si nous n’avons pas essayé, ça l’aurait pu devenir une pratique courante ».

Morash espère que cette situation sert de mise en garde aux autres sections locales et aux autres syndicats.

« Ça diminue le pouvoir des syndicats et affaiblit notre message », dit-il. « À titre de dirigeantes et dirigeants syndicaux, nous prenons ces choses à cœur. Nous essayons de mettre la barre plus haute pour nos travailleuses et travailleurs ».

Le vice-président international du premier district, Russ Shewchuk, espère que le cas de la section locale 1555 envoie un message. « Toute bataille en vaut la peine quand on parle de syndiquer les travailleurs et de gagner des parts du marché, même si tu as l’impression que tu es David contre Goliath », déclare Shewchuk. « C’est un petit prix à payer pour faire des affaires pour ces grandes entreprises. »

« Nous accordons vraiment le mérite à Russ de changer le message de la FIOE », exprime Morash. « Il est entré en poste et a déployé un véritable effort dans la syndicalisation. Ça nous a donné confiance, son énergie, de regarder de 10 à 20 ans à l’avance. » ■

CIRCUITS

N.C. Local Helps Electrician, Family Fleeing War-Torn Ukraine

Ukrainian electrician Dmytro Hrih and his family had tried to remain in their home country for as long as they could after Russian troops invaded in February 2022. But late last year, when it finally became almost impossible for them to stay, the members of Charlotte Local 379 helped the family settle into a new home in North Carolina.

"It's amazing to hear some of their stories," said Local 379 Business Manager Scott Thrower.

Born in Ukraine when it was still one of the republics that made up the Soviet Union, the 37-year-old Hrih hailed from Horlivka in the country's Donetsk region. Hrih's studies at Donetsk National Technical University focused on electrical machinery used for industrial installations.

After graduating, Hrih had been working as an electrician and power engineer when Russia attacked and occupied Donetsk City in 2014. He then moved his family to Zaporizhzhia, where he and his father eventually started their own contracting company. Their firm worked on local construction projects ranging from grain elevators to supermarkets, with Dmytro serving as a foreman and supporting his growing family.

Unfortunately, Zaporizhzhia became a frequent target of Russian attacks after the 2022 invasion.

"We hoped to stay there," said Hrih's wife, Kateryna. But by late last year, caring for two children — a teenage daughter and a newborn son — while also dealing with unpredictable power cuts during a Ukrainian winter "was really hard," she said.

"We had never thought about leaving Ukraine," Kateryna said. "We had good jobs. We could travel."

They had visited the U.S. before, touring Los Angeles, Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon and visiting relatives in Florida and in Charlotte. When they arrived in North Carolina this time, though, their suitcases were stuffed with as much of their

"Without work, adaptation to a new country becomes survival."

— Kateryna Hrih

In February, Charlotte, N.C., Local 379 member and recent Ukrainian immigrant Dmytro Hrih, center, brought his wife and son to a meeting with organizer Doug McDaniel.



belongings as they could carry.

Once in Charlotte, they were soon struck by a major difference between their adopted land and their homeland. "In Ukraine, we had furnished apartments," Kateryna said. "Here, we've had to buy everything."

Although the members of their extended family helped financially as much as they could, finding a job for Dmytro was paramount. "We sent out so many job applications, sometimes 30 to 40 resumes a day," she said. His employment outlook improved dramatically when he was put in touch with Local 379.

"We spent a whole day with them," said Local 379 organizer Doug McDaniel, noting that the language barrier between them wasn't too hard to breach; while Kateryna would usually translate what Dmytro said in Ukrainian, "he understands everything you say," she said.

One thing that helped make Dmytro's case for IBEW membership is that "blueprints are the same here" as they are in Ukraine, Kateryna said.

"There are little nuances, but they're really very common."

There are some interesting differences between the two countries, though, she said. For one thing: "In Ukraine, they never use conduit. They use plastic boxes as pipes."

Fortunately, other electrical workers from Ukraine are among Local 379's thousand-strong membership.

"We're trying to keep [these members] working together. The ability to communicate can be a safety issue," Thrower said.

As this newspaper was being prepared, Dmytro was working with a signatory contractor on 2161 Hawkins, a 22-story, mixed-used residential/commercial building in Charlotte's South End neighborhood. Thrower noted that the project has an IBEW connection: It's managed by the National Real Estate Advisors, the organization that handles the many other such investments that help support the IBEW's National Electrical Benefit Fund and National Electrical Annuity Plan.

Dmytro was recently upgraded from a construction wireman 4 to a construction electrician 2. "He is on his way to being a journeyman wireman. He's doing very well," Thrower said.

And he is taking English classes two times a week. "He's getting better at it," McDaniel said.

Meanwhile, the entire Hrih family is working through the naturalization process to become U.S. citizens. "We are together," Kateryna said. "For us, it's a great opportunity. This experience is amazing."

"When the IBEW answered, they said they would help with the work, and to tell the truth it was the most invaluable help," she added. "Because without work, adaptation to a new country becomes survival. So, we don't know what we would do without Local 379's help. We are infinitely grateful to the IBEW." ■

Founders' Scholarship Open for 2024 Entries

Applications for the IBEW's Founders' Scholarship, which is awarded on a competitive basis to members continuing their studies, are now being accepted. Rules and a list of required entry materials are available at www.ibew.org/FoundersScholarship. The deadline is May 1.

Started in 1966 under International President Gordon M. Freeman, the scholarship is awarded annually to members attending an accredited college or university and working toward an associate, bachelor's or postgraduate degree. The area of study must be in a field that furthers the electrical industry overall.

Applicants must be members in good standing for four continuous years or a charter member of a local union. The Founders' Scholarship is for members only. Children or dependents of members are not eligible.

Winners can receive up to \$200 per semester credit hour or \$134 per trimester credit hour. The maximum award is \$24,000 over an eight-year period.

New York Local 3's Jeannie Lockwood and Milwaukee Local 2150's Brian Williams were last year's winners of the Founders' Scholarship.

Lockwood, a journeyman wirewoman and

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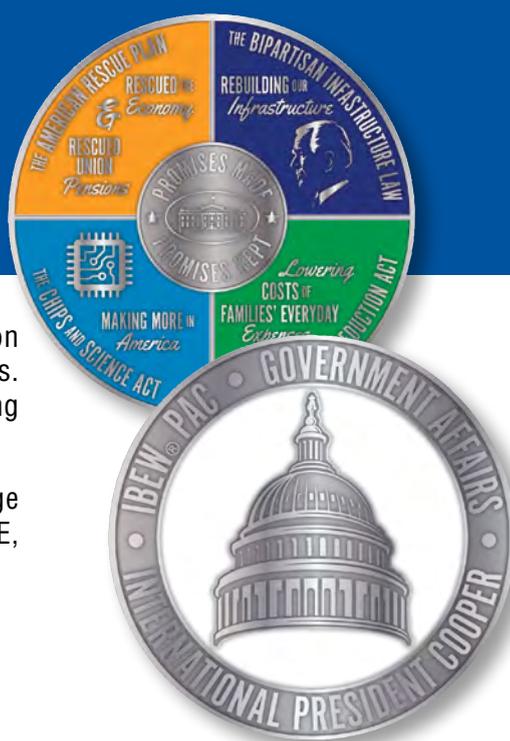
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instructor in Local 3's apprenticeship training center, is completing a master's degree in adult learning at SUNY Empire State College this year and will begin work on a doctorate degree in education. She plans to use the degree to strengthen Local 3's education programs.

Williams works as a business customer consultant for We Energies (formerly Wisconsin Electric), working with cities, hospitals and other businesses. He is working toward a master's degree in business administration at Concordia University in Milwaukee with the goal of becoming a right-of-way agent for We Energies. A right-of-way agent represents a utility or government entity when it is planning a real estate transaction. Duties include research and holding initial conversations with the owner of the property.

Application and entry materials should be emailed to Scholarship@ibew.org or mailed to the IBEW Founders' Scholarship Committee, 900 7th St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20001. Call (202) 728-6103 for questions. ■



IBEW Locals Celebrate Autism Acceptance

Across the country, IBEW locals are lighting up their halls, posting on social media and engaging members in other activities to recognize members of their unions and communities who have autism.

This year marks the 16th annual World Autism Awareness Day, celebrated April 2 as part of World Autism Month. Autism spectrum disorder, as it's medically defined, is a neurological and developmental condition that affects how people interact with others, including how they learn and behave. Some people with ASD, who may also go by the term neurodivergent, are diagnosed as children while others are well into adulthood before it's detected.

Individuals on the spectrum can work any job, including those held by IBEW members. As such, a number of locals participate in Autism Awareness Month. St. Louis Local 1 is lighting up its hall in blue, the color often associated with autism awareness, as it has done in years past.

New York Local 3 and its affiliated clubs also participate in a variety of ways. Last year, its sportsman's club held a walk and fundraiser. And Baltimore Local 24 has created graphics that it is

"Local 24 has been promoting awareness for several years. ... Unions are a place for everyone."

— Business Manager Mike McHale

sharing on social media and an LED display outside the hall.

IBEW locals, including Local 3 and Local 24, also support autism awareness outside of April, with walks and other activities held at various times of the year.

"Some Local 24 families have members that have autism or are neurodivergent. Raising awareness helps with acceptance and understanding," Business Manager Mike McHale said. "Local 24 has been promoting awareness for several years, and we are sure many of our members have been doing it much longer. Unions are a place for everyone." ■



New York Local 3's Sportsmen's Club members donned T-shirts and comfortable shoes for an autism awareness walk in 2023 to support local charity Eden II. It's one of a number of ways that Local 3 supports autism acceptance throughout the year.

TRANSITIONS

DECEASED

Clay Leon III



Clay Leon III, a son of New Orleans and a Fifth District international representative for more than a decade, died Feb. 5. He was 69, just one day short of his 70th birthday.

"This is devastating to us in the Fifth District," International Vice President Brian K. Thompson said. "We rallied around him. He rallied around us and demonstrated what it took to fight to the bitter end.

"For that, I am eternally thankful he was my brother and one of my closest friends. We can all rejoice that he's in heaven and he's pain-free."

Fifth District International Representative Glenn Brannen, a longtime friend and former business manager at Shreveport, La., Local 194, said Leon was "a good guy to know." Brannen added, "When you had a long day, he was someone you could talk to, and you knew he would cheer you up."

Born and raised in the Crescent City, Brother Leon began his apprenticeship in 1973 and joined New Orleans Local 130 in August 1975. He topped out as a journeyman wireman in August 1978 and had a long career in the field, including at the New Orleans Convention Center, where he served several years as a Local 130 steward.

Current Local 130 Business Manager Paul Zulli said Leon's leadership skills were sharpened in that role.

"We've never had the best relationship with the convention center over the years," said Zulli, who first met Leon on a jobsite more than 40

years ago. "The company that runs it has been doing it for a long time and doesn't hide that it doesn't like unions. Clay dealt with a lot of issues, but he always treated people with respect and looked out for our members."

Leon went on to serve as Local 130's treasurer from 2000 to 2005 and on the executive board from 2005 to 2009. He also worked as an organizer and assistant business manager.

He was appointed business manager to fill an open position in 2009 and was later reelected to the position, becoming the first Black business manager in Local 130's history.

Zulli and Brannen both said that one of Leon's notable accomplishments was negotiating a contract with the local chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association that didn't include a trip to the Council on Industrial Relations, a joint initiative between the IBEW and its signatory contractors to settle disputes between labor and management in the electrical industry.

That may sound odd in some parts of the United States. But with New Orleans being in Louisiana, antagonism between labor and management is commonplace. Leon worked hard to develop a more positive relationship with NECA, Zulli said.

"He was very well respected by his peers and all the people in the local," Zulli said. "He was always nice and very pleasant, easy to talk to and never had a bad word to say."

Leon left the business manager's position in 2013 to join the Fifth District staff. He serviced locals from all branches in Alabama, Mississippi and the Florida Panhandle.

Thompson, who became the district's international vice president in 2019 following the retirement of longtime IVP Joe Davis, said no one did more to ensure a smooth transition than Leon.

He took on any task and was adept in working with local unions outside his construction background, Thompson said. In 2018, Leon played

a leading role in organizing a group of Frontier technicians into Pensacola, Fla., Local 676.

"He was just the utmost professional in everything he did," Thompson said. "You could tell by the way he talked to people and the way he welcomed them that he was something special."

Leon was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2019 but made a full recovery. He was stricken with an aggressive form of pancreatic cancer in 2022, however, that ultimately led to his death. He continued to work and was kept on the district staff.

His ordeal was made even more grueling by the sudden death of his son, Clay Leon IV, in April 2023.

"He attended Catholic schools and was strong in his faith," Brannen said. "What else can you rely on to get through something like this? He handled it all as well as you could."

Leon was cognizant that being a Black leader in the IBEW made him a role model for minorities and historically underrepresented groups in the Brotherhood, Brannen said. Leon was a member of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus.

"He got promotions because of his tenacity and willingness to work," Brannen said. "That is what he preached to everybody. Do the right thing, and you'll get rewarded."

Zulli said a special moment came at the Fifth District progress meeting in 2020, when Leon told him "How proud he was of us and that we were doing a great job leading Local 130."

"I will never forget the pride on his face as he said that," Zulli added.

Brother Leon is survived by his wife, Ursula, along with two daughters and one grandson. The officers and staff send their condolences to his family and loved ones during this difficult time and remember his service to the IBEW.

"The Lord blessed us all when he gave us Clay, who touched us in many ways," Thompson said. "For that, we are eternally grateful and better for it." ■

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POLITICS & JOBS

A Decade of Political Work Pays Off

IBEW, Building Trades Win City-Wide PLA in San Diego

San Diego is now the first major city in the U.S. to pass a blanket project labor agreement for nearly all city-funded construction, the culmination of roughly a decade of hard work and perseverance by Local 569 and the Building Trades Council to reshape the political landscape.

"This is truly a historic moment for the city, and it's always great to start your day supporting workers and working families in our great city," Mayor Todd Gloria said at a signing ceremony on Valentine's Day. "San Diego loves its workers and working families."

San Diego has long had a reputation for anti-worker policies that included a ban on PLAs. But over the last 10 years, through the concerted efforts of Local 569 in collaboration with the Building Trades Council, the balance of power has shifted toward working people. A City Council and mayor's office that were once dominated by Republicans has shifted to an all-Democrat, pro-worker body.

"Politics and policy matter, and we hope our success provides an example to our sisters and brothers in other locals."

—Local 569 Business Manager and San Diego Building & Construction Trades Council President Jeremy Abrams

"No one thought we would be able to achieve the complete overhaul of the political landscape resulting in this significant win for workers," said Ninth District International Representative Gretchen Newsom. "It was the hard work of Local 569 working side-by-side with the San Diego Building Trades to strategize political efforts that produced these wins." Newsom, a Local 569 member, served on the negotiations committee to establish the PLA along with Local 569 Business Manager and Building Trades Council President Jeremy Abrams.

Newsom said it took the whole playbook of actions including precinct walks, phone banks, mailers, educating members and building coalitions.

"For decades, San Diego was treated as a test lab for all the worst policy ideas of corporate America," said Local 569 member Carol Kim, who also serves as business manager of the Building Trades Council and worked closely with Newsom over the years to organize the political shift. "This PLA won't erase the injustices of the past, but it can write a better, more equitable future."

The new PLA, which passed the council unanimously, is the outcome of a successful ballot initiative in 2022 to overturn a 10-year-old ban on the pro-worker agreements. Known as Measure D, the initiative passed by nearly 12 percentage points, thanks in large part to the efforts of Local 569 members who worked tirelessly to get out the vote.

"Make no mistake, this was a top priority for all our members," Newsom told *The Electrical Worker* at the time. "They walked door to door every single Saturday and Sunday for more than two months. We phone-banked, we text-banked, we pulled out all the stops for a successful campaign while the other side was spending a lot of money against us."

The PLA, which takes effect July 1 and runs through 2031, applies to projects of \$5 million or more during its first two years. After that, the threshold drops to \$1 million. The city is expected to award 111 contracts for construction projects during the

ongoing fiscal year that are estimated to cost about \$635 million in total, reported the San Diego Tribune.

With its pro-worker provisions like local hiring goals and apprenticeship requirements, the PLA makes San Diego eligible for state and federal projects, including the billions of dollars available from legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

"This PLA means more work for IBEW members in the San Diego area," Newsom said. "As the city fixes and upgrades critical community infrastructure, it will now do so with the skilled and trained members of our building trades."

With so much high-paying work now on the table for Local 569's roughly 3,600 members, Abrams said, this effort can be a blueprint for other cities.

"This journey has been one that underscores the power of solidarity and a long-term commitment to ensure high-road, family-sustaining jobs for our members," Abrams said. "Politics and policy matter, and we hope our success provides an example to our sisters and brothers in other locals who are fighting the good fight for their members." ■



Members of San Diego Local 569 stand with Mayor Todd Gloria, third from the right, at a signing ceremony on Valentine's Day as San Diego became the first major city to have a blanket project labor agreement. It was the result of roughly a decade of organizing by Local 569 and the Building Trades Council to revamp the city's political landscape.

GROUNDING IN HISTORY

A Bittersweet Gift

In 1987, two RCA executives visited the International Office to meet with International President J.J. Barry. They brought with them an antique Victrola phonograph as a donation to the IBEW Museum, an item with great significance for both organizations.

The gift also symbolized the end of an era, as RCA was to close its doors at the end of the year.

RCA was founded in 1919 under a partnership among General Electric, Westinghouse, AT&T and United Fruit. They began manufacturing receivers for the burgeoning radio industry and even created the first nationwide radio network, NBC.

To expand its product line, RCA purchased Victor Talking Machine Co. in 1929. Under the new name of RCA Victor Division, the Camden, N.J., facility continued manufacturing radio sets, as well as the last models of hand-cranked Victrola phonographs. In 1930, the Victrolas were converted to all electric.

In 1932, RCA became an independent company after an antitrust suit forced the original

partners to divest their ownership. With the corporate conglomerate out of the way, the opportunity of organizing the RCA began. Although the IBEW had the support of the American Federation of Labor, it was the United Electrical and Radio Workers of America that signed the first contract with RCA in 1936.

It wasn't until 1950 that the IBEW won recognition across all of RCA's operations, including 10,000 workers at the Victor Division and 3,000 at the RCA Service Co. This allowed IBEW workers to enter the industry of television service and repair.

Over the next three decades, IBEW members helped make RCA the dominant electronics and communications firm in the United States. Starting in the 1970s, as in many trades,



The donated RCA Victrola Phonograph, c. 1929



Left to right: RCA Vice President for Labor Relations Don Ponturo, RCA Vice President for Employee Relations Ed Scanlon, and IBEW International President J.J. Barry.

competition from international firms began to diminish the company's prominence. RCA was reacquired by GE in 1986 and became defunct in 1987. Today, it exists as a brand name only.

It was therefore bittersweet that, in October 1987, RCA Vice President of Employee Relations Ed Scanlon and Vice President of Labor Relations Don Ponturo visited the International Office to meet with Barry. They presented him with a Victrola phonograph from 1929, which is still in working order. It was one of the last hand-cranked models to be built by Victor as the Camden phonograph line was converted to electric.

The donated Victrola thus had historic significance for the RCA, and the executives wanted to ensure that it had a suitable location for its preservation and display. The IBEW Museum is proud that it was chosen for that honor. ■

Visit nbe-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.

Annual Funding Notice for the National Electrical Benefit Fund

Introduction

This notice includes important information about the funding status of the National Electrical Benefit Fund (“the Plan” or “NEBF”). It also includes general information about the benefit payments guaranteed by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (“PBGC”), a federal insurance agency. All traditional pension plans (called “defined benefit pension plans”) must provide this notice every year regardless of their funding status. This notice does not mean that the Plan is terminating. In fact, despite the difficult economic times and the market losses in 2008, the Plan has substantially rebounded. As a result, the Plan is in sound financial condition and is considered a “green zone” plan (rather than a plan in endangered or critical status). This notice is provided for informational purposes and you are not required to respond in any way. This notice is required by federal law. This notice is for the plan year beginning January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2023 (“Plan Year”).

How Well Funded Is the NEBF?

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

Funded Percentage			
	2023 Plan Year	2022 Plan Year	2021 Plan Year
Valuation Date	January 1, 2023	January 1, 2022	January 1, 2021
Funded Percentage	92.57%	90.93%	86.51%
Value of Assets	\$17,901,877,577	\$17,201,772,836	\$16,003,545,120
Value of Liabilities	\$19,338,915,848	\$18,918,349,371	\$18,499,097,563

Year-End Fair Market Value of Assets

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

	December 31, 2023	December 31, 2022	December 31, 2021
Fair Market Value of Assets	\$17,636,894,935	\$16,591,884,241	\$19,010,466,830

Endangered, Critical, or Critical and Declining Status

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

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

If the Plan is in endangered, critical, or critical and declining status for the plan year ending December 31, 2024, separate notification of that status has or will be provided.

Participant Information

The total number of participants and beneficiaries covered by the Plan on the Valuation Date was 636,846. Of this number, 302,888 were current employees, 166,233 were retired and receiving benefits, and 167,725 were retired or no longer working for a covered employer and have a right to future benefits.

Funding and Investment Policies

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

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

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

Asset Allocations	Percentage
Cash (Interest bearing and non-interest bearing)	0.32%
U.S. Government securities	5.54
Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	3.39
All other	5.36
Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	0.01
Common	17.54
Partnership/joint venture interests	16.90
Real estate (other than employer real property)	4.67

Loans (other than to participants)	0.56
Participant loans	—
Value of interest in common/collective trusts	31.18
Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1.68
Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	—
Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	1.08
Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	4.54
Value of funds held in insurance co. general account (unallocated contracts)	—
Employer-related investments:	
Employer securities	—
Employer real property	—
Buildings and other property used in plan operation	—
Other	7.23

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

Right to Request a Copy of the Annual Report

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

Summary of Rules Governing Insolvent Plans

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

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

Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC

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

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

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

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

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

Where to Get More Information

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

Paul A. Noble NEBF Trustee	Kenneth W. Cooper NEBF Trustee	David Long NEBF Trustee	Dennis F. Quebe NEBF Trustee
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LOCAL LINES

Local 16 Apprentice Wins Construction Award

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — The 30th annual Ritz’s Fantasy of Lights was highly successful. This year’s volunteer effort netted more than \$186,000, which covers the cost of 2,000 therapy sessions. Since its inception, more than \$4.5 million has been raised for children and adults needing these life-altering treatments at the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center. Special thanks are due to the many JATC students and instructors who helped through the week to insure everything went as smoothly as possible.

Much appreciation goes to Bryan Diehl, Ben Ippock, Ryan McRoberts, Jerrad Sprinkle and Matthew Woods for their efforts to negotiate a fair and equitable inside collective bargaining agreement. Local 16 is also currently in contract discussions with General Motors.

The IBEW would like to congratulate Gracie Kaufman for winning Modern Structure LLC’s Southern Indiana Construction Career Kick Start Award. Gracie is a third-year apprentice with Local 16 and is very involved in union events. To qualify for this award, she had to provide an extensive application that included her GPA, work history, extracurricular activities, community service and a list of other achievements. The hall is proud to have members like Gracie, who are truly award-winning!

Donald P. Beavin, P.S.

Congratulating Brother Hanks on Retirement

L.U. 24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — Greetings from Charm City! At the beginning of this year, we bid farewell and happy retirement to Local 24’s vice president, Brother Ellwood Hanks. Brother Hanks has been in the trade for more than 40 years and has left a lasting impression on his apprentices and fellow journeymen. Brother Cory Shifflett said: “Wood has been a mentor and a role model for



Local 24’s Mike McHale and Ellwood Hanks at T. Rowe Price headquarters at Harbor Point in Baltimore on Brother Ellwood’s last day.

years. He would always lend an ear and support anytime I needed it. Ellwood exemplifies brotherhood, and all of us at Local 24 wish him well.”

With the retirement of Brother Hanks, other local union officer appointments were made by the executive board. We’d like to congratulate Brother Cory McCray, who will be filling the vice president position. Brother Miles Morris will be moving from our examining board to the executive board. To fill the position on the examining board, Sister Anna Moore was sworn in as an officer. We also welcomed Brother Jack Powell, who joined the organizing staff in January.

Once again, congratulations to all. Thank you for your willingness to serve the members of Local 24. Live Better/Work Union.

Mike McHale, B.M.

Local 26 Events in 2024

L.U. 26 (ees,em,es,govt,i&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — Looking ahead, here are a few key dates to mark your calendars for:

- JATC Graduation — June 1
- Dollars Against Diabetes Golf Outing — June 3
- Virginia Picnic (Manassas) — June 22
- Maryland Picnic (Edgewater) — Aug. 24
- Fishing Trip — Sept. 21
- Poker Run for Special Love — Sept. 28

Best wishes to the following new retirees: Brian Abe, Calhoun Anderson, Celestin Barasebwa, Jon Bayeaux, Dale Carpenter, David Chick, Michael Cooper, Wade Dagle, Steven Daniels, Elbert Deel Jr., James Downing, William Figgers, John Gaffney, Riley Gaines Jr., Steven Gerardi, Randall Henri, William Hileman, John Hyre III, Andre Kelly, Raymond King, Horace Malcolm, William Margowski, David Marshall, Stephen Matula, Albert McDowell, Matthew Menke, Michael Milling, Darrell Mincks, Stuart Moore, Michael Moran, Owen Morris, Timothy Moseng, Richard Nelson, Donald Newlond, John Patton, Enrico Pelausa, Richard Pfistner, Kenneth Platt, Michael Reilly, Mark Robba, Donald Robey, Mark Robinson, Jeffrey Rutledge, Michael Sabatino, Perry Samuelson, Kevin Shumaker, Gurtej Singh, Martin Smith, Mark Spruill, Gary Thomas, Thomas Travis, Richard Ulrich, Thomas Vanderark, Craig Wild and Michael Zollman.

The following members have passed away since our last article: Victor Bernard, Dwight Bushnell, Kenneth Campbell, Bryan Collins, Eugene Dailley, Adam Dunaway, James Guelig, Tulio Guzman, Donald Hemmer Jr., Steven Johnson, Anthony Lewis, Michael Long, William Maxwell, Matthew McGahan, John Piazza Sr., Robert Poetzman, Nelson Pumpfrey, William Rhodes, Michael Shoemaker, Willie Spradlin, Earl Taylor Jr., John Ward, Kevin Weyant, Thomas Wright and Ray Wyatt.

Joseph F. Dabbs, B.M.



Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and the Los Angeles/Orange County Building Trades announce the \$1 billion Radford Studio Center project labor agreement with Local 40 members in attendance.

Local 40 Celebrates Radford Studio PLA

L.U. 40 (em,i&mpps), HOLLYWOOD, CA — Our local was in attendance earlier this year with Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and the Los Angeles/Orange County Building Trades to announce the \$1 billion Radford Studio Center project labor agreement. This project will create over 3,500 union jobs and reinvigorate one of the oldest studio lots in Los Angeles. This investment will also ensure that good-paying union jobs in entertainment stay here in L.A.

The studio lot opened 95 years ago, five years after Local 40 was chartered, and this much-needed modernization will transform the campus into a cutting-edge film and TV facility.

The owner of the studio, Hackman Capital Partners, also owns the historic Television City

studio, which signed a \$1.25 billion project labor agreement last year. Combined, the two PLAs represent one of the largest private-sector commitments to union labor in Los Angeles history.

Many of the historic buildings will be preserved, and the Local 40 members who work to maintain the facility will be invaluable in assisting our signatory contractors during the remodel process and maintaining the campus upon its completion.

The current projected completion date is summer 2028. Although this project is still a long way from breaking ground, we look forward to the many work opportunities this will create for our members in the years to come.

Stephan Davis, B.M./F.S.

Negotiation Sessions Ongoing for Local 46

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,mt,rtb,rts&st), SEATTLE, WA — Hello, union family! With nearly 100 contracts for our local’s members, there is almost always someone negotiating in our hall. Local 46 members stand in solidarity to improve their contracts and lives.

We started 2024 with Delta Electric Motors, continuing our fight for a better contract. As I write this, our Delta members are in mediation, trying to come to an agreement and avoid a strike. At the same time, our Port of Seattle members are doing some banner training for their negotiations.

Johnson Controls members are in talks with corporate to secure better pay for their specialized skill set. Our limited energy/sound and communications unit, which has grown to over 1,000 members, is in the middle of negotiations, and we hope to be celebrating an improved contract by the time this article is published!

Our largest unit, inside wire, will jump into negotiations as this article is released, as well as our stockman, residential and light-fixture



Johnson Controls members gathered at Local 46 to discuss their contract.

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.

maintenance units. Our political action committee made good use of lobby days, taking 46 members to Olympia to speak with elected officials about improved health care for all, feminine hygiene and pumping on the jobsite, clean injection sites for diabetics, and the ability to file for unemployment while striking.

When we all come together to support one another, we are bound to achieve greatness!

Megan Kirby, P.S.



Local 48's renovated union hall looks even better filled with active members.

Local 48's Updated Hall Built 100% Union

L.U. 48 (c,em,i,rtb,rts,st,tm&ptc), PORTLAND, OR — With the new year comes a new look for the hall. We committed from the start that the work would be done 100% union. Marshall McGrady, our political coordinator, took on an additional role in coordinating all the meetings from initial design to final product, and the results speak for themselves. The new copper panels are beautiful, an obvious reminder of our favorite metal. Large screens make reading easier, and a specially made emblem behind the podium makes for the perfect background for a photo op.

The upgraded look elevates and highlights our commitment to excellence, a space where politicians, developers and those we organize can see that we are THE power professionals. And thanks to all the union crafts who made our hall so beautifully and hopefully walked away with renewed pride in cross-trade solidarity.

Kevin Lux, P.S.

Local 50 Operations Mechanics Save Community Member

L.U. 50 (u), RICHMOND, VA — Jan. 14 started as just a regular day at work for Donald Flora and Leslie Conner. The two Virginia Natural Gas operations mechanics were performing routine maintenance on a commercial meter set in the Atlantic Shores retirement community in Virginia Beach when they heard someone screaming. They found an 83-year-old woman who had been walking her dog and was being attacked by a nutria, a large rodent.

Flora, a 30-year union member, and Conner, a 39-year union member, ran to her assistance, kicking the animal until it released the woman from its bite. They immediately called 911 and waited for paramedics to arrive, and the woman was soon transported to the hospital.

"This rodent was similar in size to a dog, looked like a beaver with a long, rat-like tail, and we hope to never see one again," said the mechanics, who were pleased that they were able to assist the woman. She is still recovering from the incident.

Local 50 represents hourly workers of Virginia Natural Gas, Dominion Energy, Monongahela



From left, Local 50 members Donny Flora and Les Conner.

Power and Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative and has members working in three states.

John Albert, B.M.

Changes at Local 68

L.U. 68 (i), DENVER, CO — Greetings, brothers and sisters: As is typical, the work slowed down somewhat over the winter, but it stayed fairly steady. The work picture is expected to improve in the coming months, with a few new projects starting up.

The election season is in full gear with the caucuses and primaries coming up before the November election. There will be many opportunities to get involved and participate, such as phone banking, lit drops, postcards and door knocking. You should be able to find something that fits your schedule and personality. We can always use your help ensuring that candidates who champion labor will be elected.

By this time next year, Local 68 should be in the middle of our remodel. Expect change to be a constant for the next several months. Speaking of changes, for those who may not be aware, Business Manager Jeremy Ross has accepted a position with the International Office. Local 68 wishes Brother Ross all the best. We are sure he will do very well in his new role. Brother Zack Esquibel has been appointed to fulfill the remainder of the term as business manager. Local 68 offers Brother Esquibel all the support and assistance needed as we move forward.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of our recently deceased brothers and sisters: Claude F. Adams, Elwin J. Coulter, James Ferguson Jr., Robert A. Henry, Robert G. Holcomb, Ronald W. House, Phillip E. Johnston, Ronald O. Lufkin, Stanislaw Mardian, Timothy D. Moser, Robert E. Nesland, Stephen R. Parsons, James M. Schlieker, John R. Sulkko, William H. Walters Jr. and Dennis R. Wamsley.

Morgan Buchanan, Pres.

Local 112 Celebrates Office Manager's 50-Year Career

L.U. 112 (c,i&st), KENNEWICK, WA — More than 170 members, associates and family members gathered Dec. 9 to celebrate Lori Johnson's 50 years of service to the IBEW. Lori was hired part time by Business Manager George Elgin in December 1973

to help with the labor-intensive process of dispatching, and within a few months, she was asked to join the staff full time. During her career, she has worked under five business managers and has helped tens of thousands of members with joining the union, receiving retirement benefits and everything in between.

When asked about her favorite part of the job, Sister Johnson reflected on the relationships she has built with members and their families. Her mother, Andy Leiby, was Local 112's office manager and worked there for 37 years, and her late husband, Steve Johnson, was a 40-year member of the local. In this day and age, you would be



Lori Johnson celebrates her 50-year career with Local 112.

hard-pressed to find a member with 50 years of active service. We would like to extend our congratulations and show our appreciation for her long-standing and continued service to the IBEW.

Travis Swayze, B.M.

Local 124 Braces for Work Boom

L.U. 124 (ees,em,i,mar,rts,se,spa,t&ptc), KANSAS CITY, MO — Work in Kansas City is booming, with multiple projects ongoing. The Meta data center project is finishing the first two buildings with multiple contractors on site.

The Panasonic battery plant continues to man up, with many calls coming in every week. Meta's Building 3 is scheduled to begin in summer, around the time a second data center is also scheduled to begin. With that, Local 124 is bracing for three megaprojects to be all going at one time!

In February, the Jackson County Legislature approved a vote for constituents to continue the sales tax for the Chiefs and Royals. If passed April 2 (please vote in support of this), a new downtown Royals stadium will be built, along with upgrades to Arrowhead Stadium. Smaller projects would surround these jobs, as well.

Robin Carnahan, administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration, held a press event at the Charles Evans Whittaker U.S. Courthouse in Kansas City, Mo., to announce a \$61 million investment in low-embodied carbon materials as part of President Joe Biden's Investing in America agenda.

Local 124 will definitely need the help of many of our traveling brothers and sisters to complete these projects.

Wade Kiefer, P.S.

Local 130 Welcomes New Contractor

L.U. 130 (i&ptc), NEW ORLEANS, LA — Another Mardi Gras has come and gone in New Orleans, and what a great time it was. The work situation in our area has been slow lately, but we are optimistic that it will pick up soon.

We are excited to announce that Local 130 has welcomed a new contractor, Pisciotta Bros. We are thrilled to have them on board and the chance to show them what we can do.

We want to thank the RENEW group for their volunteer work cleaning up the Oaks. They did a great job of removing debris and restoring power and showed the true spirit of solidarity and community service.

Butch Naquin, R.S.

Planning for Local 150's Summer Events

L.U. 150 (es,i,rts&spa), WAUKEGAN, IL — I hope this report finds everyone well and busy! Continuing education classes are still available for current and retired members at our JATC. Visit lakecounty-jatc.org and sign up for a class today.

As warmer months are approaching, I would like to encourage everyone to participate in Local 150's summer events to inspire solidarity among our sisters and brothers. This year, Local 150 will sponsor a Thursday concert series on July 25 at the Village of Antioch Bandshell, 900 Skidmore Drive, Antioch, Ill. Music starts at 7 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there in your Local 150 attire!

Other events you can attend this year include the Local 150 family picnic. We are excited to see what our fourth-year apprentices have planned for

IBEW MERCHANDISE



RETIREMENT PIN \$2.50

Silver lapel pin with "Retired" below the IBEW logo. 3/4" diameter with standard grade clutch.

DENIM SHIRT \$48.00

Denim - 100% cotton with button down collar and 2 button cuff. IBEW initials along with fist and lightning bolts embroidered above pocket on left chest.

BLACK LOGO WATCH \$100.00

Men's black ion-plated stainless-steel watch with silver IBEW logo on face. Features ion-plated stainless-steel band with safety latch and water-resistant housing.

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

www.ibewmerchandise.com

LOCAL LINES

us. Also, the softball team will be looking for players for this year's tournament, and we wish them luck. Next, you can try for a hole-in-one at our annual golf outing. Think good weather and join us for the annual car show; bring your favorite ride to show off and enjoy the food. We will need volunteers to help out with these events, so please call the hall to sign up. We look forward to seeing all of you over the summer!

Last, for children of Local 150 active members, the \$500 scholarship applications are due by May 31, and we wish those who are college-bound good luck in their studies.

Stay IBEW Strong!

Aaron M. Rendon, R.S.

Local 212's Chili Cookoff Starts the New Year

L.U. 212 (i), CINCINNATI, OH — Happy 2024, brothers and sisters! Our Women's Committee hosted their annual chili cookoff as well as the euchre tournament. Brother Dave Waller took home the pot. Congratulations and thank you for coming, Dave! The cookoff has expanded, so thankfully our hall has enough receptacles! While our local is known for Skyline Chili, we promise that most of us from Cincinnati do not always use cinnamon in our everyday chili.

Women's Committee President Jayme Scott presented winners with personalized aprons and wooden spatulas for their efforts. President Phil Bovard and JATC Assistant Director Chris Fridel won first place in the mild and spicy categories, respectively. The Women's Committee thanks everyone for attending!

Courtney Groeschen, P.S.



From left, Local 212 President Phil Bovard and JATC Assistant Director Chris Fridel at the local's chili cookoff.

Show Solidarity for Strong Contracts, Leadership

L.U. 292 (em,govt,i,rtb,rts&spa), MINNEAPOLIS, MN — Our local will be negotiating contracts for the majority of our members this year, including the inside construction and maintenance agreement and the limited energy agreement. We expect work

to pick up this summer and hope we will be in a strong position to negotiate a good contract.

Now is the time to come together and turn out to show solidarity for a strong contract. To stay informed on the progress of negotiations, download the Local 292 app. Search "IBEW292" at the App Store or Google Play or go to ibew292.org/resources.

2024 is an important election year. We are hoping to maintain a labor-friendly majority in the Minnesota House and gain a labor-friendly majority in the U.S. House. Most important is reelecting Joe Biden as president. Biden is the most pro-labor president we have ever seen and a close friend of the IBEW. Please consider getting involved this year to help share our collective pro-labor voice and help us elect pro-labor candidates. You can find out more political information, including how to register to vote, at ibew292.org/political.

The Sherco Solar project, a 710-megawatt utility-scale solar project, is expected to ramp up again soon. With that, along with the prospect of a couple of data centers and a strong bonding bill passed last year by the Minnesota Legislature, we hope to see a much improved work picture this spring and summer.

Andy Snope, Bus. Rep.

Local 340 Sees Growth and Opportunities

L.U. 340 (i,rts&spa), SACRAMENTO, CA — Our local is continuing to see growth and opportunities. We have been fortunate to have a strong work outlook in the coming year. Our Membership Development team gained extra helping hands who have assisted us with our need for additional electricians. The job calls have been consistent, and we are hopeful to gain more manpower in the coming months for the projects we foresee this year.

I like to bring us back to our roots every now and then, remembering where we came from and not forgetting that we had trying times before yet have been successful in keeping our local strong throughout. It is through connections, work relationships and adapting to the ever-changing workforce that we are able to remain in the top tier in our district. May we all continue to see a better year each year.

Bob Ward, B.M.

Local 364 Is Off and Running

L.U. 364 (catv,ees,em,es,i,mt,rts&spa), ROCKFORD, IL — We thought 2023 was busy, but 2024 is shaping up to be another banner year for our local.

As we move into spring, Local 364 has several large-scale projects underway or about to start.

The Facebook project continues to set the bar for construction, with all work being done on time or ahead of time.

The Hard Rock Casino opens in late summer or early fall, and this project has continued to bring in more work to the Rockford area in and around the casino.

The new Walmart cold-storage facility, directly across from the Stellantis car assembly plant in Belvidere, has taken shape. This project is 1.3 million square feet and has come together fairly quickly.

And last, we have the Stellantis project, which was shuttered in 2023, but thanks to President Joe Biden and UAW President Shawn Fain, has new life. We are very excited to see work there again at the new EV plant. As of this writing, there are still several details to work out, but all of this work is off and running for Local 364.

Brad Williams, P.S.

Happy Easter From Edmonton

L.U. 424 (as,cs,c,es,i,it,mt,mo,o,pet,se,&u), EDMONTON, AB — Our local has successfully ratified the collective agreement with Impactica Printing. It is a four-year agreement with increases of 3%, 2.5%, 2.5% and 1%, and it was ratified with 100% of the members voting in favor.

On Jan. 25, Members of Parliament Alexandre Boulerice, Matthew Green and Alistair MacGregor visited Local 424 and the Electrical Industry Training Centres of Alberta. We discussed fair wage policies and the Union Training and Innovation Program.

Scott Crichton, P.S.



South Dakota Rep. Linda Duba visits Local 426 in celebration of National Apprenticeship Week.

Energizing Tomorrow at Local 426

L.U. 426 (i,lct,o,spa,t&u), SIOUX FALLS, SD — In celebration of National Apprenticeship Week, our local hosted an engaging tabling event at the union hall on Nov. 17. We explored local apprenticeship programs that showcased the diverse opportunities available in the area. The event was enhanced by the presence of South Dakota Rep. Linda Duba, who shared her intent to pass legislation to bring more education about our local electrical apprenticeship program to our state's high school students.

Shane Larson, Mem. Dev.

Taking Our Meetings to Our Members

L.U. 440 (i,rts&spa), RIVERSIDE, CA — Members ended 2023 on a productive note and attended our local's first boxing/health club event. Long ago, Local 440 understood that not every member is able to attend monthly meetings as frequently as the labor movement would hope. So we created the motto and culture that if our members are unable to attend the meetings, we will bring the meetings to them.



From left, Local 440 Boxing/Health Club members Richard Ramos, Jesus Gomez, Colton Torrez, Noah Newman, Vicente Aguirre and Bernie Balland. (Not Pictured: Alton Harris)

To date, we have created and maintained the Local 440 softball team as well as golf, gun, mountain bike, poker, flag football, off-road, prayer request, car/truck/motorcycle, dominoes and chess clubs. We also have our internationally recognized and chartered RENEW chapter and Veterans Committee, all of which we use to promote and grow our Local 440 mentor program.

If you're reading this and want information on participating, please feel free to reach out to me at bernie@ibew440.org, and I will put you in touch with the chairman of the club you're interested in. All clubs have annual events, with the possibility of extras throughout the year. We hope to see you at one of them!

From apathy to activism — through brotherhood we will change our jurisdiction!

Bernie Balland, P.S.

Local 654 Welcomes Special Guest

L.U. 654 (i), CHESTER, PA — Our local started the new year off with a special guest: Eagles offensive tackle Lane Johnson, a two-time first-team and second-team All-Pro, five-time Pro

Bowler, and Super Bowl LII champion. We were honored to have him in attendance and grateful for the opportunity to hear him speak about his journey.

Lane discussed the important topic of mental health awareness, a subject for which he has advocated throughout his professional career. He spoke about how he became aware of and addressed his issues starting from his college days



Super Bowl champion Lane Johnson of the Philadelphia Eagles visits Local 654.

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Local 702 congratulates the 2023 class of journeyman linemen.

all the way up to this season. Lane offered pointers for stress management and insight about the signs of depression and how to reach out for help.

It was a great conversation about the mental challenges and hurdles we all face no matter where we are in life. Some members asked questions, and Lane even signed a few autographs. This was a great way to reflect upon the importance of helping others and the role of brotherhood in doing so.

Christopher Schieler, P.S.

Solar Work Continues at Local 702

L.U. 702 (as,c,catv,cs,em,es,et,govt,i,it,lctt,mo,mt,o,p,pet,ptc,rtb,rts,se,spa,st,t,u,uow&ws), WEST FRANKFORT, IL — Our outside construction branch is feeling the impact of the Illinois Commerce Commission’s ruling against Ameren Illinois, and we have seen significant layoffs. We continue to work to reverse this devastating ruling. However, the work outlook for 2024 is not promising.

The inside branch is extremely busy trying to man solar work. We continue to fill calls and expect this to continue throughout the year. It is projected that 2 gigawatts of solar work is scheduled to start in our jurisdiction either toward the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025.

Jamie Hatfield, A.B.M.

Congratulations, Local 728 December Graduates!

L.U. 728 (em,i,rts&spa), FT. LAUDERDALE, FL — Congratulations on achieving the esteemed title of union journeyman wireman to the class of



Local 728’s December graduates: (top row, from left) Jordan Abrahamsson, Cameron Meldrim, Garrett Ivins and Zachary Humphrey; (middle row, from left) Cody Wilson, Samuel Hepple, Daniel Sohlden, Ricardo Daley, James Murriello and Apprentice of the Year Larry Gibbs; (front row, from left) Ambimbade Mawudzro, Damian Amiot Perez and Stephan Mark Superville.

December 2023! The collective dedication and hard work has paved the way for remarkable success, illuminating new paths for others to follow. Your unified perseverance holds the promise of shaping a brighter future for our industry and union. Well done to each one of you, and may your journey ahead be filled with continued success and brilliance.

Effie Cruz, Bus. Rep.



Brother James F. Wilkening celebrates his 50-year career with Local 1042.

Brother Wilkening’s 50 Years of Service

L.U. 1042 (u), SANFORD, FL — Our local would like to recognize Brother James F. Wilkening for his 50 years of faithful service. Brother Wilkening was presented with a certificate from the IBEW recognizing his commitment to the union for all these years. We are very grateful for your service.

Ellen Stephenson, P.S.

Working with Legislators for Workers’ Rights

L.U. 1340 (i&o), NEWPORT NEWS, VA — Virginia legislators began their 2024 session in January, and our local members are engaged in Richmond representing our members and labor. Representatives of Local 1340 attended a series of meetings to discuss important issues facing our industry and working families.

On Jan. 27, Business Manager Jeff Rowe,

President Aaron Woodard, and Political Committee members Jesse Robertson and Jim Avery participated in the winter meeting of the Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council, presided over by President Jason Parker, also a member of Local 1340.

The following day, the team met with other IBEW representatives at the Virginia Association of the IBEW meeting, where Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney discussed ways to work together on upcoming local and state projects. Later that day, they joined other union representatives from across the state to kick off the Virginia AFL-CIO Legislative Conference. The body received updates on proposed legislation being considered in this year’s general assembly session and information on specific bills to address with their legislators.

On Jan. 29, approximately 160 union brothers and sisters converged on the General Assembly building to lobby our elected state officials on issues such as expanded bargaining rights, increasing the minimum wage, apprenticeship utilization requirements and many other topics. The legislative session ended March 9.

Renovations at the union hall were expected to be completed by mid-March.

We regret to report the passing of retired members Glenn Hollifield (Dec. 5, 2023) and James “Cookie” Alligood (Dec. 31, 2023).

Jim Avery, P.S.

Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed)

Did you work construction on a Department of Energy (DOE) site?

You may be eligible for a free medical screening exam to test for health conditions that may be work related.



“The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program’s concerns and diligence are appreciated for the future well-being of our members and retirees.”

“This program saved my life. If it hadn’t been in place and I hadn’t taken the initiative to participate, I wouldn’t be here today. My advice to any worker is: Don’t Wait.”

Dennis Stoltz
IBEW Local 68 (Rocky Flats)
Former Business Manager

Guy Sands
IBEW Local 575
Former Portsmouth GDP Worker
BTMed Participant



Photo Courtesy of DOE.

TO ENROLL, CALL 1-800-866-9663 OR VISIT www.btmed.org.

BTMed is part of the Department of Energy’s Former Worker Program and is administered by CPWR - The Center for Construction Research and Training, the health and safety research center of North America’s Building Trades Unions, with support from state and local Building and Construction Trades Councils. Funding from the Department of Energy (DE-FC01-06EH06004).

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 Baum, B. M.	1/15/24	38 McCourt, J.	12/24/23	106 Adsit, W. M.	1/9/24	280 Littleton, B. D.	12/19/23	440 Brook, J. E.	12/1/23	702 Choate, C. R.	12/22/23
1 Braun, T. A.	12/22/23	38 Sarris, A. M.	12/25/23	110 Becker, W. D.	5/28/23	280 Simmons, H. E.	11/28/23	441 Montoya, J. N.	12/16/23	712 Rice, D. E.	12/14/23
1 Busch, J. E.	1/26/24	38 Skufca, P. C.	1/8/24	110 Dufour, M. J.	7/11/23	291 Makinen, E. V.	12/18/23	444 Avey, L. J.	9/10/23	714 Bauer, F. L.	11/25/23
1 Klenke, R. P.	12/31/23	38 Volk, E. F.	1/17/24	110 Hanacek, M. G.	12/13/23	292 Cisewski, J. S.	12/13/23	445 Presley, R.	12/22/23	714 Mayer, C. C.	12/17/23
1 Leggitt, R. W.	12/27/23	41 Davis, D. H.	7/14/23	110 Kavanagh, P. M.	7/2/23	292 Hackenmueller, R. P.	1/23/24	446 Van, J. J.	1/26/24	714 Moore, C. L.	12/22/23
1 Nash, H. E.	1/11/24	41 Derrah, R. L.	1/6/24	110 Prince, T. J.	10/19/23	292 Lindahl, F. E.	11/29/23	449 Fitzpatrick, T. Q.	11/22/23	716 Davis, E. N.	11/3/23
1 Stewart, J. R.	1/28/24	41 Fehmer, D. W.	1/3/24	110 Schauer, J. J.	12/8/23	292 Lothenbach, J. L.	10/22/23	449 Irving, W. T.	12/1/23	716 Drymond, O. K.	9/5/23
1 Sturgell, J. W.	1/7/24	41 Lee, M. C.	10/27/23	110 Scheerer, W. J.	1/15/23	292 Wallace, J. A.	12/21/23	456 Marvel, D. H.	1/20/24	716 Roberts, F. D.	12/18/23
1 Volner, J. K.	11/27/23	41 Orlowski, J. W.	12/9/23	111 Massa, B. D.	11/7/23	292 Freeman, R. B.	11/19/23	474 Allen, C. E.	12/20/23	716 Vasquez, Y. R.	11/11/21
3 Cinque, T. J.	1/17/24	43 Chetney, W. C.	11/10/23	112 Barbour, E. M.	1/5/24	295 Williams, B. G.	12/19/23	474 Leakes, D. S.	11/9/23	721 Wasylow, W. F.	1/4/24
3 Cyril, E. P.	1/5/24	43 Muraski, R.	10/31/23	112 Eberhart, J. W.	12/19/23	295 Wornock, A. R.	12/23/23	474 Smith, C. L.	11/13/23	723 Nussbaum, D. W.	11/23/23
3 Dorb, A. M.	1/13/24	43 Nesbitt, E. G.	1/5/24	112 Gibson, W. H.	12/15/23	300 Cross, R. N.	5/19/21	479 Neely, P. C.	12/27/23	728 Nalesnik, R. M.	1/21/24
3 Feder, S.	12/5/23	43 Smith, M. P.	1/19/22	112 Meyers, W. P.	10/28/23	300 Forsey, G. C.	10/21/23	479 Williams, U. D.	11/29/23	728 Rideout, R. B.	12/27/23
3 Floden, R. A.	12/26/23	43 Usowski, M. M.	12/9/23	113 Blanchard, G. M.	12/7/22	302 Bliss, G. A.	12/25/23	479 Young, L. R.	11/7/23	743 Sandridge, E. E.	1/8/24
3 Frain, A. G.	12/24/23	44 McDaniel, S. I.	12/21/23	115 Mitchell, R. J.	10/28/23	302 Cook, C. E.	8/18/23	480 Russell, V. P.	1/5/24	744 Van Duyne, P. H.	7/19/23
3 Geosits, E.	12/15/23	46 Bruno, L. T.	11/20/23	117 Hoke, D. L.	1/12/24	302 Dumont, A. J.	1/18/24	481 Collins, D. G.	1/21/24	760 Sayne, F. E.	12/19/23
3 Giammarino, J. J.	1/6/24	46 Chelin, G. B.	1/3/24	120 Bartlett, R. W.	1/16/24	302 Norton, W. I.	1/22/24	483 Pollard, R. J.	12/24/20	760 Woods, L.	12/30/23
3 Green, H. E.	12/11/23	46 Waters, R. W.	12/1/23	124 Ferrantelle, J. A.	12/7/23	304 Seifert, L. F.	12/16/23	483 Vail, R. D.	1/10/24	801 Clark, J.	12/28/23
3 Haddock, J. J.	12/6/23	47 Brown, D. R.	10/14/23	124 Krause, H.	7/14/23	305 Boyd, L. H.	1/1/24	490 Chapman, R. A.	1/28/24	816 Bryant, R. E.	1/6/24
3 Halagarda, R. C.	12/21/23	47 Kin, J. D.	6/10/23	124 White, K. J.	12/29/23	306 Peck, R. H.	12/29/23	490 Hopkins, T. A.	12/30/23	861 Martin, L. L.	4/2/23
3 Hanley, E. R.	9/6/23	47 Rico, H.	6/13/23	125 Lefors, K. B.	11/19/23	307 Hausrath, C. A.	12/23/23	494 Cleppe, P. G.	11/29/23	890 Read, C. B.	11/18/23
3 Hylton, W. A.	5/30/21	47 Thilges, T. R.	1/12/24	126 Spencer, C. E.	10/23/23	309 Vongruenigen, C. A.	12/31/23	494 Lubbecki, D. J.	12/25/23	903 Crews, S. E.	12/26/23
3 Jackowski, L. F.	12/16/23	48 Didier, A. M.	10/18/23	130 Odenwald, L. H.	7/31/23	313 Stallings, D. J.	12/5/23	498 Rumsey, L. B.	1/17/24	903 Joris, F. L.	1/28/23
3 LeBron, S.	2/6/23	48 Lackey, W. S.	12/23/23	130 Spath, C. L.	12/10/23	322 Black, D. T.	1/22/24	502 Kallar, R. W.	1/26/24	906 Black, M. D.	10/15/23
3 Lopez, F.	8/11/23	48 Radabaugh, B. A.	1/10/24	134 Andrichik, W. J.	12/16/19	332 Andrew, H. J.	12/25/23	502 Paisley, R. G.	1/16/24	906 Kerry, C.	8/8/23
3 Martin, J. F.	1/8/24	48 Rogers, R. A.	1/4/24	134 Ashcraft, R. G.	11/17/23	332 Goebel, T. A.	9/10/23	502 Sheehan, B. J.	1/5/24	910 McCaffrey, R. J.	8/25/23
3 Monchik, S. R.	12/12/23	48 Sparks, F. R.	10/27/22	134 Bonner, M. H.	1/19/24	332 Witrykus, T. A.	1/1/24	508 Todd, W. E.	1/5/24	915 Scroggin, C. D.	1/28/24
3 Mondesir, G.	5/17/21	48 Word, S. E.	12/30/23	134 Donatelli, M. D.	1/10/24	340 Haley, W. G.	10/30/23	518 Wyatt, L. E.	1/19/21	917 Brown, C. A.	12/24/23
3 Olivencia, J. A.	1/22/24	53 Elliott, J. B.	10/29/23	134 Dreasler, W. K.	1/8/24	340 La Vette, L. O.	1/12/24	527 Ayala, H.	1/16/24	932 Green, R. C.	10/22/22
3 Pasqualoni, J.	1/11/24	53 Garrett, W. J.	11/21/23	134 Hogan, J. M.	10/21/23	340 Lewis, R. L.	12/26/23	527 Floyd, W. N.	1/23/24	948 Hooker, J. R.	11/20/23
3 Perla, J. G.	12/8/23	57 Bush, C. M.	12/22/23	134 Janowiak, T. R.	1/23/24	340 Nurpuri, S.	3/23/23	530 Auger, M.	1/3/24	952 Adams, R. N.	12/21/23
3 Piechota, G. R.	12/31/23	57 Marcus, T. W.	1/4/24	134 Killackey, M. J.	12/17/23	340 Pibbs, J.	2/15/14	531 Wantuch, L. G.	1/1/24	953 Bahr, W. D.	12/18/23
3 Pignataro, A. S.	10/29/23	58 Garbutt, J. D.	1/5/24	134 Lacey, E. G.	12/16/23	340 Standridge, D. R.	11/27/23	545 Jobes, R. E.	11/16/23	953 Mickelson, R. L.	1/18/24
3 Raimo, V. D.	1/7/24	58 Lapointe, D. R.	1/5/24	134 Maslan, T. E.	1/4/24	342 Martinez, M. F.	6/22/23	557 Field, H. E.	9/3/21	972 Barr, L. G.	12/15/23
3 Razziano, R. J.	11/11/23	58 Monterosso, W. J.	12/2/23	134 Miller, R. A.	12/8/23	343 Downning, L. M.	1/13/23	558 Browder, W. A.	11/6/23	995 Baites, L. T.	12/3/22
3 Scibelli, M.	12/28/23	58 Ondren, C.	12/23/23	134 Mullarkey, T. W.	11/11/23	343 Everman, A. G.	1/27/24	558 Collier, J. L.	7/4/23	995 Curtis, B. L.	12/12/23
3 Sullivan, A. J.	12/9/23	58 Weisman, D. S.	1/22/24	134 North, R. E.	8/11/23	343 Johnson, B. C.	12/25/23	567 Lord, J. N.	10/22/23	995 Nolan, T. J.	1/6/24
3 Sullivan, S. L.	10/31/21	60 Belohlavek, C. L.	12/17/23	134 O'Grady, T. F.	12/14/23	343 Landherr, M. K.	11/15/23	567 St. Pierre, J. P.	10/16/23	997 Mower, D. W.	1/4/24
3 Tirado, R.	10/25/23	60 Salinas, H. E.	10/11/23	134 Sokolowski, W. J.	12/2/23	347 Yashack, T. E.	12/5/23	568 Gagnon, B.	11/30/23	1049 Portes, R. R.	1/21/24
3 Turchin, C. B.	11/1/23	64 Appelman, L. G.	12/26/23	134 Valle, R. J.	1/17/24	349 Jeannin, P. H.	12/17/23	569 Duggins, W. E.	1/19/24	1141 Bohlander, B. K.	7/11/23
3 Vetoulis, P. J.	12/23/23	64 Mullen, J. C.	1/24/21	134 Venegas, W. M.	12/17/23	351 Dunner, J. J.	12/2/23	586 Brisbois, J. P.	12/8/23	1186 Ihori, M. Y.	8/10/23
3 West, J. J.	11/29/23	66 Craig, L. W.	12/3/23	141 Bauduin, J. H.	1/9/24	351 Waligroski, J. E.	1/22/24	595 Haag, M. R.	11/1/23	1205 Faircloth, R. W.	10/27/23
5 Cornelius, D. J.	12/12/20	66 Graham, R. W.	12/6/23	141 Kubovicz, R. A.	1/21/24	353 Bozzer, R. A.	11/27/23	595 Klopp, E. M.	9/9/23	1245 Medina, R. L.	12/2/23
5 Emanuel, N. L.	1/3/24	66 Preston, C. A.	11/21/23	143 Swartz, D. F.	12/5/23	353 Caponio, J.	4/29/21	595 Vasquez, W. M.	4/30/23	1316 Evans, H. L.	12/31/23
5 Kelly, R. E.	10/10/20	68 Mardian, S.	12/16/23	145 Colbrese, M. E.	12/11/23	353 Hart, N. J.	12/15/23	596 Stevens, W. F.	1/15/24	1319 Woodruff, J. S.	12/23/23
5 Mackenzie, D. B.	8/20/21	68 Moser, T. D.	1/17/24	145 Darin, J. K.	2/5/24	353 Lawrence, P.	10/31/23	601 Hammersmith, T. N.	11/16/23	1319 Zardecki, J. J.	1/27/24
5 Pastorius, R. P.	12/18/23	68 Schwab, K. A.	10/20/23	146 Chesnut, S. K.	1/15/24	353 Lempinen, T.	1/20/24	601 Marlowe, H. D.	12/18/23	1340 Allgood, J. W.	12/31/23
6 Damico, D. A.	12/6/23	70 Trotter, R. D.	1/15/24	153 Plank, J. R.	12/22/23	353 Napolitano, E.	12/11/23	602 Fox, S. L.	11/16/22	1377 Davis, W. G.	1/1/24
7 Broska, D. J.	1/20/24	76 Eckroth, R. P.	12/24/23	159 Brown, B. B.	12/12/23	353 Pullen, B. M.	12/15/23	602 Gudwer, J. F.	12/12/23	1393 Syverson, R. L.	1/27/24
8 Mulligan, N. G.	1/31/24	77 Mathews, J. B.	1/10/24	159 Hellenbrand, R. J.	11/10/23	353 Skibinski, H. K.	1/14/24	606 McNeely, H. H.	12/23/23	1547 Hacker, G. R.	1/7/24
8 O'Kane, D. F.	12/5/23	77 Schuyler, G. S.	11/11/22	160 Grell, S. P.	10/23/23	353 Smillie, J.	12/9/23	606 Scandle, J. R.	1/18/24	1579 Cook, L. J.	10/15/23
8 Schuler, R. C.	1/3/24	77 Sprouse, K. C.	11/7/23	160 Haegele, R. F.	12/26/23	353 Smith, G. R.	10/25/23	607 Santistevan, P. A.	8/22/22	2038 Ogram, D. R.	10/22/21
9 McIntyre, J. M.	12/27/23	80 Cahoon, H. C.	11/6/20	164 Bierals, C. E.	1/5/24	353 Trichas, D.	1/9/24	611 Buntington, G. A.	12/4/23	2085 Sokolyk, T. M.	12/14/23
11 Alfonso, A. Y.	12/13/23	80 Wortham, S.	11/8/23	164 Desposito, F. J.	11/22/21	354 Wall, J. C.	1/4/24	613 Buice, L. R.	1/2/24	2166 Bennett, B.	1/12/24
11 Barrett, P. W.	9/9/20	82 Ponder, D. F.	12/24/23	164 Duffy, R. A.	11/28/23	357 Ball, R. F.	1/23/23	613 Easley, R. E.	1/5/24	2166 Eastwood, B.	11/13/23
11 Dalool, C. W.	1/20/24	84 Lowie, R. B.	12/16/23	164 Kazenmayer, O. J.	12/23/23	357 Garner, M. S.	8/27/23	613 Eassey, R. E.	1/5/24	2286 Kite, B. G.	1/6/24
11 Dominick, W. R.	12/31/23	84 Souza, A. A.	1/5/24	164 Martin, M.	3/31/23	357 Hallmark, G. A.	12/7/23	613 Johnson, F. A.	12/12/23	2295 Craig, W. L.	4/28/22
11 Dubow, R. R.	1/8/24	90 Ciaffone, J. R.	11/12/23	164 Scaravilli, S.	7/1/23	357 Caserto, V. M.	12/20/23	613 McCain, K. R.	1/18/24	2330 Butt, D. K.	11/5/21
11 Forrest, R. W.	1/2/24	90 McGuire, H. F.	1/15/24	164 Zapata, H. M.	12/24/23	363 Matich, J. K.	12/16/23	613 St. Pierre, J. P.	10/16/23	2330 Dewling, G. E.	11/21/23
11 Meyer, G. D.	1/11/24	94 Felker, R. A.	12/5/23	175 Bumbalough, R. A.	1/11/24	363 Michalczyk, P. M.	6/15/23	613 Thomason, D. B.	12/23/23	I.O. (5) Black, H.	1/14/24
11 Moore, J. M.	10/13/23	96 Lapierre, E. R.	7/11/21	175 Clayton, C.	12/30/23	363 Napolitano, E.	12/11/23	613 Witting, R.	12/3/23	I.O. (5) Vaughan, S. E.	10/13/23
11 Moore, W. V.	11/26/23	96 Mahan, J. M.	12/15/23	175 Stooksbury, L. E.	11/10/23	363 Pullen, B. M.	12/15/23	617 Bingley, J. J.	1/31/23	I.O. (6) Loghry, P. W.	1/3/24
11 Norton, M. B.	11/24/23	96 Pothier, P. J.	10/7/21	175 Wright, L. E.	1/13/24	363 Skibinski, H. K.	1/14/24	617 Powers, J. F.	10/26/23	I.O. (46) Arron, B.	1/2/24
11 Phillips, T. P.	12/22/23	96 Roffee, R. A.	12/2/23	176 Palmateer, M.	12/5/23	363 Smith, G. R.	10/25/23	617 Stoney, J.	11/17/23	I.O. (77) Galliher, T. A.	11/3/23
11 Reyes, D. P.	9/24/23	98 Anderson, B. D.	11/9/23	176 Saindon, J. R.	1/10/24	363 Tychas, D.	1/9/24	640 Barkley, T. H.	12/15/23	I.O. (134) Lasare, R. A.	1/10/24
11 Sand, J. A.	1/4/24	98 Byrne, J. F.	1/22/24	177 Dumont, N. E.	11/12/23	369 Roxby, K. H.	1/20/24	640 Huffman, J.	12/1/23	I.O. (160) Yerigan, J. M.	1/20/24
11 Waddell, B. E.	1/8/24	98 Carlucci, C. M.	1/5/24	177 Feller, L.	12/16/23	369 Daulton, L. D.	12/26/23	640 Kupihea, K.	10/12/23	I.O. (362) Bodencak, J.	10/30/23
14 Doty, E. G.	10/27/23	98 Deitz, M. P.	12/18/23	180 Hogan, M. L.	11/2/23	369 Dooley, W. D.	3/22/23	640 Merrill, R. E.	1/1/24	I.O. (365) Millican, C. E.	1/7/24
17 Poteet, A. T.	10/6/23	98 Formont, R. A.	10/9/23	193 Miller, R. J.	1/2/24	369 Jones, S. M.	11/6/22	647 Lambert, H. N.	1/26/24	I.O. (441) King, T. F.	12/27/23
20 Preston, J. G.	12/27/23	98 Harlan, F. N.	12/14/23	196 Huff, K. E.	1/7/24	369 McNay, R. D.	7/18/23	648 Wroot, R.	9/13/23	I.O. (760) Johnson, B. G.	1/19/24
21 Fleischli, J. P.	12/21/23	98 Henry, J. P.	7/28/23	196 Robillard, F.	2/19/23	369 Sandifer, S. T.	12/14/23	659 Baker, H. E.	1/15/24	I.O. (1205) Graham, C. M.	1/16/24
24 Allen, J. B.	1/8/24	98 Schenker, H. J.	11/11/23	196 Stomberg, S.	1/24/24	375 Dellanno, A. J.	6/25/23	659 Baskette, H. D.	11/9/22	Pens. (I.O.) Anderson, M. B.	1/24/24
24 Fraley, M. J.	1/4/24	99 Dodd, T. E.	9/27/23	197 Tynan, K. J.	12/30/23	375 Kauffman, K. L.	7/8/23	659 Purkis, J. H.	1/24/24	Pens. (I.O.) Chavis, W. S.	1/2/24
24 Marchineck, L. A.	1/3/24	99 Kelley, L. B.	12/28/23	210 Deschatelets, D.	1/13/24	375 Minarovic, T. J.	3/14/22	661 Merriman, L. C.	8/31/23	Pens. (I.O.) Gest, R. C.	12/20/23
25 Hubbs, D. R.	1/24/24	99 Kerr, G. F.	12/16/23	210 Gross, C. L.	12/31/23	405 Gibbs, E. J.	12/15/23	665 Carroll, R. K.	12/19/23	Pens. (I.O.) Glomski, J. W.	12/10/23
25 Wirschning, F.	1/24/24	100 McCullough, D. P.	12/31/23	212 Leibbrook, R. E.	1/9/24	405 Sutton, M. D.	1/24/24	666 Eller, R. D.	12/31/23	Pens. (I.O.) Gowan, M. W.	12/8/23
26 Brush, R. K.	12/28/21</										

In Memoriam continued

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
Pens. (I.O)	Rickard, G. H.	12/6/23	Pens. (I.O)	Schuman, R. J.	12/17/23	Pens. (I.O)	Stroh, G. A.	1/1/24
Pens. (I.O)	Ricker, D. J.	10/29/23	Pens. (I.O)	Spruck, R. A.	11/24/23	Pens. (I.O)	Swanson, R. C.	12/1/23
Pens. (I.O)	Sarno, F.	12/17/23	Pens. (I.O)	Stark, R. N.	1/24/24	Pens. (I.O)	Weiner, S.	11/19/23
Pens. (I.O)	Schuler, M. F.	11/25/23	Pens. (I.O)	Steinle, E. T.	10/24/23	Pens. (I.O)	Wolfgram, D. W.	12/7/23

This list shows members for whom PBF death claims were approved in February 2024. ■

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

This is a summary of the annual report for the INT'L BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS' PENSION BENEFIT FUND, (Employer Identification No. 53-0088380, Plan No. 001) for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Basic Financial Statement

Benefits under the plan are provided by a trust (benefits are provided in whole from trust funds). Plan expenses were \$193,452,750. These expenses included \$10,362,123 in administrative expenses and \$183,090,627 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries. A total of 556,598 persons were participants in or beneficiaries of the plan at the end of the plan year, although not all of these persons had yet earned the right to receive benefits.

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$2,402,321,430 as of June 30, 2023, compared to \$2,312,357,606 as of July 1, 2022. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$89,963,824. This increase includes unrealized appreciation or depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan's assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year, or the cost of assets acquired during the year. The plan had total income of \$283,416,574, including employee contributions of \$98,918,240, gains of \$14,576,329 from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$171,729,353 and other income of \$-1,807,348.

Your Rights to Additional Information

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

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

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

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

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

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the

assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

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

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

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

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PUB. L. 104-13) (PRA), no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The department notes that a federal agency cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it is approved by OMB under the PRA, and displays a currently valid OMB control number, and the public is not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3507. Also, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if the collection of information does not display a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3512.

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

OMB control number 1210-0040 (expires 06/30/2023)

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



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.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS	Fourth District	Third District	THE ELECTRICAL WORKER
William W. Riley	Donald B. Finn	Dennis C. Affinati	Editor Kenneth W. Cooper
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			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

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WHO WE ARE

‘Do All the Things That Bring You Joy’ New York Wireman Turns Scraps Into Art

New York Local 3 member Mitchell Siegel doesn't look at scrap metal on jobsites the same way most wiremen do. For him, that discarded material is inspiration.

The third-generation journeyman has been turning scrap into art for the last few years. It's an extension of the woodwork he's been doing since before he started his apprenticeship more than 30 years ago.

"It's become a lot of fun," said Siegel, who counts several uncles and cousins as Local 3 members. "I never considered myself an artist, but I guess I am."

That artistic flair is a family trait, said the Long Island native, noting that both his parents are creative and like to work with their hands.

Family members got Siegel into welding. An avid fisherman, he was looking to buy a fishing rack for his truck when a cousin suggested a cheaper route.

"He suggested I buy a welder and make the rack myself," Siegel said. "Other cousins also inspired me to start welding, and that was the start of my love for working with metal."

Siegel said his projects usually take a few weeks to complete. Once he has an idea, he draws it out small and then uses a tracer to scale it. After that, he cuts it out and usually puts a light behind it.

A favorite tool is his plasma cutter, also known as the "sun in a gun" for how blazingly hot it gets to cut through metal.

"It's a lot of fun to use," he said. "It cuts metal like butter."

While he could use what's called a CNC machine to do the cutting, Siegel said he cuts everything by hand, in part because the machine is pricey, but also because he prefers the process and how the pieces come out.

"When I cut by hand, no two are alike," he said. "Each one is unique in its own way."

Siegel has finished 12 pieces so far. They include a dandelion with petals falling off, a butterfly, a heron and a wheelbarrow with sunflowers.

"A lot of my art is oriented toward my love of the outdoors. I'm a big nature lover," he said. "It's the natural order of things that I'm inspired by."

Another source of inspiration is jobsites, where he gets the bulk of his material for the sculptures.

"I'd say about 99% of what I use comes from recycled metal," he said. "There's something special about taking pieces out of the garbage and repurposing them. If it wasn't for seeing different things on a jobsite, I wouldn't have that initial spark of inspiration."

Some pieces have a personal connection, like the three-foot-tall heart he



New York Local 3 member Mitchell Siegel has been turning scrap metal and other items from jobsites into art for the past few years, making pieces for friends, family members, co-workers, local organizations and sometimes just for the holidays.

made for the hospital that treated him after he had a heart attack. Or the butterfly that he donated to his temple's garden, which grows food to donate to those in need. Standing 14 feet tall and with a bench around it, which he crafted from reclaimed skids, the butterfly can be seen from anywhere in the garden.

"It just seemed like the right thing to do," he said of the piece, the first he donated.

Siegel's sculptures are the logical extension of all his craftwork, including his electrical work.

"If I can incorporate wood and metal, then light it up, that encompasses everything I do," he said. "It puts it all together."

Siegel's work is popular with his co-workers, said foreman Rob Stankes, who's known the Levittown, N.Y., resident for about 11 years.

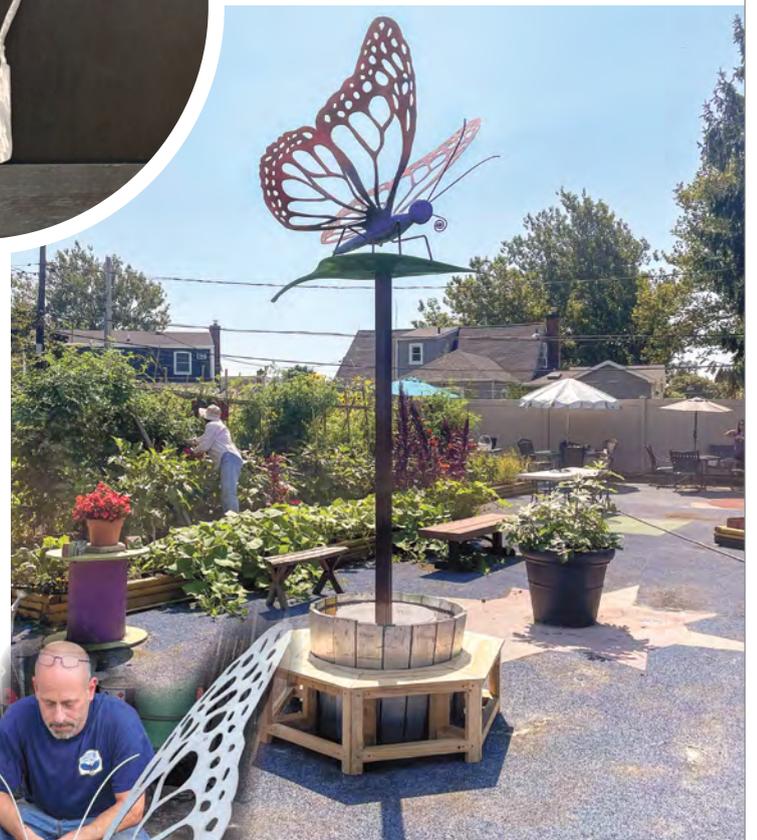
"Everybody's always interested in what he's doing. He has a good following," Stankes said. "It's like they say: One man's trash is another man's treasure."

Some of Siegel's favorite pieces are the ones he puts on his lawn for the holidays. He built a heart-themed sculpture for Valentine's Day and repurposed a crown box from a jobsite that showcases different pictures depending on the holiday.

But the one that stands out the most for him is one of his first, which he constructed for Halloween. It depicts Jack and Sally from the movie "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

"I'd say about 99% of what I use comes from recycled metal. There's something special about taking pieces out of the garbage and repurposing them. If it wasn't for seeing different things on a jobsite, I wouldn't have that initial spark of inspiration."

— Mitchell Siegel, New York Local 3 member



Siegel crafted the 14-foot butterfly sculpture and surrounding bench, above, for his temple's garden. It's also the first piece he donated. "It just seemed like the right thing to do," he said.

"I had a lot of fun making that one," he said. "Halloween is my favorite holiday."

In keeping with his love of his day job, Siegel even crafted a fist holding a lightning bolt and two others with "FGE" — the initials of his employer, Fred Geller Electric. One of the FGE pieces, done a few years ago, was inspired by a conversation Siegel had with an apprentice.

"He asked me one day if I had ever used a hot knife or hot wire, so I brought mine in and we did a sign to put on the

foreman's office wall," he recalled.

A family man, Siegel said his biggest supporters are his wife, Michelle, and sons P.J. and Shawn. Sometimes they even name the pieces.

"They're always inspiring and helping me," he said. "They are why I do all of what I do."

It's that base of support, along with the camaraderie of his fellow tradespeople, that encourages Siegel to keep expanding his horizons.

"You should never stop trying to do different things," he said. "You should do all the things that bring you joy." ■