

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1893

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

Printed in the USA

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Vol. 19 | No. 3 | March 2025

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'I'm Happy Every Day'

IBEW Retirees Reap the Rewards of a Proud Career

From letters to social media posts to “My IBEW Story” on page 2 every month, we know how much members value their union and the negotiated wages and benefits that allow them and their families to live their best lives.

But for smiles as wide as a pension check, talk to IBEW retirees.

They’ll tell you about overseas vacations, Alaskan cruises, traveling North America in an RV, and remodeling their homes; investing more time in such lifelong pleasures as fishing, hunting, motorcycling and restoring classic cars; throwing themselves into charity work, spoiling their grandchildren and the ability to simply relax.

As you’ll see on pages 4-5, there are also joys that come from lasting bonds with their IBEW brothers and sisters through local Retirees’ Clubs.

“I’m happy every day,” says a past New York City Local 3 wireman who helps lead his Retirees’ Club chapter in Westchester and Putnam counties.

AN UNBREAKABLE PROMISE

Editorial, page 2

Donald Finn, business manager of Chicago Local 134, hears it all the time: “Whenever I talk to a retiree, they always say thank God for the IBEW for what they have. Not everybody gets what we do in retirement.”

It’s the ultimate freedom, said International President Kenneth W. Cooper.

“Financial worries are some of life’s heaviest burdens,” he said. “Being free of them means you get to decide what the rest of your life looks like — and for many of our retirees, that’s 30, 40, even 50 years enjoying the rewards of an IBEW career.

Maybe you’ll see the world. Maybe you’ll sit on your deck and read a book. It’s entirely up to you.”

Going forward, inside construction members have even more to look forward to in retirement — an additional monthly payment for every year of service went into effect Jan. 2. It is the first increase in National Electrical Benefit Fund payments in 25 years.

The trustees also created an additional employer-funded pension plan called the National Electrical Individual Benefit. Subject to local bargaining, NEIB benefits are based on the number of hours that members work for NECA contractors throughout their careers.

“These are generational changes for the retirement security of our current members and our future members,” Cooper said. “It is a huge source of pride for us knowing that our members can retire while they’ve still got lots of life left in them, and that they can retire well.”

IBEW RETIREES continued on page 4

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FROM THE OFFICERS

A Secure Retirement: Our Unbreakable Promise



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

This month's Electrical Worker features stories of IBEW members making the most of their retirements, but in the years before the advent of collective bargaining, a dignified and secure retirement was out of reach for most working people.

People generally worked until they could not physically do the job anymore, relying on private charity and family to survive their golden years. For many others, they literally worked until they dropped dead.

The growth of the labor movement helped change all that. It was a long and arduous process, but by the 1920s, the IBEW established its first-ever pension plan.

Modest at first, it grew as the IBEW's membership and power grew, setting the stage for the creation of today's National Electrical Benefit Fund.

In the years after World War II, many local unions would establish their own pension plans, and a long and secure retirement became a reality for the first time for workers across North America.

Unlike the 401(k) plans most workers have today, a pension is an unbreakable promise, money that workers and their families can count on until the day they die.

But starting in the 1980s, the attack on organized labor caused a decline in the pension system as corporations looked to squeeze profits however they could out of their employees.

Well-funded pension plans were attractive targets for Wall Street raiders, who looted working people's hard-earned retirement funds to boost shareholder value.

From 1980 until today, the percentage of workers covered by a defined-benefit retirement plan shrank from 38% to under 15%.

And that has made retirement an impossibility for millions.

The FINRA Foundation reports that nearly 51% of Americans worry that they will run out of money when they are no longer earning a paycheck, while one in four of those over 50 report that they will never be able to retire.

While retirement security has been chipped away in the private sector over the past four decades, the IBEW and NECA have stood firm against the current.

We protected our defined-benefit plans, making union electrician one of the few jobs in the private sector that still came with a pension.

Not only do we continue to offer the best retirement plans in the industry, but we are also making them stronger and more comprehensive.

Last year, we reported on the changes we negotiated with NECA for the NEBF.

Working with our contractor partners, we raised NEBF benefits for the first time in two decades. The IBEW is bigger and stronger than it's been in generations, which is reflected in our retirement funds' health.

Our members are working harder than ever, and they deserve a piece of that success.

All members who retire starting this year will see their NEBF payout increase to \$33 per month per year of service. And that's retroactive for every year worked. Current retirees will receive a one-time "13th-month" check later this year.

We also set up the first new pension benefit since the IBEW and NECA started the NEBF in 1946. The National Electrical Individual Benefit, or NEIB, is a defined-benefit plan like the NEBF. But while the NEBF bases its benefits on how long a member has been in the system, the NEIB is based on the number of hours worked.

So, with the NEIB, you will get double the benefits if you work double the hours as someone in the NEBF, even if you both have been working the same amount of time.

The electrical construction industry is booming, with IBEW members working more hours than ever. With the NEIB, members can make a substantial down payment on their retirement starting now.

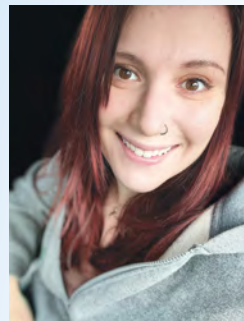
But setting up a NEIB plan in your local requires leaders to negotiate one with your NECA chapter. So every construction business manager must take the first step.

With the NEIB, our members can convert every hour worked into a more secure future, so don't wait. The time is now to take advantage of this new benefit.

The IBEW's goal has always been to ensure every electrical worker's dignity, from the day they first strap on the boots to the day they lay down their tools. We will continue to fight to ensure that every working person in the electrical industry enjoys the same retirement security opportunities that we have. ■

My IBEW STORY

Zoe McCormick, VDV installer/technician
apprentice
Rockford, Ill., Local 364



“I was a hairstylist right after high school, thinking that would be my career for the rest of my life. After eight years, having been laid off due to the pandemic, I realized that it was not my true calling. I was working 50 hours a week with barely any days off, back-to-back open-to-close shifts. It was the most stressful time of my life, and after working at a beauty store with no promise of being a manager, I left the cosmetology field completely.

While working at the beauty store, I'd started researching options like college or other trade schools. My husband, a member of Sheet Metal Workers Local 219, could see how unhappy I was with my schedule and that I wasn't learning any skills. He suggested that I look into the industrial trades. His cousin recommended the IBEW's VDV apprenticeship.

When I didn't get in on my first try, I was determined to find anything I could do to gain experience. I heard about an opportunity to work at a solar farm in Lena, Ill., and while I knew it would be very different than what I was used to, I ended up enjoying it way more than cutting hair. I finally felt recognized and was able to learn through hands-on experience, meeting some amazing people who have been very helpful on my journey. I got the call after my second interview and became a member in July 2024.

I've been working as an apprentice since then, and I have a great sense of satisfaction from my work. I'm bettering myself every day, learning new skills all the time. Overall, I can go home knowing that I finished work that needed to be done. And a lot of people are rooting for me, which feels great. Even though it's more challenging work than what I'm used to, I just love it.

Being an IBEW member has helped my marriage because my husband and I can spend more time together. I go to work every day without worrying about losing my job if I didn't sell enough products that day or needed a day off that I was unlikely to get, even with advance notice. Now, even though I sometimes do work 50 hours a week, I know my schedule. I can focus more on learning my trade and actually save money every month to be able to plan things for the year.

Before, it was like no one wanted to teach me anything and I felt like I was a burden to people. Now, even though I'm new here, people say, 'Look how much she's done.' I'd never really had praise at a job before, and it's a good feeling.

I always thought I'd be one of just a few women on jobsites, but with every job I've seen more and more. I hope one day I can go to schools or conventions and talk to more girls about joining. I love my career, and I'm so glad I went back for my second interview.”

Share your story at ibew.org/MyIBEWStory



The number of Women's Committees in the IBEW's First District — Canada. The number had only recently been just six. 'Women's Committees offer a sense of belonging in a male-dominated industry,' said Jennifer Gray, director of civic and community engagement.

See "Women's Committees More Than Double in First District" on page 9.

Hard Work, Positivity Help a Calif. Member Find IBEW Success After Prison

Helped by L.A. Nonprofit, Local 11 Wireman Gives Back by Mentoring

Gonzalo Varela, a Los Angeles Local 11 member who recently earned his journeyman wireman ticket after spending more than half of his adult life in prison, is not afraid to share his feelings with his co-workers.

"Sometimes I say, 'I'm grateful to be here with you guys,'" Varela said. "Some guys are like, 'What's wrong with this guy?'"

"I tell them, 'If only you knew where I've been, you'd be happy every day,'" he said. "I have a second chance, and I'm taking it. I'm going with it all the way."

In 1988, Varela was sentenced to serve 15 years to life in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation system.

"I was young and went to a party, and somebody there ended up dying," he said. "I was guilty for saying nothing. I ended up getting incarcerated for keeping quiet. I feel bad about it."

During his time in prison, Varela worked hard to improve himself. "The only good thing I could say about being where I was at [was] I was able to always exercise and read," he said. "I started going to classes and then facilitating classes. I got into every program you can think of."

He also counseled others to be honest with parole boards about why they were incarcerated.

"They would always say, 'It was an accident,' or 'It wasn't me,'" he said. "I would tell them, 'Look: All they want to know is the truth, which is you're guilty for doing the crime, and you're not that same person anymore. You've got to accept responsibility for what you did.'"

Although Varela fully followed his own advice when he went before a parole board himself, he was still surprised when the board found him suitable for release in October 2016.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. "I thought I was going to be there for the rest of my life."

Getting adjusted to a world that had changed dramatically from when Varela went into prison, though, was a major challenge, especially after he decided to do it on his own. "I wasn't sure what to do or where to begin," he said.

The only identification Varela had then was from his state correctional institution, and when asked during job interviews whether he'd been incarcerated, he answered honestly. "They were like, 'We'll call you,' and I'm like, 'They're not going to,'" he said.

Varela kept busy doing volunteer work while living in transitional housing

before he was accepted into an 18-month program run by Los Angeles-based Homeboy Industries, which helps formerly gang-involved and incarcerated people find jobs.

Through Homeboy, Varela was able to get the identification documents he needed, to work a nonunion temp job installing solar panels for residents of lower-income communities and to take courses.

"They had math classes at 6 in the morning on Saturdays," he said. "I kept hearing, 'If somebody wants to get into the IBEW, they have to be sharp at math, and I'm like, 'Who is the IBEW?'"



Staffers at Homeboy told Varela that he could learn more about the union through Second Chance at Loving Life (2nd Call), a nonprofit offering life skills and trades programs.

One of 2nd Call's longtime volunteer facilitators is John Harriel — better known as Big John, chairman of Los Angeles Local 11's executive board and also a formerly incarcerated person. (Learn more about Harriel in the Nov. 2022 Electrical Worker.)

After Varela started going to 2nd Call meetings on Thursday nights and sharing his story with Harriel and the others, "I got comfortable speaking about myself and utilizing the life skills they taught," he said. "I was surprised that there were others just like me. That gave me the courage to speak."

Harriel also is a superintendent and diversity manager with IBEW signatory contractor Morrow Meadows. "Big John took a chance on me and got me in at Morrow Meadows as a material handler," said Varela.

By fall 2018, Varela — who had also volunteered at Local 11 in his spare time — felt ready to apply for an



"When I went to my [apprenticeship] interview, I'm like, 'Oh man, they're going to say something because I'm going to put down that I've been incarcerated.' They said, 'What we care about is who you are today.'"

— Los Angeles Local 11 journeyman wireman
Gonzalo Varela



Far left photo: Los Angeles Local 11 journeyman wireman Gonzalo Varela, right, with fellow 2nd Call beneficiary and volunteer "Big John" Harriel, the local's executive board chairman. At left: A few years ago, Varela was introduced to then-International President Lonnie R. Stephenson after an IBEW meeting in California.

IBEW apprenticeship.

"When I went to my interview, I'm like, 'Oh man, they're going to say something because I'm going to put down that I've been incarcerated,'" he said. "They said, 'What we care about is who you are today.'"

Local 11 accepted Varela into its apprenticeship, and he gained broad electrical experience working on construction projects such as a new building at a college in Long Beach; a large parking structure in Los Angeles; and SoFi Stadium, home of the NFL's Chargers and Rams.

In October, Varela topped out of the apprenticeship and became a journeyman wireman.

"We have a very good union," Varela said. "I love every part of what we stand for, because we're strong. The people I surround myself with, they're positive and they believe in giving back and helping out."

Varela is also proud of his continued work as a 2nd Call mentor. "I still go every Thursday," he said. "They need to hear that there's somebody that understands what they're going through."

He credits much of his success to

his wife, Olga. "She's been my strongest supporter," he said. The couple separated amicably after Varela was incarcerated but reconnected after his release.

Meanwhile, Varela continues to

stay positive. "When we mope and complain, it doesn't get us anywhere," he said. "That's not about making the best of it and being able to provide for my family." ■

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— Josh Allsuo
IBEW Local 347

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'I'm Happy Every Day' IBEW Retirees Reap the Rewards of a Proud Career

Continued from page 1

LOCAL 349 Brotherhood Beyond the Tools

Brian Rappaport is grateful that Miami Local 349's Retirees' Club offers so many excellent membership benefits, from monthly potluck lunches to tours through parks and historical sites — not to mention the club's sponsorship of a recent weekend boat cruise out of Fort Lauderdale to Key West and Bimini Island.

But the club's impressive list of activities is not the primary reason the president of Local 349



joined upon his retirement last August.

Instead, he said, "it's about the fact that there is a Brotherhood that extends once you hang up the tools."

Rappaport's long IBEW career included three decades of service in various leadership roles with his local. "You spend all these years with these folks," he said. "After you retire, you're not just going to be lost wandering in the wilderness. There's a support network that's out there."

Having such a solid and experienced network of IBEW retirees to lean on is extremely helpful, Rappaport said.

"It gives you an opportunity to get fresh eyes on a problem that you have that somebody else may have already gone through," he said, such as navigating changes in Medicare. "Talking to others in similar situations is a tremendous plus."

Retired Miami Local 349 President Brian Rappaport and his wife, Paula, enjoy a day out in Helen, Ga., which resembles an Old World village in Bavaria.

Local 349 member Frank Auer, who was elected president of the club shortly after he retired and joined it three years ago, said he got involved to give something back to the IBEW.

"I wasn't able to do as much when I was raising a family," said Auer, who worked for nearly 30 years as a wireman, followed by another 20 years as a superintendent for a large signatory contractor. "The union has been extremely good to us. I wish I'd tried harder to be active."

Auer's wife, Brenda, serves as the club's recording and publishing secretary. "Since my husband and I have joined, we've made new friends," she said. "We get together outside of the club and have dinner together. It's like opening up a whole new world because guess what? Now we have time to do things that are fun."

That participation by retirees and their spouses helps give the Local 349 club "more of a family feeling," Rappaport said. "The thing that draws me in is the friendship and the camaraderie. It's



At left, Miami Local 349 Retirees' Club President Frank Auer and his wife, Brenda, take a break at Robbie's Marina in the Florida Keys. The club recently took a weekend boat cruise off Florida's coast, below.



just a real warm feeling that you get."

With that in mind, Auer and Rappaport, who continue to work with Local 349's JATC, encourage younger IBEW members to attend the local's meetings and be as involved with their union as much as possible.

They know it's not easy. "They're being pulled a thousand different ways," Auer said. "They have a lot of responsibilities."

Rappaport added that he's seen a recent shift in young people's attitudes toward retirement.

"Our age group is the kind that wanted to do things like that together, because when we came up through the union, there were a lot of events that brought us together," he said. "The newer

and younger brothers and sisters haven't been brought up that way."

Auer and Rappaport hope to change that, agreeing that it's crucial to communicate the value of IBEW membership early and often.

"Unions are some of the only places left in the world where you can still earn a pension," said Rappaport, who continues to serve as a trustee on Local 349's apprenticeship committee. "These healthcare benefits of ours, and things that carry on into retirement, are what's going to make or break you when you reach retirement age." ■

LOCAL 257 'Like You're Back on the Job'

Jefferson City, Mo., Local 257 is sandwiched between larger local unions in St. Louis and Kansas City. It's not a particularly large local in terms of members, especially by construction standards, currently with about 700 members.

That's part of what makes its Retirees' Club so vital to so many and why it is so active.

"The fellowship is because it is a smaller union and everyone knows everyone," said Connie Hamacher, who serves as the club's press secretary after her husband retired as a Local 257 member. "They look forward to seeing each other at our events and meetings."

Jefferson City is the state capital and Local 257 has jurisdiction in Columbia, home of the University of Missouri's flagship campus. Yet, many of its members and retirees live on farms or in small towns that dot the central part of the state.

Getting together isn't always easy, but the club's emphasis on fellowship and frolicking has given those retirees incentive to do so since it was chartered in 1988.

"We just have a lot of fun," retired wireman and club President Ron Holzhauser said. "It's a group that gets together and enjoys being social."

"We talk and cuss at each other every once in a while," Holzhauser added with a laugh. "It's like you're back on the job."

Holzhauser noted that his IBEW career allowed him and his wife to raise four children comfortably. They are grown, and the couple now spends part of their time traveling, including internationally.

A good salary and good pension plan made that happen, which he hopes isn't lost on active members.

"These young kids nowadays really



Members of Jefferson City, Mo., Local 257's Retirees' Club during a visit to the Henry Miller Museum in St. Louis.

need to know about the retirement plan," he said. "It's better than it's ever been."

Club members put together a float for Jefferson City's annual Labor Day Parade. It's in addition to the one put together for Local 257's active members. It annually makes a financial contribution to St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., during the holiday season.

There is a brick recognizing the club at the Henry Miller Museum, which is housed inside the courtyard next to the building where the IBEW was founded in St. Louis in 1891, and members have visited there.

Local 257 Business Manager Joel Vanderslice said the club serves as a good reminder for current members the sacrifices previous generations made for the benefits they receive today.

"The amount of history that comes together at those meetings is pretty incredible," he said. "The fact those people fought for the rights that we all have and are still coming together in solidarity is amazing. A lot of them have known

each other since their apprenticeships and they're out there doing stuff."

The club meets for monthly dinners, which are spread throughout the jurisdiction so each retiree can have an event close to his or her home. One member opened his own restaurant following his retirement and is popular because of the outstanding chicken and country ham he prepares for some events.

And finally, club members serve as volunteer judges for the Missouri chapter of the SkillsUSA competition, held in April at the State Technical College in Linn, Mo. SkillsUSA is a nonprofit recognized by the Labor and Education Departments as a successful model for teaching middle school, high school and college students how to prepare for a career in the trades.

All those activities are meaningful, but Holzhauser says the sense of community remains the most important thing for most members.

"We just have a good time harassing each other and telling old jokes," he said. ■

LOCAL 3 No More Early Alarms

Frank Balbo helps run the New York Local 3 Retirees' Club for Westchester and Putnam counties north of the city. He has been retired for two and a half years.

Balbo worked all over New York City in his 42-year career, from the deepest subway tunnel to the top of the World Trade Center, from Lower Manhattan to the outer boroughs and on the bridges between.

"When you're Local 3, you touch every little bit of it," he said.

Now that he is retired, life so far is exactly what he hoped it would be.

"I'm happy every day. I don't have an alarm clock. I exercise three times a week. I read a lot of books. I drove down to Florida for a few weeks to visit friends because when you retire, that's what you do," he said. "I'm enjoying my life and spending my money."

There are rules, though.

"I don't get on the couch until dinner. Got to stay in shape," he said.

The biggest surprise, he said, is that it turns out he likes doing housework.

"I'm Italian. My wife brought up my two kids. She was a stay-at-home mom. She did the cooking and cleaning, and I took it for granted. Now I'm the house husband until she retires. I do laundry. I run errands. I start dinner. I clean up the house. I'm hyper, and I stay busy. I love it."

It is a life he never could have imagined for himself when he started out of high school working nonunion.

"They have nothing. They are lucky to get medical. Those guys work until they're 70. They have no savings. No pension," he said. "Thank God there is a pension, and God bless [former Local 3 business manager and creator of the local's pension plan] Harry Van Arsdale."

Balbo added: "We didn't go the college route. We chose construction because we liked the camaraderie, and we chose electrical work because we're smart. I have a lot of good stories working with the men, and we made a lot of money." ■



New York Local 3 Retirees' Club member Frank Balbo is staying busy and loving it.

LOCAL 424

Two-Wheeled Solidarity

For Edmonton, Alberta, Local 424 retirees Ray MacNeil and Willy Milley, retirement means more time to ride their motorcycles. And thanks to the IBEW's network of motorcycle clubs, there's always a fellow member to ride with.

"I just keep meeting new people," MacNeil said. "I have IBEW family all around North America."

MacNeil, who serves as president for all the IBEW riding clubs in Canada, said that if he's in a town with a charter, he'll look it up.

"Wherever I'm at, I'll ask about a meeting," he said.

On one occasion when he was in Los Angeles, he checked in on Local 11 and was asked to speak at a motorcycle club meeting about fundraising. MacNeil's home club in Alberta does a lot of charity work, including with the Patient Financial Assistance Program at the Cross Cancer Institute and with the Mustard Seed, which helps people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

"That was a big honor," MacNeil said.

For Milley, the riding club is a way to stay in touch with old co-workers.

"When you work, you move from job to job. You might not see someone for 20 years, then you run into them at a ride. It's a nice way to touch base," said Milley,

who retired in 2014.

Milley said he's thankful for his health and pension, which have allowed him to travel across Canada and the U.S.

"I'm able to enjoy my pension," Milley said. "The IBEW has given me the chance to do the things I want to do, not just what I have to do."

The IBEW's motorcycle clubs are a rare spot where active and retired members regularly get together for a shared interest. MacNeil says he'll often encourage the members to check in on the Retirees' Clubs.

"I tell them to go to the barbecue and ask what you can do, get a conversation going," he said.

Local 424 has an active Retirees' Club, said Paul Pomerleau, the club's recorder. They meet every week for coffee and doughnuts at the hall, and sometimes younger members will stop by to chat.

"It gives us a chance to compare notes on how the jobs are going and see what's changed over the years," Pomerleau said.

Pomerleau said he attends other senior groups outside the IBEW, but the Local 424 group is special.

"With the other groups, they're not

electricians. It's nice to be able to talk about old jobs, what's changed with the code, the union, things like that," he said.

In addition to the weekly coffees and official monthly meetings, Local 424's Retirees' Club has hosted provincial and local politicians at events open to all members. They're also planning to bring someone in from law enforcement to talk about

how to avoid telephone and online scams.

They even get out to the Calgary Stampede, a 10-day event that draws people from all over Canada, where they have breakfast on hand and brisket sandwiches for lunch.

"It's nice that our members get to retire with so much life left in them," Business Manager Michael Reinhart said.

"They're retired, but they're not tired of hanging out with each other or participating in the local."

MacNeil said that

his advice to younger members is to figure out what they want to do before they retire.

"You work all your life, you have people around you, then all of a sudden, there's nothing to do. A person can get lost," he said. "Whatever you want to make out of retirement is up to you, but have some type of plan."

For MacNeil and Milley, that's enjoying their IBEW pensions on the open road.

"I have IBEW brothers and sisters all over the place. For me, it's always there," MacNeil said. "It's in my blood." ■



Edmonton, Alberta, Local 424 retirees Ray MacNeil, pictured above on the far right in the middle row, and Willy Milley, on the far right in the front row above, can often be found enjoying their retirement on the open road, riding with other IBEW members across Canada and the U.S.



LOCAL 648

Cool Cars for a Cause

Hamilton, Ohio, Local 648 members and retirees did the entire Brotherhood proud nearly 15 years ago, when they coordinated a crew of volunteers and built the Joe Nuxhall Miracle League Field in their jurisdiction.

The experience left them with warm feelings they weren't about to let go of. Today, many of Local 648's Retirees' Club members continue to raise money for the field, primarily through its Cruise-In for Kids Car Show held each June.

They have raised more than \$150,000 for the field, which is a state-of-the-art facility that allows people with severe disabilities to play baseball and softball, many for the first time.

Those funds have helped keep the facility in tip-top shape and led to so much more. Local 648 retirees have joined with signatory contractors and other trades to build an adjoining 18-hole miniature golf course that meets the needs of the disabled.

"It gives me hope and faith that there are still a lot of good people out there that want to help others," said Local 648 retiree Steve Crain, one of the car show's organizers.

"The main cog in this is retired union people," he said. "Local 648 retirees are out there always looking to help somebody out."

Right: Local 648 retired Brothers Steve Crain, left, and Ken Rhodus, center, celebrate with Nuxhall Foundation Chairman Kim Nuxhall at another successful Cruise-In For Kids Car Show.



Left: An Aston Martin DB5 on display at Cruise-In for Kids. It was used in the James Bond movie "Goldfinger," and the owner allowed it to be displayed.

volunteer who was a leader in getting the field built and now co-chairs the car show with Crain, said Kim Nuxhall sometimes mentions that he and others should get paid for their efforts.

Rhodus laughs and reminds him he doesn't need it, thanks to the good wages he earned during his career and the pension he now receives.

"I worked 49 years in the IBEW, and I loved it," he said. "I'm a very happy camper. We don't want the accolades. We just say the IBEW gang from Local 648 is here to help."

Crain was a natural to coordinate

the show. He's a car enthusiast who has participated in numerous shows himself over the years. He helped organize the Gassy Geezers, a car club comprising mostly retired union members that has met monthly for nearly 20 years.

Even at 78, he still enjoys doing the work that allows a vintage car to regain the shine it had when it was just coming off the lot.

"It's been a passion all my life," he said.

But even with his deep roots in the car community, Crain has been stunned at the success of the annual show that benefits the Miracle Field — and not just financially.

It gets regular coverage from Cincinnati-area media. Sponsors, many of them fellow building trades unions and their signatory contractors, always jump into help.

"They're coming to us," Crain said. "We don't solicit it."

Back in 2014, he estimated that the first show would raise \$3,000, tops. Instead, it raised \$13,000, and the event has grown ever since.

"For a one-day car show, it is out of sight," he said. "Every car club around now wishes it could do something like this. We have one ace in the hole that they don't have, and that's the Nuxhall family name."

Now, IBEW brothers and sisters like Crain and Rhodus could soon be stepping

up for the biggest project yet.

Funds are being raised for the Hope Center, an adjoining 31,000 square-foot building that will house a gymnasium, workout areas, medical care facilities and an arcade, all designed with the disabled in mind.

When finished, organizers believe the facilities at Hatton Park will be the world's most inclusive campus for athletes with developmental and physical disabilities. Visit nuxhallmiracleleague.org/hope for information.

Rhodus, who played high school football with Kim Nuxhall, said he has no doubt the money will be raised to build the facility because the Nuxhall family's name remains so strong in and around Cincinnati.

He and other Local 648 retirees will be chomping to get back to work when construction begins. The motivation remains strong.

"When those children come up, no matter what age they are, and they're in a wheelchair or using whatever they can to get out there to play and they stop and give you a hug ..." Rhodus said, his voice trailing off.

"I can't tell you what that means." ■

Share your story about how the IBEW has improved your life both on and off the job at ibew.org/MyIBEWStory. SCAN QR CODE





OSHA Issues New PPE Rule, Arc Flash Guidance

Biden Administration's Directives Aimed to Bolster Construction Worker Safety

IBEW workers have additional safeguards while on the job thanks to a new rule on personal protective equipment and guidance on arc flash hazards.

"The first thing we talk about when we're organizing is safety. Not wages, but working conditions," IBEW Safety Department Director Mark MacNichol said. "Everybody wants to know that they'll come home safe at night, and these new standards will help ensure that happens."

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a long-awaited rule that requires the construction industry to provide properly fitting PPE to any worker who needs such equipment. Announced in December, the rule aligns the industry with others that already had such a mandate.

"I've talked to workers in construction, particularly women, who have spoken of personal protective equipment that didn't fit or was simply unavailable at the jobsite in their size," Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Doug Parker said. "PPE must fit properly to work. I'm proud of the broad support from both employers and unions for OSHA's efforts to make clear that employers must provide the right PPE for each worker who needs it."

The Department of Labor, of which OSHA is a part, cited a study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health that found that 41% of women had reported their PPE not fitting properly. Another study by the Center for Construction Research and Training found that nearly nine in 10 women said they'd experienced such a problem.

"A tradeswoman has every right to expect proper-fitting PPE the same as a tradesman. Addressing that issue removes another hurdle for women considering a career in the trades," IBEW Construction and Maintenance Department Director Matt Paules said. "As a business manager, I dealt with this issue, and it's a safe bet that every construction business manager has as well. It's a simple concept: Employers must provide proper-fitting PPE. We're pleased that OSHA is issuing guidance on this."

With the construction industry booming, there is a need to recruit more people, creating a market for a more diverse selection of PPE. And an employer that does so not only keeps their employees safe but also cultivates a more welcoming and inclusive atmosphere on the jobsite that benefits everyone.

"For a person who is an atypical size and doesn't have the correct gear, it makes them feel like an outlier. It's



The Biden administration's Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a regulation in December requiring the construction industry to provide proper-fitting personal protective equipment on worksites and also improved safety standards for arc-rated and flame-resistant clothing and PPE.

simply not fair how it impacts them," MacNichol said. "This rule benefits all workers — regardless of gender."

MacNichol noted how PPE that doesn't fit right isn't just an inconvenience — it's a safety hazard.

"A glove that's too big is more dangerous than no glove at all," he said. "They can get caught up; they can pinch your fingers off. It's just common sense to have these additional protections."

OSHA also issued new PPE-related guidance on arc flash protection in November, the first in 20 years. The update outlines new protocols for ensuring the proper use of arc-rated and flame-resistant clothing and PPE for those working on or near energized electrical equipment.

"The IBEW represents 838,000 members across a wide variety of careers, and our members know better than any other industry the dangers associated with electrical arc hazards. This critical measure prioritizes the health and safety of workers who do work vital to maintaining our electrical infrastructure," International President Kenneth W. Cooper said. "Most of us have seen lives irreparably damaged, even lost, to electrical arc flashes, so we fully endorse OSHA's updated rule, based on the strong scientific evidence that supports these worker protections."

The new guidance addresses two main issues, said the Partnership for Electrical Safety, a trade group that works closely with OSHA: categorizing

work as deenergized when it doesn't actually qualify and therefore doesn't require the proper PPE, and a lack of PPE when voltage is low because of the myth that low voltage isn't hazardous.

"The primary issue the IBEW has fought for since Henry Miller and our founders created our union is jobsite safety. Arc flash is a serious threat to electrical workers working on energized equipment no matter the classification," Paules said. "OSHA's announcement provides appropriate guidance for employers and employees to ensure that arc flash protective clothing and equipment is provided for and worn by anyone working on or near energized equipment. This new guidance will make everyone who works in such an environment safer." ■

IN MEMORIAM: LARRY COHEN

Legendary IBEW Counsel and Labor Lawyer Was 92

Retired IBEW general counsel Laurence “Larry” Cohen, who served the Brotherhood with distinction for nearly a half century, died on Dec. 24 following a brief illness. He was 92.

Cohen served as general counsel from 1980 until his retirement in 2011 and previously worked at the law firm of Sherman Dunn, the IBEW’s legal representation since 1947. Current general counsel Jon Newman, who remained close to him until his death, noted that Cohen spoke to seven International Conventions during his tenure as general counsel.

No one is likely to match that number, Newman said.

“I was just fortunate to apprentice under him,” he added. “The words that come to mind when I think of Larry are smart and funny.”

In addition to his work for the IBEW, Cohen served as general counsel to the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO and the Asbestos Workers Union. He argued four cases before the Supreme Court and won them all, the most notable being *IBEW v. Foust* in 1979.

In that case, an IBEW local in Wyoming had been sued for breach of the duty of fair representation. It was on the losing end in a lower court and the plaintiff was awarded \$75,000 in punitive damages.

Cohen realized the dangerous precedent that could set. Anti-union forces could use such suits to drain resources if a local union were liable for punitive damages. An appeals court upheld the earlier ruling, but the Supreme Court ruled 9-0 in the IBEW’s favor, saying that punitive damages could not be awarded in duty of fair representation cases.

That precedent stands to this day.

“If punitive damages are a possibility, even if a union believes it would win a duty of fair representation case, it has so much exposure that it often would be forced to settle,” Newman said. “When punitive damages are taken off the table, unions are not going to be shaken down or forced into a settlement in these cases.”

Richard Resnick, who succeeded Cohen as the IBEW’s general counsel and is now retired, said Cohen’s intelligence, sense of fairness and warm personality allowed him to reach across the aisle and helped the IBEW and other construction unions form strong relationships with management.

“He was just a wonderful litigator,” Resnick said. “It’s not easy to argue a case before the Supreme Court and he was a master at it.

“He was my mentor,” Resnick added. “I loved the guy.”

A native of Washington, D.C., Cohen looked to be headed for the family business. As a young man, he worked for Cohen’s Picture Framing, which was well known in the District of Columbia, and went on to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business.

Cohen’s Picture Framing was founded by his grandfather, a Russian immigrant.

“He and his sons built it into a fairly successful capitalist [enterprise],” Cohen said in a 2009 interview that was part of an AFL-CIO oral history project, “even though he remained until his dying day an ardent socialist.”

He decided to attend law school after watching television coverage of the Army-McCarthy hearings. With a passion for social justice, Cohen decided he wanted to represent unions and working people after taking a labor law class during his second year at Yale Law School, from which he graduated in 1959.



“He was an icon and staple of the IBEW,”

— Ricky Oakland,
IBEW chief of staff

His first job after that was working for the Teamsters Board of Monitors — a three-person board that oversaw the Teamsters after it was put into federal receivership in 1958. He stayed in that position until the following year, when he was hired by the legendary Lou Sherman to join Sherman Dunn.

He left in 1964 for a three-year stint as a legal assistant to a member of the National Labor Relations Board before returning to Sherman Dunn for good in 1967. At the time, the IBEW made organizing in the Deep South a priority and Cohen, who was Jewish, was sent to assist.

He said in the 2009 interview that he was sometimes referred to with anti-Jewish slurs, even by other lawyers. He once checked out of a North Carolina hotel when he learned an operator was listening to his phone conversations and revealing the content to virulently anti-union local politicians.

Resnick said that work showed Cohen’s commitment to the IBEW and his own personal toughness.

“Here was this nice Jewish guy not only facing a lot of anti-union folks, but also a lot of antisemitism,” Resnick said.

Cohen succeeded Tom Dunn as general counsel in 1980 and remained in the role for the next 31 years, continuing his tireless work for labor.

“He was an icon and staple of the IBEW,” said Ricky Oakland, the IBEW’s chief of staff.

Oakland worked closely with Cohen beginning in 2003, when Oakland was appointed director of the CIR/Bylaws and Appeals Department. CIR stands for the Committee on Industrial Relations, which works to settle disputes between the IBEW and its management partners in a satisfactory manner for both sides.

“We had to go before the international president several times and one thing he taught me was never oversell an issue,” Oakland said. “Don’t waste [the president’s] time. Lay out the facts, but when he makes a decision, stop selling.

“I have taken that to this day. Once the president makes a decision, move onto the next topic, and Larry taught me that.”

A career disappointment came in 1998. President Bill Clinton nominated Cohen to be general counsel of the NLRB, but Republicans controlling the Senate squashed the nomination and it never reached the floor.

That did not nothing to lessen his profound legacy. Newman said Cohen was generous in his time with young lawyers — including Newman himself, who joined Sherman Dunn in 1995.

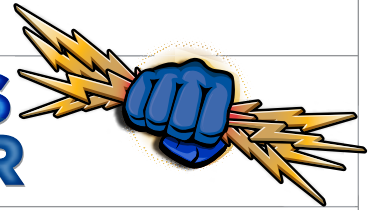
“He was a very good mentor in how to approach a legal issue and doing legal research,” Newman said. “He was very generous in including young lawyers in client meetings, where they were exposed to interesting cases and could meaningfully participate.”

Cohen is survived by his wife of 62 years, Jo, along with two children and seven grandchildren. He was an avid Washington Commanders fan and died just before the team’s surprising run through the NFL playoffs.

He was asked during the 2009 interview what was the most fun he had during his career.

“Advancing the cause of workers and winning,” he said. “The only statement that Richard Nixon ever made with which I agreed with is, ‘I have tasted victory and I have tasted defeat, and victory tastes better.’” ■

PROFILES IN POWER



Profiles in Power is an occasional series of articles highlighting IBEW members who serve their communities in public office and what they do with that power.

Florida Member Holds Office So Others ‘Can Have What I Have’

Gainesville, Fla., Local 1205 President James Ingle made clear in his first speech as a member of the Gainesville City Commission where his passion for helping others came from.

Wearing his trademark fedora and long hair pulled back, Ingle told how he never pictured himself getting involved in politics as a kid. He grew up in Orange Park, Fla., near Jacksonville, in a single-parent household with a loving mother, but one that struggled financially in a “trailer at the end of a dirt road.”

“People like us just didn’t run for office,” he said.

At 19, he moved to Gainesville — not to attend the University of Florida, as many people his age did. He fondly remembered visiting other family members there during his childhood and his best friend was attending school there, so he headed to the city with no clear prospects.

“When I moved down here, just through sheer, dumb luck, I fell into an electrical apprenticeship program sponsored by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,” he said. “With the exception of marrying my beautiful and awesome wife, that probably was the most consequential decision of my life.”

With that, Ingle had his ticket to the middle class. He went on to become a journeyman wireman and worked with the tools for many years, including time as a traveler, before becoming an organizer and later the president of Local 1205.

Now, he’s intent on helping Gainesville’s struggling residents transition into a better life, just like he did.

“It got me involved in the labor movement,” Ingle said of his getting his IBEW card. “That has been my passion ever since.”

The commission is a seven-person body that includes the mayor and sets the budget and passes laws and ordinances in Gainesville, a city of 150,000 about 110 miles north of Orlando. Ingle won an at-large seat during last November’s elections.

“He’s very conscientious,” said Local 1205 Business Manager and longtime friend Lanny Mathis. “He’s what I would call tenacious. He tends to argue a lot sometimes, but he’s always fighting for the right things and to help working people.”

Florida has a long-deserved reputation as an anti-union state, but Mathis and Ingle both said Local 1205 has had a positive relationship for many years with elected officials in Gainesville, a college town with a progressive bent. They’ve been open to their concerns, along with the concerns of other unions and advocates for working families.

But Ingle, who often visits the state capital in Tallahassee to lobby for labor issues, said he noticed that not many working people hold political office at any level. For some, the time commitment is too much. Others, especially those without union representation, must work multiple jobs.

That’s why he believes his presence is so important.

“They’ve never used a porta-potty on a 100-degree day,” he said of politicians in general. “They don’t understand why prevailing wage is so important.

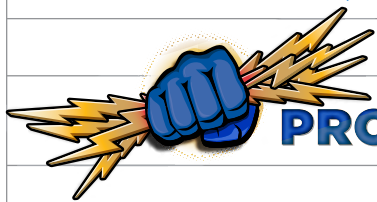
“Because of that, they too often don’t understand the consequences of their decisions. But when you do have people who understand issues like that, it makes the entire labor movement so much stronger.”

Ingle credits his mother for instilling a strong sense of helping others. He knew of some union history in his family, but not much understanding of what it meant.



Gainesville, Fla., Local 1205 President James Ingle, who was elected to the Gainesville City Commission last November.

PROFILES IN POWER *continued on page 8*



His grandfather was a union-represented bus driver for Greyhound. His grandmother was a union-represented worker for Southern Bell. They spoke positively of that experience but offered few specifics.

"I didn't know what a union was," Ingle said, "but I knew I wanted to be in one."

He briefly was a Teamsters member before being accepted into the Local 1205 apprenticeship in 1997. He immediately knew he had found a home.

"What I liked about it is that it was such a huge variety of work, both physically and mentally," he said. "One day, you're sitting down looking at prints, trying to figure out something with your brain. The next day, you're digging a ditch."

Ingle takes pride in knowing that Local 1205 has been a success even in a place like Florida, which has had a



Gainesville, Fla., Local 1205 President James Ingle being sworn in as a member of the Gainesville City Commission. Ingle won a seat on the seven-member body last November.

right-to-work law in effect since 1947 and has ramped up its attacks on working people in recent years under a far-right governor and legislature.

"Every job we get here is despite the fact we're union," he said. "We have to show customers that we can provide the manpower and technical

expertise that others don't. We have to muscle our way in."

This was Ingle's third attempt at a seat on the commission. His two previous attempts fell just short. But those campaigns still had value, he said.

"Even if you don't win, a lot of people stick a microphone in your face," he said. "We were able to bring up a lot of labor issues that had never been talked about in local politics before."

His message for any IBEW member or retiree across North America considering a run for political office is simple:

Go for it.

"I don't think there is a downside to trying," he said. "When the labor movement was the most powerful movement in the country, we were involved in politics. Not to say that politicians were beholden to us, but politicians were with us."

In that inauguration speech, Ingle noted he was wearing a pair of high quality, union-made work boots. When it is time to purchase another, he won't have to go without something else or wondering if his credit card will be declined.

He promised to be a voice for those who haven't achieved that kind of stability just yet.

"What I want is for the working-class people in Gainesville to have what I have," he said.

And he's laying the groundwork for a successful tenure. After finishing his inspiring acceptance speech, Gainesville Mayor Harvey Ward turned to Ingle before introducing other council members about to take the oath of office that day.

"That's going to be a hard act to follow," the mayor told the crowd with a smile. ■

GROUNDING IN HISTORY

The Pension Story

From its very inception, the IBEW has been bound by the principle that brotherhood and benefits are inseparably joined. The first resolution passed by delegates at the founding convention in 1891 was a \$50 death benefit for each member and \$25 for their spouse, paid in part by a per capita tax of 10¢ a month. Such a benefit was essential in those early days since electrical workers had the most fatalities of any trade.

Because of this, insurance companies refused to insure electrical workers at any premium, forcing the union founders to address it themselves. The second benefit approved was a strike benefit, with 5¢ per capita set aside every month.

At the 1892 convention, the death benefits were doubled to \$100 and \$50, respectively. Although generous, this led the IBEW to quickly approach bankruptcy, forcing the delegates at the 1893 convention to eliminate the benefit for spouses and raise per capita to 15¢. Even then, the first grand secretary-treasurer, J.T. Kelly, had to mortgage his house and stocks just to keep the Brotherhood afloat.

Slowly, the IBEW found its financial footing, allowing it to invest in an early apprenticeship system and hire full-time organizers. Increased bargaining power helped secure better wages, working hours and safety conditions for members. At the 1915 convention, the strike benefit was expanded to include members who were disabled on the job. Called the Difficulty Benefit Fund, it was approved by

referendum vote in 1916. By 1920, employers tried to combat the ever-growing advantages of unionism by offering "company unions." The IBEW's response was to usher in new insurance benefits while also addressing a long-sought dream of the founders — retirement.

At the IBEW's 16th convention in 1921, a referendum was proposed to create the Electrical Workers' Benefit Association (EWBA), a fraternal organization that would provide life insurance for all members aged 55 and under. Not only would it provide plans for members that were otherwise too expensive, it would also allow the IBEW to compete with company unions more successfully. The referendum passed in 1922. That same year, railroad strikes across the country had completely emptied the Difficulty Benefit Fund. At the 1923 convention, it was moved to suspend payments and allow the fund to recoup.

The EWBA, meanwhile, was performing better than expected and efforts were made to expand its offerings. With membership approval, the IBEW chartered the Union Cooperative Insurance Association in 1924, the first union-owned company of its kind, offering life insurance policies not only to members but to their spouses and children, as well as to outside labor groups.

With multiple insurance offerings now available, it was time to address the Difficulty Benefit Fund. At the 1925 convention, a proposal was made by several locals to use the fund for a home for old and incapacitated members. In a similar vein, another proposal sought to convert the fund into a pension plan. This proposal was approved, and a report was ordered for the next convention. In 1927, delegates convened in Detroit and overwhelmingly voted to create the IBEW's first pension plan. The balance of the Difficulty Strike Fund would serve as its foundation, coupled with a per capita tax of 37¢ a month. The plan took effect Jan. 1, 1928, and marked a major step toward achieving economic independence by offering \$40 a month to members who reached the age of 65 and had 20 years of continuous good standing, regardless of where they had worked or how often they changed employers.

The pension plan continued to evolve. At the 1946 convention, the "Employers Benefit Agreement" was signed between the IBEW and the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), which provided that both organizations would share pension costs. Members and their employers would each contribute 60¢ a month, while benefits increased to \$50 a month. The fund was renamed the Pension Benefit Trust Fund (PBTf).

Although generous, by 1950 it became clear the PBTf was on the same path as the early death benefit. International Secretary J. Scott Milne issued a warning that if nothing was done, the fund



The August 1954 Electrical Worker featured a version of International President J. Scott Milne's "Pension Story" lecture that helped win a referendum to raise the per capita tax and shore up the Pension Benefit Trust Fund.

would go bankrupt by 1961. In May 1951, a referendum was called to raise the per capita tax by \$1 a month, for a total of \$1.60, to ensure the PBTf's financial solvency. That summer, Milne traveled to locals across the United States and Canada with his "Pension Story" lecture and published several editorials in The Electrical Worker urging members to pass the referendum.

"In the beginning our members reaped few benefits for themselves for all the hard work, the blacklists, the heartaches and the tears they put into bringing this Electrical Workers' Union to life," wrote Milne in a 1951 article. "But they were not men who lived for a day, or a week, or a month — but for the years ahead — for those who would come after, their children and their children's children. And while there are those who say unionists of our generation do not have the same union zeal, there are many, many more who say they do. We must look to the future."

In the end, the referendum was passed on January 1, 1952, and the pension was saved. The dream of the IBEW's founders was to create a union that could provide for its members and their families, let them live a life of dignity, and hopefully someday retire in modest comfort. Because of that commitment, today the IBEW has the strongest pension fund in the labor movement. ■

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

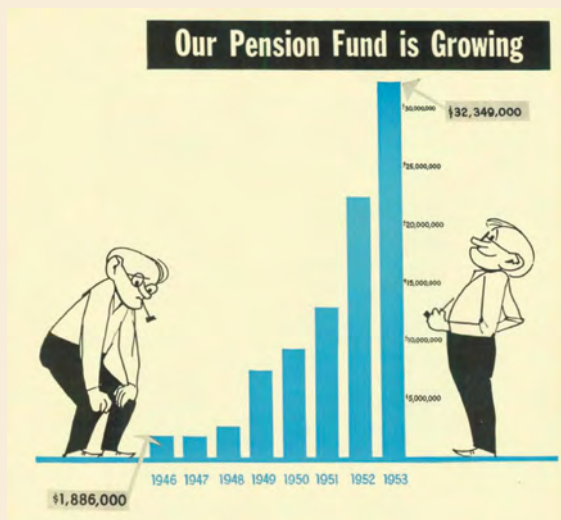


Illustration from the August 1954 edition of The Electrical Worker.

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Women's Committees More Than Double in First District

Canadian women members are finding new avenues of support as the First District's number of Women's Committees recently rocketed from six to 13.

Tradeswomen make up roughly 4% of the construction workforce, representing an upward trend. Still, it leaves a lot of opportunity to recruit new members with construction workers in high demand — it's estimated that the industry will need to fill more than 300,000 vacancies over the next decade. Women's Committees are a way to do that.

"Women's Committees offer a sense of belonging in a male-dominated industry," said Jennifer Gray, director of civic and community engagement. "From mentoring and organizing to community service and activism, these committees engage and empower women to take an active role in their union while building a bigger and stronger IBEW."

Sandra Brynjolfson, assistant business manager at Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213, was part of a small cadre of women who started organizing an ad hoc women's committee in 2013. Local 213 got its certificate of recognition for the committee last April, and Business Manager Jim Lofty is quick to point out that the efforts of Brynjolfson and others were crucial to the local's current success.

"Having a resource like a Women's Committee reassures women entering the trade that they're not alone and there's a safe space for them to address issues that are common to women," Brynjolfson said. "It's a natural way of organizing. When you feel you belong and you share that passion, others gravitate toward it."

Lofty also noted the importance of having women members in lobbying efforts, such as when they spoke to provincial representatives about the importance of proper-fitting personal protective equipment.

"For politicians to hear these stories from our women members and see how loose-fitting clothing and PPE can be a hazard, it was received in a way that a bunch of men couldn't have conveyed," he said.

First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk has called for the Canadian Women's Caucus, a one-day gathering for female delegates, to be held just before the All-Canada Progress Meeting and for business managers to send their Women's Committee members to both.

"Having the caucus the week of the ACPM provides a more significant opportunity for networking with IBEW leaders, NextGen members and other women," Shewchuk said. "Face-to-face

discussions are essential for getting their message heard."

For smaller committees, meeting more women members is a great way to cultivate a sense of solidarity that runs throughout the union.

"Our local has under 30 women, so it's great to meet others in the trade," said Hamilton, Ontario, Local 105 member Warner Kelly, who co-chairs her Women's Committee. "It definitely takes our committee to the next level."

Having women at the progress meeting also means they can participate more fully in the union, Ottawa Local 2228 Business Manager Paul Cameron said.

"It's more than just making them feel included," Cameron said. "I wanted them to take part and get the whole experience."

For Local 2228 Assistant Business

Manager Meaghan Olmstead, the conferences are a way to educate and empower women in a way that could help on a jobsite.

"A lot of times, women won't raise their hands on a jobsite. Conferences help you raise your hand because there's a whole network of sisters supporting you," said Olmstead, who co-founded Local 2228's Women's Committee.

Whether it's offering a mental health workshop, volunteering at a women's shelter or hosting a euchre tournament, successful Women's Committees are providing avenues for involvement and solidarity, which is necessary for retention — a major issue in the industry.

One thing that's universal for the success of a Women's Committee is support from the local's leadership.



Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213 members march in the Tradeswomen Build Nations banner parade in December 2023. The local received its Women's Committee certificate of recognition in April 2024.

"It's imperative to have leadership on your side. When a business manager explains something, it has more authority," Olmstead said. "Without the support of our brothers, sisters will have a hard time." ■

Share your IBEW news!

IBEW Canada is seeking impactful stories from local unions and members. Please contact Shaina Hardie at Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org.

Les comités des femmes des sections locales ont plus que doublé

Alors que le nombre des comités des femmes au Premier District a récemment passé de six à treize, les membres canadiennes ont trouvé de nouveaux moyens de soutien.

Les femmes dans les métiers représentent environ 4 % de la main-d'œuvre du secteur de la construction au Canada, une tendance à la hausse; ce qui laisse beaucoup de possibilités de recruter de nouveaux membres en forte demande dans ce secteur. L'industrie aura besoin de pourvoir à 300 000 postes dans l'industrie au Canada au cours de la prochaine décennie, selon les estimations. Les comités des femmes sont l'une de ces solutions.

« Le comité des femmes offre un sentiment d'appartenance dans une industrie à prédominance masculine », déclare Jennifer Gray, la directrice du service de l'engagement civique et communautaire. « Du mentorat à la syndicalisation, au service communautaire jusqu'au militantisme, ces comités font participer les femmes et visent à les habiliter pour jouer un rôle actif au sein de leur syndicat tout en construisant une FIOE plus grande et plus forte. »

L'assistante gérante d'affaires du local 213 en Colombie-Britannique à Vancouver, Sandra Brynjolfson, faisait partie d'un petit groupe de femmes qui ont commencé à mettre en place un comité des femmes ad hoc en 2013. Le local 213 a reçu son certificat de

reconnaissance au mois d'avril dernier et le gérant d'affaires Jim Lofty s'est empressé de souligner que les efforts de Mme Brynjolfson et ceux des autres ont été déterminants au succès actuel du local.

« L'existence d'une ressource comme le comité des femmes qui veulent faire partie des métiers est rassurante pour celles-ci, elles ne se sentent pas seules et elles se trouvent dans un lieu sûr pour discuter des enjeux communs à elles », raconte Mme Brynjolfson. « C'est une façon naturelle de syndiquer. Quand les gens ont un sentiment d'appartenance et que c'est une passion commune, les autres gravitent autour. »

M. Lofty ajoute l'importance d'avoir des femmes membres exercer des moyens de pression, comme la fois où elles ont parlé avec des représentants provinciaux à propos de l'importance d'avoir des équipements de protection individuelle ajustés adéquatement.

« Quand les politiciens entendent ces histoires sur les vêtements et sur les ÉPI amples de nos femmes membres et de constater qu'elles peuvent être un danger, ont été reçu de manière que des hommes n'auront pas pu formuler », dit-il.

Le vice-président international du Premier District, Russ Shewchuk, a demandé que le caucus canadien des femmes soit tenu avant la Conférence

canadienne annuelle, un rassemblement d'une journée, et les gérants d'affaires d'envoyer les femmes des comités aux deux. « La tenue du caucus la semaine de la Conférence canadienne annuelle offre une occasion plus importante à faire du réseautage avec les leaders de la FIOE, avec les membres NextGen et avec les autres femmes », mentionne M. Shewchuk. « Les discussions en personne sont essentielles pour faire entendre leur voix. »

Pour les petites communautés, rencontrer plus de femmes est une excellente façon de cultiver un sentiment de solidarité à la grandeur du syndicat.

« Notre local compte moins de 30 femmes, c'est donc merveilleux d'en rencontrer d'autres dans le domaine », exprime Warner Kelly du local 105 à Hamilton en Ontario qui copréside son comité des femmes. « Ça permet certainement à notre comité de passer à une autre étape. »

La présence des femmes à la conférence annuelle veut aussi dire qu'elles peuvent activement participer dans le syndicat, mentionne Paul Cameron, le gérant d'affaires du 2228 à Ottawa en Ontario.

« C'est plus que de les faire sentir incluses », formule M. Cameron. « Je

voulais qu'elles vivent l'expérience dans son ensemble. »

Pour l'assistante gérante d'affaires Meaghan Olmstead du local 2228, les conférences sont des moyens pour les instruire et pour les valoriser afin de les aider sur les chantiers.

« Bien souvent, les femmes ne lèvent pas la main sur un chantier. Les conférences t'aident à lever la main parce qu'il y a un réseau de femmes qui t'appuie », déclare Mme Olmstead, cofondatrice du comité des femmes du local 2228.

Qu'il s'agit d'offrir des ateliers sur la santé mentale, faire du bénévolat dans un refuge pour femmes ou d'organiser un tournoi de Euchre, les comités des femmes qui ont fait leurs preuves offrent des pistes pour la participation et pour la solidarité qui sont nécessaire à la rétention, ce qui est un gros problème dans notre industrie.

L'appui inconditionnel du leadership du local est déterminant dans la réussite des comités des femmes.

« D'avoir le leadership de notre côté est impératif. Un gérant d'affaires qui explique les choses à plus d'autorité », prononce Mme Olmstead. « Sans le soutien de nos confrères, ce sera plus difficile pour nos consœurs. » ■

Racontez-nous vos nouvelles FIOE!

La FIOE cherche des histoires marquantes des sections locales et des membres. Veuillez communiquer avec Shaina Hardie à Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org.

CIRCUITS

Chicago Local Expands Opportunities for Apprentice Applicants

What does a local do when it has more apprentice applications than available spots and a need for workers in its manufacturing arm? If it's Chicago Local 134, it brings them together for a job fair.

"It couldn't have worked out better," said Local 134 Business Manager Don Finn, who also represents the Fifth District on the IBEW International Executive Council. "It did exactly what we wanted it to do."

Local 134 has the admirable problem of getting, on average, more than 1,000 applicants to its electrical construction and communications apprenticeship while only having about 200 spots available. And recently it got more than 4,000. It's signatory manufacturing companies, however, have been having a hard time filling positions, particularly in the switchgear and lighting divisions. Ryan Madiar, a business agent who handles the majority of Local 134's manufacturing signatories, saw an opportunity to solve both issues at once. They would host a job fair for their manufacturing companies and invite the applicants who didn't get into the construction and communications apprenticeships to attend.



Chicago Local 134 held its first-ever manufacturing job fair for job seekers who applied to its electrical construction and communications apprenticeship but didn't get in, creating a way for them to still become members.

"When there is a need and the IBEW has the means, the IBEW has an obligation to help," Madiar said. "These applicants are motivated and want to be in the electrical industry, and a lot of good candidates are turned away every year. I recognized that this is an untapped labor pool that could be made available to the signatory manufacturers."

The first-of-its-kind event was held in October at the IBEW-NECA Technical Institute with about 20 signatories and close to 300 job seekers attending. About 25 have already been hired, Madiar said.

"We never dreamed what would come through that door," Finn said. "It was a really positive event all around."

Unlike the construction side, manufacturing doesn't have a referral hall for when employers need candidates. That's usually handled by the employers themselves and not all of them have a human resources department to do it. Madiar, who's currently pursuing a master's degree in Professional Studies in Human Resources and Employment Relations, started thinking about how Local 134 could

bridge the gap between job seekers who want to work in the electrical industry and employers who need strong candidates.

"I learned about the recruiting process for employers, how expensive and time consuming it can be, and how high employee turnover can negatively impact profitability," Madiar said. "In recognizing the need, I thought about some different options and landed on a job fair. Each of the signatory manufacturers I reached out to immediately said they would participate."

Madiar pitched the idea to Finn and others, including Gene Kent, the director of apprenticeship programs. They were all on board. With very little advertising outside of a flyer that was sent to all the applicants and utilization of long-established networks, they ended up with a turnout that exceeded their expectations.

"It was successful because it was Local 134 reaching out to the applicants with an opportunity to become a member and prospective jobs ready to go," Finn said.

The employers who attended covered a wide range of the industry, including switchgear, lighting, passenger train car, communications systems, appliance repair and generator maintenance. They even had the Museum of Science and Industry participate.

They also collected resumes from each job seeker who attended the fair and created a database that Madiar can now draw from in the event a signatory contacts the hall looking to fill a vacancy. It's a way to keep interested applicants in the Local 134 family, Finn and Madiar said.

"If I could take 4,000 apprenticeship applicants I would, but it's just not possible," Finn said. "We don't want to lose them though. This gets everyone under our roof. At the end of the day, they're all IBEW."

The database is also a way to strengthen ties with signatories.

"A lot of employers said that they didn't have to do recruitment for a year based on the number of resumes they received at the fair," Madiar said. "This saves them time, money and gives our signatory employers a competitive advantage over nonunion rivals."

Madiar also pointed out that someone who doesn't get into the construction apprenticeship but does get hired by a manufacturing company could very well be building the components that inside electricians are installing on jobsites, which gives them an advantage should they decide to apply for the apprenticeship again.

"It provides an alternative career path for apprenticeship applicants that has never been offered before," he said. "And by Local 134 providing more employment opportunities to job

seekers in the community, it enhances our already great reputation."

Madiar also sees a potential benefit with future contract negotiations.

"This could strengthen our position at the bargaining table since we're providing a solution to help signatory employers thrive."

The success of the job fair, which Local 134 plans to do again this year, could be another tool for organizing, Madiar said.

"If you think about it, the manufacturing and construction sectors, though treated as separate entities, are intricately connected. One branch feeds the other," he said. "That concept can be applied to organizing."

Madiar noted how in manufacturing organizing, they are competing with other unions, but having the construction and communications apprenticeships as something to offer as a future career option puts the IBEW at an advantage. Someone could start out on the factory floor in a switchgear shop and by the end of their career they could be a foreman, superintendent, or even a business manager.

"Other unions do not have the boundless opportunity in the electrical industry that IBEW apprenticeship programs offer," Madiar said. "The message to workers is that if you join the IBEW, you have more prospects for career growth than any other union or employer out there." ■

VEEP Outside Program's Banner Year Capped With Lazy Q Graduation

Frank McIntosh wasn't familiar with VEEP. He had not given much thought to being a lineman, either.

But in 2021, his best friend from his early days in the U.S. Army took part in the program at the Lazy Q Ranch in La Grange, Texas, one of the top lineman training programs in the country. McIntosh was stationed at Fort Cavazos near Killeen, Texas, about a two-hour drive away, and his friend stayed with him during breaks in the intensive curriculum.

McIntosh enjoyed his time in the Army, but he and his wife were looking to settle in a community after all the moves brought on by military life. He attended his friend's graduation ceremony from VEEP, which allows active-duty personnel to take part in pre-apprenticeship training while still on active duty.

"I thought, 'Man, I can do this,'" said McIntosh, a native of southern New Jersey who was deployed to Eastern Europe, Saudi Arabia and Korea during his nine-year military career. "You make enough money to support a family and work outside. It's all the things I enjoyed about the Army, except I get to sleep in America at night."

McIntosh was part of his VEEP graduation class at Lazy Q last December. He's now an apprentice lineman and a member of Kansas City, Mo., Local 53. He found himself working on a project in Minnesota in mid-January.

"Anyone who does well in the military can do well in the line trade," he said.



Servicemembers taking part in VEEP receive instructions on pole climbing at the Lazy Q Ranch in La Grange, Texas.

"Everything you work with is heavy. Everything can crush you. You have to keep your head on a swivel and be situationally aware. You have to trust the guys around you that they're not going to put you in a bad spot."

The year 2024 was a groundbreaking one for the outside curriculum portion of VEEP. The Veterans Electrical Entry Program was founded in 2019 by the IBEW in conjunction with the National Electrical Contractors Association and Electrical Training Alliance to ease veterans' transition from active duty to civilian life.

Veterans have attributes that make them ideal for an electrical career, such as working with advanced technology and a deeply ingrained sense of teamwork, so VEEP allows them to complete a pre-apprenticeship program.

It helps them better adapt to real-life stresses and provides the IBEW a group of new members who previously might have been harder to reach. There are pre-apprenticeship programs in VEEP for both inside and outside construction.

Lazy Q partners with VEEP for a 16-week pre-apprenticeship program. Tuition and fees were waived for all participants, who received health insurance while taking part in the program.

Participants received 800 contact hours in the field during the 16 weeks at Lazy Q. That gives them a big step up in their careers. Labor Department guidelines require an apprentice to have a minimum of 144 contact hours per year for three years.

VEEP graduates are slotted into apprenticeships at one of nine AJATCs across the country. McIntosh is one of 365 graduates to date.

"It's very competitive to get in and graduate," said Jason Iannelli, the Electrical Training Alliance's Director of VEEP. "There's no guarantee. Our students earn their seat every single day."

"Wherever they go for that first job, they will be very well prepared for it," he added. "It's very important we give the industry a candidate that is ready on Day 1. If we send them one who is not, the next time I call a training coordinator and ask them to take [a VEEP graduate], they'll say, 'We're good, the last one didn't work out too good.'"

Utility Director Donnie Colston, who worked for many years as a utility lineman, said the job is a 24-hour, seven-day assignment. Companies and utilities must respond quickly in emergencies, and it's a point of emphasis made during

the interview process.

Many potential apprentices have a hard time understanding that they must be ready whenever called upon, he said. Those with a military background generally do not.

"These workers understand the responsibility to report when you are needed most," Colston said. "Military applicants are dedicated and committed to reporting for work and emergency response. I have been very impressed with their desire to learn all aspects of the training to be a successful lineworker."

Lazy Q gets its name from Quanta Services, a Fortune 500 company that provides infrastructure for electrical, industrial and communications projects.

Another benefit of the program: VEEP participants learn about the importance of solidarity and union membership.

McIntosh, who was a staff sergeant when he left the Army, said he wasn't exposed to unions while growing up and knew little about them until being accepted into VEEP.

He appreciated being taught the importance of taking calls and how Local 53 will help him find a job even when work cools off. McIntosh, 29, and his wife plan to settle in eastern Kansas not far from Kansas City.

"There's no other school that pays and houses and feeds you to learn how to build power lines," he said of his time at Lazy Q. "As far as line schools go, you can't beat it. There's no other program like that." ■

Ohio Training Guidance Counselors to Promote Building Trades

Thanks to the IBEW and other members of the Affiliated Construction Trades Ohio Foundation, guidance counselors in the Buckeye State will now have the information they need to present trades apprenticeships as a viable career option on par with four-year colleges and the military.

"We need to educate the educators on the benefits of a construction career path," Fourth District International Representative Ed Moore said. "Counselors are on the frontlines in the schools, helping students make determinations on their future. By exposing them to our exceptional apprenticeship training centers and providing critical information about our programs, we can create thousands of advocates across Ohio that will point

young people our way.”

The training program, developed by ACT Ohio with early help from Trades-Futures, part of North America’s Building Trades Unions, is the product of a law passed last year with bipartisan support and signed by Republican Gov. Mike DeWine.

“This wasn’t aligned with a D or R political ideology,” said Kitty McConnell, ACT Ohio’s director of marketing, communications and outreach. “It’s just good policy for hardworking tradespeople.”

McConnell said the initiative focuses strictly on workforce development in one of Ohio’s most in-demand occupational segments: construction. In fact, building trades apprenticeship enrollment comprises half of all such enrollments across all industries.

Counselor training is required at a joint labor-management registered training center, and about half have been

scheduled at IBEW JATCs, including the first one, hosted by Newark Local 1105 in October. More than 1,500 counselors have registered so far, with about 2,000 expected every year, Moore said.

The training, which applies to counselors who work with students in grades 7-12, consists of four hours of multi-trades curriculum based on TradesFutures’ educational material. Each session begins with an overview of Ohio’s building trades, the current employment market for skilled tradespeople and a mapping of the registered apprenticeship system in the state. The final hour of the session consists of a tour of the training center and a question-and-answer period with instructors and apprentices.

The training at Toledo Local 8 went longer than expected because the counselors had so many good questions, Training Director Glenn Rettig said.

“The counselors liked the Q and A,”

Rettig said. “They seemed very interested in the opportunities that our apprentices have. Exposing them to the cost of the training along with the pay and benefits a unionized worker can make was a real eye-opener for them.”

McConnell said Ohio policymakers have long been concerned with providing graduating students with relevant skills and information needed to find careers in the state’s in-demand sectors. They’ve made it a priority to advance apprenticeships, and the counselor training requirement is part of that.

“Union apprenticeships are the best kept secret in the United States,” Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper said. “They provide all the training, job placement, good wages and benefits at no cost to the student, allowing them to graduate debt-free with a career in the electrical trades.”

Ohio’s elected leaders also



Ohio guidance counselors take part in a training on building trades apprenticeships, now a requirement for all middle and high school counselors.

recognize the economic advantage that a skilled construction workforce provides, McConnell said.

“The quality-of-life outcomes that families and communities experience as a result of these middle-class careers and tuition-free apprenticeships are something every elected official can see in their home districts,” she said.

Rettig noted that by educating counselors throughout the state, the pool of potential apprentices will grow.

“Typically, better students are pushed toward four-year degrees, and only vocational students are told about the trades,” Rettig said. “The hope is that all students will get information on what these apprenticeships offer. But counselors can’t give advice on something they’re not exposed to.” ■

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 Aubuchon, D. G.	11/1/24	26 McDonough, J. M.	10/3/24	113 Kohler, M. L.	8/29/23	258 Wesner, J. R.	10/29/24	479 Sheffield, J. W.	11/29/24	725 Good, R. D.	9/4/24
1 Bevirt, J. P.	11/14/24	26 Pensmith, W. E.	6/12/24	113 Murray, D. J.	6/13/23	269 Hullfish, G. R.	11/22/24	480 Young, G. B.	10/15/24	728 Cords, A. L.	10/15/24
1 Goodhart, D. M.	11/26/24	26 Weddle, K. E.	1/13/25	113 Turner, T. S.	11/7/24	271 Brewer, Z. T.	12/10/24	481 Cornelius, L. E.	12/29/24	728 Jindracek, R. H.	12/10/24
1 Mock, M. G.	9/20/24	34 King, J. R.	11/18/23	115 Sanchez, R.	10/23/24	271 Cashion, J. D.	12/1/24	481 Duff, J. W.	12/3/24	728 Mayotte, E. T.	6/18/24
1 Niemeyer, D. R.	12/4/24	34 Norton, C. T.	12/11/24	117 Zdroik, J. J.	10/20/24	280 Fisher, R. D.	11/12/24	481 Fields, S.	11/11/24	743 Gusick, E. A.	11/27/24
1 Slover, R. E.	6/10/23	35 Silva, A. M.	9/23/24	120 Pol, W. F.	1/25/23	280 Wolf, L. C.	9/7/24	494 Lemke, D. E.	12/10/24	743 Howresko, G. N.	12/3/24
1 Unnerstall, P. J.	11/18/24	35 Smith, W. R.	10/30/24	124 Harrison, J. M.	1/4/25	291 Reichert, D. W.	11/17/24	508 Spell, R. L.	12/27/24	760 Owens, J. C.	12/2/24
2 Chamberlain, J. C.	11/27/24	38 Williams, R. H.	8/25/24	124 Inzerillo, P. V.	4/29/24	292 Diemert, B. M.	10/9/23	518 Baird, M. L.	10/30/24	768 Jackson, S. M.	9/16/24
2 Weatherspoon, J. E.	4/12/24	40 Newlander, D. R.	11/1/24	124 Moreno, J. B.	11/21/24	301 Wheat, F.	9/28/24	518 Rodriguez, J. A.	12/5/24	769 Jones, H. R.	12/2/24
3 Abbruzzi, S. M.	11/13/22	41 Callahan, J. P.	11/19/24	125 Babka, B. F.	12/26/24	302 Lowe, W. S.	12/19/24	527 Cates, J. L.	12/11/24	812 Engel, J. R.	9/29/24
3 Allende, J.	11/2/24	41 Willems, K.	11/28/24	126 Wess, L. D.	10/31/24	305 Oberley, M. A.	11/29/24	529 Folden, L. E.	9/15/24	873 Talbert, T. R.	11/4/23
3 Altomare, J.	6/13/23	43 Landers, N. E.	12/3/24	126 Woodley, E. P.	11/8/24	306 Carpenter, G. H.	12/18/24	531 Roberts, B. R.	9/5/24	876 Hull, G. R.	10/18/22
3 Baram, R. H.	12/2/24	46 Turbin, K.	10/14/24	130 Bourgeois, L. P.	10/17/24	306 German, T. A.	12/26/24	557 Dryer, G.	12/11/24	876 Jeluso, J. C.	9/26/24
3 Brennan, M. P.	11/26/24	47 Cotta, B. C.	8/29/24	130 LeBlanc, R. M.	11/19/24	307 Mick, C. L.	11/18/24	558 Jones, E. C.	11/25/24	876 Moore, B. F.	12/15/24
3 Chromy, R. E.	12/3/24	47 Ebersole, R. W.	11/20/24	130 Ortolano, K. J.	1/6/24	312 File, F. L.	7/20/24	558 Peden, B. L.	12/3/24	903 Sentell, L. E.	11/4/24
3 Dejesus, E.	10/8/22	48 Hill, M. L.	12/19/24	134 Czachor, L. L.	12/24/24	313 Olszewski, W. E.	12/17/24	567 Foster, G. A.	10/18/24	910 Robare, J. J.	11/14/24
3 Ferraro, C. P.	6/20/24	48 Maciejczyk, J.	4/6/24	134 Gibson, W. L.	11/12/24	316 Thurman, R. R.	10/17/24	569 Smolk, W. B.	6/9/22	910 Wood, S. R.	7/16/24
3 Giammarino, D.	12/2/24	48 Neely, R. G.	11/8/24	134 Kassel, R. L.	10/26/24	332 Jennings, J. J.	11/13/24	569 Wilkins, R. D.	12/12/24	915 Dobbins, D. G.	2/14/24
3 Hanrahan, E. J.	9/11/24	48 Wright, M. A.	10/21/22	134 Kolpak, L. T.	12/13/24	347 Olson, J. H.	11/22/24	595 Andresen, M. C.	4/4/24	917 Carter, J. E.	11/17/24
3 Kuris, G.	10/29/24	51 Eller, R. L.	12/8/24	134 Krol, S. J.	12/1/22	349 Snelgrove, J. E.	3/27/23	595 Briant, R.	5/23/24	948 Bellinger, B. L.	4/13/24
3 Lane, G. T.	12/2/24	51 Green, R. B.	9/11/24	134 Laff, R. R.	12/13/24	350 Howerton, S. E.	6/28/24	595 Faure, P. E.	10/27/24	952 Anderson, R. D.	11/8/24
3 McGuire, J. P.	11/26/24	57 Wallwork, S. A.	12/6/24	134 Lobjoko, R. M.	11/29/24	351 Anderson, W. S.	10/14/24	595 Key, T. R.	8/29/24	953 Strigun, M. A.	12/21/24
3 Peltz, P. E.	2/26/23	58 Bolchi, C. R.	12/8/24	134 Scropo, P.	2/13/21	351 Read, G. J.	11/17/23	602 Gomez Torres, J. C.	10/28/24	993 Strocker, E.	10/4/24
3 Silverman, J. L.	11/12/24	58 Casad, J. F.	12/6/24	134 Spike, R. M.	4/18/24	353 Fashion, J. M.	11/24/24	606 King, M. K.	9/11/24	1141 Valentini, A. A.	8/21/23
3 Sirignano, S.	3/29/23	58 Johnson, W. G.	12/17/24	134 Stromquist, W.	12/7/24	353 Lamb, R. M.	12/4/24	606 Rector, E. R.	11/21/24	1245 Brown, B. W.	9/21/24
3 Southerton, E. C.	11/26/24	58 Koch, K. C.	5/30/24	134 Vaughan, K. D.	12/14/24	353 McNeil, F.	11/2/24	611 Romero, F. A.	9/22/24	1245 Russell, E. P.	11/13/24
3 Stancil, W.	11/22/24	58 Kot, J. F.	8/7/22	136 McGee, J. E.	11/12/24	353 Sterling, M. D.	11/14/24	611 Sanchez, B.	11/9/24	1249 Vanderbunt, R.	10/30/24
3 Witkowski, A. C.	9/8/22	58 Kraehling, J. T.	12/28/24	146 Miller, J. W.	12/12/24	353 Strmaitis, A. A.	12/12/24	611 Skelton, A. D.	11/27/24	1319 Kuharchik, W.	11/12/24
3 Yackavage, J.	11/19/24	58 Ross, J. L.	9/10/24	150 Crede, K. L.	11/22/24	354 Butters, A. F.	2/27/24	611 White, D. J.	11/26/24	1319 Scassa, O.	11/19/24
3 Zebrowski, R. M.	12/9/24	58 Skowronski, M. J.	7/5/23	150 Meyer, J.	11/19/24	354 Dunfield, M. H.	7/4/24	613 Cantrell, W. L.	11/29/24	1340 Saunders, J. C.	11/10/24
6 Esposto, A. L.	7/11/21	64 Adams, W. M.	10/20/24	150 Pakulski, R. K.	5/28/24	357 Hartwig, G. E.	11/9/24	613 Satterfield, K. T.	10/1/24	1393 Timberman, G. L.	8/27/23
6 Wenquist, K. W.	12/11/24	66 Little, D. R.	6/1/24	153 Arnt, J. C.	11/28/24	357 Robinson, M. D.	10/6/24	613 Smith, W. H.	11/15/24	1701 Burch, C. L.	11/27/24
8 Barber, P. M.	1/6/25	70 Pippin, G. N.	11/9/24	160 Baker, R. L.	12/26/24	363 Cerrone, B. P.	12/5/24	639 Lockhart, E. D.	7/25/24	1701 Hancock, H. E.	11/8/24
8 Wallace, D. J.	10/22/24	76 Fanning, H. D.	1/23/21	160 Kline, D. A.	12/7/24	363 Gerace, T. S.	10/6/24	640 Collins, B. E.	7/23/24	1928 Kelly, K. B.	2/15/23
8 Wheeler, J. W.	12/11/24	77 Darling, P. J.	11/17/24	160 Nicholson, D. K.	10/12/24	364 Bennett, J. A.	10/26/24	649 Parker, J. R.	11/8/24	2150 Ostrom, J. D.	12/15/24
9 Cundiff, W.	12/15/24	77 Noyes, L. C.	9/5/23	164 Campellone, J. A.	12/23/24	364 Miller, R. H.	11/15/24	654 Hashinger, R. H.	11/8/24	I.O. (3) Schweizer, W. E.	11/11/24
9 Gardner, C. J.	10/29/24	82 Lillicrap, J. R.	1/5/24	175 Storie, G. A.	12/23/24	369 Elliott, A. M.	11/8/24	659 Brock, C. L.	12/2/24	I.O. (106) Ross, D. L.	12/13/24
9 Kane, J. W.	11/18/24	86 Attridge, P. C.	12/6/24	191 Pilkey, C.	1/29/24	375 Corby, R. T.	8/16/24	659 Georgianna, B. L.	11/13/24	I.O. (111) Weaver, R. J.	5/28/22
9 Martin, C. J.	12/3/24	86 Krause, T. J.	5/5/24	193 Baskett, L. D.	11/21/24	387 Smith, M. L.	3/19/20	659 Hawtin, B. E.	12/18/24	I.O. (134) Bliznik, L. J.	12/8/24
11 Balderrama, T.	11/23/24	90 Smith, K. W.	11/23/24	193 Fitzpatrick, T. L.	11/7/24	400 Flanagan, B.	10/20/24	659 Props, K. L.	10/31/24	I.O. (134) Schneider, H. J.	11/27/24
11 Oeffling, D. E.	12/10/24	98 Smythe, C. T.	5/20/24	197 Hendricks, S. W.	1/5/25	401 Goodher, E. K.	3/5/23	661 Spiller, T. G.	5/12/24	I.O. (424) Lynn, R. C.	12/13/24
11 Pine, J. M.	12/8/24	98 Weiss, D.	6/12/21	197 Meyers, B. L.	3/17/22	405 Jones, R. M.	10/8/24	665 Oberlin, R. E.	12/16/24	I.O. (716) Edwards, L. K.	10/17/24
11 Vezich, R.	10/24/24	100 Burton, R. A.	12/11/24	212 Baker, J. D.	12/7/24	413 Septer, T. J.	11/11/24	683 Baughman, J. R.	6/21/24	Pens. (I.O) Benway, L. W.	12/2/24
12 Fischer, C.	9/24/24	100 Evans, M. D.	9/13/24	212 Kathman, R. E.	8/31/24	424 Lapointe, N.	12/16/24	683 Obert, H. J.	11/20/24	Pens. (I.O) Craig, W. L.	2/20/22
15 Castellari, S. P.	8/23/24	103 Bromberg, F. M.	8/4/24	212 Morgan, P. B.	7/19/24	424 Maclean, A. D.	12/23/24	683 Simpson, R. R.	12/18/24	Pens. (I.O) Dorans, W. J.	11/18/24
16 Grounds, J. D.	12/17/24	103 Bryan, R. E.	12/2/24	212 Murphy, B. S.	11/23/24	424 Monaghan, J. P.	10/2/24	684 Mize, D. A.	5/29/23	Pens. (I.O) Hagan, B. F.	10/8/21
17 Jackson, P. J.	9/12/24	103 Mulligan, M. J.	12/5/24	222 Gillis, R. W.	11/25/23	424 Smith, D. G.	9/25/24	697 Lorden, T. F.	12/2/24	Pens. (I.O) Johnson, R. L.	3/24/23
18 Carl, W. A.	12/7/24	103 Schiavone, A.	12/10/24	223 Moniz, E.	12/8/24	426 Ellsworth, A. L.	9/14/23	701 Creed, M. J.	12/1/24	Pens. (I.O) Robertson, E. A.	12/1/24
20 Horton, E. E.	5/10/24	104 O'Hara, T. F.	9/4/24	226 Timmerman, J. L.	10/21/24	429 Allison, J. C.	11/20/24	701 Koehler, J. H.	12/8/24		
20 Partridge, M. V.	9/29/24	105 Gilarowski, R. E.	11/19/24	229 Zumbrum, W. E.	11/18/24	441 Difilippo, A. A.	11/10/24	701 Rivers, T. P.	12/11/24		
20 Seward, B. E.	10/10/24	105 White, B. J.	11/11/24	230 Hastings, D. A.	7/10/24	441 Grindley, S. C.	11/11/24	702 Brown, S. F.	12/4/24		
24 Adams, J. J.	10/22/24	106 Tunney, G. J.	6/9/24	233 Maffit, J. R.	1/30/24	441 Lund, H. B.	1/14/24	702 Ference, E.	12/9/24		
24 Reed, R. A.	11/22/24	110 Spadino, R. T.	12/22/24	234 Beck, V. R.	1/22/24	443 Gougler, G. L.	9/8/24	702 Swayze, C. J.	11/9/24		
25 McKenna, R. H.	7/1/23	112 Jarmer, P. V.	6/25/23	252 Goss, B. W.	12/8/24	456 Cavanaugh, S.	10/6/21	716 McKnight, J. E.	11/27/24		
25 Mulligan, B. G.	11/14/24	113 Garcia, A. H.	8/24/24	258 Jorgensen, D. W.	8/27/23	477 Akin, M. A.	11/16/24	725 Brooks, W. J.	2/18/23		

This list shows members for whom PBF death claims were approved in January 2025. ■

ORGANIZING WIRE

Ky. Co-Op Workers Persevere to Win First Union Contract

Nearly a year and a half after they eagerly voted to join the IBEW, workers at South Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative Corp. in December overwhelmingly approved their first contract with Louisville, Ky., Local 2100.

"This unit is just special," said Alex Vibbert, Local 2100's business manager. "They held on for the contract negotiations and showed up in droves to ratify their agreement."

Vibbert said workers at the co-op, known commonly as SKRECC, voted to join the IBEW in July 2023. "But the company did not even come to the table for the first time until [that] December," she said. "That was a very long year, but [the workers] held together and held steady."

The co-op services 12 southern Kentucky counties along with two more in Tennessee. The workers' multifaceted campaign to make a host of positive changes dates to 2016, Vibbert said.

"They were losing benefits, and they were seeing very negative changes in their leadership," she said.

Fortunately, "linemen talk to linemen," Vibbert said, and SKRECC's workers began to realize how their benefits compared — and often differed — with those at other Kentucky co-ops, which are usually led by boards of trustees elected by their member-customers.

For SKRECC's workers, theirs "wasn't a co-op community anymore," Vibbert said. "They'd become numbers" instead of people.

In traditional co-ops, "you would see somebody work their way up from being an apprentice to lineman to maybe a director of operations, then make their way up to a CEO," said Fourth District Lead Organizer Andy Chapman. "They have a sense of pride because they work with a co-op owned by the members."



South Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative workers routinely packed their organizing meetings with representatives from Louisville Local 2100 and the IBEW's Fourth District.

But in recent years, Chapman said, many co-ops have been hiring CEOs from outside their organizations. "They don't have that sense of pride because they've been hired from some other place," he said.

This was the situation at SKRECC, and it motivated its workers, led by veteran linemen Jon Slavey and Derek Maurath, to band together and press for changes in the way things are run at the co-op.

"They were working as a union before they even formed their union," Chapman said.

The SKRECC workers also contacted Local 2100 executive board member Benji Bohannon, who connected them with Chapman.



Workers at SKRECC recently won a fight to display the IBEW logo on their work clothes and vehicles.

"Andy was honest with us and told us about the kind of stuff that the co-op would pull," said Slavey, who's been a lineman for nearly 28 years. "They've all got the same playbook."

The workers persevered, and they were raring to organize with the IBEW when the vote was held in July 2023. "They marched in, one right after another" to cast their votes, Vibbert said. "It's a moment I will never forget."

It took another five months to convince SKRECC's board to come to the bargaining table.

"They did not want the union in there," said

Fourth District International Representative Chad Douthat, who services Local 2100. The IBEW filed at least 30 unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board, he said. "They refused to meet with us. They had intentions of fighting this tooth and nail."

"We kept it as friendly as we could," he said, noting that the management side seemed unprepared for the negotiations, going so far as to replace their attorney at one point.

Despite the yearlong contract-talk slog, "it ended up working out pretty good," Douthat said. "The workers were a pivotal point in the

negotiations, too. This is an extremely strong unit, and they were very easy to work with."

Maurath, who has been a lineman for more than 12 years, said, "We were just asking for industry-standard stuff."

For Slavey, pensions were another big deal. "Some of us older ones were worried about the younger ones having the quality of life that we've had and the benefits we've had," he said.

The contract was at last ratified in December by a 50-1 vote, and since then, applications for IBEW membership have continued to stream in. "That is amazing to me," Vibbert said, considering that Kentucky is a so-called right-to-work state, where workers are legally allowed to opt out of

paying union dues while still benefiting from collective bargaining agreements.

Vibbert and the others also credited this win to "Talk to Two," Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper's initiative that encourages IBEW members to speak about the union, every day, with at least two bargaining unit co-workers who haven't joined or with workers in other, not-yet-represented departments.

"I'm bought in, 100%," Slavey said of IBEW membership. "I've not seen any downside to it."

Vibbert said her nearly 800-member local is showing even more signs of growth, thanks in part to workers at other Kentucky co-ops who have been watching the successful SKRECC campaign. The local also represents workers at utilities such as Shelby Energy Cooperative, Owen County Rural Electric Cooperative and Kentucky Utilities.

The business manager thanked the campaign's organizing and negotiating teams for their "big family of support" in holding the new unit together.

"I am less than three years in as a business manager," said Vibbert, a Local 2100 member since 2015. "I've never been through a campaign before, and this was the first time our local organized a new group since, I believe, the early 2000s." ■

Illinois Local Hopes Peaker Plant Organizing Success Starts a Trend

Union-enthused workers at a northern Illinois power plant overwhelmingly voted to join Downers Grove Local 15, and leaders of this 5,200-member utility local hope that the campaign will help fuel future drives to bring more workers at similar facilities into the IBEW.

"Local 15 is always looking for ways to increase our membership and help more middle-class working families," Business Manager Chris Riser said. "We're excited for this opportunity and honored to be part of this adventure."

About 20 people work at Invenergy's Nelson Energy Center, a gas-fired plant that began operating in Rock Falls in 2015. Soon after the facility's launch, the company added a couple of peaking generators to help the center handle occasions when customer demand for electricity threatens to exceed the plant's maximum baseload genera-

tion capacity.

Workers at so-called peaker plants are not traditionally unionized, said Regional Organizing Coordinator Lynn Arwood. "We have work to do to pick up these plants," she said.

A worker at Nelson and an IBEW member at one of the nuclear power plants represented by Local 15 happen to be brothers, Riser said, which helped facilitate organizing conversations. "There were a couple issues that they wanted to talk to somebody from Local 15 about," he said.

After the Nelson workers had exhausted nearly every avenue of communication with Invenergy to address their concerns, Arwood said, they opened a formal dialog with the IBEW. "They made a pact with each other and decided that this is what they needed to do," she said. "This group is more bonded than anybody can imagine."

It was an eager group, too, Arwood said. During their first official organizing meeting with Local 15, for example, the workers wanted to sign union authorization cards right away, something that doesn't usually happen so early in the process.

"They were begging for cards, so we gave them the cards," Arwood said.

Local 15 received a healthy 70% majority of cards authorizing a unionizing vote, Riser noted. "We talked to these guys about what their issues were and then took it to the company," he said. "We went out and just kind of 'grassrootsed' it."

Within weeks, Riser said, "we had filed a petition for an election with the [National Labor Relations Board] and then represented the employees at the election Sept. 4."

Seventeen of the 20 workers voted in favor of becoming Local 15 members, the business manager said, noting that Invenergy did not challenge the result and that the local has received no real push-back from the company throughout the process.

"There were a lot of questions asked, a lot of 'We'll get back to you' on things," Riser said. "But there hasn't been a lot of anti-union stuff at the plants that we've heard of."

A negotiating committee was assembled soon after, with discussions toward a first contract between Local 15 and Invenergy remaining underway as this article was prepared.

Meanwhile, there are more than 50 other peaker plants in Illinois, and Riser said he wants his local to be at the forefront organizing them. "Once we get Nelson done, we'll have a track record on what it takes to go forward," he said. "We'll have a record to build on." ■



Workers at Invenergy's Nelson Energy Center plant in Rock Falls, Ill., pictured here, recently — and eagerly — voted to organize with Downers Grove Local 15.

TRANSITIONS

APPOINTED

Dean Warsh



Sixth District International Representative and former Milwaukee Local 494 Business Manager Dean Warsh has been

appointed Government Affairs Director, effective Feb. 1.

The move continues a career in which Warsh is credited with turning Local 494 into a force in Wisconsin politics during his eight-year tenure as business manager.

As an international representative, he assisted local unions throughout the Sixth District — which includes Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin — in finding ways to best take advantage of union-friendly legislation that aided domestic manufacturing and supported the American worker.

"I couldn't be happier for him," said Business Development International Representative John Bzdawka, who preceded Warsh as business manager and brought him onto the Local 494 staff. "He's worked hard his entire career and politics was always kind of his thing."

"He's ended up where he needs to be. I think he's going to do a great job for the IBEW," Bzdawka added.

It's a career path that Brother Warsh didn't expect when he began his apprenticeship and joined Local 494 in 1992.

Don Warsh, his father and a Korea War veteran, spent 40 years working with the tools as a Local 494 member. The elder Warsh never traveled more than 30 miles from home for work and comfortably provided for his wife and the couple's six children, his son said. He was active and attended union meetings but never held a position with the local.

"I thought I would just follow in his footsteps, working for 40 years and helping the local wherever I could," said Warsh, who later awarded his father a 55-year service pin while he served as business manager. "But then you get asked to do one thing, and that leads to another, and then another, and you end up getting some opportunities."

Warsh was elected to Local 494's executive board in 2001 and became the vice president in 2010. One year later, he got an up-close vision of the importance of politics.

Scott Walker, then Wisconsin's notoriously anti-union governor, enacted a series of measures with the help of a friendly legislature that crushed working families. Warsh and his wife, Kerri, who was then a union-represented teacher, were among the thousands who demonstrated at the state capitol.

The experience left a bitter taste, but Warsh vowed to make political involvement a priority.

"I saw with just the swipe of a pen, they could take away everything we had negotiated," he said.

He served as a Local 494 organizer before being appointed business manager in 2015 following Bzdawka's departure to become an international representative. He was re-elected three times during the next eight years, leaving the position to become an international representative in July 2023.

Among his hires as business manager was John Zapfel, whom he brought on as the local's political director.

Those two — along with the help of allies both inside and outside the IBEW — helped elect a union friendly governor in Tony Evers, pro-union officials to dozens of local offices, and flip the state Supreme Court to Democratic control. Wisconsin still has a right-to-work law but may be on the path to repealing it, just as neighboring Michigan did in 2023.

Zapfel now is a Government Affairs international representative and will again report to Warsh.

"I just appreciated his openness and willingness to take in new ideas," Zapfel said. "He was always looking for the best person for the job and to do the job right. When I came over, with Dean's willingness, we took Local 494 to a higher level."

The local also regularly reached out to traditionally underrepresented groups under Warsh's leadership.

It started printing materials in Spanish to better communicate with Milwaukee's growing Hispanic population. It worked with a prison minister and organizations that tried to connect inmates with a career in the trades upon release.

"I realized my local did not look like the community I live in," Warsh said. "It was important to reach out and show we are inclusive."

He is taking on his new role during an anxious time. The IBEW and unions had a strong relationship with former President Joe Biden and helped get many pro-working family measures enacted, including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act and Chips and Science Acts, which provided federal funding for tens of thousands of IBEW jobs.

The relationship will be different with the Trump administration and a GOP-led Congress, but Warsh said he's optimistic.

"The most important thing for myself and everyone in the IBEW is to put our members to work," he said. "I'm looking forward to building alliances and friendships on both sides of the aisle, talking about common sense issues that our members care about."

"Don't get me wrong," Warsh added. "This will not be an easy task. We must work closely with our new and long-standing partners to ensure we preserve all the gains we achieved with the previous administration."

Bzdawka said his longtime friend and colleague is the person to do just that. "No one is going to out-work him, and he's a really good guy," he said. "Coming in with the new administration, there's a lot of uncertainty. But Dean has the moral compass to navigate whatever comes our way."

Warsh has been an active participant in several labor organizations in Wisconsin and currently serves as a member of Gov. Evers' Green Ribbon Commission on Clean Energy and Environmental Innovation. He has one daughter, Caitlyn Bieniak, a Marine Corps veteran. She is a journeyman wireman and member of Portland, Oregon, Local 48.

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

DECEASED

Dorothy Husted Geonie



Retired Third District International Representative Dorothy Husted Geonie, whose senses of dignity and sympathy fueled

a decades-long career that helped tens of thousands of working people find a better life through IBEW membership, died on Dec. 18. She was 103.

Geonie was born in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens, N.Y. While Geonie was still a toddler, her family moved to West Orange, N.J. There, she received an education that included two years at the Essex County Vocational School. She also developed a deep love of sports, playing basketball and softball in her free time and becoming a devoted fan of New York's professional teams.

In 1942, the 21-year-old Geonie joined the millions of women who entered the workforce during World War II, taking a job as a telephone equipment assembler at the massive Western Electric plant in Kearny, N.J., making 45 cents an hour. (Adjusting for inflation, that's about \$8.60 an hour today.)

Sensitive to the low-pay plight of herself and her fellow workers while the company was raking in millions of dollars in profits, Geonie volunteered to work as an inside organizer for the IBEW at the plant. Her efforts were credited with helping the union win the right to organize the facility's nearly 30,000 workers, a major victory over six other unions that were competing for the privilege in the face of stiff Western Digital resistance.

Kearny Local 1470, once one of the East Coast's largest locals representing telephone manufacturing workers, was chartered in 1948. Geonie was initiated into the IBEW the following year, and she quickly became active with Local 1470, serving terms as its recording secretary and chair of the executive board. Geonie also served on the local's grievance, entertainment and blood bank committees, and she was the editor of the local's newspaper.

At the same time, organizing leaders from the IBEW's International Office were using Geonie's unionizing talents on campaigns at Westinghouse, RCA and other Western Electric plants,

dispatching her to work on numerous successful organizing fights in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Minnesota and Louisiana.

In 1953, Geonie became the first woman to serve as an international representative from the IBEW's Manufacturing branch, appointed by International President D.W. Tracy to service the 200-plus manufacturing locals in the union's Third District, which has jurisdiction over Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

Throughout her district tenure, while Geonie frequently led training sessions on grievance procedures, local union elections and shop steward duties, she never stopped organizing. Among her notable successes: her participation in a 1973 effort to bring more than 400 Northland Electric Motors workers into Watertown, N.Y., Local 2101, as well as an IBEW win in 1985 that welcomed nearly 1,100 Essex County, N.J., government office workers into Newark Local 1158.

In 1983, Geonie's many achievements were lauded by the YWCA's Academy of Women Achievers, which presented her an award for outstanding accomplishment.

"Dorothy, in her inspirational leadership role, sets an important example for all women," noted a biographical sketch of Geonie that was prepared for her award. "She is committed to continue opening previously closed doors so that others might follow where she had led."

After working for the Third District for nearly 42 years, Geonie retired in 1995

and later moved to Franklin Park, N.J. She was a member of the Italian Sons and Daughters of America, and she enjoyed playing golf and attending the theater and opera, before and after her retirement.

Lawrence F. Neidig Jr., a retired senior executive assistant to the international president and international secretary-treasurer, fondly remembered serving with Geonie — whom he called "Dottie" — after he was appointed as a Third District international representative in 1992.

"She worked very hard and serviced the local unions very well," Neidig said. "She was a very strong individual."

He added that Geonie stayed sharp and enjoyed herself well into her 90s. "She was always looking for a card game," he said.

The two of them became close friends after Geonie retired, said Neidig, noting that they had had lunch together in the past year.

John W. Varricchio, a retired international representative who came on staff in the Third District in 1989, remembered Geonie as a fun-loving gambler, as well. "She liked to play cards, and she liked to go to the casinos," he said.

"We had a lunch group, and we would meet three or four times a year, coming from all directions," added Varricchio's wife, Pat. "We stayed close for many, many years doing that."

Please join the officers and staff of the IBEW in sending sincerest condolences to Sister Geonie's family members and friends. ■

“LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

For My Family, for My Union

I'm a mother who carries the weight of dreams,
a daughter of resilience, a woman who beams
through struggling hardship, I forged my way,
Building a life for my family day by day.

With the heart of love and headstrong with skill,
I work to create, to fix, to build
From the classroom to the job site, I've learned to persist,
Now I see challenges as opportunities to grow, to rise up and let my strength show.

My union has shaped me. Its strength like a tree.
Because the roots run deep, in the work that's free
For those who have walked a hard road before, I extend my hand for together
we soar.

In this union, we're part of something grand,
Fighting for freedom hand in hand.

From foster to now, with a career so bright,
I've turned my struggles into pure sunlight.
I will rise, I'll lead, I will guide and fight for my family, for my union,
I'll channel the might.

Like a conductor giving power and light to the future so bright.

This is me, a mosaic of dreams and strife,
Crafting my purpose, and carving my life.

Kanitra Porch
Boston Local 103

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

LOCAL LINES

Second Annual Local 15 Golf Outing

L.U. 15 (u), DOWNERS GROVE, IL — On Sept. 28 more than 200 golfers teed off at the White Pines Golf Club in Bensenville, Ill., for our local’s charity golf outing. The chosen charity was Cal’s Angels, a non-profit organization supporting those affected by pediatric cancer, which grants wishes, funds research, and raises awareness for kids and their families.

Sponsorship donations were accepted, providing funds for food, drinks, and donations for raffles and silent auctions. A shotgun start at noon kicked the day off, followed by a dinner. Local 15 President Chris Riser thanked members for coming out and supporting such a great cause. He expressed the importance of getting Local 15 members together to create camaraderie and a sense of union pride.

President Riser would also like to thank Local 15 Charity Fund Organization members Keith Jackson, Jamie Loven, Alex Masters, Brittany Schury and Shawn Wachter for all the hard work they put into making this event successful.

A total of \$40,000 was raised this year for Cal’s Angels. A huge thank you to all of our members who participated in the outing!

John Richards, Bus. Rep.

Electricians’ Work at Local 41

L.U. 41 (em,es,govt,i,se&spa), BUFFALO, NY — As many of you already know, the Carpenters have proposed a change to their apprenticeship program to the New York State Department of Labor. The Carpenters are attempting to add all the work done on solar installations to their apprenticeship including underground, pulling wire, testing and maintaining the solar field.

Recently Business Manager Greg Inglut and Training Director Matt Hilmey made a trip to New York City, where the Apprenticeship and Training Council of the NYSDOL met to hear comments on the proposed change. We would like to thank all our members who took the time to file public comments in opposition to the Carpenters’ proposal. In total the council received more than 1,500 letters against the change, with only 500 in support of it.

While we await the decision from the New York State Commissioner of Labor, it is important to remember we need to stay vigilant in protecting our trade. We will continue fighting for what is ours, but we need the continued help from our membership to alert us of any other trade performing the work of an electrician. The work of the electrician begins with layout, ends with the last cover plate, and we do everything in between.

Matthew M. Gaiser, A.B.M.

Local 43 Veterans Committee Lay Holiday Wreaths

L.U. 43 (em,i&rts), SYRACUSE, NY — Veterans Committee members Brother Kevin Mullen, Sister Haley Parker, and Brothers Bill Towsley and Elliot Wright showed their dedication to our community by laying wreaths this year to honor our veterans at the Onondaga County Veterans Memorial Cemetery for the holidays. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for honoring our veterans during the holiday season.

Jeff Cassano, P.S.



Members of the Local 43 Veterans Committee laid wreaths at Onondaga County Veterans Memorial Cemetery to honor veterans during the holiday season.

Local 47 Bargaining and Event Updates

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings brothers and sisters: This year’s work picture has been steady with the book numbers low and work being a little further from home. However, Local 47 has seen a slower year compared with the past decade. This will continue into next year as the California Public Utilities Commission processes and approves the investor-owned utility rate cases for 2025 – 2029, bringing much-needed stability to the system. That fight will continue in Sacramento with legislators, the California Public Utilities



Local 47 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin presented journeyman lineman Mark Aragon his 40-year-service pin. Congratulations, Brother Mark.

Commission and the Governor’s office, where we will be actively advocating for members.

Here are Local 47’s bargaining and event updates:

- Southern California Edison — Negotiations continue for real-time operators and the call center unit. The company’s refusal to upgrade groundmen to distribution equipment operators was settled the day before arbitration. The company agreed to upgrade in the future and pay \$75,000 to those who weren’t upgraded.
- City of Banning — General negotiations continue.
- City of Riverside — Wastewater negotiations continue.
- City of Riverside — Supervisory and utility negotiations continue.
- City of Colton — Electric negotiations continue.

In upcoming events, the Local 47 Steward and Safety Conference is set for May 10.

We are sad to report the deaths of Bobby Duvall and Jose Ramirez. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union!

Mitch Smith, P.S.

Baldwin Power Plant Life Extension

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — In December, Vistra Corp. announced that instead of closing the 1,185-megawatt-producing Baldwin power plant at the end of 2025, they will continue operations through 2027 and will be hiring more employees. With the addition of a new, 68-megawatt utility-scale solar system and 2-megawatt/8-megawatt-hour energy storage system, which recently began generating power, Baldwin is a power generation hub and has recognized Local 51 as the bargaining representative for the solar field employees. This is great news for our members.

Also in December, Business Manager Bobby Wedell attended most of our 14 unit meetings and presented our members with their IBEW service pins. Former Business Manager Jim Bates received his 55-year pin. Brothers Roy Burton, Larry Cawthon, Larry McCollough and former Business Manager



Brother Roy Burton receives his 60-year pin from Local 51 Business Manager Bobby Wedell.

Dominic Rivara received their 60-year pins. Brothers Carl Edwards and Newman Hawks each received their 70-year pin. Congratulations to all!

Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.

Spreading Christmas Cheer the Local 103 Way

L.U. 103 (cs,i&ptc), BOSTON, MA — December was a busy month here at our local. The 11th annual Toy and Winter Clothing Drive was the biggest one yet! More than 10,000 toys, winter coats and hats were donated by our members to be given to those less fortunate in Boston and the surrounding towns.

The retirees’ Christmas luncheon was attended by more than 300 retirees and their spouses. Everyone enjoyed themselves. Such gatherings are a great way to celebrate the holiday season, share memories and enjoy each other’s company.

The Brotherhood Christmas party was a great night to bring people together and celebrate the season with old and new friends.

James Fleming, P.S.



Local 103’s toy donations from the biggest Toy and Winter Clothing Drive yet.

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	
(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.



Retirees enjoying Local 131's retirees' Christmas gathering.

Retirees and Apprentices Having Fun in Kalamazoo

L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rtse&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI — Currently the work outlook is steady in Kalamazoo. Several projects continue to keep our local members fully employed. The new Gun Lake Casino, a 15-story hotel and aquadome, is finishing up. We appreciate the hard work done by everyone on the project. Palisades nuclear plant is manning up. Pfizer and Zoetis each have projects for Moore, Hi-Tech and KEI.

The retirees' Christmas party was a lot of fun. Sixty members and their spouses attended. The Kalamazoo January 31st annual party (1-31-Day) was also so much fun. The apprentices organized and planned a great party.

Organizer Ryan Lewis has successfully organized 30 highly qualified nonunion journeymen and apprentices. Membership development is the only way we can have enough members to successfully meet all the requirements needed next year. Currently our local has grown to more than 528 members, with 120 apprentices. Thank you to the LMCC for encouraging the bounty and incentive programs.

This year's picnic will be July 26, and the Tigers baseball game is April 26. Go to IBEW131.com for more information. I hope to see you at a union meeting or an event.

Morris Applebey, B.M./F.S.

Local 141 Enjoys Festive Holiday Season

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings and Happy New Year, brothers and sisters. Work remains slow in our local, with 47 members on Book 1. Many thanks to the surrounding locals that have been able to keep our members working.

As many are aware, the past election cycle was tough for a lot of labor-friendly political candidates. Sadly, our two members that were vying for seats in the West Virginia House of Delegates fell short of their election goals. Both of these gentlemen ran first-class, honest campaigns and will hopefully make another run for these seats in 2026.

Once again, the Local 141 Social Committee did an outstanding job with our holiday festivities. From our presence in local Christmas parades to our retirees' Christmas dinner, the holiday dinner and dance, and our kids' breakfast with Santa, there was something fun for everyone to enjoy.

It is with great sadness that Local 141 reports the passing of Brother Thomas "Bingo" Binkowski. He will be greatly missed.

Kurt "Bug" Reed, P.S.



The Local 269 meeting hall was filled to the brim during the annual Christmas party.

Happy Hall-a-Days!

L.U. 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ — Our local union hall was once again the epicenter of holiday cheer and goodwill. Santa and his helpers again heard the Christmas wishes of the children of our families. With tables overflowing with toys and games, no child went away unhappy, much less empty handed. There were also plenty of treats and activities on hand to keep young ones occupied while they patiently waited to visit with Mr. Claus. And when Santa wasn't sitting in the hall, he was out riding through the streets of our territory in New Jersey and Pennsylvania delivering presents and goodwill to members' families.

However, before Santa and his helpers took over the main hall, our members gathered for the annual Local 269 Christmas party. The hall was filled to overflowing with brothers and sisters enjoying food, drinks and cigars in abundance. Laughter and well-wishes resounded in the dining room as members young and old enjoyed a well-deserved night out.

As always, these special events would never happen if it wasn't for the hard work and dedication of a lot of special people. Thanks to everyone who helped, and see you next year!

Brian Jacoppo, P.S.



Local 357's baseball team played in support of Toys for Tots on Dec. 22.

A Season Full of Local 357 Cheer

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — Our local had a busy and festive holiday season. We celebrated our retirees on Dec. 12 with a delicious dinner, a lively band and service pins that were presented to several of our Local 357 retired members. Recipients included Bruce Empol (15 years), Edward Gering (35), Edward Pawlowski (50), George Horn Jr. (60), Eddie Williams (60) and Dayton

Barney (70), whose long years of service we deeply respect and appreciate.

A few days later, we hosted the annual children's holiday party. The union hall was filled with laughter and merriment as our families came together to celebrate. We had fun activities for everyone, including classic video games, basketball hoops, playful elves who entertained with games and magic tricks, face painting, and, of course, the highlight of the day: photos with Santa Claus!

On Dec. 22, our Local 357 baseball team participated in a charity event supporting the Toys for Tots program. Additionally, as a union, we extended our support to approximately 40 of our members' families who faced hardship this season due to unemployment by providing them with holiday gifts. This act of brotherhood characterizes the Local 357 holiday spirit.

Julie-Ann Peebles, P.S.

Local 481 Food Drive and Christmas Luncheon

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rtse&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Our annual food drive held in December brought in a significant amount of donations from our members, contractors and community partners. During the holidays, we believe it is

important to extend a helping hand to those in need in our community. With more than 5,050 pounds of food collected and more than \$3,900 received in monetary donations, we were able to make the holiday season brighter for many. Thank you to everyone who donated!

We had a record number of attendees at our retirees' Christmas luncheon. We look forward to this event every year as it brings so many of our retirees together. During the event, Business Manager Jeff Wheeler distributed years-of-service milestone pins. In attendance was Jim Webb, who received a pin for 65 years of service. Over the years, Mr. Webb has continuously participated and graciously provided a helping hand with various local union events and projects. Thank you, Jim, for all you have done and continue to do for the IBEW!

Blake Andrews, Bus. Rep.



Reagen Edlund's winning card design from Local 483's drawing contest.

Local 483 Holiday Card Design Contest

L.U. 483 (catv,lctt,o&u), TACOMA, WA — Last year our local started its first-ever holiday card design contest. We asked our members' children to compete in a contest to design our annual Christmas card. The winner received a \$50 cash prize as well as bragging rights for designing the winning card. Once a winner is selected, their drawing is featured on our annual Christmas card, which is then distributed to other IBEW locals, employers and elected officials. This has been a fun contest for us and has been a great way to engage our members on a more personal level.

The 2024 winner was Reagen Edlund. She is 12 years old and when she is not playing softball, she is making arts and crafts. Her father, Jason Edlund, is a journeyman lineman at Peninsula Light Company in Gig Harbor, Wash.

Byron Allen, B.M./F.S.



Retirees in attendance at Local 141's retiree Christmas dinner held at Wheeling Island Casino-Racetrack.



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LOCAL LINES



Local 611's new journeymen celebrate at their 2024 apprenticeship banquet.

Local 611 Welcomes New Journeymen

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — At our recent apprenticeship banquet, our local graduated 49 new journeymen: Billie Antone, Jakob Arellano, Marco Batalla Brito, Alex Bearzi, Maurice Betonie, Johnny Brady Jr., Sebastian Burgos, Richard Chavez, Patrick Cota, Xavier De La Rosa, Ryan Denetchee, Lewis Devers, Matthew Donovan, Kyle Elliott, Jonathan Evans, James Fortney, Buddy Garcia, Ramon Garcia, Isaiah Gomez, Dominic Gurule, Nicholas Gurule, Selvin Guzman, Alexander Hill, Clayton Hust, Delilah Kinsel, Tristan Luna, David Mariglia, Lawrence Martinez, Nicholai McChesney, Helen Miyaki, Nathaniel Olayer, Joel Ortiz Torrecillas, Cyrus Owens, Kenneth Rendon, Patrick Ritter, Steven Sanchez, Ryan Schneider, Tyke Schoser, Robert Spitzer, Leandro Urioste, Louie Verdin, Ernest Vigil, Justice Vigil, Alejandro Villcano, Jerod Wagberman, Ryker Witt, Johnathan Woods, Jessie Zamora and Endre Zsigmond.

The Outstanding Apprenticeship winner for 2024 is Ryker Witt; the C.S. Mitchell Award went to Ashlee Simpson and the Perfect Attendance Award went to Billie Antone. Congratulations to everyone.

This year's children's Christmas party on Dec. 15 and the adult Christmas party on Dec. 21 were both held at Revel ABQ, and they were both hugely successful. Thank you, committee members, for an outstanding job.

On behalf of Local 611, I would like to send condolences to the family and friends of Eddie Crisp, Ernest Davis, Willard Gettemy, Ruben Mancha, Mario Murillo, Edward Newton, Ronald E. Phillips, Nelson Rodarte Sr., Florencio Romero, Michael Salaz, Bryan Salazar, Bonifacio Sanchez, Albert Skelton, George R. Turner, David J. White and Michael Wingo.

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

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.

Longevity at Local 617

L.U. 617 (c,i,mo&st), SAN MATEO, CA — It is a long-standing tradition in Local 617 to host a bi-annual service pin awards banquet (formally known as "Old Timers' Night") to come together and honor our brothers and sisters who have 20 years of service or more in the trade. Our 2024 banquet was held Nov. 7 and celebrated the service of more than 300 members, with 44 of those members awarded pins for 50 years of service or more.

Congratulations to all of the pin recipients



Local 617's 25-year-service-pin recipients.

who are either actively working in the trade or retired: We thank you for your dedication and service. And thank you to all who attended and enjoyed an evening honoring our trade and the electrical industry. Our guests of honor (although they were unable to join us in person this year) were Brother Alindo Cardelli, 100 years young and a Local 617 member for 82 years, and Brother Ernie Howe, 103 years young and a Local 617 member for 78 years. We commend you, brothers, and we wish all IBEW members a long, healthy, and memorable career and retirement.

Scott Wein, B.M./F.S.



Local 683 celebrated their centennial anniversary in style at the Battelle Grand Ballroom in the Greater Columbus Convention Center.

Celebrating 100 Years of Local 683, and Travelers Needed!

L.U. 683 (i&ptc), COLUMBUS, OH — On Dec. 14, Local 683 proudly celebrated its 100th anniversary in grand style at the Battelle Grand Ballroom within the Greater Columbus Convention Center, a city landmark wired by our own members. More than 2,200 members and guests gathered for this historic occasion, creating memories that will be talked about for years to come.

This milestone honors a century of our members shaping the skyline of downtown Columbus and building key infrastructure, including stadiums, arenas, manufacturing facilities and more. We extend heartfelt gratitude to the generations of members who laid the foundation for our great organization. A special thank you also goes to those who organized and executed this unforgettable celebration, as well as everyone who attended.

Looking ahead, the work outlook in our jurisdiction remains exceptional. We are currently averaging 100 unfilled calls daily, with many positions offering above-scale pay or incentives. The data

center boom continues, and a major solar project is set to ramp up in 2025.

Additionally, the new airport terminal project will kick off this year. We deeply appreciate the traveling brothers and sisters who help us meet this demand and look forward to continuing our proud tradition of excellence.

Mike Morey, Pres.

Come on, Springtime

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — Brothers and sisters, hopefully spring is on the way soon! With all the hurricane damage and then the holidays, a little normalcy will hopefully go a long way. 2024 was a tough year for a lot of our members, so we are hoping and praying that 2025 will be bountiful for all.

By the time you read this article, the first quarter will have ended, and without a crystal ball we know not what's in store, but fingers remain crossed. The work picture is stable and hopefully the data center, the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility project at the Savannah River site and the prime contractors on site will all be ready to hire soon. Our in-town shops continue to hold their own, and we all know that this is crucial for

the livelihood of any local union.

Please welcome Lori Shepherd (Alrich Electric) and Ryan Smith (Miller Electric) as trustees to the JATC. They will serve alongside current trustees Keith Goff, Business Manager J.R. Richardson, President Mike Greene and Vice President Alonzo Ingram.

Congratulations are due to Wayne Gullledge, Johnny Hutcheson, Larry Hyman and Ray Randolph, who represent

Local 1579 in the 16th annual Memorial American Legion Post 71 Golf Tournament. They posted an impressive 14 under, not bad for a group of guys that all have a seven in their age. Way to go, guys! These four have been friends and brothers for 45 years or more. What a run!

"The practice of charity will bind us — will bind all men in one great brotherhood." — Conrad Hilton.

Mike Greene, Pres.

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RETIREEES

Local 1 Retirees Schedule First 2025 Meeting

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 1, ST. LOUIS, MO — As we welcome spring, our first Retirees' Club meeting of 2025 will be held March 19 at 10 a.m. at the union hall. The Retirees Committee is currently scheduling guest speakers for the year along with planning our annual events.

We hope everyone remains well, and we look forward to seeing you in March.

Jim Schario, P.S.

Nassau Retirees Enjoy Day of Fishing

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, NASSAU CHAPTER — On a warm, sunny day in July, members of our Retirees' Club spent an exciting day fishing. [See photo bottom, left.] We boarded the Captain Eddie III and departed from Captree State Park in Long Island.

Much anticipation was felt by the group as we ventured out into the Atlantic Ocean (Great South Bay) for a day of fishing. The day was warm, the beer was cold and the company was great. Best of all, we actually caught fish! The boat pool was won by Dennis Coughlin, who caught a 26" fluke.

The trip was organized by Vice Chairman Jimmy Bernard. Thanks for all the hard work, Jimmy.

John Milligan P.S.

Here's to a Fantastic 2025!

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 26, WASHINGTON, DC — Happy New Year to all the retired members of our local! As we step into 2025, we reflect on the incredible camaraderie and dedication that our Retired Members' Club has shown over the past year. Your continued engagement and support are the cornerstones of our union's strength and spirit. Here's to another year of health, happiness and union solidarity!

On Feb. 2, we celebrated the 30th annual "Bowling for Gold" Union Bowling Tournament, which benefits the Community Services Agency of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO. This is our club's 22nd year of participating in this all-union event, and it was inspiring to see so many participants bowling for a good cause. Thank you to everyone who attended.

The Retired Members' Club upheld our tradition of setting up the holiday decorations and

tree at the union hall. A well-deserved thank you goes out to all who volunteered their time and energy to decorate, and who later took down the festive decorations.

In April we will host another luncheon for our retired members to receive their years-of-service pins and awards. If you are reading this and receive an invitation, please respond!

A highlight of November's meeting was an exciting drawing for annual prizes for four lucky members. Congratulations to Randolph Scott, who took home the grand prize! The raffle was a success, and we appreciate everyone who purchased tickets to support our club's medical equipment program.

December's Christmas party meeting was the usual success. Many members left with gift cards, adding a little extra joy to the holiday season. Thank you to everyone who joined us and made it a memorable occasion. Your presence and enthusiasm truly make these events special.

We invite all retired Local 26 members to join us for our next RMC meeting. Whether in person or via Zoom, your participation is always welcomed and appreciated. If you've not yet attended, please send us your email address and we'll send you the link to join the Zoom meeting.

A special thank you goes out to all the volunteers who made our 2024 events possible and contributed to the distribution of medical supplies throughout the year. Your dedication and hard work embody the true spirit of union solidarity and service.

Here's to a fantastic 2025! Stay safe and stay strong!

Michael Acree, P.S.

Happy New Year From Local 35 Retirees

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — We would like to honor all those who passed away in 2024: Thomas Coffey, Gary DeFemia, Paul Ferenbach, Gary Grymkowski, Robert Hackemack, Richard Kleinsmidt, Clayton Peckham, Henry John Rugar, Robert Senkbeil and Alcious Watson.

The retirees had a great Christmas luncheon with lots of good food as we concluded the year.

I would like to thank Michael Nealy and John Bowen for our Christmas luncheon.

Our next meeting will be in March on the second Wednesday, March 12, at 12 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus in Newington. Please encourage other retirees to join us. We hope to see you there!

Kenneth White, P.S.



Local 96 Business Manager James Arthur and members at the retirees' holiday luncheon.

United We Stand

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 58, DETROIT, MI — The presidential election was a hard pill to swallow, but as we move into the new year as politically active unionists we must remain stalwart and keep an eye on what is happening in Washington. We hope that the economic improvements made during the Biden administration stay in place. So much work was done that the economy is the best it's been in decades.

With the shift in the White House administrative power, we must be diligent and keep our eye on the earned benefits that support the older citizens in this great country of ours. Don't hesitate to speak out when questions about changing or dismantling Social Security come up.

As a population we will still have power, and much of that power is shown by the work we do. Step up and volunteer in your community, union, and politics on the state and national level. We must remember that we always get more done when we work together. Let's work to get along, stop the hate and fix the things of which we don't approve. Let's stand together: United we stand, divided we fall.

Pat Nuznov, P.S.

Local 96 Retirees Holiday Luncheon

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 96, WORCESTER, MA — We hope everyone had a blessed and safe Thanksgiving and a happy holiday season. We would also like to wish everyone a healthy and prosperous 2025 moving forward.

Congratulations and a big thank you to our retired members for their outstanding service and dedication in moving Local 96 forward through the years.

Happy recent retirement to the following members: Leonard Ciuffredo, Joseph DeMango, John Healy, Jeffrey Lavalley, Richard Lemay, Michael Luukko, James Madden, Wayne Menard, William Robinson, Kurt Smollin, Mark Vigeant and Michael Vizzo.

The following members celebrated their IBEW years-of-service pins and awards: Gerald Caron, Thomas Cote, Richard Ermanski, Wayne Gendron, Raymond Halvorsen, Michael Lamkin, Joseph Oliveri and Bruce Rochette (50 years); Louis DelSignore, Joseph DiLiddo, Wayne Hickey, Robert Hogan, Gordon Holway, Joseph Horgan, Joseph Kapurch, Paul Kasabula, Gary Kapurch, Richard Lanney, Roger LaRochelle, Daniel Manzano, Michael Markarian, Norbert Perduta, James Rolf and Charles Saari (55 years); Anthony Desimone, Vincent DiLeo, Donald Garny, Adam Skrzypczak and Chares Triba (60 years); Sven Borglund, William Durkin, William McGee and Edward Nummelin (70 years).

William Perry, Bus. Rep.

Join the Fun With Local 105 Retirees

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 105, HAMILTON, ON — Hello everyone, and Happy Easter to those who celebrate! We hope all of you have enjoyed the winter and are looking forward to spring.

Here are some of the events that we've enjoyed and look forward to enjoying:

- 2025 euchre began Mon., Jan. 6.
- We enjoyed a delicious breakfast at St. Naum Church on Wed., Jan. 8.
- Valentines' dinner and dance was held at Michelangelo's on Sun., Feb. 9.
- We will attend "Rhythm of the Dance" (Irish dancing) at the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts and a lunch at the Sherwood Restaurant in Brantford on Tues., March 11.
- We will lunch at the Mandarin Restaurant in Burlington on Thurs., March 13.
- We're booked at the Cairn Croft Hotel in Niagara Falls April 8 -11. The cost is \$195 double or \$185 single. This includes accommodations, two breakfasts per person, one dinner per person, and a wine and cheese social.

For those of you who are 55 years old, a retiree of Local 105 and have not yet joined the Retirees' Club, just jump on board. You're missing out!

Most importantly, please remember that all the events we enjoy, past and present, are made possible by our amazing hard-working local and Executive Board members, past and present. Our heartfelt thanks goes to all of you!

Eden McLean, P.S.



Local 3 Nassau Chapter retirees gather for their fishing trip at Captree State Park in Long Island.

RETIREES

Local 134 Retirees Enjoy Holiday Festivities

RETIRES' CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — We are now one quarter into 2025. I'm sure all can agree that 2024 was a political roller coaster. For me, the last quarter of 2024 was heart wrenching. When I awoke Nov. 8 and turned on the television, I burst into tears. It was the first time in my 74 years that an election made me cry. I have always respected the voice of the American people, whether a Republican or Democrat was elected to office. I do not respect or trust Donald Trump, and my feelings go way back before I knew him as a politician. I must now put my trust in our nation and Capitol Hill to try to unite us instead of dividing us. This is my opinion only and does not reflect that of the Retirees' Club of Local 134.

We ended the year with our annual festive holiday luncheon on Dec. 11. A turkey dinner was served on decorated tables with green tablecloths and red and white poinsettias. We had a raffle for 20 gift certificates and all the poinsettia centerpieces. Business Manager/Financial Secretary Donald Finn came to join us and gave a speech with wishes for a merry holiday and Happy New Year.

A special thank you goes to Donald Finn and Local 134 President Tim Fitzgibbons for all the help and support they give us throughout the year.

Susan Kleczka, P.S.



Local 257 retirees at the annual Labor Day picnic.

making a car appear on stage were a few of the magical moments that mystified the attendees.

Retirees attended the annual Christmas party hosted by Local 257 on Dec. 10. Sixty-eight members and guests were treated to a family-style luncheon. A raffle was held for scratch offs and a poinsettia was won by Tom Oligschlaeger. Annual donations for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., totaled \$1,000 this year, supporting St. Jude's mission of saving children and finding cures.

Connie Hamacher, P.S.

Local 313 Retirees Hold Inaugural Golf Tournament

RETIRES' CLUB OF L.U. 313, WILMINGTON, DE — As 2024 came to a close, the Retirees' Club joined together to count our blessings and retell old tales at the annual Christmas meeting. We want to thank all the Local 101 members for attending, and we hope the best for those who weren't able to make it.

With some help from Brothers Mark Cuomo, Stan Mlynarski and others, we were able to

add a new event to the calendar in 2024. On Sept. 28, honorary guests John Abegglen and Billy Wilson kicked off the Inaugural Retirees' Golf Tournament with ceremonial tee shots at Johnathan's Landing.

For your families and friends, stay healthy and active in life and your local.

Bruce Esper, P.S.



Standing in the left corner of the stage, Local 134 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Donald Finn stops by the retirees' holiday luncheon to send best wishes for the season.

Celebrating Local 257 Retirees' Service

RETIRES' CLUB OF L.U. 257, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — At the annual Labor Day picnic, service awards were presented by Business Manager Joel Vander-slice. Eighty service awards were presented with 41 retirees receiving them. Forty-year pins went to David Apperson, Anthony Backes, John Bonnot, John Enloe, Todd Gentry, Paul Morris, Dennis Palmer, Robert Schubert and Ezra Vest. Forty-five year pins went to Gary Baken, Rick Baker, Steven Barnes, Jean Bedigie, James Breid, Donald Bruemmer, Michael Cave, Gary Chambers, Rodney Hardwick, Harry Haverich, Loyd Libbert, Michael Massman, Jack Pettigrew, Arthur Roark, Joseph Schmutzler, Dan Schroeder, David Scott, Randy Seay, Jerry Shubert, Mark Stokes, Thomas Stokes and Keith Yager. Fifty-five year pins went to Carl Buckner, Sam Hamacher, Otsie Murray, James Nevins, Thomas Oligschlaeger and Jerry Petershagen. Sixty-year pins went to Joseph Gallatin, Kenneth Polly and Donald Stokes. A sixty-five year pin was awarded to Gary James.

On Dec. 1, retirees and spouses went to a magical comedy show performed by Taylor Reed in Osage Beach. Levitation, cutting people in half and



Local 349 retirees enjoy their December holiday luncheon, where brotherhood and gifts were shared.

Looking Ahead to the New Year

RETIRES' CLUB OF L.U. 349, MIAMI, FL — Greetings and Happy New Year from sunny Miami.

The new year promises to be an exciting one for our Retirees' Club, with our first adventure on an exciting cruise planned for January. Departing from Ft. Lauderdale, we set sail for Key West and the Bahamas on Celebrity Cruises.

Looking back, we shared a traditional Thanksgiving luncheon at beautiful Gulfstream Park Racing in the Ten Palms Restaurant. We watched live horse races and cheered for our favorite horse from the comfort of the dining area.

Our December holiday luncheon was held at a local Longhorn Restaurant, where we enjoyed each other's company and exchanged gifts.

This past year has been filled with unforgettable memories that brought us closer together through sharing our losses and blessings.

Please join us on the second Thursday of each month at noon for a brief meeting and a pot-luck lunch at Local 349's union hall, 1657 NW 17th Ave., Miami.

Brenda Auer, P.S.

Cruise-In For Kids Car Show

RETIRES' CLUB OF L.U. 648, HAMILTON, OH — The Joe Nuxhall Miracle League Fields is a state-of-the-art facility that offers baseball and recreational opportunities with a big-league-level game-day environment for athletes of all ages and abilities with special needs. Local 648 retirees have been raising funds for the Miracle League Fields over the last decade. Local 648 retirees Steve Crain and Kenny Rhodus have chaired the Cruise-In For Kids car show for more than 10 years. Steve Crain, an avid car collector and a 58-year member of Local 648, used his contacts with a local group of car guys, the Gassy Geezers, to help organize the car show.

With help of Local 648 retirees John Crowthers, Ken Rhodus, Larry Setser, Ben Suttmitter, Dale Truster and their spouses, the car show has become a tremendous success. This group of retirees, with more than 300 years of IBEW service, have used their talents and experience to raise over \$150,000 for the Joe Nuxhall Miracle League and to continue the long history of Local 648 and NECA in supporting this cause. Great job, brothers! (Editor's note: See "Cool Cars for a Cause" on page 5.)

Bobby Angst, P.S.



Local 648 retired Brothers Steve Crain and Ken Rhodus with Kim Nuxhall, president and board chairman of the Nuxhall Foundation.

Local 654 Christmas and Turning the Page to 2025

RETIRES' CLUB OF L.U. 654, CHESTER, PA — The Christmas holiday season brought good cheer and treasured fellowship to the retirees of our local. Local 654's officers and members gave retirees a wonderful Christmas luncheon at our hall in mid-December. It's always a great time to see fellow retirees and catch up on things.

Some of us who meet bi-weekly for breakfast had our annual lottery ticket exchange just before Christmas. We bring tickets, usually scratch-offs, and give them out to those in attendance. This gifting ritual has occurred annually for several decades. If you win some dough, great; if not, there's always next year.

It is with heavy hearts and mournful sadness that we remember the passing of our retired brothers John Barlow, John Clark, Charles (Stu) Fischer, Robert H. Hashinger Jr., Tom Highfield Jr., Joseph Hudak, Roy Mayo, James R. Miller, John M. Parks



Local 313 retirees at the annual Christmas party.

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Local 654 retiree Bob Groff attended our Retirees' Club Christmas luncheon. Bob, who turned 94 in January, holds a special place in our hearts as the beloved Santa Claus at our children's Christmas party for many years.

Sr. and Frank Powell. To their families, we offer our sincere condolences.

Looking ahead, our local union leadership asked us at the Christmas luncheon if we could attend the local's Jan. 9 general meeting to witness the induction of our first-year apprenticeship class. Retirees' inclusion in local membership activities is always a true sign of brotherhood, is it not?

William Faulkner, P.S.

Local 743 Sees "Joy to the World"

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 743, READING, PA — On Dec. 11, the Retirees' Club went to the American Music Theater in Lancaster, Pa., to enjoy the 2024 Christmas show, "Joy to the World." After the show, full of beautiful lights and holiday music from multiple genres, the retirees headed to dinner at Miller's Smorgasbord in Ronks, Pa., for a delicious meal and great fellowship between the retired brothers and their wives. Great to see the brotherhood continuing, even among the retired members!

Robert C. Brown, Pres.

Happy New Year From Local 756

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — Happy New Year! We hope you are all doing well! Even though it is already March when you read this, we want to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2025! We still have low attendance at our meetings and would love to see more of you there.

We invite any retired and unemployed brothers and sisters and their spouses who are in the area to come and join us. Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month (September to May) at 11:30 a.m. at the Local 756 union hall in Port Orange, Fla.

With sadness, we have had three members pass since our last article. We send our condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Brothers Melvin J. Doxie, James B. Williams and Wilbur Wright Jr.

Diane Gibbs, P.S.



Local 743 Retirees' Club went to the American Music Theater in Lancaster, Pa., to enjoy the 2024 Christmas show.



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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

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The Electrical Worker (print)

ISSN 2332-113X

The Electrical Worker (online)

ISSN 2332-1148

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

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WHO WE ARE

Bringing Holiday Joy to Sick Kids 'a Privilege' for Long Island Members

As they climbed aboard a holiday "Cheer Bus" to deliver presents to sick children, Long Island, N.Y., Local 1049 members knew they were in for a roller coaster of emotions.

"It's a hard experience to explain because it is such a difficult time for these families," said Nick Clemente, aka Santa Claus. "But it's very rewarding to keep the magic alive for kids who literally are fighting for their lives."

The inaugural outing in December 2023, a partnership with the charity Kids Need More, spurred even greater turnout and donations during the 2024 holiday season. And anticipation is already building for 2025.

"I think the members would rebel if we didn't continue doing it," Business Manager Pat Guidice said. "We want to expand it out and make it where we're reaching more families and more children. This is going to be one of our signature events."

With day camps and year-round family activities, Kids Need More strives to make life brighter for children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

The Cheer Bus program is especially popular. Donors such as Local 1049 rent a small motor coach, fill it with volunteers and sackfuls of gifts, and visit designated homes a few days before Christmas.

"We all meet up at a school, and then everyone has an opportunity to load up their buses, mingle and get ready to start the day," said Clemente, an equipment operator on an underground drill crew. "It's a huge event. I'm really impressed by the extent of what they do."

Assistant Business Manager Rick Fridell suggested that the local get involved after hearing about the charity from his girlfriend, whose son survived Stage 4 cancer.

Like Clemente and others, he felt a range of emotions on delivery day.

"You see the joy on the family's part, but for us, it's sad, it's very sad," Fridell said. "You've got this child who's suffering but has this huge smile on their face, and you feel happy for the moment. But you walk away knowing the family may lose that child."

With their parents' help, ailing children and their siblings make wish lists for Kids Need More, which takes care of some of the more affordable gifts. Bigger-ticket items fall to donors.



After raising funds, buying toys and stuffing huge Santa sacks, Local 1049 elves deliver gifts to sick children on Long Island through the charity Kids Need More.



"It's a privilege for us to be able to do this, to give these families a brief moment where they can enjoy the holidays the way they should be enjoyed."

—Local 1049 Member Nick Clemente, aka Santa Claus



Fridell said the generosity of Local 1049 members made it possible to fulfill wishes for Nintendo Switches, outdoor basketball hoops, bicycles, remote-control toys and more.

"It's very moving to see the interactions between all the volunteers, all of us doing everything we could to make these families happy," he said. "And we did it as a family, as IBEW Local Union 1049."

Lisa Quinn, a 37-year member in the PSEG business office, couldn't wait to make deliveries for a second year. For weeks beforehand, she and fellow volunteers worked through a checklist — donations; shopping sprees;

sorting mountains of toys, books, pajamas and all manner of other gifts into Santa-style bags.

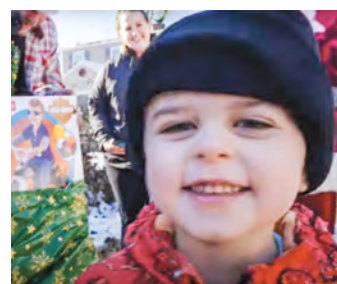
But when the big day arrived Dec. 22, Quinn woke up with a cold. Visiting kids with weakened immune systems was out of the question. "I was so disappointed, but I can't wait to do it again this year," she said.

"When we pull up, the expression on the kids' faces, it just does something to you," Quinn described. "Being a kid is supposed to be the easy part of life, but here they are, between doctors' visits and medical tests, and your heart just breaks. But they're smiling. And you're smiling. It's an amazing thing to be part of."

The joy practically jumps off the screen in a Local 1049 video. At each stop, Santa and his busload of elves disembark singing Christmas carols, while excited children rush toward them and the plump, festive bags in their hands.

For Melissa Moro's family, it was the best yet of three years of visits from Kids Need More volunteers.

"Luca goes through a lot, in and out of the hospital. To see him smile



Delivery day thrilled 4½-year-old Luca, who struggles with medical issues due to a brain tumor in his infancy. "To see him smile means so much," his mom said.

means so much," Moro said of her 4½-year-old, who's had medical issues since brain surgery as an infant and is at grave risk of the tumor returning.

"He ran right up to the bag and pulled out a fire truck and police car and a Hot Wheels track. When he saw that, he was over the moon," Moro said.

There were also a tricycle, Bluey books, various toys and a good pair of boots. Gifts for his toddler sister included a Barbie doll. "She's loving it. She carries that thing everywhere," Moro said.

Before December, Moro didn't know anything about the IBEW. Now, Local 1049 has her enduring gratitude.

"They were so great," she said. "They didn't have to take time out on a Sunday to do this, but they did, and they interacted with Luca so well."

She also complimented Santa,

played for the second time by 34-year-old Clemente, whose wife beat cancer several years ago.

"She's all better now, thank God," he said. "We received a lot of support from my friends and family and my co-workers and Local 1049."

So he wasn't about to say no when his mother, Jennifer Clemente, a Local 1049 Executive Board member, volunteered him as St. Nick at a union meeting.

"Rick Fridell was bringing up that he could use some support from members — donations and to pack up gifts, and he also said, 'We need someone to play Santa Claus.' My mom's hand went up," Clemente said with a laugh.

"It's a privilege for us to be able to do this, to give these families a brief moment where they can enjoy the holidays the way they should be enjoyed," he said. "It's a tough thing but also a really beautiful experience."

Scan the code to see Local 1049's smile-filled video from delivery day. (bit.ly/Local1049KidsNeedMore). ■



Santas — including Local 1049's Nick Clemente — huddle before their various groups hit the road for the Kids Need More delivery day in December. Each organization covered the cost of a small bus and designated a volunteer as St. Nick.