

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. 4 | April 2025

IBEW News

Local 11's Storybook Project

Skill, Creativity Required to Build Unique Art Museum **3**

Rushing Toward the Flames

IBEW Members Rallied to Devastating L.A. Wildfires **6**

'Right-to-Work' Fails Again

N.H. Bill Dies for 40th Time **7**

In This Issue

Editorials **2**

MyIBEW Story **2**

North of 49° **8**

Circuits **9**

Power at Work **10**

Power at Work **10**

Transitions **11**

Grounded in History **12**

In Memoriam **13**

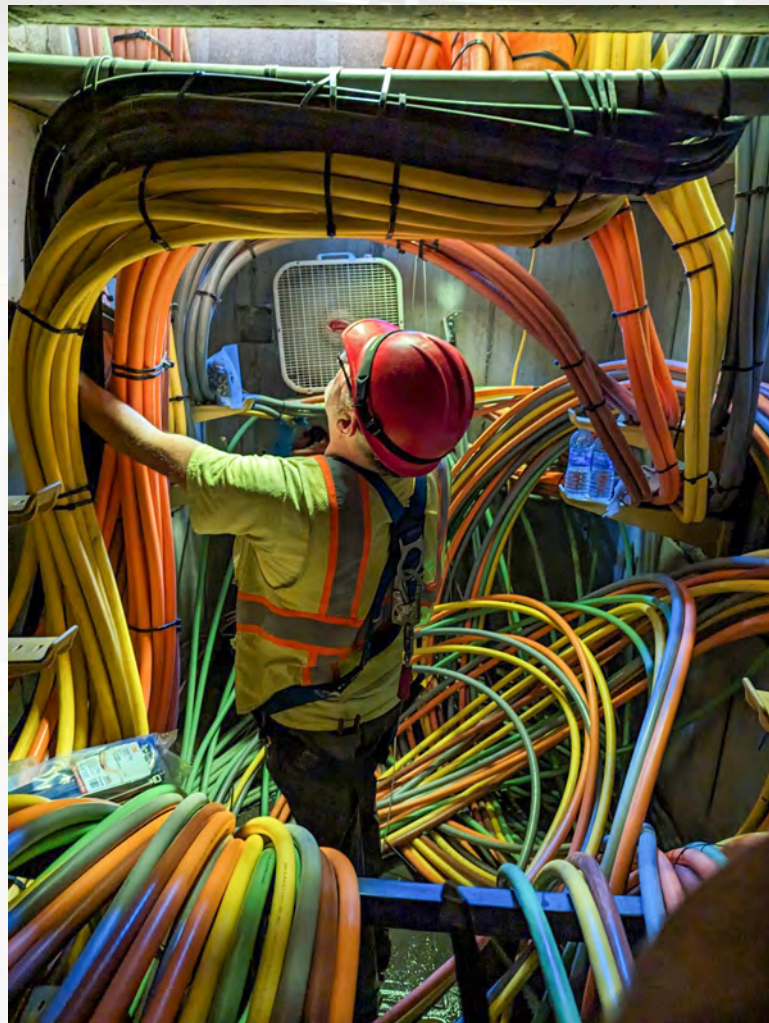
Local Lines **14**

Letters to the Editor **17**

NEBF **18**

IEC Minutes - August 2024 **19**

Who We Are **20**



YOUR UNION, IN FULL COLOR

2024 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

As a window into our union and the diverse and fascinating jobs our members do, you can't beat the annual IBEW Photo Contest:

Utility, telecom and outside construction work framed by stunning scenery; colorful and intricate details of inside construction and manufacturing; the wide array of work in our railroad, broadcasting and government sectors. The IBEW Media Department had the challenging task of narrowing down a record 1,156 entries for the 2024 contest, and thousands of brothers and sisters cast votes online for the finalists. First-place and a \$1,000 prize went to the vibrant image above, a mass of serpentine rainbow-colored wires ready to be fed into a manhole on a transfer switch repair job in New York state. For other winning photos and honorable mentions, check out pages 4-5. We hope they inspire your own entries in the 2025 contest, which will be open for submissions soon. Keep your eye out for announcements in The Electrical Worker and on social media.

See All the Winners pages 4-5

WWW.IBEW.ORG

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO 1032
LONG PRAIRIE, ILL

FROM THE OFFICERS

Wired for Change



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

The IBEW is hosting its annual Construction and Maintenance conference this month, and its theme is “Wired for Change.” This is more apt than ever, because change is the only way we will navigate the challenges of today’s rapidly changing construction industry and ensure that this union is North America’s first choice when it comes to electrical construction.

The construction market, which has seen a historic expansion over the last few years, continues to run hot despite some slowdown due to high interest rates and new tariffs.

Employment is still increasing in most states, with demand for skilled electrical workers higher than ever.

As we reported in the January Electrical Worker, over the next eight years, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that there will be more than 80,000 net new electrician jobs per year.

The IBEW has capitalized on this historic moment by organizing more construction “A” members than we have ever had and by moving aggressively to sign up more contractors and customers.

But someone else is also seizing this opportunity to grow: our nonunion competition. According to a recent report by Independent Electrical Contractors, nonunion electrical contractor firms have seen steady growth since 2017, growing by 31% over a six-year period.

Today, more than 60% of electrical construction is done nonunion.

That puts our progress in perspective, because success cannot just be measured by membership but by market share.

No matter how many members we have, if our competition dominates the market, they get to set industry standards.

Cornering the market when it comes to electrical construction is how the IBEW will cement its status as the leading supplier of skilled electrical workers for the nation.

The reality is that as much as we have been organizing, there are still too many unfilled calls each month, and every unfilled call is a gift to nonunion contractors. If the IBEW is not doing the job, you better believe someone else is.

That’s a big reason I have been so passionate about ensuring that every call is filled. We all need to work not just harder but smarter by adopting new innovative policies that will give us an edge over our competition.

These include making it easier for nonunion electricians to sign up with the IBEW and speeding up the apprentice-to-journeyman pipeline.

We cannot expect to meet the challenges of the 21st century by relying on the policies we used in the 20th.

In the IBEW’s 134-year history, we have survived and grown by adapting to the demands of the moment.

There is no greater demand right now than ensuring that every construction project, big and small, is built by skilled IBEW men and women. And it is the responsibility of every IBEW leader from the local level on up to make it happen. ■

Your Right to Work Safely

Of all the things unions fight for, there’s one that eclipses everything else: Your right to return home from work every day alive and well.

Since the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was established in 1970, workplace deaths have dropped by more than 60%. But as we’re reminded on Workers Memorial Day every April 28, there’s still a long way to go.

In 2022, the most recent data, 5,486 workers were killed on the job and 120,000 died from occupational diseases. In workplace injuries and illnesses overall, there was a slight uptick to 3.5 million reported incidents.

With line work and the construction trades representing two of North America’s most dangerous professions, the IBEW has a lot of practice fighting for safety standards and enforcement.

But we’re going to need a bigger, louder army. We’re going to need all of you. Four years of historic progress for America’s workers is under fire, including safety rules and meaningful fines for law-breaking employers.

Take what was nearly the first-ever federal standard for heat safety. The IBEW and our allies pushed for it with increasing urgency as summers got hotter. In recent years, workers in some areas of the American South and Southwest have endured weeks on end of temperatures above 100 degrees.

Water, shade and rest breaks can be a matter of life and death, and we make sure they are included in IBEW contracts.

For the millions of other people working outdoors, relief was in sight. But in February, the Trump administration blocked the heat standard from becoming law.

In Congress, there’s a bill to abolish OSHA altogether. Its sponsor, Arizona Rep. Andy Biggs, thinks workers’ safety should be up to the states alone. Heat danger is a case study in why that’s a problem.

When several cities in Texas and Florida enacted rules requiring water and rest breaks, both states’ Republican Legislatures made such ordinances illegal. In Biggs’ home state, they’re trying to do the same thing. They’re angry about a rule passed by the Phoenix City Council in 2023, when there were so many heat-related deaths, coroners had to bring back COVID-era refrigerator trucks.

Unions fought for the Phoenix standard and are pressuring the Legislature to keep its hands off it. Let’s never forget the power we have at the city, county and state levels.

Nationally, you can join the fight to save OSHA and the protections we’ve largely taken for granted for decades. As Workers Memorial Day approaches, keep an eye out for rallies and memorials, and call your senators and representatives via the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

Just like having our brothers’ and sisters’ backs on jobsites, taking action is another way we keep each other safe. ■



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

My IBEW STORY

Tamer Kirac, journeyman marine electrician
Seattle Local 46



“I started the electrical trade at Lockheed Shipbuilding and Construction Co. on Harbor Island in Seattle, working in the evenings and attending the University of Washington during the day. Initially, I was working as a ship scaler, but I had an interest in the marine electricians’ trade. I enjoyed working near them, asking lots of questions on the job, participating in evening classes for blue-print reading and learning as much as possible. The foreman was curious about me, this 22-year-old kid asking all these questions.

After about six months, the IBEW marine unit at Lockheed formed a committee to test me. I passed with flying colors because I enjoy working, read a lot, and I’m quite a handyman. I became a journeyman electrician and have continued with this work since the mid-1970s.

Over the years, I have worked intermittently at the shipyards and as an economic development professional, for which I received graduate degrees from the University of Washington. My employment at Pacific coast shipyards has always been as an IBEW member, as I continued my membership for Local 46 job opportunities when I returned home from international consulting work.

The shipbuilding industry has been great to me. Lockheed Shipbuilding is gone, but Todd/Vigor and other smaller shipyards in the area remain. Every time I visit the IBEW, there are always people I know, some I’ve known for 50 years or so. It’s always nice to be able to just sit down and have a coffee and discuss how things are going.

Harry Thompson, an IBEW representative and journeyman, is a super guy, and we have both worked at a smaller shipyard, Lake Union Drydock. I see him quite often — he comes to the shipyards about once a month, which is great because there’s always issues and things to discuss. It’s been a very interesting exchange of knowledge, experience, issues and politics over the years. I’ve learned quite a bit, and I hope I’ve been useful to all the shipyards I’ve worked for in the last 50 years or so.

The electrical trade has shown me throughout my life and professional career that labor contributes positively to society. When it’s organized, it contributes even more, and the electrical trade is one of the more organized trades in North America. Having worked in a lot of countries, there is nothing equivalent to it.

I have always used it as an example, making a more productive, wage-equitable trade that is supported educationally and financially. It contributes to any society where there is electrical work needed, which is everywhere.

IBEW membership provided me the opportunity to work as a marine electrician while attending school after my swing shifts. The pay scale was great, covering necessary expenses for me and my wife. And being almost 75 years old, still working at the local shipyards is a reward itself.”

Share your story at ibew.org/MyIBEWStory

THE METER

\$280 MILLION

The value of approved projects in the San Bernardino, Calif., school district covered under the new community works agreement — similar to a project labor agreement — that Local 477 helped win.

See “Patience, Relationships Lead to Big Win for California Local” on page 10.

A Storybook Project

L.A. Local's Skill, Creativity Take Narrative Art Museum off the Page

When you win the contract to build a museum dedicated to storytelling art, you shouldn't be surprised when construction isn't straightforward.

The IBEW-built Lucas Museum of Narrative Art in Los Angeles is an extraordinary edifice. It looks like someone converted the skull of a space whale into the headquarters of an intergalactic police force from George Lucas' "Star Wars" universe.

The billion-dollar endeavor employed more than 4,000 union workers, including more than a hundred members of Los Angeles Local 11.

"This is a custom building. Most projects, you get a print, you get standard material, and then maybe one part that was unique. Maybe two. A special detail. This entire project is a special detail," said Local 11 Business Manager Robert Corona.

It wasn't even supposed to happen here.

When Oscar-winning director and producer Lucas and his wife, Mellody, announced plans in 2012 for a museum dedicated to paintings, sculptures, murals, photography, comic art, book and magazine illustrations — any and all art committed to telling a story — the home they had in mind was an abandoned airfield in San Francisco.

By 2014, though, the project took flight and landed in a parking lot outside Soldier Field in Chicago. Reception to the design was, at best, mixed. Critics said the design — a cross between a circus tent and Jabba the Hutt's palace covered with thousands of milky white fiberglass-reinforced polymer panels — was an eyesore. Lawyers, judges and politicians spent years squabbling, and the parking lot stayed a parking lot.

By 2017, the Lucas museum was nothing but dreams. And where do dreams go to come to life? Hollywood. Or in this case, a few miles south.

The museum had a birthplace, the 160-acre superblock in south L.A. called Exposition Park, already home to the Coliseum; the Natural History Museum; and BMO Stadium, the venue for Major League Soccer's Los Angeles FC.

Ground broke in March 2018, and Local 11 members set to work with thousands of other construction workers targeting an opening in 2021.

Inside would be 100,000 works from Lucas' billion-dollar narrative art collection, from initial drawings and props from the "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones" sagas to 2,000-year-old mosaics pulled from Roman ruins.

Not every interesting building requires interesting work, said Local 11 Business Representative Errol Cutley. Conduit is conduit and a light switch is a light switch in a lot of fancy buildings. Not here.

"There is not a straight angle in that place, and everything, I mean every component, is unique," he said.

The project labor agreement covers nearly every trade, and almost a half-dozen signatory contractors have been on site over the years, Cutley said. Journeymen and apprentices have been called on for medium-voltage, low-voltage, fire alarm, radio wire and communication installations.

Cutley said he heard from the Local 11 members on the project that, yes, the unique design of the building created some of the challenges on the project, but integrating all the custom components into control systems was the true challenge.

"Every light in every room is specific in size and shape, from strings of LEDs to spotlights that can move, change brightness and warmth. All of it is integrated into a wireless control system," he said.

The building was also designed to make

renovation easier, Cutley said. Instead of running conduit through a concrete slab, for example, a large part of the foundation was replaced with Styrofoam sheeted over with concrete.

"The conduit is embedded in the Styrofoam, which in some areas is six feet thick. In future remodels, you just simply peel back the concrete top, and you have much easier access to conduit," he said.

But even though the museum building's odyssey was over, there was still a struggle or two before the happily ever after. Few battles are bigger than what the construction faced in 2020.

"Everything slowed down," Corona said.



"Most projects ... maybe one part that was unique. Maybe two. This entire project is a special detail."

— Local 11 Business Manager
Robert Corona

Members of Los Angeles Local 11 are wrapping up work on the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art in Exposition Park. The museum is an extraordinary demonstration of our members' skill, combining unique power, lighting and low-voltage components into a smoothly operating integrated system. The 300,000-square-foot building will spread over five levels and integrate uniquely shaped solar panels, a green roof, on-site battery storage and a grid connection. Every lighting element in the gallery space, library, learning studios, two theaters, restaurant, cafe and event space is custom and specific.



"Some of the delay was that everything was delayed, but some of it was rethinking and redesigning."

In 2021, the opening was planned for 2023, and in the next year extended to 2025. In January, even though construction was nearly complete, the opening was bumped a little further, to early 2026.

Not all the complexity of the build was the result of its style. There are multiple sources of power, including solar and the grid, but also an on-site battery storage facility that sometimes takes power from the building and sometimes provides it. This isn't necessarily new, but Corona said it highlights where the IBEW shines.

"If we become glorified installers, taking

something out of a box and hanging it on a wall, we become as replaceable as what we are installing," Corona said. "Our value is our skill in integrating lighting, power, fire and communications systems, however complex the plan."

Delivering that work from a trained, diverse, local workforce, Corona said, is why this project was always going to be wall-to-wall union.

"The nonunion side is not competitive on private projects in Los Angeles at this scale and this complexity, and they haven't been for decades," he said. "Will we always get them? I hope so, and our investment in organizing and training is what we do instead of relying on hope."

Corona said it is important to remember that

even though most buildings of this kind wear the name of the people who paid for them, you shouldn't be fooled into forgetting the people who made them real.

"The first job I worked on as an apprentice was the Convention Center expansion. Huge project. I was there 18 months. And what's cool about that is, when I go there for a car show or a meeting or dinner, there's lights I can point to and say: 'I put that in. My sweat and actual blood took this off a piece of paper and made it real,'" Corona said. "I know my kids roll their eyes, 'Yeah, I know, Dad.' And everyone else takes it for granted. But we know. The professional who made it knows what it takes. And these structures will last because of us." ■

2024 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

YOUR UNION, IN **FULL COLOR**

FIRST PLACE (\$1,000)

Bobby Vredenburg | New City, N.Y., Local 363

Bobby Vredenburg took this picture of fellow Local 363 member John Carlstrom while the two worked underground and repaired an automatic transfer switch. All the wires shown are routed into the manhole from the bus, a conducting system that connects different parts of a circuit or power system. "I like that it shows the beginning of what we had to do and how much of a mess we had to figure out," said Vredenburg, a journeyman wireman who used a Google Pixel 3 camera. "That's all the wires right after they are pulled. We had to figure out what goes where and make them look nice before we passed them on for them to bolted into the bus up top." Vredenburg was working for signatory contractor Perreca Electric.



"I like that it shows the beginning of what we had to do and how much of a mess we had to figure out."

Rules for entering the 2025 contest will be advertised in upcoming issues of The Electrical Worker, as well as on our website and social media.



SECOND PLACE (\$750)

Darren Asuncion | Anchorage, Alaska, Local 1547

Using his iPhone, Darren Asuncion captured this beautiful view on Alaska's Kodiak Island. Fellow Local 1547 member Michell Kane looks into the distance during a break installing a "hub" jump while working for the Kodiak Electric Association. Essentially, workers perform an electrical jump where the blades attach at the highest point of a wind turbine. The work is dangerous if not done safely but also offers stunning views like this. "It was a fabulous day," said Asuncion, a foreman for Kodiak Electric. "I took out my phone and started taking some pictures."



THIRD PLACE (\$500)

Richard Cottrell | Philadelphia Local 98

A few years ago, Philadelphia Local 98 camera operator Richard Cottrell was working on a Philadelphia Eagles pregame show outside Lincoln Financial Field for Comcast SportsNet, now known as NBC Sports Philadelphia. "I'm typically the one guy on site that's not taking any pictures" with a smartphone, said Cottrell, a 25-year-plus IBEW member who also serves as a shop steward. But this time, the sun was shining just right on the show's open-air stage, and "I noticed the shadow with the two lights when the guys were lighting it," he said. He pulled his phone out of his pocket and snapped the scene from several angles, deciding this one was perfect for photo contest consideration.



BROADCASTING
Lee Pfannerstill | Chicago Local 1220

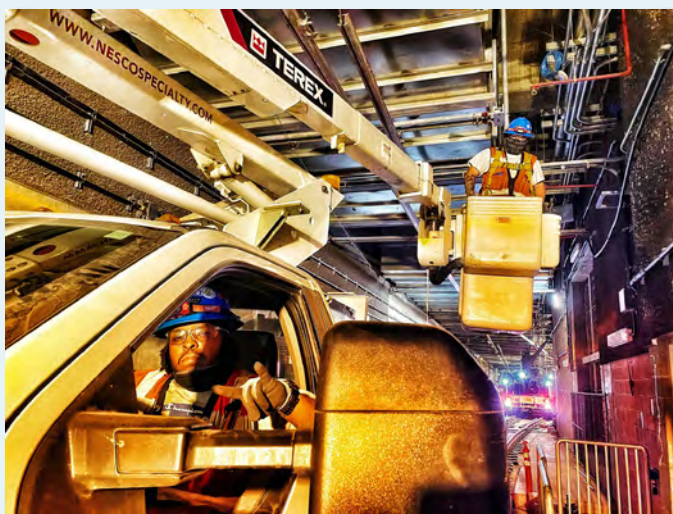
HONORABLE MENTIONS (\$200 EACH)



GOVERNMENT
Carlos Contreras | Kansas City, Mo., Local 53



MANUFACTURING
Joseph Meza | Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245



INSIDE CONSTRUCTION
Natalie Anaya | Los Angeles Local 11



OUTSIDE CONSTRUCTION
Justin Mann | Chicago Local 9



TELECOMMUNICATIONS
Josh Saladino | Tampa, Fla., Local 824



RAILROAD
David Fuller | Little Rock, Ark., Local 807



UTILITY
Jamie Lowe | Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 258

‘WE KNOW HOW TO BUILD’

How IBEW Members Rallied to Fight, Report On and Rebuild From L.A.’s Devastating Wildfires

For 24 days in January, the nightmare of an urban wildfire consumed parts of Los Angeles.

On Jan. 7, a bone-dry wind roared out of the Mojave Desert, over the San Gabriel Mountains and down into Los Angeles. The wind whipped small brush fires like a bellows in a forge.

By the time the 14 fires were under control at the end of January, 29 people were dead, 200,000 were forced to flee their homes — often with nothing more than they could carry on their backs — and at least 18,000 structures were destroyed.

They were the most destructive fires in Los Angeles history, with an estimate of more than \$250 billion in total economic damage.

Whenever there is a disaster anywhere in North America, whether it’s an ice storm in the Upper Midwest or the annual parade of hurricanes in the Southeast, IBEW members are always among the first to arrive. They clean up. They repair. They rebuild. They keep the fire fighters and public safety officials safe, powered up, warm and connected.

“In times of disaster, IBEW members as emergency responders don’t hesitate — we step up,” said Ninth District International Vice President Dave Reaves. “The devastation these wildfires left behind is heartbreaking, but our brothers and sisters showed the true strength of this union, not just by rebuilding power lines and communication networks, but by lifting up their communities.”

The response to the two largest fires — the Palisades fire near the ocean and the Eaton fire 30 miles inland in the town of Altadena — required the routine skills of IBEW linemen responding to day-to-day emergency calls, but at a vastly different scale.

Workers were sent by Southern California Edison into chaos to restore order shift after 16-hour shift, some for eight weeks.

“Our linemen do scheduled maintenance, and we do emergency work on the grid: replace poles, pull wire, hang transformers, remove the old equipment. The work is the same. When it’s a tragedy, the pressure is higher and the conditions are worse,” said Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47 Business Manager Colin Lavin.

In Altadena, where the damage from the Eaton fire was concentrated, thousands of homes and businesses in the mostly middle-class community were vaporized by the fire. Lavin said close to 600 Local 47 members were assigned there in the weeks after the fire.

Local 47 Business Representative Craig Blair worked in Altadena as an apprentice and now supervises Edison crews from Orange County. Many of his crews were deployed to Altadena. As Blair checked in on them, he drove down the same roads he’d driven as an apprentice, but they were empty now, and everywhere around him was flat and gray.



January fires in Pacific Palisades and Altadena started in the hills but did not stay there. Wildfires became urban conflagrations that killed at least 29 people and destroyed thousands of homes, businesses and nearly the entire electrical distribution network in those neighborhoods.



More than a thousand IBEW members from at least five locals were involved in the weeks-long recovery effort, from line crews setting poles to data technicians rebuilding emergency services to reporters covering the tragedy.

“It was surreal. I have never seen blocks and blocks of city burnt to the ground,” he said. “As far as you could see in every direction, there was just ash, a concrete pad, and then there would be one house standing. The mind has a hard time comprehending that much devastation, and then ... one house.”

Blair’s crews worked from 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Each morning, they would arrive from their hotel to a central mustering point or laydown yard at the Santa Anita racetrack. A camp kitchen hauled behind a semitruck served breakfast and provided everyone a sack lunch.

Local 47 field accounting members managed the mountain of poles, wire reels and transformers. Each night, the auger, bucket and pickup trucks came back empty, and the crews would prep the material for the following day. At sunrise, they would drive into the barren neighborhoods and work until dark.

“They wanted you done with your physical work before dark. There’s no power. It’s pitch black,” Blair said. “I know a big portion of the early focus was to get the streetlights back up.”

Crews set poles, strung conductor and hung transformers. Wherever there were surviving houses or businesses, they would install service to the house. Blair said the crews could all see one another, even though they were working in dense suburban neighborhoods.



“There were no leaves, no houses, nothing,” he said.

The work was similar at the Palisades fire, but the terrain and the neighborhoods were vastly different.

Above the famed beaches of Malibu, Pacific Palisades is a maze of canyons, said Local 47 Business Representative Jim Tice. Each canyon has a single road that weaves between a few dozen houses, some of them deep in the shadow of the mountain and others on high

bluffs with views across the ocean.

In Altadena, the winds blew the wildfire down toward densely populated neighborhoods. In the Palisades, fires drove south from the heights of the Santa Monica Mountains into the valleys. In one, all the houses would be gone, but the next valley, for seemingly no reason, would be spared, Tice said.

Hundreds of people fled down the narrow canyon roads only to abandon their cars as traffic clogged and the fire

snapped at their heels. A bulldozer was later brought in to clear a path through the burned and melted shells to let fire engines and repair trucks through.

The fire even jumped the Pacific Coast Highway to the mega-millionaires’ mansions lining the shore.

“I never thought I would see the sand on Malibu beach burning,” Tice said. “There were pieces of the houses on fire, cinders blown in burning on the beach. Everything burned.”



Local 47 line crews worked 16-hour days, seven days a week for up to eight weeks, rebuilding the distribution network, all too often for homes that were little more than concrete slabs and a chimney stack.

Roughly 50 Edison crews, each made up of about five Local 47 members, met each morning at a laydown yard in Calabasas.

“One crew is replacing everything, and a whole separate group would come and collect whatever was left of the old,” Tice said. “The fire doesn’t disintegrate wires, but they melt. Cars melt. There might be a stub of a pole. Most of the wire is on the ground, but it is in pieces.”

It wasn’t only linemen called into emergency service.

Los Angeles Local 45 President Rita Martinez is a data communications technician and steward for the City of Los Angeles Information Technology Agency. When the fire tore through the northern edge of the city, it destroyed critical equipment in the first responders’ communications network, cutting off three fire stations at the heart of the struggle.

“The networks for the fire department all went down. All their fiber lines and hubs were burned,” she said. “Where we were working, the smoke was really dense. The houses, businesses, they were flattened.”

Martinez and crews from phone, microwave and data groups converted the entire communications network from wired to wireless and reconnected the firehouses to the city command post.

“We had to run generators to power everything and reconfigure the equipment to let it talk to the network. And we had to run cables up to new receivers or access points to carry the signal down into the station,” Martinez said.

Crews split into 12-hour shifts and worked around the clock until the job was finished.

Lavin, Los Angeles Local 11 Business Manager Robert Corona, Local 45 Business Manager Rodney Cummings and

Local 40 Business Manager Stephan Davis created a hardship fund for members affected by the fire. Eventually, it will accept donations from any IBEW member or local, Lavin said.

But the area’s locals and IBEW members haven’t waited. Tens of thousands of dollars have already been donated to brothers and sisters who lost all or part of their homes or had to evacuate for days at a time.

Local 47 members working in Paradise donated about \$30,000 to the community, a number that some signatory contractors matched, Lavin said.

The Local 11 Veterans Committee cleaned up the wreckage from a member’s burned out garage, Corona said, but that’s only one of the acts of kindness he knows of. He said he expects to hear about many more in the coming weeks.

“You don’t know what you can do, but you want to do something, so we put together care packages to deliver to shelters — feminine products, toothpaste, toothbrushes, body wipes. You don’t grab that when you could grab a picture or things you got from your parents,” Corona said.

They also put together supplies for the nearby fire station: coffee, water, snacks. They needed a police escort to deliver it, Corona said.

How the Los Angeles locals choose to support the wider community hurt by the fires is a decision they are leaving until the severity of the situation is more clear.

“Our local hall is in Pasadena, not far from Altadena. On that first day, I received calls from so many people who said to me: ‘I have to leave my home. I am gathering my stuff right now,’” Corona said. “It’s terrible, but it could have been so much worse. We lost too many people, but, thank God, most of what people lost is property. And we know how to build.” ■

IBEW Helps Lead Way to 40th Defeat of New Hampshire ‘Right-to-Work’ Bill

The latest drive for “right-to-work” in New Hampshire crashed into the brick wall of the state’s labor movement in February, as the IBEW and fellow unions overcame a huge Republican majority to defeat the bill for the 40th time.

“It was the heaviest lift of my career,” said state AFL-CIO President Glenn Brackett, former business manager of Manchester, N.H., Local 2320. “We started out 44 votes upside-down, and we ended up winning by 20.”

From campaign resources to member participation, Brackett said, the IBEW’s help was invaluable.

“The IBEW Second District really carried the day,” he said. “All I had to do was make a phone call, and the local unions turned out.”

The Feb. 13 vote in the House of Representatives was 200-180, with 25 Republicans joining Democrats not only to reject the bill but also to bar it from coming to the floor again until the 2027 legislative session.

For decades, national anti-union groups have spent tens of millions of dollars in New Hampshire attempting to pass right-to-work — a misnomer that weakens unions by allowing workers to reap the benefits of membership without having to contribute to the costs of bargaining and representation.

“Because of the hard work of our members and union brothers and sisters around the state, the majority of our lawmakers understand that right-to-work isn’t just bad for workers, it’s bad for jobs and the economy in places with these laws on the books,” said Mike Monahan, Second District international vice president. “We’ve won the battle 40 times, and we’ll win it 40 more if we have to.”

Monahan applauded the participation of locals in New Hampshire and those from Massachusetts and Maine with members across the state border. They include Manchester, N.H., Local 2320; Boston Locals 103, 104 and 2222; Dover, N.H., Local 490; Manchester, Maine, Local 1837; Worcester, Mass., Local 96; and Waltham, Mass., Local 1505.

Fighting back in New Hampshire has gotten tougher over the past 10 years under the trifecta of a GOP governor, House and Senate. And this time around, the margin between the parties jumped from two House seats in the last legislative session to more than 40 in the wake of the 2024 elections.

Local 490 Business Manager Eric Batchelor described labor’s vigorous campaign of mailings and message blasts to members that encouraged them to call and visit legislators, easily send letters and turn out to demonstrate in front of the Capitol.

“It was all hands on deck,” Batchelor said. “People who’ve been fighting this for decades say this was the greatest victory we’ve ever had with right-to-work.”

Peggy McCarthy, a Local 2320 member who served two years in the New Hampshire House and describes herself as an “Eisenhower Republican,” said some members of her party just need a little nudge to understand that they can support business and oppose right-to-work at the same time.

“It’s like: ‘Hey, it’s OK to vote against right-to-work. You’re not a bad Republican if you don’t vote for this,’” she said.

Brackett said the success of those strategies also depends on electing labor-friendly Republicans.

“One of the things we did proactively during the last election cycle, we actively

supported pro-union Republicans in primaries,” he said. “That was a huge component of our campaign to defeat right-to-work.”

He also stressed the solidarity of elected Democrats. All 180 House Democrats present for the vote — which came during an ice storm that kept some legislators away from the Capitol — were unanimous in rejecting the bill.

Even some employers publicly opposed the legislation.

“We were able to coordinate testimony from our New Hampshire NECA chapter manager and some of our NECA contractors to testify at the hearings,” said Ed Starr, a Second District international representative. “Their message was ‘We don’t need the government getting involved in our relationship with the union.’”

McCarthy, a central office technician with Consolidated Communications, made a similar point in testifying against the bill, saying it “attempts to insert government into an existing, functioning private arrangement.”

“My fellow union Republicans and I have had a challenging time in New Hampshire,” she told the House Labor Committee in January. “I’ve never understood the Republican disdain for unions. Aren’t we about limiting government interference and empowering individuals?”

“I took my job 28 years ago because it’s a union shop,” McCarthy continued. “I benefit from good wages, health care, retirement, safe work rules, paid medical leave and pay equity — six major labor issues that were negotiated, not legislated.”

“We keep the power on, we keep you online, we keep you safe, warm and connected, and get you where you need to be. We make prosperity possible. We are doing our part — please do yours.” ■



The IBEW and other New Hampshire unions rally outside the Capitol in Concord to urge members of the majority-GOP House to vote “no” on the latest attempt to pass a “right-to-work” law, campaigns bankrolled every year by anti-union forces outside the state. “We started out 44 votes upside-down, and we ended up winning by 20,” said AFL-CIO President Glenn Brackett, former business manager of Manchester, N.H., Local 2320.

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Manitoba Represented on U.S. Skills Show

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Local 2085 member Madina Nur could feel the pressure last September while competing in the Ideal Championship in West Palm Beach, Fla., and not just because she was the only electrician from Canada to qualify for the electrical tool maker's annual televised tournament.

"As soon as you step in, it's just like a fishbowl, with everybody looking at you and cameras and lights," said Nur, a third-year apprentice who works for IBEW signatory contractor McCaine Electric. "It was extremely nerve-wracking."

Nur's electrical trade career began after high school as a labourer on an industrial site.

"I saw what all the trades do and all the different options I had for work. I never really got to see that in high school," said Nur, who was soon accepted into Local 2085's Apprenticeship Manitoba program.

"I could see right from the beginning that Madina is extremely intelligent with theory, and her practical skills were really good," said Steven Sprange, a Local 2085 member who teaches pre-employment skills at the local's Code of Excellence Training Center. "She was the only person I've ever taught who got 100% on a code final exam."

Nur has also experienced a breadth of work situations during her apprenticeship, starting with construction on a Manitoba Hydro building to control dams in the northern part of the province. "I got to pull heavy wire and look at switch gears and see all kinds of stuff," she said.

More recently, Nur has worked with McCaine on projects at Winnipeg's St. Boniface Hospital and StandardAero, an international airplane manufacturer.

"Madina has a really good attitude and work ethic, which is something that's really hard to teach," Sprange said. "She always had stuff ready to go, always was looking for more to do."

Nur learned about the Ideal competition through Local 2085, which teamed up with the company to hold qualifiers at the training center.

"Initially, I was like, 'That sounds cool,' but Florida wasn't even in the forefront of my mind as a possibility," she said.

That didn't keep her from winning first place. "Others were faster, but they didn't do things correctly," she said.

Shortly afterward, Nur passed an online electrical code quiz meant to help narrow the field of thousands of competitors from across Canada and the U.S. "It was nice that [the quiz] came with a Canadian code version," she said.

Next, she had to work on a competition kit that was mailed to her. "[Ideal] wanted you to film yourself putting together three receptacles," Nur said:

"one wired regularly, then a [ground fault circuit interrupter] receptacle, and then another regular receptacle that needed to be protected by the GFCI."

After submitting her video, Nur was notified that she had been selected for an all-expenses-paid trip to West Palm Beach for the 2024 electrical championship, to compete for a share of more than \$30,000 in cash and prizes.

There, she joined five journeyman wiremen and nine other apprentices from across the U.S., a mix of IBEW and non-union electricians that included the competition's only other woman, Oklahoma City Local 1411 apprentice Abby Roush.

The two-day championship also featured competitions for workers in HVAC, plumbing and auto tech, with the electricians' challenge as a grand finale. Each apprentice was instructed to install an electrical subpanel and then an air handler with a heating coil. Jobs like these might take experienced journeymen

several hours to complete. The apprentices had 90 minutes, with judges and TV cameras following every move.

"I guess they wanted you to show your thinking skills," Nur said. "They don't give you much prep time, and I definitely did not get as much done as I would have liked to, but I tried my best."

While Nur didn't take home one of the top prizes, she hasn't ruled out competing again. "It was definitely a good experience," she said. "I'll see how I feel about it when it comes around for qualifying again."

First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk congratulated Nur on her role-model performance. "Bringing more women and first-generation Canadians like Madina into the IBEW is extremely important to the future of our union," he said.

The competition aired in December on the CBS Sports Network. It's viewable online at youtu.be/rKcTtCjdx0g.

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Local 2085 apprentice Madina Nur, representing Canada last fall at the Ideal Championship in Florida, confers with Chip Wade, the television show's host.



Credit: Ideal Industries

Share your IBEW news!

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

Le Manitoba est représenté dans un concours aux É.-U.

Durant la compétition Ideal Championship, la membre Madina Nur de la section locale 2085 de Winnipeg au Manitoba pouvait sentir la pression en septembre dernier à West Palm Beach en Floride; et pas parce qu'elle était la seule électricienne du Canada d'avoir été qualifiée au tournoi télévisé annuel du fabricant d'outils.

« Aussitôt arrivée, c'est comme un aquarium, tout le monde te regarde, les caméras et les lumières », déclare Mme Nur, une apprentie 3e année qui est à l'emploi de l'entrepreneur signataire de la FIOE, McCaine Electric. « C'était extrêmement angoissant. »

Le parcours de Mme Nur a commencé après le secondaire. Elle a travaillé sur un site industriel.

« J'ai vu tout ce que font les métiers et les différents choix qui s'offraient à moi. Je n'ai pas vraiment vu ça au secondaire », dit Mme Nur, qui a été aussitôt acceptée dans le programme d'apprentissage du local 2085 au Manitoba.

« Je me suis tout de suite aperçu que Madina est extrêmement intelligente dans la théorie et ses compétences pratiques étaient très bonnes », formule Steven Sprange, un membre du local 2085 qui enseigne les compétences préalables à l'emploi au centre du Code d'excellence du local. « Elle était la seule personne que je n'ai jamais enseigné à obtenir 100 % sur un examen final en code.

Mme Nur a également connu un

large éventail de situations au travail pendant son apprentissage, en commençant par la construction d'un bâtiment pour contrôler des barrages à Manitoba Hydro dans le nord de la province. « Je tire de gros fils et je vérifie des appareillages de commutation et je vois toutes sortes de choses », dit-elle.

Plus récemment, Mme Nur a travaillé sur les projets de McCaine à l'hôpital St. Boniface à Winnipeg et à StandardAero, un fabricant international d'avions.

« Madina a une très bonne attitude et une bonne éthique de travail, il s'agit de choses vraiment difficiles à enseigner », déclare M. Sprange. « Elle accomplit toujours ces tâches et cherche toujours à en faire plus. »

Mme Nur a appris l'existence d'Ideal compétition grâce au local 2085 qui a uni ses forces à l'entreprise pour trouver des personnes qualifiées au centre de formation.

« Au début, je me suis dit "c'est génial", mais la Floride n'était même pas une possibilité qui me venait à l'esprit », exprime Mme Nur.

Ces paroles ne l'ont pas empêché de remporter la première place. « Il y en avait d'autres qui étaient plus rapides, mais ils n'exécutaient pas la tâche correctement », dit-elle.

Peu de temps après, Mme Nur a été soumise à un questionnaire en ligne sur le code électrique destiné à réduire le nombre de candidats parmi les milliers venus du Canada et des É.-U. « C'était bien de voir que le questionnaire avait

une version du code canadien », dit-elle.

Par la suite, elle devait travailler sur une trousse qui lui a été envoyée. « Ideal voulait qu'on se filme pendant qu'on assemblait des prises : dont une à branchement régulier, ensuite, une prise de disjoncteur différentiel de fuite à la terre et enfin, une autre prise à branchement régulier qui devait être protégée par le DDFT », dit-elle.

Après envoyée sa vidéo, Mme Nur a été informée qu'elle avait été choisie pour un voyage tous frais inclus à West Palm Beach pour le championnat électrique 2024 afin d'avoir la chance de gagner plus de 30 000 \$ en prix et en argent.

Elle s'est rejoint à cinq compagnons et à neuf autres apprentis des É.-U. et à un mélange de membres de la FIOE et à des électriciens non syndiqués où la seule autre femme en compétition était l'apprentie Abby Roush du local 1411 d'Oklahoma City.

Le championnat de deux jours présentait aussi une compétition pour les travailleurs dans le domaine du HVAC, de la plomberie, de la mécanique automobile et le défi des électriciens en guise de grande finale. Chaque apprenti devait installer un panneau électrique ensuite un appareil de traitement d'air muni d'un élément chauffant. Les

travaux de ce type peuvent prendre plusieurs heures à terminer pour des compagnons expérimentés; 90 minutes avaient été accordées aux apprentis, sous le regard des juges et des caméras qui les suivaient partout.

« Je pense qu'ils voulaient qu'on démontre notre façon de penser », mentionne Mme Nur. « Ils ne te donnent pas assez de temps pour te préparer, et je n'ai définitivement pas eu assez de temps pour faire tout ce que je voulais faire, mais j'ai fait de mon mieux. »

Bien que Mme Nur n'ait pas remporté l'un des prix principaux, elle n'exclut pas de compétitionner à nouveau. « C'était définitivement une bonne expérience. Je verrai comment je me sens lorsqu'il s'agira de se qualifier à nouveau », dit-elle.

Le vice-président international du Premier District, Russ Shewchuk, l'a félicité pour sa performance exemplaire. « De compter plus de femmes et de Canadiennes et de Canadiens de la première génération comme Madina dans la FIOE est extrêmement important pour l'avenir de notre syndicat », dit-il.

La compétition a été diffusée en décembre sur la chaîne CBC Sports Network. Vous pouvez la trouver en ligne (anglais seulement) : <https://youtu.be/rKcTtCjdx0g>.

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

Local 26 RENEW Committee Brings Building Trades Together for Chess Tournament

Most people might not think of construction workers as chess aficionados, but the success of Washington, D.C., Local 26's chess tournament proved otherwise.

"It was more successful than we thought it would be," Local 26 President Tom Myers said. "It appears that the average electrician is more cerebral than commonly thought."

The January tournament was hosted by Local 26's RENEW chapter and open to all members of the local, as well as the area's building trades. More than 20 people registered for the first-ever event, and even more showed up at the door, said Logan Valle, the local's RENEW president. RENEW is a young workers initiative in the IBEW; Canadian locals have a similar program called NextGen.

"The chess tournament was a lot of fun," Valle said. "It felt really good to see all of the hard work that our RENEW committee members put into it pay off. And who knew watching the championship round would be so intense!"

The idea for the tournament came from RENEW Treasurer Wesley Hebler, who often plays virtual chess with co-workers during breaks at the jobsite. It quickly gained traction within the committee and then with Local 26 leadership.

"It was new and innovative, so we thought it was in line with the mandate of RENEW, which is to bring new and innovative ideas to the local and to train young leaders," said Myers, who attended the event. "New leaders need support whenever possible."

Attendees included rank-and-file members, Local 26 officers and agents, instructors and retirees, and members of other building trades unions.

"It was really surprising and satisfying to see so many individuals of different ages and classifications who might not otherwise come together on a jobsite," RENEW Vice President Carolyn Gillespie said.

Attendees were also treated to lunch before the playing started, which provided an additional opportunity to socialize.

"The best part of the event, in my opinion, was just before we started competing," Valle said. "Everyone was talking and laughing and encouraging each other before the tournament. It was like one big family meal."

The tournament got a financial boost from the Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building and Construction Trades Council, which donated funds for the RENEW group to purchase the chess sets. Local 26 officers personally donated \$300, which served as the prize for the tournament winner.

Due to the success of the inaugural tournament, there are plans to make it an annual event and keep it open to all building trades members.

"While RENEW membership is reserved for members 35 and under, we hope that by allowing members of any age to participate that we create an opportunity for the voices of the next generation to be heard and carried through the union," Valle said.



Washington, D.C., Local 26's RENEW chapter hosted its first-ever chess tournament in January, bringing out members of the building trades for an afternoon of strategy and friendly competition.

The Local 26 RENEW chapter has about a dozen active members who regularly attend other events put on by the local, from the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus' days of service to the Motorcycle Club's annual poker run.

"Whenever you ask them for help, they show up and are happy to participate," said Business Manager Joe Dabbs, who also attended the event. "That's important because every time we come together through work and conversation there are teachable moments of the challenges a union faces and the complexities of running a large local."

In addition to fostering union solidarity, the chess tournament is an opportunity to disprove the stereotype of construction workers as not being intellectual.

"It's an unfortunate and inaccurate notion. I'm sure all electricians, and tradespeople in general, would like to distance themselves from such an idea," Gillespie said. "Chess has been popular for a long time, and for good reason. But the game itself has acquired some unfortunate stereotypes as being elitist or ivory tower. Hopefully, we can push back against both of those flawed assumptions by hosting more of these tournaments." ■

Missouri, North Dakota Locals Reach Out to High School Students

With construction on the rise and college tuition prohibitively expensive for many, more high school students are taking a look at the trades. St. Louis Local 1 and Minot, N.D., Local 714 are two locals among many in the IBEW that are meeting this moment.

"We need these kids coming into the trade," Local 714 Business Manager Bob Wolf said. "And if they come in ready, if they come in with that clay, we'll mold them."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there will be at least 80,000 net new jobs for electricians every year over the next eight years, roughly twice the rate of all other trades. And increasingly, young people are looking to the trades for a debt-free and rewarding career. One report found that 93% of Generation Z graduates and 80% of parents said learning a skilled trade can be a better route to economic security than college. Gen Z is roughly defined as people born between 1997 and 2012.

"We've seen a shift in what our society needs and values as a career over the last few years, and I think it's important that students know that a four-year degree isn't the only pathway to success," said Nick Ziegler, an instructor at Minot High School who teaches construction classes.

Minot High recently revamped its electrical wiring program to follow curriculum established by the Electrical Training Alliance. One part is hands-on, in which students create wiring diagrams, assemble circuits according to the diagrams, and then test or troubleshoot the circuits. The second part is virtual and facilitated by Local 714 and the Dakotas Electrical Apprenticeship, taking the students through the early stages of an electrical career and introducing them to subjects like electrical theory, codes and plan reading.

The course is in its infancy, but early results have been promising, Wolf and Ziegler said.

"We hit the trifecta. The kids, the IBEW and the community all benefit," Wolf said. "The kids get a leg up with a highly paid, in-demand career; the IBEW gets more electricians so we can man more jobs; and the community gets more skilled workers."

For students who choose to continue their electrical education, they get direct entry into Local 714's apprenticeship and will start with five of the seven course requirements completed for their first year, allowing them to top out sooner.

"This is a huge selling point for many of the students getting ready to graduate because it gets them there a little faster than their peers and gives them real, tangible goals where they can see their efforts produce results and advance their careers," Ziegler said.

In Missouri, the Ritenour School District Path to Trades program is a two-year work-based initiative that introduces high school students to various trades, including electrical careers, through its partnership with St. Louis Local 1. The program, which started in October, is offered to freshmen and follows them through their high school years, with the opportunity to continue their trades education at North Tech High School in their junior year.

"Local 1's role is to help these young men and women find their way into the union," Business Manager Frank Jacobs said. "Hopefully this will help them find their career path early on."

Local 1 also works with Missouri Works Initiative, a nonprofit supported by the state AFL-CIO, on programs with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater St. Louis and St. Mary's South Side Catholic High School. The pre-apprenticeships provide students with hands-on learning experiences, direct exposure to registered apprenticeships and career guidance.

They use the North America's Building Trades Unions' multicraft core curriculum and even provide the necessary workwear, Missouri Works Initiative Executive Director Megan Price said.

"We aim to de-risk new apprentices for both the contractors and unions," said Price, who is also a Local 1 member. "They are ready to hit the ground running on Day 1 of the apprenticeship."

The programs are supported in part by the Electrical Connection, a joint venture of Local 1 and the St. Louis NECA chapter. Local 1 also provides an instructor.

"Local 1 has been instrumental in our programs' success," Price said. "From opening the training center up to our students and showing off the electrical trade, to helping us find the best instructor for our program, in addition to the financial support, it all goes a long way."

While reaching out to students in high school can come with a degree of uncertainty, Local 714's Wolf noted that colleges and the military have long been doing it.

"Why not the trades?" Wolf said. "It's a great time to give these young people some exposure so they can see what it's all about and if it's a good fit for them."

Compared to other forms of outreach, it also provides a good return on investment.

"If we get five kids from the program, that's better than we'd do running an ad," Wolf said. ■



St. Louis Local 1 and Minot, N.D., Local 714 are just two of the locals that are taking advantage of changing attitudes about the trades vs. four-year colleges. "I think it's important that students know that a four-year degree isn't the only pathway to success," said Nick Ziegler, an instructor at Minot High School.

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

POWER AT WORK

A NEW PLAYBOOK

Patience, Relationships Lead to Big Win for California Local

San Bernardino, Calif., Local 477 officials saw attempts by the union trades to form a working relationship with their community's public school district come up short for more than a decade.

So just over two years ago, Political Director Ben Pratt and others within the local decided to try something new.

"I think the old playbook of storming into a school board or city council meeting and asking for something with nothing in return just doesn't work," said Pratt, who also serves as Local 477's vice president.

"You have to lay the groundwork by proving beyond rhetoric that you do offer something. This is a symbiotic relationship between the district and us."

The work paid off Feb. 5, when the San Bernardino City Unified School District Board voted unanimously to approve a community works agreement, or CWA, between it and the Inland Empire Building Trades Council. Local 477 was the lead negotiator for the council.

"Until it happened, I never would have imagined it would have been by a 7-0 vote," said Pratt, who has lived in San Bernardino nearly his entire life and whose children attended the city's schools.

A CWA is similar to a project labor agreement used on public works projects. They guarantee that workers, both union and nonunion, are paid a fair wage and that local residents are given priority in filling the work. Taxpayers benefit because these agreements eliminate costly delays and ensure that enough skilled construction workers are available to finish the job on time and on budget. It also provides guardrails against unscrupulous contractors looking to undercut working conditions.

"If we [Local 477] were spearheading this, Ben would be the tip of the spear," Business Manager Jason Eshelman said. "But we both know we would not have been successful if it was just Ben and me. We had a lot of help."

San Bernardino has a population of about 225,000 and sits about 60 miles east of Los Angeles. Unlike in the massive, and progressive, City of Angels, local politics leans conservative, so wins for organized labor are harder to come by.

That includes within the public school district, the eighth-largest in California with 47,000 students. A high-profile attempt to reach agreement on a CWA between the board and the building trades council failed in 2010, and little momentum had been generated to restart the process since.

That's where Local 477 came in, working in conjunction with the building trades council; the Inland Empire Labor Council; and the Southern Sierras Chapter of NECA, the IBEW's longtime management partner.

Not only did the board vote unanimously for the agreement, but one member gave a full-throated endorsement for all organized labor.

"Our country was at its greatest when unions were at their strongest," board member Michael Santos said.

Local 477 officials were disappointed with market share in their jurisdiction, and they identified the school system as one way to improve that. Even without a CWA, the local sent its organizers to career days and fairs involving the district's students, telling them the importance of an IBEW apprenticeship.

That was merely the first step.

"We decided that we needed to form a true community partnership before ever mentioning a



Members of San Bernardino, Calif., Local 477 along with friends and allies celebrate after the city's school board approved a community works agreement with the building trades Feb. 5.

working agreement if we were going to be successful," Pratt said. "Plus, it's the right thing to do."

With the help of a grant from the state's Department of Apprenticeship Standards, Local 477's JATC staff established an after-school pre-apprenticeship program in many of the district's high schools.

Training Director Jon Rowe and other instructors visited a high school once a week for 14 or 15 weeks. Students who successfully completed the program were guaranteed an interview for Local 477's apprenticeship program after graduation.

Rowe said he originally started the program to help bring more young people into the IBEW, not for a CWA. Turns out it accomplished both. Board members saw that Local 477 was invested in the students and wasn't just looking to land work.

"Schools are really eager for these pathways, and I think it's really important we harvest these relationships," Rowe said. "We told them, 'The IBEW and NECA are here to help, and we're going to prove it.'"

In the background, Pratt and Eshelman built relationships with board members, seeing what was important to each. One was concerned that women would not have fair access to the work. Another was concerned about Black and minority representation.

Local 477's political action committee met and endorsed candidates in the lead-up to last November's elections. Pratt was asked by some board members to speak to various jobs and industry panels.

They continued to exchange ideas, but other than when they were asked to speak during public comment sessions, Pratt and other Local 477 members did so quietly. They realized that most elected officials would rather not deal with potentially divisive issues just before an election.

Another byproduct from that: Potential opponents, especially from nonunion contractors, had little time to counter Local 477's work.

Pratt was a leader in the effort, but he asked other Local 477 members for help. He asked two women active in the local for suggestions on who would be good to speak to the board on how a CWA would ensure more opportunities for women in the trades.

That led them to Venessa Ingalls, a founder of Tradeswoman's Sisterhood, which promotes

gender diversity and empowering women in the trades. Ingalls is a member of Riverside, Calif., Local 440, which also is in the Inland Empire.

"It [a CWA] serves as a powerful tool to ensure local hire, which not only strengthens our communities, but provides our residents with family-sustaining employment opportunities," she said.

"It is essential we create a level playing field where all workers regardless of their race or gender can thrive and contribute to the success of our community," Ingalls continued.

Pratt said the CWA's final language will ensure just that — not just in the workforce, but on the management side, too.

"It really demonstrates we care about our women-owned and minority-owned businesses and contractors," he said. "That component means our local employers are going to be hiring

local alumni from this school district."

As in most large school districts, there's plenty of work to do. The San Bernardino board has approved about \$280 million in upcoming projects that will be covered by the CWA. Pratt and Eshelman expect Local 477 and its signatory contractors to be more than competitive in bidding for that work.

Eshelman said he was merely doing what any business manager would do: giving people room to do their jobs and supporting them when needed. Pratt and others were instrumental in building trust with the board members and showing them Local 477 cared about the students first.

Now, other nearby school districts are asking how they can incorporate Local 477's programs more into their systems, he said.

"We had a game plan, a battle plan and a blueprint," Eshelman said. "Everyone had an objective to accomplish, and we did it." ■

IBEW MERCHANDISE



IBEW CAST IRON SKILLET \$85.00

Custom 3D CNC Machined Cast Iron Skillet featuring the IBEW logo. Skillet measures 10" across and is pre-seasoned, ready to cook.

CAMOUFLAGE HAT \$20.00

Realtree patterned twill camouflage hat with custom IBEW lettering. Adjustable size to fit all.

BLACK LOGO WATCH \$100.00

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

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

www.ibewmerchandise.com

TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

Gina Cooper



Gina Cooper, the first woman to serve as an international vice president, retired April 1 after years of innovations and growth under her leadership in the Fourth District.

“No one has ever done it better,” said Austin Keyser, who was appointed as Cooper’s successor. “Gina’s ability to bring labor and management together across industries — construction, utility, line clearance — has been impressive and critical to our success in the Fourth District.”

Appointed by then-International President Lonnie R. Stephenson after the death of her predecessor, Brian Malloy, Cooper was sworn in Sept. 1, 2020, and elected at the 40th IBEW Convention in May 2022.

She also served the past four years on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO alongside federation President Liz Shuler, an IBEW sister from Portland, Ore., Local 125.

“Gina has left an indelible legacy on our union, having worked her way up through the ranks as an organizer, to her glass-ceiling breaking leadership as international vice president,” Shuler said.

“She’s inspired me and countless activists with her innovative approaches to growing membership, fighting for good union jobs and the right to safe workplaces and a secure retirement. We are forever grateful for her groundbreaking leadership.”

Cooper’s innovations, many of which revolve around her passion for organizing, include an assertive strategy to organize manufacturing workers and electric cooperatives, and networking with employers to create IBEW jobs.

“After 42 years of service to the IBEW, I feel like I’m leaving the IBEW better than I found it, and that’s the goal,” Cooper said. “The fighting Fourth District — that’s our mantra, we fight for our work — has absolutely prospered, and I’m so happy about that, but the credit goes to the amazing leadership of the local unions in the Fourth District and my staff. They are second to none. And I have every confidence that Brother Keyser will lead with distinction and continue our forward momentum.”

Cooper grew up in Nevada, where her father was a union plumber and her two brothers became union sheet metal workers. Her mother was a business agent and organizer for Locals 465 and 569 and later office manager for Local 357. As a young woman, Cooper joined the staff as a clerk.

“I really wanted to go through the apprenticeship, but back then, I was discouraged from doing it because I was a girl,” she said. “I was told that I

made a greater impact in the office, so I worked my way up to office manager, and then the local organizer had an organizing assignment for me, and I was hooked. From that day on, organizing was all I wanted to do. I loved it.”

Today, she is thrilled to see so many women thriving as IBEW electricians.

“We’ve come a long way, and I love it,” Cooper said. “When we were at the Women’s Conference and we had our Fourth District caucus, every single woman who was in the caucus was a foreman, a general foreman, a steward or an officer of their local union.”

Cooper’s IBEW career took her from locals in Las Vegas and California to IBEW headquarters in Washington, D.C., to the Fourth District as an international representative and ultimately as its leader.

“No one has ever done it better. Gina’s ability to bring labor and management together across industries ... has been impressive and critical to our success in the Fourth District.”

— Fourth District International Vice President Austin Keyser

In 1997, while attending an IBEW conference, Cooper met the then-business manager of Mansfield, Ohio, Local 688 and her future husband: International President Kenneth W. Cooper. After years of friendship and dating, he left his leadership position to join her at Local 396 as an assistant business manager.

A few years later, both moved to the International Office in Washington, D.C. — but not exactly at the same time.

“I like to remind him I have seniority,” Cooper said with a laugh. “I came on staff in November 2005, and he came on in March 2006”

After working in the Telecommunications and Government Employees departments, she became the first woman to serve as director of professional and industrial organizing for Membership Development, where she managed 50 field organizers and assisted with scores of organizing drives.

But her single biggest victory came after moving to the Fourth District as an international representative in 2015.

Ending two decades of failed attempts to organize Baltimore Gas and Electric workers, Cooper was a key part of the team that finally succeeded in 2017. The win brought 1,400 BGE employees into the IBEW and created Baltimore Local 410.

Cooper was one of the two lead negotiators who bargained the workers’ first contract, reaching agreement in 2019.

Between those kinds of successes and rave reviews from officers of local unions that Cooper serviced,

Stephenson decided she was the ideal person to take over the Fourth District after Malloy’s death.

“While I’m proud to appoint our first female vice president, it’s not the reason I chose Gina for this role,” he said at the time. “It’s because she is eminently qualified.”

Her initiatives include meticulous organizing plans for cooperatives, outside construction and the manufacturing sector, where the Fourth District team identified and assessed 371 plants in the district, which covers Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

“As of right now, we have identified 15,626 workers that we believe would be part of our bargaining units, and of that we’ve started active campaigns at four locations,” Cooper said. “We want manufacturing workers to know that the IBEW is the place for them.”

She’s also pleased with the success of industry nights at the district’s annual progress meetings and the Politics, Activism, Livelihood (PAL) training program that was created in the district to help members understand why the union is involved in politics and how politics affect their livelihood. That program is now a national program.

Throughout it all, her admirers say, Cooper unfailingly puts members first.

“What’s most impressive is Gina’s commitment to making decisions based solely on what’s best for members,” said Danielle Eckert, who heads Government Affairs as an assistant to the international president. “Her focus on members informed every high standard she set and resulted in incredible progress.”

Breana Malloy, a Fourth District international representative and daughter of Brian Malloy, said, “My dad always said, ‘It’s all about the members,’ and Gina embodies that sentiment in all that she does.

“Her accomplishments alone are evidence of that, but it’s undeniable after witnessing the leadership, strategic vision and work ethic she brings to work every day,” Malloy said. “The Fourth District is in a great position because of her, and we’re poised to build upon her many successes.”

With a close, blended family of five grown children between her and President Cooper — three daughters and two sons who live in four states — she is looking forward to spending more time with them and with her husband in retirement.

“Kenny’s job and my job, they’re both really high pressure,” Cooper said. “We don’t get to see each other a lot — he’ll be coming back into town, and I’ll be taking a plane out. We have date night at IBEW conferences.”

Eventually she’d like to have a couple of horses, some miniature donkeys and a cow, she said, but “my biggest goal right now is to support Kenny until he’s ready to retire.”

Whatever challenges are ahead for the IBEW, Cooper believes the future is bright.

“The Fourth District is truly a family — sometimes a dysfunctional family — but family nonetheless,” she said. “We always have each other’s backs, work together and never lose sight of what matters most, our family, our members and our work.” ■

APPOINTED

Austin Keyser



Fourth District International Representative Austin Keyser has been appointed the district’s international vice president,

effective April 1.

Keyser will finish the term of the retiring Gina Cooper. He was assistant to the international president for government affairs from July 2021 until August 2024, when he returned to the Fourth District. The district includes West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and Keyser’s native Ohio.

“No one has ever done the job better,” Keyser said of Cooper. “She commands respect for the IBEW because her plans were comprehensive and persuasive, and she built coalitions between labor, employers and political actors to benefit our members.”

While serving as assistant to the international president, Keyser was a frequent visitor to the White House. He also was a liaison between International Presidents Lonnie R. Stephenson and Kenneth W. Cooper and lawmakers on Capitol Hill. That work helped the IBEW play a key role in the passage of the landmark Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and CHIPS and Science Act.

A third-generation IBEW member, Keyser began his apprenticeship at Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 in 2001 and was made a steward before even topping out. He later served as assistant business manager, treasurer and membership development coordinator before being elected business manager in 2008 at the age of 29.

He left his position in 2011 to become the AFL-CIO’s Ohio director, then took over its entire Midwest operation in 2014. He returned to the IBEW in 2017 when Stephenson appointed him director of what was then called the Political and Legislative Affairs Department. He was appointed to the newly created position of assistant to the international president for government affairs four years later.

Keyser said his assignment was to deliver on the strategy created by Stephenson and Cooper to put the IBEW at the center of increasingly important industries — like solar, advanced nuclear, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and battery manufacturing — to ensure that members are doing the work.

“What they wanted, and I fought

for politically, was a world where the IBEW was an indispensable part of any business plan in those industries,” he said. “Whatever happens politically, if we are in their business plans from the beginning, our members will always have work and we will always have room for more.

“Vice President Cooper adopted that full-on at the district level,” he added. “She did it through specialized agreements, leveraging local politics, bringing all the pieces together into a comprehensive and comprehensible plan. She says it often, and I believe it: ‘We follow the plan, and we win.’”

A good example of that is grid-scale solar in Ohio, where electrical work was performed almost entirely by nonunion contractors a few years ago.

Now, more than three-quarters of it is performed by IBEW members, he said.

“In Ohio, the Republicans have supermajorities in the state House and Senate and all five [statewide] offices are red,” he said. “There was one blue senator [Sherrod Brown], and he just lost.

“But, if we’re honest, that’s been true in the Midwest since the Tea Party swept through 15 years ago,” Keyser added. “And yet, some of the biggest projects in the nation are in Ohio — the \$28 billion Intel plant in Columbus, the Honda-LG battery plant — and we have project labor agreements on all of them because they cannot do it without us. You just have to play the game as it exists and do the best you can.”

“Whatever happens politically, if we are in their business plans from the beginning, our members will always have work.”

— Fourth District International Vice President Austin Keyser

It’s a model he intends to continue across the Fourth District, including in the massive data center industry in Virginia and Maryland. Making sure IBEW members are doing the electrical work there is a priority, he said.

The most significant challenge the IBEW faces, he said, is maintaining the connection within and across the union as it grows.

“Like the vast majority of people in America today, most people who join the IBEW didn’t grow up in a union home,” he said. “It’s also a fact that we need to grow, and that can strengthen us or destroy us. We need to educate our newest members. We need them to understand prevailing wages and project labor agreements, but they won’t come in knowing.”

That responsibility will fall heavily on the people most trusted by the membership: the business managers.

“It’s a heavy load on top of just

TRANSITIONS continued on page 12

TRANSITIONS *continued*

running the machinery of the local — I know that. I was in their shoes, but there is no one our members trust more than the peer they elected to lead them,” Keyser said. “I believe in strong local unions that are part of our larger mission. My number one goal is to add as much value to our local unions as I can: help them organize, win better contracts, and educate and connect with our members.”

It’s the only way, he said, to chart the union’s course in a political climate that changed after the November elections.

“We will build on what we’ve won in the market regardless of political whims. When the political winds work against us, we resist. When they blow in our direction, we take as much ground as we can,” he said.

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

RETIRED

Donnie Colston



When Donnie Colston was a journeyman lineman with Louisville, Ky., Local 2100, he never dreamed that one day he’d be giving guid-

ance to federal agencies, negotiating with CEOs and testifying before Congress.

“When I was standing on top of a transmission tower, it wasn’t my in my head that I was going to be doing anything other than pulling wire,” said Colston, who retired as Utility Department director April 1.

Colston, who was initiated into Local 2100 in 1980, served in a number of roles, from shop steward to business manager, and even went into government work when then-Gov. Paul Patton appointed him labor liaison and director of administrative services for Kentucky’s Department of Workers’ Claims. But office work wasn’t for him, at least at the time, so after about a year and a half, he went back to the tools.

“I went right back to the truck,” Colston said. “I’d say most of the people that do it, they love the work. It’s very hard to get them away from it.”

But it wasn’t long before he was asked by his business manager to run the local’s political operations, which led to his working with the Greater Louisville Building and Construction Trades Council and the Kentucky chapter of the AFL-CIO.

“Donnie was so effective at engaging and motivating our affiliates and other trade unionists,” said retired Kentucky AFL-CIO President Bill Londrigan, who worked with Colston and has known him for over 30 years. “Not since Donnie was engaged in those efforts have we experienced such turnout and enthusiasm.”

Colston’s affinity for political work

eventually led to his appointment as an international representative in the IBEW’s Government Affairs Department in 2013. From there, he moved to the Utility Department. He was appointed director in 2017.

“I’m not sure that there are very many people who can say, ‘I’m a lineman and I have no college education, but I had the ability to testify before Congress.’”

— Utility Director Donnie Colston

“Donnie brought a lot of experience and wisdom with him to the International Office, and the IBEW is better for it,” said International President Kenneth W. Cooper, who’s also known Colston for years and helped him make the decision to leave Kentucky for Washington. “He’s a true union brother who always put the members’ interests first.”

Colston’s work as utility director entailed interacting with agencies including the Environmental Protection

Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. He also testified before Congress on four occasions.

“I’m not sure that there are very many people who can say, ‘I’m a lineman and I have no college education, but I had the ability to testify before Congress,’” Colston said. “To the IBEW’s credit, there are very few unions that bring a 30-year craftsman to the Hill. Only with the strength of the IBEW and its members can a journeyman lineman be given the opportunity to testify before Congress on the members behalf.”

Colston credits his time at the International Office with opening his eyes to all the ways government entities like OSHA and the EPA impact a utility worker’s job, and consequently why it’s important to be involved in that work. But his first love is the tools.

“The best part of being a lineman is knowing that you can accomplish something,” Colston said. “There’s nothing like the feeling of knowing how to fix something, fixing it, and then seeing the result when you’re done.”

Like a lot of lineworkers, Colston worked his fair share of power outages, often caused by hurricanes and other storms. While they kept him away from

his family, he said there’s a lot of job satisfaction that came with the work.

“I have yet to meet a customer that said, ‘No thank you, I don’t want my power.’ Every customer I ever had from the 30-plus years I was a lineman was thankful,” Colston said. “There aren’t very many jobs where you can say that. There’s a lot of gratification from knowing that you had the skills and the ability to complete the task and turn the power back on.”

Retired Louisville Local 369 Business Manager Larry Wendler has known Colston since their days leading their respective locals. They’ve even been known to refer to each other as “brother from another mother.” Wendler said he could always reach out to Colston at the International Office if he needed guidance.

“When I had an issue, I leaned on him. I respected his wisdom,” said Wendler, who also knew Colston’s father, a member of Local 369. “He’s a true leader.”

For Wendler, Colston will be remembered as always looking out for the interests of others, especially his IBEW brothers and sisters.

“He’s a truthful, outstanding person,” Wendler said. “I can’t say enough

about the person he is. He never put personal stuff first.”

In retirement, Colston said, it’s time to repay his wife for “putting up with my lineman butt.”

“It takes a special person to be married to a lineman because they know we’re not going to be there all the time,” he said.

Colston said they’ve got plans to buy a new camper and spend time enjoying the solitude and fires at as many campsites as possible.

“We’ll do a lot more things that we couldn’t do for all these years,” Colston said. “It’s time for us to travel.”

The IBEW and all it’s given him will always be close to his heart, Colston said.

“I am incredibly grateful to the IBEW for allowing me to be a voice for all my brothers and sisters in the utility industry,” he said.

Colston was awarded the Edwin D. Hill Award at this year’s Labor and Management Political Action Committee conference, held in March, for his decades of service to the utility industry on behalf of IBEW members.

On behalf of the officers, staff and members, we wish Brother Colston all the best, and a long and fulfilling retirement. ■

GROUND IN HISTORY

Little League Dreams, IBEW Generosity

As another baseball season begins, it’s time to recall a historical IBEW connection to our nation’s pastime.

What we know today as Major League Baseball was born in 1876, when eight teams came together to organize the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs. In 1901, the creation of the rival American League allowed for the first World Series in 1903.

Today, most major league stadiums were built and are maintained by IBEW members, but this is the story of one the most famous playing fields for the kids dreaming of becoming pro ballplayers.

Founded by Carl Stotz in 1939, the Little League began with three teams from Williamsport, Pa. Stotz developed the idea the previous summer when he invited his nephews and their friends to play games in Max M. Brown Memorial Park alongside Lycoming Creek.

Stotz experimented with various field dimensions in each game, helping him determine rules and standards tailored for children. The first Little League game was held on June 6, 1939. The format proved to be a success, and new teams quickly sprouted throughout Pennsylvania. In 1947, the first out-of-state team was formed in Hammonton, N.J. The time had come for the Little League to host its first World Series.

Held on Stotz’s field, the inaugural Little League World Series commenced on Aug. 21, 1947. It garnered national attention, and within a year there were teams up and down the coast, from Maine to Florida.

By 1949, Stotz’s original field was starting to show its age. The facilities were

Where Little League Baseball Was Born



Aerial view of the ball park at Williamsport, Pa., where baseball is a serious matter, as business manager of L. U. 812 explains in his accompanying letter.

This photo of the home of Little League Baseball in Williamsport, Pa., ran in the December 1949 *Electrical Worker*. IBEW members volunteered on field improvements that year.

in serious need of repair if they were to accommodate the ever-growing crowds. So, in preparation for the league’s 10th anniversary and the upcoming third Little League World Series, the trade unions of Williamsport volunteered their time to give the field an upgrade. Included among them was IBEW Local 812 of Williamsport

“Our electrical contractors, through the cooperation with Local 812, planned a program to purchase the material needed for the new buildings at the very lowest possible cost,” wrote O.F. Reeser, press secretary of Local 812, in the December 1949 issue of *The Electrical Worker*. “Our electricians volunteered their services and are to be commended for the fine spirit and work they performed toward the promotion of the birthplace of Little League Baseball.”

Stotz’s field would continue to host the Little League World Series until the construction of Howard J. Lamade Stadium in 1958 in South Williamsport, Pa. Today, there are over 180,000 Little League teams throughout the world, and every year the best of the best meet at Lamade Stadium for the World Series.

Stotz’s original field is still active and continues to host annual tournaments for local teams. In 2014, the field was added to the National Register of Historic Places, solidifying its place in our cultural history, a history that the IBEW was honored to play its part in. ■

Visit nbeiw-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.

LOCAL LINES

Fantasy of Lights and Pinning Ceremony

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — Fantasy of Lights, the Easterseals Rehabilitation Center’s festive holiday array and major fundraiser, had another successful season in 2024. Even after purchasing several new displays, the event still netted \$211,817. This will provide more than 2,100 therapy sessions to those who might not be able to afford these services otherwise. Since the event’s inception, more than \$4.7 million has been raised, and these funds could not have happened without the IBEW’s commitment to the community. Despite harsh weather, the Brotherhood set up, maintained and stored each of the fixtures throughout the event. Apprentices and instructors came out in full force, and it is encouraging to know that Local 16’s future is in such good hands!

The hall recently hosted a pinning ceremony to recognize more than 200 retirees for their years of service. Most notable of this distinguished group is Anthony “Tony” E. Russell, who received his 70-year pin. [See photo, bottom, left.] Tony’s friendship, sense of integrity, commitment to professionalism, and desire to promote the skills and values of the IBEW are treasured by all who know him. Thank you, Tony, for your example.

Donald P. Beavin, P.S.

2025 Work Outlook

L.U. 24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — Greetings from Charm City. Work has begun on two major data center projects at the former site of the Eastalco Aluminum Works in Frederick. Local 24 wired the Alcoa plant in the early 1970s and performed maintenance and plant upgrade work until it was shuttered about 20 years ago. The closing of the works, like so many other industrial sites across the U.S., was devastating to the working men and women of our communities. Beginning in 2021, Local 24, along with our partners in industry and government, worked to make the rebirth of the 2,200-acre site a reality.

Along with data center work in Frederick, our signatory contractors have been awarded major projects at Fort Meade, the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore, the Amtrak Frederick Douglass Tunnel, the CSX Howard Street Tunnel (double-stack) and the Ellicott City North Tunnel (flood mitigation).

In addition to the projects we have been awarded, we are working to support the development of a new container terminal port and US Wind’s monopile manufacturing facility. These projects are at Tradepoint Atlantic on the site of the former Bethlehem Sparrows Point plant.



Local 24 members working at the University of Maryland.

Like Eastalco, Sparrows Point was a major employer of our members but closed about 15 years ago. To date, Local 24 members have worked hundreds of thousands of hours on various redevelopment projects at the site. We will continue our efforts across our jurisdiction to ensure that signatory IBEW contractors have the opportunity to bid these projects and help us grow our industry.

Live Better/Work Union!

Mike McHale, B.M.



Local 16 thanks Tony Russell for 70 years of dedication to the IBEW.



Local 26 delegates attend the 2025 EVMC Leadership Conference.

Business Manager Joseph Dabbs Receives Special Appreciation Award

L.U. 26 (ees,em,es,govt,i&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — Our local’s Electrical Workers Minority Caucus delegates attended the EVMC 2025 National Leadership Conference in St. Louis in January and hosted a poker tournament in March. During the conference in St. Louis, at the Awards Scholarships Dinner Gala, Business Manager Joseph Dabbs received the Special Appreciation Award for his faithful commitment to advancing the goals of the EVMC.

Business Manager Dabbs has continued to give advice and guidance and has created a working language and approach to our district chapter in several critical matters.

Our RENEW group held a chess tournament in January and a meet-and-greet game night in March. For more information about all of our upcoming events and news, please visit our website at ibewlocal26.org.

Best wishes to the following retirees: William Arnold, Sharam Baghi, Steve Bowling, Ryan Boyer, Krystopher Buchman, Andrew Burgess, Luis Cabrera, Allan Cadwell, Warren Cooksey, Warren Davis, Brian Dawson, Christopher Emmell, Joseph Flanagan, Robert Georgine, Charles Granger, Larry Graves, John Harper, Rodger Harrison, James Hoffmaster, William Jones, John Kirscht, Daniel Lambert, Roy Leyh, Joseph McDonough, Richard McMullan, Clarence Miller, Edward Moore, Robert Schnackenberg, Andrew Strack and Terry Turner.

The following members have passed away since our last article: Richard Bayliff, Dannel Bolt, Patrick Burke, Robert Drev-enak, John Exline, Charles Ferguson, Lawrence Flesher, Brian Francis, Larry Grenier, William Haney, Kendrick Harris, Frederick Mace, Michael Malone and Paul Trainor.

Joseph Dabbs, B.M.

New Year, New Opportunities

L.U. 34 (em,i,mt,rts&spa), PEORIA, IL — Our local enters 2025 strong with an abundance of work projected for the year ahead. While several solar arrays are wrapping up in the Peoria and Quincy areas, more are on the horizon. Most notable is a 135-megawatt array in Ipava that is projected to employ 150 electricians.

Our membership continues to grow. We indentured a record number of apprentices in 2024, and 2025 promises to be comparable. One side effect is that we have outgrown our satellite office in Quincy. Research is underway to acquire a larger facility for the branch.

As always, stay safe and practice excellence, brothers and sisters.

Zachary Helms, V.P./Comm. Dir.

Local 80 Returns Home

L.U. 80 (i&o), NORFOLK, VA — Our local was thrilled celebrate its 125th anniversary Sept. 6-8 at the Rivers Casino in Portsmouth, Va. The weekend festivities included a Norfolk Tides baseball game and a special ceremony at the casino, which stands as a testament to the hard work and dedication of our electricians.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the members of Local 80’s RENEW group. These talented young men and women designed and built a float that was featured in Norfolk’s Grand Illumination Christmas Parade, where we were honored to take home the



Local 80’s new address at 5307 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk, Va.

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

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



Local 90's 2024 retirees celebrate a new chapter of life.

first-place award for non-commercial floats. Thank you for your creativity and commitment!

In exciting news, Local 80 has returned to its charter city of Norfolk with the purchase of the former Ironworkers Local 79 union hall at 5307 E. Virginia Beach Blvd. We are proud to be back where it all began and look forward to continuing our legacy in the community.

Christopher Query, A.B.M.

Honoring Local 90's 2024 Retirees

L.U. 90 (i), NEW HAVEN, CT — Our local held its annual retirement dinner and 25-year pin ceremony Oct. 17, 2024, at the Woodwinds banquet facility in Branford. [See photo, top, left.]

The retirees honored that night were Erec Betchley, Carolyn Bierce, Robert Blanchette, Dominic Borelli, Brian Bozzuto, James Bracken, George Cappola, Chester Champini, Angel Ferrer, Robert Guerrero, Raymond Pierso, Matthew Pisani, Charles Plungis, Edward Serrano, John Thompson, Gil Traverso, Chris Winingger and Tom Zajac.

The following 25-year pin recipients were also honored that night: Fred Anderson, William Bengtson, Brian Bocek, Ron Capasso, John Cislo, Robert Formanski, Scott Gerich, Anthony Giampa, Brian Godere, Richard Hunt, Joe Julian, Jeff Karavas, Bernard Knochenhauer, Joe Kularski, Ken Lomme and Gary Millette.

Business Manager Sean Daly and the officers of Local 90 wish all of the retirees a healthy and happy retirement!

John Bellemare, Pres.

Local 96 Retirees Holiday Luncheon

L.U. 96 (i), WORCESTER, MA — We hope everyone had a blessed and safe holiday season. We would also like to wish everyone a healthy and prosperous 2025.

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

Happy recent retirement to the following members: Leonard Ciuffredo, Joseph DeMango, John Healy, Jeffrey Lavallee, Richard Lemay, Michael Luukko, James Madden, Wayne Menard,



Local 96 retirees gathered to receive their service pins.

William Robinson, Kurt Smollin, Mark Vigeant and Michael Vizzo.

The following members celebrated years-of-service pins and awards with the IBEW: 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, Gary Kapurch, Joseph Kapurch, Paul Kasabula, Richard Lanney, Roger LaRochelle, Daniel Manzano, Michael Markarian, Norbert Perduta, James Rolf and Charles Saari (55 years); Anthony Desimone, Vincent DiLeo, Donald Garmy, Adam Skrzyzyczak and Chares Triba (60 years); and Sven Borglund, William Durkin, William McGee and Edward Nummelin (70 years).

William Perry, Bus. Rep.



An architectural rendering of Local 120's renovation, showcasing its modern design and expansive glass facade.

Local 120 Preparing for Expansion

L.U. 120 (c,i&o), LONDON, ON — Exciting news for our local: Following a successful application, presentation and membership vote, a renovation of the Offices and Training Centre has been approved, worth more than \$12 million. This project will more than double the current square footage of the union hall, sparking new opportunities for growth and development.

Key features of the renovation include:

- The addition of four full-sized classrooms.
- A warehouse exceeding 3,000 square feet dedicated to hands-on training.
- A large storage garage for machinery and training equipment.
- An open-concept second floor designed for future expansion.
- Additional offices and flexible spaces.
- Accessibility enhancements to ensure the facility is welcoming to all.

Local 120 is set to break ground this spring,

with the goal of providing state-of-the-art safety training, electrical training and trade schooling to our members by 2027.

Stay tuned for updates as we embark on this transformative journey!

Brennan Hepburn, P.S.

A Visit From the Land Down Under

L.U. 124 (ees,em,i,mar,rts,se,spa,t&ptc), KANSAS CITY, MO — Last November, Matt Everding, a delegate for the Electrical Trades Union Queensland and Northern Territory branch in Australia stopped by to visit our hall in Kansas City.

Matt is working on the Cross River Rail project in Brisbane, Queensland. It is the largest infrastructure project ever undertaken in the state. The CRR is a new 10.2-kilometer (6.3-mile) rail link and will be Brisbane's first underground rail line, consisting of four new underground stations, 5.7-km (3.5-mile) twin tunnels and upgrades to several existing aboveground stations. Brother Matt was optimistic when speaking about it: "It has been a challenging project, but I and the ETU will always stand up for the members of our great union in the fight for safety, wages and conditions." It was a pleasure to have him visit us, and he is welcome anytime at Local 124.



Scenes from the Local 134 family picnic.

Celebrating Local 134's 125th Anniversary

L.U. 134 (catv,em,govt,i,mt,rtb,rts,spa&t), CHICAGO, IL — This summer we will be honoring the momentous 125th anniversary of our local with a family picnic celebration Saturday, Sept. 6. This milestone allows us to reflect on our rich local history, memorialize the present and prepare for the future.

The 125th picnic will be at the IBEW campus at 6201 W. 115th St. in Alsip. Join us for food and drinks, music, ice cream, face painting, balloon twisters, bounce houses, pony rides, a petting zoo, games, prizes for the kids, and giveaways designed to commemorate this historic occasion. Please mark your calendars: We cannot wait to celebrate generations of hard-working, dedicated Local 134 members and honor their commitment to our great local!

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

Local 150 Events and Work Outlook

L.U. 150 (es,i,rts&spa), WAUKEGAN, IL — Greetings! We hope everyone is healthy and work is strong as we enter spring 2025.

Continuing education classes are still available for current members at our JATC; visit lakecountyjatc.org and sign up for a class today.

Local 150's summer events are just around the corner. We will be looking for participants and volunteers to help with the family picnic, softball tournament, bowling events, golf outing and car show, so call the hall to sign up. We look forward to seeing all of you there!

Our work outlook is strong for this year. On Jan. 24, the Illinois Supreme Court upheld the circuit court's previous licensing decision. This decision has given the city of Waukegan the authority to start construction on the permanent casino at Fountain Square with a completion date in 2027. In Grayslake, T5 Data Centers purchased 160 acres and secured permitting for a 1.2-gigawatt data center with twenty 60-megawatt buildings on site. This project has a tentative start date in May, with

projected completion in 2032. We look forward to the upcoming work.

Lastly, the \$500 scholarship applications for children of Local 150 active members are due May 30. We wish those who are college bound good luck.

Brothers and sisters, look out for one another and be safe out there!

Aaron M. Rendon, R.S./P.S.



Local 124 Business Manager Bo Moreno and Matt Everding, delegate for the Electrical Trades Union Queensland and Northern Territory branch in Australia.

LOCAL LINES

Holiday Fun at Local 164 Children's Party

L.U. 164 (c,em,i,o&t), JERSEY CITY, NJ — On Dec. 15, our local held its annual children's holiday party, and a great time full of holiday cheer and Christmas fun was had by all. With more than 200 attendees, our members and their kids and grandkids were treated to a wonderful time. There was great food, music and fun activities — a magician, bounce house, face painting, balloon animals and more.

Of course, Santa made an appearance along with a number of his elves, as well as Spiderman, Elmo, Mickey Mouse, Elf and the Grinch. The kids received presents from Santa and gave him their Christmas wish lists. It was a great day of fun, joy and solidarity. It was made possible by our Holiday Party Committee (Santa's Helpers), chaired by Brother Matt Benevento, who has led the charge of holiday fun for years. An incredible job was done by all, as they do every year.

Business Manager Dan Gumble; President Tom Sullivan; and the officers, agents and staff of Local 164 thank Matt and the committee of dedicated members for another great party, making the holidays special and fun for Local 164 children and families.

Wishing a happy, healthy and prosperous new year to all from Local 164!

Warren M. Becker, P.S.



Santa (Brother Robert Grippo) bringing holiday joy and fun to the children of Local 164.

IBEW Bug Artwork

L.U. 302 (i,rts&spa), MARTINEZ, CA — Recently, our local added a new piece of artwork to our hall, and Brother Javier Contreras from Local 234 is the artist who made it happen.

On a trip to Castroville Local 234's new hall, our organizers came across the IBEW bug painted on one of its walls. They were very impressed with how it looked. After talking with the staff, they found out that Javier was the artist responsible. We contacted him to see if he would be interested in painting one for us and, thankfully, he was.



Castroville, Calif., Local 234 member Javier Contreras contributed his talent to the IBEW logo at Local 302's hall in Martinez.

After many days of hard work, we now have one of our own. It really makes a statement in our hall, and it's also a perfect place for taking pictures.

On behalf of the members of Local 302, I would like to thank Brother Javier Contreras for doing an outstanding job and giving our local something we can all be proud of.

Tom Hansen, B.M./F.S.



From left, Local 340 EWMC attendees "Slim" Saleem, Troy Takara and Erik Lopez.

EWMC 2025 Conference Report

L.U. 340 (i,rts&spa), SACRAMENTO, CA — Four of our local's Electrical Workers Minority Caucus members attended the EWMC 2025 National Leadership Conference in St. Louis in January. There were more than 800 in attendance at the conference, and 260 attendees experienced this event for the first time. Two of our own were among those first-timers, and what a truly moving experience it was for them. They were excited to be part of such an inspirational conference.

One of our members shared that one of the conference events was speaking with juvenile offenders, some who have been incarcerated for years.

The objective was to share opportunities available with the IBEW upon their release.

One youth shared how he had been interested in another trade, but after connecting with one of our members, he gained confidence to get assistance in an apprenticeship with a nearby local. Despite the majority of the youth being set in their ways, with arms crossed and minds made up about their futures, the gratification of reaching just one made all the difference.

Being involved in the EWMC and the IBEW has proven how connected members are in the common goals of solidarity and brotherhood.

Robert Ward, B.M./F.S.

Still Rolling Into 2025

L.U. 364 (catv,ees,em,es,i,mt,rts&spa), ROCKFORD, IL — The first quarter has just flown by, and as we head into summer, work remains steady throughout our jurisdiction despite all the turmoil in Washington.

We are very excited about the work coming our way with the announcement of the idle Stellantis plant coming to life. Details are still being worked out, but the initial plan is to build a mid-size truck at the plant while Project Yukon moves along nicely across the street with about 100 journeyman wiremen onsite. This project tentatively looks to start interior work sometime in April.

Our Facebook project is nearing completion, with about 40 VDV techs and a handful of journeyman wiremen on site. We are optimistic that work will continue with more buildings being built to the east of the current site, but nothing has been set in stone, so we will see how these developments work out in the future.

We would also like to thank all the brothers and sisters from across the country who helped bring this work to completion. We couldn't have had the success we had without the help of the travelers on these projects, so once again, thank you.

Brad F. Williams, P.S.

Workers Memorial Lit Up for Labor Day

L.U. 494 (em,i,mt,rts,spa,t&govt), MILWAUKEE, WI — The Workers Memorial Gazebo, a cherished symbol of our community at Zeidler Union Square Park in Milwaukee, was without light since 2007. The gazebo, which opened in 1995, has been the revered starting point for decades for our Labor Day marches and commemoration events, a testament to our shared history and values.

Pam Fendt, president of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, contacted Local 494 organizer Ken Blaeske for assistance in relighting the gazebo. Ken diligently procured the necessary funds with the support of the executive board and the membership, demonstrating the power of our collective efforts.

The Milwaukee Area Labor Council and the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO have a long-standing memorandum of understanding with Milwaukee County to be the gazebo's stewards and keepers.

Thanks to the expertise and dedication of signatory contractor Dnesco Electric, the gazebo's electrical system was updated and the structure was relit, a significant milestone achieved in time for Labor Day.

Robert "Bob" Weber, Bus. Rep.



Local 494 assisted in updating and relighting the Workers Memorial Gazebo at Zeidler Union Square Park in Milwaukee.

Local 570 Women's Committee

L.U. 570 (i,mo,spa&u), TUCSON, AZ — Our local was honored to present the Certificate of Recognition for its Women's Committee granted by the IBEW on Nov. 8, 2024. Local 570 fully supports the work



From left, Local 570 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Joshua DeSpain, Caiden Droscha, committee Chair Molly Berning-O'Neill, committee Secretary Jennipher Williams, Madeline Pellicer, Angel Orozco, committee Treasurer Amalia Gamboa, Angelica Sparks and Nagisa Rose.



Local 702's transformer class gives apprentices practical experience in the assembly, maintenance and troubleshooting of transformers.

being done by our Women's Committee. We look forward to the participation and leadership from this segment of our membership. Congratulations!

Joshua DeSpain, B.M./F.S.

Local 702 Lineman Training Facility

L.U. 702 (as,c,catv,cs,em,es,et,govt,i,it,lctt,mo,mt,o,p,pet,ptc,rtb,rts,se,spa,st,t,u,uow&ws), WEST FRANKFORT, IL — Our local's Lineman Training Facility, located in West Frankfort, is a state-of-the-art center dedicated to providing top-tier education and hands-on training for the next generation of electrical workers. One of the standout programs is the transformer class, where apprentices gain practical experience in the assembly, maintenance and troubleshooting of transformers, critical components of modern electrical systems.

Through a combination of classroom instruction and real-world application, apprentices are prepared for the challenges of the industry. This hands-on training ensures that students are not only well-versed in theory

but also highly skilled in executing complex tasks.

As the electrical trade continues to evolve with new technologies and renewable energy solutions, Local 702 remains committed to equipping its linemen and apprentices with the expertise and adaptability needed to thrive in the future of the trade.

Business Manager Steve Hughart, Director Scott Kerley, and classroom and field instructors

are extremely proud of what the new Local 702 Lineman Training Facility has to offer. By blending advanced techniques with traditional craftsmanship, the training facility plays a vital role in shaping skilled, future-ready linemen.

Jamie Hatfield, A.B.M.



At a service pin ceremony, from left, Adam Campbell, Justin McIntosh, Zac Cassidy and Local 728 retiree Robert Jindrecak.

Retiree and Graduate Appreciation

L.U. 728 (em,i,rts&spa), FT. LAUDERDALE, FL — With deep appreciation, we celebrate our retirees as they receive their years-of-service pins, a testament to their dedication and hard work. Thank you for your invaluable contributions and service!

Effie Cruz, P.S.

Political Committee Participates in Labor Lobby Day

L.U. 1340 (i&o), NEWPORT NEWS, VA — Members of our local’s political committee attended the Virginia AFL-CIO legislative day in Richmond to lobby in support of

labor issues at the General Assembly. This year is a short session, 45 days, and began Jan. 6. The group included Jesse Robertson, committee chair; retired member Jim Avery; and apprentices Dylan Kilgore and Nick Bowman, both attending for the first time.

At the plenary on Sunday afternoon, speakers described proceedings and handed out talking points. On Monday, the group visited the offices of five delegates and three state senators to discuss bills being considered. They joined other union brothers and sisters in the gallery at the House and Senate sessions to become familiar with the procedures required to pass legislation.

Our positions on several important proposed bills were shared with representatives who can help our goal of jobs with dignity. Both sides of the conversation found it to be educational, and we hope our views will be considered when they vote.

Jim Avery, P.S.

“LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

Navajo Nation Memories

I just read your article in the January 2025 issue, “IBEW Volunteers Light Up Navajo Nation.” (See accompanying photos from that article.)

It brought back memories. In 1962-1965 I was an inside wireman apprentice working for Reynolds Electrical & Engineering Co. out of Albuquerque, N.M., Local 611.

Reynolds had a line crew along with inside wiremen.

I think it was in 1963 that I was assigned to a line crew that installed pole line work on the Navajo Reservation outside Window Rock, Ariz. At that time, the reservation did not have any electricity. I am not sure what happened after we installed the electrical pole lines.

After completing my apprenticeship and becoming a journeyman electrician, I moved to San Diego in 1967, where I worked out of Local 569 until retiring.

Thanks for bringing back those memories.

Rich Bauer

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.



Instagram



facebook



YouTube



IBEW Hour Power



ElectricTV

Annual Funding Notice for the National Electrical Benefit Fund

Introduction

This notice includes important information about the funding status of the National Electrical Benefit Fund (“the Plan” or “NEBF”). It also includes general information about the benefit payments guaranteed by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (“PBGC”), a federal insurance agency. All traditional pension plans (called “defined benefit pension plans”) must provide this notice every year regardless of their funding status. This notice does not mean that the Plan is terminating. In fact, the Plan is in sound financial condition and is considered a “green zone” plan (rather than a plan in endangered or critical status). This notice is provided for informational purposes and you are not required to respond in any way. This notice is required by federal law. This notice is for the plan year beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024 (“Plan Year”).

How Well Funded Is the NEBF?

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

Funded Percentage			
	2024 Plan Year	2023 Plan Year	2022 Plan Year
Valuation Date	January 1, 2024	January 1, 2023	January 1, 2022
Funded Percentage	95.02%	92.57%	90.93%
Value of Assets	\$18,767,975,914	\$17,901,877,577	\$17,201,772,836
Value of Liabilities	\$19,751,608,402	\$19,338,915,848	\$18,918,349,371

Year-End Fair Market Value of Assets

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

	December 31, 2024*	December 31, 2023	December 31, 2022
Fair Market Value of Assets	\$18,966,330,557	\$17,670,809,535	\$16,591,884,241

* Preliminary and subject to change

Endangered, Critical, or Critical and Declining Status

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

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

If the Plan is in endangered, critical, or critical and declining status for the plan year ending December 31, 2025, separate notification of that status has or will be provided.

Participant Information

The Plan’s total participants and beneficiaries covered as of the end of the Plan Year, and as of the end of the two previous plan years, are shown in the table below.

	December 31, 2024*	December 31, 2023	December 31, 2022
Active Participants	318,705	310,164	302,888
Retired or Separated from Service and Receiving Benefits	174,380	170,285	166,233
Retired or Separated from Service with a Right to Future Benefits	178,537	171,271	167,725
Total Participants	671,622	651,720	636,846

* Preliminary and subject to change

Funding and Investment Policies

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

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

The Plan’s preliminary asset return as of the end of the Plan Year was 10.58% gross of fees.

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

Asset Allocations	Percentage
Cash (Interest bearing and non-interest bearing)	0.10%
U.S. Government securities	5.41
Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	3.38
All other	6.01
Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	0.04
Common	17.16
Partnership/joint venture interests	15.46
Real estate (other than employer real property)	3.38
Loans (other than to participants)	0.41
Participant loans	-
Value of interest in common/collective trusts	35.97
Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1.65
Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	-
Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	1.10
Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	4.19
Value of funds held in insurance co. general account (unallocated contracts)	-
Employer-related investments:	
Employer securities	-
Employer real property	-
Buildings and other property used in plan operation	-
Other	5.74

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

Right to Request a Copy of the Annual Report

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

Summary of Rules Governing Insolvent Plans

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

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

Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC

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

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

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

The PBGC guarantees pension benefits payable at normal retirement age and some early retirement benefits. In addition, the PBGC guarantees qualified preretirement survivor benefits (which are preretirement death benefits payable

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

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

Where to Get More Information

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

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

August 2024 International Executive Council Meeting

Minutes and Report of The International Executive Council's Regular Meeting

The meeting of the International Executive Council was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 28, 2024, in Chicago, Illinois. The members of the council in attendance were Calabro, Calvey, Cunningham, Chincio, Finn, Griffiths, Hamilton, and Riley. Chairman Erikson attended via audio/video conference call. Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

International President Cooper

International President Kenneth W. Cooper met with the members of the International Executive Council via zoom to discuss a variety of matters affecting all branches of the brotherhood.

International Secretary-Treasurer Noble

International Secretary-Treasurer Paul A. Noble presented financial reports covering the IBEW Pension Fund, the Unity Fund, and the Investment Portfolio of the Brotherhood, both in Canada and in the United States.

Legal Defense

General Counsel reporting on legal activity and bills, and payment for legal defense, made from the General Fund, were examined, and approved in accordance with the requirements of Article X, Section 1 of the IBEW Constitution.

Financial Reports

The International Secretary-Treasurer's Report on the various funds of the Brotherhood were presented to the members of the International Executive Council, examined, approved, and filed.

Resolution Concerning Certain Investments of the General Fund and the Pension Funds

On the recommendations of the independent investment consultant for the General Fund and the IBEW pension funds and in consultation with Investments Staff, the International Executive Council took action to approve the restructuring of certain investments with the aim of optimizing the funds' respective investment portfolios.

Appeals Filed with The International Executive Council

The International Executive Council conducted a thorough review of the facts pertaining to an appeal from Local Union 86, Scott E. Merkle Card Number D948692, and it is the decision of the IEC to Uphold the denial of his early pension application.

Article XX and XXI Cases

There were no Article XX or XXI cases to report during the third quarter of 2024.

Local Union Under International Office Supervision

There are two Local Unions under trusteeship, Local Union 2330, St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and Local Union 1501, Baltimore Maryland. The IEC authorized the continuation of these trusteeship for six (6) months, no action is required at this time.

IBEW Consolidated Balance Sheet/Income Statement ending June 30, 2024

Reviewed and Filed

IBEW Unity Fund Contributions ending June 30, 2024

Reviewed and Filed

IBEW Pension Benefit Fund Consolidated Statement of Net Assets ending June 30, 2024

Reviewed and Filed

Retirement of International Officers

Brian K. Thompson, International Vice President Effective — July 1, 2024

Retirement of International Representatives

Ann Miller, International Representative, Government Affairs Department Effective — April 15, 2024, revised letter

Todd Newkirk, International Representative, Seventh District Effective — July 1, 2024

Steven R. Crum, International Representative, Fourth District Effective — August 1, 2024

Lead Organizers

Philip Meyer, Membership Development Effective — July 1, 2024

Melanie Probst, Membership Development Effective — August 15, 2024

David Hayes, Membership Development (Vested) Effective — May 9, 2024

Retirement of International Office Employees

Michelle Quansoon, Office Employee, First District Effective — June 1, 2024

This regular scheduled meeting was adjourned on Thursday, August 28, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. the next regular meeting of the International Executive Council will commence on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, in Washington, DC.

For the International Executive Council

Myles J. Calvey, Secretary
August 2024

The IEC acted on numerous applications under the IBEW pension fund. For a complete listing, consult www.ibew.org, clicking on the International Executive Council link on the "About Us" page. ■



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

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Chairman
Christopher Erikson

First District
Joseph P. Calabro

Second District
Myles J. Calvey

Third District
William Hamilton

Fourth District
Zachary T. Cassidy

Fifth District
Donald B. Finn

Sixth District
Mark H. Cunningham

Seventh District
Leroy J. Chincio

Eighth District
Tom N. Griffiths

INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

First District
Russell N. Shewchuk

Second District
Michael P. Monahan

Third District
Dennis C. Affinati

Fourth District
Austin Keyser

Fifth District
Glenn Brannen

Sixth District
Michael Clemmons

Seventh District
Christian J. Wagner

Eighth District
Jerry Bellah

Ninth District
David E. Reaves Jr.

Tenth District
Brent E. Hall

Eleventh District
Mark D. Hager

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

Editor
Kenneth W. Cooper

Matt Spence

Tim Lawson

Alex Hogan

Curtis D. Bateman

Asifa Haniff

Ben Temchine

Colin Kelly

Rix Oakland

Colleen Crinion

Michael Pointer

Janelle Hartman

Joe Conway

Emily Welsh

Mike Palm

Javier Pierrend

Alexis Betts

Amy Rieger

HOW TO REACH US

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

Send letters to:

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

Or send by email to: media@ibew.org

Have you moved?

Got to ibew.org/ChangeMyAddress or call 202-728-6263

©2025 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The Electrical Worker (print)
ISSN 2332-113X

The Electrical Worker (online)
ISSN 2332-1148

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

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

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

Paid advertising is not accepted.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40011756.
Canada Post: Return undeliverables to P.O. Box 122
Niagara Falls ON
L2E 6S8.



DISTRICT 4: DC, KY, MD, OH, VA, WV

WHO WE ARE

Maryland Local's Blood Drive Honors Brother Killed in Workplace Accident

As a certified welder, Baltimore Local 410's John Amig Jr. was keenly aware of how dangerous repairing a broken natural gas line can be.

"Certified welders do underground work and fabrication for the gas infrastructure," explained Local 410 Assistant Business Manager Chris Kasecamp. "They'll weld new gas mains together, and they'll go out and repair existing ones with pressurized live gas inside."

Because of experts like Amig, a graduate of York County (Pa.) School of Technology's welding program, catastrophic on-the-job accidents are rare. Amig brought his decades of experience to Baltimore Gas and Electric in 2016, one year before Local 410 was chartered by the IBEW to represent the utility's workers.

"John came to the BGE system and learned it," said Kasecamp, who had worked alongside Amig on a handful of jobs. "Keep in mind, some of BGE's gas infrastructure is 200 years old. There's a lot to learn, and you're always coming across lots of different things."

On a warm and sunny Friday afternoon in May 2021, the 51-year-old Amig and two other crew members came across a leaky old fitting on a steel gas main in the northern Baltimore suburb of Pikesville.

"Unless there's some kind of tribal knowledge, you really don't know much about it," Kasecamp said.

But even though Amig carried with him the proper skills and years of know-how, something went wrong as the crew went about excavating the main and sealing the leak.

"The pipe blew apart with John in the hole, lighting off with him in it," Kasecamp said.

Quickly, Amig's co-workers pulled him out of the fiery trench and rendered first aid. Within minutes, a fleet of fire and rescue units responded to treat Amig's injuries. They also spent nearly four hours trying to extinguish the gas-fed fire that occasionally shot flames into the air as high as 60 feet.

Amig, meanwhile, was flown by helicopter to Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore for treatment by the staff of its adult burn center. The welder had sustained severe burns over 80% of his body.

"This wasn't a safety failure or about not having proper equipment," said Local 410 Assistant Business Manager Brian Terwilliger, who noted that no one has ever determined the explosion's ignition source. "This was just a freak accident — a really sad, tragic story, completely unexpected."

"A one-in-a-million kind of thing," Kasecamp added.



Below, Local 410 members help Amig's grandson reveal the new John Amig Jr. Way street sign.



At left, a conference room at Local 410's new union hall now bears Amig's name.



At left, John Amig Sr. holds a plaque during a Local 410 and BGE ceremony to name his son's workplace and the road to it after the fallen welder.

change that day, we honor John by looking forward, we watch our brothers' and sisters' backs, and we question critical steps," Jacobs said at the event. "These dedications will forever keep John's memory alive."

The local's office conference room has also been dedicated to Amig. "Our charity committee is also in the early stages of organizing a Local 410 memorial golf outing to honor all of our members who have died on the job," Kasecamp said.

He also noted that Amig's daughter Hannah, who is set to graduate high school this spring, is honoring her father by following in his footsteps. With charitable help from Local 410's membership to pay her tuition, Hannah has been taking classes at a nearby Earlbeck Welding School campus.

"There is nothing more important to the IBEW than making sure every single one of our members goes home safe at the end of every workday," said Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper, who retired April 1. "But when something unthinkable like this happens, nobody does more to commemorate victims like John, and to rally around their families, than the men and women of our great union." ■

The injuries proved too severe, and Amig died in the hospital on Aug. 23, 2021.

Almost immediately after their brother's accident, members of Local 410 rallied together to raise more than \$57,000 through an online fundraising campaign to help Amig's family cope with any financial burdens that might arise while the welder underwent treatment in the burn unit.

The members were just getting started.

Six days after Amig's passing, with COVID-19 infections still a global concern, Local 410's leaders offered his family the use of Baltimore's Local 24 spacious union hall for a celebration of his life and a visitation with the family beforehand.

Afterward, many members remained in touch with Amig's widow, Angelique.

"One of the things we talked to her about was, we wanted to do something in John's name to honor him and keep his memory alive," Kasecamp said. "She said that one of the biggest things the Burn Center struggles with is

having enough blood" to use during routine medical treatments and for emergencies.

Johns Hopkins, like many hospitals across the U.S., relies on blood and blood products that are donated to the American Red Cross. But the agency frequently experiences shortages of all types of blood, especially O-negative blood, which can be given to anyone.

"She said that an annual blood drive would be incredible because it could help out people just like John," Kasecamp said.

Working with representatives from Johns Hopkins and the Red Cross, Local 410's leaders set about planning, scheduling and promoting an inaugural memorial drive in Amig's name, held over two days last October in a nearby fire department's hall.

"I think we had over 60 donors," Kasecamp said, noting that the Red Cross estimates that each pint of donated blood can save up to three lives. "We ended up getting shirts made for anybody who donated," featuring Amig's name on the front and back.

The blood drive's turnout was so

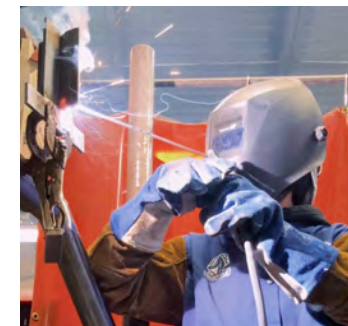
good that the local has already started planning the second annual drive for October, he said.

"It's something that we want to keep doing, too," Terwilliger said. "We do gas and electric, and no matter what the accident is, if something happens, you're probably going into the burn center, whether it's for a flash or for a burn from a gas fire."

There have been other enduring efforts to honor the Local 410 welder. Shortly after Amig's death, for example, Business Manager Woody Jacobs and other leaders from the local sat down with representatives from BGE. "They were looking to do something to honor John, as well," Kasecamp said.

The parties landed on renaming the weld shop where Amig worked — part of BGE's Spring Garden service facility campus in south Baltimore — after him, along with the street that leads to the shop. A ceremony in 2022, attended by dozens of Local 410 members plus representatives from Amig's family and BGE, formalized the names of the Amig Weld Shop and John Amig Jr. Way.

"While we cannot go back to



With help from Local 410, Amig's daughter Hannah is learning to be a welder like him.