

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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## IBEW News

**Ill. Tradeswomen Lobby**  
Sisters 'Take Over' Capitol **3**

**Nuclear Power Revolution**  
IST Noble Addresses Leaders **6**

**Goal Is 'Zero Fatalities'**  
IVP Cooper's Safety Message **6**

**NEW!**

## IBEW PODCAST

Join Cooper, Noble  
on Debut **7**

## In This Issue

Editorials **2**

My IBEW Story **2**

North of 49° **8**

Power at Work **9**

Circuits **10**

Transitions **11**

Organizing Wire **13**

Grounded in History **13**

Local Lines **14**

PBF Summary Annual Report **17**

In Memoriam **18**

Who We Are **20**



*Data center projects have ballooned, with some demanding several times as many electrical workers as some locals have. Managing the demand along with the locals' traditional business is a growing challenge across North America.*

**M**onroe, La., isn't the first place you'd think of as the center of a trillion-dollar global technological revolution.

Monroe is home to 50,000 people in the northern part of the state. In all directions out of Monroe you find little but cornfields, rice fields, cotton fields and the people who farm them.

It's been the home of Local 446 for more than 110 years, and the local has been successful in guarding its jurisdiction, considering the challenges of organizing in the Deep South.

"We have three colleges, a hospital network and the schools that have kept us busy," said Business Manager Ken Green.

But 30 miles east, something extraordinary is happening. In Holly Ridge, an unincorporated community with one blinking traffic light, hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of earth-moving equipment is flattening 2,700 acres to prepare for the largest Meta data center in the world. At 4 million square feet — about 70 football fields — and a budget flirting with \$10 billion, it is four times as large as any data center Meta has ever built.

## STAND WITH FEDERAL WORKERS

*Editorial, page 2*

Entergy Louisiana is planning to build three natural gas powerhouses — two on the Holly Ridge site itself — at a cost of \$3.2 billion, and all 2,600 megawatts are for Meta's insatiable servers.

Nine data centers have been announced for the campus. Four are the traditional cloud computing data centers, but five will house the cutting-edge power-gobbling chips that will train Llama, Meta's collection of open-source artificial intelligence models.

No one knows how many electricians will be needed, Green said, but Meta has announced that it expects there to be 5,000 construction jobs.

Local 446 has 500 members, and nearly everyone who wants it already has work in

the jurisdiction.

"The positive part of high market share is you have the work. The negative is that if they haven't come in the last 10 years, they aren't coming," said Fifth District International Representative Brent Moreland.

Which leaves the question: How will the local find 1,000 or 2,000 electricians for five, maybe 10 years of work while maintaining what it already has?

"The explosive growth in the data center industry is a wave we are perfectly placed to ride. The stakes are high for our customers, and the work needs to be of the highest quality and on the shortest timelines. We were made for this," said International President Kenneth W. Cooper. "We have to keep our own history in mind, though. We have to be smart about how we meet this moment. The interests of the IBEW, our contractors and customers must align if we are all going to benefit over the long term. And the long-term growth of the IBEW has to be where we focus."

**THE DATA CENTER SURGE** *continued on page 4*

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## FROM THE OFFICERS

# Standing Up for Our Rights



**Kenneth W. Cooper**  
International President



**Paul A. Noble**  
International Secretary-Treasurer

**A**s Americans, we hold dear the rights enshrined in our Constitution — the freedoms of speech, worship, assembly, the right to vote. But there's another right, just as vital to working people, that was made law in 1935: the right to organize and collectively bargain.

With the signing of the National Labor Relations Act, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave workers a powerful tool to improve their lives. The NLRA didn't just permit unions — it encouraged them, recognizing organized labor as a force for social good. In the decades that followed, especially after World War II, union membership flourished, and with it, so did America's middle class.

Nearly thirty years later, President John F. Kennedy expanded those protections by granting collective bargaining rights to federal workers, a group left out of the original NLRA.

For the first time in American history, federal employees now had the right to collectively bargain and fight for themselves.

These actions laid the foundation for generations of shared prosperity.

But today, those foundational rights are under attack.

In March, President Donald Trump issued an executive order stripping collective bargaining rights from hundreds of thousands of federal employees across multiple agencies. Among those affected are members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers who proudly serve the federal government.

From naval shipyards to public power, IBEW government members serve our nation with great distinction, and we could not be prouder that they are members of this great union.

This isn't just an attack on public-sector workers — it's a threat to the principle of organized labor. When collective bargaining is undermined anywhere, it weakens protections for all workers, public and private.

We've seen this play out before.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan broke the air traffic controllers' strike, firing over 11,000 workers and decertifying their union. This move unleashed a wave of union-busting throughout the private sector that reverberated for decades.

In 2011, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker dismantled collective bargaining rights for public-sector workers. He promised it wouldn't affect private-sector unions — but within just a few years, he and his allies passed "right-to-work" laws that dealt a devastating blow to union power across the board.

In 2014, union membership in Wisconsin stood at roughly 12%. A decade later, it has dropped to under 7%.

So if you think: "I work in the private sector. This doesn't affect me," then think again.

When public-sector workers lose their rights, it opens the door for anti-union forces to target everyone.

The old labor movement slogan "An injury to one is an injury to all" is more apt than ever.

That's why the IBEW is standing shoulder to shoulder with our union brothers and sisters in the federal workforce. Their fight is our fight.

Government union members help build strong labor-management partnerships, promote safety and ensure that public agencies run more efficiently. They deserve the same dignity, respect and voice on the job as any other worker.

The IBEW has joined the AFL-CIO and unions across the country in demanding that the Trump administration reverse its executive order. But we need more than a reversal — we need lasting protection.

That's why we're calling on Congress to pass the Protect America's Workforce Act, bipartisan legislation that restores collective bargaining rights for unionized federal workers.

Every IBEW member should demand action from their members of Congress. Call them via the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and let them know that we are watching, and that we won't back down.

We are strongest when we stand together. And one of the greatest strengths of being an IBEW member is knowing that, across North America, your union family has your back.

Let's honor that tradition. Let's fight back. And let's defend the rights that generations before us fought so hard to win.

More than ever, we need that spirit and to come together to fight for our fundamental rights as working people. ■

## My IBEW STORY

**Edna Michelle Wright**, journeyman wireman  
Montgomery, Ala., Local 443



“My father was an IBEW member, and I remember all the picnics, Christmas parties with the union renting out an entire civic center for an event. Everybody my daddy worked with was my uncle, and it was exciting to be a part of. It was a dream.

My dad was one of the Tuskegee Airmen, and I became a combat fighter in the Marines, trying to follow in his footsteps as his only child. As a combat engineer, based at Camp Lejeune, I was rou-

tinely dropped by aircraft to get the barracks wired so that the soldiers can get set up and be taken care of. I came into the IBEW as a civil/electrical engineer about two years ago, and I've felt my expertise totally appreciated within the IBEW.

As a master electrician, I tend to work on different projects all the time. Presently, I'm a traveler from my home base, Montgomery Local 443, working with Mid-City Electric in the Columbus, Ohio, region. We have about five projects going with Whiting-Turner, and I'm sent from project to project.

I have five children — four boys and a girl — and the IBEW has been a blessing. I was out there working independently for more than 15 years with no retirement, no pension, just my savings, and that's why I came into the union. There were so many positives to it: making good money, making friends, meeting new people, learning new things.

These battery plants I've worked on are new. They've only been up for three years, and I've worked on them for two. With two years in the union, I've completed six battery plants. So getting this new trade exposure offers new things to learn, new experiences. I'm now working on an AI project for the government, and it's all new dynamics that I'm learning. Very few have this range of experience. Among the positives of the IBEW is that you're doing things that have never been done before. And to have that on your resume — you stand out.

I love the union — that's never going to change. We are a family, and we JW's tell apprentices that the IBEW has been good to us and they're going to continue being good to us. We tell them what we know, what the IBEW has done for us members. They've shown us. I'm a single mother of five, and I've been in the IBEW for two years, and this is the best thing that's ever happened to me.

When you love what you're doing, it's not work anymore.”

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

[ibew.org/MyIBEWStory](https://ibew.org/MyIBEWStory)



45%-70%

The share of a data center's construction budget that goes to the electrical subcontractors.

See this issue's cover story,  
“The Data Center Surge: A New Generation of IBEW Jobs.”





# IBEW Sisters 'Take Over' Illinois Capitol for Tradeswomen Lobby Day

## Child Care, Women's PPE Among Day's Key Topics

IBEW sisters from across Illinois were out in full force for a tradeswomen lobby day at the Capitol in Springfield, calling on their elected leaders to support policies that will bring more women into the trades.

"The day was an extraordinary experience for everyone," said Chicago Local 134 Business Representative Bea Thompson, who spoke at the event. "We learned how to actually be a part of the lobbying process by speaking face-to-face with our lawmakers."

Approximately 300 women from across the trades donned pink shirts for "Tradeswomen Take Over Springfield," a day of action hosted by the Illinois AFL-CIO. The event, held March 5, included lobbying legislators as well as a rally.

"Events like this give tradeswomen the forum to collaborate with each other and talk about issues that matter to them. It also demonstrates to women who are thinking about getting involved in the trades that they

are not alone," said Lisle Local 701 Business Manager Anthony Giunti. "We hope it also shows them that the IBEW has the resources and support to make women successful."

The key issues of the day were accessible child care, personal protective equipment for all body types and combating gender-based violence. There was also a call to support House Resolution 161, which would reaffirm the state's commitment to expanding workforce opportunities for all people who wish to pursue a career in the trades.

"We had a very positive response from our local elected officials. They were pleased to sit down with our sisters to listen and learn about their concerns," said Bloomington Local 197 Business Manager Mike Raikes. "Our sisters brought up valid points about the trials of child care, especially during evening hours when they have apprenticeship classes."

Approximately 5% of Illinois tradespeople are women, slightly above the national average of 4%.

For Champaign-Urbana Local 601 office manager Deanna Lavoie, the issues that would help women in construction are universal to all workers, particularly those with families. Lavoie

completed her electrical apprenticeship in 2011 but started working in the office about four years later after giving birth.

"My husband is also in the construction trades, and after having a baby, I'm not sure how we would have made it work had I not been offered a job in the office," Lavoie said. "The not knowing where you are going to work and what time you need to leave to get there, or how long the drive home will be, makes it hard to plan for children."

Lavoie also talked about the issue of being able to breastfeed.

"Thanks to this job, I was able to nurse for 13 months," she said. "By law, employers have to allow a woman to pump at work, but how many construction workers do you think that actually works for?"

For many in attendance, it was their first time engaging in such an effort.

"The day proved to be a learning experience for everyone as we each learned how important our voices are in the process of influencing change," said Thompson, who

served as a lobby captain and led other tradeswomen in their lobbying efforts.

Thompson said it was encouraging to have so many legislators respond positively to their issues.

"The legislators were very receptive, and more than a few were eager to support H.R. 161," she said. "It really gave a satisfying feeling to know that women in construction have so many advocates in Springfield."

Raikes pointed out the need for more tradespeople, and in particular electricians, and how the Legislature spends hundreds of millions of dollars on construction projects around the state. These projects could have requirements to promote safety and opportunities for all construction workers, especially women and minorities.

"Women have already played a vital role in our industry, and there is plenty of room for more women in the trades," Raikes said. "We should all be pulling on the same rope to create more cohesion among our ranks."

Like Lavoie, Thompson sees breaking down barriers for women entering the trades as a way to strengthen the entire industry by opening it up to new ideas and innovation.

"Women have been an integral part of building this nation for centuries," she said. "Given the opportunities through proper training, our capabilities are limitless." ■



IBEW sisters were among some 300 Illinois tradeswomen who visited the Capitol to talk with legislators about issues that included child care and PPE adapted for different body types to better protect women on the job.



IBEW sisters from across Illinois lobbied their legislators in March, including Rep. Lisa Hernandez, pictured in the middle at left. "The legislators were very receptive," said Chicago Local 134 Business Representative Bea Thompson.



# The DATA CENTER Surge

## A New Generation of IBEW Jobs

Continued from page 1

### Eating the Elephant

The companies that build data centers — Meta, Alphabet, Amazon, Oracle, IBM and Microsoft — are worth trillions. They are also in a life-or-death race to build data center capacity and build it now.

Even better for electrical workers, data center projects are uniquely dependent on their skills: Between 45% and 70% of the entire budget for data center construction goes to the electrical subcontractor.

That combination of tight deadlines and no margin for error in construction means the vast majority of data center work — even in the places where IBEW market share is lowest — goes IBEW.

“About 10 years ago when our first data centers started to appear, they told us, ‘Hey, there’s going to be more.’ You’re hoping that’s true, and it ended up being true,” said Columbus, Ohio, Local 683 Business Manager Pat Hook.

“So over these years, we’ve experienced a lot of increased demand for workers. We need to grow our local and figure out some strategies to accomplish that. And we started with the owners, the general contractors and our electrical contractors on the site.”

In Northern Virginia, which has more data center capacity than the rest of the country combined, Washington, D.C., Local 26 does close to 97% of the work.

“There are only so many people in this country who are willing to do electrical work and skilled enough to do it well and safely. Whatever that number is, money is moving that same group of people around the country,” Moreland said.

Meta understands the market, and while the local’s scale is just under \$30 an hour, even without a project labor agreement, the job will likely pay far above that.

Multiple locals are facing single data center projects that require two, three, sometimes four times their current membership.

For these locals, managing the growth is “like eating an elephant,” said Baton Rouge, La., Local 995 Business



*In just a decade, data centers have jumped from budgets averaging less than \$500 million to more than \$10 billion, and labor demands have grown with the budgets.*



Manager Jason Dedon.

“At first, that elephant tastes good, but pretty soon you’re sick of it, but it’s endless. Every time you open your mouth to breathe, there’s more elephant,” he said. “And as long as you got so much elephant, what about your fields? What about your farm? Because sick as you are of eating it, even the biggest elephant ends. Then what are you going to eat?”

The data center elephant reminds Dedon of a cautionary tale about the meal Local 995 had in front of it about 40 years ago.

“Until the ‘80s, we had 90% market share. This was a union town,” he said.

From where the Mississippi River entered his jurisdiction in the north to where it leaves in the south, there are dozens of chemical plants. Every one was wall-to-wall union, even after a so-called right-to-work law passed in 1976.

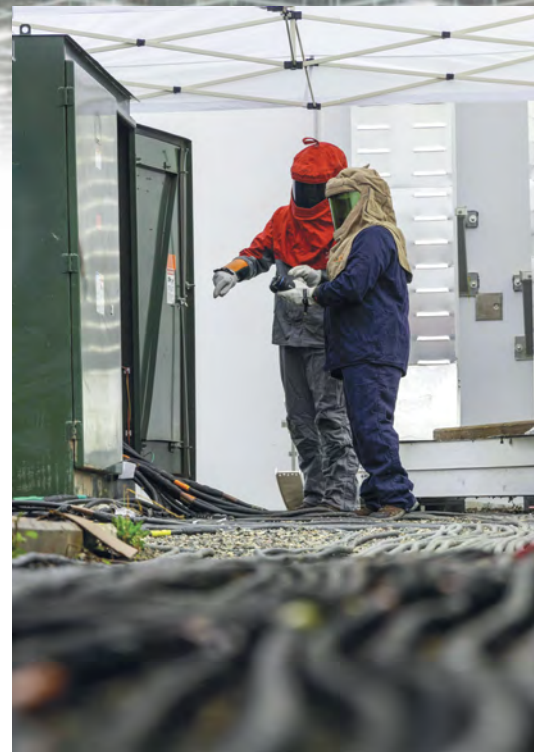
Then the Riverbend nuclear power plant project arrived. Hundreds of Local 995 members and travelers flocked to the job. Nearly 1,000 nonunion electricians were “white ticketed” — allowed to pay dues and work on union jobs but never made full members.

The industrial customers, let alone residential and commercial customers, were left in the lurch. Job calls stayed open, particularly calls at scale — below what Riverbend was paying.

Who needs bread and butter when you have an endless supply of elephant? Besides, Dedon said, the thinking at the time was, “We’re at 90% market share.”

But those 1,000 nonunion electrical workers, trained on IBEW jobs, became the backbone of a nonunion workforce that stripped Local 995 past the bone to the marrow. Many of the union contractors not on Riverbend walked away from Local 995 and welcomed the union-trained workforce with open arms.

*Just this year, the five largest data center builders — Apple, Microsoft, Meta, OpenAI and Google — have announced nearly \$1.3 trillion in new construction by 2030.*



*Above: Inside journeyman Joey Winskowski works with a third-party rep to look for hot spots as a large transformer is commissioned at a data center.*



*Artificial Intelligence data use, on average, 10 times the energy of hyperscale data centers, and the largest will use as much power as some of the largest cities in the U.S.*

former Alcoa aluminum plant near Frederick, Md., 60 miles west of Baltimore and northwest of Washington, D.C.

Baltimore Local 24 is anticipating a cluster of hyperscale data centers planned for 2,100 acres of forest and farmland beneath tandem 500-kv power lines. The first phase of construction includes 15 data centers and eight auxiliary buildings on less than one-third of the available land. The budget could reach \$5 billion.

A total of 45 centers on this one project is realistic, said Baltimore Local 24 Business Manager Mike McHale.

“This is life-changing for Local 24,” he said.

And McHale has a plan to staff the new work while growing the local’s bread-and-butter work.

As The Electrical Worker reported in March 2024, the local was essential to critical changes to Maryland law that made the development possible.

“The Frederick Chamber of Commerce is very clear — this project would not have happened without Local 24, (Washington, D.C., Local) 26, (Washington, D.C., Local) 70 and (Cumberland, Md., Local) 307,” said Local 24 Business Agent Carmen Voso.

“We abandoned them, so they abandoned us,” he said. “The biggest non-union contractors were built off the guys we trained. We made the perfect storm.”

Local 995 now has 3% market share in one of the most industrialized corners of the nation.

“Just because we know what happens and have hindsight, doesn’t make solving these ‘too-good-to-be-true’ jobs any easier,” he said. “Never lose the bread and butter; those jobs will not be waiting for you when the bubble bursts.”

### The Outskirts

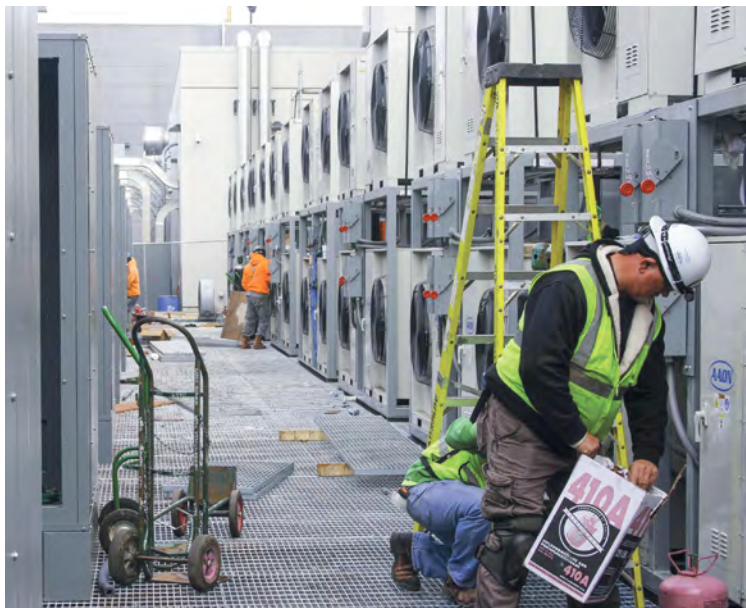
Local 446 is not alone and will have many more locals join it in trying to learn from the past mistakes of Local 995.

Holly Ridge is just a part, albeit the largest part, of Meta’s announced \$200 billion investment in data center infrastructure.

And as large as that is, it’s only the third-largest data center investment announcement this year.

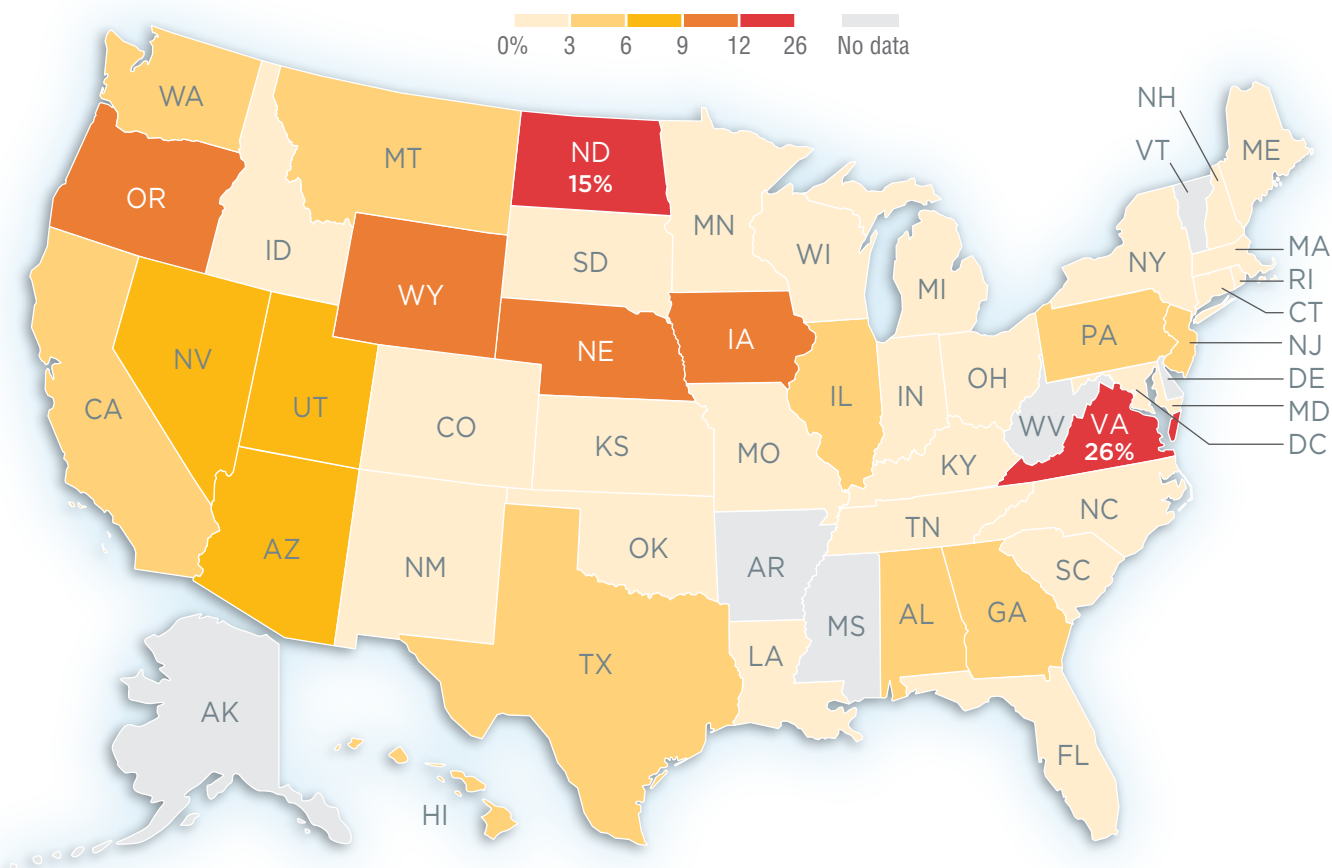
In January, ChatGPT maker OpenAI unveiled an AI infrastructure plan that it claimed would exceed half a trillion dollars in just the next four years. Apple then matched that: \$500 billion by 2030. Amazon committed \$100 billion. Alphabet, parent company of Google, committed \$75 billion.

One of the largest, a campus of data center campuses, is rising on the site of a





## Data Centers Are Power Juggernauts



The Frederick, Md., data center project is built on the site of the Baltimore Local 24-built Eastalco aluminum plant, which was shuttered two decades ago.

Map shows the percentage of power consumption in each state consumed by data centers.

Source: Electric Power Research Institute



It's estimated that 45% to 70% of the construction costs of the typical data center go to the electrical subcontractor.

Although there is no PLA on the project, Voso said, the developers understand the role the IBEW played, and all contracts so far have been won by signatory contractors.

The total need is not clear, Voso said, but, conservatively, they will need 1,000 IBEW members on site by August. Peak could be double that. Or triple.

Local 24 has 2,400 members.

"Our hope is that they ramp up slowly and it isn't 'We need 1,000 in six weeks, then another 1,000,'" Voso said.

The developers of the Quantum Frederick project built a 40-mile fiber ring called the QLoop connecting Frederick to the densest concentration of data centers and fiber connections in the world. Frederick is just across the Potomac River from

the heart of the global data center industry in Northern Virginia.

"It's a blip of a millisecond to the center of the internet," Voso said.

Crossing the Potomac not only opens up new land, but it also breaks down a barrier that has stifled Local 24.

For decades, Local 26 and Local 24 had similar membership numbers. Then in the 1990s, data centers took off in Northern Virginia and Local 26 never looked back.

"They have about six times our membership now," Voso said. "But we could have 2,000 on this portion of this one project. There will be more campuses and more data centers on this project. I'm not saying we will catch up. I'm just asking, 'Why not?'"

Local 24 has lower market share

than either Local 446 or Local 26, and McHale wants to use the Frederick developments not just to grow in size, but also to dominate the market.

McHale wants to use the Frederick developments not just to grow, but to grab market share at the same time.

In their favor, most of the subcontractors doing this work in Virginia are bidding the work in Maryland, and they are almost all signatory with the IBEW.

Dynalectric DC, a division of Emcor, is one of the largest developers of data centers in the world. Paul Mella, its CEO until his retirement this year, was a 52-year member of the IBEW and director of the Washington, D.C., chapter of NECA.

Power Solutions even built a 100,000-square-foot data center prefab shop in Frederick for Virginia projects and already employs 120 Local 24 members.

Between the customer goodwill

developed in the political battle and the strong, deep connections with the subcontractors doing the work, McHale has a plan to man this work.

"We want to organize every non-union worker. Strip them all. Our examining board will meet as often as necessary to make it happen," McHale said.

Second, the apprenticeship has nearly tripled and will continue to rapidly expand.

Finally, Voso said the trick with these projects will be to staff them while maintaining the local's existing relationships for the hundreds of millions of dollars of projects that will happen in the rest of the jurisdiction.

"I want to crush nonunion and organize everyone directly into a job, but we can't lose service, office, educational, hospital and stadium work in the process" Voso said.

The Baltimore rate is a substantial bump for nonunion electricians. That and an open call are the greatest organizing tool a union has.

And for the existing members who worry that money is being left on the table, Fourth District International Vice President Austin Keyser has a simple message.

"Our mission is to maximize how much you make in your career, not on a single job," he said. "There is one and only one recipe for that: Maximize market share."

No job, no industry, even one as rich as data centers, lasts forever, he said.

"We are the beneficiaries of the union we inherited. That includes the good — the contracts, the protections, relationships — and the not so good — lost market share from our own miscalculations," he said. "We paid for that clarity. We better use what we learned." ■



# IST Noble: IBEW at Center of a Nuclear Power Revolution

**T**he future of nuclear power and the IBEW are interconnected, International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble said in March to thousands of the highest-ranking nuclear power regulators and executives.

Noble spoke during a special session of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's 50th anniversary annual meeting.

NRC Chairman David Wright moderated the panel, titled "The Next 50 Years." Noble was joined by some of the most consequential people in the U.S. nuclear power industry — including one of the NRC's most senior regulators and the leader of industry coalition the Nuclear Energy Institute.

Also on stage were the CEO of Terrapower, which hired IBEW members to build an advanced sodium reactor in Wyoming, and the CEO of Georgia Power, which just finished construction of Vogtle units 3 and 4, the first new large-scale nuclear reactors to come online in the U.S. in decades.

*International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble (next to Georgia Power CEO Kim Greene) spoke to many of the highest-ranking leaders in the global nuclear industry about the critical role of IBEW members in the nuclear future.*



IBEW members and power company representatives. "We're in constant communication with our utility industry partners, sharing information, developing strategies. This leads to them partnering with labor to ensure that their workforce is available."

Noble said the best way to ensure the future workforce is to plan the expansion around existing fossil fuel power generation workers.

"The IBEW represents valuable workers from the fossil industry, and a lot of those are becoming displaced.

There's absolutely no reason to let those folks walk out of the energy industry," Noble said.

The skilled worker shortage in the U.S. is so extreme that regulators, developers and utilities can no longer afford to just build a project and expect

workers to come.

"The creation of site selection guidance and regulatory process for brownfield communities and the potential worker transition from coal to nuclear remains a high priority of ours," he said.

Chris Levesque, CEO of Terrapower, — which is developing a first-of-its-kind sodium reactor in Kemmerer, Wyo. — picked up on Noble's message.

"The IBEW operates the coal plant down the road from Kemmerer Unit 1, and we're going to welcome the IBEW at our plant [when it opens] in 2030," he said.

While new nuclear power generation is critical to meeting growing power demand, Noble emphasized what is possibly the IBEW's most important contribution to the growth of nuclear power in America: members' skill operating the existing fleet safely.

"Continuing to uphold the high operational standards of the current fleet is absolutely critical. Any declines in this industry's performance will create hesitancy for further nuclear development the U.S.," he said. ■

**"Training and safety, that's what we do best."**

— International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble

Noble made the case that the IBEW is and will be a reliable and necessary partner for nuclear developers, utilities and regulators.

"What we do better than anyone, our greatest attribute, is we create journey-level craftspeople. Training and safety, that's what we do best," he said.

Everyone on the stage expects an unprecedented spike in energy demand in the next half-decade. Nearly 3,000 delegates from almost 50 countries were there to hear how nuclear regulators and their partners could meet that need.

Any successful plan will have union labor at its heart, Noble said.

"The more we know in advance, the better we can deliver, the better we can mobilize," he said. "We're this vigilant because we're trying to stay prepared for one reason. We want to partner with the industry, and we want to win the work."

The goal is to work with industry partners and regulators to fast-track new generation projects and ensure that they understand the realities of the supply of qualified, productive electrical workers.

"We just had our national LAMPAC meeting last week, and one word that kept coming up over and over again was 'partnership.' It's critical," he said of the annual conference bringing together

## IVP Cooper: 'Every Worker' Must Be Engaged in Safety

**R**etiring Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper recently reminded some of the nation's top utility regulators and executives that the IBEW must be a leader in workplace safety and developing rapid response plans to weather emergencies.

It's a responsibility that comes with being the world's largest electrical union, she said.

"When the power goes out, when infrastructure is damaged, and when communities are at their most vulnerable, it is IBEW members, alongside first responders, who step in to restore essential services," Cooper said.

Cooper made the comments during a women's panel at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' Winter Policy Summit on Feb. 26 in Washington, D.C. The theme of the panel was "High Voltage, Higher Safety: Continuing the Commitment to Reduce Serious Injuries and Fatalities." It was sponsored by the Edison Electric Institute, which represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies, many of which are staffed by IBEW members.

"That's why local coordination between organized labor, emergency responders and municipalities is critical," Cooper added. "The faster we can mobilize skilled workers, the faster we can get power back online, keep hospitals running, and help businesses and families recover."

Cooper, who officially retired April 1, was joined on the February panel by AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, a member of Portland, Oregon, Local 125; Katie Sieben, chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission; and Tamla Olivier, chief operating officer for Pepco.

Panelists were asked how the energy industry can reestablish progress in reducing fatalities and serious injuries on the job. Working conditions are much safer and deaths and injuries dropped for decades, but the number has plateaued in the last 15 years.



Photo courtesy of Edison Electric Institute

*Then-Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper, second from right, during a panel session at NARUC's Winter Policy Summit on Feb. 26. AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, a member of Portland, Ore., Local 125, is second from left.*

Cooper said it is by overcoming complacency and risk normalization, where workers start to see some hazards as just part of the job.

Union leaders must be the voice of the workers, ensuring that safety concerns raised by employees will not be ignored by management, she said. They should publicly reinforce with utility executives that safety is a shared responsibility, she added.

"The next leap forward in reducing fatalities won't come from just more rules," Cooper said. "It will come from a culture where every worker, at every level, is actively engaged in safety."

"The goal isn't just fewer incidents," she added. "It's zero fatalities. And by working together, we can get there."

Cooper reminded the audience of the IBEW's world-class training programs, including those in conjunction with its utility partners.

"IBEW electricians and line workers don't just restore power," she said. "We restore hope. As extreme weather events become more frequent, our role becomes even more crucial."

"That's why investing in training, infrastructure and workforce development isn't just a priority for the IBEW," she said. "It's a necessity for the communities that rely on us when disaster strikes." ■



# #WomenInConstructionWeek

## Members, Locals Took to Social Media in March to Celebrate the IBEW's Thriving Sisterhood



Mia Rivas is at UC Cal Berkeley.  
March 9 at 11:11 AM · Berkeley, CA · 🌐

This week at my job site, the GC celebrated **#WomenInConstructionWeek**. This was a first for me. They invited me to lunch, their treat. **#IBEW595 #IBEW SparkyLife #Tradeswomen**



IBEW 654 (Chester, Pa.)  
March 8 · 🌐

Today, we celebrate the strength, resilience, and dedication of the women of IBEW 654 and beyond. From the job site to leadership roles, women continue to power our industry and inspire the next generation. **#IBEW654 #WomenInTrades #InternationalWomensDay #StrongerTogether**



IBEW Local 11 (Los Angeles)  
March 8 · 🌐

During Women in Construction Week, we convey our appreciation to our Local 11 sisters for their hard work and dedication. We are also proud to see them recognized by the Los Angeles City Council, as initiated by Councilwoman Heather Hutt, pictured at center.



Local #3 (NYC) IBEW  
March 7 · ⚙️

More women are employed in the construction industry than ever before. Local #3 IBEW proudly celebrates our sisters — electricians, apprentices, instructors, office workers, mothers, and leaders — during Women in Construction Week, International Women's Day, and Women's History Month.

## THE LINE

Leadership to Membership

## New IBEW Podcast

### THE LINE: Leadership To Membership

“I think it’s imperative that your leadership be able to communicate with the rank and file and let them know why we do what we do.”

— International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble

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

## Toronto Local Displaces Rival, Adds Members and Contractors

**T**oronto Local 353 is the IBEW's largest local union in Canada, with nearly 13,000 members, but adding to that number remains a top priority.

If it means displacing a so-called union that is more friendly to management instead of the workers it represents, so much the better.

Local 353 recently won certification votes at Onyx Electrical and A&W High Voltage Contracting, two companies where members previously were represented by the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

Most Canadian labour activists commonly refer to CLAC as a fake trade union because it often negotiates contracts favourable to contractors instead of the bargaining unit. It is not a member of the Canadian Labour Congress and makes little effort to work with the country's union movement.

"We've had a really positive response when displacing CLAC contractors and bringing them into the IBEW," Local 353 Membership Development Director Andrew White said. "Part of our success has been better working conditions. We're a members' union. We support and represent members."

The higher wages the new members receive because of IBEW representation remain an attraction, White said. But they also appreciate the increased emphasis on safety and the dignity of being represented by one of the country's most powerful trade unions.

There are benefits for management, too. White said most contractors realize that the IBEW's training programs are the best in the industry. Local 353 and other Canadian locals provide a qualified workforce on nearly a moment's notice, saving the companies from doing the hiring themselves.

Displacement campaigns, such as the ones conducted by Local 353, will be on the agenda when the First District holds its Membership Development Conference in Moncton, New Brunswick, this summer, said Brad Wood, First District organizing coordinator for eastern Canada.

So will threats by CLAC and other management-friendly unions to challenge IBEW representation at companies across the country, he said.

"Decertification is a real threat for any local unit and bargaining unit," he said. "It's crucial to talk about the elephant in the room."

Collective bargaining agreements between Ontario's construction unions and companies typically last for three years. The 60-day period before the end date is referred to as the open period, where a competing union can earn enough card-check signatures from

employees to call for an election. Workers also can agree to a new CBA with their current union and management or decertify and work nonunion.

All of the IBEW's Ontario CBAs with contractors end at the same time, which guarantees certainty for contractors and partners across the province.

CLAC and the Building Union of Canada, another "false" union, has its agreements end at different times. IBEW organizers stay on top on those end dates and have a plan ready when the 60-day period begins.

First District International Representative Rich Di Pietro, who previously served as the Ontario organizing coordinator and now is a service rep, said White and his staff show the importance of being organized and having a campaign ready to go the moment an open period begins.



Representatives from Toronto Local 353 and other Ontario inside local officials during a recent meeting to discuss construction organizing.

"They have done an exceptional job, especially in the last couple of years, of paying attention to competing unions, identifying those open periods and educating [CLAC] members," said Di Pietro, a former membership development director at Hamilton, Ontario, Local 105.

First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk said Local 353's work reverberates far beyond Toronto — and even the province.

"[Business Manager] Lee Caprio and his organizing team have done an

incredible job that truly sets the bar for the rest of Canada," Shewchuk said. "There are never any excuses or finger pointing as to why they can't do their job. They have gained an incredible amount of market share over the last few years, truly putting boots on the job and food on our IBEW families' tables."

"They can do it all, from grass roots bottom up organizing, to negotiating top down with company owners," Shewchuk added. "They have created an organizing culture that is built for success. The First District applauds the work ethic of Local 353." ■

### Share your IBEW news!

IBEW Canada is seeking impactful stories from local unions and members. Please contact Shaina Hardie at [Shaina\\_Hardie@ibew.org](mailto:Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org).

## La S.L. de Toronto supplante son rival et ajoute des membres

**L**a section locale 353 à Toronto est la plus grande au Canada. Elle compte environ 13 000 membres, mais ajouter à ce chiffre demeure une priorité absolue.

Tant mieux s'il s'agit de supplanter le soi-disant syndicat favorable à la direction au lieu des travailleurs.

Le local 353 a récemment gagné les votes de certification à Onyx Electrical et à A&W High Voltage Contracting; deux entreprises dont les membres étaient auparavant représentés par le Christian Labour Association of Canada.

La plupart des militants syndicaux canadiens considèrent le CLAC comme un faux syndicat, car ce syndicat négocie souvent en faveur des entrepreneurs au lieu de l'unité de négociation. Il n'est pas membre du Congrès du travail du Canada et fait peu d'effort pour travailler avec le mouvement syndical du pays.

« Nous avons eu des réactions vraiment favorables en déplaçant les entrepreneurs du CLAC vers la FIOE », déclare Andrew White, directeur de la syndicalisation du local 353. « Notre réussite tient en partie à améliorer les meilleures conditions de travail. Nous sommes un syndicat de membres. Nous appuyons les membres et nous les représentons. »

Les salaires plus élevés que gagnent les nouveaux membres grâce à la représentation de la FIOE demeurent attrayants, mentionne M. White. Ils sont aussi heureux du fait d'insister

d'avantage sur la sécurité et la dignité d'être représentés par l'un des syndicats les plus puissants du pays.

Il y a aussi des avantages pour la direction. M. White souligne que la plupart des entrepreneurs se rendent compte que les formations de la FIOE sont les meilleures dans l'industrie. Le local 353 et d'autres locaux canadiens fournissent une main-d'œuvre qualifiée dans un délai très court, ce qui évite les entreprises de procéder elles-mêmes à l'embauche.

Les campagnes de supplantation, comme celles menées par le local 353, seront au programme lors de la Conférence sur la croissance de l'affiliation syndicale tenue cet été à Moncton au Nouveau-Brunswick par le Premier District, exprime Brad Wood, coordonnateur de l'organisation syndicale du District pour l'Est du Canada.

Il en va de même pour les menaces du CLAC et d'autres syndicats favorables à la direction de remettre en question la représentation de la FIOE dans les entreprises à travers le pays, dit-il.

« La décertification est une réelle menace pour toute section locale et unité de négociation », dit-il. « Il est essentiel de parler de l'éléphant dans la pièce. »

Les conventions collectives entre les syndicats de construction de l'Ontario et les entreprises s'étendent généralement sur trois ans. La période de 60 jours avant l'expiration de la convention

collective est la période de maraudage, ce qui donne droit aux syndicats concurrents d'obtenir suffisamment de signatures des travailleurs pour convoquer une élection. Les travailleurs peuvent aussi convenir à négocier une nouvelle convention collective avec leur syndicat actuel et la direction ou de se décertifier et travailler sans syndicat.

Toutes les conventions collectives de l'Ontario signées par la FIOE avec les entrepreneurs expirent en même temps, ce qui garantit une certitude aux entrepreneurs et aux partenaires dans toute la province.

Le CLAC et le Building Union of Canada, un autre « faux syndicat », voient leurs conventions collectives prendre fin à différentes dates. Les organisateurs syndicaux de la FIOE suivent ces dates de près et un plan est déjà en marche au début de la période de 60 jours.

Rich Di Pietro, représentant international du Premier District, était au poste de coordonnateur de l'organisation syndicale et maintenant représentant de service, mentionne que M. White et son personnel montrent l'importance d'être syndiqué et ils ont une campagne prête à démarrer dès le début de la période de maraudage.

« Ils ont fait un travail exceptionnel,

particulièrement au cours des dernières années, de prêter attention aux syndicats concurrents, de cibler les périodes de maraudage et d'éduquer les membres [du CLAC] », prononce M. Di Pietro, un ancien directeur de la syndicalisation au local 105 à Hamilton en Ontario.

Le vice-président international du Premier District, Russ Shewchuk, souligne que le travail du local 353 résonne au-delà de Toronto et même de la province.

« Lee Caprio [le gérant d'affaires] et son équipe de syndicalisation ont fait un travail incroyable et ça place la barre réellement haute pour le reste du Canada », déclare M. Shewchuk. « Il n'y a jamais assez d'excuses pour expliquer pourquoi ils ne peuvent pas faire leur travail. Ils ont gagné une part de représentativité incroyable au cours des dernières années, mettant réellement l'effort nécessaire au travail et ils ont permis de mettre la nourriture sur la table des familles de la FIOE. »

« Ils peuvent tout faire, de syndiquer depuis les travailleurs jusqu'aux entreprises », ajoute M. Shewchuk. « Ils ont créé une culture de syndicalisation propice à la réussite. Le Premier District félicite l'éthique de travail du local 353. » ■

### 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](mailto:Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org).



# POWER AT WORK

ACT FAST

## Apply Soon for Founders' Scholarship Worth Up to \$24,000

The application deadline for the 2025 IBEW Founders' Scholarship is June 1, and International President Kenneth W. Cooper encourages interested members to submit their paperwork as quickly as possible.

"Education and professional development have always been core values of the IBEW," Cooper said. "I invite each and every one of our members with a desire to do more to help their brothers and sisters to apply for a Founders' Scholarship."

Offered exclusively to IBEW members in good standing, Founders' Scholarships help pay for courses toward degrees in approved fields from accredited institutions. The independent Founders' Scholarship Selection Committee picks the winners, awarding up to \$200 per semester credit hour, or \$134 per trimester credit hour, with a maximum award of \$24,000 over eight years.

"Furthering your education is an investment that shows your dedication and commitment to your IBEW brothers and sisters," said Research Director Jim Voye, who administers the scholarship program.

International President Gordon M. Freeman launched the scholarships in 1966 to honor the organizers of the IBEW. Freeman's hope was that the money would help members broaden their education while furthering the IBEW's mission to organize every electrical worker.

Each scholarship applicant must submit an essay and resume plus reference letters and transcripts. "They don't all have to arrive together, but they all have to be either emailed or postmarked by the June 1 deadline," Voye said.

One winner of the three scholarships awarded last year is Santa Rosa, Calif., Local 551 member Adrian Hardesty, a union activist since his apprenticeship who is pursuing a master's degree from Rutgers University with a concentration in conflict resolution and negotiation.

A member of Local 551's executive board and a former benefits trustee, Hardesty said the Rutgers program "will help me become the most effective leader that I can be for the IBEW."

Local 551 Business Manager John McEntagart supported Hardesty's application.

"He is that member that is considerate of others, thinks things through and always looks out for the members," McEntagart said.

Kristin Renskers, another winner, became a union activist when she helped Duluth, Minn., Local 31 unionize the utility department she worked for.

"The experience of organizing from the inside and obtaining a contract is the most valuable of my life," Renskers said.

"Kristin provides the even keel and level-headedness allowing for productive and thoughtful solutions," said Local 31 Business Manager Will Keyes.



Adrian Hardesty, Santa Rosa, Calif., Local 551

Now Local 31's business representative, Renskers also is working on a labor and employment relations degree from Rutgers. "I look to where labor has come from and plan for where we might go," she said.

Gary and Hammond, Ind., Local 697's Matthew Valant became interested in adult learning after attending the National Training Institute. He is now the training director and an instructor at the Electrical Training Center in Lake County.



Kristin Renskers, Duluth, Minn., Local 31

"Transitioning from electrical worker to teacher is tough," said Valant, who is spending his scholarship money on an educational doctorate in instructional systems technology. "I hope to use my education to continue to instill knowledge and confidence into our future generation of IBEW teachers."

Local 697 Business Manager Felipe Hernandez said Valant's passion for teaching and professional growth are highly evident.



Matthew Valant, Gary and Hammond, Ind., Local 697

"His pursuit of further education aligns perfectly with the scholarship mission," Hernandez said.

Email application and entry materials by June 1 to [scholarship@ibew.org](mailto:scholarship@ibew.org) or mail them to the IBEW Founders' Scholarship Committee, 900 7th St. NW, Washington, DC, 20001. Visit [ibew.org/foundersscholarship](http://ibew.org/foundersscholarship) for application requirements and winners' responsibilities, and call (202) 728-6103 with questions. ■

### CONTRACT

## Freight Rail Members Ratify New Agreement With Wage, Benefit Gains

Crucial economic and workplace benefits are now in place for the nearly 3,500 members of the IBEW's railroad branch who work for freight carriers in the U.S. now that the members have ratified a five-year collective bargaining agreement with the National Carriers Conference Committee.

"Thanks to the dedication of our railroad members, we continue to win contracts that recognize their essential contributions to the nation," International President Kenneth W. Cooper said in an announcement March 25. "This agreement reaffirms our commitment to securing strong contracts that provide economic stability for our members and their families."

Key provisions of the IBEW's new pact include an 18.77% compound wage increase over the life of the agreement, a path toward earning vacation time more quickly, and the ability to annually carry over — and even cash out — unused sick time.

"We were excited to see that so many of our members were in favor of the agreement," said Railroad Director Al Russo.

Under the Railway Labor Act, agreements between railroad unions and carriers do not expire. Instead, "they remain status quo — meaning no changes to current wages, work rules, and health and welfare benefits — until an agreement is reached," he said.

Russo said he and the leaders of the IBEW's railroad system councils



The members of the IBEW's Railroad branch who work for freight carriers in the U.S., including BNSF, recently ratified a five-year agreement with the National Carriers Conference Committee.

made sure the direction of the negotiations stayed steady to help prevent that.

"This round of negotiations was historically quicker, which prevented the bargaining process to drag on for three to four years," Russo said.

The IBEW's agreement largely follows a pattern set by those ratified by other unions during this latest round of bargaining.

Russo emphasized the importance of strong working relationships between labor and management was key in achieving a successful round of negotiations, highlighting that the rail carriers recognized the value of collaboration, which led to a productive bargaining session.

"There was a mutual understanding of respect between the parties that helped both sides accomplish reaching a tentative agreement," he said, praising NCCC Chairman Jeff Rodgers and his team and expressing appreciation for their cooperative efforts.

As this newspaper was being prepared, the IBEW remained in talks with the NCCC toward adoption of a bereavement leave benefit, and discussions were ongoing around resolving sick leave benefit questions for the union's workers with Conrail, the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad and the St. Louis Terminal Railway. ■



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# CIRCUITS

## IBEW Utility Director, San Diego Members Celebrated by Labor-Management Group

Retiring Utility Director Donnie Colston, a 45-year IBEW member and longtime leader, received a surprise award in March from a group representing the IBEW and its electrical utility partners.

Colston retired April 1 after serving as the Utility Department's director for the last eight years. Initiated into the IBEW as a journeyman lineman with Louisville, Ky., Local 2100 in 1980, over time he became increasingly active with his local, his city's building and construction trades council, and his state's AFL-CIO chapter. After becoming director of the Utility Department in 2017, he frequently met with officials at federal government agencies and testified before Congress four times.



**“Because of Donnie’s calming sense of leadership, the IBEW is stronger than ever in the utility industry.”**

— International President Kenneth W. Cooper on retired Utility Director Donnie Colston (pictured)

International President Kenneth W. Cooper presented Colston with the Edwin D. Hill Award during the National Labor and Management Public Affairs Committee's 18th annual conference in Washington.

“Because of Donnie’s calming sense of leadership, the IBEW is stronger than ever in the utility industry,” Cooper said, “from promoting strong labor-management partnerships to ensuring that the voices of IBEW members are always heard on Capitol Hill.”

The IBEW's international president from 2001 to 2014, Hill led the formation of national LAMPAC in 2007 to broaden partnerships between the union and the investor-owned utilities represented by the Edison Electrical Institute. The Hill Award recognizes individuals who have helped strengthen such partnerships.

Colston was moved by the award. “The IBEW taught me how to represent my fellow workers and placed me in a position to advocate for them,” he said. “I’m very honored by the IBEW’s faith in me as a member and representative.” (Read more about Colston in

the April Electrical Worker.)

“Usually, we don’t give out two Hill Awards,” said Cooper, acknowledging that the decision to honor Colston had been kept secret. “Sometimes we do something special because we have special circumstances.”

Representatives from San Diego Local 465 and San Diego Gas and Electric also were on hand to receive a Hill award, honoring their successes in fighting an initiative to force the municipal government to take over the utility’s operations inside the city limits.

“By working together, you convinced the City Council to reject that initiative, protecting both affordable and secure power for customers and good union jobs for working people,” Cooper said.

The nine-member San Diego City Council unanimously rejected the initiative last June. Had it not, said Local 465 Business Manager Nate Fairman, hundreds of the more than 1,500 IBEW jobs at SDG&E

in is solidarity. So, when we actually were under attack, I was able to connect with them.”

(Read more in the September 2024 Electrical Worker.)

Fairman said the coalition stands ready for the release of a City Council-commissioned municipalization feasibility study this summer, something that could reignite activists’ efforts.

“The successes that we need to have in the next five to 10 years are going to involve all of us needing to work together,” Fairman said.

Scores of representatives from IBEW districts and utility locals across the U.S. joined industry representatives for the 18th annual National LAMPAC meeting, featuring panel discussions led by IBEW and management leaders on topics such as safety, legislation and grid resilience.

Public Service Electric and Gas Chair Ralph LaRossa wrapped up the day by presenting the John D. Dingell Award to the authors of a House of Representatives resolution to designate July 10 as Journeyman Lineworkers Recognition Day.

“Everything he did was focused on bringing labor and management together,” said LaRossa of Dingell, a former Democratic representative from Michigan who also was the longest-serving member of Congress. Dingell, who died in 2019, had served as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee for nearly 60 years — as its chair for more than half that.

Last summer, H.R. 1355 was introduced by Rep. Linda Sánchez, a Democrat from California and a former compliance officer and member of Santa Ana, Calif., Local 441. “After any natural disaster, you guys are often the first on the ground trying to restore power and to connect people with really critical services,” she said.

Rep. Donald Norcross, an active member of Folsom, N.J., Local 351 and a former assistant business manager, agreed. “Outside of the military, [you’re] the largest group of workers that comes together to keep us safe,” said the New Jersey Democrat.

IBEW members “have bipartisan colleagues here who will always have your back,” added Pennsylvania Republican Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a life member of Trenton, N.J., Local 269.

“Labor needs industry and industry needs labor, and the two working together can benefit all that we love,” he said. ■

## ‘Lion the Electrician’: Ontario Member’s Book Connects Kids to the Trade

Like a lot of parents, Steve McKeown could recite his children’s favorite books by heart, reading them so often they became ingrained in his memory. But of all the books in his head, none were about being an electrician, or any other tradesperson.

“My kids often ask about my work and what I do from day to day. That got me thinking about the lack of children’s books about the trades,” the Thunder Bay, Ontario, Local 402 organizer and president said. “As the two ideas coalesced, I started rhyming a few lines, and before I knew it, I had the makings of a book.”

As it turned out, McKeown actually had the makings of a series of books. Each iteration of “Animal Trades” focuses on a particular trade, with the main character represented by an animal. There’s “Bear the Carpenter,” which comes out later this year, and “Gorilla the Iron Worker” and “Rhino the Operator” in the works. The first book, which came out in December, is “Lion the Electrician.”

“Animals are a great way for kids to connect to the skilled trades through lovable characters,” McKeown said. “Once you start to think about it, a variety of different animals are suited to different trades based upon their own traits and characteristics.”



*Inspired by his children’s interest in his work, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Local 402 member Steve McKeown started writing a collection of children’s books about the trades. “Lion the Electrician,” the first in the series, came out last December.*



As for why lions are electricians: “Lions are the kings of the jungle. It’s easy to recognize those same leadership qualities in so many of our electricians,” said McKeown, a Local 402 member since 2012.

The books are written for children ages 0-8, and McKeown said the province has been supportive in getting the book into Grade 1 classrooms and libraries. There’s even a supplemental lesson plan and stickers to accompany the book, giving teachers a ready-made avenue to introduce children to the series and the trades.

“What a wonderful opportunity to reach out to kids across the country and make a positive connection and introduction to the trades,” said First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk. “As an electrician myself, I tend to agree we are the ‘kings of the jungle,’ as nothing runs or operates without electricity in this world. And as a former organizer, what a great way to cultivate the next generation.”

An organizer with Local 402 himself, McKeown works with secondary schools and has seen how certain perceptions about the trades are ingrained in students early.

“By the time many children reach high school, they’ve already developed preconceived biases about



*Lauded for his members’ fight against municipalizing SDG&E was San Diego Local 469 Business Manager Nate Fairman, pictured here with the utility’s CEO Caroline Winn, left, and Vice President of External Affairs and Communications Brittany Applestein Syz.*



*McKeown poses for photos with VIP fans of “Lion the Electrician,” including Ontario Minister of Labor and Immigration Minister Craig Peterson, Ontario Minister of Labor and Immigration member of Parliament for Thunder Bay.*



# TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

## Sherilyn Wright



Sherilyn Wright, senior executive assistant to the international president, retired April 1, capping a four-decade career that took her from meter reader in Denver to the executive offices of the IBEW and the halls of Congress.

“Her accomplishments are vast, but what she’ll be known for most is her compassion and support for the membership,” said International President Kenneth W. Cooper. “Anyone who knows Sherilyn knows that if you need her help, she’ll be there in spades.”

Wright assumed the role of executive assistant to the president when her predecessor, Liz Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO, stepped down. Shuler first met Wright when she worked as a business representative for Local 111 in Denver.

“Her intellect, selfless approach to leadership and sense of humor stood out, and her talents were a natural fit for [IBEW leadership],” said Shuler, who is a member of Portland, Ore., Local 125. “It was a joy to watch her rise through the ranks and see her influence grow within our union.”

Wright wasn’t initially active in Local 111 when she joined in 1983. But when the company, the Public Service Co. of Colorado, tried to break the union and started firing people, she couldn’t just stand by. It took two years of fighting, but the local eventually won and got everybody’s job back.

**“Her accomplishments are vast, but what she’ll be known for most is her compassion and support for the membership.”**

— International President Kenneth W. Cooper

“That’s what got me started,” Wright recalled. “I remember my friend coming back and saying I should quit as a steward because I could get fired, but I said: ‘Absolutely not. You don’t mess with my family.’”

Wright was hired as a business representative in 1999. She also served on the local’s Human Rights Committee. In 2000, she took on the role of political coordinator, helping labor-friendly candidates win the Colorado Senate for the first time in nearly four decades. It was then that she discovered her love of politics.

“I didn’t like politics until I got involved in that campaign,” Wright said. “That’s when we started working with all the other unions, and we were successful in what we tried to do.”

Wright’s political success in her home state led to her appointment in 2005 as international representative in the Government Affairs Department, then known as Political and Legislative Affairs. In that role, she lobbied legislators on Capitol Hill and oversaw the IBEW’s grassroots campaign that helped put a labor-friendly administration in the White House.

“I didn’t fully realize before I got involved in politics that there’s so much we don’t know that affects us in the workplace ... and I loved getting people elected that represented our values,” Wright said.

Wright was able to transition her political skills into a set that served her well in her role as executive assistant to three international presidents.

“Sherilyn was always very reliable. I couldn’t have made a lot of the decisions that I did without her input,” said former International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “I can’t say enough about her and her

commitment to the IBEW.”

Reflecting on her tenure with the IBEW, Wright said it’s amazing to think of all she’s been able to do, from meeting presidents to traveling to Cuba and China, to going to the top of the Golden Gate Bridge, among countless other highlights.

“I’ve always thought that there’s more opportunity in the IBEW than at any corporation,” she said. “As women, we tend to doubt ourselves, but people aren’t trying to bring you along and promote you because they want you to fail. It’s because they believe in you. So if someone asks you to step up, do it.”

One moment that stands out for Wright is when she received the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus’ Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024.

“My first EWMC was where I saw that I really did belong in the IBEW on a larger level. That’s when it felt like home,” said Wright, who served on the EWMC board when she was with Local 111. “I don’t know if there’s anything more special I could have been given.”

The award is a testament to her full body of work for the labor movement, said EWMC President Emeritus Robbie Sparks.

“She’s contributed so much to organized labor,” Sparks said. “She never said, ‘Give me.’ It was always ‘Open the door and I’ll get it done.’”

Wright is also someone who never forgot where she came from, Sparks noted.

“Still water runs deep with Sherilyn. She gets things done quietly. She has a very special spirit,” Sparks said. “You don’t run into people like her often.”

For Wright, the people and the problem solving are what she’ll miss the most.

“I think my favorite part of this job is, when an issue comes up, figuring out, how do we solve it? Who do we get plugged in? Which people can we connect? And just seeing how we can make a difference,” she said.

Wright said she doesn’t have any set plans for retirement yet, but she takes solace in knowing that she has IBEW siblings all over that she can rely on.

“Just knowing you can travel anywhere and you’ll have family there if something should come up is a great thing about the IBEW,” she said.

It’s a sentiment that goes both ways, Sparks said.

“I can’t put into words how much she’s meant to me. She’s like one of my children,” Sparks said.

On behalf of the officers, members and staff, we wish Sister Wright all the best and for a long and healthy retirement. ■

RETIRED

## Paul O’Connor



Paul O’Connor knew in the eighth grade that he wanted to be an electrician. What he couldn’t have anticipated is all that the profession would entail for him over his 40-plus years as an IBEW member.

“To be a member of the IBEW is the top of the mountain,” said O’Connor, who retired Dec. 1 as director of the Government Branch. “It’s a powerful thing to be able to say that you’re a member.”

A second-generation tradesperson from New Hampshire, O’Connor grew up near a Navy shipyard in Kittery, Maine. When he started working at the Portsmouth shipyard, though, he wasn’t yet in the union. He made it a point to join Portsmouth, N.H., Local 2071 as soon as he could.

TRANSITIONS continued on page 12



who or what a tradesperson is. They often see us as male and Caucasian,” McKeown said. “My goal is to break the stigmas and eliminate the biases associated with the skilled trades, showing children from a young age that anyone can do this work and that it’s extremely rewarding.”

McKeown also has a message for parents and teachers.

“I want them to talk about the trades with the same high regard they do for professions like becoming teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers and firefighters,” he said.

McKeown noted that he is in a position to nurture his children’s curiosity and interest in the trades, but that may not be the case for parents of different professions.

“How does a child of two teachers, nurses, police officers or accountants — without exposure to the skilled trades — navigate that? Hopefully these books will help,” McKeown said. “We use the term ‘bottom-up’ when it comes to organizing. Well, this is bottom-up parenting for our future skilled tradespeople.”

The feedback on “Lion the Electrician” has been overwhelmingly positive, Local 402 Business Manager Craig Peterson said.

“My initial reaction was, ‘What a great idea — why didn’t I think of that!’” he said. “The book is exceptionally well done. I have yet to hear a single negative comment about it. It’s a fantastic resource.”

Peterson said the IBEW Construction Council of Ontario has purchased copies for distribution among the locals throughout the province. The book is also being promoted at monthly meetings and via

word of mouth.

“We take great pride in Brother McKeown’s accomplishments and congratulate him on his achievement,” Peterson said.

McKeown said “Lion the Electrician” is in over 100 classrooms around Ontario. He’s also working on making it and future editions available through an online store for the province’s educators. But perhaps most important, his own kids are fans.

“They love it,” he said of Norah, age 9; Mila, age 6; and Miles, age 3. “When my son sees the stickers or the book, he says, ‘Dad, it’s Lion.’”



For more information on the “Animal Trades” series and to purchase a copy of “Lion the Electrician,” scan the QR code or go to [animaltrades.ca](http://animaltrades.ca). ■



“Lion the Electrician.” From left: Local 402 Business Manager David Piccin; McKeown; and Kevin Holland,



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## TRANSITIONS *continued*

"When I first became a union representative, I would always speak out against management. That's risky to do when you don't have the protection of a union," O'Connor said.

O'Connor worked his way up at the shipyard, eventually serving as business manager. In 2003, he started a 13-year span as president of the Metal Trades Council, a multi-craft coalition of tradespeople working at the yard.

It was only about two years into his tenure when the Department of Defense announced that it would close the yard, which employed some 6,000 men and women. Not one to back down from a fight, O'Connor organized his fellow tradespeople to fight the closing — and won.

"Paul played a huge role in keeping it open," said Matt Biggs, president of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, who worked closely with O'Connor during that time. "If not for Paul, it might not be open today."

That was O'Connor's first political battle, but it was far from his last. Federal workers are under near-constant threat from the whims of Congress and other politicians trying to make a point about government spending. As a native of New Hampshire, a state with a front-row seat to national politics, O'Connor was uniquely positioned to fight for the rights of his co-workers.

When the George W. Bush administration tried to implement a new union-busting personnel system, falsely claiming it was necessary for national security, O'Connor and others pushed back.

"Paul was critical to that effort," said Biggs, who was down in the trenches with O'Connor for the battle. "He brought a lot of expertise that other, higher-up folks didn't have since he was on the ground doing the work."

O'Connor served on a number of Department of Defense-related committees and other coalitions of federal workers, always championing the men and women doing the critical work of keeping the United States safe.

"He's a great source of institutional knowledge," said Dale Troll, general representative of the AFL-CIO's Metal Trades Department. "He knows federal contracts and laws inside and out."

For O'Connor, it's always been about what you can get out of a strong labor-management relationship when you start from a place of dignity and respect.

"Our workers are our strongest asset. We are the highest-quality workforce in the world," O'Connor said. "Our members who work at NASA, at the [Tennessee Valley Authority], on the national grid — they're not doing national security halfway. And it's insulting to have Congress or anyone else say otherwise."

While at the Portsmouth shipyard, O'Connor spearheaded a program that allowed for collaboration between labor and management, the Declaration of Excellence, culminating in that yard ranking first in quality, safety and low cost.

"It was, and still is, a highly regarded yard," said O'Connor, who noted that all the politicians and others from government who toured the facility consistently walked away amazed. "You don't create efficiency by randomly firing people. You create efficiency by creating a strong and respectful labor-management relationship."

O'Connor was also a leader in revamping how blue-collar and white-collar workers are paid, pushing successfully for it to be more equitable.

"He fought hard to make sure the workers got what they deserved," Troll said. "If they knew how much time and effort he put in, they'd do more than just thank him."

Troll noted that O'Connor wasn't bombastic

in his approach and always came from a place of commitment to workers.

"Paul could be low-key and subtle, but if you pulled his chain, he'd get riled up," Troll said.

"He's very unassuming, but he's also a bulldog for what he's passionate about, and that's labor and federal workers."

O'Connor said he's glad to be back in New Hampshire and close to his family, but he hasn't entirely stepped away from the fight. In between playing guitar and kayaking with his wife, he's consulting on federal workforce issues, including with the AFL-CIO Metal Trades.

"We wouldn't let him go completely toes up in the sand," Troll joked.

O'Connor said he'd like to do more hiking and maybe take some solo bicycle trips when he's not redoing his office.

"I want to get back out and do stuff that fills me up. The IBEW filled me up, now I want to do more," he said. "Who knows? I might even chop some wood." ■

### DECEASED

#### Joe M. Fashion



Joe Fashion, a dynamic business manager who built Toronto Local 353 into a powerhouse and represented Canada on the International Executive Council, died in November at age 88.

Nicknamed "Joe Cool" for his calm under

pressure and fearlessness in thinking big, Fashion led the multi-sector local for two decades beginning in 1987. His strategies for organizing, bargaining, training, facilities and other successes led to his appointment to the IEC for four years, serving until his retirement from both posts in 2007.

"Nothing seemed to faze him," said current Local 353 Business Manager Lee Caprio. "He had a vision for the local, and he took a lot of heat for it at times. You needed someone who was strong enough to withstand the onslaught, and Joe Cool was exactly that."

Bill Martindale, a retired First District representative out of Local 353, watched Fashion grow from a "regular guy on the tools" into a passionate and inspiring leader.

"He would do things in the toughest of times that he knew in the future would be best," Martindale said. "He would go to bat for something that wasn't considered sellable, that had so much opposition, but he'd get through it. He hired organizers when other locals didn't. He built a hall in very difficult times, and it turned out to be the best thing we ever did."

Along the way, Fashion strengthened Local 353's relationship with IBEW leadership in Washington, D.C., and in 2003 invited International President Edwin D. Hill to the local's 100th anniversary party.

"People didn't really know who we are," said Caprio, the local's training director at the time. "Then Ed spoke about Joe in a way that changed that. He said something to the effect of, 'It's not hard to believe a leader like Joe Fashion is able to lead his membership to be the fourth-largest local in North America.'"

"I think that was the first time the U.S. had acknowledged that we were a superpower in the IBEW world," Caprio said.

To accomplish that, Fashion had to manage near-constant pushback while forging ahead with

organizing programs, capital investments, pension increases and other progress, ultimately converting many naysayers. "He motivated others to think long term and to think about the overall health of the local," Martindale said.

His sincerity had a way of winning people over, Caprio said.

"Joe remained very firm and he was always levelheaded, even when union meetings would get out of hand," he said. "He'd come down to the microphone on the floor, and he'd speak from his heart. Even people who didn't like him would end up cheering and clapping."

He also had enormous respect in the industry, Caprio said, noting the relationship between Fashion and the head of Toronto's largest electrical contractor.

"Both sides created this atmosphere of fairness, of friendliness and mutual respect," Caprio said. "In fact, that's where the name Joe Cool came from, because everybody thought, 'This guy just doesn't buckle under pressure.' He did business in a very gentlemanly way."

Fashion was determined to organize non-union contractors during an era when many locals — including his own, previously — balked at outside recruitment.

"He was all about changing the culture," Martindale said. "He hired me as an organizer in 1990 and mentored me and guided me through it. Membership increased tremendously in his time."

Significant growth came from Fashion's push to organize low-rise contractors, a sector of the building industry that was, and still is, largely nonunion.

"Joe had to really pay the political capital for that, but it worked out," Caprio said. "Twenty-five years later, we now have probably 95% of the residential market in the greater Toronto area."

Fashion loved sports, especially hockey, and played for years on IBEW baseball and hockey teams. As business manager, he created a sports and entertainment fund for members to help build friendship and solidarity.

"He was all about that kind of thing," said Martindale, his longtime teammate. "He created a retirees' fund, he held picnics, he encouraged volunteerism. When I was just a 20-year-old apprentice, he encouraged me to go to union meetings and Labor Day parades. It was quite an education."

Above all, he said, Fashion was a true friend and ally.

"No matter how busy he got, Joe was the kind of person who would still go the extra mile for you," Martindale said. "He would always make the time."

Fashion's survivors include his son, Todd J. Fashion, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, among many other loving friends and relatives. He was preceded in death by his wife, Grace, and daughter, Lucy Anne Walker.

On behalf of officers, staff and members, the IBEW offers our heartfelt condolences, with gratitude for Brother Fashion's decades of dedicated and lively service. ■

### DECEASED

#### Neil Tyree



Retired Eighth District International Representative Neil Tyree died at his home in Helena, Mont., on Feb. 27. He was 83.

Brother Tyree is remembered as a

tireless advocate for IBEW members who was willing to take on a leadership role even during difficult times. Rocky Anderson, who served as president of Casper, Wyo., Local 322 when Tyree was business manager there in the 1980s, said Tyree paid for food and beverage during local meetings and other events himself instead of charging it to the local. He would do the same in individual meetings with members, always paying for a meal or a beverage.

"It always came out of his pocket because our local was in such bad straits," said Anderson, who later served as Local 322's training director. "He spent quite a bit of his salary taking care of the membership."

Local 322 lost much of its work in the early part of the decade due to changes in federal policies under the Reagan administration. Tyree realized that and thought membership fees should go toward rebuilding the contractor base. Expenses on other items were kept at a minimum. He also made sure members got the credit when the local was recognized for good work when he could have easily taken it for himself, Anderson said.

A native of Pomona, Calif., Brother Tyree moved to Nevada with his family as a child. He served in the Marine Corps from 1959 to 1962 and joined Las Vegas Local 357 in 1963 before moving to Wyoming, where he completed a Local 322 apprenticeship and became a journeyman wireman.

He became an IBEW activist while working at the Jim Bridger Power Plant in Rock Springs, Wyo., where he served as a Local 322 steward for several years. He was elected to its executive board in 1978 before being elected business manager in 1981.

He served in that role until being appointed an international representative in 1989. Tyree's primary role was as a service rep for Montana locals, although he had other duties throughout the Eighth District, which also includes Colorado, Utah, Idaho and Wyoming.

"He was a real asset," said Don Herzog, who served alongside Tyree as an Eighth District international representative and is now retired. "He really wanted to do the working man justice."

Anderson echoed those comments, noting Tyree made sure Local 322 had a visible presence in the Wyoming labor community. For instance, he and other Local 322 members attended rallies in support of workers at a local grocery chain trying to gain representation from the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

Herzog said Tyree had a wonderful sense of humor and was quick with a joke, but no one confused that with him not taking his work seriously.

"Once he got something in his head, whether it was an arbitration hearing or representing someone, he just wouldn't let it go," Herzog said. "He put hours into arbitration hearings. His work ethic was paramount."

Tyree retired in 2004 and kept his home in Helena, where he moved after being named an international representative. He was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting and fishing and was buried with military honors at the Montana State Veterans Cemetery.

He is survived by Virginia, his wife of 61 years; two sons; seven grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.

The officers and staff send their condolences to Brother Tyree's family and friends during this difficult time and thank him for his many years of service. ■



# ORGANIZING WIRE

## Reworld Workers in N.Y., Pa. Prevail in Organizing Fights

Workers at waste-to-power facilities in New York and Pennsylvania overcame intense corporate resistance to unionizing and won elections to have IBEW locals represent them.

"They tried to drag it out as much as possible," said John Scherrer, business manager of Niagara Falls, N.Y., Local 237. A majority of workers at a Reworld facility there elected to join the IBEW on Jan. 30.

So did workers at a Reworld plant near Harrisburg, Pa., about a week earlier, voting to align with Reading Local 777.

Reworld facilities generate electricity by burning garbage. "They're calling it some kind of environmental company, but really they're a generating company," said Local 777 Business Manager Daulph Kline. "It makes them think they can pay us less."

Workers at the Niagara Falls plant, for example, process more than 810,000 tons of waste per year, generating nearly 200,000 megawatt-hours of electricity along the way.

"They're making decent money, but it's apparently a nasty job," said Steve Rockafellow, a Third District international representative who helped with organizing at both facilities. "There's smoke in there and ash and things like that."

It can be dangerous, too, said Third District Lead Organizer Michael McGee: "You've got operators, you've got maintenance people, but your field people? Those guys are out there having to look over their shoulder constantly to make sure a fork truck's not blazing through."

Workers at both plants had grown increasingly disgruntled with the company's restructuring of benefits, Rockafellow said, plus the deletion of annual bonuses.

"Management just decided, 'We're not doing that anymore,'" he said. What fueled workers' ire, he added, was how company leaders talked openly "about how they had record profits and then announced that the management people still got their bonuses."

Workers' first try at organizing — with another union in 2023 — failed by a razor-thin margin, said Nick Coyle, a Local 237 organizer. "The company made them lots of promises," he said. "But that all went away as soon as the election was over."

A Reworld employee was talking to a Local 237 member at their kids' wrestling tournament about conditions at the plant. The member recommended getting in touch with Coyle, and by last October, the Reworld workers there had begun a peer-to-peer organizing campaign.

"Some of them felt the IBEW was a better fit and maybe what they needed to actually get a win," Rockafellow said. "They were getting union authorization cards signed pretty quickly."



Workers at this Reworld facility recently voted to join Niagara Falls, N.Y., Local 237. Those at a similar plant in Pennsylvania joined Reading Local 777.

They also ran into Reworld-sponsored resistance, he said, including captive-audience meetings.

"It's just every step of the way, they do everything they can to delay the election and everything they can to make it difficult," McGee said.

What helped put workers at ease, Rockafellow said, was assuring them that the IBEW had their backs. "We tell

them: 'You're not bringing in a union. You're forming one with your coworkers,'" he said.

Although a vote Dec. 19 saw a majority of the workers voting in favor of IBEW representation, Reworld threatened to dispute the results after learning that a National Labor Relations Board agent had made a small mistake in ballot box handling that didn't affect

the election's outcome.

The parties agreed to hold a second vote Jan. 30.

"I kind of am nervous of a rerun election," McGee said. "They can be scary, and the statistics aren't favorable."

Also nerve-wracking, Scherrer said, was that Reworld hired more workers before the second vote. "We were afraid that maybe they were stacking it," he said.

The results of the revote, however, were better than those of the first one. IBEW staffers and local labor leaders with first-contract experience were still meeting with workers and assisting the local's negotiating team as this newspaper was being prepared.

"I feel like we have a lot of leverage," Scherrer said. Much of what the Niagara Falls plant processes is brought in across the state by rail from New York City. "Any interruptions would have a real impact on them," he said.

Meanwhile, Reading Local 777 organized Reworld workers at a municipally owned facility in Harrisburg. After a plant worker last fall contacted the

International Office for help, organizing got underway quickly, said Business Manager Kline.

"My business rep and I went over for a couple of meetings, and [Harrisburg] Local 143 helped us out, letting us use their union hall," he said.

Workers' issues in Harrisburg mirrored those in Niagara Falls. "They said the same exact things," Rockafellow said, "that the trend is every year they get a little less and the company is going to come after something else. They wanted to organize before then."

McGee said that Reworld's anti-union tactics there were similar, too. "Everyone got called into the office, one at a time. They repeated: 'You need to vote no. You're going to lose your retirement.'"

Reworld's union-busting attempts were a bust in Harrisburg as well. About half of that location's enthusiastic bargaining unit had quickly turned in signed union authorization cards, Kline said, and more than 77% of those voting Jan. 21 favored IBEW representation.

Negotiations toward a first contract are in progress. ■

## GROUNDNED IN HISTORY

### Hands Across the Border

With a flick of a switch on Nov. 23, 1981, Mayors Bert Weeks of Windsor, Ontario, and Coleman Young of Detroit adorned the Ambassador Bridge with a glowing "necklace of lights." The project on the 7,490-foot bridge was unique. Twelve IBEW members from Windsor Local 773 and Detroit Local 58 worked together for eight weeks at heights over 400 feet above the Detroit River to link the U.S. and Canadian borders electrically and put hearts aglow in their respective cities.

The project began when Business Managers Dan Diamond of Local 58 and Doug Ryan of Local 773 met with Fred Somes from Motor City Electric, a U.S. contractor, and Gary Tucker of Tucker Electric, a Canadian contractor, in the mayor of Detroit's office.

The first consideration was the



The Ambassador Bridge, opened in 1981, was festooned with a "necklace of lights."

safety of the workers, and a specially modified harness was developed to give the men freedom of movement when they need it. When working in more secure places, like near the large Ambassador Bridge sign, they clipped a 1.7-meter (six-foot) shock-absorbing lanyard from the harness to the bridge.

The first step of the project involved stringing the wiring, 16,000 feet of cable, along the bridge's suspension system using a Sikorsky helicopter in winds of up to 28 mph. Next the electricians from the two IBEW locals had to hang and connect 180 high-pressure sodium vapor lights at 50-foot intervals. The last step involved the wiring and hanging of the lights on the towers

on the east side of the bridge from swing staging suspended from the top of the bridge tower.

The Local 773 members on the project were Mark Gignac, Mike Warden, Russ Balkwill, Brent Poliquin and Walter Dick. From Local 58 were Doug Groves,

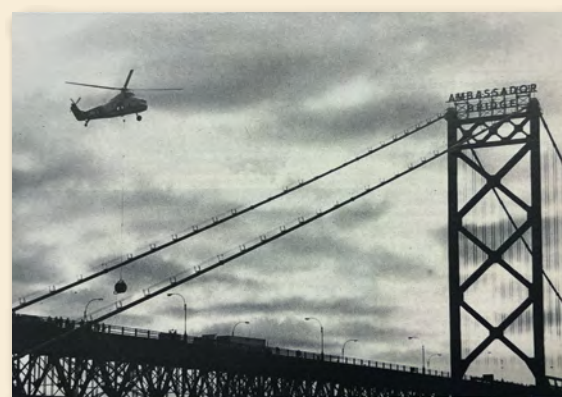
Jim Charlton, Bob Roland, Jim Charlton, Caracciolo and Bob Stepanski.

Prior to the bridge lighting ceremony, the officers and crew members from Local 58 were invited to a banquet on the Canadian side hosted by Local 773, who were celebrating their 63rd anniversary.

The lighting of the Ambassador Bridge marked a special moment in the history of the IBEW. Business Diamond said it symbolized "in a very visible way, the long-standing international ties between 58 and 773." Even more so, it symbolized the successful collaboration between two nations, now celebrating over 125 years in brotherhood. May the future of our shared union shine just as bright. ■



Brother Mike Warden, member of Local 773, shown wearing the modified safety harness.



Electricians using the Sikorsky helicopter install electrical cable on bridge suspension.

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



LOCAL LINES

Support Organized Labor

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,rts,s,se,spa,st,ws&ptc), ST. LOUIS, MO — Greetings, brothers and sisters. My neck is still recovering from the whip-lash turn the federal government has taken. I pray the union members that told me there was no difference between President Biden and President Trump are now seeing how stark a difference there is. My personal experience in the first Trump administration was the elimination of the deductions and tax credits I could use when I traveled for work. I lost an estimated \$3,000 because Trump wanted to reward his corporate buddies at the expense of me, the working man.

Our focus locally is on the ongoing contract negotiations for the inside agreement. If the recent past is any indicator, hang on. It's going to be tough.

Our RENEW chapter had a great turnout for the spring trivia night. All monies raised went to our local relief committee.

Elections have consequences, for better or worse. Be engaged and active in supporting candidates that support organized labor. Your job and your family's livelihood depend on it.

Mourn the dead, and fight like hell for the living. Be safe.

Kyle Hunter, P.S.

Invenergy Nelson Natural Gas Plant

L.U. 15 (u), DOWNERS GROVE, IL — Our local has successfully organized the employees at Invenergy's Nelson Energy Center, a natural gas power generation and hydrogen production facility in Rock Falls, Ill. After months of efforts, including discussions about the benefits of joining Local 15 and obtaining a 70% majority of authorization cards, a petition was filed for an election with the NLRB. Key figures in this process included Local 15 President Chris Riser, Vice President Ben Busser, Business Representative John Richards, Chief Steward Scott Ragan and Sixth District Regional Organizing Coordinator Lynn Arwood.

A Local 15 negotiating committee has been formed and has begun contract negotiations following polls from the employees to determine their contract preferences and request necessary information from the company. The leadership of Local 15, including President Riser and Vice President Busser, are enthusiastic about this achievement and look forward to supporting more middle-class working families through increased union membership.

Brad Gritt, Bus. Rep.

Local 17 Training Center Update

L.U. 17 (catv,em,lctt,o&u), DETROIT, MI — Undeveloped land was purchased in 2019 to establish our local's training center, and the grand opening was held in 2021.

Our \$2.5 million investment over the past five years allows us to fulfill our vision of creating a world-class training facility for our current members and future generations of IBEW workers.

Current training classes include:

- LCTT apprentices (more than 100 apprentices every Saturday)
- LCTT boot camp
- ALBAT Apprentices (lineman, substation, traffic) held weekly
- Crane operation and simulator
- ISA certification
- CDL
- URD cable splicing
- Journeyman upgrade
- Welding and fabrication
- Pipe bending

Future programs launching soon include classes for:

- Transmission (100-foot tower)
- CATV/teledata
- Renewable energy
- EV charging stations (three installed for training)
- IBEW outside electrical heavy equipment operations

The facilities are also used for proposal meetings, unit meetings and other union events.

James Shaw, B.M.



Local 17's new world-class training facility in Michigan.

Local 43 Syracuse Crunch Hockey Night

L.U. 43 (em,i&rts), SYRACUSE, NY — Our local's members and their families had a fantastic time at the Syracuse Crunch hockey night at the Onondaga County War Memorial arena. Business Manager



Local 43's Syracuse Crunch hockey night.

Alan Marzullo had the honor of dropping the puck to open the game. It was an evening filled with fun and great memories for all.

Thank you, brothers and sisters!

Jeff Cassano, P.S.

California Fire Restoration

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Southern California residents are going through one of the biggest disasters ever seen in the region. The outpouring of support for the restoration of the power grid has come from across the country, and it's amazing to see the Brotherhood come together to do what we do best: to put the power back on! Being able to bring society some comfort is rewarding, as is the knowledge that the men and women of the IBEW can do amazing things.

Here are Local 47's bargaining and event updates:

- Southern California Edison — Real-time operators voted on a new stand-alone agreement, and the agreement passed overwhelmingly. Negotiations continue for the call center unit. Regarding the discharge of Manuel Guerrero, as of the second day of arbitration (Feb. 5), the case was under submission to Arbitrator Ken Perea. Regarding the discharges of Dylan Rogers, Craig Baker and Eric Najera, as of the second day of

arbitration (Feb. 19), the case was under submission to Arbitrator Sarah Adler.

- City of Riverside — Wastewater negotiations continue.
- City of Riverside — Supervisory and Utility negotiations continue.
- City of Colton — Electric negotiations continue.



Local 47 crews working hard on the Eaton Fire restoration in February.

PSA: Support Your Local

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — With this country's political climate, today and every day, please support your local union.

Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.

Local 71 Marks 71 Years of Service

L.U. 71 (lctt,o&rtb), COLUMBUS, OH — Our local celebrated its 71st anniversary Feb. 8 with a heartfelt event honoring decades of service in the electrical, telecommunications and broadcasting industries. Several hundred members and retirees gathered to reflect on the union's achievements, its role in building and maintaining the trades we represent,

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](http://ibew.org/media-center/submitting-local-lines) or email [locallines@ibew.org](mailto: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.

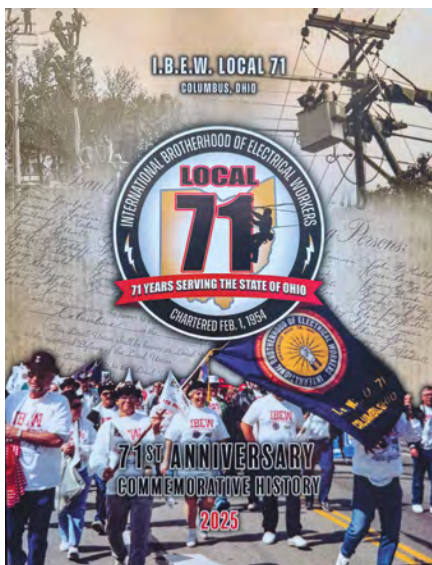
If you have an idea for an Electrical Worker story, please contact the Media Department at (202) 728-6219 or [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org).

Trade Classifications

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

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





Local 71's anniversary history book cover photo.

and its ongoing commitment to those skilled trades.

Held at the Columbus Hyatt Regency, the celebration brought together generations of union members, among them many retirees who dedicated their entire careers to advancing the local's work. Also in attendance were apprentices, representing the future of the local and eager to learn from the stories and wisdom shared by journeymen in their fields.

Todd Kessler, Local 71 business manager, spoke to the members: "For 71 years, we've been powering our communities and ensuring workers in our industries have the best training, safety and support they need to succeed. Today, we honor everyone who made this possible. I'm blessed and humbled to lead Local 71 at this special moment in our history." Former Business Manager Wally Sickles also addressed the attendees with a profound speech.

Since being chartered on Feb. 1, 1954, Local 71 has played an integral role in powering much of Ohio, supporting industries that keep the community connected and thriving. Its members have contributed to key projects, from major infrastructure builds to maintaining critical communication and broadcasting systems.

As the celebration and dancing came to a close, attendees toasted 71 years of success and the bright future ahead.

Here's to another 71 years of excellence and dedication from Local 71.

*James Roessner, R.S.*

## Holidays at Local 99

L.U. 99 (govt&i), PROVIDENCE, RI — Our local had a cheerful and busy holiday season, starting with the setup of the annual holiday lights display. Thankfully, with the help of volunteers, Local 99 was able to successfully complete the display in time for members of the local and the community to enjoy.

Local 99's RENEW Committee started an annual holiday meeting raffle. Attendees were rewarded for their involvement in union activities and meetings by receiving free raffle tickets, entering for a chance to win one of 11 donated prizes including a Milwaukee heated jacket, a packout organizer and new Local 99 sweatshirts.

December concluded with the annual holiday union gathering. Every year Local 99 provides delicious catered food for all attending members. After the meeting concluded, we awarded service pins to all eligible members. This is the second year Local 99 has invited members who are contractors to join in this annual event.

*Sidney Jablonski, P.S.*

## 125 Years for Local 113

L.U. 113 (ees,em,i,mo,o&ptc), COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — Greetings, brothers and sisters.

At the time of this writing, the local has been busy preparing for the celebration of our upcoming 125th anniversary in March. Local 113's charter was signed March 31, 1900, with our celebration March 29.

The local's RENEW Committee has been hard at work putting together a float for this year's Colorado Springs St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Work has been slow in the area, with hopes of more coming in the near future. Best wishes, brothers and sisters!

*Justin McMahon, R.S.*

## Continuing Education

L.U. 103 (cs,i&ptc), BOSTON, MA — This month, our local proudly celebrated the graduation of Business Agent James Fleming from the Harvard Trade Union Program. This elite program is designed to educate labor leaders on economics, leadership and collective bargaining strategies.

Established in 1942, the HTUP is an intensive six-week executive training course through Harvard's Labor and Worklife Program. Brother Fleming's achievement highlights his dedication to strengthening worker advocacy and leadership.

Congratulations, Jimmy! Great job!

*Louis Antonellis, B.M./F.S.*

## The Future Starts Now With Another First-Year Class

L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rts,se&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI — The work outlook remains steady in Kalamazoo. Palisades nuclear plant is progressing toward startup, with plans for completion by December. Allocation for the contract raise will be May 5.

Local 131 plans to sponsor a tools and trades expo in September. We have invited several contractors, vendors, building trades, high schools and tech centers to participate. Thank you, Jon Current, for all your hard work on this project.

Welcome to the new first-year class that started in January: Max Aguilon, Samantha Beach, Morgan Bumpous, Maria Carson, Deshaun Darden, Gary Horton, Dylan Johnson, Gabriel Johnson, Kaleb Johnson, Nicholas Keene, Hayden Key, Robert Lewis, Zachary Morris, Gabriel Powell, Janice Sienicki, Bryce Stewart, Christopher Stewart and Sebastian York. The IBEW will always be here for you.

Our local's website, [ibew131.com](http://ibew131.com), has a new tab dedicated to retirees. There is a lot of good information just for you!

The Local 131 picnic is scheduled for July 26, and I hope to see you there!

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



Local 131 first-year apprentices starting their careers.



Local 141's newest journeyman wiremen, from left (front row), Brandon Gordon, Scott Mehlman, Chase Bonnette and Dakota Loughery; (back row) Nathan Myers, Bradley Schaber, Drew Barbour and Mason Lindner.

## Local 141 JW Graduation Dinner

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Work remains slow in our local, with 47 members on Book 1. The third and fourth quarters of 2025 and into 2026 look promising, as a couple of sizable commercial projects are projected to start in downtown Wheeling.

In January, the Wheeling JATC held a graduation dinner for Local 141's newest journeyman wiremen at the Wheeling Island Hotel Casino & Racetrack. Congratulations to Drew Barbour, Chase Bonnette, Brandon Gordon, Mason Lindner, Dakota Loughery, Scott Mehlman, Nathan Myers and Bradley Schaber. May these brothers enjoy a long and fulfilling career in the IBEW!

As of this writing, Local 141 is sending a delegation of officers to the state capitol in Charleston to attend the West Virginia AFL-CIO Legislative Conference. The delegates' goal, along with many labor unions throughout the state, is to speak to elected officials on matters important to labor during the legislative session and persuade them to vote against bills that are harmful to working families.

Local 141 is deeply saddened to announce the passing of retired brothers Scott "Scooter" Palmer and James "Jimmy Dollar" Lawther, as well as the unexpected passing of active member Charles Michael "Vargs" Vargo. Collectively, these gentlemen are responsible for many funny stories and great memories of Local 141. They will be greatly missed.

*Kurt "Bug" Reed, P.S.*

## Spring at Local 245

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — Well, it's finally spring, and here at our local we're ready for some warmer weather. We gathered at the Huntington Center on Feb. 22, where more than 600 of our members and their families came to cheer on

our Toledo Walleye hockey team for an overtime win. This is a yearly tradition that brings our membership from all of our branches together as one unit. We can't wait to see everyone at next year's event!

As of this writing, negotiations are ongoing with Vistra Corp. and the city of Rossford. Upcoming negotiations include Local 245's newly organized group, the Clyde Light and Power members. Our outside construction work is steady, and many new calls are coming in.

We'd like to take this opportunity to remind all of our members to be their brothers' and sisters' keep-

ers. Thank you for working safely!

*Brian Gendaszek, P.S.*



Local 245 members attended the Toledo Walleye game at the Huntington Center on Feb. 22.

## New Industry in Collinsville

L.U. 309 (i,lctt,mo,mt,o,rts,spa&u), COLLINSVILLE, IL — At the beginning of the year, our local received good news about a new industry coming to our area. With the help of the Reimagining Energy and Vehicles in Illinois incentive program, two biorefinery companies will build sustainable aviation fuel facilities in Sauget, Ill. Avina Clean Hydrogen and Crystall Biosciences have plans to construct SAF manufacturing plants worth \$820 million and \$240 million, respectively. SAF is made from non-petroleum feedstocks, of which Illinois is a top producer, and it can reduce carbon emissions by up to 80%.

Our RENEW Committee is hitting its stride in 2025. Their first-ever trivia night was a blast, and a new event, mouse races, is on the schedule for Sept. 20. A special thank you goes out to apprentice wireman Lauren Streff and all the volunteers for providing new opportunities for the members to get to know each other.

In other news, Local 309 is continuing to host blood drives for the American Red Cross every other month. Call the hall (618-345-5112) to schedule a time to donate. And for all families, a night at the Grizzlies event is scheduled for July 18.

*Carlos S. Perez, A.B.M.*



## LOCAL LINES

## Giving Back and Paying Forward

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — In February, we joined other Minnesota locals at the state capitol for the annual IBEW Day on the Hill. Brother John Swanson, political coordinator, worked with other statewide IBEW representatives to schedule face-to-face meetings with our state senators and representatives. These visits allowed us to personally present defined IBEW issues to the legislators who represent us. This year, 320 Minnesotan IBEW members from various trade classifications signed up. Our local had its best attendance yet, with 76 members participating. Apprentices, JWs and retirees filled the ranks.

Also in February, Sister Taylor Lamphear and Brother Milo Weckworth traveled to the Local 701 union hall in Warrenville, Ill., to receive election judge training conducted by the International Office. Their knowledge and leadership skills will be put to use in our election of officers in June. The duties of officers can be found in the IBEW Constitution, Article XVII, page 56. Whether at a state capitol or a local union hall, those who hold office have a responsibility to serve those they represent.

Local 343 membership approved the creation of an apprenticeship scholarship eight years ago, and a maximum of ten \$500 scholarships are awarded annually to qualifying apprentices. Since 2017, 45 scholarships totaling \$22,500 have been presented. Four apprentices have taken full advantage of this opportunity and received four scholarships each year between 2017 and 2020. It's free money!

Local 343 is forming a RENEW Committee. RENEW is an IBEW-wide program open to all members ages 35 and younger. It offers members the chance to become more involved in the local's activities, learn about the benefits of the IBEW, increase pride in union membership and develop leadership skills.

Congratulations to the first members of the RENEW Committee: Sisters Mandy Tullis-Martin and Damien Moore and Brothers Colton Nesler and Ray Wicks.

We remember our brothers who passed in 2024: KB Askland, Howard Barnes, James Bell, Eugene DeBus, Anthony Dickey, Allen Everman, Robert Hagemann, Gerald McRae, Douglas Neff, David Olson and Richard Sargent.

Save American jobs, buy Made in USA.

Thomas Small, P.S.

## Local 351 Clothing Drive

L.U. 351 (c,cs,i,it,lctt,mt,o,se,spa&t), FOLSOM, NJ — Our local's Women's Committee and Veterans Committee did a great job conducting a clothing drive that finished amazingly strong. After five weeks of hard work, a grand total of 3,423 pounds of clothes; 300 pairs of shoes; eight 40-gallon bags of linens; two 40-gallon bags of scarves and gloves; and four 40-gallon bags of backpacks, bags, and other accessories were collected. Everything that was collected was distributed to needy families throughout Local 351's jurisdiction.

Thank you to both committees and all the volunteers of Local 351 for their hard work and dedication.

Dan Cosner, B.M.

## Local 357's Strong Start to 2025

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — Our union's involvement in community activities was highlighted earlier this year by several significant events. In January, the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus



From left, Local 357's Matthew Apfel, Julie-Ann Peeples, Steven Cuthbert, Aaron Kessler, Cheyenne Woltz, Daniel Aranda, Lamare Jones, Brandon Nutton, Dee Mattera, Ronnie Lagunas, Tito Torres, Doug Ziegenhagen and Ike Radulovic.

joined the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade in downtown Las Vegas, where our vibrant float honored this great man and his remarkable achievements. The Brotherhood and Welfare Fund Committee organized our annual Bowling for Brotherhood event in March. This enjoyable day raised funds for S.A.F.E. House. Notably, Matthew Baeza won for the second consecutive year!

We also took part in the College of Southern Nevada Construction Career Day. During this event, IBEW leaders discussed the advantages of apprenticeships. We provided several engaging, hands-on activities and showcased the various aspects of our trade.

Local 357 organized two local strikes, demonstrating our steadfast commitment to upholding local standards and fair wages. Our members' strong participation in these early morning pickets showed their dedication, loyalty and solidarity.

For our families, the Local 357 Scholarship Committee is offering five scholarships of \$5,000 each to help kickstart the higher-education journeys of high school seniors graduating in 2025. Additionally, our members now enjoy a new benefit that includes a free trust and will service to assist them in estate planning and give them peace of mind.

Julie-Ann Peeples, P.S.

## Local 481 Holds Gala for Members

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rt,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — In March, we held our annual gala for our local members and significant others. The gala is a night to get away from the daily grind of the workplace and enjoy some solidarity. A night for the membership to come together to enjoy a nice meal, see some old friends, meet some new friends, enjoy a cold beverage or two, and dance the night away. It is also an opportunity to introduce newly sworn-in apprentices to retired members who want to share their experiences. With nearly 800 members and guests this year, the Local 481 gala was one of our largest ever.

Thank you to all the members who came out and enjoyed the night with your fellow brothers and sisters! If you were unable to attend the event, I strongly encourage you to try to make the next one. You won't regret it. Remember, the union is only as strong as the membership, so stay engaged!

Blake Andrews, Bus. Rep.

## Local 483 Accomplishments and Goals for 2025

L.U. 483 (catv,lctt,o&u), TACOMA, WA — Our local is proud to partner with the NW Line JATC and Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood, Wash., to open a third vocational outside line training academy. This partnership will enable VOLTA to be accessible to veterans' benefits as well as expanded financial assistance for students. The need for qualified applicants for our powerline construction

apprenticeship program has never been greater, and this partnership will go a long way toward fulfilling that need.

Local 483 is also conducting our 11th annual peanut butter drive. Over 83,000 jars were donated to area food banks in the past 10 years! This year, we are aiming for that magic number of 100,000 jars. If you want to help us meet this monumental goal, please contact us at the hall or go to our website at [ibew483.org](http://ibew483.org) and make a donation.

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



Local 483, in partnership with the NW Line JATC and Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood, Wash., offers VOLTA training.

## Project Phoenix in Full Swing

L.U. 557 (i,mt,rt,s&spa), SAGINAW, MI — Hello, brothers and sisters. As you may have heard, we have a major job in Saginaw. Thanks to the CHIPS and Science Act, we are able to make major strides in semiconductor manufacturing, and our members are on the forefront of this megaproject! It has been an honor meeting members from other locals who are coming to support the IBEW and having chats with newly organized members about how the IBEW has changed lives.

I would also like to take a moment to emphasize the importance of making new members feel welcome and showing them the true meaning of brotherhood and solidarity. It can be nerve-racking to make the jump, and it is our responsibility to show them why they made the right choice and to retain our values as union members.

At this moment, there are 362 IBEW members referred to Project Phoenix.

Donovan C. Bender, P.S.

## Local 601 Secures New Contract

L.U. 601 (i&rtb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL — Collective bargaining is a cornerstone of union power. After some contentious negotiations, Local 601 has a new contract that started March 1 and ends Feb. 28, 2028. We would like to thank all those on the bargaining team for representing us at the negotiation table.

Local 601 has been in full swing for work, with a good outlook on the horizon. We had been slow for a while, so it's a good feeling knowing that our books are clearer than they have been in the past.

Local 601 also sponsored a round of trivia questions for Local 309's RENEW trivia night. We wish them great success and collaboration in the future.

As of this submission, we have 27 on Book 1 and 34 on Book 2. To sign the out-of-work lists, you must sign in person or via fax or email from your home local.

Luther Baker, P.S.

## Local 617 Health and Wellness

L.U. 617 (c,i,mo&st), SAN MATEO, CA — Our local urges all members and their families to live happily and healthfully. Local 617 has partnered with the administrators of our wellness programs, BaySport Inc. and Optum Behavioral Health, working with their trained professionals to provide members with the best support relating to mental, emotional and physical health.

Our membership has access to valuable services including health screens and testing, health coaching, weight-loss guidance, free flu shots, nutritional counseling, health club discounts, exercise classes, discounted gym memberships, smoking cessation programs, substance abuse counseling and mental health supportive care.

2025 will be busy with healthy lifestyle challenges and activities like the hydration and pigskin challenges, planksgiving, boot camps, and the March Madness tournament. Members formed bas-

ketball teams to compete with one another on weekends leading up to a championship game, all in the spirit of exercise and sportsmanship.

We believe unions can improve health and wellbeing for all workers and their families, both in the workplace and at home, and we are committed to supporting our membership in all their healthy lifestyle endeavors.

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



Local 601 sponsored a round of trivia questions for Local 309's RENEW trivia night.

## New Chili Champ

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — The end of winter and early spring in Tampa were busy for our local. The repairs of the damage to our hall from hurricanes Helene and Milton are almost complete. Business Manager Randall King would like to thank International Vice President Glenn Brannen for thinking of us when Thorogood Boot Co. donated 300 pairs of boots for members affected by the storms. Having good, union-made boots enabled our brothers and



sisters who suffered storm-related losses to be able to go back to work and support their families.

On Feb. 7-8, several lucky brothers and sisters were hosted by Antron Brown, the NHRA Top Fuel champion, at the Bradenton Motor Speedway. The Local 915 bug held a place of honor on Antron's race car as part of a new sponsorship.

On Feb. 15, we held our annual work party to clean up the grounds surrounding the union hall. The 2nd annual Local 915 chili cook-off was held Feb. 22. This year, Brother Jonathan Fielder took top prize, toppling the reigning champ, Brother Brian Nathan.

On March 15, Local 915 hosted our anniversary celebration commemorating 125 years of representing electrical workers in Tampa.

Brian Nathan, A.B.M.



Brother Jonathan Fielder holding the Local 915 chili cook-off trophy.

## Local 1347 Standing Up for Our Rights

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,u&ptc), CINCINNATI, OH — The leaders we elect directly shape labor rights, work-force protections and job security. When our rights are under threat, it's time to stand up and take action.

Brother Don Scott Smith is leading the charge in this fight, standing against harmful policies like "right-to-work" laws, a tactic designed to weaken



Local 1347 stands up for our rights!

unions and diminish the value of workers. One of the most effective ways to make our voices heard is by taking to the streets in a peaceful rally, showing solidarity for the labor movement.

Stand up. Speak out. Defend labor rights. Get involved and fight for the future of our workforce.

Andrew Kirk, B.M./F.S.

## Local 1547 Apprentices Give Back

L.U. 1547 (c,em,i,o,t,u,lctt&ptc), ANCHORAGE, AK — Fairbanks local apprentices, staff and family



members are dedicated to giving back to the community through hands-on volunteer work. The Fairbanks Food Bank was recently chosen as a service project because it aligns with the local's shared commitment to supporting those in need.

While community service has always been a part of the IBEW's culture, Business Representative Naomi Hewitt is working to establish a monthly service initiative to make our efforts more consistent. She organized the food bank project, announcing it at the general meeting, where members eagerly signed up to participate.

The goal is to actively support the community in diverse ways. A few months ago, apprentices volunteered at the Breadline's Stone Soup Cafe and plan to assist the Girl Scouts with electrical challenges at their office.

Melinda Taylor, Comm. Dir.

## In Memoriam: James Edgar Rooks

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — Hello, brothers and sisters. I hope everyone is well. Our work situation in Augusta has been very steady. Savannah River Site and our in-town shops have been busy, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down. The data center is steadily hiring, so all who want to be part

of that project should get their chance soon. Plant Vogtle has been successfully completing normal outages and has been keeping our members busy.

We are, for the most part, returning to some sense of normalcy since Hurricane Helene had its way with our area. However, our lake property is still not quite ready for the membership to enjoy. Hopefully we will soon have it back to where it should be. Thank you all for your patience.

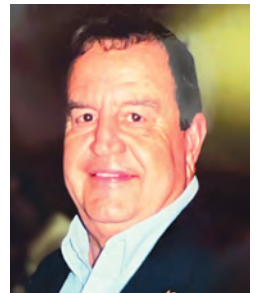
On a somber note, we lost a Local 1579 leg-end as Brother James Edgar Rooks passed away Feb. 8. Edgar had

more than 60 years of service to the IBEW, and his last 20 were spent as assistant business manager. He spent his career faithfully serving the IBEW and the members of Local 1579. He was instrumental in achieving the initial project labor agreement for Plant Vogtle units 1 and 2. People still talk about the 4-10 and 3-12 shifts that were negotiated in that PLA.

When other trades tried to cave during negotiations, Edgar remained steadfast and determined to get our members a fair and profitable agreement that eventually came to fruition. Edgar was not only my mentor but also my friend and my brother. Edgar, you will be sorely missed, but never forgotten.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." — Maya Angelou

Mike Greene, Pres.



Local 1579's James Edgar Rooks.

From left (back row), Mason Jefferies (first-year), Naomi Hewitt (Local 102 rep.), Gary Chin (first-year); (middle row) Daniel Fischer (JW), John "JD" Calhoun II (first-year) with girlfriend, Cali; Azi with stepmother and Local 102 office manager, Carrie Van De Hei; Tim Estes (JW and executive board member); (front) Amanda Earhart (JW).

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

This is a summary of the annual report for the INT'L BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS' PENSION BENEFIT FUND, (Employer Identification No. 53-0088380, Plan No. 001) for the period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The annual report has been filed with the employee benefits security administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

## Basic Financial Statement

Benefits under the plan are provided by a trust (benefits are provided in whole from trust funds). Plan expenses were \$208,150,405. These expenses included \$14,798,094 in administrative expenses and \$193,352,311 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries. A total of 578,301 persons were participants in or beneficiaries of the plan at the end of the plan year, although not all of these persons had yet earned the right to receive benefits.

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$2,518,069,884 as of June 30, 2024 compared to \$2,402,321,430 as of July 1, 2023. During the plan year the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$115,748,454. This increase includes unrealized appreciation or depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan's assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year, or the cost of assets acquired during the year. The plan had total income of \$323,898,859, including employee contributions of \$107,027,755, gains of \$20,715,785 from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of

\$197,739,684 and other income of \$-1,584,365.

## Your Rights to Additional Information

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

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

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

Paul A. Noble  
International Secretary-Treasurer  
900 7th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-4089  
99-1488546 (Employer Identification Number)  
(202) 728-6200

The charge to cover copying costs will be \$14.00 for the full report, or \$0 per page for any part thereof.

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

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

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

And at the following address:

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

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

## Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PUB. L. 104-13) (PRA), no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The department notes

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

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

OMB control number 1210-0040 (expires 03/31/2026)

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



In Memoriam

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
1	Barker, J. E.	2/10/25	22	Skarda, J. E.	8/18/24	98	Caldearo, J. T.	8/19/24	145	Dasso, P. R.	2/22/25	349	Brown Hechavarria, P.		488	Scognamiglio, C. A.	2/6/25
1	McQuaide, J. J.	1/30/25	22	Smith, L. L.	1/10/25	98	Francis, H. R.	1/23/25	145	Iverson, S. J.	2/15/25			1/11/25	490	Chretien, R. D.	1/24/25
1	Rothermich, G. A.	12/14/24	24	Brewer, A. W.	12/20/24	98	Hammer, C. E.	12/24/24	146	Plummer, G. L.	2/4/25	349	Denaro, M. A.	2/5/25	490	Goodale, R. E.	1/20/25
1	Slover, R. E.	6/10/23	24	Hild, G. J.	1/24/25	98	Hendrie, N. R.	11/5/24	146	Spesard, D. K.	2/10/25	349	Drake, R.	1/18/25	490	Raucci, A. M.	1/29/25
2	Hardin, M. R.	1/21/25	24	Inglett, J. R.	12/30/24	98	Kedra, J.	8/25/24	150	Bigelow, R. E.	12/22/24	349	Nelson, J. H.	1/14/25	494	Komassa, K. A.	11/27/24
2	Koch, G. L.	2/9/25	24	Webster, H. S.	6/26/24	98	O'brien, W. J.	1/19/25	158	Palmer, K. J.	12/28/24	349	Snelgrove, J. E.	3/27/23	494	Kreuser, S.	2/15/25
3	Arzu, M.	2/3/25	25	Ericson, R.	1/22/25	98	Pickard, F. J.	11/8/24	159	Small, R. A.	12/23/24	349	Stewart, B.	12/18/24	502	Northrup, G.	9/29/24
3	Bacchi, K.	5/26/22	25	Lo Verde, F. G.	1/19/25	98	Rhodes, W. C.	11/22/24	163	Hartman, P.	11/28/24	350	Foutes, H. L.	12/2/23	505	Ridgeway, R. M.	3/26/24
3	Balletta, L. J.	11/8/24	25	Roth, P. R.	2/24/25	98	Rurode, D. S.	2/3/25	164	Cook, M.	1/21/25	351	Burns, C. E.	2/9/25	518	Hall, M. C.	1/7/25
3	Bisson, T. P.	2/28/25	26	Haney, W. M.	1/12/25	98	Seifried, J.	12/25/24	164	Getz, D. E.	2/6/25	351	Farinaccio, J. J.	1/26/25	520	Jones, E. M.	1/12/25
3	Brown, J. R.	12/13/22	26	Kieffer, J. L.	2/9/25	98	Smith, J. A.	11/7/24	164	Long, M. C.	12/27/24	351	Lupi, L. G.	1/28/25	520	Kasberg, S. R.	1/11/25
3	Capobianco, F. R.	2/18/25	26	Lichliter, D. C.	2/18/24	99	Rossi, J. A.	8/24/24	164	Nixon, R. L.	1/18/25	351	Sharp, R. L.	2/28/25	520	Rhea, O. W.	12/27/24
3	Catulle, M.	5/13/23	26	Malone, M. B.	12/27/24	100	Charest, J.	12/7/24	164	Price, W. E.	2/9/25	352	Heathman, J. A.	11/25/24	527	Mata, C. D.	1/10/25
3	Chodkiewicz, L.	11/15/21	26	Marceron, R. D.	2/2/25	100	Howell, C. R.	12/5/24	164	Vanfossen, D. E.	2/9/25	353	Barfield, J. W.	11/25/24	530	Fraser, J. L.	2/20/25
3	DiStefano, A. R.	2/5/25	26	Rogovsky, D.	1/31/25	100	Vollhardt, C. L.	11/4/24	175	Day, J. R.	2/13/25	353	Barrie, D.	1/16/24	532	Culp, G.	2/22/25
3	Dockery, A. A.	2/3/25	26	Roy, J. A.	8/13/24	102	Bagnall, R. S.	12/13/24	175	Pinckard, M. A.	8/6/24	353	Campsall, W.	2/10/25	540	Stephens, J. H.	2/20/25
3	Falk, D. M.	2/9/25	32	McLoughlin, J. L.	2/19/25	102	Calvacca, P.	11/21/24	176	Karun, L. F.	1/20/25	353	Celebi, A. A.	1/30/25	553	Bunger, D. H.	1/13/25
3	Faro, F. C.	2/10/25	34	Martin, R. O.	2/10/25	102	Canty, R. W.	12/24/24	176	Latour, J. A.	1/29/25	353	Gill, G. W.	11/11/24	553	Walters, G. T.	7/2/23
3	Federocko, J.	1/18/25	35	Brennan, P. C.	8/24/24	102	Hutchison, J. J.	12/13/24	176	Thomas, B. C.	1/17/25	353	Granito, E.	2/8/25	558	Newman, D. M.	1/31/25
3	Garcia, C.	12/13/24	35	Joiner, R. L.	1/26/25	102	Izzo, P. V.	1/17/25	177	Cornatzer, R. A.	10/26/24	353	Lams, R.	1/28/25	567	Ennis, P. G.	1/15/25
3	Gomez, G. R.	1/18/25	38	Camp, C. L.	1/7/25	102	Mayer, V. C.	1/10/25	177	Witt, R. W.	1/20/25	353	Livingstone, G. F.	1/10/25	567	Gerry, R. M.	12/24/24
3	Hafner, G. E.	1/17/25	38	Chal, R. W.	1/26/25	102	Pombo, J. N.	12/1/24	191	Roe, T. G.	1/14/25	353	Riley, L. B.	2/20/24	568	Forbes, D. A.	3/7/22
3	Handel, J. N.	1/18/25	38	Leonetti, W. J.	2/14/25	103	Fox, W. D.	12/27/24	191	Watson, J. L.	10/7/24	353	Smith, K.	1/3/25	568	Renaud, D.	11/16/24
3	Hanfmann, P.	2/10/25	41	Schierstein, H. J.	2/17/25	103	Garcia, R. M.	2/28/25	194	Leone, B. R.	12/21/24	353	Wake, J. H.	8/24/24	569	Dimond, J. L.	1/31/25
3	Joblon, F. S.	11/3/23	42	Horan, J. J.	10/15/24	103	Griffin, W. F.	2/9/25	210	Riley, T. J.	1/29/25	354	Peterson, J. E.	2/20/25	569	Macias, W. C.	2/2/25
3	Kahn, M.	2/18/25	43	Bateman, C. E.	1/19/25	103	O'Connor, M. W.	2/1/25	212	Gilb, T. D.	2/3/25	357	Beam, R. C.	1/7/25	569	Troseth, J. E.	2/12/25
3	Kalantzis, A.	1/26/25	44	Baier, G. L.	2/27/25	103	Schieb, S. G.	12/28/24	212	McElravy, J. L.	6/30/24	357	Dalton, K. A.	2/1/25	569	Wicka, B. M.	2/13/25
3	Knuth, H. R.	12/23/24	46	Birkett, D. C.	1/26/25	103	Stucchi, A.	1/31/25	213	Greene, J. W.	11/7/24	357	Haney, J.	9/26/21	570	Luper, J. R.	1/25/25
3	Layer, R. E.	2/15/25	46	Carson, V. L.	2/6/25	103	Sullivan, T. J.	11/28/24	213	Jones, G. A.	4/21/24	357	Hartman, S. J.	9/16/22	570	Roussard, R. D.	2/3/25
3	Lucas, R. A.	2/19/24	46	Kimball, D. R.	6/29/23	103	Wentzell, C. J.	12/3/24	213	Sykes, J. M.	12/17/24	357	Hyten, J. L.	1/30/25	576	Bordelon, R. S.	2/2/25
3	McCormick, T. M.	1/16/25	46	Onisor, D.	7/9/24	103	Whidden, K. M.	3/5/25	223	Bernat, T. W.	10/12/23	357	Johnson, R. D.	2/19/25	576	Velotta, C. D.	4/1/24
3	McLoughlin, J. J.	9/24/24	46	Smith, S. D.	1/11/25	104	McClare, H. F.	2/6/25	223	Metcalf, P. M.	1/24/25	357	Koper, G. R.	9/18/23	586	Collins, R. L.	2/13/25
3	Murasso, M. S.	12/3/24	46	Stewart, R. W.	12/3/24	104	Yeaw, J. L.	1/27/25	226	Barton, L. A.	2/20/25	357	Miller, K. J.	1/4/25	586	Muldoon, P. J.	1/19/25
3	O'Brien, M. J.	1/5/25	46	Wollam, C. M.	1/18/25	105	Davies, D. O.	2/23/25	226	Brown, D. A.	1/5/25	357	Richardson, G. D.	2/16/25	595	Blanke, G. D.	1/18/25
3	O'Gara, T. A.	2/21/25	47	Ramirez, J. D.	12/1/24	105	Kroese, L. H.	1/20/25	230	Dalman, B. J.	1/11/25	363	Crantek, N. B.	5/3/24	595	Key, T. R.	8/29/24
3	O'Keefe, J. P.	1/15/25	48	Began, R. G.	11/5/24	105	Reichstein, K.	12/29/24	236	Mulholland, J. J.	8/21/24	363	Scaglione, M.	3/22/23	595	Reeder, W. K.	9/13/24
3	Pernice, J. F.	1/12/25	48	Bowman, H. B.	7/4/23	105	White, B. J.	11/11/24	236	Zyzyes, K. E.	12/28/24	364	Eschen, T. J.	1/16/25	595	Wiley, L. N.	11/21/24
3	Ragusa, J.	2/3/25	48	Bradstreet, R. R.	3/4/25	106	Sandberg, R. W.	1/7/25	241	Auble, R. T.	12/9/24	364	Kindred, T. J.	2/4/25	596	Keyser, G. R.	1/23/25
3	Rodriguez, J. M.	1/31/25	48	Hawes, M. A.	2/6/25	110	Dueber, J. R.	2/18/25	241	Chapman, E. D.	1/6/25	364	Martin, C. J.	8/29/24	596	Layton, E. S.	11/20/24
3	Russo, M.	2/2/25	48	Ison, R. M.	2/6/25	110	Engebretson, E. D.	1/10/25	242	Larson, R. J.	1/18/25	364	Rhode, J. A.	12/1/24	601	Lavenhagen, G. P.	2/5/25
3	Saslaw, S.	4/19/23	48	Loughary, L. R.	1/17/25	110	Galles, J. J.	1/18/25	242	Schillinger, G. N.	5/13/24	364	Roach, G. R.	1/9/25	602	Coronado, D.	2/13/25
3	Schlapa, T. E.	3/2/23	48	Nowell, K. W.	11/10/24	110	Lee, D. R.	2/17/25	242	Thompson, D. A.	1/28/25	369	Dooley, J. A.	1/30/25	606	Boutte, J. D.	11/8/24
3	Schmelke, A. J.	1/4/25	48	Ziemann, D. A.	2/15/25	110	Oberpriller, J. P.	1/6/25	246	Smith, W. W.	2/18/25	369	Durbin, C. A.	1/18/25	607	Wislotzky, T. A.	10/18/24
3	Siegel, N.	1/28/25	51	Payne, G. D.	1/1/25	110	Windorski, J. P.	10/20/24	252	Byrd, D. R.	2/22/25	369	Rice, D. E.	4/28/24	611	Lujan, A. V.	1/14/25
3	Weimer, T. A.	2/20/25	53	Frazee, R. D.	2/17/25	113	Weeks, J. R.	1/1/25	252	Gawlik, D. J.	2/12/25	369	Robertson, H. N.	10/1/24	611	Newton, E. M.	5/27/24
5	Keller, M. J.	2/11/25	55	Bivans, J. L.	8/31/24	124	Bedford, C. F.	12/29/24	252	Smith, R. D.	2/5/25	369	Sizemore, W.	1/25/25	613	Bennett, M. P.	1/4/25
5	Schultz, A. W.	10/2/24	55	Gamble, R. D.	10/13/24	124	Dumsky, J. M.	12/16/24	254	Drefko, T. M.	2/19/25	387	Blankenship, D. A.	12/17/24	613	Elkins, K. A.	2/7/25
5	Tyler, T. R.	11/3/24	55	Ridout, D. D.	1/22/25	124	Johnston, R. C.	9/6/24	257	Hardwick, R. K.	12/24/24	400	Cassidy, C. J.	6/30/24	613	Murphy, B. E.	2/9/25
5	Williams, P. L.	12/28/24	55	Roberson, W. A.	2/6/25	124	Moehle, W. H.	11/5/24	270	Mayton, M. K.	9/27/24	400	Zito, A.	10/18/23	613	Parker, D. R.	11/1/24
6	Glen, F. E.	6/13/24	56	Purves, J. S.	1/17/25	125	Crocker, A. M.	12/28/24	270	Sharpe, G. L.	12/14/24	405	Hynek, J. S.	1/26/25	613	Parks, R. L.	2/12/25
7	Gosselin, E. J.	12/29/24	56	Southworth, J. E.	1/18/25	125	Haeberlin, A. E.	1/12/25	275	Brufadt, M. M.	1/8/25	405	Phelps, L. A.	1/23/25	613	Scruggs, T. H.	1/26/25
8	Hill, M. E.	1/28/25	57	Rhodehouse, J. R.	2/14/25	125	Mills, D. L.	11/17/24	275	Kasmauski, J. E.	2/1/25	405	Van Erdewyk, M. J.	2/21/25	613	Tate, R.	12/31/24
8	Hunt, J. M.	8/10/24	58	Baudino, J. M.	2/23/25	125	Slawson, R. M.	2/18/25	280	Waterworth, K. R.	2/22/25	413	Fitts, D. C.	4/9/23	617	Brooks, A. H.	11/6/24
8	Wittich, M. R.	1/21/25	58	Cora, R. P.	2/2/25	126	Flanagan, E. S.	11/10/24	291	Nichols, M. M.	1/12/25	415	Witt, J. W.	7/8/24	617	Robins, J. E.	12/23/24
9	Virzintas, M. J.	2/9/25	58	Crittenden, B.	2/4/25	126	Siegrist, W. A.	2/10/25	292	Berlin, T. K.	10/14/24	420	Schlatter, K. M.	7/20/23	625	DeMont, V.	3/4/25
11	Burrows, R. D.	1/21/25	58	DeVergilio, L.	1/30/25	130	Cusachs, G. L.	1/30/25	292	Gaulke, D. E.	2/2/25	424	Andrea, G. T.	1/26/25	627	Lewis, J. A.	12/10/24
11	Cagigas, M. J.	12/21/24	58	Gressman, J. J.	12/25/24	130	Segrave, W. A.	12/20/24	292	Gossen, R. L.	1/4/25	424	Countryman, W. H.	2/8/25	640	Barry, D. N.	1/10/25
11	Candler, E.	10/1/24	58	Lifton, S. P.	3/9/24	131	Cerbin, P. J.	1/9/25	292	Petrik, R. E.	9/21/24	424	Thurgood, R. R.	2/21/25	640	James, R. E.	10/15/24
11	Davis, W. M.	12/25/24	58	Tackelson, R. L.	1/20/25	131	Nederhoed, W. J.	1/7/24	292	Petschl, T. G.	2/28/25	426	Ellsworth, A. L.	9/14/23	640	Thomas, D. A.	1/30/25
11	Gatlin, J. J.	12/24/24	58	Thill, R. D.	1/15/25	134	Annecca, M. J.	12/25/24	292	Pickens, N. J.	5/22/24	428	Barr, S. M.	2/2/25	648	Scheid, J. W.	1/13/25
11	Hartwell, K. J.	1/7/24	60	Adams, R. F.	1/3/25	134	Coffman, G. S.	12/20/24	292	Stabner, W. A.	1/25/25	428	Damron, R. L.	2/17/25	649	Jamison, R. E.	10/9/24
11	Hoover, R. L.	1/31/25	64	Ide, J. S.	8/22/24	134	Conrad, J. E.	1/18/25	295	Keese, W. P.	1/29/25	429	Brown, J. D.	2/18/25	649	Parker, J. R.	11/8/24
11	Jacobs, D. M.	2/19/25	64	Skowron, M. J.	2/6/25	134	Doden, C. F.	1/31/25	305	Flanagan, J. L.	2/19/25	429	Rainey, H.	7/16/22	665	Jones, T. W.	1/2/23
11	Malone, G. L.	1/17/25	66	Cavazos, J. M.	11/26/24	134	Galassini, J. D.	1/7/25	305	Reader, G. A.	2/2/25	441	Cothran, C. E.	9/6/24	665	Love, J. M.	12/11/22
11	Osborne, V. A.	2/1/25	66	Edwards, W. T.	12/25/24	134	Kostka, M. J.	1/30/25	305	Ritter, R. A.	2/1/25	441	Erickson, B. A.	2/5/25	667	Roley, D. G.	2/23/25
11	Springer, K.	9/8/24	68	Bamford, E.	12/11/24	134	Kuntz, H. D.	1/22/25	307	Eaton, S. D.	2/7/25	441	Hodge, M. T.	1/11/25	683	Bard, R. D	



In Memoriam continued

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
701	Kocher, A. E.	1/21/25	1066	Monette, J. G.	1/26/25	I.O. (134)	Burns, W. M.	1/17/25
702	Pike, L. S.	12/6/24	1105	Burris, L.	1/20/25	I.O. (134)	Fielding, J. K.	2/4/25
702	Roach, R. L.	1/4/25	1105	Levingston, J. C.	1/3/25	I.O. (180)	Folsom, K. D.	1/24/25
702	Smith, J. J.	1/4/25	1105	Wells, J. L.	2/26/25	I.O. (197)	Tyler, J. R.	1/23/25
702	Titus, E. L.	1/11/25	1141	Porter, J. L.	1/16/25	I.O. (245)	Reichow, H. E.	12/24/24
712	Mora, J. C.	1/24/25	1141	Shoopman, J. R.	2/24/25	I.O. (412)	Cheek, R. A.	2/4/25
714	Hall, E. M.	12/27/22	1141	Upton, R. L.	1/12/25	I.O. (474)	Lucas, D. R.	12/31/24
716	Burden, B. G.	12/31/24	1141	Young, J. R.	3/3/23	I.O. (617)	Pease, D. K.	2/23/22
716	Criss, D. C.	5/15/24	1147	Somerville, D.	1/8/25	I.O. (841)	Sullens, T. G.	2/10/25
716	Frels, D. B.	1/2/25	1186	Higa, M. R.	12/17/24	I.O. (1377)	Namoski, R. F.	9/26/24
716	Hollis, J. G.	12/28/24	1186	Honda, M. M.	11/16/24	I.O. (1464)	Holland, D. L.	1/31/25
716	Merecka, R. D.	3/12/23	1186	King, D. C.	10/29/24	Pens. (I.O)	Bean, M. N.	1/9/25
716	Swetman, J. E.	9/4/24	1186	Yonamine, W. K.	12/24/24	Pens. (I.O)	Benak, J. J.	1/14/25
716	Varner, J. D.	12/18/24	1205	Luke, J. S.	10/11/24	Pens. (I.O)	Cain, L. L.	2/12/25
725	Hughes, G. A.	3/4/25	1220	Phelps, W. R.	12/15/24	Pens. (I.O)	Casali, S. R.	2/3/25
728	Gibson, T. H.	1/16/25	1245	Swenson, G. A.	2/9/25	Pens. (I.O)	Chambless, J.	1/15/25
728	Lamb, T. E.	1/4/25	1245	Waelty, H. A.	1/8/25	Pens. (I.O)	Dannecker, D. E.	1/30/25
728	Specht, F. O.	1/17/25	1340	Moore, C. F.	2/18/25	Pens. (I.O)	Effenberg, J.	1/9/25
728	Stump, J. T.	12/7/24	1393	Cooper, T.	1/9/25	Pens. (I.O)	Eyster, F.	10/28/24
756	Scholz, T. F.	2/24/25	1393	Roark, R. D.	10/25/24	Pens. (I.O)	Hammond, J. A.	1/11/25
768	Lamberson, R. L.	2/9/25	1393	Simon, W. A.	8/16/24	Pens. (I.O.)	Hopkins, E. C.	2/23/25
768	Schmidt, E. M.	10/3/24	1439	Schwalbert, D. M.	7/29/23	Pens. (I.O)	Kierpaul, W. T.	12/20/22
773	Sewell, J. C.	9/7/24	1521	Palczynski, E. F.	11/23/24	Pens. (I.O)	McDermott, J. C.	1/20/25
776	Kreush, G. R.	10/17/24	1547	Carroll, F. M.	11/22/23	Pens. (I.O)	Mertinat, R. K.	12/19/24
804	Parker, J. W.	3/1/25	1547	Stanton, R. G.	2/11/25	Pens. (I.O)	Miller, L. E.	2/19/23
804	Tsandelis, A.	1/27/25	1555	French, L. E.	2/12/25	Pens. (I.O)	Minahan, E. L.	12/28/24
804	Whalen, J. T.	3/3/25	1579	Boyce, D. W.	2/18/25	Pens. (I.O)	Monardo, V.	1/3/25
873	Nesbitt, T. B.	11/15/24	1687	Appleton, R. J.	11/3/24	Pens. (I.O)	Mulrooney, B.	10/18/24
890	Lois, W. C.	1/8/25	1687	Mousseau, N.	1/14/25	Pens. (I.O)	Oberg, A. G.	1/28/25
903	Spooner, G. D.	11/26/24	1687	Zielinski, R. J.	10/25/24	Pens. (I.O)	Peters, C. E.	12/19/24
906	Beauchamp, P. D.	2/14/25	1922	Geonie, D.	12/18/24	Pens. (I.O)	Sularz, F. J.	2/3/25
910	LaPlatney, R. A.	10/18/24	1928	MacLeod, G. D.	2/3/25	Pens. (I.O)	Voytek, F.	2/5/24
910	Wilder, D. E.	2/13/25	2038	Polowick, L. G.	1/31/25	This list shows members for whom PBF death claims were approved in March 2025. ■		
915	Ellis, M. D.	2/13/25	2085	Cumming, B. G.	12/12/24			
952	Gajefski, K. F.	12/22/24	2085	Harlton, M. J.	9/8/24			
972	Heppner, B. L.	1/16/25	2166	Hare, L. W.	2/24/25			
972	Pickering, R. L.	12/8/24	2330	Higdon, P. M.	12/31/24			
993	Nedland, J. G.	12/18/24	I.O. (73)	Corey, R. L.	3/8/24			
1003	Kirkpatrick, K. D.	11/29/24	I.O. (134)	Breen, R. H.	1/13/25			



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

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DISTRICT 5: AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, PR

## WHO WE ARE

# ‘We’re Fighting for Them’: Georgia Utility Local Grows in a Challenging Environment

**A**tlanta Local 1997 came into being just six years ago, following a successful organizing drive that earned IBEW representation for about 675 gas employees of Atlanta Gas Light.

It was a moment to celebrate. But AGL employees who were leaders in that drive, such as Tim Dasher, knew significant challenges had to be met for the local to grow.

Specifically, how do you convince bargaining-unit members of the value of paying membership fees? They aren’t required to by law in a so-called right-to-work state like Georgia, and the Deep South might be the most anti-union part of the country.

Plus, how do you persuade other AGL employees to support organizing drives in their units and become Local 1997 members themselves?

“People don’t just join,” said Dasher, who was elected business manager in 2020 and has served in the role ever since. “You have to show them we’re fighting for them.”

They must be doing something right.

Local 1997 is growing at an impressive rate. The number of fee-paying members is up to about 830, which is between 85% and 90% of the employees with representation, Dasher said.

Local 1997 is in first-contract negotiations with Southern Co., AGL’s parent, for its call center employees. First-contract negotiations will soon begin for the construction coordinators, who oversee outside contractors that perform work for AGL, which services the entire state.

Once completed, membership should surpass 1,000. Other groups of employees are clamoring to join.

“It’s almost crazy,” Dasher said. “It’s like we have people lined up waiting to come in.

“I think everyone is waking up and seeing the benefit of a bargaining unit, especially after [the COVID-19 pandemic],” he added. “Instead of someone telling you, ‘Here are the rules, and you can take it or leave it,’ people do



*Right: Dasher, center, in AGL’s Fleet Center with, from left, Fifth District International Representative Kevin Zylks, AGL Fleet Coordinator Nick Hortman, Ezell, and Fifth District International Representative Joseph Skinner. Hortman’s position recently became part of Local 1997.*

not want to just take it. They want their own pathway.”

Start with call center employee Yvonne Goring, who has seen the value of IBEW membership in her own home.

Goring’s husband, Brent, is a gas employee and helped organize the original bargaining unit. He now serves as Local 1997’s vice president.

Brent and his Local 1997 brothers and sisters received wage raises of at least 7% during the first two years of their initial collective bargaining agreement. They routinely got less than half of that before becoming IBEW members.

Yvonne and others in the call center noticed and knew they deserved something similar. They also wanted protection against a disciplinary system that allows call center employees to be suspended for three days at management’s discretion, with little written guidance and no grievance process.

“Basically, it’s for us to have a voice,” said Yvonne, who has worked in the center for 19 years. “For the length of time I’ve been here, it’s never been that way. There’s always been favoritism. The wage disparity was horrible. It’s really hard for someone to come



into the call center and live off the wages they are offering.”

Brett Copeland works in training for AGL and has been with the company for more than 20 years.

Earlier in his career, he assisted the IBEW on two other campaigns to organize AGL that fell just short. Instead of giving in, he was a leader in the successful campaign that culminated with the charter signing in 2019.

He remains active in Local 1997’s volunteer organizing committee. He’s found a receptive audience in AGL employees who are not part of a bargaining unit and want to form one, some sharing similar family concerns to those he had.

“It’s not just the wages, but the long-term benefits of everything we’ve negotiated,” Copeland said. “They see the fairness in how the company is now because of the bargaining units and how it’s slowly transforming relationships.”

Jacob Ezell, a Local 1997 steward who works in distribution, grew up in

*International President Kenneth W. Cooper, second from left, and Business Manager Tim Dasher, far right, after Local 1997 was recognized for its growth at the 2023 Membership Development Conference. Also pictured are Local 1997 organizers Brandolyn Walker, left, and Jacob Ezell.*

the company — which has proved frustrating at times — remains a priority.

Southern has union-represented workers at many of its subsidiaries. These employees enjoy good wages and benefits. AGL employees haven’t seen their wages rise to those levels yet.

But Jerry, who has worked with IBEW members at utility companies throughout the South, sees progress and believes Southern will get there with its AGL employees.

Copeland agreed that the relationship could be better but is improving. He noted that Dasher and a Southern Co. Gas executive filmed a video stressing the importance of a positive union-management relationship.

“That’s a big thing, to get together and synchronize labor and management,” Copeland said. “We’ve spent a lot of time peeling the Band-Aid off and trying to get a relationship started, where we can have those conversations and an open dialogue. We’re starting to close some of those differences.”

Dasher said a positive byproduct of the ongoing campaigns is that everyone has more appreciation for the work performed by AGL employees across the company, not just in their own units.

For instance, he said, he and others who worked in the field for AGL didn’t realize the importance of the company’s clerical staff. Now they’re viewed as brothers and sisters working together to lift each other up.

“We always thought they had it made,” he said. “But after representing them and helping them get that first contract, we see just how hard they work, too.”

Dasher noted that he’s had the support of all three Fifth District international vice presidents who have served since the beginning of the organizing drive several years ago, including current IVP Glenn Brannen. Having access to support from leaders in the IBEW’s Utility Department and organizing staff was invaluable, he said.

He praised Local 1997 Volunteer Organizing Coordinator Darryl Holliday, who recently passed away after a long cancer battle. Even while undergoing treatment, Brother Holliday helped organize AGL’s construction department. He worked to secure a better future for other Local 1997 members while knowing his death might be imminent and planned to serve on the first-contract negotiations team.

“It’s been a thing of beauty to watch them grow and become IBEW leaders,” Jerry said. “You do not walk into the IBEW and understand all the inner workings. It’s been a joy teaching this local all those things and watching everyone grow.” ■



*Local 1997 continues to grow its membership, including with this call center negotiation team seen here with Dasher.*