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IBEW News



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POWERING THE PATH FORWARD

RENEW and NextGen Are Forging Tomorrow's Leaders

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Dillon Gorman was new to the IBEW and had a good job as a meter reader with Alliant Energy. But at 19, he wasn't sure where he fit into the union as a young member.

So, when the IBEW began encouraging locals to establish young members' committees in 2011, Gorman jumped at the chance. He helped form Madison, Wis., Local 965's RENEW committee with assistance from then-Business Manager Tony Bartels.

RENEW and its counterpart NextGen in Canadian locals were formed because the IBEW understood that young members are essential in growing the union's power.

Gorman credits the groups for getting those 35-and-under members to play a more active role in their local unions and their communities. In turn, younger IBEW leaders have more avenues to provide their input on issues that matter to them, and more seasoned IBEW leaders are listening.

THE IBEW'S FUTURE

More than a decade after their formation, RENEW and NextGen are more important than ever, a point that was made at their recent conference in Portland, Ore., where the theme was "Powering the Path Forward."

Those are more than just words, organizers said. It's a call to action at a critical time.

Opinion polls in North America consistently show that support for unions is at its highest level in more than 60 years, especially among younger adults.

More young people see union trades as an alternative to a costly college education that often

leaves students with a massive debt, instead finding out about wages and benefits that can support a family.

If the IBEW and other unions are going to thrive, young members will play a crucial role.

"Look at where we are today," said Gorman, who is now the Local 965 business manager and serves as the Sixth District representative on the international RENEW/NextGen Committee. "It's an established group of people that have a lot of power. They are embracing what we have to say and bringing it to the table."

He said RENEW will continue to grow by focusing on issues that are important to all members and empowering their ability to make change.

His time in RENEW is nearing an end as he ages out, but he plans to continue to support Local 965's committee in his role as business manager.

RENEW/NEXTGEN continued on page 4

FROM THE OFFICERS

Tomorrow's Leaders, Today



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

Longer ago than I'd like to admit, I was once a young member of the IBEW. I was full of ideas and energy and ready to take on the world. But I didn't really know where or how to start.

It's something I see in so many of our newer members today. These young leaders, brimming with fresh ideas and eager to put them into action, fill me with hope for the future of our great union.

For well over a decade, the RENEW and NextGen initiatives have been vital in engaging our members 35 and under. When they were formed, we talked about them as training grounds for the IBEW's leaders of the future.

But the truth is that members of RENEW and NextGen are leading right now, and more than ever we need that leadership.

No matter how long you've been an IBEW member, we all have a role building a bigger, stronger union. As I told our members attending the RENEW/NextGen conference in October, they are not the future.

They are very much the present.

If we're going to maintain our position as a leader in the electrical industry, our younger members are going to lead the way.

In organizing. In building alliances. In doing good work in the communities we serve.

I was happy to share with conference attendees that we added 24,000 members during the previous year, a 50-year high. That's something to celebrate.

But it barely begins to scratch the surface in meeting the shortage of skilled construction workers in the U.S. and Canada. So, I left them with a challenge:

Use this golden opportunity to grow and make our Brotherhood stronger than ever.

If you're a young member, I can't emphasize enough the importance of getting involved in your local union's RENEW or NextGen committee. You'll be doing your part in building a stronger union.

And our more seasoned members have things they can do to support our younger ones. In the same way we train apprentices on the tools, we need to make sure we're including them in the vital work of union-building.

Make sure you include them in your organizing activities. They understand the concerns of young workers in the United States and Canada better than most of us.

Make sure they have a prominent role at job fairs. Incorporate some of their ideas on social media. Listen to their suggestions on getting the word out to young people on the value of IBEW membership.

Things like working and getting paid while going through their apprenticeship. The ability to earn family-supporting wages without taking on the massive student loan debt of some of their peers.

As Stephanie LaPrairie, lead inside organizer at Shreveport, La., Local 995, said in the cover story of this month's *Electrical Worker*: "It gives them a better idea of what is going to happen after you graduate than from a journeyman who has been in the trades for 40 years."

RENEW and NextGen members play a crucial role in building a strong IBEW for generations to come. Not in the future, but now.

Thank you for all you do for the IBEW, and happy holidays to you and your families. Together, we'll continue building a bigger, better IBEW for all the generations to come. ■

An Abundance of Giving

It's that time of year when IBEW brothers and sisters are filling food pantries and delivering meals, running toy and coat drives, spending days off wiring the holiday displays that light up our cities, and finding so many other ways to share our good fortune.

Giving back is a core value of the IBEW, and I'm so proud of what you do all year long to support your communities and help people in need.

Right now, for example, Local 11 in Los Angeles is partnering with Habitat for Humanity to rebuild houses destroyed in January's catastrophic wildfires. In New Jersey, Local 827 Unit 1 recently raised more than \$32,000 for breast cancer programs. As part of a safety initiative in St. Louis this summer, Locals 1 and 309 joined with the Urban League to install doorbell cameras for low-income homeowners.

That's a tiny sample of your everyday generosity. When November and December roll around, the list gets even longer.

A few of those holiday good works are featured on the back page of this month's *Electrical Worker*: A toy drive for hospitalized children that is still going strong 25 years after being launched by an Ann Arbor, Mich., Local 252 member. A party to wrap donated toys at Savannah, Ga., Local 508. Food drives at Asbury Park, N.J., Local 400 and Cheyenne, Wyo., Local 415.

Throughout the United States, donations of nonperishable food and household necessities are even more critical than usual this year. I encourage all of us to give what we can, whether it's through our locals and labor federations or other charities.

The sad fact is that many more Americans are struggling this holiday season, the result of massive job cuts in the public and private sectors, the federal government shutdown, inflated grocery prices, the effects of tariffs on all kinds of products, rising health care costs and other economic factors.

IBEW families aren't immune to these challenges, and we'll keep fighting back.

For now, though, let's savor this season of gratitude and joy. Let's stroll the bright lights, deck the halls, sing carols, drink cocoa and embrace our kids' and grandkids' excitement. And while we're cherishing our families and counting our blessings, let's also help lift up others who aren't as fortunate.

I know you will, because it's who you are. It's who we are.

Whether you're celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa this month, taking a trip or spending quiet time at home, I wish you the happiest of holidays and thank you for all you do. ■



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

My IBEW STORY

Kevan Link, building and bridge electrician
Philadelphia Local 744



"In 2008, I dropped out of college. It just wasn't for me. I was looking at my future and couldn't see how I was going to make a good living out of what I was studying. Also, I am definitely much more comfortable working with my hands than I am sitting at a desk.

I needed a job fast, and my brother was an electrician, so I went to work with him. I started as a helper and worked my way up, and I was at the same small commercial electrical company for more than 10 years. It was good money, but there was no health care and no retirement. My day-to-day was good, but I didn't know what my future would bring.

I always knew that union life was better and always had the idea that I would try to join the IBEW at some point. But change can be scary, and sometimes it's easier to just keep on with what you're doing.

In 2020, I started dating my now-wife, a union organizer who has been in the labor movement for years. She made it clear to me that if I wanted to be serious with her, I had to be serious about myself and go union. So I started looking at different options, like trying to test into our area's inside local.

Living in Philadelphia, I had a lot of great choices of locals to join. When I weighed all of my options, I decided to apply to SEPTA, the region's public transportation system. I took the test, had an interview and started shortly after.

There's a lot of interesting history to my work with SEPTA. A lot of the areas where I work are the old Pennsylvania Railroad facilities. We talk about that in our work — you know, I'm working on a project that was started by a guy who was alive 100 years ago. And a lot of people don't get to work on things like this.

Being an IBEW member has changed my life and my family's lives. I'm so proud of what I do for work and very proud to be union. Sometimes, if you haven't worked nonunion before, you don't know how big a difference there is. My local's small, but I still try to go to as many meetings as I can, and I am always talking to my co-workers about the importance of our union. It's important for each and every member to get involved.

The biggest change is the security of knowing I have the paycheck and good benefits for myself and my family. I have a toddler now, and I'm glad I can be an example for my son.

Also, I know there's a finish line. I'm only 38, so I've got some time, but before I went union, the idea of retirement was something that wouldn't be in the cards for me.

Now, I know there's a date, and at that point, I'm done! I'm hanging up the tools and I won't turn the wrenches anymore. And that never even seemed like a possibility before." ■

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

ibew.org/MyIBEWStory

THE METER

13,000

The number of solar panels Local 3 members are installing atop the new international terminal at JFK Airport in New York City. Once complete, it will be the biggest solar array in the city.

See "New York Members Are Installing a Record-Setting Airport Solar Array" on page 6.



JERRY O'CONNOR

1934 - 2025

Retired Secretary-Treasurer Remembered as 'Epitome of a Labor Leader'

Jeremiah "Jerry" O'Connor, a born leader who captivated audiences from classrooms and union meetings to organizing drives, bargaining tables and ultimately convention stages as international secretary-treasurer, died Sept. 29. He was 91.

O'Connor retired in 2005, wrapping up a career that began as an apprentice wireman at Lisle, Ill., Local 701 in 1959.

"Even the pride I took on that day cannot compare with the feelings that surround me now as I stand before you," he said when he was elected secretary-treasurer at the 36th International Convention in 2001 in San Francisco.

"Whatever I can do to advance our cause will be done. Whatever sacrifice I must make to move the IBEW forward, I will make it. I am Jerry O'Connor, your brother, one of you, and I rededicate myself to the pledge I made so many years ago in Illinois: You will never get anything less than my very best effort."



In homage to his rodeo days, a bronzed pair of Jerry O'Connor's cowboy boots are on display in the IBEW Museum in Washington, D.C.

As some of his closest union brothers affirm, he lived up to that promise every day.

"He was the epitome of a labor leader," said International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble. "He believed in the mission, and he made you believe in it."

Noble was first inspired by O'Connor while on staff at West Frankfort, Ill., Local 702. "He spoke from the heart. It was just telling the truth from his own life experience. It was something genuine," he said. "For a young guy like me at the time, Jerry was the IBEW."

Working closely with International President Edwin D. Hill, O'Connor forged a legacy that includes stronger IBEW pension funds, advancements to fight

In Cape Coral, Fla., Jerry O'Connor joined fellow IBEW retirees twice a week for breakfast. From left: International President Emeritus Lonnie R. Stephenson; O'Connor; and former Local 701 Business Managers Art Ludwig and Frank Furco.



for members politically, and expanded training and organizing programs.

Whatever the subject, he was a powerful messenger.

"He impressed me from the very first time I heard him speak," said International President Emeritus Lonnie R. Stephenson, recalling how O'Connor paced the dais at Local 701 meetings while delivering his reports as business manager.

"The way he walked back and forth, he was controlled. He had everyone's attention," he said.

Stephenson belonged to Rock Island, Ill., Local 145 but attended meetings at host locals when he traveled for work. Later, O'Connor serviced Local 145 as a Sixth District international representative while Stephenson was business manager, cementing their friendship.

He said O'Connor was a committed organizer and early proponent of what is now IBEW policy: a strategy to increase market share in the construction industry as demand for electricians grows.

"When he became [Sixth District] vice president, he made it very clear to us as business managers that our responsibility was to organize our jurisdictions," Stephenson said. "He made no bones about it. He implemented a rule within the district that if somebody could document 10 years or more experience working the electrical trades, you were to recognize them as a journeyman."

In recent years as retirees in Cape Coral, Fla., the pair met for breakfast twice a week along with Art Ludwig, a former Local 701 business manager whose bonds with O'Connor go back to his apprenticeship.

"Jerry was a union man from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head," said Ludwig, who took O'Connor's classes. "He preached it and he lived it. He was a firebrand. There was no doubt when you met him that you

knew he was due for greater things."

Born in Chicago in 1934, O'Connor grew up in nearby Lombard until moving with his family to Tucson, Ariz. There, as shared in his obituary, "he embraced the cowboy spirit," riding broncos and competing in rodeos.

"Rumor has it — and Jerry never denied it — that he ran away to the rodeo and his father had to come get him," Ludwig said. "He was that kind of spirited guy."

O'Connor was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1953 and learned to be a surveyor, skills he brought back to Lombard two years later. But by spring 1959, he'd found a new calling as an apprentice wireman.

He dove into union committees and activities, immersing himself in matters of safety, bargaining, labor-management relations and political action. In the field, he quickly rose to be a foreman and general foreman.

He was hired as an assistant business manager in 1965 and concurrently taught at the JATC. He became business manager in 1978 and moved to the Sixth District staff as an international representative nine years later.

O'Connor serviced construction, utility, manufacturing and radio-TV broadcasting locals and, with his coveted speaking skills, led organizing, steward and leadership trainings.

"He was a phenomenal orator," said past International Executive Council member Frank Furco, another retired Local 701 business manager who trained under O'Connor.

"He didn't use a teleprompter, didn't use notes," Furco said. "He just got up there and talked. He commanded your attention without raising his voice. No matter what position he was in, when he got up to do a speech, everyone loved to hear Jerry."

And no one could stump him.

"He was so good on his feet," Ludwig said. "He could answer any question with ease."

Tall and energetic with a "wild Irish look in his eyes," he said, O'Connor could be volatile — if he chose to be.

"He absolutely could control his emotions," Ludwig said. "But if you picked a rough road against Jerry O'Connor, you'd have a hard time. Contractors learned that you didn't want to fight with Jerry. You wanted to negotiate with him."

His popularity was another factor. "He was so charismatic that he had the members 100% behind him," Ludwig said. "Employers knew that with a wave of the hand, Jerry could get anything done."

In Illinois, O'Connor also served as president of the DuPage County Building & Construction Trades Council and volunteered with the Red Cross, United Way and his local blood bank.

He was appointed Sixth District international vice president in 1995 and elected in 1996. In that role, he was lauded for major progress in education, training and organizing.

In January 2001, the IEC promoted him to fill an unexpired term as secretary-treasurer. He was elected by convention delegates in San Francisco on Sept. 10, 2001.

His deftness handling any situation was clear the next morning. As The Electrical Worker wrote when he retired: "Brother O'Connor's admirable leadership qualities were on display as he, President Hill and fellow international officers guided convention proceedings forward in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks."

O'Connor also made history as the first elected international secretary-treasurer, a job that had been two separate positions until a membership referendum between the 35th and 36th conventions. Instead of a secretary and a treasurer, members voted for a com-

bined title and duties.

IBEW members still benefit from O'Connor's record, which includes restructuring the union's pension funds to protect against such things as a collapsing stock market, record-low interest rates and the 9/11 attacks.

He oversaw the union's burgeoning multi-region health and welfare fund, which became today's not-for-profit IBEW/NECA Family Medical Care Plan. He also called for research into lower-cost prescription drugs and within a year rolled out the Electrical Industry Sav-Rx program.

Noble said O'Connor strove "to take what our forefathers left us and make it better," from the genesis of the FMCP to the Electronic Reciprocal Transfer System that debuted on his watch.

Critical to travelers, ERTS streamlined the transfer of pension and health benefits into members' accounts at their home locals, replacing what had been a grueling paper trail marred by delays and errors.

"Things happen in real time now, and that was an absolute game-changer," Noble said. "Construction by nature is temporary work — you go where the jobs are. And knowing that you have continuity in your benefits gives you peace of mind."

Noble was among the IBEW visitors to Cape Coral who dropped in for breakfast with O'Connor, Stephenson and Ludwig. The trio met at the same diner every Tuesday and Saturday, a tradition that continues for the surviving brothers.

They'd noticed O'Connor becoming frailer in recent months but stressed that he was as sharp as ever as they talked politics and swapped stories from decades earlier.

Several weeks after he began missing breakfasts, O'Connor died at home of natural causes. His survivors include two daughters, Diane Lebreux of Joliet, Ill., and Debra Shultz of Naples, Fla.; five grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. His first wife, Annette, died in 2009, and his second wife, Nancy, died in 2022.

The IBEW sends its sincerest condolences to Brother O'Connor's family and friends, including his tightknit circle from the Sixth District.

"We lost a good friend," Stephenson said. "As you go along in your career, there are certain people who end up being mentors, and you strive to try to emulate them. Jerry was that person for me." ■

POWERING THE PATH FORWARD

RENEW and NextGen Are Forging Tomorrow's Leaders

Continued from page 1

Skills for Leadership

Local committees must take an active role in their local unions' day-to-day activities, said Civic & Community Engagement Director Jennifer Gray, who oversees RENEW at the International Office.

"The message is: How should we assist our local unions, whether that's political activism, community engagement or organizing members?" Gray said. "To me, that's key."

This year's conference included a conversation with international vice presidents, who spoke candidly about what leadership requires.

Fourth District International Vice President Austin Keyser said RENEW can be "about learning the things and the hard skills you need to be a leader." He said the program is a success in getting younger members involved but told attendees that it is incumbent on them to learn the "foundational skills," such as becoming an expert on legal terms in a collective bargaining agreement at their local, to be leaders and make the IBEW stronger.



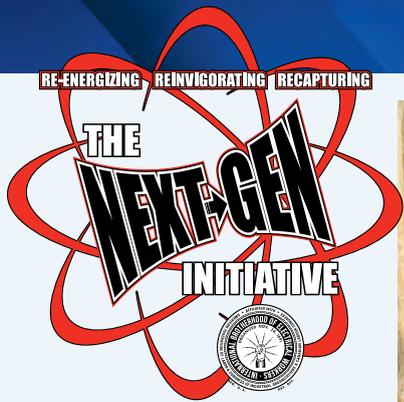
"It's more than just stepping up and saying, 'I want to be a leader,'" he said. "You should be able to educate and defend yourself against people who attack us."

"A lot of folks in this conference have the characteristics of a leader," he added. "Now you have to learn a way to weaponize it."

Gray said there are now 215 RENEW and NextGen committees at local unions across North America. They routinely perform good works in their communities.

But as the program has matured, the focus has shifted to how members can make their own local unions — and by extension the entire Brotherhood — stronger.

Part of that is helping add more members. IBEW membership continues to rise, now up to 873,000 active



members and retirees across North America. As International President Kenneth W. Cooper told the conference, the IBEW added about 24,000 net new members in the past 12 months — a 50-year high — but that is merely scratching the surface on what needs to be done.

Tens of thousands more are needed to meet the demand for skilled electricians and for local unions to increase their market share. They're needed to address the boom in data centers and power generation. Many more members are needed in line work, utilities and manufacturing to support the ever-evolving electrical grid.

"We simply must not only grow but grow at a faster pace than ever for the IBEW to remain the leader it's always been in the electrical industry," Cooper said. "Our RENEW and NextGen members will play a critically important role in that effort."

It was a theme Gray and others echoed throughout the conference.

"We need everyone to step up and grow our union," she said.

"Growth does not happen by accident," she told the conference. "It happens because members step up, learn, participate and lead. Each of you — whether from construction, utility, manufacturing, railroad, government, broadcasting or telecommunications — builds on the foundation of those before us and now."

Focus on Organizing

"Message received," was the reply from conference attendees and other leaders in RENEW and NextGen.

"I try to use it as a tool to help our local and try to push that message to our district as a whole," said Sidney Jablonski, 24, a fourth-year apprentice at Providence, R.I., Local 99 and the committee's Second District representative. "It's not just to help young people but the union as a whole."

Stephanie LaPrairie said she probably would not have advanced to leadership positions



Top: Members of Baton Rouge, La., Local 995's RENEW committee visit with patients and staff at the Baton Rouge General Pediatric Burn Camp. The committee raises funds for the camp and volunteers time with patients. Pittsburgh Local 29 member Jordan Layhew, above left, represents the Third District on the RENEW/NextGen Committee. Madison, Wis., Local 965 Business Manager Dillon Gorman, above right, represents the Sixth District.

at Baton Rouge, La., Local 995 without RENEW.

She attended college for one semester and found that it wasn't for her. She performed a Google search for programs and employment opportunities that might interest her. LaPrairie learned about Local 995's apprenticeship program, applied and was accepted.

A Local 995 organizer encouraged her to get more involved not long after starting her apprenticeship, and she attended a RENEW conference in St. Louis.

LaPrairie, now 32 and a journeyman wireman, serves as Local 995's lead inside organizer and recording secretary and is a member of the JATC committee — along with continuing to serve on the local's RENEW Committee.

For her, getting RENEW members more involved in organizing is a priority. In the Deep South, where people often grow up hearing anti-union messages from politicians and corporate leaders, it might be even more important.

LaPrairie didn't grow up in a union household and heard those messages herself. A current high school student or recent graduate will react more favorably when learning the benefits of an IBEW career from someone not much older than themselves at career fairs and other venues, she said.

"It gives them a better idea of what is going to happen after you graduate than from a journeyman who has been in the trades for 40 years," she added.

Building a RENEW committee in a Southern city can be difficult. Many Local 995 members are travelers because the market share for the IBEW and other construction unions is so low in the area.

"We really need to go out and work

with local organizers and talk to communities about who the IBEW is and what we do," LaPrairie said. "That way, when someone hears about us, it's not in a negative context. Part of that is highlighting our apprenticeship programs."

Jordan Layhew has the perspective of being a journeyman lineman and member of Pittsburgh Local 29, where he serves on the executive board. He is the Third District representative on the RENEW/NextGen Committee and helped start the Local 29 committee after attending the last International Convention in Chicago in 2022.

"Once we started planning events and I saw the interest in younger workers, it really lit a fire in me," said Layhew, 27.

He said Local 29's RENEW Committee has been overwhelmingly successful. Younger members feel more empowered and are regular participants in local union meetings and activities. He credits Business Manager Josh Ewing and the office staff for much of that.



Washington, D.C., Local 26 RENEW Committee members held a chess tournament to encourage more younger members to get involved in the local.



Above: Civic & Community Engagement Director Jennifer Gray addresses this year's RENEW/NextGen Conference.



Left: Fourth District International Vice President Austin Keyser speaking during a breakout session at the RENEW/NextGen Conference.

Randhawa said Local 213's committee is a "soft entryway" for young members. The group attends sports events and pub nights to encourage fellowship, which has led those members to get more involved in the local overall.

"We're in a unique spot," he said. "We're growing really heavily. We have a large influx of new members. We've found it helps to keep it light and keep it airy."

But he agrees that for NextGen to remain relevant, members must make use of the foundational skills that Keyser talked about at the conference, especially as older members age out. Those skills vary from local to local, he said.

"You have to be open to change," he said. "But there has to be an understanding in my mind that some things have to be maintained."

Keyser, for one, is pleased by the changes taking place in RENEW/NextGen, noting it is becoming more of an academy to learn the business of the IBEW.

"I feel like the biggest change is how we approach the next generation," he said. "Our union is growing rapidly, and we have to continue to engage it."

International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble told the attendees at the conference in Portland: "We don't need your leadership down the road. We need it today in organizing campaigns, on community projects and in political actions that defend collective bargaining, safety, pensions and healthcare."

If it sounded like a call to action, it wasn't by accident.

"The renewed commitment could not come at a more important time," Gray said, "because this generation is changing the face of the labor movement." ■

On the larger committee, he's trying to pass on the lessons he's learned in Pittsburgh. Some local RENEW committees have languished after the COVID-19 pandemic, he said.

"It's in the title," he added. (RENEW stands for Reach Out and Engage Next-Generation Electrical Workers.) "Getting members involved and piquing interest now will only help us down the line when our current union leaders step down."

Added Jablonski: "My business manager and president back me up with everything."

A Call to Action

Manny Randhawa, the First District representative on the RENEW/NextGen Committee, has been active in Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213's committee for nearly 10 years. Now 31, he's the membership development director for a fast-growing inside construction local with a diverse membership.

RENEW and NextGen committees must be flexible to meet the needs of the locals they serve, he said. Being in Canada, he knows Local 213's committee might be different from some of its American counterparts.



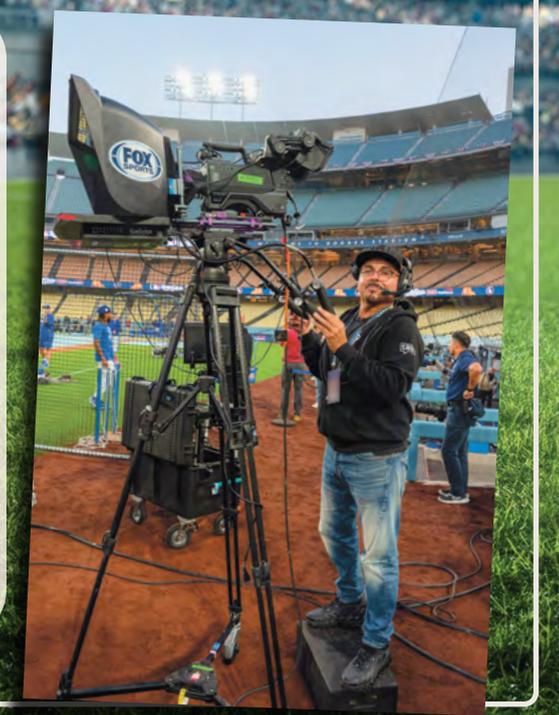
IBEW Technicians Shine in Drama-Filled World Series

For the 26th consecutive year, IBEW broadcast members provided the sights and sounds for Fox Sports' coverage of the World Series, which was transmitted to viewers around the world.

First, New York Local 1212 member Dave Chesney (top left) prepares a camera before Game 3 at Dodgers Stadium on Oct. 27. At top right, Philadelphia Local 98 member Anthony "Rug" Lomastro sets up microphones and transmitters inside a base on Oct. 26, one day before Game 3. At right, Chicago Local 1220 member Al Ishu prepares his camera before Game 3.

The Los Angeles Dodgers won their second consecutive title, beating the Toronto Blue Jays four games to three. The series was televised by Sportsnet in Canada.

Dating to 1990, IBEW members have worked as camera operators and technicians 32 times at the World Series. CBS, where the IBEW also has jurisdiction, televised the Fall Classic in 1990-93. Fox Sports televised it in 1996 and 1998. It has televised the World Series every year since 2000 and has the rights through the 2028 season. ■



IBEW MERCHANDISE



RENEW LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT \$21.50

100% cotton - charcoal long sleeve t-shirt with IBEW logo on back and RENEW / NextGen logos on shoulders.



LADIES CAMOUFLAGE HAT \$20.00

Pink and green twill camouflage hat with custom IBEW lettering. Adjustable size to fit all.



EMBOSSED DENIM JACKET \$65.00

100% cotton, rugged blue denim, with embossed IBEW initials on front and large 10" embossed logo on back. Features heavy duty brass buttons on placket, cuffs and chest pockets.

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

www.ibewmerchandise.com

New York Members Are Installing a Record-Setting Airport Solar Array

Soon, the members of New York City Local 3 will no longer be able to boast that the rooftop solar installation they just installed on the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Manhattan is the city's largest.

That's because several dozen of the local's electricians are working to hand that distinction to an even bigger site in the city — the 13,000-panel array they're placing atop a new international terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Those Local 3 solar installers have been working with nearly 1,500 of their brothers and sisters on the electrical upgrades that are part of the entire airport's \$19 billion transformation project. It's not just the largest ongoing infrastructure development in the local's jurisdiction — it's one of the biggest in the U.S.

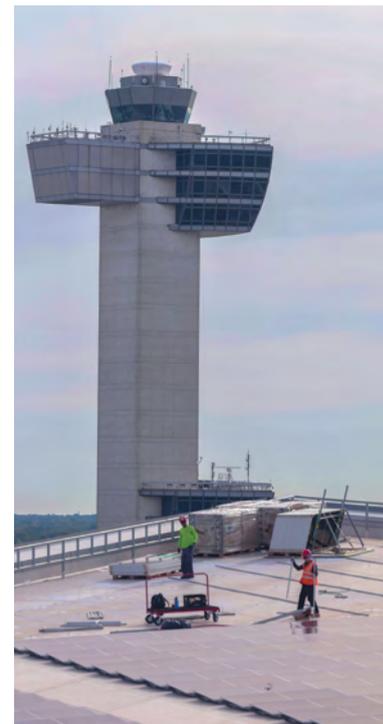
"The amount of work that this whole project has generated for my local and my members has been very welcome," said Local 3 Business Manager Christopher Erikson. "It's solar, it's power generation — it's the IBEW's work, and we do it best. It's how we keep the union strong at Local 3."

Planning and development for rooftop solar at JFK's Terminal 1 has been going on at least since 2021, said Anthony Badalamenti, vice president of power and renewables at Local 3 signatory E-J Electrical Installation Co.

"We bought all the solar panels, the racking and the equipment early to keep the project on time," said Badalamenti, a former Local 3 member. "We had everything staged, and we had the equipment ready for installation and rigging" in coordination with the local authorities and the Federal Aviation Administration.

As many as 50 Local 3 electricians — with at least a 15% apprentice-to-journeyman ratio — have since enjoyed steady prevailing-wage work on the project, including on some Saturdays when the weather cooperated.

"We got lucky this year. We didn't have a really rainy season that held us



up," Badalamenti said. "When you've got good weather, you've got to keep everybody moving."

Working on Jamaica Bay in Queens — at an active international airport that handles more than 1,200 arrivals and departures every day — has added a measure of difficulty to the project, said Badalamenti, whose company also handled the solar installation at Javits.

"I don't think it's so much the noise," he said. "You're right on the water there, and you're on a roof all day. There's no wind stoppage, and the temperature feels 10 degrees colder most of the time."

And with solar panels measuring as much as 4 feet by 7 feet, "we're always cognizant of high-wind days," he said. "They're like sheets of plywood. You've got to have two journey persons handling [panels] all the time, because they could take off on you and you don't want a panel on the runway."

To protect workers from the elements, E-J provided high-visibility long-sleeve shirts and extended brims for their hardhats. "We also brought some



Nearly 1,500 New York City Local 3 members are working on upgrades at John F. Kennedy International Airport, including the dozens of electricians installing on a new Terminal 1 building what will soon be the city's largest rooftop solar panel array.

tents up there to bring some shade for breaks," Badalamenti said.

Local 3's installers also have had to account for Terminal 1's variety of rooftop angles.

"I've been to the project a number of times," said Erikson, who also chairs the IBEW's International Executive Council. "The design of the roof, the patience of putting the panels in, how beautiful it looks — it's really amazing."

Jobsite inspectors also have been making sure that any reflection glare from the panels won't blind air traffic workers in JFK's nearby control tower.

"The roof is pitched at nearly every angle, like flower petals," Badalamenti said. "With a lot of solar jobs, no one gets to see the work. Here, you're going to be able to fly in and see it."

The whole airport upgrade is covered by a project labor agreement with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. "We have great relationships with the Port Authority, the major carriers — the whole site," Erikson said.

Terminal 1, which is taking over the former sites of Terminals 2 and 3 to become JFK's largest, is scheduled to open the first of its 23 gates this summer and then continue to phase in to full operation over the next four years.

"We've got to be online in March," Badalamenti said. "We're getting close to mechanical completion. We're in really good shape with where we are."

Local 3 electricians also have installed six hydrogen fuel cells to deliver supplemental electricity to the building. Together, the cells and Terminal 1's 6.63-megawatt solar array are expected to generate enough renewable energy to meet the needs of the 2.4 million-square-foot facility on what's slated to become the biggest self-contained airport microgrid in the U.S.

Badalamenti said that future Local 3 solar work at JFK will include installation of a rooftop panel array on a new 1.2 million-square-foot Terminal 6, along with a parking lot solar canopy, battery storage and ongoing maintenance for all of it.

Local 3 electricians will also upgrade wiring at the other terminals, and they'll be fully involved in the airport's construction of a new ground transportation center and a revamped road system.

All these upgrades at JFK were "long overdue," said Erikson, who noted that members of his local recently completed electrical upgrades as part of the \$8 billion renovation of nearby LaGuardia Airport.

"LaGuardia looks great, and JFK is going to equal it if not exceed it," Erikson said. "We're building a world-class gateway to the United States here in New York City."

The business manager credited the hundreds of Local 3 members working all over the airport site.

"Our men and women bring to the table skills, productivity and safety," he said. "We're proud to be doing it, and I'm proud of our members, who perform at 100% every day on every job." ■



Christopher Erikson, New York City Local 3 Business Manager and chairman of the IBEW's International Executive Council, speaks with some of his local's electricians on the Terminal 1 jobsite.

IBEW Locals Reach Out to Spanish Speakers, Offer English Classes

Locals' Efforts Expand Reach of Organizing

Locals across the U.S. are reaching out and training workers in the native language, and it's yielding promising results.

Roughly 30% of construction workers are Latino, and their numbers are increasing. And while not all Latinos speak Spanish, these locals are finding that offering training materials, outreach and retention efforts in Spanish is helping them tap into a part of the construction workforce that previously was beyond their reach.

Jon Rowe, training director for Riverside, Calif., Local 440 and San Bernardino, Calif., Local 477, said the engagement is a way to bring in more workers, especially construction wiremen working in solar, many of whom only speak Spanish.

"It gives us another avenue for recruitment," Rowe said, noting that the membership is supportive. "They see the need out on their jobsites."

Rowe said the locals are not just offering Spanish language services but also English lessons.

"The goal isn't to make everything in Spanish but to help members be able to work in English since jobsites and other areas of the construction industry are English-speaking," he said.

Richmond, Va., Local 666 also offers English classes and recently ran a bilingual salting training.

"We recognized the opportunity to engage and empower newly organized members, many of whom speak Spanish," Local 666 Business Manager Charles Skelly said, noting that while the local is very busy now, a number of jobs are winding down, so it is likely to have a slowdown in calls.

"Member retention is key, and salting provides a way to keep members working while waiting on the next call," Skelly said. "And the intel a salting member can provide about non-signatory contractors and their workers will help us grow even more once the calls pick back up."

Skelly said the new members were appreciative of the opportunity to be heard and have their questions answered.

"This was a great opportunity to review some of the information from their new member orientation," he said. "Most of them wanted to know if there would be more classes like this so they could invite their co-workers."

Skelly noted that the class took just over an hour and the new members stayed for another hour discussing and learning the benefits of membership and what they can do to be more engaged.

"Our goal was member

engagement, retention and organizing, and we hit that mark," he said.

For Indianapolis Local 481, the Spanish speakers came to them, Business Manager Jeff Wheeler said.

"Our outreach so far has been word of mouth, and it's been driving a huge number of workers to us," Wheeler said.

There's a lot of work in Local 481's jurisdiction, and the new Latino electricians are helping meet the demand.

"We're continuing to organize, have tripled the size of our apprenticeship and quite frankly were running out of other nonunion electricians in our pool of applicants," Wheeler said.

The benefit for Local 481 is that it has a new group of people who previously had been an untapped resource in their area, Wheeler said. And for the new workers, they're experiencing the benefits of being in a union.

"This is part of our future,"



Richmond, Va., Local 666 members attended a bilingual class on salting. The well-attended class also gave members another avenue to learn more about the local and member benefits.

Stafford said.

Skelly and Rowe both said their jurisdictions likely have a higher-than-average number of Spanish speakers, so if they want to engage that workforce, they need to create a pathway for those workers.

"I want to change the number of people walking through the door," Rowe said. "Besides, if we don't get involved in the community, then what are we doing?" ■

Wheeler said. "There have been some obstacles to overcome, but it's been well worth the effort."

The Electrical Training Alliance has also recognized the growing need for coursework in Spanish.

"Local demand drives everything,

and with this particular topic, that demand reached the leadership of the IBEW and the National Electrical Contractors Association, which both expressed the need to create and deliver standardized software that's equivalent to English," ETA Executive Director Todd



Ninth District Hosts Emergency Mental Health Summit

More than 100 people from Pacific Northwest locals, NECA chapters and the mental health industry convened at Portland, Ore., Local 48 in October for a transformational summit on mental health.

"In all my years as a rep, I've never seen so many people engaged like that," Ninth District International Representative Dave Myers said. "It was a day that defied all expectations."

The summit was planned in only two weeks and "went off without a hitch," said Kelly Foster, Ninth District mental health representative. "It was amazing."

The agenda included sessions on employee assistance plans and suicide prevention, and dedicated time for networking and sharing best practices.

With so many decision-makers gathered together, real actionable change was possible, Myers said. Attendees committed themselves to tackling the mental health crises in the construction and electrical industries and pledged to come back with results at the next summit in spring 2026. ■

For more information on the IBEW's efforts to address the mental health crisis in the construction trades, see the June 2025 Electrical Worker cover story, "The Invisible Injury," at ibew.org/archive.

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

IBEW's Message on Mental Health: 'Solidarity Saves Lives'

A new report from Canada's Building Trades Unions examined the mental health of its members and offered recommendations for reducing stress by tapping into the solidarity inherent in unions.

The CBTU reported that Canadian tradespeople report similar levels of poor mental health as workers in other sectors, but the reasons behind their pain are often different. High stress, jobsite hazards and financial strain create unique mental health and substance use issues for tradespeople.

However, members of the IBEW and other building trades reported feeling strong support from their unions, said First District International Representative Travis Merrett.

"That solidarity is a foundation we can build on," he said.

The survey of just over 1,000 members of CBTU unions yielded similar results as that of mental health studies in the United States. The CBTU, of which IBEW Canada is a member, found that a substantial number of tradespeople reported having conditions like depression and anxiety and that those conditions are exacerbated by workplace factors such as stress, jobsite hazards, burnout and financial strain.

Merrett noted that while the challenges are serious and widespread, the IBEW and other unions already provide a unique structure of support that most workers in other sectors don't have.

"The sense of belonging, of brotherhood and sisterhood and peer support that exists in the trades, are powerful tools," he said. "We just need to make sure members know how and where to get help within their locals, and that they feel safe doing so."

That hurdle of seeking the help that is available is significant. In the CBTU's findings, 84% said their union offered necessary mental health support, and most are comfortable discussing mental health and substance use with their union. But only 10% reported ever accessing those union supports.

The survey also found that union members, more than workers in other sectors, feel a sense of belonging and support from their unions.

"That finding didn't surprise me at all," Merrett said. "In our trades, relationships are built on trust and shared experience. That connection can make a huge difference when someone is struggling."

Merrett said the First District has been promoting awareness and educating members about mental health and addiction. They are a central theme at provincial and national conferences and leadership meetings. It's also supporting locals to host trainings, distribute resources and partner with community organizations that specialize in support and recovery.

"Mental health is a part of workplace safety, not a separate entity," Merrett said.

The report, which surveyed members from March to May 2024, included best practices for care, creating an environment where members feel supported and comfortable seeking the help they need.

Among those recommendations was the creation of a national Mental Health and Substance Use Committee comprising representatives from the building trades to take the CBTU's findings and turn them into action.

"This report reinforces what we've long known in the trades: Solidarity saves lives," said First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk. "Behind every set of tools is a person who deserves to feel supported and safe. We stand with the CBTU and are committed to raising awareness so that every member understands that help is available."

Merrett, who sits on the Committee representing IBEW Canada, said he

wants members to know that the report isn't just about statistics. It's about their lived experiences.

"It validates what many have felt for years," he said. "It's helping guide real action and it shows that unions aren't just about wages and working conditions, they're about people."

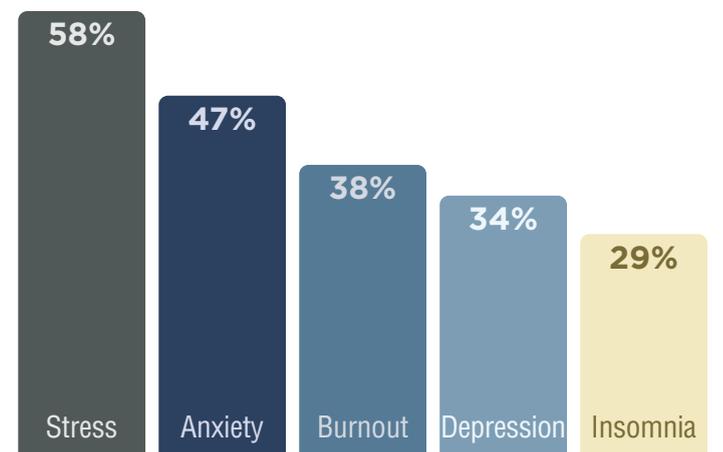
Merrett said members should know their mental and physical health is critical to the IBEW.

"Talking openly about mental health in the trades helps chip away at the stigma and reminds our members that strength also means knowing when to ask for help," he said. "Members should never feel alone in this." ■

Share your IBEW news!

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

Common Job-Related Mental Health Distresses



A report from Canada's Building Trades Unions found that its members suffer from many of the same afflictions as those in other job sectors, but the reasons are often different.

Source: Canada's Building Trades Unions. Percentages above reflect the share of tradespeople in the survey who reported the respective distresses.

Le message de la FIOE sur la santé mentale : « La solidarité sauve des vies »

Un nouveau rapport des Syndicats des métiers de la construction du Canada (SMCC/CBTU) a examiné la santé mentale de ses membres et a formulé des recommandations visant à réduire le stress en tirant parti de la solidarité inhérente aux syndicats.

Selon le rapport des SMCC, le niveau de problème de santé mentale des gens de métier canadiens était similaire à celles et à ceux rencontrés dans d'autres secteurs, mais les raisons à l'origine de leur souffrance sont souvent différents; haut niveau de stress, danger sur les chantiers et pression financière, ont tous créé des problèmes particuliers liés à la santé mentale et à la toxicomanie chez les gens de métiers.

Cependant, les membres de la FIOE et les membres d'autres syndicats de la construction ont déclaré recevoir un soutien solide de la part de leur syndicat, mentionne Travis Merrett, représentant international du Premier District.

« La solidarité est la base sur laquelle nous pouvons miser », dit-il.

Le sondage de juste au-dessus de 1 000 membres a donné des résultats comparables aux études en santé mentale aux États-Unis. Les SMCC, dont la FIOE est membre, a révélé qu'un grand nombre de gens de métier souffrent de trouble, comme la dépression et l'anxiété et que ces troubles sont exacerbés par des facteurs liés au milieu de travail comme le stress, les dangers sur les chantiers, l'épuisement et la pression

financière.

M. Merrett précise que malgré la nature sérieuse de ces défis et de leurs étendues, la FIOE et d'autres syndicats apportent déjà une approche unique en matière de soutien que la plupart des autres travailleuses et travailleurs dans d'autres secteurs n'ont pas.

« Le sentiment d'appartenance, de fraternité et de sororité et le soutien des pairs qui existent dans les métiers sont des outils puissants », dit-il. « Nous devons seulement nous assurer que les membres savent comment et où obtenir de l'aide et qu'ils se sentent en sécurité de le faire. »

Les difficultés rencontrées pour chercher l'aide disponible sont notables. Dans les conclusions des SMCC, 84 % de ces personnes ont dit que leurs syndicats offraient l'appui nécessaire en matière de santé mentale et la plupart sont à l'aise pour discuter de leur santé mentale et de leur toxicomanie avec leurs syndicats. Mais seulement 10 % d'entre eux ont indiqué avoir déjà utilisé les services de soutien syndicaux.

Le sondage a également révélé que les syndiqués, plus que les travailleurs d'autres secteurs, éprouvaient un sentiment d'appartenance et de soutien de la part de leurs syndicats.

« Ces conclusions ne m'ont vraiment pas surpris », formule M. Merrett « Dans nos métiers, les liens sont construits sur la confiance et les expériences partagées. Ce lien peut faire

une énorme différence quand une personne souffre. »

M. Merrett a indiqué que le Premier District a entrepris des actions pour sensibiliser les membres et à les former au sujet de la santé mentale et des problèmes de dépendance. Ces sujets sont au cœur des conférences nationales et provinciales et des réunions du leadership. Il s'agit aussi d'accompagner les sections locales à organiser des formations, à distribuer des ressources et à s'associer avec des organismes communautaires spécialisés dans le soutien et la guérison.

« La santé mentale fait partie intégrante de la sécurité au travail et non une entité distincte », exprime M. Merrett.

Dans le rapport qui a sondé des membres entre mars 2024 et mai 2024, comprennent les meilleures pratiques en matière de soins, créer un environnement où les membres se sentent appuyés et à l'aise pour demander de l'aide.

Parmi ces recommandations est la mise en place d'un comité national sur la santé mentale et la toxicomanie, composé de représentantes et représentants des métiers de la construction, ce comité sera chargé de mettre en œuvre les conclusions des SMCC.

« Ce rapport confirme ce que nous savons depuis longtemps dans les

métiers : la solidarité sauve des vies », prononce le vice-président international du Premier District, Russ Shewchuk. « Derrière chaque trousse d'outils est une personne qui mérite de se sentir appuyée et de se sentir en sécurité. Nous sommes de tout cœur avec les SMCC et on s'engage à augmenter la sensibilisation pour que chaque membre comprenne qu'il existe de l'aide. »

M. Merrett, qui fait partie du comité en tant que représentant de la FIOE Canada, souhaite que les membres réalisent que le rapport ne s'arrête pas aux statistiques, mais traite leurs expériences vécues.

« Ça confirme ce que plusieurs ressentent depuis des années », dit-il. « Ça contribue à passer à l'action et ça prouve que les syndicats ne sont pas seulement préoccupés par les salaires et les conditions de travail, mais sont préoccupés par les personnes. »

M. Merrett dit que les membres doivent savoir que leur santé physique et mentale est essentielle pour la FIOE.

« Parler ouvertement de la santé mentale dans les métiers contribue à réduire la stigmatisation et rappel aux membres que la force veut aussi dire savoir quand demander de l'aide », dit-il. « Les membres ne devraient jamais se sentir seuls dans cette situation. » ■

Racontez-nous vos nouvelles FIOE!

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

CIRCUITS

R.I. Apprentice Excels in the Ring, on the Job

Will Guilmette is serious about his pro boxing career, putting in the work that might someday give him a shot at a title.

He's simultaneously working just as hard at another goal. It isn't as visible but every bit as important.

He's on track to become a journeyman wireman in May. Boxing remains his passion, but he understands the lifetime of security that comes with being an IBEW electrician.

"Obviously, you can't box forever,"

long amateur career and improved to 2-0 with a first-round knockout victory over Douglas Siva on Nov. 1 in Uncasville, Conn. He won his pro debut via a first-round knockout May 10.

Despite the physical demands of that career — which includes exhausting morning runs, long hours working on balance and technique, sometimes brutal sparring sessions — he's keeping up with his apprenticeship duties, both on the jobsite and in the classroom.

Guilmette concedes that it's often exhausting. But the sense of satisfaction he gets makes it all worth it.

"My head hits the pillow, I'm out," he said. "I'm so tired that even on the weekends, I can't think of going out."

Individual sports played a major role throughout Guilmette's life while growing up in Coventry, R.I., about a 30-minute drive southwest of Providence.

Wrestling was the sport of choice, but that changed at 13, when he accompanied a friend and his older brother to a boxing gym in nearby West Warwick.

"As soon as I went with them, I quit wrestling. I quit every other sport," he said. "I fell in love with it."

Guilmette doesn't disagree that boxing is often brutal. He's seen his share of fighters give it up quickly after absorbing a few punches.

But he found something deeper in the effort it demanded for someone to be successful.

"It was just that feeling of months of training and the dedication you put into it," he said. "Even in fights I lost, while I wasn't happy, I really enjoyed that feeling of training and seeing what the outcome was. I like having a goal in mind."



Guilmette lands a right to the jaw of Tymar Miles in his first pro fight on May 10, 2025. Guilmette has won each of his first two pro fights by first-round knockout.

sometimes he comes right at you and wants to fight. You'll get your money's worth when you watch him. And when he drops down and works [the opposing fighter's body], you're done."

Local 99 showed up in force for his first professional fight, at Foxwoods Casino in Mashantucket, Conn. Not only were members in attendance, but Local 99 sponsored him. His trunks included a sponsorship patch for the local.

"They support me tremendously," Guilmette said. "The president, the business manager, all the guys in the office, but also the members. There were probably 100 union guys standing and cheering for me. That really pushes you through a fight. It motivates you."

Business Manager Joe Walsh and his staff have worked with JATC instructors and signatory contractors to give Guilmette enough time to pursue his boxing career while also making sure he's meeting his apprenticeship responsibilities.

"My belief is that if someone is serious about pursuing their dreams, you do whatever you can to support them," Walsh said. "Will has shown that he's very serious about this."

"A lot of our members get a kick out of watching him, and he's given all of us someone to rally around," Walsh added. "I'm excited to see where his boxing career takes him, but I'm just as excited by his work as an apprentice and that he understands the significance of a career as an IBEW electrician."

For Guilmette, the work is just beginning. In both arenas.

"The process of getting ready, staying disciplined, is something I've loved," he said. ■



Providence, R.I., Local 99 apprentice Will Guilmette celebrates while the referee raises his arm in triumph after winning his first pro fight.

er," said Guilmette, a fifth-year apprentice at Providence, R.I., Local 99, and a rising middleweight fighter. "It's a very small window in life when you can box. You have to have a career in mind and be able to support your family.

"That's exactly what the IBEW does for you."

Guilmette (pronounced Gil-MET), 23, turned pro earlier this year after a

Guilmette caught another break when he walked into that gym as a teenager.

It was owned by Bry Lemme, a longtime boxing trainer in New England who is also a journeyman wireman and third-generation Local 99 member.

Lemme not only became his trainer. When Guilmette was 15, he started taking him on side electrical jobs. Lemme needed the help. He also wanted to expose his star pupil to a potential career.

It worked. While fighting as an amateur, Guilmette was accepted into the Local 99 apprenticeship just after high school. Lemme, who continues to train him, said lessons learned in the ring can also transfer to the job and the classroom.

"He sees that the harder you work, the more work you put in, the more you have," Lemme said. "You drive a nice truck, you worked for it."

"Through the union, I told him you put in your five years of apprenticeship, you're rewarded in the end," he added. "You get a pension. You get an annuity. You have a license no one can

take away from you."

Guilmette continued his amateur career, winning a New England Junior Olympics title and competing in the Southern New England Golden Gloves. He traveled to national tournaments in Ohio and Louisiana to see how he fared against top-level competition.

He turned professional earlier this year and signed with CES, a New England-based promotional company.

Lemme noted that at 6 feet, 1 inch, Guilmette is tall for a middleweight, where the weight limit is 160 pounds. But he thinks Guilmette might excel even more as a pro. He has better balance and coordination.

"Now, his body is mature and he's fighting at a comfortable weight," Lemme said.

Plus, professional boxers go through weigh-ins the day before a fight, giving them more time to rehydrate. Amateur weigh-ins are done just a few hours before.

"He's a tall, unorthodox fighter who has a great jab, but sometimes he's too tough for his own good," Lemme said. "He should box a little more, but

Dynamic Women's Committee Boosts Wash. Local's Organizing

Ever since Lisa Forsberg graduated at the top of her apprenticeship class in 2022, the Tacoma, Wash., Local 76 journeyman has taken on a mission to help fellow IBEW members — and future ones — find support from allies on the jobsite and in the union hall.

"Sitting at my graduation, it hit me that I was now a part of a family that uplifts me and helped me find my place," said Forsberg, a wireman who recently helped launch what's become a highly engaged Women's Committee called the Sisters of 76.

Electrical work became Forsberg's second career after she found working at grocery stores unfulfilling.

"I didn't know how to navigate that culture at all," Forsberg said. "I had no upward momentum. I felt very, very lost."

Forsberg's life at home further prodded her to take an inventory of her capabilities. "I'm in my 30s and I couldn't afford the basic needs," she said. "I lived in a studio apartment after my divorce, I was in debt, and I saw no way out of that cycle."

Having developed a reputation as



Members of Tacoma, Wash., Local 76's recently formed "Sisters of 76" Women's Committee posed with International President Kenneth Cooper and International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble at the IBEW's 2024 Women's Conference in New Orleans.

a hard worker and drawing inspiration from Sarah English, a longtime friend who's also a full-time instructor at Local 76's Southwest Washington Electrical JATC, Forsberg decided to apply for an IBEW apprenticeship with the local.

Business Manager Clint Bryson, who was a Local 76 business representative when Forsberg applied, recalled hearing how her energy was clear

CIRCUITS continued on page 10

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CIRCUITS *continued*

during her apprenticeship interview: “Our business manager came back and said, ‘We’ve got to keep an eye on that one’ because she came across as very impressive.”

Not only did Forsberg end up graduating from the apprenticeship with top honors, but a few months later, she also became the first woman to win second place in the annual Western States Electrical Contest, a wireman skills competition for first-year journeymen.

Through her involvement with RENEW, the IBEW’s program for locating and developing union leaders and activists (See this month’s cover story for more.), Forsberg focused on forming Sisters of 76, in part because of some bullying she experienced as an apprentice.

“I know how easily one begins to feel like they’re all alone and don’t know how to talk about what’s happening — or even who to talk to,” said Forsberg, who set up the committee with help from English and another friend and Local 76 colleague, Caitlin Hartley.

The Sisters of 76 quickly got active and stayed active. Over the last two years, the growing committee has helped strengthen the local’s already robust membership support network through efforts ranging from establishing a work clothing bank to conducting conduit-bending workshops and to holding informational mentorship socials for new apprentices.

“We’re learning how to be better teachers, and we’re getting the chance to help our apprentices be more successful,” Forsberg said.

Thanks also to some Sisters-led try-a-trade events, hundreds of high school students have learned about opportunities that come with apprenticeships in the IBEW and other unions.

“Because of the Sisters’ involvement, I really saw a difference in how the kids sought out people other than myself to talk to,” Bryson said.

The Sisters have even extended the local’s involvement with Habitat for Humanity, the charity that builds affordable housing for low-income families, by organizing an all-women building project. Forsberg has also joined other Local 76 representatives to speak at Habitat fundraisers.

And while Local 76’s RENEW volunteers continue to handle the electrical work for the annual Capital Lakefair celebration in Olympia, Sisters volunteers, wearing bright tie-dyed shirts, have been part of the festival’s parade, riding in and walking alongside the local’s Chevrolet Suburban.

“It lets people know who we are and what we’re doing,” Bryson said, “but it also lets them see that we have a really diverse membership and that there’s a place for everybody in every aspect of our local.”

One key message throughout the local’s outreach efforts is that apprenticeships change lives, the business manager said, with affinity groups like Sisters of 76 — as well as an in-development Veterans’ Committee — helping to lead the way.



“We’ve had great conversations with women, tribal programs and schools with a variety of underserved students,” said Bryson, who was elected business manager of the 1,100-member local earlier this year.

He views such volunteer work as an extension of the IBEW’s organizing roots. “I’ve been a member for 34 years, and I’ve seen a growth in our diversity,” he said. “We’re saying, ‘We want everybody in the electrical industry to be union, to

One of the many Sisters of 76 activities is participation in the annual Capital Lakefair parade in Olympia.

know what’s available to them.’

“Lisa’s efforts are helping us improve on that,” he said. “Local 76 is stronger with her here.”

Forsberg, who was recently brought on staff as a business representative, advises patience for members of other locals who would like to start affinity groups of their own.

“We’ve had our members’ involvement skyrocket, and these committees are a big part of it,” she said. “But committee involvement will ebb and flow — even just a couple of people is not too small — and it’ll take time to develop the outreaches and events that your committee wants to host.

“The first thing is to just start,” she said. ■

POWER AT WORK

Michigan Local Successfully Lobbies for New ‘Responsible Bidder’ Rules

Lansing, Mich., Local 665 joined other unions and signatory contractors to get a local ordinance amendment passed that more comprehensively determines which contractors will be awarded local construction projects.

“Amending this ordinance is about making smart investments with public money, not just picking the lowest bidder and hoping for the best,” Local 665 Business Manager Aaron Pangborn said. “It’s about employing and retaining the best trained and qualified electrical workers that live and work in the city of Lansing.”

Prior to the amendment, publicly funded projects over \$50,000 often went to the lowest bidder, which favored nonunion contractors that cut corners and consequently lowered the quality of work done. The amended ordinance, which went into effect in late August, now uses a weighted scoring system that takes into account a host of factors, only one of which is cost.

Now, for a bidder to be considered qualified, it has to meet a series of criteria that include participating in a Department of Labor-registered apprenticeship program, having a safety training program, offering employer-sponsored health care and structured retirement plans like a pension, and paying the prevailing wage.

“When you buy a vehicle, do you always purchase the cheapest car on the market, or do you find one that balances cost with desired features? We all recognize price isn’t the only factor — it’s about getting the best value,” wrote Jen Eyer in a column in the Lansing



Lansing, Mich., Local 665 business manager Aaron Pangborn, left, and Assistant Business Manager Ken Kolp, right, testified in support of the “responsible bidder” ordinance.

State Journal. Eyer serves as an Ann Arbor councilmember, where a similar ordinance was passed, and assisted the Lansing building trades in getting their amendment over the finish line.

Under the new rubric, non-monetary criteria account for a majority of the points, with just 40% of the score based on cost.

“The ordinance considers not only the bid amount, but several other factors that are core values to the IBEW,” Pangborn said.

Pangborn and other IBEW members, including Assistant Business Manager Ken Kolp, worked closely with members of the City Council and many of the other trades for several months to ensure that the amendment was fair and appropriate for Lansing.

“Local 665 was a key partner in the labor coalition that helped move this ordinance forward,” said Eyer, whose father is a retired Local 665 member. “They did a great job ensuring council had the facts they needed to feel confident in their vote.”

Pangborn credits the mayor and councilmembers, several of whom were endorsed by Local 665 in their electoral races, for overwhelmingly supporting the measure, which passed by a 7-1 vote.

“As we always say, elections have consequences, and when you have local legislators that are labor-friendly, it makes our jobs that much easier,” he said.

Kolp noted that the benefits of the ordinance extend beyond the building trades.

“We had three times the amount of letters from local businesses that supported this legislation than statewide groups that opposed it,” Kolp said. “There was a lot of community support around keeping Lansing tax money in the Lansing area.”

Kolp and Pangborn said that a number of signatory contractors also lobbied in favor of the amendment.

“Getting our signatory contractors to reach out and deliver letters of support was instrumental in passing the ordinance,” Kolp said. ■

ORGANIZING WIRE

Nuclear Workers Vote Overwhelmingly to Join Seattle Local

After multiple unsuccessful attempts, more than 200 workers at Framatome, a nuclear manufacturer, voted decisively to join Seattle Local 77.

“When the workers approached us to make this happen, we dove in,” said Darla Stevens, an assistant business manager and organizer with Local 77. “The amount of support we received from the community, from other IBEW locals and even from other unions was incredible.”

The employees at Framatome, about three hours southeast of Seattle, have wanted a union for a long time, said Local 77 organizer Sara Langus, but their previous campaigns always fell short. In one effort, they lost by only six votes.

But this time was different. The momentum was on their side.

“They came to us with 30 cards signed. We told them it wasn’t enough, and within a few weeks they had 70 cards,” Langus said. “That showed us they were serious and ready.”

The campaign moved at an incredibly fast pace, with only three weeks between filing and the vote, which was held at the end of July. But a mix of older workers who recalled the earlier drives and new workers told Stevens and Langus that they were ready to put it all on the line.

Normally, organizers want indications of about 70% support from the workers before holding an election, but the energy of the campaign was high, so they filed at 46%, which was then knocked down to 34% when management made them include more employees in the unit.

“That meant we had to move fast and be strategic,” Langus said.

The organizers divided workers into three categories: the confirmed yeses, the undecideds and those who were forced into the unit. With the yes group, they emphasized how close the last election had been. With the undecided workers, they focused on the benefits of being in a union and worked to counter the company’s multiple misleading statements. For those who didn’t want to be in the unit at all, they

assured the workers that if it won, the union would be there to listen and fight for them no matter how they voted.

What drove Framatome’s employees to unionize were core issues every worker faces: better benefits, wages and working conditions. Management was constantly demanding overtime, usually with only a day or two of notice. Shifts were also changed with little warning, making it nearly impossible for workers to plan their personal lives.

“These workers at Framatome were highly motivated to form their union, and they did it for all the best reasons: to build a better life for their families, to have a voice on the job, and to build a safer and more productive workplace,” Stevens said.

Langus and Stevens said it was the workers themselves who made the campaign successful.

“They took real risks,” Langus said. “They knew they’d be targeted, but this time they didn’t shy away. They were loud, and they were determined to see it through.”

That determination was crucial in the face of Framatome’s anti-union campaign. The company brought in a union-busting firm that was on site for weeks, pulling employees into one-on-one meetings. There was an onslaught of misleading information, and supervisors pulled no punches, sending out letters and urging people not to join the union.

“It was a daily battle to counter their messaging, but the workers held strong,” Langus said.

In the end, the pro-union workers won, with 118 voting in favor of representation and only 64 against. They join 32 other Framatome employees who are already members of Local 77, which represents roughly 8,500 workers in the utility and energy sector across Washington, northern Idaho and northwest Montana.

The new bargaining unit is made up of employees who perform a wide array of highly technical positions. They include end-to-end nuclear fuel manufacturing and support functions, such as control room and process operations; quality assurance, surveillance and documentation verification; and materials logistics and inventory control.

“In just a short time, these workers came together with incredible energy and determination to be heard,”

said Jason Locke, an electrician and one of the leaders of the campaign. “They are eager to make things better around the plant, share their ideas for how the company can improve production and partner with Framatome to return it to its status as the workplace of choice in the Tri-Cities.” ■

Raise a Root Beer Mug: Canadian A&W Unit Wins First Contract

After making history as the first A&W workers to unionize in Canada, 20 new members of Kamloops, British Columbia, Local 993 are celebrating another victory: a first-ever contract after 18 months of bargaining.

“We’re really happy about it,” said steward Keira Sampson. “I think people are being treated way better. I would say that good rules are in place and workers are standing up for themselves more.”

The two-year contract includes just-cause protections and progressive discipline that Sampson said has led to fewer firings. It also creates a new A&W-supported fund that workers can tap for college or other post-secondary education.

Despite the prolonged contract talks, Local 993 organizer Brian Andrews said there’s mutual respect between the union and management.

“We built a good relationship,” he said. “They were a little standoffish at the start, but once they realized we weren’t going anywhere, they were more agreeable. It’s gone well overall.”

Andrews said the contract didn’t increase wages because A&W pays at or above British Columbia’s minimum of \$17.85 an hour — the equivalent of almost \$13, well above the federal minimum wage in the United States.

Beyond being unique to Canada, the Kamloops location appears to be the only unionized A&W in North America. The century-old chain — America’s first fast-food franchise — became famous for its root beer floats in frosty mugs and car-hop service that eventually gave way to drive-thru windows.

With 42 A&Ws throughout British Columbia, Andrews said, future organizing is possible. But he cautioned that the timing has to be right.

Successful union drives in the fast-food industry are rare in Canada and the United States, between employer opposition and a revolving door of potential members as restaurant workers come and go.

Notably, several IBEW locals in the Midwest and California have beat the odds with hard-won organizing and contract victories over the past three years at regional coffee chains.

For the A&W unit, a revived card-check law in British Columbia removed the biggest hurdle to organizing: elections and the period of time they give employers to wage anti-union campaigns.

Passed by the New Democratic Party in 2022, the law allows bargaining



A unit of IBEW members at the only unionized A&W in Canada, and likely all of North America, won a first contract after 19 months of bargaining. Pictured are Kamloops, British Columbia, Local 993 organizer Brian Andrews and steward Keira Sampson.

units to be certified without a vote once 55% of workers sign membership cards.

Unionization in the province immediately shot up. After the law’s first full year in 2023, the BC Labour Relations Board reported that 92% of nearly 200 certifications had been achieved through card check.

The A&W drive “would have been a lot harder” without the new law, Andrews said. “Given how long it takes for a vote to happen, everyone who signed a card could be gone by the time there’s an election.”

Even the process of collecting cards was tricky, as would-be members left for new jobs, college or other opportunities.

“The high turnover was one of our biggest challenges,” Andrews said. “People quit, they graduate from high

school, they move to management. We’re constantly trying to stay up to date with members to let them know they’ve got a union and that they can talk to their shop steward about any issues.”

The churn in recent months has included two stewards. Now 19-year-old Sampson is shepherding the unit on her own with Andrews’ help.

“Keira might be the youngest steward we’ve ever had in Local 993,” he said. “She’s doing a good job.”

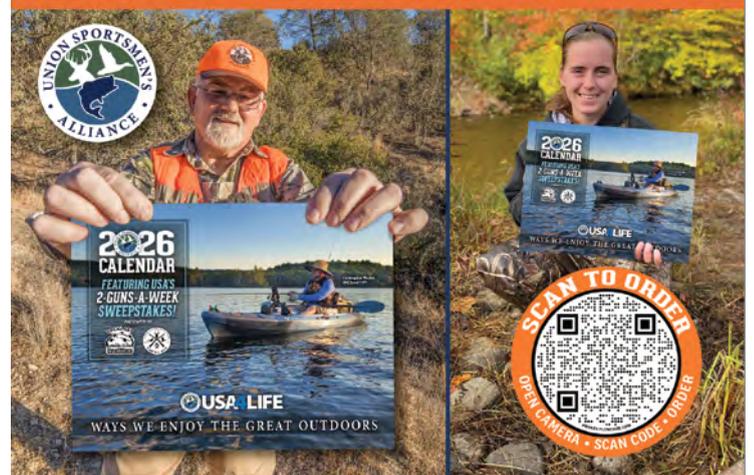
Sampson said it’s stressful at times, but she’s learning a lot and enjoying her role.

“I felt like it was a really good cause,” she said about being recruited by one of the previous stewards. “I believe in equality, and I like helping people out. And I really like helping my co-workers.” ■



Workers at nuclear facility Framatome voted overwhelmingly in July to join Seattle Local 77.

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TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

Wyatt R. Earp



Wyatt Earp, Third District international representative and lead political organizer for the IBEW in New Jersey and Delaware, retired effective Dec. 15 after more than 45 years in the union.

Earp is a third-generation inside wireman.

His grandfather Arthur and father Robert were members of New York Local 3, but it wasn't certain that Earp would join the family trade while he was in high school.

On the one hand, Earp was in all Advanced Placement classes. He won a state law competition, then a regional one and competed in the national finals in California. The following year, he went to the state final of a computer competition.

"I was really at a crossroads. I couldn't get enough of school and was thinking about going to college," he said.

But Earp was also a gifted mechanic and loved working with his hands. Throughout high school, he had jobs in a body shop, fixing coin-operated laundry machines and as a handyman in a local hotel "fixing toilets."

"Anything I did, I wanted to learn how it worked," he said.

Joining the apprenticeship at Asbury Park Local 400 in 1979 allowed Earp to do both.

"I liked the classes. I liked working in the nuclear power plant. There was a lot of interesting stuff to do," he said.

Earp also started night classes at Rutgers University, studying labor-management relations. After he finished his degree, he came back to teach as adjunct faculty.

Even while he was an apprentice, Earp was already running jobs. Soon after topping out in 1983, he was a general superintendent and then general foreman for all trades at the Oyster Creek radioactive waste facility, where he was responsible for hundreds of IBEW members.

"Building a project or building relationships, it was all problem solving. That has always been my mindset: How do I make this, whatever this is, work better?" he said.

For years, Earp's father had been Local 3's director of employment, managing its team of referral agents. He was, Earp said, the model of service that Earp followed.

"My whole life, anyone who asked me to do something, I said yes. 'Yes, I can do that.' And it's always taken me someplace interesting since that high school legal competition that got me a week in California for the nationals," he said.

In 1989, James Gratton, then Local 400's business manager, asked Earp to become the financial secretary and a business agent.

"For the most part as foreman, super or general foreman, you're not spinning wrenches, but you are moving the whole day," he said. "The biggest surprise was two weeks sitting in a chair makes your whole body sore."

A year later, he got out of the chair when he

was made a full-time organizer.

While not his biggest win, Earp's favorite was an organizing drive he ran at a 25-man shop where five of the owner's family members were in the unit.

"We won 23-2. The guy freaked out. He thought he knew who worked for him. He didn't," Earp said. "If I don't know you well enough to sit at your kitchen table with your spouse, I'm not doing my job. They all had my address, my phone number and could talk to my family like I talked to theirs."

"As a political operative for the IBEW, he's done a great job. Our agenda moves in New Jersey, electorally and legislatively, and Wyatt is no small part of that."

— Former Third District International Vice President Dennis Affinati

By 1994, Gratton was ready to retire and asked Earp to run for business manager. And he said yes and won. In his tenure, the local added at least 100 new members, including several dozen service contract employees at the Army's Fort Monmouth.

"That one was funny. The base tried to fight our organizing drive by telling the workers they would have to be drug-tested. Can you imagine that, though? We were straighter than the military!" he said. "So anyway, we lost the first election, but they broke all their promises, and we won the next round."

Around 1997, the local's service representative, John W. Varrichio, told Earp that an officer at Local 400 had sent a letter to International President J.J. Barry complaining that Earp was organizing too many people, Earp said.

"I asked if that was really a problem," he recalled.

His answer was an invitation from Barry, a committed organizer, to come on staff at the Third District.

In the early 2000s, Earp transitioned from service rep to the political representative for New Jersey and Delaware, positions he held for almost a quarter-century.

In that time, the IBEW saw a congressman elected from its ranks, Rep. Donald Norcross, and New Jersey passed a prevailing-wage law for utility work.

Earp drove a repeal to a New Jersey law barring assistant district attorneys and public-sector

managers from organizing. Once the law was changed, they joined the IBEW in the hundreds.

New Jersey is also home to the Labor Candidates Program, which provides formal training and support to union members running for office. Over more than 25 years, graduates of the program have won more than 1,100 election victories. It is a model that has been replicated across the nation.

Earp, whether he admits it or not, was a critical part of each of those achievements and many, many more, said recent Third District International Vice President Dennis Affinati.

"As a political operative for the IBEW, he's done a great job. Our agenda moves in New Jersey, electorally and legislatively, and Wyatt is no small part of that," said Affinati, who retired Nov. 1. "He is tied in really well to the politics of the state."

For now, Earp said he expects that his retirement will be pretty familiar.

"You can never really turn it off, and I'm not sure I want to," he said. "I'll be staying in New Jersey helping whoever I can, however I can."

Please join the officers wishing Brother Earp a long and healthy retirement. ■

DECEASED

Kenneth Sawyer



Retired Eleventh District International Representative Kenneth Sawyer, who grew up in small-town Iowa and went on to become an IBEW leader throughout the Midwest, died on Sept. 13. He was 92.

"He loved the IBEW because it provided a great living for his family," said his son, Mike Sawyer, who followed his father into the Brotherhood and served as business manager of Des Moines Local 55. "He realized that when he was young, and like so many others, he was proud of that. It was the most important thing other than his family."

Brother Sawyer grew up near Dakota City, Iowa — population about 500 — before moving nearly 200 miles to the southeast to Des Moines, the state capital, in 1951 at the age of 19.

He intended to work for Northwestern Bell as a phone installer. But, his son said, a friend employed by Iowa Power & Light recommended it as a good place to work, so the elder Sawyer tagged along to a jobsite on a Monday morning, looking to get hired.

The supervisor told him he was too skinny to be a lineman but offered him a job driving a truck for the utility, Mike Sawyer said. Kenneth Sawyer took it and became a member of Des Moines Local 499, a utility local that represented company workers.

The elder Sawyer became a groundman in 1953 and — perhaps to the surprise of that original supervisor — a lineman in 1958. Mike said his father was encouraged by a foreman he respected to get involved in Local 499. He did just that, serving on several committees and as chief steward, treasurer and president.

He moved into the office full time in 1967, when he was elected business manager. Mike Sawyer said his father enjoyed working in the field but realized he found a home fighting for fellow members.

"He loved teaching stewards' training classes, and he loved organizing people," his son said. "He just had a knack for it, and he was passionate about it."

Sawyer stayed in that role until he was appointed to the Eleventh District staff as an international representative in 1971. The district includes Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota.

Much of his work was with utility and outside locals and teaching steward training classes, but he serviced locals from all IBEW branches throughout the rest of his career, which ended with his retirement in 1998.

Bill Eads was the district's international vice president by that point, but his relationship with Sawyer went back much further.

The two met in the late 1960s, and they worked closely together when Eads was business manager of Kansas City, Mo., Local 1613 and it engaged in a 110-day strike against Kansas City Power & Light in 1974.

The strike was ongoing while the International Convention was held in Kansas City that year. Delegates picketed around the KCPL building every day during it.

"Ken had a lot of knowledge in the utility business and was the go-to-guy for information in the Eleventh District," Eads said.

Later, when they were both international representatives, the two worked together on a successful organizing campaign of the technical and clerical staff at Iowa Power & Light, bringing those employees into Local 499.

"We always had a good relationship," Eads said. "Ken had been around the block a few times and was just a pleasure to deal with. Just an all-around good international rep."

Mike Sawyer has fond memories of accompanying his father to Local 499's hall, especially during the summer when school was out.

"When I was younger, he would talk a lot about the union and the good it did," he said. "He loved it when companies sent in their high-priced lawyers for these grievances and arbitration hearings and he and the IBEW would still win. He really enjoyed that."

"Ken had a lot of knowledge in the utility business and was the go-to-guy for information in the Eleventh District."

— Former Eleventh District International Vice President Bill Eads

In retirement, Kenneth Sawyer kept his home in Adel, Iowa, just outside Des Moines. His son said he closely followed IBEW matters and attended events regularly until the last few years, when his hearing began to decline.

"He told me well into his 80s that he wished he could still help the International organize," Mike said. "He said, 'I can't do it because my hearing is gone,' but that is something he absolutely loved doing."

Besides Mike, Kenneth Sawyer is survived by four other children, two stepchildren, 19 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

The officers and staff pay tribute to Brother Sawyer upon his passing and send their condolences to his family and friends. ■

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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	Rehling, T. H.	9/11/25	24	Cochran, C. G.	8/25/25	103	Seale, R. L.	1/12/25	305	Eddy, R. L.	9/15/25
1	Zulauf, F. J.	12/13/23	24	Litzinger, R. A.	4/2/25	105	Lyons, D. J.	5/26/25	309	Gauen, B. E.	10/3/25
3	Anderson, C.	8/16/25	25	Bub, A. W.	9/10/25	105	Stewart, J. D.	8/27/25	309	Jackson, H. P.	9/13/25
3	Anderson, J. E.	9/2/25	26	Beall, H. W.	8/9/25	110	Armstrong, V. J.	7/11/25	309	Kleeman, L. J.	9/17/25
3	Augienello, M. J.	8/26/25	26	Brigden, B. H.	9/1/25	110	Lee, R. M.	8/24/25	309	Thomas, D. J.	8/8/25
3	Bair, C. G.	10/10/23	26	Schroeder, J. J.	6/18/25	115	Langstaff, I. D.	9/4/25	313	Warwick, W. I.	8/20/25
3	Brohan, P. P.	11/22/24	26	White, C. A.	9/8/25	124	Bryan, C. W.	9/29/25	317	Gilkerson, M. W.	7/5/25
3	Burroni, S. A.	3/26/23	38	Bohlmann, R.	1/10/25	126	Henry, L. D.	9/8/25	317	Mills, J. E.	9/17/25
3	Caballero, A.	7/12/23	38	Maddox, D. R.	9/9/25	127	Colombe, W.	8/21/25	322	Trotta, A. E.	7/13/23
3	Campbell, D. A.	9/8/25	38	Ramser, S. M.	8/26/25	130	Schmidt, S. H.	5/7/25	325	Cook, E. E.	9/25/25
3	Cano, W. E.	8/30/25	38	Zone, R. E.	9/11/25	131	Northrup, D.	2/15/23	332	Doll, R. W.	10/5/24
3	Cooper, N.	9/11/25	40	Paniagua, J. F.	8/25/25	134	Abele, L. J.	8/25/23	347	Walkup, M. G.	8/24/25
3	DiFranco, A. J.	9/10/25	41	Imiolo, J. J.	8/26/25	134	Bernacchi, J. H.	8/30/25	350	Helton, R. B.	7/19/25
3	Friscioni, D.	12/16/22	41	Kernen, G. L.	10/3/25	134	Burke, J. J.	9/22/25	351	Carfagno, R.	8/20/25
3	Gadaleta, C.	8/25/25	41	Lepczyk, R. J.	3/19/25	134	Carlson, W. E.	7/2/25	351	Higgins, M. S.	9/11/25
3	Gotta, R. J.	9/26/25	42	Peets, W. A.	8/27/25	134	Cassidy, S. M.	9/9/25	351	Mickens, E. T.	8/20/25
3	Graber, H.	8/6/25	43	Gwiit, W. A.	9/26/25	134	Cosman, H. A.	7/4/25	351	Shiple, W.	9/23/25
3	Hartman, E. J.	9/7/25	43	Parkhurst, D. A.	4/3/25	134	Edwards, R. R.	8/3/25	351	Witzell, K. W.	6/21/25
3	Hartt, R. J.	9/3/25	43	Rood, G. A.	8/23/25	134	Johnson, L. L.	8/23/25	353	Amos, S. A.	8/23/25
3	Hay, D. J.	3/23/25	46	Foreman, D. A.	7/19/25	134	Kral, E. J.	8/27/25	353	Bergin, C. A.	8/27/25
3	Kizis, R. J.	9/16/25	46	Kandel, J. L.	6/4/24	134	Smith, D. L.	8/21/25	353	Chianelli, J.	7/18/25
3	McVeigh, J. T.	7/6/24	46	Kaske, W. E.	9/7/25	134	Zykwa, L.	9/20/25	353	Coward, A. V.	7/8/25
3	Michiels, W.	4/28/23	47	Arant, D. F.	8/13/25	134	Zyskowski, C.	9/12/25	353	de Jong, M. M.	5/31/25
3	Racanelli, V.	7/2/25	47	Blakeney, T. D.	8/29/24	139	Windows, T. I.	10/30/24	353	Erle, J. O.	9/11/25
5	Barger, L. L.	8/1/25	48	Cisar, J.	2/5/24	141	Witchey, M. B.	5/8/25	353	Ferguson, D. W.	9/16/25
5	Bertoni, J.	8/8/25	48	Faulkner, L. D.	12/30/23	145	Bursott, E. R.	5/29/22	353	Korakis, G. C.	9/5/25
5	Miller, D. R.	9/13/25	48	King, L. R.	5/8/25	146	Gosnell, T. B.	9/28/25	353	Neely, R. R.	9/19/25
6	Champagne, L. J.	8/10/25	48	Snell, T. E.	8/10/24	159	Hyatt, F. G.	12/5/23	353	Neilson, G. A.	7/21/25
6	Hill, R. T.	9/9/25	48	Warren, T. M.	4/23/25	160	Hynek, C. D.	3/26/25	353	Ramos, J.	9/15/25
6	Sawyer, R. E.	9/19/25	56	Sinnott, J. E.	8/5/25	160	Manning, J. C.	12/11/22	353	Rea, P. A.	7/28/25
6	Taylor, A. L.	7/24/25	58	Danko, R.	8/24/25	163	Norakus, E. J.	8/20/25	353	Sawka, M.	10/12/25
6	Yip, C. C.	7/9/25	58	Kohler, E. J.	7/28/25	163	Taylor, R. H.	6/3/25	353	Taylor, D. I.	9/26/25
8	Aossey, R.	7/25/25	58	Peltier, C. B.	9/20/25	164	Comiso, J. R.	9/6/25	354	Losee, G. R.	9/24/25
8	Barker, C. O.	7/7/25	58	Raymond, M. L.	4/11/23	164	Roberts, G. M.	7/18/25	354	Severson, R. H.	9/24/25
9	Alvis, T. V.	7/25/25	58	Stone, R. B.	8/25/25	175	Duval, T. C.	5/25/25	357	Farr, T. J.	3/8/25
9	Banfield, R. L.	8/9/25	58	Vokes, G. J.	7/24/25	175	Jones, R. G.	8/20/25	357	George, R. E.	9/6/25
9	Kupczyk, R. J.	9/11/25	68	Brunet, A. S.	7/26/23	175	Shiple, L. P.	4/24/25	357	Nunn, J. M.	9/4/25
9	Noonan, T. J.	9/14/25	68	Johnson, K. R.	8/16/25	175	Tallent, T. R.	8/5/25	357	Peeples, R. J.	8/5/25
11	Britton, W. E.	8/1/25	68	McKee, R. R.	5/30/25	176	Anderson, L. E.	8/1/25	364	Lilja, J. M.	8/6/25
11	Buckley, P. J.	9/1/21	68	Montoya, D. J.	8/11/25	176	Wynn, A.	9/14/25	369	Bird, J. J.	7/9/25
11	Burens, J. T.	7/4/25	68	Rodriguez, D. J.	6/19/25	177	Lindbloom, K. R.	3/1/25	369	Kappesser, L. W.	8/26/25
11	Gipsman, N.	9/11/25	68	St. Aubin, E. F.	8/30/25	177	Stillwell, H. L.	9/10/22	369	Walters, R. E.	9/13/25
11	Harris, M. J.	5/6/25	71	Halley, Z. A.	1/1/23	194	Morton, W. H.	5/29/25	369	Welch, D. L.	8/13/25
11	Hernandez-Navarre, O. E.	7/20/25	71	Krepps, R. C.	11/10/24	212	Banks, J. C.	9/16/25	379	Burriss, A. D.	10/31/20
11	Highfill, P. J.	9/28/23	73	LeCount, D. J.	9/1/25	212	Masden, K. C.	8/20/25	400	Merker, J. F.	8/20/25
11	Mabry, T. J.	3/15/23	76	Morgan, S. K.	8/26/25	213	Revesz, G.	7/3/25	401	Wolf, R. P.	8/30/25
11	Quackenbush, R.	9/2/25	77	Eyler, S. R.	8/12/25	223	Blaney, R. C.	9/24/25	424	Atkinson, B. R.	10/5/25
11	Russell, S. O.	8/31/25	84	Bartlett, M. L.	9/30/25	234	Myers, J. H.	6/24/25	424	Krywiak, W. M.	9/8/25
11	Sanchez, F. A.	8/21/25	89	Knypstra, J. E.	8/10/25	242	Jaques, L.	9/12/25	424	Liu, Y.	10/10/23
11	Shor, D.	4/6/25	90	Browne, G. W.	9/7/25	245	Taylor, R. L.	6/15/25	424	Szelagiewicz, R. J.	9/30/25
11	Stickel, H. R.	8/20/25	98	Bell, C. R.	9/8/25	265	Cook, D. W.	9/3/25	424	Tourand, R. J.	5/21/25
11	Volkert, D. S.	9/23/25	98	Graham, S.	8/19/25	269	Burns, R.	8/24/25	426	Mack, M.	8/15/25
11	Yaugo, P. C.	7/18/25	98	Kabatt, P. C.	8/22/25	269	Reed, J. H.	7/26/25	429	Burns, R.	8/19/25
16	Mitchell, G. A.	12/1/23	99	Brewster, A. E.	9/12/25	275	Briggs, R. A.	1/10/24	430	Nyara, F. J.	8/8/25
16	Watson, G. A.	9/27/25	99	Waddington, D. B.	9/8/25	275	Fletcher, M. A.	9/17/25	441	Garcia, U.	9/1/25
17	Easton, L. J.	5/10/25	102	Cullen, J. R.	9/6/25	278	McNutt, S. K.	8/31/25	443	McClellan, R. D.	9/6/25
17	Spensley, M. D.	1/29/23	102	Cyphers, G. C.	6/25/25	288	Camlin, R. E.	8/17/25	443	Ratliff, J. B.	9/6/25
18	Kilian, J.	4/24/23	102	Jenkins, L. E.	9/11/25	292	DiGiovanni, D. V.	6/3/24	449	Ruffridge, M. L.	9/12/25
20	Hicks, R. G.	5/13/25	102	Lyden, E. S.	8/3/25	292	Eidem, C. M.	5/9/25	466	Saunders, A. W.	7/14/25
20	Hodge, J. B.	9/13/25	102	Sergeon, C. D.	5/29/25	295	Cox, D. G.	9/18/25	474	Cummings, P. F.	3/17/25
22	Burke, L. R.	9/1/25	103	Hutton, E. H.	9/2/25	300	Crossman, B.	9/15/24	474	Parish, T. M.	12/27/24
22	Schotte, L.	8/27/25	103	Johnson, N. O.	9/9/25	300	Provost, E. P.	8/29/25	477	DeWitt, E. S.	12/19/22
24	Boddiford, J.	9/7/25	103	Lovett, R. J.	9/20/25	302	Shaffer, R. A.	9/23/25	477	Fleming, K. D.	6/24/25
			103	Lunn, A. T.	9/11/25	302	Spencer, F. E.	4/22/25	477	Keheley, M. T.	6/14/25
									479	Jones, D. O.	7/28/25
									481	King, J. W.	9/3/25
									494	Krueger, T. A.	9/15/25
									494	Preston, J. G.	8/14/25
									499	Sawyer, K.	9/13/25
									499	Weldon, W. E.	10/13/23
									505	Hummel, K. D.	8/29/25
									527	Johnson, L. L.	3/27/23
									551	Smartt, R. B.	4/9/25
									553	Hedgepeth, J. C.	9/8/25
									558	Canaday, D. B.	8/29/25
									558	McMeans, D. G.	9/6/25
									567	Dufour, L. R.	7/5/25
									569	Harpenau, L. J.	7/12/25
									570	Clark, T. E.	7/5/25
									570	Robillia, P.	9/11/25
									570	Valenzuela, E.	8/14/25
									573	Dawson, T. J.	7/9/25
									573	Habraken, R. T.	8/22/25
									573	Tryon, K. J.	6/5/25
									575	Long, E. C.	8/31/25
									577	Hansen, R. F.	9/8/25
									583	Robles, J. R.	8/12/25
									586	de Ruelle, L.	3/27/25
									586	Ghattas, G. S.	9/5/25
									595	Batterton, R. L.	4/1/25
									595	Moore, L. K.	11/15/22
									595	Ramos, L. C.	9/15/25
									602	Colburn, J. R.	7/9/25
									602	Roland, A. L.	9/3/25
									611	Herrera, L. A.	8/14/25
									613	Cagle, C. T.	4/8/23
									613	Chesser, C. L.	9/10/25
									613	Russell, J. M.	3/12/25
									625	Bates, J. R.	9/26/25
									625	Oakley, D. H.	9/3/25
									625	Oickle, F. S.	9/5/25
									640	Harris, D. L.	9/1/25
									640	Patterson, R. H.	8/16/25
									640	Ross, C. T.	7/15/25
									640	Tolomio, T. J.	4/3/24
									649	Katava, J. P.	9/16/25
									659	Christensen, D. A.	8/23/25
									659	Wilchek, D. J.	9/22/25
									661	Gould, R. W.	8/30/25
									665	Maki, D.	9/17/25
									666	Price, T. T.	6/1/25
									673	Rudd, R. A.	9/27/25
									676	Richardson, P. F.	8/29/25
									692	Cislo, K.	7/29/25
									692	Oslund, T. S.	9/17/25
									697	Klirnek, L. A.	9/15/25
									697	Mishler, D. C.	9/27/25
									697	Rowley, D. B.	9/14/25
									697	Tharp, D. F.	9/6/25
									701	Dieke, L. H.	7/31/25
									701	Haugk, K. J.	9/27/25
									701	Mackay, K. H.	9/26/25
									702	Cunningham, J. W.	7/18/25

LOCAL LINES

Local 16's Fall Activities

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — On Sept. 1, the local had its best turnout in recent memory at the Labor Day Association's 139th annual parade. This event was the culmination of a long weekend of activities honoring the working men and women that built this great country. Participants celebrated with a delicious meal, new matching shirts, candy for parade watchers and walkers, free carnival rides, and other events. Thanks to all who made this possible!

Many thanks are due to the executive board members and other hardworking volunteers who hosted Local 16's family picnic this year. Workers served food, held giveaways, offered children's games and supported the Brotherhood in many other ways. Blessings on each who gave their weekend to make it happen.

Sister Sara Schapker recently joined a team that went to Dago, Kenya, to work with the JD Sheth Foundation on a wattle-and-daub home for a widow with 10 children. Using simple tools, the crew erected the posts and wattle, working by hand to pour the mud that will form the structure's walls. Local 16 is proud to recognize Sara's commitment to making the world a better place.

Donald P. Beavin, P.S.

Growing Membership, Growing Staff at Local 24

L.U. 24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — Greetings from Charm City! Data center development in our jurisdiction has continued, and we are playing a critical role. Our members' commitment has gone beyond the jobsite: They have volunteered hours attending meetings to make the case for well-paying middle-class careers.

Recently, the Frederick County Council passed legislation creating an overlay map for future data center development. While this is

valuable, there is still work to do as our advocacy efforts turn to influencing the map's boundaries.

The results of our efforts are clear. Local 24's membership has grown to more than 2,700, with data centers helping to drive this increase. Our continued growth in all market segments amplifies our voice in the region.

To capitalize on this growth, we welcomed several additions to our staff. Brother Mike Ayres joined us as a service agent, bringing years of experience and leadership to the role. Our local is also excited to announce Brother Don Herrera and Sister Anna Moore as new organizers. Their energy and perspective will strengthen our efforts to grow market share and bring more workers into our union.

As 2025 draws to a close, the officers and staff of Local 24 wish you and your family a happy holiday season!

Live Better/Work Union.

Mike McHale, B.M.



Local 24 members do their part in wiring the modern world.

Season's Greetings From Local 26

L.U. 26 (ees,em,es,govt,i&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — Our local hopes everyone enjoyed a blessed and safe Thanksgiving.



Local 16 member Sara Schapker with her team in Kenya, who worked with the JD Sheth Foundation on a wattle-and-daub home for a widow with 10 children.



Frank Vanah, Eugene Orlando and Herb Meyers with Local 38 Business Manager Dan Gallagher and President Michael Muzic after receiving their 70-year service awards.

We held our annual fishing trip and poker run in September, and the annual pension seminar and 10th annual Union Sportsmen's Alliance Conservation Dinner in October.

A financial awareness seminar was also held for our members between the ages of 25 and 40 and their spouses in November. And in December, our annual holiday parties will be held in Front Royal, Va.; Roanoke, Va.; and Greenbelt, Md.

For all upcoming events, please visit our website at ibewlocal26.org.

Best wishes to the following retirees: Brian Abercrombie, Joseph Baker, Edward Barton, Derwin Bell, Andrew Burkhardt, Donald Bus-sink Jr., William Clotey, Rafael Cruz, Barrie Farrell, Robert Gilroy, Lawrence Goswick, Bernard

Gwynn, David Hogan, Juan Garcia Jimenez, Louis Kelley, Matthew Miller, Troy Minor, John Muir, Neal Smith, Kelly Stout and Craig Venning.

The following members have passed away since our last article: Harold Beall Jr., Dylan Biscoe, Brian Brigden, Michael Cox, Danny Friend, Charles Granger, Dennis Lamb, Hudson Lancaster, Jerome Little II, Denny Mitts, James Ward and Christopher White.

Christopher M. Cash, B.M.

Local 38 Annual Scroll Party

L.U. 38 (i), CLEVELAND, OH — On Sept. 27, our local held its annual scroll party, honoring members with 50 to 70 years of service, along with graduating apprentices from the inside and VDV branches. Brothers Frank Vanah, Eugene Orlando and Herb Meyers, all in their 90s, attended the event and spoke on what being a member of the IBEW has meant to them over the last 70 years.

Local 38 also honored nine 65-year, nine 60-year, 58 55-year and 30 50-year members.

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2025, comprising 31 inside journeymen and nine telecommunication installer technicians. Stay active in your union — you are the future of this great Brotherhood.

Dan Gallagher, B.M./F.S.

Local 46 Members Power Hospital Expansion

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,mt,rtb,rts&st), SEATTLE, WA — Business Manager Sean Bagsby joined members at the Providence Swedish North Tower project in Seattle, with VECA Electric and EC Electric performing all electrical work under Mortenson Co. The visit reaffirmed Local 46's commitment to supporting our signatory contractors and ensuring their success.

With nearly 1,000 members on the out-of-work books, Dispatcher Wayne Horton



Local 46 members continue to build for the future with hope, determination and solidarity.

Submitting Local Lines Articles

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

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

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

Trade Classifications

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

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

acknowledged the realities of today's job market in his remarks during the visit. Business Manager Bagsby emphasized that this is temporary. "Our goal is to ensure our contractors thrive, because when they succeed, our members succeed," he said. "The work will return, and we'll be ready."

The Swedish North Tower project will expand vital health care services for the region, powered by the skill and dedication of IBEW members. Even in a challenging season, Local 46 continues to build for the future with hope, determination and solidarity.

Seamus Anglin, P.S.

A New Look for Local 68

L.U. 68 (j), DENVER, CO — Hello, brothers and sisters! I want to start by apologizing for not submitting an article for the October issue. Things have been busy at Local 68 as I slip into my new role as the local's president. We have some exciting happenings here in Denver.

Our annual picnic was a success this year, with approximately 615 in attendance. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped and to Local 68's members and their families for coming out.

At the time of this writing, we await the completion of Local 68's newly remodeled hall, and we are planning an open house celebration that I hope will have a big turnout. The renovations have been ongoing for almost a year, and we are excited to get back into the building.

We are completing plans for the annual Christmas party, which will be held Dec. 13 from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. There will be gifts for the kids, face painting, cookie decorating, food and beverages, and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Come on over with the family and join the fun.

Finally, with the hall's completion, we resumed the retirees' monthly lunch gatherings in October.

Debbie Tikka, Pres.



Local 134 celebrated its 125th anniversary with a family picnic in September.

are certified, the governor will determine the election month for this ballot item. As more information becomes available, we will notify the membership.

Wade Kiefer, Bus. Rep.

Celebrating Local 134's 125th Anniversary With Family and Friends

L.U. 134 (catv,em,govt,i,mt,rtb,rts,spa&t), CHICAGO, IL — As 2025 comes to a close, we would like to take a moment to reflect on one of this year's highlights, the local's family picnic and celebration of our 125th anniversary.

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in September, we gathered at the IBEW-NECA Technical Institute campus with family and friends for a well-deserved celebration. The afternoon was filled with live music and dancing, delicious food and drinks, and all kinds of activities for the kids. Every member left the event with a special gift.

We will continue to honor generations of hard-working Local 134 members as we move forward into the new year. Our membership's commitment to this great local and the electrical industry will carry us well into the next century and beyond.

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



Local 150 members walked in Zion, Ill.'s Labor Day Parade and won the Mayor's Choice Award for the third year in a row.

thanks to all members who volunteered their time, efforts and contributions to continue the legacy that is Local 150. We look forward to seeing all of you at our 2026 events.

Our work outlook for 2026 is good, with a casino, data center and various other projects moving forward during the year.

Sisters and brothers, take care of each other and be safe!

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

an agreement a few years ago, and their construction bid stipulates that only Local 158-affiliated contractors can bid for work at the facility. Our local could not ask for a better partner than the Green Bay Botanical Garden.

Merry Christmas to you and yours!

Jesse Jacques, B.M./F.S.

Local 164 Helps Bring the Fun



Local 158 sponsors the caterpillar display at the Green Bay Botanical Garden of Lights.

L.U. 164 (c,em,i,o&t), JERSEY CITY, NJ — On June 21-22, July 19-20 and Aug. 2-3, our local's members volunteered their time and took part in the annual Best Day Foundation beach days. The foundation is a national organization that provides a fun, exciting beach-day experience for children and young adults ages 4 to 24 with special needs.

Activities included games, an obstacle course, and surfing and bodyboarding. Volunteers at these events can be "beach buddies," where they play on the beach or on water teams, helping participants surf the waves at the Jersey Shore. It's an exciting and

rewarding experience for all involved.

Local 164 became involved with the Best Day Foundation through Brother Ivan Zhirnov, who has volunteered with the organization for years as a water team captain. We are proud that Local 164 fielded a water team for each event day and had multiple beach buddies.

Business Manager Dan Gumble and President Tom Sullivan thank all the members who participated and helped make the events a success.

Warren M. Becker, P.S.

Missouri's Historic Special Session

L.U. 124 (ees,em,i,mar,rts,se,spa,t&ptc), KANSAS CITY, MO — Hello, brothers and sisters.

On Sept. 10, our local's members and their families boarded a charter bus and headed to Jefferson City for a rally and protest of the historic mid-decade gerrymander. The IBEW was one of many labor organizations that packed the Rotunda and walked the halls of the Capitol that day. By some accounts, it was considered one of the largest rallies in Missouri's history.

However, it was not enough to stop the General Assembly from passing the gerrymandered maps and changing the initiative petition process, which could hurt labor in many ways. In particular, the change could compromise our ability to defend against future right-to-work laws.

The proposed map would split Kansas City into three districts, affecting the city's ability to get funding for infrastructure projects from the federal government. Having a single, dedicated congressional leader representing all of Kansas City is more effective than having three congressional leaders who are loosely dedicated to Kansas City but also represent 10 to 30 other counties.

There's still a chance to stop the changes in the initiative petition process, as it would alter the Missouri Constitution and must be put on the ballot for voters to decide. The governor has the power to determine which 2026 election (April, August or November) to hold this vote, but no selection has been made yet. Signatures are due Dec. 11; once they

Amped for the Future, Local 150 Welcomes 2026

L.U. 150 (es,i,rts&spa), WAUKEGAN, IL — Our local wishes all IBEW families a safe and joyful holiday season! We hope 2026 will be a healthy and flourishing year for all our IBEW sisters and brothers.

Members made many great memories at our union events this year. Local 150's family picnic was chaired and planned by the fourth-year apprentices, and it was an enjoyable day and well attended.

We had perfect weather and a great show of solidarity for our golf outing. Additionally, Local 150 sponsored softball, bowling and sporting clay teams to represent us at various events, with all teams enjoying their participation.

Local 150 members also walked in the Zion, Ill., Labor Day Parade. We won the Mayor's Choice Award for best overall entry for our "Candyland"-themed float. This is Local 150's third year in a row winning this coveted award.

Last, members showed off their rides at the local's car show, where they enjoyed each other's company and Brother Jon Aunet's smoked ribs, prepared on site. Yum!

Local 150 thanks and recognizes the following members who chaired committees: Jon Aunet, John Bonnot, Dan Dimitroff, Pat Garrity, Matt McNeill, Ron Meyer, Jeff Schwingbeck and the fourth-year apprenticeship class. Thank you to members' families who helped out, supported and participated in this year's union events! And

Christmas Time Is Here!

L.U. 158 (i,it,mar,mt,spa&u), GREEN BAY, WI — Our local is sponsoring the caterpillar display at the Green Bay Botanical Garden of Lights event. We have proudly sponsored this display of more than 350,000 Christmas lights for more than 20 years. The garden opens the event at the end of November, and it runs until after Christmas, averaging 56,000 visitors. It is a stunning winter landscape filled with interactive lights and displays with sound and motion.

The Botanical Garden and the local reached

Brother Ivan Zhirnov (far right) and Local 164 brothers help the Best Day Foundation to bring the beach fun.



LOCAL LINES

Union Strong

L.U. 300 (govt,i,u,mo&lctt), MONTPELIER, VT — In a world where we are constantly judged on how we work, where we work, what we look like and where we came from, members of our local are proud to say, “We are IBEW strong!”

A recent conversation with some members who work for a small municipal electrical utility in the brave little state of Vermont prompted me to draft this article. It should not matter where we came from or where we may end up; nor should it matter the size of the company we work for or the brands of the tools and equipment we use to accomplish our work. It shouldn't matter the type of work we do on a daily basis or the work we do during emergent situations, the size of our crew, or the comforts we enjoy inside our office environment.

What should matter is the leadership we provide so that others can develop the trust they need to follow us, the training we provide so that others can develop the confidence to continue to work under extreme conditions, the safe work environment we foster so that others may go home to their families after a day's work, and the camaraderie we create so that others feel welcomed and willing to continue the legacy we have nurtured.

In a country full of adversity, I humbly ask that we all take a moment and reflect on what are we doing as citizens. If you think you are someone who can do no wrong, well, you are wrong. Humility is a gift; accept and use it wisely.

Have a wonderful holiday season, and see you all in 2026. Find your (IBEW) faith, keep the faith, and embrace your humility.

Jeffrey Wimette, B.M./F.S.



Hardwick Electric linemen, proud municipal utility members of Local 300.

Union of the Year

L.U. 302 (i,rts&spa), MARTINEZ, CA — Our local was recently recognized by the Contra Costa Labor Council as “Union of the Year.” New Business Manager Julian Vinatieri received the award at the 27th annual Contra Costa Labor to Labor Dinner. This dinner hosts local- and state-level elected officials and representatives from the labor council's 85-plus affiliated unions.



Local 302 Business Manager Julian Vinatieri accepts the Union of the Year Award from Contra Costa Building and Construction Trades Council Executive Director Tim Sbranti.

Local 302 was chosen for this award because of its activism in key political races during the recent election cycle. Our local led the charge in contributions, leaflet drops, phone banking and lobbying at the Capitol.

Vinatieri noted: “It was a true honor to accept this award on behalf of our membership. Our members stepped up and answered the call when we needed them. This award is a good reminder and reflection of what can be achieved when we all contribute. I am thankful to have members who are willing to put in the work to help us secure a brighter future.”

Julian Vinatieri, B.M./F.S.

End-of-Year Thanks

L.U. 340 (i,rts&spa), SACRAMENTO, CA — We are wrapping up another great year with our local. We had a successful annual membership picnic, where our attendance was over 1,000, including members and their families. We offered a huge layout of kids' entertainment that included jump houses, face painting and carnival games. As always, we cooked barrel chicken and tri-tip for our main course, with hamburgers and hot dogs for our starters.

This event could not have been pulled off without the help of our volunteers. Longtime volunteer Bobby Mitchell again dedicated his time and even brought along his grandson this year in his stroller. Bobby has helped our office for years with many behind-the-scenes tasks that are crucial to getting this picnic secured. Thank you, Brother Mitchell, for the unwavering dedication, love and time you put into this local.

Along with the picnic, we have had numerous successful events, including those by our VOLT Committee. Some may not be aware of the work that goes into securing project labor agreements and community workforce training agreements, but we have many hands on deck to assist us,

including Erin Teague, who has spearheaded this committee and is truly a great asset for our local.

Her connections and political experience have helped Local 340 to pick up momentum in getting our members to engage the community where it matters most. One event in particular that she helped to organize was the VOLT Committee's Speak to Win, where we guided members on how to craft a two-minute testimony to defend our work and strengthen our collective voice.

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

Local 352's Day of Service

L.U. 352 (u), LANSING, MI — On Oct. 12, our local proudly hosted a Day of Service in memory of former local union President Tracy K. Tolbert, whose unwavering enthusiasm and dedication to serving others inspired the event. Tracy was the original force behind the event, organizing it annually until her passing. This year's event carried her legacy forward with compassion, community and solidarity.

Thanks to the coordinated efforts of union members and volunteers, 118 adults and children from the underserved community of Lansing were warmly welcomed and served a healthy, nutritious meal by volunteers and Local 352 members. In addition to the meal, guests received care bags



Solidarity in action at Local 352: From left, (front row) Zina Williams, Devin Logan, Evalyn Coffee, Cale Boak, Valencia Fisk, Venita Young, Kerra Tolbert, O'sha Tolbert, Kristy Bodary, Debbie Foster-Myers, Melissa Chavez and Tammy Harris; and (back row) Renee Drake, Eric Boak, Robert Kingsbury and Kai Malikh N. Tolbert.

filled with essential dental hygiene items generously donated by local partners.

Bringing joy and energy to the program, Detroit-based comedian Renee Drake 313 performed for attendees, delivering a lively and heartfelt set that brought laughter and connection to everyone in the room.

The Day of Service marked a significant milestone in the union's Solidarity Feeds Lansing initiative, a commitment to supporting local families in need through direct outreach and volunteerism.

“We are proud to carry on Tracy's mission,” said a Local 352 representative. “Her spirit was present in every smile, every meal served and every care bag handed out. This event is not only a tribute — it's a promise to continue her work.”

A special thank you to union member Bob Kingsbury for donating his time and talent to photograph the event, helping to visually document its impact.

Melissa Chavez, R.S.

Local 424's Election Results

L.U. 424 (as,ees,em,es,i,mo,o,ptc,rtb,rts,spa&u), EDMONTON, AB — Thank you to all candidates who ran in the 2025 local election.

The winners of the election are:

- Business Manager/ Financial Secretary Michael A. Reinhart
- President Joseph Trodden
- Vice President Orrie Bliss
- Treasurer (vacant)
- Recording Secretary David Handley
- Unit 1 Chair Scott Crichton
- Unit 2 Chair Richard Santin
- Unit 3 Chair Brian Young
- Unit 4 Chair (vacant)

- Examining board members Jordan Bergeron, Jian Dong Lu and Robert Gibbons

Scott Crichton, P.S.

Local 702 Celebrates Kevin Leehy's Retirement

L.U. 702 (as,c,catv,cs,em,es,et,govt,i,it,lctt,mo,mt,o,p,pet,ptc,rtb,rts,se,spa,st,t,u,uow&ws), WEST FRANKFORT, IL — Greetings, brothers, and sisters. Our local congratulates and thanks retiring executive board member Kevin Leehy. Kevin is retiring after almost 40 years in the IBEW. During this time, he served for 15 years as executive board member representing the Manufacturing branch.

Thank you, Kevin, for your many years of faithful service representing the members of Local 702. Best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Jamie Hatfield, A.B.M.

Congratulations, Local 728 Graduates

L.U. 728 (em,i,rts&spa), FORT LAUDERDALE, FL — To the July 2025 graduating class, it's been an honor watching your group grow from apprentices into the skilled and dedicated electricians you are today. Your hard work, discipline and perseverance have brought you to this milestone, and it's well deserved.

Carry the trade forward with strength and solidarity. Wishing you continued success as you light the way for the next generation.

Congrats on this remarkable achievement!

Effie Cruz, P.S.



Local 702 staff and executive board with retiring member Kevin Leehy.



Local 728's July graduates: From left (back row), Benoit Cloutier, Anton Corteza, Tavaris Cleckley, Rebecca Goodrum, Alliette Acevedo, Jacob Welk and Jacob Shue; and (front row) Jason Gibson, Mickelson Henry, Addison St. Luce, Amanda Rosana, Amanda Ordonez and Nicholas Dydych.

RETIREES

Local 1 Retirees Volunteer at Black Madonna Shrine

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 1, ST. LOUIS, MO — A group of retirees volunteered this summer to make some electrical upgrades to the Black Madonna Shrine's outdoor chapel, with materials donated by Liberty Electric.

Our summer concluded with a spectacular Labor Day celebration at Local 1 with great food and live entertainment. Once again, our annual retirees' golf tournament at Forest Park was a great success, with 58 golfers attending.

The Retirees' Committee would like to thank Business Manager Frank Jacobs for sponsoring our annual September luncheon and making it a big success. This support made it possible for the retirees to pledge a donation of \$2,500 to the Local 1 Relief Committee.

Our committee has elected to reinstate its January meeting at 10 a.m. on Jan. 21 at the Local 1 union hall. Retirees will receive a letter listing the dates for our meetings through 2026.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. Please remember that the Christmas coat drive is underway at the hall.

Jim Schario, P.S.

Local 3 Luncheon in Florida

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY/CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER — Our Retirees' Club chapter held a luncheon in Florida in March 2024, where our officers met with Business Manager Chris Erikson. Attendees included Chris, myself, Pension Director Maureen Steiger and Assistant Business Manager Ray Melville. It's always a good time when we gather together and we had a great time catching up.

Michael Manfredi, P.S.

Classes and Fellowship

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY/NASSAU COUNTY CHAPTER — In late August, 76 of our retired members and their spouses attended classes at the Long Island Education Center. We learned about osteoporosis and low bone mass, as well as who is likely to develop the condition and how it can be treated. We also learned how to eat healthily with different combinations of ingredients in spring rolls.

After the classes, we were free to enjoy the beautiful grounds with a swim in the Long Island Sound or the pool, or to just sit and soak up the sun. The view of the sunset by the water was spectacular and enjoyed by all.

At night, we had a barbecue with all kinds of

delicious food followed by ice cream. To end the picture-perfect day, we gathered as good friends by the fire pit and talked the night away.

John Milligan, P.S.

What More Can You Ask For?

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY/SUFFOLK COUNTY CHAPTER — Our retired members gathered for education and social time at the Long Island Education Center in Cutchogue, N.Y. Just out of view is the beautiful Long Island Sound beach and a pool just below on the grass field.

Local 3 conducts free educational classes in this historic building concerning many subjects related to our health and security. What more can you ask for? Local 3 does it again.

Steven Danielson, R.S.



Local 5 member Paul Karpan.

Remembering Brother Paul Karpan

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 5, PITTSBURGH, PA — In June, retired member Paul Karpan received his 70-year pin. Brother Karpan was initiated into the union in 1955 and retired in 1985. Because he was unable to attend the pinning ceremony and photo session at the hall in South Side, we went to Brother Karpan's home to present his award (see photo above).

Mr. Karpan stated: "I am proud to be a member of the greatest union in the free world. I'm lucky to be able to live a good life because of the benefits provided to me by my union. I should know, as I've been retired for 40 years! Wishing all of my union brothers and sisters, both working and retired, all the same blessings that I received by belonging to Local 5. Also, a great big heartfelt 'thank you' goes out to all Local 5 officers, past and present, for taking such good care of the members!"

With great sadness, I must note that Brother



Local 35 retirees at the club's annual outing.

Karpan passed away Sept. 22 at 103 years young. We celebrate the pride he embodied over his 70 years in the IBEW. Rest in power, Paul.

Tom Benson, V.P.

New Office for Local 35 Retirees

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — We had a great day for our retired members' annual outing, with a great turnout and many raffle prizes. Thank you all!

Special thanks to all the contractors who donated to our event. Big thanks to Business Manager Michael Nealy and staff for donating their time.

Our office has finally moved into our new building at 961 Wethersfield Ave. in Hartford.

Dennis Machol and I talked in front of all the apprentices, especially the first-year students, during class to give an understanding about our union, the benefits package, when and how we approach retirement years, and how important it is to our collective well-being.

The retirees' last meeting for 2025 is Dec. 10 at noon in Newington at the Knights of Columbus hall, 171 Pascone Place. We hope to see more of our brothers and sisters at the meetings.

Wishing all a very merry Christmas and a healthy New Year!

Kenneth R. White, P.S.

Latest Updates for Local 53 Retirees

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Just a few lines to catch up on events, some we have done and some we haven't.

To start off, I would like to announce that I am back to being secretary for the Retirees' Club in a limited capacity. I had some health issues, which are ongoing, but I wanted to continue helping as secretary to aid Bob Stuart, president of the Retirees' Club and my friend.

We had our fall luncheon Oct. 3. President Stuart reported to me that everyone had a good time. There was good barbecue from Jack Stack. Thank you to Business Manager Ben Bush and the staff from Local 53. We will have another luncheon on April 10, so please join us.

Additionally, if any are interested, we have a luncheon the second Thursday of every month at 11 a.m. in Urich, Mo., at the Grand River Grill. Come join us for some great visitation and good

food. See you there!

The annual crappie tournament will be April 25, same place, same time. Please put it on your calendar.

We would like to wish all of you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. The Christmas party this year is Dec. 12.

Duane Pearce, P.S.

Local 58 Retirees on the Road Again

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 58, DETROIT, MI — This year's fall bus trip was to Washington, D.C. It was a five-day trip to the nation's capital, which included a tour of the IBEW Museum and International Office. This unique museum celebrates IBEW history with texts, graphics, artifacts, and interactive displays and videos, all telling the IBEW story. Our group was given first-class treatment and IBEW goodies to commemorate the trip. Those in attendance raved about the museum, and it was enjoyed by all who attended.

The annual Christmas party promises to be its usual good time on Dec. 3. It's always one of our best-attended events, and those present will enjoy a catered lunch; plenty of camaraderie; our 50/50 drawing; and the opportunity to make contributions to our five charity baskets: St. Vincent DePaul, Detroit Children's Hospital, Shriners, Coalition on Temporary Housing, and the Local 58 Benevolent Fund, all of which benefit children. This celebration is a good way to stay in touch with fellow retirees and kick off the season and celebrate the holidays.

The end of the year is always a great time to make a resolution or two. Volunteering within the union or your community is a good place to start. Happy New Year.

Pat Nuznov, P.S.

The Best of Life for Local 105 Retirees

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 105, HAMILTON, ON — All of us from Local 105 would like to wish all of you a very blessed, merry Christmas and the very best of life for 2026!

Following is a list of events that we have either already attended or look forward to attending later this fall:

- Sept. 11 — More than 100 retirees enjoyed the annual fish fry.
- Oct. 2 — More than 100 retirees attended the semiannual lunch at the Mandarin.
- Oct. 16 — The annual Oktoberfest hosted by Kitchener Local 804, always a great time!



Local 3/Nassau County chapter retirees enjoy the Long Island Education Center on Long Island Sound.

RETIRES

- Nov. 8 — Local 105’s 125th anniversary banquet at the Oakville Conference Centre.
- Nov. 11-14 — Cairncroft, Niagara Falls, a wonderful time at this semiannual event.
- Nov. 23 — Christmas dinner and dance hosted by Toronto Local 353 (a party always not to be missed).
- Dec. 7 — Local 105 Christmas dinner and dance at the Winona Wine Estates.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I reiterate: For those of you in Local 105 who are 55 or older and have not yet joined the Retirees’ Club, jump on board! New retired members are joining in the fun, and I want to get the word out to all. It’s only \$25 per person a year! The expense is kept low as we only pay half the cost of the events and the other half is covered by the local. It’s a win-win!

Please remember that all events are made possible by our hardworking executive board and local members, past and present, who volunteer their time and efforts to ensure that all of us have many enjoyable experiences. We are so proud and fortunate to be a part of the Local 105 Retirees’ Club. Our sincere, heartfelt thanks to all of you!

Eden McLean, P.S.

Remembering Brother William “Billy” Taney

RETIRES’ CLUB OF L.U. 110, ST. PAUL, MN — Brother William “Billy” Taney passed away on April 4. Billy was IBEW all the way, a 50-year member who never compromised his union beliefs.

My friendship with Billy went back to our first days as IBEW members. Our working paths went in different directions until we were both hired by Business Manager Bruce Campbell, me as assistant business manager and Billy as a field representative and later as an organizer. Eventually I became Local 110’s business manager, and I chose Bill as my assistant.

After our retirements, Billy started a tradition of gathering other retired Minnesota business

managers for a twice-yearly dinner meeting. These were known as our “winter and summer” meetings, gathering in northern Minnesota and the Twin Cities. These gatherings became something we all looked forward to, with the camaraderie becoming stronger with each one. We would talk about our old days, our successes and our not-so-successful actions. One thing we always had was Brotherhood and our proud IBEW membership.

Family and friends celebrated Billy’s life at the Local 110 hall May 30. (See photo bottom, left.) We are thankful for this great Brotherhood, the IBEW.

Dick Vitelli, B.M. (retired)



A group of 20 Local 134 retirees made a trip to Cantigny Park in October to see the beautiful formal gardens, the First Division Museum and Military Tank Park.

Happy Holidays to all IBEW Members and Staff

RETIRES’ CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — Time goes by so quickly, but this has been the longest and most confusing political year of my life. It feels like we are having a Civil War, not between the North and South, but Democrats against Republicans. Our country feels so divided, and I’m afraid to mention anything political to anyone for fear of starting a verbal war. I am hoping things will soon change for our country and we will have a happier new year in 2026.

I would like to thank our board members who line up our guest speakers for our monthly meetings, and the members who line up our field trips that are always fun and interesting. Thanks goes to James Martin, who does a great job organizing our luncheons and play outings to Drury Lane Theater. The plays we enjoyed this year were “Beautiful: The Carole King Musical” in February; “The Da Vinci Code” in April; “Always ... Patsy Cline” in June; “Dial M for Murder” in September; and “Sister Act” in December, which had the highest attendance.

Brother Jim Valleyfield once again spoke on the importance of Local 134’s donations of essentials for soldiers, which we contribute toward at the end of each year, bringing the donations for homeless veterans to the Jesse Brown VA Hospital. The U.S. should not have homeless veterans.

I’d like to end by thanking all retired members who voted me to the executive board for another term. Have a safe holiday season.

Susan Kleczka, P.S.

Labor Day Celebration

RETIRES’ CLUB OF L.U. 257, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — Our local’s retirees celebrated Labor Day with a parade Sept. 6 and the annual union picnic



Local 313 2025 Retirees Pin Ceremony.

Life Is Good

RETIRES’ CLUB OF L.U. 313, WILMINGTON, DE — On Oct. 1, we held our annual pin ceremony at the retirees’ meeting. Eighteen of the 43 eligible journeymen showed up to collect their prestigious hardware. Fifty- to 65-year pins are certainly reason enough for a celebration, but this group generally needs no particular reason to be smiling or in party mode. Life is good!

All enjoyed a beautiful day of fun at Jonathan’s Landing as we nailed down this second day of golf into our regular yearly schedule.

For all who are unable to attend functions and meetings, we would like to let you know that you are missed and not forgotten. Please reach out to the retiree officers or the union hall office staff to pass on a request for a visit or a call if you desire.

Bruce Esper, P.S.

Sept. 13. Retirees distributed candy on the parade route. A special thanks goes to Dave Loaiza for providing the retiree float.

The annual picnic treated Local 257 members, retirees and their families to a day at the park with a barbecue, bounce house, bingo and social time. Service awards were presented by Joel Vanderslice, business agent, to the following members: Michael Abel and John James (40 years); Rick Baker, Daniel Bax, Steve Bremer, Jim Bruemmer, Anthony Castillo, Wayne Clark, Lyndel Gallatin, James Loehner, Keven Niemeier and Michael Sweeten (45 years); Tony Chambers (50 years); Phil Butts, Bill Jurgensmeyer and Larry Schubert (55 years); and Bob Kauffman and Robert Stevinson (60 years).

A Missouri redistricting map and a change to the initiative petition process were approved by the Legislature. Redistricting is traditionally done every 10 years. But this action is being taken mid-cycle at the request of President Trump to change the outcome of the 2026 election.

The new initiative petition process would make it more difficult for the public to change the law. This is the process that allowed right-to-work legislation to be defeated. Instead of a simple majority to pass a public-initiated law, an overall majority plus a majority in each of the eight congressional districts would be required.

Signatory initiative petitions are underway to take both actions to a vote of the people. Your support is needed to ensure fair governing.

Connie Hamacher, P.S.



Local 317 Retirees’ Club President Jerry Booth presents a 60-year service award to Clyde Dempsey.

Local 317 Retirees’ Luncheon and Service Awards

RETIRES’ CLUB OF L.U. 317, HUNTINGTON, WV — Our local’s retirees continue to enjoy monthly luncheon get-togethers. At the August luncheon, we were glad to see Clyde Dempsey, who came from Florida to receive his 60-year service pin.

Jerry Booth, Pres.



Local 257 retirees and Labor Day Parade attendees, from left, Ronnie Martin, Don Stradford, Dave Loaiza, Bill Jurgensmeyer, Elaine Jurgensmeyer, Sam Hamacher, Connie Hamacher, Hershel Schultee, Ron Holzhauser and Judy Holzhauser.



From left, Local 110 member Dick Vitelli; Local 292’s Jim Marold; Local 242’s Jim Brown; Billy Taney’s wife, Carol; and Local 294’s Greg Topel.

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GROUND^{ED} IN HISTORY

The Right of Reciprocity

The first health and welfare plans offered by IBEW locals appeared in the 1950s. Locals soon established trustee boards to administer these plans, similar to how their pension funds had been managed since the 1920s.

However, for those members who decided to travel for work, a flaw was quickly exposed.

It took several months before a member could become eligible for a local's H&W plan. Once vested, the plan would cover medical costs for the member and their family. But when a member chose to travel, they would lose access to their home local's plan and have to restart the vesting process with their traveling local. This meant that for an extended period of time, members and their families were without health protection.

It was here that reciprocity plans began to fill the gap.

The first to arrive was the NECA-IBEW Health and Welfare Plan in 1955, followed by the Southern Electrical Welfare Trust in 1956 and the Eighth District Electrical Benefit Fund in 1961. In 1967, 10 locals in upstate New York established a pension reciprocity agreement, which was expanded to cover health and welfare in 1970. The same year, the Eleventh District launched its own reciprocal H&W plan.

Each of these plans was structured on the "money follows the man" concept. For the traveling member, any money deducted for H&W was transferred to the home local. The amount was determined by the benefit agreement of the local the member was traveling to. If the amount was less than the benefit provided by their home local, the home local would make up the difference. This arrangement allowed traveling members to maintain their H&W coverage for themselves and their families.

Soon, pressure built for a national solution. At the 31st International Convention in 1978, a resolution was submitted by Boston Local 103 and endorsed by 58 local unions calling for an "international reciprocity agreement for health and welfare." It stated: "There is no doubt that the fairest method of providing our members equity in the various trust funds available would be



The Shell Pennsylvania Chemical Project near Beaver, Pa., pictured in 2020, was one of the largest single construction projects in the U.S. and put IBEW members to work from across the U.S. and Canada.



Above, a challenge coin commemorating traveling IBEW members. At right is a data center in Virginia. Data centers, huge jobs typically outside major metropolitan areas, attract large numbers of travelers.



for the money to follow the man throughout his working career to the end."

The resolution passed. Following the convention, International President Charles Pillard assigned Wesley Taylor, chairman of the International Executive Council, to promote and implement reciprocity plans across the union.

Over the next four years, Taylor spoke at every district progress meeting to champion the benefits of a national reciprocity agreement. New plans followed, among them the Central California Trust in 1978, the Midwestern H&W Reciprocity Plan in 1979 and the New England Plan in 1980. By the next International Convention in 1982, the national plan had been adopted by 320 locals. Three years later, in April 1985, Pillard announced 100% participation from all electrical construction locals.

Under Pillard's leadership, the IBEW had developed a system of portable "reciprocal" benefits that restored integrity to the Brotherhood's traveling network and helped revive Henry Miller's original dream of an organization

that could span nations.

But there was one practical problem still to tackle. Reciprocity involved burdensome paperwork that made for delays and errors.

That was remedied not quite 20 years later when technology met tenacity in the form of International Secretary Treasurer Jerry O'Connor during the tenure of International President Ed Hill.

In 2003, O'Connor rolled out the Electric Reciprocal Transfer System, or ERTS, digitizing the transfer of benefits. It is one of the lasting accomplishments under O'Connor, who died in September at age 91. (See obituary, page 3.)

International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble remembers the impact ERTS had when he was business manager at West Frankfort, Ill., Local 702.

"Things happen in real time now, and that was an absolute game-changer," Noble said. "Construction by nature is temporary work — you go where the jobs are. And knowing that you have continuity in your benefits gives you peace of mind." ■



A Fiat Chrysler plant in Ontario required 300 travelers to be built.



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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

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Third District William Hamilton		Eleventh District Mark D. Hager		

HOW TO REACH US

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

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WHO WE ARE

Generous Members Make Holidays Brighter

Ann Arbor, Mich., Local 252 Little Patients, Big Smiles

Vicki Loy was wiring a safety system at C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital when she was saddened to realize that many young patients would still be there the next month for Christmas.

Thinking about her crews’ good wages as Ann Arbor, Mich., Local 252 members, Loy said, “I started asking the guys, ‘Hey, what if we all throw our spare change in a jar?’”

That was 25 years ago. What started with nickels and dimes has become a holiday mission for Loy and Local 252, each year raising thousands of dollars that generate hundreds of smiles.

Their contributions help the hospital fill a store that rivals a small Toys “R” Us in every way but one: no cash registers. Parents can “shop” for gifts, for not just patients but also their siblings, relieving some of the financial stress and time strains on families during medical crises.

“The IBEW is one of our larger donors. They give so generously,” said Lindsay Heering, director of Child & Family Life at Mott, part of University of Michigan Health. “And Vicki has one of the biggest hearts ever.”

The project includes shopping sprees at Meijer, a grocery and department store that employs Local 252 electricians. Loy and other volunteers fill cart after cart, but not randomly.

“Vicki checks with me every year to see what the greatest needs are,” Heering said, explaining that gifts for school-age children are typically abundant, but less so for infants, toddlers, teens and young adults up to 21. “The IBEW really help us fill those gaps.”

Occasionally, the local gets thank-you cards that Business Manager Ryan Husse reads at membership meetings. “It really touches a lot of families,” he said. “We’re very proud to participate and proud of Vicki for leading the way.” ■



Journeyman Vicki Loy, top, annually leads Local 252’s efforts to help fill a makeshift toy store at the 250-bed C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital, allowing families to select holiday gifts at no charge.

Asbury Park, N.J., Local 400 and Cheyenne, Wyo., Local 415 Filling Hearts and Cupboards

Charities fighting hunger know there’s one thing they can count on at the holidays: the big hearts of IBEW members and locals’ efforts to collect and deliver literally tons of food.

Among them is Asbury Park, N.J., Local 400, which got this shout-out from a food bank last year: “Our friends at IBEW are bringing hope, joy, and full plates to many families across Monmouth and Ocean Counties this Thanksgiving thanks to their recent donation. ... 3,465 lbs. of food, including turkeys and other holiday meal essentials — that’s enough for 2,888 meals!”

Local President Michael Ricca coordinates the food drive, reminding members that people in need don’t necessarily look like they’re struggling.

“You never know what someone’s going through,” Ricca said. “And you never know when you might need help yourself. There was a point during the Great Recession when the food bank was coming to our hall in support of our members.

“It’s a big objective of our local to say that when times are good, when everybody’s working and you’ve got a couple of extra bucks in your pocket, that we give back.”

The same spirit drives the RENEW chapter at Cheyenne, Wyo., Local 415, which is collecting for two food pantries this Christmas.

The group’s chair, second-year apprentice Michael McHenry, said joining the IBEW “was the best decision I ever made” and is eager to give back.

“It’s a super good feeling to know that we’re helping a lot of people in our community,” he said. ■



The IBEW’s many food drives include one at Asbury Park, N.J., Local 400 (top) and another by the RENEW chapter at Cheyenne, Wyo., Local 415.

Savannah, Ga., Local 508 Gifting Toys, Wrapping Joy

Every December, piles of toys, spools of sparkling paper and bustling union elves turn Savannah, Ga.’s IBEW hall into a Southern outpost of the North Pole.

You can practically hear Local 508 hearts bursting as leaders and staff talk about hosting their Central Labor Council’s annual gift-wrapping party and the weeks beforehand that volunteers spend collecting donations and shopping for presents.

“It’s something we love doing,” Business Manager Alton Mosley said. “Our members keep wanting to give more and more, and that means we can bless even more families.”

The IBEW’s and fellow unions’ generosity allows the Savannah Regional CLC to provide three gifts from children’s wish lists and a \$100 grocery card, benefiting military, union and other families in need.

“Local 508 has played a huge role in hosting and helping me organize. They’ve been awesome,” said CLC President Christi Hulme, whose autumn is consumed by the project.

Volunteers will gather again Dec. 4 and wrap like crazy. “We start at 5 p.m. and go until we’re finished,” Hulme said, sparking a laugh from Mosley. “Sometimes I’m starting with the bicycles around midnight,” he said.

Organizer Ray Harrison has put together tricycles and other gifts requiring assembly but is still mastering the art of wrapping. “There are some awkward packages,” he said. “Like trying to wrap a ball or boxes shaped like triangles.”

Union families helped by Local 508 include a big one of their own: journeyman wireman Steven Smith and his 13 children, who lost their mother in March 2024 to complications from a heart attack the previous October.

Smith, who’d quit his longtime job at a nuclear plant to care for her, was overwhelmed when local brothers and sisters showed up with a sleigh’s worth of presents and a holiday feast for Christmas 2023.

“The hall had contacted me to offer help, but I was still blown away,” he said. “There were toys and gift cards and food. Ruth, my wife, just about broke down at what a blessing it was. There was such a weight on us then.

“We would have had a Christmas as a family, but it wouldn’t have been that kind of bright Christmas. It wasn’t just the gifts. It was about the time they gave. The love they gave. It was so

much from the heart.”

The not-so-secret Santas returned last year as the Smith clan faced their first Christmas without Ruth. Smith is back at work and said he’s grateful every day for the IBEW. Not only did union wages and benefits help him and Ruth fulfill their dream of a large family, but he found another one in the process.

“I’m so glad the good Lord set it up for me to fall in with Local 508,” he said. “I got into this business for a career. But you don’t just get a career. You get a family. The IBEW is a family, and it felt like my family had their arms wrapped around me when I needed it most.” ■



A party to wrap donated toys brings IBEW and fellow union members together at Savannah Local 508’s hall each December. Wrappers include Business Manager Alton Mosley, pictured standing in photo at far left.