

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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## Defeating the Anti-Union Playbook

*Lessons From a New Local's Hard-Won First Contract*

**THE IBEW'S 2026 PHOTO CONTEST**  
 Deadline: Oct. 31 • Details on pg. 7

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**T**wo years after electing to join the IBEW, the workers at the Shell Monaca Facility in Beaver County, Pa., overwhelmingly approved their first contract April 16.

They will form the initial membership of Monaca Local 724, a newly chartered manufacturing local.

Every first-contract negotiation is different. The parties will have unique histories, attitudes and demographics.

But there is a negotiation playbook that nearly every company pulls from for strategies and tactics to delay and dispirit newly formed unions. The negotiating team at Local 724's successful fight for a first contract can serve as a blueprint for any organizer or newly organized unit in the IBEW.

"We have raises, a grievance policy, much better healthcare, and our own local," said Rick Hindes, the newly appointed business manager. "But I'll be honest with you, it wasn't easy.

## WE'RE MAKING HISTORY

*From the Officers, page 2*

There were times when we thought we may never get a contract."

"I say in every campaign, 'Winning the election is the easy part.' It gets really hard in the negotiations because the enemy of momentum is delay, and companies have many tools and a lot of incentives to slow everything down," said Joe DiMichele, director of professional and industrial organizing.

Most American workers don't have a collective bargaining agreement, though more than two-thirds want one. Most have no idea how to build their own union or what to expect if they try.

## Delay, Dispirit, Decertify

Local 724 had a real advantage going into the first negotiations. The organizing drive was fast and quiet.

"From the first call to the vote was five months," said Michael McGee, former international lead organizer and now regional organizing coordinator. "When we presented a majority of authorization cards [in May 2024], management was genuinely surprised. When we asked for voluntary recognition, Shell refused. The next day we filed the NLRB Petition for Election. Later we found out that Shell did not believe we had majority support and was very surprised when we filed the petition."

Even though Shell USA is a Texas-based company, it didn't deploy the most aggressive union-busting tactics before the election — none of

**PLAYBOOK** continued on page 4

FROM THE OFFICERS

# Making History



**Kenneth W. Cooper**  
International President

Last month, IBEW delegates from across North America gathered in Atlanta for our annual Membership Development Conference. I often say that, outside of the International Convention, Membership Development is the most important meeting our union holds.

That's because organizing is the lifeblood of any union. It's about far more than dues. It's about power to secure a better future for working people.

And today, the IBEW has more of that power than ever before.

Our union has grown consistently over the last decade, but in the past few years, we've been shattering records and making history.

As we reported in *The Electrical Worker* last year, the IBEW welcomed more than 24,000 new members in 2025.

Well, as I announced in Atlanta, we're not just matching those numbers. We're blowing past them.

This year, we've already organized approximately 30,000 new IBEW members. You'd have to go back to 1969 — the height of the labor movement — to find growth like that.

And there's no sign of us slowing down.

Across North America, workers are looking for what the IBEW offers: good wages, strong benefits, a voice on the job and the dignity that comes with a union card. Our duty is to reach them, organize them and welcome them into the Brotherhood.

And this matters to every IBEW brother and sister, because every new member, employer and jump in market share means more power to secure and improve on our wages and benefits.

There is no way we could have negotiated an increase in NEBF benefits without a bigger membership behind us.

But as impressive as those numbers are, this is no time to take our foot off the gas on organizing.

The economy is witnessing a historic demand for skilled electrical workers.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 81,000 electrician openings per year. That's a growth rate of 9% annually between 2024 and 2034, much faster than the national average at a time of sluggish overall growth.

Much of that growth is driven by the explosion in data center construction, but every sector of our industries is feeling the demand, from commercial and industrial construction to manufacturing, transmission and distribution.

Whoever can recruit, train and retain the skilled workers needed to build and maintain these projects will lead the energy industry for decades. And that's where the IBEW excels.

That's why industry leaders — from Microsoft to Google to countless others — are looking to the IBEW.

But it's on our local leadership to make it happen. Because organizing is a bottom-up effort, done worker by worker. That's why I need every IBEW member to make organizing their priority. It's going to take everyone working together to meet the demands of this moment.

This boom isn't slowing down, and neither can the IBEW. If we're not doing the work, someone else is. So let's continue to shatter even more records and ensure that every electrical worker is an IBEW worker.

Thank you for all you do, and keep up the great work! ■

# Honoring Our Linemen

For all of you who aren't linemen, imagine it's 90 degrees outside and you're atop a power pole in flame-resistant long pants, rubber gloves and sleeves, hardhat, and heavy safety equipment. There's no shade. The sun is brutal, and sweat drips down your face, complicating the dangerous work of maintaining and repairing power lines — ensuring that everyone else can cool themselves with fans and air conditioning.

National Lineworker Appreciation Day on July 10 reminds us that we need to say thank you to the brothers and sisters keeping us safe and comfortable. From summer's heat waves and thunderstorms to icy winters to ordinary days that bring their own risks, our linemen are heroes.

We honor them annually on July 10 because that's the day in 1896 when the IBEW's founder and first president, Henry Miller, was fatally injured while repairing a storm-damaged power line in Washington, D.C. Shocked by a live wire, he fell to the ground and died a few hours later.

As this month's Grounded in History feature reports on page 8, Miller was dedicated to his brothers' safety in an era when as many as one out of every two linemen was disabled or killed on the job. It was the foremost reason he and nine fellow linemen came together in St. Louis in 1891 and created the IBEW.

Safety remains our No. 1 priority. We fight, of course, for the industry's best wages and benefits, for healthcare, pensions, vacation time and other terms that bring peace of mind and a work-life balance to our members. But ultimately, nothing is more important than making sure that all of you — in every industry — come home safe and sound at the end of every workday.

Through bargaining, we negotiate safety rules and establish safety committees that include workers, because no one is more aware of a workplace's hazards than you are. Politically, we push Congress, state legislatures and local governments for new and better safety laws.

We can be proud of the difference our efforts make. In the 135 years since Henry Miller and his brothers founded the IBEW, lineman fatalities in the United States and Canada have plunged to a tiny fraction of the many lives lost in their day.

Even so, linework remains one of North America's most dangerous jobs. We owe a debt to the men and women who do it.

On July 10, and every day, give the lineworkers you pass a wave, a smile and a big thumbs-up. Tell a crew working in your neighborhood how much you appreciate their hard work. I guarantee your gratitude will make their day. ■



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

## My IBEW STORY

**Jesse Collins**, pressure control specialist  
Atlanta Local 1997



“I started working for Atlanta Gas Light in January 2016, making \$16.75 an hour. My wife and I had been married for 15 months, and we were purchasing our first home with a baby on the way. About a month later, tragedy struck when we lost our first child. It was such a devastating blow, but five months later my wife became pregnant again. She was immediately put on bed rest and required multiple procedures to ensure a successful pregnancy. With my wife unable to work, we became a single-income home.

God smiled on us and gave us a healthy baby boy in March 2017. With childcare unaffordable, my wife stayed home to raise our son. For the first time in my life, we had to seek some government assistance to keep food on the table. Providing seemed nearly impossible, and I was scared of losing our home and letting my new family down. Somehow the bills were paid each month, and we endured. In 2018, my amazing wife became pregnant again, and our second son was born in April 2019.

When the employees of Atlanta Gas Light voted to unionize in April 2017, I was excited for my family's future. And when members of Local 1997 voted 'yes' to a contract in February 2020, I went from \$21.25 to \$24.08 an hour. I could see my future for the next four years before me on paper. I couldn't fathom in that moment how life-changing being a member of the IBEW would be. By the end of the contract in May 2022, my wage was \$31.38. Now, I earn \$45.43. This would not have been possible without the IBEW.

I never thought I'd be in the position that I am in today. I've been given wonderful opportunities to be involved in my local, and I've served for the last six years as an executive board member and as a steward. I've met people from our district and around the U.S. I went to a gas conference in Canada, and everyone at the conference was wearing their IBEW logo on their shirts. You'd be walking in another part of town, and somebody would see you and say, 'Hey there, brother!' When you look across the IBEW, there's a lot of people who firmly believe in that brotherhood, that sisterhood, how meaningful it is to stand together.

If anyone asks what the IBEW has done for me, I tell them that it has given me fair wages and a clear path to success. It has guaranteed a safe workplace, progression, healthcare, raises, and fair and equal treatment. And it's given me a Brotherhood of 900,000-plus with an unshakable bond. It has allowed me to purchase a better home for my family. I don't have to worry about whether I can pay the bills, and I can put good, healthy food on the table for my children.

As a father, my core responsibility is to take care of my family. Before our first contract, struggling to make ends meet weighed heavily on me. It was my duty to provide, but it felt like no matter how hard I tried, I could not succeed. The IBEW put a straight, clear path to success in front of me. I would not be where I am today without it. I am grateful and honored to be a member.”

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](http://ibew.org/MyIBEWStory)

**THE METER**

30,000

The number of new members the IBEW has organized already this year, after welcoming 24,000 new members a year ago.

See From the Officers on this page.

# Florida Local Helps Space Agencies Reach for the Moon, Beyond

**H**undreds of IBEW electrical workers with Daytona Beach, Fla., Local 756 helped NASA send four astronauts around the moon in March. While it was the space agency's first crewed voyage beyond Earth's orbit in more than 50 years, helping NASA and others launch all sorts of spacecraft from Florida — with or without anyone aboard — has been part of the local's job since 1958.

"We helped with Apollo, we helped with the Space Shuttle, and now we're helping with Artemis," said Business Manager Matthew Nelson, who noted that the local recently celebrated the 90th anniversary of its charter.

"The launch vehicles we don't really touch," Nelson said. "But the infrastructure — the launch control center, launch pads, mobile launchers — everything that gets the rocket to the pad — that's us."

Besides their work at the John F. Kennedy Space Center, Local 756's highly trained electrical workers also partner with signatory contractors on the nearby Cape Canaveral and Patrick Space Force bases, as well as at other military and federal facilities along Florida's east coast.

"We have work in town, too, like schools work, but the big thing is what people see on TV," Nelson said.

IBEW members have been part of the Artemis project since it began nearly 16 years ago, working on structures such as Mobile Launcher 1, a 380-foot-tall platform that can ferry Artemis mission rockets on their eight-hour, four-mile trek from NASA's Vehicle Assembly Building, or VAB, to Launch Pad 39B.

"The local got a project labor agreement," said Nelson, who worked on the government contract for about nine years before becoming business manager in 2019. "We had contractors building it and a hundred-some people on it."

**"... [T]he infrastructure — the launch control center, launch pads, mobile launchers — everything that gets the rocket to the pad — that's us."**

— Local 756 Business Manager Matthew Nelson

At the same time, "our people were also over at 39B, running in new infrastructure and new communications and power systems," Nelson said. "We pretty much tore the old pad down to the ground and rebuilt it."

"The majority of it has been union work, and the major electrical work was done by the IBEW," he said.

It's been the kind of high-quality work people expect from the IBEW.

"When Artemis I took off [in November 2022], I had guys send me pictures of



stuff [on Mobile Launcher 1] that was blown out and destroyed," he said. "Everything that we installed stayed."

Jeff Henderson, who recently retired as an international representative with the IBEW's Fifth District, was Local 756's service rep.

"The success of that whole project, I believe, was thanks to Matt and his relationship with contractors and NASA," Henderson said.



With NASA planning to send regular Artemis missions to land on the moon, Local 756 members in 2020 were tapped to work on a second mobile launcher.

"Getting everything set up, we peaked at 170 journeymen on first and second shift," Nelson said. "They were working 10 hours six days a week, seven days at one point."

To construct Mobile Launcher 2, NASA tried a different approach.

"This one, they built it in stages,

most of it on the ground so people could work off lifts and booms," he said. "Then, they put it together like Lincoln Logs or Tinkertoys."

Most of the Local 756 members working on Mobile Launcher 2 were laid off in March when the project was placed on hold.

"They're going to take it and re-engineer it," Nelson said.

The business manager is confident that the space agency can make the launcher work.

"We're trying to keep it our project because we have the guys that know how to do it," Nelson said. "It's like 60% done. They're not going to trash it."

He and other Local 756 members also have worked extensively in the VAB, which opened in 1966.

"I was there working for subcontractors when the shuttle was still active," said Nelson, who's been an IBEW member for nearly 30 years. "We had to modify the platforms and put new ones up."

"It had a glass elevator, so you could see the whole thing. It was just a neat experience," he said.

Over in the Launch Control Center, "we got to redo some of the antiquated stuff in the room to get it up to date," Nelson said.

The business manager estimates a need for at least 100 more



electricians in the coming months to staff work for SpaceX, one of NASA's commercial customers that leases Pad 39A for programs such as Starship, Falcon and Gigabay.

"There was a lot of animosity for years over SpaceX and Davis-Bacon," said Henderson, referring to the law requiring payment of local prevailing wages on projects that receive federal funding. "When Matt came in [as business manager], he got it all squared away."

Local 756 members also work on Cape Canaveral for Relativity, a 3D-printed reusable rocket startup, and for Blue Origin, which launches spacecraft from Pad 36.

"We're pushing some of the non-union contractors out of these space

center projects, which is amazing to me," Nelson said. "Blue Origin fired the nonunion contractors they've been using for years and hired one of our union contractors, because they'd seen our work."

Henderson said Nelson's experience has helped him make things work. "Every place has its quirks about how to get things done," he said. "Matt is excellent at that."

Nelson is working hard to ensure his members have access to space-related construction and maintenance jobs for as long as possible.

"There's so much work, there's so much money, and so much potential," he said. "This work is not going to go away." ■

*At one point, nearly 170 electricians represented by Daytona Beach, Fla., Local 756 worked on NASA's Mobile Launcher 2, pictured here, in support of the agency's Artemis project. Business Manager Matthew Nelson is confident that the on-hold project will have his members back to work soon.*

# Defeating the Anti-Union Playbook

## Lessons From a New Local's Hard-Won First Contract

▼ **Continued from page 1**

the members of the volunteer organizing committee were fired, there were no captive audience meetings and no “union avoidance” consultants were brought in. McGee said there were just a handful of emails with some unconvincing messages about the workers and the multibillion-dollar petrochemical giant being a “family.”

(You can read the full story of the initial organizing drive in the September 2024 issue of *The Electrical Worker*.)

The transition to negotiations was quick, McGee said, but that was all that went quickly. Agreement took 21 months. There is no “average time” between the celebration of a successful union election and the ratification vote for a first contract. Corporations often use first contract negotiations as a second shot to break the union.

“They were tough to bargain with. That’s why it took so long. They fought us on every single issue,” McGee said.

In the 100 years since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act — written to encourage the formation of unions and protect labor rights — courts, regulatory agencies, Congress and ever-larger corporations have fought its enforcement. The highway to collective bargaining envisioned by the authors of the NLR Act is now a maze inside a swamp.

Critically, nothing Shell did was particularly illegal or, more important, unexpected. Anyone who wants to turn a union organizing win into a first contract should expect similar tactics.



IBEW members built the Shell Pennsylvania Petrochemicals Complex starting in 2015. The plant opened in 2022, but the operators and maintenance workers didn’t approach the IBEW about organizing until 2024.



When an agreement was finally reached, Monaca, Pa., Local 724 Business Manager Rick Hindes and Shell lead negotiator Brandon Davis took a moment to celebrate.

### WASTE TIME

Workers vote to join a union in nearly every case to solve problems with their pay, rising healthcare costs, and a lack of consistency or respect.

It is critical that negotiators and rank-and-file members remember that the goal of company negotiators is to slow things down, DiMichele said.

“Expect them to hold major issues for later, bring up secondary issues first and then stay on them,” he said.



The plant uses ethane derived from the nearby Marcellus Shale to produce polyethylene, one of the most common thermoplastics.

In this negotiation, Local 724 President Shaun Butler said one of these issues was a boot allowance.

The chemicals in the petrochemical plant eat through the soles of work boots, even the so-called chemical-resistant ones. A common request of the membership was a boot allowance that covered most of the cost of replacements.

“We spent five days talking about boots,” Hindes said.

The negotiating committee worked full shifts. All of their negotiating time came out of their time off: time away from family, time away from work. Across the table were professional negotiators on company time.

“Five of our off days were about negotiating \$100 extra,” Hindes said. “It was unbelievable how they would stall. And they didn’t have reasons for disagreeing with our proposal. They just said: ‘No. Less.’ You just have to understand what they are really doing.”

Another delay tactic, McGee said, was reopening agreements once they had been settled.

“One time, we got to an agreement. And we’re all happy coming in the next day,” McGee said. “They sit down and their lead negotiator says: ‘I don’t have the authority to say what I said yesterday. We are back to square one.’ It was like a bomb went off in the room.”

### THE LOWEST LOWBALLS

Employers are required by law to “bargain in good faith,” but a century of pro-corporate regulations and court decisions has muddied what good faith actually means.

National Labor Relations Board regulations make it illegal for employers to punish workers for organizing, including by cutting their pay or benefits. Any first contract will, by law, have to be at least as good as the contract workers already have.

That does not stop employers from trying.

“They started with offers that were far less than we were making. When we said this was illegal, they said, ‘We can always declare an impasse,’” Hindes said.

The lead negotiator, Third District International Representative Mike Kwashnik, even told the company that its offer “wasn’t where they legally needed to be” and, therefore, wasn’t in good faith, McGee said.

McGee and the negotiating team had no great options. They could not accept the impasse declaration, which would allow Shell to impose its position unilaterally. They could file an unfair labor practice complaint with the NLRB, but the

board had too few members to issue rulings after President Donald Trump illegally fired board Chair Gwynn Wilcox. Trump took nearly a year to appoint enough members for the board to function, but few unions would look to the new pro-corporate majority for help.

The only choice is to stay calm, stay at the table and grind away.

### COUNTER EVERYTHING

Whatever proposal you make, no matter how justified or supported by evidence, expect a counter. Just don’t expect a justification.

“They never, ever said yes. No matter what, their counter was less. No reason. Just ... less,” McGee said. “Expect it to not make sense.”

For example, most unionized Shell factories are represented by the United Steelworkers. In response to certain proposals, Butler said, the company would say no because “the USW doesn’t get that.”

But if they did propose something that was in USW contracts, the company said this facility was different.

## Fight The Playbook

The key to surviving these tactics is remembering that the company’s strategic goal isn’t winning better terms in a contract but avoiding a contract entirely.

NLRB rules allow a decertification campaign to begin a year after a successful union election.

A unit that sees endless delay can lose heart. It becomes vulnerable to management that says, “We told you it will be worse when the union steps between us.”

People who opposed the union might see their working conditions improve. They might receive information, training and support to start a decertification campaign.

But, if the unit votes to decertify a union, all of the worker protections go away.

It is illegal to fire workers who engaged in protected organizing activity before a vote and during negotiations. After a decertification vote, anyone can be fired, for any reason or no reason at all. The company can change any policy, cut anyone’s wages or hours.

Knowing these are the stakes helped mentally prepare Hindes, Butler and the organizing committee.



“We told management: ‘We don’t care if this goes five years. You can keep flying up, and we’ll keep showing up,’” Hindes said. “It wasn’t personal between us and management, but it was personal for the people who work here. This was about our families. Our kids. Our futures.”

## TRANSPARENCY AND FREQUENCY

The bare minimum is honest and regular communication with the bargaining unit.

Shell is the 23rd-largest company in the world, with assets of over \$370 billion and annual revenue of \$267 billion, according to Forbes. It has more than 100,000 employees, including 18,000 in the U.S.

Shell employed a team of professional negotiators, some of whom flew in from Houston for each negotiation.

The Monaca unit has 205 members. Outside Kwashnik and McGee, the organizing committee and then the negotiating committee included Hindes, Butler, Chief Steward James Frederick, Harley Resse (now financial secretary), John Baker (now executive board member) and Rich Morris (now recording secretary and executive board member). They were volunteers who worked after full shifts out of donated offices in nearby Beaver, Pa., Local 712’s hall.

The power imbalance between those two groups is impossible to overstate. As weak as it is, labor law gives union negotiators real power, DiMichele said, but completely overcoming the imbalance takes a united, informed membership. “The VOC has to be strong and committed,” DiMichele said. “It has to seek out every opportunity to keep the members informed, and it has to tell them as much of the story as they legally can.”

For Hindes and Butler, that meant scheduled formal meetings with the

bargaining unit and frequent informal conversations with individuals and groups.

They never disturbed anyone on their job, but every other moment was fair game.

“We didn’t talk about fishing. People asked us, and we answered,” Hindes said. “We gave them a lot of information without spoiling the negotiations, and we reminded them of the benefits of staying strong and the costs if we didn’t.”

DiMichele said every interaction should include updates on negotiations, but also time to listen to frustrations.

If there is a classification or unit where support is low before the election, McGee said, the days and weeks after the vote are the critical time to bring those “no” votes on union side.

“We held meetings right after the vote to keep momentum and sought out the no votes to say: ‘The election is over. You’re part of it. Let’s get what you want. So, what do you want?’” McGee said. “What do you want to keep? What policies do you want to get rid of?”

Have everyone write down what they want, ranked one to five. Collate a top 10 and look for asks that are very important to smaller groups. Bring that back to membership and incorporate it into negotiations.

“After a lifetime on the job just taking whatever management gives you, it can take a while for the unit to start thinking hard about what they really want for themselves,” McGee said.

And the longer negotiations go on, the more important communication becomes.

“It was hard because sometimes you had nothing new to say or nothing new you could say, but you still had to show up and explain, no matter how frustrated you were yourself,” Butler said. “The only thing in our control is building unity.”

## EXERCISE POWER IMMEDIATELY

A union doesn’t need a contract to protect a member from being unfairly disciplined or fired.

“Train stewards immediately,” Hindes said. Local 724 had steward training, taught by Third District Education International Representative Larry Neidig III, within days of the election certification at the very start of negotiations.

There were no grievance procedures to protect, no jointly negotiated working conditions policies to enforce and no negotiated role for stewards in an official disciplinary procedure.

The union is the official representative for the unit with or without a contract.

Only two weeks after the certification vote, a panicked member called Hindes at home, asking him to come back down. The worker was going to be fired because he had missed something important, a safety violation.

Butler did what stewards are supposed to do. He investigated for himself, and the straightforward story of a worker making a critical mistake was not straightforward after all.

“This guy had asked the company safety manager if he was doing it right, and the manager walked him through the job and approved the paperwork,” he said. “In the past they would have fired this guy, but, I said, ‘If you’re going to fire our guy, you have to fire everyone involved.’”

The company “circled their wagons,” Butler said, and in the end, neither the worker nor the managers were disciplined.

Butler didn’t need a contract or a disciplinary procedure to save the member’s job. He had the power to represent the workers.

*Negotiation took place over nearly two years from the organizing election to the contract ratification. The negotiating committee celebrated (top left) the day of the final agreement. It included Jim Frederick, Mike Kwashnik, John Baker, Michael McGee, Shaun Butler and Hindes.*

“You are equal to them at the table. When I, Rick or Kwashnik speak, we speak for 200 people. You don’t have to be nervous or afraid. There is no more bullying because ‘I can fire you for no reason.’ Not here you can’t. Because I’m not just me, we’re us,” Butler said.

It is true that an organizing group can’t control the company’s timeline or NLRB panel decisions, DiMichele said.

“But we don’t have to. Any unilateral changes to policies, we can object. You never have to go into another disciplinary meeting alone again as soon as the union is voted in,” DiMichele said. “Nothing will change a person’s mind faster than a skilled steward saving their job. That’s power you need to use during the slog of negotiations.”

## MAKE COMMUNITY MATTER

Beyond the informational duties and the exercise of power, VOCs built for long-term success seek out opportunities outside negotiation updates to build solidarity and connection.

This can take many shapes, DiMichele said.

“Think family picnics. Motorcycle toy runs. T-shirts. Solidarity nights. Bowling. Dances,” he said. “Especially in more rural places, this is big. Not every place has everything. Unions aren’t just about what percent raise you get. They are about building community and working-class power, and that should be fun.”

At Monaca, what worked best to build bridges was hot dogs.

“All-day dogs. It’s huge,” Hindes said.

It started simply, Butler said. A member’s wife has terminal cancer. The committee wanted to raise money for the couple. One Wednesday, he dragged a hot dog roller to the plant, bought \$200 of hot dogs and sold them, all proceeds to the member and his wife.

They’ve raised at least \$5,000, and now it’s a Wednesday tradition.

“Everyone can eat: hourly, salary, even contractors. You can talk with people who don’t love the union. We can just show them who we are, respond to rumors, tell the truth,” Butler said. “And it’s a simple way to show, yeah, we did this for Jim, but we’ll do this for you. This is why we’re union. We take care of our own.”

## Stay in the Game

None of that will force a company to agree to a contract it doesn’t want. But all of it buys you leverage at the bargaining table and gives negotiators time.

“Opportunities will come, even against the biggest companies. You have to be at the table when it does,” DiMichele said.

For the Local 724 negotiators, that opportunity arrived in July 2025. Shell wasn’t getting the returns it wanted from its chemical division, including the Monaca plant. The company announced that the entire division was up for sale.

An unresolved contract dispute was a risk that the company no longer wanted to carry into that sale.

“All of a sudden, their lead negotiator said, ‘How do you think we could get this done?’” McGee said. “And just like that, they were willing to bargain.”

It still took some time, and they didn’t get everything they wanted. But they did get a contract.

Critically, it included a successor clause so that any company that buys the facility has to respect the contract and negotiate with the union.

“It is the oldest lesson there is: Never stop organizing,” DiMichele said.

The contract contains a 12% raise over three years, which includes 5% in back pay from an increase Shell held back in February; a \$10,000 signing bonus; a \$250 boot allowance; and participation in the IBEW-run Family Medical Care Plan, which Hindes said is “better healthcare than we were getting for a much lower cost.”

When the contract went to the membership, it was overwhelmingly approved, far outpacing the original organizing election.

“The successful ratification represented far more than the approval of a first contract — it reflected the determination, unity and perseverance of workers who came together to improve their working conditions and build a stronger future for themselves and their families,” Kwashnik said.

The charter will be officially signed Aug. 5 in Local 712’s union hall.

“So many people think the union comes in and shakes a contract out of a company. It isn’t true. You either make your own union or it’s never there. We’ll train you. We’ll help the whole way. But you don’t hire us, you become us,” DiMichele said. “You get the future you want by doing the work.” ■



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*'We Deserve Better'*

# Union-Busting Backfires in Face of Oregon TV Producers' Solidarity

A group of TV and digital news producers who voted overwhelmingly to join Portland, Ore., Local 48 earlier this year is standing strong against their employer's aggressive union-busting campaign and election challenges.

The organizing drive at KGW-TV was sparked a year ago by an existing unit of directors, who found themselves fighting for their jobs and jurisdiction as the company pushed automation and overlapped duties between union and nonunion employees.

"It's just been in the last few years that the corporate mindset has changed, and honestly it's been awful," said a worker who misses past labor peace and management respect at the station.

"Now it's, 'Hey, we're not making the record profits we used to, the industry is changing to digital,' and all of that is a fact," the worker said. "But there's no shortage of corporate profit. They're just gutting from the inside."

The broadcaster began in radio in the 1920s, bills itself as "Portland's leading local news" and is one of 64 stations owned by Tegna nationwide — a number that would skyrocket to 265 stations if the company is absorbed by media giant Nexstar. The \$6.2 billion merger was approved in March but frozen by a federal judge in April after 13 states, including Oregon, filed an anti-trust lawsuit.



*Unionized directors at KGW showed their love for their jobs, the IBEW and their worker-friendly city while greeting producers on Feb. 19, the day they voted to join Local 48's existing unit at the station. Management refuses to recognize the new members.*

Union-busting was central to Tegna's playbook as it prepared for the merger, fueling a level of hostility from KGW management that surprised even veteran union staff. Local 48 Business Representative Tara McElligott, who came to the IBEW this year from the International Chemical Workers, called it "among the most relentless, cynical and sustained anti-union efforts I have witnessed in two decades of this work."

Tactics included a blizzard of deceptive fliers, emails and other



*Portland, Ore., Local 48 members and staff rallied outside KGW-TV in February as producers turned out to vote on joining a decades-long unit of directors. Unionbusting bosses have been fighting ever since to derail the landslide victory.*

communication; "voluntary" anti-union meetings; letters hand-delivered to producers' homes on the eve of the Feb. 19 election; and the startling presence of armed security guards when they arrived at a scantily staffed KGW the next morning.

"They claimed the union was going to be violent, so they told all the non-essential people not to come in on the day of the election," said Mark Hinkle, another Local 48 business representative.

The union won 17-3, with all 20 eligible voters casting ballots. The company immediately filed objections with the National Labor Relations Board. It lost four out of five of them at the regional level. Tegna is appealing the losses to the full NLRB, which is also expected to hear arguments on the fifth charge.

Organizers were delighted by the landslide but not surprised, having seen the producers' interest in the IBEW grow quickly after a union activist proposed the idea last summer.



"As that area between what the producers do and what the directors do got grayer, a union worker said, 'You guys really should be part of us,'" Hinkle said. "And once that seed was planted, it only took a very short while."

"Pizza in the park" gatherings across the street from the station in downtown Portland gave producers a chance to ask questions of directors and IBEW representatives. "The directors told the producers about their union experience: 'This is how it's been for us, these are the perks and

protections, and we think you guys deserve them, too,'" Hinkle said.

On top of issues common to all workers, McElligott said, pay disparity was one of the motivating factors for producers, who are split almost evenly between men and women. In May, at the IBEW's urging, Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries began investigating KGW for potential wage discrimination.

One piece of evidence is a recording — made with permission of all parties — of a wrenching Feb. 2 meeting between two managers and an Emmy-winning woman producer being paid thousands of dollars less than some colleagues without the same longevity and duties. As she made her case for improving on the 2% merit raise she'd been receiving annually, the senior boss used the opportunity to pressure her to vote against the IBEW. Claiming the union would block merit pay, he repeatedly told her that 2% is "better than zero percent."

"It's heartbreaking the way that they treated her and it's heartbreaking what she had to endure, but my God, did she stand up," said Ray Lister, a Ninth District international representative and lead organizer.

McElligott said the woman "had asked repeatedly what the matrix is for merit pay and what she needed to do for earning more than 2% but was never answered."

She added: "She was gaslit regarding her claim of pay discrimination and then was told by management that 'We're happy with where we are at in regard to pay.'"

Less than two months earlier, the company had no idea an organizing drive was underway. Other than the park meetings, workers largely connected using an encrypted app, Signal, keeping the campaign under wraps for six months. "The secret was kept tight. It didn't leak out," Hinkle said. "And that's all on the producers."

Lister was impressed by how well

the group communicated with each other and the "phenomenal questions" they asked at meetings. "I can't say enough good things," he said. "There was so much active participation. Some organizing drives, it's mainly a couple of people, but this time there was a ton of them. It's easy to build trust when people are willing to communicate like that."

IBEW negotiators dropped the campaign bombshell at a December 2025 bargaining session for the directors' contract, stunning Tegna with a packet of signed cards from a majority of producers seeking representation.

Hinkle said bargaining had hit a wall that day and the company lawyer wanted to adjourn. But first he asked if there was any other business. "We said: 'Yeah, one more thing. We have paperwork here that says we plan to umbrella in the producers.'"

"We passed it over to management and asked them to voluntarily recognize the producers, and the look on their faces was shock and awe," he said. "My joke is that you'd have thought it was holy water with garlic and silver nitrate. Their lawyer recoiled from it. He said: 'We categorically deny this. I'm not even going to entertain the idea,' and then he stormed out of the room, followed by the news director and a woman from human resources. We left it on the table, and they over-nighted it back to us unopened."

Hinkle believes management was especially angry because the IBEW's revelation disrupted a merger-friendly scheme to get rid of the directors and their contract by shifting the work to nonunion producers. "I really think that was their long-term goal, and then they were like, 'Oh, crap.'"

Workers said all that employees want is to be treated fairly. "As a news organization, we cover other people's union efforts all the time — stories about people who deserve better, and now that's happening here," one said.

"I wish management understood that all the shady stuff they're doing is 100% backfiring. I liked working here. I liked my managers. Now I'm disgruntled, and I don't want to be. None of us here wants to feel that way." ■

# New Jersey Nuclear Members to Bring Manufacture of Important Isotope to U.S.

**N**uclear power has been getting a second look as a clean and reliable energy source, with mothballed plants coming back online. In New Jersey, it's also taking on a new role that will move production of an in-demand isotope to domestic shores and aid in cancer treatments — with Cranbury, N.J., Local 94 members at the helm.

“This is a huge step for the company and the union in demonstrating their commitment to not only providing safe, reliable and efficient power, but also showing the unlimited potential of nuclear to provide for the community and make lives better,” said Local 94 Business Manager Adam Neuman.

Members of Local 94, who work at the PSEG Salem nuclear generating station, will now be tasked with production of Cobalt-60, a radioisotope that is used to sterilize more than 16 billion single-use medical devices a year, including syringes, surgical gloves, catheters and heart valves. It's also used in radiation therapy to treat certain types of cancer, and in precision brain tumor surgeries.

“Anytime we can take on work that is in demand and projected to be in place for several years, it shows commitment to the community and the workforce,” said Dave Scott, Local 94 nuclear business agent. “I believe that the more people hear about the benefits of nuclear energy, the better.”

One of the great features of the Cobalt-60 production evolution from a business standpoint is that there is very little added work to the normal

refueling process, Scott said.

Cobalt-60 is produced by placing naturally occurring Cobalt-59 into the reactor vessel fuel rod assemblies using a special encapsulated assembly called a cobalt burnable absorber. Once the reactor is placed back in service, a process known as “neutron bombardment” takes place where the Cobalt-59 absorbs the free neutrons, transforming it into a Cobalt-60 isotope. The process takes about three 18-month fuel cycles before the medical-grade isotope can be harvested.

**“This is a huge step for the company and the union ... showing the unlimited potential of nuclear to provide for the community and make lives better.”**

— Local 94 Business Manager Adam Neuman

Most of the 600-member Local 94 workforce is shared across the three-unit site and either participates directly in or supports the outage efforts, Scott said. The Local 94 members who would most directly participate in the process are the radiation protection technicians and operators, who would monitor and oversee all handling and

transportation. Operations members may be involved with moving fuel after it's placed in the spent fuel pool.

The Cobalt-60 endeavor comes from a partnership among Westinghouse Electric; Nordion, a Canadian company; and PSEG Nuclear. The project will result in the first commercial-scale production of Cobalt-60 in a U.S. nuclear reactor. Under the agreements, the companies are to apply newly developed production technology for pressurized water reactors.

The technology to produce Cobalt-60 has been trusted for nearly 70 years due to its deep penetration, uniform dose distribution and compatibility with a wide range of materials, Westinghouse said in a news release.

Despite its track record, the U.S. relies entirely on foreign sources for Cobalt-60, with 20% to 50% of supply coming from Russia. About 50% comes from Canada.

The new collaboration paves the way for 25% of the isotope to be made at the Salem plant.

“This advancement strengthens global supply and demonstrates how commercial nuclear energy can support critical healthcare infrastructure,” Sophie Lemaire, interim co-president of Westinghouse Nuclear Fuel, said in a news release.

Production of Cobalt-60 at commercial scale is made possible by tax credits in the Inflation Reduction Act, sweeping climate legislation that's considered to be the largest in U.S. history. It was signed into law by President Joe Biden in 2022. ■



## THE IBEW'S 2026 PHOTO CONTEST

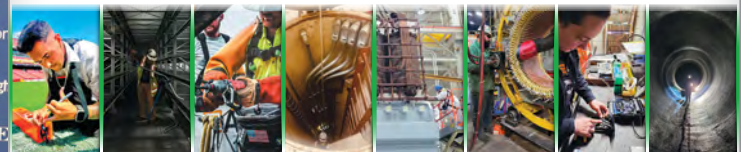
**The IBEW Photo Contest has been The Electrical Worker's way to ride shotgun with brothers and sisters for a quarter of a century.** Your pictures bring us closer together and are a showcase for the critical role members play in the life and work of North America.

The hundreds of submissions we receive every year are a priceless contribution to our story: the story of working people that is too often ignored or, worse, hidden. But just because something is priceless doesn't mean a value can't be put on it.

- Top Prize: \$1,000**
- Second Place: \$750**
- Third Place: \$500**

**A \$200 Honorable Mention will also be awarded for EACH BRANCH of the IBEW:**

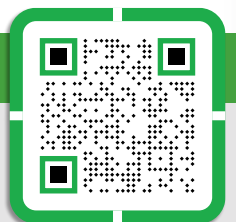
- Broadcasting
- Inside Construction
- Outside Construction
- Government
- Manufacturing
- Railroad
- Telecommunications
- Utility



**DEADLINE: OCT. 31**

See official rules and submission instructions at **IBEW.org/photocontest**.

**Entries MUST be submitted electronically** by Oct. 31 via the Photo Contest link on **IBEW.org**. Please contact the Media Department at **media@IBEW.org** or 202-728-6102 with additional questions.



Local 94 Business Manager Adam Neuman and Local 94 Nuclear Business Agent Dave Scott (standing: second and third from the left, respectively) joined leaders from PSEG and Westinghouse for the signing of the agreement on Cobalt-60 production.

# GROUND<sup>ED</sup> IN HISTORY

## Remembering Henry Miller

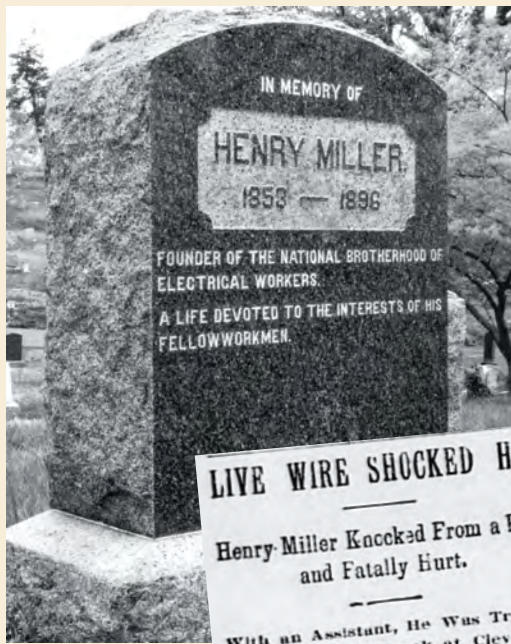
This month marks the 130th anniversary of the death of our founder and first president, Henry Miller. On July 10, 1896, Miller came into contact with a live wire while on top of a pole, instantly sending 2,200 volts through his body. He suffered severe injuries from the fall and passed away a few hours later in his boarding house in Washington, D.C. His death is a reminder of the inherent dangers of electrical work and the constant vigilance our members must maintain to ensure their safety and the safety of those around them. It is for this reason that we recognize July 10 as National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

According to J.T. Kelly, IBEW's first Secretary-Treasurer, Miller was born Jan. 5, 1858 in Fredericksburg, Texas. Hugh Murrin of Local 283 in Oakland, Calif., and later a close friend of Miller's, recalled that his parents were German immigrants and that Miller would occasionally slip into a German accent when on the job. He lived on his family's ranch until age 16, when he left to work for a military project constructing a 125-mile telegraph line along the Rio Grande. After a year of this informal "apprenticeship," Miller pursued a career as a lineman.

His first post was as a line repairman for the Western Union Telegraph Co., then for the Santé Fe Railway Co. where he was given charge of a telegraph division. In 1879, Miller became a superintendent with the Erie Telephone Co. and remained with the company until 1885. Around 1886 he landed in St. Louis and found work with the Municipal Electric Light and Power Co. He also became good friends with a wireman who'd recently arrived from Pennsylvania, James T. Kelly.

In 1890, St. Louis hosted an exposition that featured an elaborate electric light display requiring dozens of linemen and wiremen to maintain. Inspired by the sight of so many of their fellow tradesmen, Miller and Kelly met with AFL organizer Charles Kassel to create Local 5221, a local union solely for St. Louis electricians. Miller was elected president and spent the next year traveling across the Midwest and East Coast, finding work in various cities, and organizing local unions along the way.

By September 1891, Miller had laid enough groundwork that 5221 felt confident in calling for a convention to establish a national organization for electrical workers. It was held Nov. 21 in the unassuming boarding house in St. Louis that Miller called home, with 10 delegates in attendance. When it concluded a week later, the IBEW was born



Henry Miller, the IBEW's founder and first president, is buried at Glenwood Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

with Miller elected as Grand President and Kelly as Secretary-Treasurer. With only \$100 in the bank, thanks to a loan from 5221, Miller jumped straight back into organizing, chartering 45 local unions over the next six months.

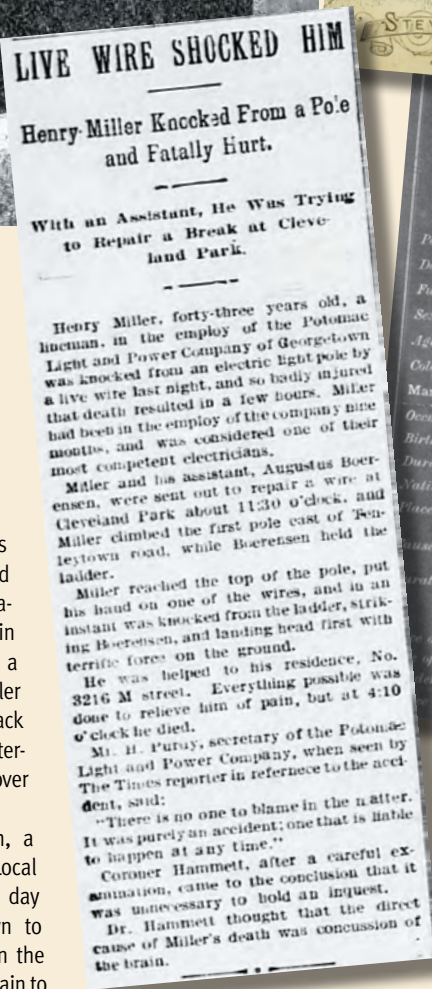
Daniel Ellsworth, a member of Detroit Local 17, remembered the day Miller rode into town to organize. "He rode on the bumpers of a freight train to get here and had no funds for organizing. When we took up a collection for him he said 'No, boys, you will need all the money you can get together for your union. I will get along some way.' I tell you,



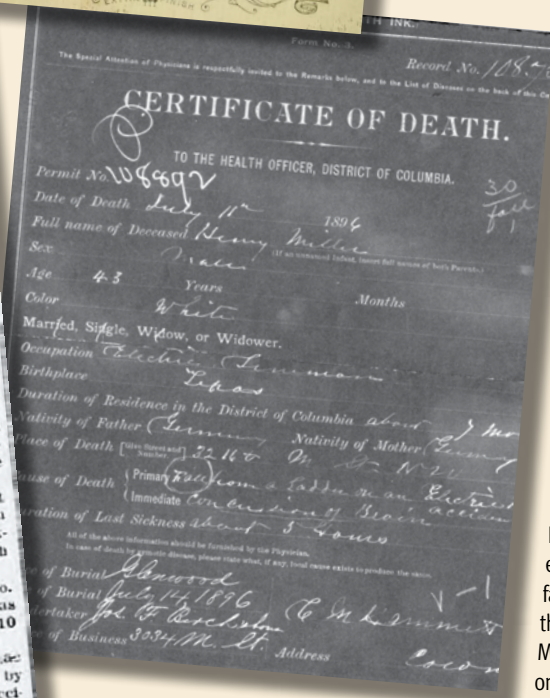
On July 10, 1896, Miller was assigned to repair a lighting circuit in Cleveland Park that was damaged during a storm. Working on the line just before midnight, Miller received the 2,200-volt shock that threw him from his pole. A doctor brought him to his boarding house where he died at 4:30am on July 11. John Lloyd, a member of Local 26, said a special meeting was convened to "appoint a committee and see that Miller was properly buried. Mr. Purdy, the superintendent of Potomac Light and Power, and a good friend of Miller's, attended the funeral in conjunction with the IBEW members." As Miller had no money of his own,

Purdy covered all funeral expenses save for \$16.00 paid by the IBEW executive office. In 1901, the IBEW paid for perpetual care of Miller's grave at Glenwood Cemetery in Washington, a service that continues to this day.

Henry Miller's life was not easy. His occupation as an electrical worker placed him in constant risk. It was the unregulated nature of the work that inspired him to create the IBEW. Faced with low wages, little to no training, and fatality rates far and above those of any other trade, Miller understood that the only way to improve working conditions and instill dignity amongst electrical workers was to organize. In that effort, Miller's tenacity and courage were without equal. "No man could have done more for our union in its first years than he did," said first IST



Miller, pictured at top in an 1891 portrait, died after he was shocked by a live wire and fell while working in Washington in July 1896. At left is an obituary in The Evening Gazette.



brothers, he was a hero in the cause."

At the 3rd IBEW convention in 1893, Miller became a Grand Vice President and Grand Organizer. One highlight of his new position was organizing the Adams Hydroelectric Generating Station at Niagara Falls. This was the first hydro plant designed by George Westinghouse and Nikola Tesla. An economic depression in 1894 forced Miller to return to work as a lineman.

He made his way to Washington, D.C., and signed the book with Local 26. He found work with the Potomac Light and Power Co. According to Henry Hatt, a traveling brother who roomed with Miller in Georgetown, our founder was always assigned the toughest jobs. He once witnessed Miller wire a 240-foot high-iron smokestack, working in heavy winds on the outer edge of narrow scaffolding. "He had a heart as big as a coat of mail," said Hatt. "His efforts on behalf of the electrical workers created a momentum around which a corporate resistance occurred." It was not only Miller's work ethic and perseverance that impressed Hatt, but also his ability to find time for reflection and relaxation. "He could do as much work in one day as two ordinary men, and read novels half the night," Hatt said.



"The Inspiration of the IBEW" by Kathleen Farrell depicting Miller's accident hangs in the International Office in Washington.

Kelly. "Every movement, every organization established, has associated with it the name of some individual whose mind conceived and whose energy and perseverance established it; and thus the name of Henry Miller will forever be associated with the Electrical Workers of America."

Hugh Murrin wrote extensively about Miller in a 1916 issue of The Electrical Worker. "I know personally of the hardships he passed through while organizing the electrical workers. With no salary or money for expenses he traveled from city to city and depended upon the men of our trade to feed him. If we are to succeed in promoting the good work that this worthy Brother started for us... we must all work together, and if we do this I can see for the IBEW the success that was the aim and heartfelt desire of Henry Miller."

On this year's National Lineworker Appreciation Day, let us remember the hard work and sacrifice of Henry Miller. To tell his story is to tell the story of the IBEW. ■

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

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

## Red Seal Is Big Win for Halifax Members Serving Royal Navy

The work done by Halifax, Nova Scotia, Local 1131 members literally has national security implications. That's why their leadership argued for years that it should be certified with the highest designation of quality.

It now has just that.

Local 1131 members, who are electricians servicing the Royal Canadian Navy's eastern fleet at the Cape Scott maintenance facility, are now required to have a Red Seal certification, the common trades designation used across the country that assures that skilled work is done at the highest level.

It will be included in ongoing apprenticeship training specific to the industry provided by the Royal Navy and signatory contractors.

"My response has always been, 'We work for the federal government,'" Business Manager Chris Johnson said. "If we do not hold ourselves to the highest standard, who will?"

Red Seal training was previously offered but done away with sometime in the 1990s, Johnson said. That decision had a real-world cost for Local 1131 members because, depending on the federal government's level of defense spending, they sometimes must leave the local to find work.

Having the Red Seal designation made it easier to become part of IBEW construction locals in Canada. Without that training being provided, they had to take unpaid time off to receive it outside the harbour.

Rear Adm. Josée Kurtz, commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic, approved the change after a recommendation from Capt. Eric McCallum, commanding officer at Cape Scott.

"The Red Seal means everything," said Johnson, who works in above-water weapons systems in addition to his business manager duties. "Now it's reality."

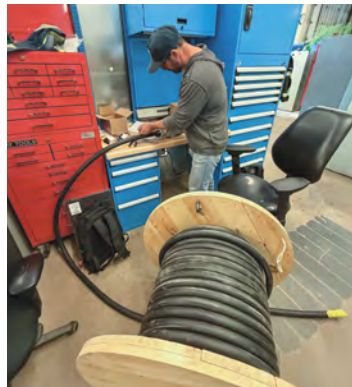
Chester MacKenzie joined Local 1131 when he was hired to work in the harbour in the early 1990s. He loved the job but has had to leave it for years at a time when defense spending slowed.

Fortunately, he earned his Red Seal designation early in his career and was able to join Halifax Local 625, an inside construction local, and maintain steady work. He's now back servicing Navy vessels and Local 1131.

"I applaud Chris and our executive council for fighting the good fight and getting the Red Seal program back in place and to where it is required for our apprentices," he said.

So does First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk.

"This is a strong example of what sustained union advocacy can achieve,"



Three Local 1131 members employed at the Cape Scott maintenance facility, from left: Wileen Grant, an electrical planner, at her desk; Cody Hutchins, who works in the cable shop, installing a power connector for the fleet diving unit; and Brad Rutledge preparing feeder cable.

Shewchuk said. "Chris stayed the course to restore a credential recognizing the value of RSE electrical work and ensuring apprentices get the same training. This is an important win for IBEW members working at Cape Scott."

MacKenzie and his Local 1131 brothers and sisters work alongside members

of Halifax Local 1133, who perform the maintenance work on the same vessels. (Local 1133 members were featured in the April 2020 issue of the Electrical Worker.)

Local 1133 originally represented both the maintenance workers and electricians, but the electricians requested a separate bargaining unit and Local

1131 was granted its charter in 1999.

"Both locals work closely together and well together, but it was needed," MacKenzie said. "We are certified electricians geared toward more industrial marine work. They are more systems and electronics technicians."

Canada has seen an increase in

defense spending under the current Liberal government as it works to increase its commitment to NATO and address Arctic security. That means more work for Local 1131, which has about 110 members across nine shops, covering areas such as fiber optics, sub-electrical and ship cabling, and about 20 percent are women.

MacKenzie, who works in the cable shop, said the "uniqueness and diversity" of work that Local 1131 members perform makes it a special place to be.

"You might get to work on a weapons system, radar system and power generation on the same day," he said. "It's a full spectrum of troubleshooting and repair, and you're fulfilling your support to the Canadian military." ■

### Share your IBEW news!

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

## La formation Sceau rouge fait son retour pour le local à Halifax

Le travail effectué par les membres de la section locale 1131 à Halifax en Nouvelle-Écosse touche littéralement la sécurité nationale; voilà pourquoi le leadership défend depuis des années une certification qui répond aux plus hautes normes de qualité.

Il en est désormais doté.

Les membres du local 1131, des électriciennes et des électriciens au service de la flotte de l'Est de la Marine royale canadienne à l'installation de maintenance à Cape Scott, sont maintenant requis d'avoir leur certification Sceau rouge, la désignation des métiers la plus répandue dans le pays qui garantit un travail spécialisé de qualité supérieure.

Elle sera comprise dans la formation en apprentissage permanente spécifique à l'industrie, elle est offerte par la Marine royale et les entrepreneurs signataires.

« Ma réponse a toujours été : "Nous travaillons pour le gouvernement fédéral" », déclare le gérant d'affaires Chris Johnson. « Qui le fera si nous ne nous plaçons pas au plus haut niveau? »

La formation Sceau rouge a déjà été offerte, mais a été retirée dans les années 90, mentionne M. Johnson. Cette décision a entraîné des conséquences concrètes pour les membres

du local 1131; puisque les dépenses fédérales pour la défense varient, les membres doivent parfois quitter le local pour trouver du travail.

La désignation Sceau rouge a permis de s'intégrer plus facilement aux sections locales de la construction de la FIOE au Canada. Comme cette formation n'était pas offerte au port, les membres ont dû la suivre en congé sans solde.

La contre-amirale Josée Kurtz, commandante des Forces maritimes de l'Atlantique a approuvé le changement à la suite de la recommandation du capitaine Eric McCallum, le commandant à Cape Scott.

« Le Sceau rouge représente tout », formule M. Johnson, qui travaille dans le système des armes de surface en plus de ses tâches de gérant d'affaires. « C'est maintenant une réalité. »

Chester MacKenzie s'est joint au local 1131 au moment où il a été embauché au port au début des années 90. Il adorait son travail, mais a dû l'abandonner pendant de longues périodes en raison du ralentissement des dépenses liées à la défense.

Heureusement, il a obtenu son accréditation Sceau rouge très tôt dans sa carrière, ce qui lui a permis d'adhérer à la section locale 625 de Halifax, un local d'électriciens, et de travailler de

façon régulière. Il est maintenant de retour à son poste d'entretien de navire de la Marine et à la section locale 1131.

« Je félicite Chris et notre comité exécutif d'avoir mené un bon combat et d'avoir remis le programme Sceau rouge sur les rails et où il est requis pour nos apprentis », dit-il.

Ainsi que Russ Shewchuk, vice-président international du Premier District.

M. Mackenzie et ses confrères et ses confrères au local 1131 travaillent de concert avec les membres du local 1133, qui effectuent des travaux d'entretien sur les mêmes navires. (Le local 1133 a été présenté dans le numéro du mois d'avril 2020 de l'Electrical Worker.)

Au départ, le local 1133 représentait les travailleurs de maintenance et les électriciens, mais les électriciens ont demandé une unité de négociation distincte et le local 1131 a obtenu sa charte en 1999.

« Les deux sections locales travaillent de très près et travaillent bien ensemble, mais il avait un besoin », informe M. MacKenzie. « Nous sommes des électriciens certifiés plus axés sur

le travail de la marine industriel. Ils sont plus des techniciens de systèmes et d'électroniques. »

Sous le gouvernement libéral actuel, le Canada a vu une augmentation de la dépense dans la défense, alors qu'il cherche à renforcer son engagement envers l'OTAN et à assurer une meilleure sécurité dans l'Arctique. Ce qui veut dire plus de travail pour le local 1131, qui compte environ 110 membres répartis dans 9 ateliers, spécialisés dans des domaines tels que la fibre optique, le câblage électrique sous-marin et le câblage de navire, dont 20 % sont des femmes.

M. Mackenzie qui travaille dans l'atelier de câbles, dit que « le caractère unique et diversifié » du travail exécuté par les membres du local 1131 est un lieu de travail unique.

« Tu peux travailler dans la même journée sur le système des armes, le système des radars, les générateurs électriques », dit-il. « Il s'agit d'un large éventail de diagnostic de panne et de réparation et vous contribuez à soutenir les Forces armées canadiennes. » ■

### Racontez-nous vos nouvelles FIOE!

La FIOE cherche des histoires marquantes des sections locales et des membres. Veuillez communiquer avec Shaina Hardie à [Shaina\\_Hardie@ibew.org](mailto:Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org).

# POWER AT WORK

BARGAINING

## After Short Strike, Long Island Railroad Members Win Raises

**A**fter nearly three years of negotiations with the Long Island Railroad, a coalition of union-represented workers that includes more than 900 members of Jamaica, N.Y., Local 589 reached a tentative agreement on an amended contract with the commuter carrier and its parent agency, the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

“Coalition bargaining was monumental to our success,” said Local 589 General Chair Jeff Klein, who led the IBEW’s contingent in the bargaining group, which also represented members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, the International Association of Machinists, the Transportation Communications Union, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

“We disagreed sometimes, and sometimes it got heated, but like with siblings, we’d be back the next day at the bargaining table,” Klein said. “We were very fortunate.”

“We would never have gotten to this point without the give and take of our coalition.”

—Jamaica, N.Y., Local 589  
General Chair Jeff Klein

The LIRR carries more than a quarter-million riders on a given weekday, and Local 589’s members in the railroad’s engineering and maintenance departments support electrical equipment in the railroad’s trains, stations and other buildings. They also work on the system’s electrified third rail and signal gates, and they keep up the high-voltage lines connecting the railroad’s substations with the power grid.

Klein highlighted pay raises as among the biggest victories the coalition won in this tentative agreement: 3% raises in each of the first two years, 3.5% in the third and 4.5% in the fourth.

“That fourth-year increase helps everybody out,” said Third District International Representative Dominick Macchia, who services Local 589 and was involved throughout the negotiations. “That’s now the first-year floor for every new rail worker agreement in the metro New York area.”

The tentative agreement was announced May 19, about 3½ days after the members of the coalition, which represents more than 3,500 LIRR workers — over half of the railroad’s unionized workforce — authorized the first strike against the LIRR in nearly 30 years.



Among the speakers featured at a May 9 rally (above) for members of the five-union coalition bargaining with the LIRR were Local 589 General Chair Jeff Klein (far left) and IBEW Railroad Director Danielle Eckert.

Under the Railway Labor Act, commuter and freight rail agreements in the U.S. do not expire. Instead, they become amendable at an agreed-on date, and the existing provisions remain in place until ratification of the amended version.

Negotiations between the union coalition and the LIRR began shortly after the agreement became amendable in June 2023.

A major problem, Klein said, was that the railroad refused to recognize the five-union coalition.

“So I said, ‘Fine, the IBEW will take the lead,’” Klein said, “and then I would bring reps from the other unions as part of ‘my’ bargaining committee.” Local 589’s website kept members informed with regular updates.

A big coalition concern was the LIRR’s hiring and retention, he said.

“There’s a lot of competition with companies outside of railroads to find qualified electricians,” said Klein, a member of Local 589 for nearly 30 years. “People don’t take railroad jobs to get rich. They take them for their stability. We felt that the LIRR needed to up its game.”

Those issues and others remained in contention over the ensuing three years while thousands of LIRR



workers remained on the job without a pay increase. Meanwhile, many of their railroad brothers and sisters around the country won raises.

“Our people were frustrated, especially because Long Island is a very high-cost place to live,” Macchia said. “Gas prices have gone through the roof, and they still didn’t have an agreement. They felt like they were running in sand and not making any progress.”

Direct bargaining between the five-union coalition and the LIRR followed the steps set forth by the Railway Labor Act and began shortly after the agreement became amendable. The process includes provisions for

mediation via the National Mediation Board before parties can seek strikes or lockouts, and state governors can even request White House intervention — in the form of Presidential Emergency Boards — when disputes threaten interstate commerce. Numerous cooling-off periods, ranging from 30 to 120 days, are placed throughout.

“It’s just a slower process in the railroad world,” Macchia said.

By fall 2024, the parties had still not made meaningful progress toward a voluntary agreement. That’s when the Presidential Emergency Boards, or PEBs, were authorized.

PEB 253’s decision sided with the union coalition, recommending in October that the parties adopt an amended agreement lasting through July 2027 and containing, among other things, 3% raises retroactive both to 2023 and 2024, followed by 3.5% for 2025 and 4.5% for 2026. In March, PEB 254 essentially recommended the coalition’s proposal as its preferred final offer.

The coalition deemed unacceptable an 11th-hour proposal by the railroad to require higher health care premium contributions from newly hired workers — essentially, a pay cut — and when it looked as if the final 60-day cooling-off period would pass without an agreement, the coalition members began preparing for a strike.

“The workers felt that they’d exhausted every avenue available under the RLA,” said IBEW Railroad Director Danielle Eckert. “They saw a

strike as their way of fighting for fairness, respect and the future of the workforce.”

By noon on May 19, the parties had announced a tentative agreement that accepted the PEB recommendation — without the LIRR’s premium contribution proposal — and the LIRR’s trains started running again.

Macchia said no one worked harder to achieve the tentative agreement than Klein, who served as Local 589’s president for nearly 10 years before becoming its general chairman in 2025. The 1,300-member local also represents electricians at Newark International Airport, as well as the electrical workers who service John F. Kennedy International Airport’s AirTrain.

“In the bargaining room, you have different personalities, you have different egos,” Macchia said. “If it wasn’t for Jeff’s leadership, they probably would still be on strike.”

Eckert agreed. “Jeff helped hold the coalition together during bargaining and the PEB process,” she said.

Local 589’s members appreciated that Eckert showed up to stand with them on the strike’s picket lines, Macchia added.

“When Danielle spoke, she said, ‘We have something in common: I’m a railroad electrician,’” Macchia said.

Klein said that he was “blessed” to work with an army of dedicated unionists.

“We would never have gotten to this point without the give and take of our coalition,” he said.

When this article was prepared, the amended agreement had been ratified by 98% of Local 589 members who voted. Visit [ibew589.org](http://ibew589.org) for updates. ■



Five unions including the IBEW were part of the coalition bargaining with the LIRR on an amended agreement.

**SAFETY**

**California Local Casts a Wide Net for Mental Health Support**

**T**he IBEW has an admirable track record of prioritizing, and securing, physical safety. It's one of the reasons Henry Miller started the IBEW in 1891. What wasn't addressed as much in the past was mental health.

Today, more and more locals are offering support and trainings on how to deal with the issue. For Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47, psychological wellbeing is just as important as physical safety.

"It's important to prioritize mental health along with safety," said Jenny Lavin, who works with Local 47 and Southern California Edison on training members how to help someone in need. "We want people to know that they don't need to suffer in silence."

From 2019 to 2024, Local 47 had five worksite fatalities, 19 overdoses and 22 suicides. And these sobering statistics aren't confined to this jurisdiction. Locals across the U.S. and Canada have their own numbers showing how mental health can take a toll on members, as well as their families.

Local 47 represents utility workers, who are often among the first responders where a tragedy has occurred. Witnessing such trauma can leave those workers dealing with their own psychological distress. But few members seek out support.

"These guys are often the first people on the scene, before bodies have been removed," said Local 47 Business Manager Colin Lavin. "They're witnessing tragedies that are beyond explanation."

In response to the need for mental health support, Local 47 offers a range of services and resources. In addition to its Employee Assistance Plan, group meetings are held after hours on Zoom for substance use recovery discussions and peer-to-peer support.

For those who are willing to go further and get trained on how to help someone who may be struggling, the local — along with SCE — offers a three-day training based on critical incident stress training. CISM is a model used by police and firefighters, as well as lineworkers. It teaches how to respond to someone who has witnessed a tragedy. It also covers how to have those hard conversations with someone and address how they're feeling.



*Local 47 offers a number of training and support group opportunities for members to get help with mental health challenges.*



*Above: From left: Clayton Loback, Jenny Lavin and Ariel Loback.*



*Local 47 members attending a Mental Health First Aid training.*



*Jacqueline Leslie, left, and Jenny Lavin at the Local 47 Stewards and Safety Conference.*

The CISM three-day class is like mental health on steroids," Jenny Lavin said. "It offers a multi-step process that allows individuals to process the emotional and psychological effects of an incident."

Another training that's offered by the union is Mental Health First Aid, a program that teaches members how to recognize, understand and respond to signs of mental health or substance use challenges.

"It shows you how to provide the first level of support," Colin Lavin said. "Basically, it teaches you how to listen more and talk less."

Jenny Lavin, who started Union Care Solutions, an organization that offers mental health and peer support education, pointed out that a lot of programs offer trainings on what to do right after an incident, but they don't address aftercare.

"Usually, there's only a safety stand-down after an injury or fatality, and that's it," she said. "These people are hurting. Workers and families are affected, and everyone is going around like it's business as usual."

Peer-to-peer support is often the best way for someone get to help — or

**“We want people to know that they don't need to suffer in silence.”**

— Jenny Lavin, Union Care Solutions founder

offer it, Colin and Jenny Lavin both said. It can be a lot easier to talk to someone who understands the job, the culture and the lifestyle.

"Nobody wants to talk to suits or someone they don't know," said Colin Lavin, who took the CISM training with Jenny. "They need someone who can offer that human touch and familiarity."

Clayton Loback, with signatory contractor Sturgeon Electric, also supports peer-to-peer training.

"The peer-to-peer model is something that our first responders already do," Loback said. "Just like firemen or law enforcement, people in our field would like to speak with someone who understands the culture and nuances of our trade."

Jenny Lavin said Mental Health First Aid works by training members, leaders and peers to recognize when someone may be struggling and to have

supportive conversations. CISM offers support on how to respond after traumatic incidents and connect members to additional resources when needed. Local 47 has trained 100 workers in CISM and 50 people in MHFA. Union Care Solutions has trained over 100 apprentices in suicide prevention.

She stressed that this is not training members to be therapists.

"It's about helping crews look out for one another in a healthier and more sustainable, effective way," Lavin said. "The goal is to create a culture where members know how to recognize stress, respond to one another and stay connected after difficult experiences."

Having buy-in from the employer is crucial, added Lavin, who trains members alongside Jacqueline Leslie from SCE. The training focuses on early recognition, peer support and connect-

ing employees to resources.

"It gives craft employees practical skills for starting conversations, reducing stigma and responding when someone is in crisis," Leslie said. "It's like CPR but for mental health."

Leslie also noted that mental health is directly tied to safety. Stress, fatigue and life challenges can increase risk on the job, especially in high-hazard work. Research shows that when someone is experiencing a mental health challenge, they're twice as likely to have a workplace incident.

Leslie, Loback, and Colin and Jenny Lavin want members to know that the classes are free and open to anyone, from business managers to apprentices. More importantly, if nothing else, they want everyone to know one simple thing:

"You are not alone." ■



*Clayton Loback, Jenny Lavin and Ariel Loback.*

# CIRCUITS

## Boston and Indianapolis Locals Face Off in Inaugural Basketball Tournament

Boston Local 103 and Indianapolis Local 481 took their skills and solidarity to the court for what they hope will be the first annual IBEW basketball tournament.

Considering how popular basketball is in Indiana, it was the perfect choice of sport to get the inaugural games off and running.

"In Indiana, basketball is a religion. It's one of our favorite pastimes," said Local 481 business manager Jeff Wheeler. "When we learned that our sisters and brothers in Local 103 shared a love of the sport, it was like a match made in heaven."

Local 481 has had a basketball league for close to 40 years, with over 100 members participating, said Local 481 member Dominic Collins. The multi-local basketball competition is an idea that has been tossed around at different IBEW conferences for years.

"We would brainstorm with delegates from locals across the country on ways to make it happen," said Collins, who was the point person for Local 481. "Then finally Lou and his team came up with a plan and reached out to us to participate."

For Local 103 Business Manager Lou Antonellis, the decision to go with basketball was simple: "Why not!"

As the host team, Local 103 members had their hands full, from planning a pre-game reception to securing a place to play — for which they got the Auerbach Center, the union-built practice facility for the Boston Celtics.

"Fortunately, we have a relationship with the Celtics where we're allowed to use it sometimes," Antonellis said, noting that the space was wired by IBEW members. "It's a beautiful building. We were happy to show it off."

The first game was nail-bitingly close, going into double overtime and then sudden death, with Local 481 emerging as the winner. The second game was not as close, with the Indiana team trouncing Local 103 and taking the W again.

"It was a lot of fun," said Local 103 member Jeff Sheehan, who revived the idea to have a basketball tournament. "I also learned a lesson: Don't take on a team from Indiana, especially for the first tournament. That was an error on my part."

Collins noted that, for a lot of his fellow Local 481 members, it was their first time playing on an NBA regulation-size court, which is about 10 feet longer. There's also an extra four feet on the 3-point line versus a high school court.

"The 10-foot difference in court length doesn't sound like a lot, but it was fun to watch the young guys in their 20s become winded after running up and down the court only a few times," Collins said. "There were also a few airballs from not factoring in the additional four feet when they would try for a 3-pointer."

The tournament was a lot to arrange in a short time, Sheehan said, but the experience was worth it.

"It wasn't two different locals playing a couple games and then going home; it was one IBEW team," he said.

The two teams had about 20 members each, from all ages, including retirees. For some, it was their first time meeting someone from another local.

"The basketball games were fun and exciting to watch, but what I enjoyed most about the tournament was seeing members from both locals laugh and interact with each other," Collins said. "These memories will stick with them for a lifetime."



Boston Local 103 and Indianapolis Local 481 competed in the inaugural IBEW Basketball Tournament, held in late February. Despite having home court advantage, Local 103 lost to Local 481. At right: Local 103 Business Manager Lou Antonellis, who also sits on the IBEW International Executive Council; and Local 481 Business Manager Jeff Wheeler.



There's no set date for a second tournament, but it will likely take place in the winter, Antonellis said.

"We're talking about visiting Indianapolis next time," he said, brushing aside any worries about a home court advantage. "We're looking to even up the series."

Playing a game or two was only part of what the event was about. By the end, members from different locals, separated by a thousand miles and different job classifications, bonded with one another. They became friends. It was a great way to foster solidarity.

"This is what the IBEW is all about: competition on the court with a brother-hood that lasts far beyond the final buzzer," Antonellis said. ■

## Detroit Local Transforms Blighted Neighborhoods With Solar Power

One of Detroit's latest revitalization projects is transforming vacant and blighted areas of land into solar arrays, and Local 58 members are helping to make that happen.

Billions of dollars have been funneled into Detroit's coffers to fund a number of projects aimed at invigorating the city's downtown. But much less attention has been paid to the underserved neighborhoods that are farther from the city's core.

Now, with the help of Detroit Local 58, those overlooked areas are getting a boost in the form of solar arrays.

"This project speaks to Detroit's commitment to renewable energy and our local union workforce," said Local 58 Business Representative Byron Osbern. "We are partners in a more sustainable initiative for this city."

The initiative will install nine solar arrays in five neighborhoods, covering a total of 167 acres. The undertaking is expected to generate 31 megawatts of solar energy, which will be used to power just under 130 municipal buildings, including City Hall, police and fire stations, recreation centers, health clinics, and transit centers.

The effort is part of a goal set by the city to power 100% of its municipal buildings with clean energy by 2034.

Local 58 members will be handling panels, connecting to inverters, grounding and bonding, connecting the solar array to the utility, and

installing underground conduit. The initiative is being done under the Tri-Trade Solar Agreement, under which the IBEW works with LIUNA and the Operating Engineers to delineate which union is responsible for different aspects of a solar construction project.

IBEW signatory contractor Motor City Electric has been chosen for all of the work on the project and is partnering with DTE, the area utility that employs members of Detroit Local 17. Matt Beck, MCE senior project manager, it has 20 to 30 members working on the arrays so far, and will likely have 40 at the peak.

"Local 58 has a great relationship with DTE," Beck said. "They knew they could trust us with the work."

For people living in the designated areas, various forms of compensation have been offered, based on where they live in relation to the sites. Some homeowners were relocated and given market value for their homes. Others received \$15,000 to \$25,000 in energy efficiency upgrades, including roof repairs and upgrades to windows, furnaces and water heaters.

"These repairs are making a real difference in these people's lives," Beck said, noting that one woman had a carbon monoxide detector installed and it went off a few months later, alerting her to the odorless poison. "She survived something that she previously may not have."

Residents in the affected neighborhoods have also been participating in the design and beautification aspects of the initiative and are getting regular updates on the project's progress.

"It's very rare to have neighbors giving so much input," Beck said. "Usually, you go to a council meeting and a project passes or not. Not only are the residents having input in the meetings, but they're getting regular updates on construction progress."

The inclusion of residents has allowed for more community buy-in, Beck said.

"They're thrilled to be able to take part in the design," Beck said. "It's been pretty positive."

Residents are also getting an education on solar power and the advantages of green energy, as well as the function of photovoltaic technology and safe work practices, Beck and Osbern said.

"The education they're getting allows for more community engagement, which is a plus for everyone involved," Beck said.

The project, which has all subcontractors hailing from the Detroit area, was made possible by tax credits from the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which was designed to improve the financial viability of renewable energy projects. ■



Members of Local 58 are working with the city of Detroit to revamp vacant and blighted land in five different neighborhoods and turn them into solar energy fields that will power close to 130 municipal buildings.

# TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

## Charles McKinney



Tenth District International Representative Charles “Charlie” McKinney, who led an organizing effort to join the IBEW and

went on to be a leading construction organizer in the Brotherhood, retired effective April 1.

Those who know him best said you won’t find a better example of persistence and perseverance.

“He shows that you can’t ever surrender or quit,” said his son, Donnie McKinney, now the Arkansas state organizing coordinator. “If someone tells you no, it just might not be their time yet. And maybe they’ll say no four or five more times. But at some point, they might say yes.”

Brother McKinney grew up in west-central Arkansas and worked nonunion construction for 15 years, eventually becoming a superintendent for a company.

By 1996, he and other employees noticed that benefits were being cut or eliminated — so they turned to the IBEW. McKinney led the organizing effort and approached Fort Smith, Ark., Local 700 officials for help.

The local agreed to represent them, and the company’s management then voluntarily agreed to recognize the newly formed unit, avoiding a costly battle for everyone involved. McKinney noted that the 17-person group voted unanimously for union representation.

“One of the things I am most proud of is that all 17 of those guys, except for those who have passed away, are still in the union except for one, and he became a signatory contractor,” he said.

Taking advantage of the increased wages and good benefits, McKinney worked as a traveler and started getting involved in Local 700. He was elected business manager in 2007, and after being reelected once, he joined the Tenth District staff as an organizer in 2011.

One year later, he became the Arkansas state organizing coordinator — the position now held by his son — and the district organizing coordinator in 2014.

McKinney admits that one of his central tenets of organizing might sound a little odd.

While he appreciates that the IBEW has the best-trained workforce and highest standards in the industry, he wouldn’t mention that often when trying to persuade qualified nonunion workers to join the Brotherhood. He said potential new members often found it to be a little intimidating.

“It makes people not in the union a little scared of us,” he said. “One of the most terrifying things they

face is that first day on a union job and they wonder, ‘How am I going to measure up to these people?’ I know that’s how I felt.”

Getting them to understand the better quality of life that awaited them often proved a better tactic, he said. McKinney said he also made it priority to reach out to new members once on the job, making sure they felt comfortable in their new surroundings.

“Most of us are just electricians looking to make a living,” he said.

Fellow Tenth District International Representative David Stephens, another Arkansas native who worked closely with McKinney on organizing for more than two decades, said McKinney “brought a professionalism that we needed to the organizing side.”

“He knew how to approach people and how they looked at things, and that was very important,” Stephens added. “The other thing about Charlie is that you never had to worry about what he was thinking. He would give you his unvarnished opinion.”

McKinney was ahead of the curve when it came to organizing the non-union worker. The IBEW has increased its attempts to do so in recent years to meet the shortage of skilled electricians as the demand from contractors only increases.

“[Y]ou never had to worry about what he was thinking. He would give you his unvarnished opinion.”

— Tenth District International Representative David Stephens

“He always stood up and said, ‘There are good ones over there like there are good ones here,’” Stephens said. “He made sure everyone understood they are the same as we are. They just had not had the same opportunities.”

In 2016, McKinney became a Tenth District international representative and service rep for nine local unions in Arkansas, including some on the professional and industrial side.

“A lot of our smaller locals, the staff are volunteers,” he said. “They’re working a 12-hour shift and then getting on the phone to serve their members. I respected that and tried to help in any way I could.”

McKinney lives in Booneville, Ark., just a few miles from where he grew up. He and his wife, Leslie, purchased a camper and plan to travel extensively. He also plans to play a lot

of golf.

In addition to Donnie, he has three daughters and two stepchildren.

“I look back, and one of the smartest things I ever did was walking into that union hall and joining the IBEW,” he said “I heard all the bad stories and everything else about unions. They weren’t true. One of the things I enjoyed most about organizing was seeing the look on someone’s face when they got that first paycheck.”

The officers and staff thank Brother McKinney for his years of service and wish him a long, happy retirement. ■

RETIRED

## Stephen J. Rockafellow



Third District Regional Organizing Coordinator Stephen Rockafellow, a veteran IBEW activist whose organizing efforts

improved the lives of thousands of workers, retired on April 15.

“I worked with good people that I liked, so it wasn’t hard,” said Brother Rockafellow, a native New Yorker for whom electrical work was part of his post-school plans.

“I liked working on cars and mechanical stuff,” he said. After graduating, he earned an associate’s degree in electrical tech from a local community college.

His first application to Newburgh, N.Y., Local 631’s apprenticeship, though, was declined.

In 1978, “I’d been banging around doing dead-end jobs and decided to apply again,” Rockafellow said. Gaining an interview, he learned that failing to include his high school transcript had kept him out of the running before.

“I’d thought they sent it in for you,” he said with a laugh.

One of Rockafellow’s apprenticeship classmates was Samuel Fratto, now business manager of New City, N.Y., Local 363.

“Work was slow, so they only took five apprentices,” said Fratto, who remains close friends with Rockafellow. “You’re not going to find anybody who’s more fun to hang out with than Steve.”

The apprenticeship was his big break, Rockafellow said: “It was my first real job. I was aware I had to take it seriously.”

Rockafellow, officially initiated into the IBEW in 1980, enjoyed attending union meetings and rallies, and he frequently volunteered to help with the local’s social activities.

When he finished his apprenticeship in 1983, his enthusiasm had caught the attention of Local 631’s leaders, who offered him what became a 10-year stint as a second-year apprentice instructor while he continued to work with the tools as a journeyman

wireman and foreman.

In 1988, he was serving his third year on the local’s examining board when he was appointed to fill a vacancy as treasurer and asked to become a business representative and organizer.

“I thought, ‘Let me take a shot at this,’” said Rockafellow, adding that Business Manager Dutch Hughes encouraged him to take classes at what is now the State University of New York’s Empire State University.

“I really had a bug for learning,” said Rockafellow, who earned a bachelor’s degree from the school in 1992 and a master’s degree in 1999.

In 1992, Rockafellow successfully ran for the first of three terms on Newburgh’s City Council. “I had a friend who was on the council, and he kind of talked me into it,” he explained.

The following year, Local 631 was amalgamated into Local 363 and Rockafellow became a full-time organizer for his new local. Doing so many jobs, he admitted, “was really taking me away from my kids too much,” and he ended his city council service in 2003.

In 2006, International President Edwin D. Hill hired Rockafellow to serve in the newly created Membership Development Department as organizing coordinator for the Northeast, which covered the IBEW’s Second, Third and Fourth districts — from Maine to Kentucky.

“I really liked the traveling,” Rockafellow said, “seeing different places and meeting workers.”

When the union later allocated one organizing coordinator to each district, Rockafellow was assigned to the Third District.

“There were 471 campaigns that went either to an election or to voluntary recognition,” said Rockafellow, reflecting on his almost 20 years of district-level service. “Of those, 358 were successful.”

“Some days, it looks like it’s all falling apart,” he added. “But there’s no better feeling than when you win elections.”

Three of the successes resulted in new locals being chartered. Two were in Trenton, N.J.: Local 30 in 2013, to represent managers in state government, and Local 33 in 2014, to represent the state’s deputy attorneys general, or DAGs.

“They all start with a call, and I’m a guy looking for business,” Rockafellow said. “Then, I find out New Jersey deemed DAGs confidential employees and they didn’t have bargaining rights.”

Fortunately, he said, a lobbying effort led by Third District International Representative Wyatt Earp, who retired in December 2025, persuaded the state’s Governor and Legislature to pass a law granting DAGs organizing rights.

The third charter was for Monaca, Pa., Local 724, “after an organizing campaign over the last several years for Shell workers in western Pennsylvania,” Rockafellow said. (Read about Local 724’s recently reached first con-

tract in the cover story.)

That campaign allowed Rockafellow to work with the organizer later selected to replace him, Third District Lead Organizer Michael McGee, whom Rockafellow called “a very hard worker.”

The Shell campaign was huge, McGee said.

“I couldn’t have done it without Steve’s advice,” he said. “When it comes to organizing and the National Labor Relations Act, he’s so sharp.”

Rockafellow has a knack for leadership, Fratto added. “Steve’s good with sending people in the right direction,” he said. “He loves the IBEW, and he’s a great asset to it. No question.”

Topping Rockafellow’s retirement to-do list is spending time with Peggy, his wife of 44 years, and their two adult children, son-in-law and granddaughter.

“Steve’s good with sending people in the right direction. He loves the IBEW, and he’s a great asset to it. No question.”

— New City, N.Y., Local 363 Business Manager Samuel Fratto

“When I realized I needed a diversion from work, I took up boating,” he said. “Hopefully, we’ll spend more time on it now.”

“I’ve always enjoyed working on my house,” Rockafellow added. “And my parents are still alive, and now I can help them out a little more.”

That kind of helpfulness defines Rockafellow, McGee said. “Even now, Steve calls me to check in,” he said. “He’s happy, cordial, professional and always a gentleman.”

Please join the IBEW’s officers and staff in wishing Brother Rockafellow a long and happy retirement. ■

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# LOCAL LINES

## Summer of Discontent

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,rts,s,se,spa,st,ws&ptc), ST. LOUIS, MO — Greetings, sisters and brothers. The time is now to get involved to save our republic and this union. It took the Nazis two months to eliminate the constitutional democracy in Germany in 1933. Thanks to the Founding Fathers and a strong judicial branch, the efforts of this administration to undermine the Constitution and democratic norms have been stopped or slowed down. All of that is temporary unless you get involved.

I teach OSHA 10/30 to our new apprentices. Since this administration took over, getting to documents and forms has become more challenging. The rule-change proposals coming down through the bureaucracy are aimed at weakening enforcement and turning OSHA regulations into a suggestion versus a required minimum.

I beseech you to become very vocal in opposing the willing incumbents who are rubber-stamping or standing by, not using their authority inherent in the legislative branch to bring this administration to heel.

Reckless illegal tariff policies, turning ICE into a personal force above the police, seizing immigrants and U.S. citizens with no reason more than they are not Caucasian to be sorted out later, going to war and bombing whomever the president wants with impunity.

When will it stop? Only when you get involved and stop it. Congress is OK with finding or borrowing more money to fund the illegal war on Iran. The same Congress also says there is no money for universal health care, no funds for a Department of Education, no funds for a level playing field for workers.

The country and this union needs you now, more than ever.

Kyle Hunter, P.S.

## 2026 St. Patrick's Day Parades

L.U. 43 (em,i&rts), SYRACUSE, NY — Our local's members and their families showed their union pride and



Local 43 celebrates at the Syracuse St. Patrick's Day parade.

enjoyed the 2026 Syracuse and Utica St. Patrick's Day parades. We had an amazing day of solidarity.

We would like to thank everyone for coming out and celebrating this annual event!

Jeff Cassano, P.S.

## Market Share Increase for Local 51

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — The National Labor-Management Cooperation Committee is a joint initiative between NECA and the IBEW designed to improve labor relations, increase competitiveness and promote union electrical work. In the NLMCC's most recent report, Local 51's market share for the outside electrical construction industry, both in employment and wages, increased to 96%. Thanks to all our members with their help in organizing nonunion workers.

To get work-picture updates within our jurisdiction, please visit our website ([ibew51.org](http://ibew51.org)), where you can also pay your dues or re-sign the books.

The power of our union rests in your hands. Being in a union means showing solidarity, fighting for better wages, taking collective action, volunteering in our communities and showing up for union events. We work together, stand together and fight together.

We have monthly unit meetings to plan, discuss, debate and make decisions as a group. The unit meeting's setup ensures that all members have an opportunity to hear and be heard. It ensures that everyone has a voice, a vote and a seat at the table. Members get updates on contract negotiations, grievances and union events. Plus, it's just a fun evening spent with your union brothers and sisters.

We hope to see you at the next unit meeting!

Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.

## Local 71 Surges With Major Projects and Member Upgrades

L.U. 71 (lctt,o&rtb), COLUMBUS, OH — Our local continues to build momentum with several exciting developments for our members. Work is ongoing with our new events hall and training center, a major investment in the future of our local and a facility that will better serve our growing membership for years.

In May, we rolled out our new Safety Wallet, giving members digital access to their training, certifications and credentials. Instead of keeping track of paper copies or wondering what may be expiring, everything can be accessed from your phone. The Safety Wallet has been adopted by the IBEW and NECA, and Local 71 has already begun uploading documents such as Fourth District safety rules, wages and important contacts. Members who prefer a paper ticket can still request one.

In addition, Local 71 members working for Verizon participated in joint IBEW/CWA safety rodeos at reporting centers across the state, reinforcing best practices and strengthening our commitment to keeping every member safe on the job.

Communication is also getting an upgrade. Our new Local 71 website, developed by BMA Media, launched in May. This updated platform makes it easier for members to stay informed, access resources, bid on jobs, sign the books, and stay connected with everything happening at the hall and across the state. Be sure to log in and explore [ibew71.org](http://ibew71.org).

Most importantly, work at Local 71 continues to grow, and the outlook for 2026 and beyond remains very strong, with no signs of slowing down. Numerous multiyear 765-kV and 345-kV transmission projects have begun, and data centers, battery, solar and power stations are underway or on the horizon, keeping the overall work forecast robust.

James Roessner, R.S.

## Local 103 Elections: A Time for Membership, Leadership and Friendship

L.U. 103 (cs,i&ptc), BOSTON, MA — May 2 was election day at our local. Thousands of members came

out to vote, reinforcing the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity that keep our union strong.

IBEW elections are about more than just choosing leaders. They are an opportunity for members to come together, have their voices heard and help shape the future of our union by supporting leadership that continues to guide Local 103 forward.

Throughout the day, the atmosphere felt more like a championship tailgate than an election. An all-day parking lot party rivaled most NFL gamedays, with barbecues, music, laughter and plenty of brotherhood keeping members connected from morning until night.

When the votes were counted, Local 103's leadership team was overwhelmingly reelected, earning the trust and confidence of the membership to continue leading our union on this prosperous path forward.

At the end of the day, the true strength of this union is not found in one title or one person. It is found in thousands of hard-working members standing together, united in purpose and proud to carry the legacy of Local 103 into the future.

James Fleming, P.S.



Local 125's Casino Night attendees having fun at the blackjack table.

## Local 125 Hosts 23rd Annual Casino Night and Canned Food Drive

L.U. 125 (lctt,o,t,u&ptc), PORTLAND, OR — On March 14, the hall buzzed with excitement for the 23rd annual Casino Night and Canned Food Drive, uniting members, families and friends for another memorable evening of fun and generosity. The event featured lively gaming tables, great prizes and plenty of laughter, all in the spirit of giving back to the community.

Thanks to the outstanding participation of everyone involved, 818 pounds of food were collected for the SnowCap Food Drive, supporting families in need. Additionally, \$5,693 was raised for the Brotherhood Fund, continuing Local 125's

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

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

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

## Trade Classifications

(as) Alarm & Signal	(et) Electronic Technicians	(mps) Motion Picture Studios	(rts) Radio-Television Service
(ars) Atomic Research Service	(fm) Fixture Manufacturing	(nst) Nuclear Service Technicians	(so) Service Occupations
(bo) Bridge Operators	(govt) Government	(o) Outside	(s) Shopmen
(cs) Cable Splicers	(i) Inside	(p) Powerhouse	(se) Sign Erector
(catv) Cable Television	(it) Instrument Technicians	(pet) Professional, Engineers & Technicians	(spa) Sound & Public Address
(c) Communications	(lctt) Line Clearance Tree Trimming	(ptc) Professional, Technical & Clerical	(st) Sound Technicians
(cr) Cranemen	(lpt) Lightning Protection Technicians	(rr) Railroad	(t) Telephone
(ees) Electrical Equipment Service	(mt) Maintenance	(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.

tradition of assisting fellow members and strengthening community bonds.

Casino Night remains a reflection of the values of Local 125 — camaraderie, compassion and commitment to service. The event's success was made possible through the dedication of sponsors, volunteers, staff and attendees who embody the union's generous spirit.

For those who missed this year's celebration, next year promises another evening of great fun for a great cause. Each year, this special event brings people together not only to enjoy themselves but to make a real difference in the lives of others.

*Travis Eri, B.M.*

## Local 141's Positive Work Outlook

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Work is picking up in our local, with 29 on Book 1.

Local 141 expects to be quite busy in the coming months, with several projects pending, including a cancer center for WVU Medicine, an aquatic center for John Marshall High School and a cooling tower replacement at AEP Mitchell. Local 141 also, as of this writing, has been putting members and travelers to work at the TCL project just north of New Martinsville, W.Va.

Our local will be holding its election of officers this summer, with all offices on the ballot. Best of luck to all who run for an elected office within the local union!

The Local 141 Social Committee is making plans for its annual summer picnic, as well as the local's 125-year celebration, which will occur in fall 2027.

Our local is deeply saddened to report the passing of members James K. Hossman and William "Bill" Magers. They will be greatly missed.

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

## Local 223 Members Win Local Elections

L.U. 223 (em,govt&i), BROCKTON, MA — We are always encouraging our members to get involved in local politics. Congratulations to Brother Joe Bednarik, who was elected selectman in the town of Somerset, Mass., and Brother Bill Raposa, elected to the planning board in the same town last year. It will be helpful to have IBEW members voting on future development in our area.

*Jeff Plaisted, Bus. Rep.*



*Congratulations to Local 223 member Joe Bednarik, who was elected selectman in the town of Somerset, Mass.*



*Local 245 members working to repair storm damage and restore service to their area.*

## Local 245 Powers Through Storms and Gears Up for Summer Events

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — Our local hopes everyone is enjoying a great summer and spending quality time with family and friends.

Local 245 looks forward to our ninth annual Mud Hens baseball game at Fifth Third Field on Aug. 8. It's a great opportunity to come together with brothers and sisters for a night at the ballpark, and we can't wait to see you there.

As of this writing, our Local 245 members are hard at work responding to numerous wind and storm events across northwest Ohio. We want to thank our members for the long hours they've put in over the past three months to restore power to customers. We also want to extend our appreciation to loved ones at home who keep everyday life moving while our members are out in the field.

On April 22, we celebrated Administrative Professionals Day and want to give a special shout-out to Amanda Parker and Lisa Tracy. Thank you both — your hard work does not go unnoticed.

Bryan Municipal Utilities, the Bryan Wastewater Treatment Plant and Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative have all ratified new three-year contracts that include many improvements. Our outside construction work remains very busy, with numerous ongoing projects.

We hope everyone continues to work safely and uphold the IBEW Code of Excellence.

*Brian Gendaszek, P.S.*

## A Semiquincentennial Event

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LESUEUR, MN — Happy 250th birthday, America! In 1776, the signing of the Declaration of Independence set the course for "these United Colonies ... to be Free and Independent States." Sixty-eight years later came the invention of the telegraph (1844), followed by the telephone (1876) and the incandescent lamp (1879). Large cities were becoming electrified.

On Nov. 28, 1891, line-man Henry Miller founded

the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. In 1894, St. Paul, Minn., Local 23 submitted a death benefit claim. The year 1919 is noteworthy for our region as the date Minnesota was first represented by an electrical union. Local 343 was chartered on April 1, 1979. This is our past.

The future of the IBEW may exceed our imaginations. Big tech CEOs claim that within 10 years, building data centers in space will be the norm. One proposal is to build a self-sustaining city on the moon. The Artemis II astronauts are paid an annual salary of about \$152,000. Whether they can claim mileage is unknown.

A Local 343 journeyman wireman's wages and benefits are approximately \$151,000. Ten years from now, your next long call may be for anti-gravity electric, report to the moon with a paid-up dues receipt and no state license required.

Buying Made In USA matters.

*Thomas Small, P.S.*

## Local 351 Honors Retirees

L.U. 351 (c,cs,i,it,lctt,mt,o,se,spa&t), FOLSOM, NJ — Our local's April general meeting was a memorable evening dedicated to honoring the careers and contributions of our retired members. Fifty members who retired in 2025 were presented with retirement watches by Business Manager Daniel P. Cosner in recognition of their years of dedicated service.

In addition, members celebrating milestone anniversaries of 50 to 65 years were honored with commemorative pins, marking an extraordinary commitment to the IBEW. Following the meeting, food and refreshments were served so those in attendance could continue to celebrate those members who helped pave the way for what we have today.

The membership, officers and staff of Local 351 extend our sincere gratitude to these members for their decades of hard work and dedication and wish them all the very best in their well-earned retirement.

*Ryck Signor, P.S.*

## Local 479 Is Getting Even Busier

L.U. 479 (i&u), BEAUMONT, TX — Our local saw the Orange County Advanced Power Station in the startup phase in April. A new Veterans Affairs clinic is being built in Beaumont and will open in 2027, and an Amazon fulfillment center is in its beginning phase. We have a continued presence at petrochemical plants here, including Exxon Mobil and Motiva Enterprises.

Also, it's apparent that another Entergy power plant, a wind farm and a data center will be coming to Jefferson County. Please keep us in mind,

traveling brothers and sisters.

Additionally, our local is designated by the ICEA to refer and train instrumentation techs for the entire state of Texas. We have seen a real increase in these calls.

Business Manager Justin Cooper and organizer Evan Pennison have been busy on the organizing front, attending organizing events at Amarillo Local 602, Dallas-Fort Worth Local 20 and El Paso Local 583.

Our JATC apprentices placed second in the Seventh District apprentice contest this year. We are very proud of them!

Our EWMC group is very active volunteering and just won the People's Choice Award in the jambalaya cookoff at the SETX Craft BBQ Festival.

Please stay safe and keep cool this summer! Happy 250 years, USA!

*Mark Jacobson, P.S.*



*Local 601's Sister Cara Siegel helps prospective students understand the workings of a circuit.*

## Local 601 Sister Teaches in Pre-Apprenticeship Program

L.U. 601 (i&rtb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL — Our members are the foundational strength of our local, and we help pave pathways for future members. For this month, our trailblazer is Sister Cara Siegel. Cara became a member of Local 601 in 2020 and completed her apprenticeship in 2025. Now, she looks for opportunities to help others find their way into the building trades.

In partnership with the East Central Illinois Building and Construction Trades Council and HIRE360, the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program helps those who are interested in learning about labor unions to take their first steps to potentially become apprentices.

Despite having a full-time job as a union electrician, Cara has been hired as an instructor to help others learn about how to join Local 601. Recently out of the apprenticeship, she knows firsthand what it takes to make it through the program and shares that knowledge with her prospective students.

During the pre-apprenticeship, students learn from union members from different trades. Cara helps students with their first time bending conduit, pulling wire, wiring receptacles and lights, and troubleshooting circuits. She also teaches them about union history and the courses needed to apply to apprenticeships.



*Local 351's 2025 retirees with Business Manager Dan Cosner and President Steve DiMatteo.*

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LOCAL LINES

Cara has a deep understanding that it is up to us to engage the next generation of the trades as soon as possible. She hopes that one day, some of the people she teaches will go into the apprenticeship and complete the program just as she did. We thank her and her efforts to be a trailblazer and pave the pathway for those who are interested in the trades.

Local 601 has 37 on Book 1 and 12 on Book 2.  
*Luther Baker, P.S.*

**Local 611 Retirees Celebrated**

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — Hello, brothers and sisters. At the time of this writing, our work picture is still going strong, with Los Alamos having continuous calls and Intel and Meta still busy.

In March, the Retirees' Committee organized a lunch at Rudy's Bar-B-Q in Santa Fe for all of the retirees from the northern part of the state, and more than 40 members showed up, many having not seen each other in several years. Retirees received a shirt and service pin for the number of years they have been members. Everyone had a great time and made plans for a future get-together.

This is an election year for both our union and the state, so please make every effort to get out and vote. I will report on our union election results in our next article.

On behalf of the local, I send condolences to the family and friends of James Clayton, Rodney Gatlin, Mahlon Howard, Santiago Lopez, Fred "Ferd" Martinez, Jose R. Martinez, Robert Mason, Armando Miranda, Anthony Montano, Sammy Moran, Albert Phol, William Rendell, Charles Sillint, Steve Vigil and Stephen Wiley.

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

*Darrell Blair, P.S.*

**Local 617 Member Health and Wellness**

L.U. 617 (c,i,mo&st), SAN MATEO, CA — Our local urges its members to be happy and healthy both on and off the jobsite. All members, including retirees and apprentices, and their dependents have access to health coaching, injury checks, registered dietitian and nutrition services, flu shots, health screenings, mental health resources, and health club discounts, all at no cost to them.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, fitness classes were available online that ranged from high-intensity workouts to meditation training aimed at keeping our members moving when they were mandated to be home. We are grateful to be able to assist our membership and their families who wish to step up their routines, get back on track, take better care of themselves or get support dealing with chronic health issues.



*Local 611 retirees gathered for a luncheon held in Santa Fe.*



*Local 617 members on the court during the March Madness Tournament.*

Activities have included a Move a Mile event, Light "Em Up challenge, Know Your Numbers testing, March Madness basketball tournaments, weight-loss team challenges, PlanksGiving and an H2o hydration tracker — all programs to create better habits that the entire family can enjoy together.

At Local 617, we are proud to focus on the overall wellness of our members so they can live their best lives.

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



*Happy Easter from Local 697!*

**Sisters of 697 Easter Event**

L.U. 697 (c,es,i,mt&se), GARY AND HAMMOND, IN — Our Women's Committee, Sisters of 697, has hit the ground running this year, working with the local to host our first Easter event at the hall. It allowed our members to take pictures with the Easter Bunny and avoid long lines at Bass Pro Shops or Walgreens. We had Easter egg hunts that included special golden eggs every hour with gift cards for the kids that found them. It turned out to be a huge success, with 70 kids in attendance!

We have a few raffles this year for our

committee to help fund events like this. At the time of this writing, our next big event is our annual fishing derby June 13, with proceeds going to a Local 697 family in need. We hope to see a few brothers and sisters from surrounding locals, as well.

We also want to congratulate sisters Christen Conway, Aubrey Deboer and Lauren DiNino on winning the Tradeswomen Heroes of the Month Award from NABTU. These ladies put in the work both on and off the jobsite.

We also want to highlight Jenn Batka, working for Aldridge Electric. With her help, they raised \$26,000 at their Polar Plunge event for Special Children's Charities and Special Olympics.

We hope you all stay safe out there!

*Phil Hernandez, B.M./F.S.*

*Local 915 President Jonathan Fielder presents Business Manager Randall King with a retirement gift.*



**Long-Serving Business Manager Randall King Announces Retirement**

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — At the April 10 general membership meeting, Business Manager Randall King announced his retirement after an extraordinary 42 years of membership and 33 years of dedicated leadership within the IBEW.

Business Manager King began his journey when he started his apprenticeship in 1982, and his commitment to the membership never wavered. He won his first election in 1993 and went on to serve in numerous capacities, including executive board member, president of Local 915, president of the Gulf Coast Building and Construction Trades Council, president of the Florida Electrical Workers Association and Business Manager/Financial Secretary of Local 915. His career has been one of tireless service and unwavering dedication to the members of the local. Local 915 wishes Randall well in his retirement and hopes he enjoys the fruits of his labor.

The meeting was honored by the attendance of International President Emeritus Lonnie R. Stephenson and his wife, Dawn. Local 915 extends its sincere gratitude to them both for making the trip to be with us.

As this transition unfolds, President Jonathan Fielder will assume the mantle of business manager, and Brother Brian Nathan will step into the role of president. Local 915 has confidence in both brothers and looks forward to the continued strength and growth of the local under their leadership.

In additional exciting news, Brother Brian Nathan won his election March 24 to serve as the

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16 oz. stainless steel and neoprene travel mug featuring the fist and lightning bolts with IBEW initials.

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Florida state senator of District 14 for the remainder of the term, through the November elections. Brother Nathan was outspent 10-to-1 by his opponent and still managed to carry a remarkable victory by 405 votes.

Brian Nathan, A.B.M.

## Rebuilding Florida Politics

L.U. 1205 (em,govt,i,u&ptc), GAINESVILLE, FL — Big news out of Florida, friends! Brother Brian Nathan of our neighboring Tampa Local 915 has secured a major victory, winning a special election for a Florida Senate seat in a race against an incumbent who raised more than \$700,000 to Nathan's \$65,000.

This victory marks a significant step forward for Florida's working class, which has gone years without strong representation at the legislative level. Brother Nathan's success proves that grassroots support and worker-driven campaigns can overcome big-money politics.

Inspired by this momentum, one of our own from Local 1205 is stepping up. Brother Jason Bellamy-Fults has officially launched his campaign for Florida's 6th Senate District, challenging another entrenched incumbent who originally inherited the seat simply because she ran unopposed.

During this year's legislative session, Brother Jason met with Sen. Jennifer Bradley and her staff. While they promised to stand with working families, their actions told a different story, voting against labor interests eight times! Jason is running to change that.

If you live in Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Gilchrist or Union counties, we encourage you to stand with working people and support Brother Jason's campaign this November.

Accompanying this article is a QR code with

information on how you can support the campaign, from simply resharing info on social media to donating time and money toward this important effort.

In brotherhood, everyone wins.

Nicholas Mangoni, P.S.



Local 1347 welcomes 107 new members!

## Local 1347 Gains New Members

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,u&ptc), CINCINNATI, OH — The broadcasting organizing campaign delivered a major victory, with 107 new members voting to join our local. Ballots were counted April 3, and the results showed overwhelming support to unionize, an incredible achievement for everyone involved.

We now turn our focus to the next critical step: securing a strong, fair contract that reflects the value and voice of our members.

To our newest members, thank you. Your engagement, discipline and commitment to the process made this win possible. You are the union, and this victory

belongs to you.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to Broadcasting and Recording Director Robert Prunn and International Representative Vinny Butler for their leadership and support throughout the campaign, as well as Local 1228 for their vital assistance in helping secure this success.

Broadcasting is growing, momentum is building, and we are proud to be part of this movement.

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

## Get Out and Vote!

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — Hello, brothers and sisters. I hope everyone is doing well. We've had a mild spring, but summer is here and the temperatures are getting brutal. Dress for the heat, and stay hydrated.

The work situation in Augusta is still strong. Savannah River Site is still hiring decent numbers of members for Savannah River Nuclear Solutions and Savannah River Mission Completion as we continue to play the waiting game for the Savannah River Plutonium Pit Facility.

Miller is still hiring at the data center in Graniteville, S.C., and will be hiring more soon. Business Manager Richardson has been constantly meeting with contractors, owners and city councilmen on several projects that we are hoping will come to fruition.

I want to reaffirm our need for our members on the road to come help with these open calls. We are also hiring our traveling brothers and sisters, so come on down.

I would like to remind all of you that this is a very important election year. It is as important now as it's ever been for our members to get out and vote for labor-friendly candidates. Your local will let you know who these candidates are in case you don't already. We here in Georgia have some very important races, and being a battleground state, we need all the help we can get to remove these candidates that don't care one bit about us or our rights as unions.

I want to wish everyone a very happy Fourth of July!

"Only a fool would try to deprive working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice." — Dwight D. Eisenhower

Mike Greene, Pres.

## Local 1701 Celebrates 75th Anniversary

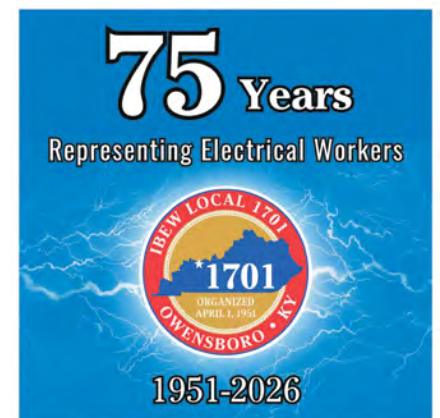
L.U. 1701 (cat,ees,,o&u), OWENSBORO, KY — Our local recently marked a historic milestone, celebrating its 75th anniversary at the Owensboro Convention Center. With 130 people in attendance, the evening honored a legacy that began in April 1951, when International President D.W. Tracy signed the local's charter.

The event was a tribute to the 19 original charter members and the generations of electricians who followed. Longtime Business Agent Harold Baggett was among the distinguished guests. Attendees enjoyed a buffet and music, while a slideshow captured the local's journey from its past achievements to future goals.

The night featured a silent auction with handcrafted IBEW items and a 50/50 drawing for the event's table decorations. This memorable celebration was made possible by the hard work of organizers Peggy Brown; Scott Coleman; Josh Cravens; Andy Daniel; Travis Glasco and his wife, Sherry; and Jonathan Nugent.

For three-quarters of a century, Local 1701 has powered Owensboro and the surrounding region. This anniversary served as a proud reminder of the solidarity and skill that are the trademark of our local. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this enduring legacy.

Rick Thurman, P.S.



Happy 75th anniversary, Local 1701!



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# IBEW Podcast

## THE LINE: Leadership To Membership

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

— International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble

Watch on YouTube



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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 Breer, D. H.	5/8/25	8 Haas, L. F.	3/1/24	57 Johnston, J. E.	2/24/26	134 Devalk, J. M.	1/7/26	295 Burris, R. D.	4/14/26	464 Geiser, J. V.	4/1/26
1 Hopwood, R. A.	3/11/26	8 Labardee, D. J.	5/6/26	58 Boelk, W.	2/19/26	134 Dochterman, S. R.	12/7/25	295 Edwards, R. L.	3/13/26	466 Fogarty, L. B.	3/5/26
1 Kalinowski, D. E.	3/4/26	11 Albright, B. M.	10/15/25	58 Bouck, T. O.	4/22/26	134 Egan, T. P.	3/18/26	295 Meggers, G. D.	11/5/25	466 Hagerman, F. M.	4/20/26
1 Moultrie, A. R.	4/11/26	11 Aquino, A.	12/18/25	58 Bowman, G. D.	3/13/26	134 Geary, J. B.	6/20/25	295 Treadway, B. L.	3/19/26	474 Bullington, J. D.	1/28/26
1 Overy, D. B.	4/3/26	11 Finwall, D. C.	12/12/24	58 Clauw, M. H.	3/5/26	134 Hicks, J. R.	1/16/26	300 Barberi, D. R.	7/15/24	474 Gonyaw, J. L.	2/23/26
1 Scherer, A. M.	8/6/25	11 Gerez, J. M.	2/8/26	58 Doan, H. J.	2/22/26	134 Jackson, J.	4/2/26	303 Cebrynski, S.	12/3/25	474 Long, R. T.	1/4/26
1 Watson, J. R.	3/21/26	11 McKeighan, M. L.	3/8/26	58 Kiefer, G. C.	12/29/25	134 Jones, M. G.	1/25/26	305 Kee, D. D.	2/19/26	480 Robertson, A. L.	1/22/26
2 Balderson, C. G.	1/1/26	11 Posner, A. B.	3/10/26	58 Kuk, S. J.	2/10/26	134 Karolczak, R. E.	3/18/26	306 Stewart, R. A.	11/14/25	481 Green, J. L.	3/8/26
3 Bivic, A. M.	1/29/26	11 Roha, M. L.	2/27/25	58 Meier, M. T.	3/11/26	134 Kehoe, K. P.	4/11/26	309 Smith, C. R.	4/12/26	481 Riley, D. W.	2/7/26
3 Calderone, L. J.	3/7/26	11 Santana, B.	3/15/26	58 Ouellette, F. R.	3/15/26	134 Nuriddeen, E. M.	10/4/17	313 Doucette, J. L.	4/15/26	481 Stocker, R. A.	5/3/26
3 Carrano, C. J.	3/28/25	11 Vaughn, M. J.	10/6/25	58 Sadowski, S.	4/6/26	134 Perமானian, C.	2/8/26	313 Shields, A. P.	11/23/25	488 Dolyak, R. J.	4/9/26
3 Culpepper, W. A.	2/22/20	11 Verdugo, G. F.	2/20/26	58 Stoner, E. L.	12/27/25	134 Rodriguez, R.	4/10/26	317 Austin, D. L.	3/15/26	494 Bagley, R. J.	8/18/25
3 DeCristofaro, M. J.	1/30/26	16 George, R. A.	5/30/25	58 Sumara, D. L.	3/1/26	134 Salinaz, E. F.	2/2/26	317 Hammer, D. H.	2/24/26	494 Richter, J. R.	2/17/26
3 Dorado, J.	3/26/26	17 Cole, R. D.	3/11/26	58 Valensky, C. A.	4/1/26	134 Triphahn, C. H.	12/25/25	317 Justice, H. A.	2/6/26	494 Tobias, R. K.	2/17/26
3 Feerick, M. V.	3/1/26	18 Coscia, M. E.	1/18/24	60 Gibbs, C. N.	1/9/26	134 Wendling, M. L.	3/4/26	322 Morgan, J. W.	2/9/26	499 Gentosi, T. C.	3/5/26
3 Garcia, A. W.	1/31/26	18 McClure, E. J.	2/20/26	60 Sacca, K. J.	2/7/26	134 Zykwa, L.	9/20/25	332 Rudd, J. G.	1/20/26	502 Oram, J. P.	4/21/26
3 Gasparino, F. J.	4/4/26	20 Coffman, L. L.	3/20/26	66 Kubena, D. L.	2/7/26	136 Collar, D. A.	3/8/26	340 Crets, M. A.	3/19/26	505 Richardson, J. M.	4/21/26
3 Geller, R.	3/28/26	20 Denham, B. L.	3/17/26	66 Williams, K. B.	9/25/24	136 Johnson, J. R.	2/7/24	340 Plymessenger, T. H.	2/25/26	508 Maulden, R. A.	11/24/25
3 Glass, S.	1/8/26	20 Estes, L. W.	12/27/25	68 Kramer, A. M.	1/13/26	136 McAnear, D. R.	11/6/25	343 Fredrick, R. L.	1/23/26	520 Picciandra, D. E.	2/4/26
3 Glennon, K. J.	3/7/26	20 Foreman, J. A.	3/29/26	68 Martinez, O. W.	3/22/26	143 Anderbery, V. M.	12/7/25	347 Butler, D. R.	4/23/26	520 Sutter, W. G.	4/8/26
3 Graham, D. P.	4/2/26	20 Head, B. G.	2/1/26	68 Rathe, B. D.	3/23/26	153 Dressen, D. E.	2/19/26	347 Davis, R. L.	3/3/26	530 Johnston, D. E.	4/8/26
3 Hannon, E. F.	2/9/26	20 Norris, J. M.	1/15/26	68 Sutak, M.	3/2/26	153 Schimel, P.	3/9/26	347 Keul, A. D.	2/13/26	530 Mentanski, J.	1/1/26
3 Harris, J. H.	4/24/26	20 Thompson, J. P.	10/29/25	68 Vigil, D. E.	1/25/26	159 Anderson, P. L.	1/30/26	347 LaVelle, J.	5/19/25	531 Roderick, J. E.	3/18/26
3 Hildebrandt, D.	12/20/25	22 Lingle, M. L.	4/10/26	70 Morsell, H.	4/10/26	163 Snyder, J. E.	4/17/26	347 Rivas, F. A.	4/26/26	532 Desmul, W. L.	1/28/26
3 Hillenmayer, K. R.	3/23/26	22 Robles, J. S.	6/13/25	71 Glidewell, F. D.	2/28/26	164 Bauer, J. E.	4/5/26	349 Fried, M.	2/14/26	558 Faulkner, D. L.	4/9/26
3 Hinkson, H. P.	1/11/26	22 Van Outry, R. J.	10/17/26	71 Hopkins, P. E.	2/20/26	164 Caruso, G. V.	8/23/25	349 Moyer, K. O.	3/18/26	558 Hill, T. R.	3/29/26
3 Hurtle, R.	12/4/24	24 Kalthof, G. N.	3/24/26	71 Kessler, R. K.	3/15/26	164 Eckhardt, D. R.	4/9/26	351 Dolce, R.	12/24/25	569 Beamer, R. W.	12/12/25
3 Kallo, J. I.	3/24/26	24 Riedel, W. J.	3/10/26	76 Muller, J. R.	8/29/25	164 Giles, W. T.	4/14/26	351 Dooner, W. F.	3/22/26	569 Glynn, R.	12/20/25
3 Maisonave, H.	3/13/26	24 Webster, D. E.	3/27/26	77 Beckley, D. P.	2/16/26	164 Hayes, E. F.	4/11/26	351 Murowany, J.	4/11/26	569 Ledbetter, L. K.	3/7/26
3 Mastriano, M.	2/6/26	25 Perrino, D.	2/10/26	77 Heesch, R. J.	12/26/25	164 Hept, J. F.	4/2/26	351 Sandler, K. R.	11/16/23	569 Scott, G. C.	2/9/26
3 Mennella, P.	3/29/26	25 Stankowski, R. J.	3/12/26	82 Smith, R. B.	3/22/26	164 Vehling, P. A.	2/26/26	353 Bingley, L. R.	9/11/25	575 Jarrell, S. W.	3/10/26
3 Murphy, W. R.	3/24/26	25 Wiegelmann, A. W.	3/21/26	82 Stonerock, M. L.	2/8/26	175 Griswold, K. R.	3/28/26	353 Durie, T. A.	10/6/23	576 Hearn, R. J.	11/9/25
3 Muscatella, C.	4/1/26	26 Thomas, E. M.	4/10/26	86 DeJohn, T. A.	11/11/25	175 Hale, M. D.	12/10/25	353 Gazzellone, G.	3/18/26	584 Emmons, T. W.	2/27/26
3 Nieves, F. R.	1/12/26	34 Masters, R. S.	6/12/25	86 MacGill, R. H.	3/26/26	175 McClain, J. R.	3/30/26	353 Hartwig, K.	3/22/26	586 Vandesande, P. A.	4/8/26
3 Rabuffo, M. A.	2/14/26	38 Greene, D. H.	1/28/26	97 Schoemann, J. M.	9/15/25	175 Roberts, K. W.	4/26/26	353 Hewitt, W.	1/30/26	595 Kelly, M.	7/26/19
3 Saccone, L. M.	1/30/26	38 Hoffman, H.	11/28/25	98 Cimino, L. S.	3/10/26	176 Pemble, R. L.	4/12/26	353 Jardine, J.	3/11/25	595 O'Hara, K. P.	4/5/26
3 Schold, C. C.	3/2/26	38 Jantonio, D. A.	3/16/26	98 Frankhouser, S. A.	4/10/26	177 Bieberbach, W. J.	12/17/25	353 Mastrantoni, A.	4/22/25	595 Sanchez, A.	9/12/25
3 Singh, R.	12/22/25	38 Kucharski, T. D.	4/1/26	98 Rees, F.	4/18/26	177 Newell, D. J.	2/6/26	353 Rosie, D. E.	1/23/26	601 Henry, M. A.	1/23/26
3 Taggart, R. E.	4/1/26	40 Frazier, V. D.	3/12/26	98 Verlander, W. T.	3/28/26	177 Sellers, J. J.	2/24/26	353 Szczurko, J. S.	11/4/25	602 Scott, R. A.	1/30/26
3 Temes, B.	3/13/26	40 Kelly, R. D.	3/12/26	98 Walsh, F. W.	6/19/25	180 Bleamel, S. K.	4/15/26	353 Taylor, R. D.	4/14/26	606 Perkins, M. A.	4/27/26
3 Torres, D.	2/23/26	41 Chislett, J. A.	4/11/26	100 Harper, J. E.	8/26/25	191 Humphrey, W. C.	3/7/26	353 Tittoto, E.	3/27/26	606 Strassel, L. K.	3/20/26
3 Ugalde, D.	3/3/26	43 Ford, F. R.	1/10/26	100 Jungk, R.	4/3/26	194 Turner, R. H.	12/31/25	354 Ellefsen, G. W.	1/31/26	607 Hirt, R. G.	3/25/26
3 Ulrich, R. W.	4/13/26	43 Kogut, G. B.	12/20/25	100 Null, J.	6/6/25	196 Remillard, P. H.	2/4/26	354 Markland, S. D.	3/31/26	611 Gallegos, B. A.	2/10/26
3 Urso, J. G.	11/4/21	44 Halverson, J. J.	7/19/25	100 Turner, W.	2/2/26	197 Cavitt, M. E.	4/13/26	354 Tennesen, R. P.	4/12/26	611 Martinez, F. E.	4/3/26
3 Warren, M. M.	11/30/25	44 Mitchell, R. L.	3/6/26	102 Bisher, S. G.	3/25/26	197 Martindale, W. H.	11/22/23	357 Eccleston, H. R.	3/18/26	611 Sillivent, C. F.	1/20/26
3 Watts, J. A.	3/11/26	44 Wilmer, A. C.	3/14/26	102 Gerdenits, J.	4/18/26	197 Meyers, B. L.	3/17/22	357 Fuller, D. L.	4/7/26	613 Dominique, F.	3/6/26
3 Wierl, J.	2/24/26	46 Lindsley, E. S.	2/1/26	103 Benson, T. J.	4/11/26	197 Trunnell, T. L.	3/26/26	357 Houpt, C. L.	4/11/26	613 Schell, D. A.	3/23/26
3 Wiesenberg, J.	3/23/26	46 Pease, B. A.	10/15/25	103 Borrelli, C. H.	2/20/26	206 Johnson, E.	3/20/26	357 Jackson, W. H.	4/18/26	613 Taunton, J. H.	3/20/26
3 Yatsko, J. M.	3/21/26	46 Shaw, R. D.	3/26/26	103 Cunha, R. W.	12/14/25	212 Garrison, J. L.	3/7/26	357 Liles, J. C.	4/14/26	617 Calvillo, M. M.	12/18/25
5 Hardy, H.	9/12/25	46 Warren, C. W.	3/18/26	103 Curran, M. J.	12/11/25	212 Whalen, G. W.	3/10/26	357 Novak, E. T.	4/3/26	617 Nesbitt, F. J.	11/6/25
5 Keefer, J. H.	3/20/26	47 Brown, R. C.	3/5/26	103 DeFeo, R. L.	3/27/26	213 Keeler, D. A.	10/17/25	363 Magnatta, A. L.	1/22/26	617 Smith, G. A.	1/9/26
5 Schumm, R. R.	3/29/26	47 Perez, A.	2/15/26	103 Fournier, F. J.	6/26/25	213 Winterburn, J.	12/6/25	364 Mizner, T. A.	1/14/26	640 Bouton, J. E.	2/26/26
5 Shemerdiak, M. J.	3/25/26	48 Burnett, K. F.	2/25/26	103 McCarthy, M. J.	4/12/26	222 Allison, R. D.	7/24/25	369 Burke, M. P.	3/24/26	640 Havens, J. R.	4/4/26
6 Cordova, A. P.	3/15/26	48 Cawthorn, J. C.	2/8/26	103 Snodgrass, P. G.	2/27/26	222 Griffin, J. C.	2/23/26	369 Cissell, M. E.	3/5/26	640 Madiol, J.	2/3/26
6 Fong, K. B.	2/21/26	48 Courtney, E. W.	3/7/26	104 McMorro, K. M.	2/21/26	222 Holler, D. C.	1/31/26	369 Fuchs, F.	1/18/26	640 Robertson, B. A.	4/11/26
6 Kane, W. J.	3/28/26	48 England, A. R.	10/10/25	104 Wenzel, M. J.	3/18/26	233 Sullivan, B. M.	2/8/26	369 Mansfield, J. D.	10/10/24	647 Brogdon, H. T.	3/9/26
6 Lytle, W. K.	12/13/24	48 Lehman, W. J.	3/16/23	105 Zimmer, M. A.	3/31/26	234 Wolfe, D. E.	4/5/24	369 Meichler, A. B.	3/12/26	648 Singleton, A. M.	2/6/26
6 Orber, B. D.	1/22/26	48 Palmer, L. G.	3/8/26	110 Gallagher, T. N.	4/8/26	236 Angers, B. R.	4/24/26	369 Minix, R. R.	11/11/24	649 Logan, D. E.	3/15/26
6 Snyder, R. L.	4/3/26	51 Harper, K. L.	3/26/26	110 Jirik, M. D.	2/4/26	236 Fusco, J. J.	4/12/26	369 Shartzter, S. C.	1/6/26	654 Connor, E. T.	1/8/26
6 Stuteville, J. T.	12/12/25	51 Wroblewski, R. J.	12/26/25	110 Lentsch, R. J.	12/10/25	236 Lynch, J. J.	10/17/25	375 Graham, H. T.	2/13/26	659 Rust, L. M.	3/24/26
6 Wong, T.	2/9/26	55 Ridout, D. D.	1/22/25	110 Swenson, D. J.	3/22/26	237 Lepine, R. P.	2/15/25	375 Wroniak, R. P.	11/12/25	659 Smith, F. E.	12/1/25
7 Moynihan, D. J.	2/13/25	56 Jackson, E. W.	1/22/26	111 McClellan, M. J.	1/13/26	242 Nordwall, D. S.	4/8/26	379 Ernest, F. L.	2/6/26	665 Goodine, S. A.	3/16/26
				112 Engelke, J. J.	11/6/25	242 Whelan, C. J.	2/28/26	379 Sughrue, P. J.	1/12/26	683 Emerson, J.	2/25/26
				113 Lambert, D. A.	3/4/26	245 Howser, C. L.	12/18/25	379 Williams, T. J.	8/23/25	683 Hopkins, W. E.	2/28/26
				120 Brown, A. H.	11/9/25	252 Campbell, J. T.	1/28/26	387 Fourr, R. L.	1/1/26	683 Voit, R. L.	2/5/26
				120 Scratch, M. E.	2/12/26	252 Phillips, T. D.	3/12/26	387 Ibarra, R. S.	3/4/26	688 Rodgers, J. M.	12/18/25
				120 VanderWeyst, F. A.	2/13/26	257 Lamm, H. C.	3/20/26	387 Tanner, W. R.	7/18/25	692 Gehringer, G. O.	4/15/26
				124 Clemons, L. C.	3/9/26	257 Leinberger, J. E.	3/31/26	388 Helmuth, J. G.	3/10/26	692 Swan, S. J.	3/2/26
				124 Nixon, D. F.	2/15/26	257 Libbert, L. R.	2/20/26	401 Rowland, R. L.	4/26/26	697 Rosenbaum, R. R.	3/25/26
				124 Ottens, E. E.	2/7/26	257 Trippensee, M. M.	3/12/26	402 Brown, V. R.	4/28/26	697 Stachelski, T. J.	4/21/26
				124 Shatto, E. E.	4/8/26	258 Bernier, P. D.	4/7/26	405 Barger, T. D.	4/5/26	701 Oldham, W. R.	4/17/26
				124 Toombs, R. E.	12/9/25	258 Callewaert, D. G.	12/24/25	410 Cain, G. J.	12/7/25	701 Urban, E. L.	2/14/26
				124 Zahner, D. C.	2/6/26	258 Paul, J. R.	8/7/25	412 DeLong, J. J.	3/26/26	702 Slater, R. L.	4/10/26
				125 Jones, P. M.	6/16/25	270 Poole, J. E.	4/19/26	424 McPherson, L.	1/11/26	704 Fee, C. W.	11/3/25
				125 King, D. S.	4/13/26	275 Lowder, R. E.	4/29/26	424 Ostrowerka, D. R.	3/17/26	704 Mitchley, T. J.	3/16/26
				125 McMahon, J. P.	10/19/25	275 VanKoeveing, G. L.	3/16/26	424 Rolfe, G. E.	8/2/25	712 Swaney, D. J.	4/4/26
				125 Pilgreen, C.	10/23/24	278 Taylor, P. E.	2/21/26	424 Thorne, V. T.	8/22/23	714 Miller, J. A.	2/6/26
				125 Rogers, G. R.	10/7/25	280 Simmons, C. V.	10/29/25	424 Wolfe, L. A.	7/27/25	716 Baxley, D. R.	8/28/25
				130 Bazile, D.	3/7/26	291 Callens, G. N.	2/18/26	429 Brown, K. R.	1/25/26	716 Deaville, I.	2/24/23
				130 Deeves, J. K.	1/18/26	291 Kaldhusdal, M.	2/3/26	429 Connors, J.	4/4/26	716 Hillin, B. J.	3/14/26
				130 Keller, B. J.	2/10/26	292 Beneke, J. P.	7/2/25	441 Greer, S. A.	3/20/26	716 Jones, M. D.	3/13/26
				130 Nuccio, D. A.	1/28/26	292 Freund, M. J.	12/21/25	456 Bachleda, B. S.	3/29/26	716 Keller, M. T.	2/10/24
				130 Packard, J. F.	11/10/25	292 Link, G. P.	2/19/26	456 Beauchamp, G. B.	11/11/25	71	

*In Memoriam continued*

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
716	Shafer, D. R.	3/27/26	1141	Fleeman, T. C.	1/20/26	I.O. (134)	Gallagher, K.	3/15/26
725	Heien, R. G.	1/24/26	1141	Motley, B. J.	4/21/26	I.O. (134)	Hain, R. A.	9/19/25
728	Griffis, J. J.	10/23/25	1141	Wilcox, K. D.	2/13/26	I.O. (134)	Kich, M. L.	4/18/26
728	Warren, A. E.	3/4/26	1186	Okumura, H. H.	1/14/26	I.O. (134)	Kvistad, W. M.	3/31/26
756	Brownfield, G. R.	11/25/25	1205	Maxfield, T. A.	2/7/26	I.O. (812)	Marshall, T. J.	2/25/26
756	Clarida, W. B.	3/10/26	1205	Sheffield, R. F.	4/2/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Bintrim, L. E.	3/28/26
756	Wright, L. V.	4/21/26	1245	Martin, J. M.	4/15/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Bowyer, C. C.	4/8/26
767	Serrett, S.	4/7/25	1245	Nielsen, D. A.	3/24/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Colebert, D. A.	4/9/26
768	Wilhelm, A. D.	6/14/25	1245	Pfeilschifter, K. D.	10/28/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Dingwall, L. W.	12/17/25
769	Larive, G. R.	3/7/26	1245	Woulfe, J. L.	3/30/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Gorman, R. J.	2/16/26
773	Brown, J. F.	2/24/26	1319	Smith, R. J.	2/25/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Hoagburg, F. J.	3/31/26
776	Grimsley, S. T.	1/11/26	1340	Kessler, B. A.	3/22/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Livingood, H. J.	11/10/25
776	Newman, C. R.	4/16/26	1393	Demaree, C. V.	4/25/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Martin, J. E.	5/19/25
804	Gruber, G. J.	4/9/26	1426	Hovland, J. R.	3/28/26	Pens. (I.O.)	McGinnis, J. E.	3/30/26
804	Hewitson, R. H.	1/24/26	1547	Haakenson, K. P.	3/12/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Molinari, J. M.	3/12/26
804	Van Grootel, J.	2/11/26	1547	Johnson, A. L.	1/14/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Myers, J. B.	4/12/26
812	McDermott, J. W.	4/25/26	1547	Klueber, P. O.	2/19/26	Pens. (I.O.)	O'Keefe, R. J.	3/31/26
855	Greulich, R. A.	3/18/26	1547	Seeman, W. P.	2/15/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Potter, G. O.	4/25/26
855	Smith, K. R.	1/6/26	1547	Wood, R. J.	2/13/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Rodriguez, A. R.	2/10/26
861	Leblanc, E. J.	2/23/26	1687	Riddell, B. R.	12/23/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Schutte, R. E.	3/17/26
903	Penton, M. R.	9/11/25	1988	Candelaria, A. M.	2/10/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Schwake, W. H.	3/13/26
906	Perttunen, J. W.	12/29/25	2085	Lacroix, R. L.	3/21/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Siebenthaler, E.	12/30/25
910	Courneene, D. P.	3/19/26	2085	Stewart, G. G.	12/24/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Verhasselt, F. J.	2/6/26
915	Stephens, J. C.	3/20/26	2166	MacIsaac, J. V.	3/20/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Vincent, M.	2/19/26
934	King, R. A.	11/15/25	2286	Gilpin, C. B.	2/11/26	Pens. (I.O.)	Walker, G. A.	2/8/26
934	Walser, A. J.	4/19/26	2322	Hoey, J. M.	10/7/25			
948	Botbyl, D. J.	2/18/26	2330	Porter, B.	2/4/26			
948	Reed, J. A.	1/13/26	I.O. (15)	Wolf, B. B.	10/27/22			
972	Chadrow, N. M.	3/19/26	I.O. (25)	Hadnagy, P. P.	5/21/25			
993	Hewer, G. M.	3/2/26	I.O. (68)	Wolf, J. D.	3/19/26			
995	Patterson, A. J.	1/30/26	I.O. (98)	McPeak, J. C.	3/8/26			
1141	Eakers, D. W.	2/16/26	I.O. (111)	Lawlor, B. J.	3/25/26			

*This list shows members for whom PBF death claims were approved in May 2026. ■*



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.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS	Fourth District	Third District	THE ELECTRICAL WORKER
<b>Zachary T. Cassidy</b>	<b>Frank Muia</b>	<b>Austin Keyser</b>	Editor <b>Kenneth W. Cooper</b>
<b>Kenneth W. Cooper</b> International President	<b>Donald B. Finn</b>	<b>Glenn Brannen</b>	<b>Matt Spence</b>
<b>Paul A. Noble</b> International Secretary-Treasurer	<b>Mark H. Cunningham</b>	<b>Michael Clemmons</b>	<b>Tim Lawson</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL</b>	<b>Leroy J. Chincio</b>	<b>Christian J. Wagner</b>	<b>Alex Hogan</b>
Chairman <b>Joseph P. Calabro</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS</b>	<b>Jerry Bellah</b>	<b>Curtis D. Bateman</b>
First District <b>Daniel P. Cosner</b>	First District <b>Russell N. Shewchuk</b>	Ninth District <b>David E. Reaves Jr.</b>	<b>Asifa Haniff</b>
Second District <b>Louis J. Antonellis</b>	Second District <b>Michael P. Monahan</b>	Tenth District <b>Curtis Sharpe</b>	<b>Ben Temchine</b>
Third District <b>William Hamilton</b>		Eleventh District <b>Mark D. Hager</b>	<b>Colin Kelly</b>
			<b>Rix Oakland</b>
			<b>Colleen Crinion</b>
			<b>Michael Pointer</b>
			<b>Janelle Hartman</b>
			<b>Joe Conway</b>
			<b>Emily Welsh</b>
			<b>Mike Palm</b>
			<b>Alexis Betts</b>
			<b>Amy Rieger</b>
			<b>Cameron Hubbard</b>

“LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

**Generations of Gratitude**

My name is Michael Holmes, and I live in Hanover, N.H. My grandfather, William Holmes, was with the IBEW for nearly 50 years. Here's a photo of him installing lights on the outside of the Empire State Building.



*William Holmes, the grandfather of the letter writer, working on the Empire State Building. He was an IBEW member for nearly 50 years.*

He had four kids, including his youngest, my father, David Holmes. My father was the first person in his family to go to college, thanks to a scholarship from IBEW. It covered his undergraduate and graduate studies at Fordham. My father often told the story of his being awarded the scholarship at the IBEW union hall and not realizing the implications of what was happening until he looked over at his own father and saw tears in his eyes (a rare and nearly unprecedented occurrence).

It was truly life-changing, not just for my father but for generations after him. He went on to get his Ph.D., travel the world and have a long and successful career helping college students decide what they want to do with their lives. My sister and I both have graduate degrees and successful careers. My two oldest kids have graduated from college, my third just finished his first year, and my youngest will begin in the fall.

I suspect that it's rare for members of the IBEW and similar organizations to see the fruits of the seeds that they plant when it comes to sacrifices they make and the hard work that they do to improve life for their members. So the purpose of my note is to give you an example of the long-lasting benefits and positive outcomes that result from things you're doing in the here and now.

My father died recently, and as I was driving home after cleaning out his apartment, I passed the IBEW facility on Route 4 in Barrington, N.H., and thought about the outsize impact the IBEW had on him and generations after him. I would like to sincerely and humbly thank the IBEW on behalf of my father and everyone else who has benefited from that night in the union hall many decades ago.

*Michael Holmes  
Hanover, N.H.*

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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

# Embracing Vulnerability, ‘The 5th Wire’ Tackles Mental Health Crisis

**A**nchorage, Alaska, Local 1547 Business Manager Doug Tansy knows most of his members, and most Alaskans, have felt the impact of the state’s nation-high suicide rate.

“The numbers don’t reflect how bad it is,” he said. “Everyone I know knows someone that has been affected. It’s just too much to bear.”

So Tansy and other Local 1547 leaders reached out to The 5th Wire, a mental health and suicide prevention program spreading across the IBEW and the electrical industry.

It starts with what sounds like a simple, yet largely untried, concept: putting electricians and other IBEW members in circles and having them discuss their own lives and struggles, with the goals of connection and empathy.

It offers a way to head off suicide before someone contemplates taking their own life and long before they might be in touch with a mental health professional.

“Whenever my friends and I hear about someone dying by suicide, we scream out: ‘No way! I had no idea!’” Tansy said. “We never see it before it happens. Local 1547 had to do something different.”



*Murphy shows a participant in the Alaska conference what he calls the “perspective stick.” It’s an exercise to show the importance of appreciating others’ perspectives.*

Alaska’s suicide rate is 28.1 per 100,000 residents, nearly twice the national rate. Tansy noted that other IBEW brothers and sisters reached out to help him when he struggled with substance use issues as a young apprentice.

But with people on their digital devices more and talking to each other less, he’s concerned that a member struggling with mental health issues today won’t have that support.

“We need to be vulnerable and find the commonality and humanity that is part of all of us,” he said.

The 5th Wire’s message springs from Sweethearts & Heroes, which was founded and led by Tom Murphy, an executive in the railroad industry



*Anchorage, Alaska, Local 1547 Business Manager Doug Tansy, center, with Tom Murphy, left, and Rick Yarosh from Sweethearts and Heroes.*

*Below: Yarosh speaking to Local 1547 members and other representatives from the Alaska electrical industry earlier this year.*

for two decades.

He also was an NCAA Division III national champion wrestler while at SUNY Brockport. In addition to that, Murphy excelled in mixed martial arts. He was a contestant on the second season of the long-running television show “The Ultimate Fighter” and competed in UFC 58. Coaches and friends watched and asked him to give motivational talks to teams and other groups.

Eventually, a former wrestling teammate asked him to speak to a group of middle schoolers on the importance of pushing back against bullying, thinking that a tough guy with charisma would be a good person to deliver the message.

Murphy made quite an impression. Requests from other schools and educators came in, and he found that he loved the work. He encouraged students to stand up for others, even when it isn’t easy.

He started Sweethearts & Heroes out of his home in St. Albans, Vt., and left his job in the railroad industry in 2014. About 2 million students have heard its message through live presentations, books, videos and online courses, according to the organization.

His co-founder and presenting partner is retired Army Sgt. Rick Yarosh, who was critically injured in Iraq in 2006, for which he was awarded a Purple Heart. Yarosh suffered burns over 60% of his body and lost both ears, his nose, his right leg below the knee and most of the function in his hands. Yet he still joins Murphy on stage to speak about hope and inspiration.

About 2½ years ago, Murphy received a call from the human resources department at Northline Utilities, asking what could be done to address the high rate of suicide among electrical workers. Northline employs members of Syracuse, N.Y., Local 1249, and Murphy made a presentation during a safety conference at the union’s hall.

Thus was born The 5th Wire. A single-phase electrical system uses three wires and a three-phase setup requires four wires. The lineman represents the crucial fifth wire — which keeps the crew grounded and prevents against the ultimate personal injury, suicide.



“I’m a believer,” Local 1249 Business Manager Mark Lawrence said. “Our local has made it part of our culture going forward.”

The number of Local 1249 members lost to suicide in recent years was alarming, and Lawrence said it was especially rattling when two members he regularly saw in the community took their own lives.

He’s now seen some of the biggest, toughest Local 1249 members become vulnerable and share during sessions using the techniques led by Murphy and Yarosh. They address challenges faced by all linemen, who often perform physically demanding work for long hours far away from home, that aren’t seen in many other industries.

In addition to the presentation in Anchorage, Murphy and Yarosh spoke at this year’s Sixth District and Third District progress meetings, the latter of which had International President Kenneth W. Cooper in the audience.

“I was just blown away,” Third District International Vice President Frank Muia said. “The message was powerful. It was emotional.”

“We did not have anyone get up to leave during a two-hour presentation,” Muia said. “No one got up to take a phone call. You could hear a pin drop. They had everyone’s attention in the room.”

Murphy also made presentations to NECA and at SELCAT’s Outside Apprenticeship Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in March.

The concept of the circles is not new, Murphy noted. Throughout history, communities have used circles for communication, which allowed all generations to build networks of support and a culture of belonging. Those steps are critical to creating a healthy community, he said.

But he noted that overall suicide rates, particularly among young people, spiked from 2010 to 2015, coinciding with the sharp increase in cell phones and social media.

“These kids that were having challenges with hopelessness are now men in the industry,” he said. “Nothing got fixed. It’s just a new set of challenges.”

Murphy’s history both in MMA and in the railroad industry — which relies on skilled construction workers, including IBEW members — makes it easier for members at his presentations to relate to him, he said.

“I know these men,” he said with a laugh. “I can bring a level of bravado, while balancing it with measured vulnerability that intrigues individuals who have largely stigmatized mental health.”

Factors such as the stress of irregular employment, the danger of the work and chronic injuries all have been cited as reasons for the high suicide rate among electrical and other construction workers.

Murphy adds another reason: People aren’t talking to each other, including members of the skilled trades, and are spending too much time on their phones.

“All we are doing [with The 5th Wire] is helping peers help their peers,” he said. “That’s what people have been doing for thousands of years, without any psychiatrists or psychologists. We have a need for mental health services in this county, but just as important, we have a need for a brotherhood that loves one another.”

The suicide rate for the general U.S. population was 14.1 per 100,000 in 2023, the last full year Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics are available.

Finding a precise number for

electrical workers is difficult, but industry experts and mental health advocates agree that it’s higher than the national average.

A 2020 analysis by the National Violent Death Reporting System put the suicide rate among all construction workers at 47.5 per 100,000. Studies have shown that construction workers have some of the highest rates of depression and mental health issues and are among the least likely workers in the U.S. to get help.

“Mental health is not a separate issue from workplace safety, it is workplace safety,” said Ninth District International Vice President Dave Reaves. “Across the Ninth District, we’ve made a commitment to give our members the tools, training and support they need to recognize when a brother or sister is struggling and to know how to respond. Through our Mental Health Summits, partnerships with professionals like Josh Rizzo, The 5th Wire and VitalCog training for our entire Ninth District staff, we are working to break down the stigma around these conversations.

“The goal is simple: make sure every member knows they are not alone, that help is available, and that reaching out for support is a sign of strength, not weakness,” Reaves added.

The Third District’s Muia said it’s critical for the IBEW to continue to provide mental health experts for members in crisis. But it’s equally critical to follow the approach put forward by Murphy and Yarosh, having members speak openly about issues they are facing, both on the job and in their personal lives.

He also said the presence of Yarosh encourages people to take The 5th Wire seriously.

“He is one of the most upbeat people I’ve met in my life based on what he’s endured and the physical challenges he faces,” Muia said. “We all have stressful situations we are involved in in our day-to-day work with the IBEW. But if it gets really bad, I always think back to Rick.”

Yarosh and Murphy’s appearance in Anchorage left a lasting impression on Tansy, too.

“What we’ve found in some of our conversations is that people who have committed suicide felt like they had no help, no hope and couldn’t overcome the burden,” he said.

“I had some hope when I was young because of my peers,” he added. “I think we have to learn how to do it again. I don’t think it’s quite as natural for young people as it was for me and my generation. The way our people participated in this, and the way they got involved, it just shows it is something we’ve needed for a while, in my opinion. They’ve just not had a place to do it.” ■