

## Burn Up the Myths

The IBEW is helping to put to rest some misinformation about safety in the utility industry. *Burn Up the Myths* is an educational seminar, in which the IBEW participates, that informs electric utility workers about the importance of wearing flame resistant clothing.

The one-day sessions in 1999 were held in Atlanta, Georgia; St. Louis, Missouri; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Kansas City, Missouri, and addressed key areas of concern and misunderstanding about flame resistant clothing. Topics in the workshops included Fundamentals of Electric Arc Burns; OSHA's Clothing Provision Development and Requirements; ASTM: Test Protocols, Test Data, Stan-

dards, Future Changes; The Fabric: History, Clothing Considerations, Selection; End-user Experiences, and a panel discussion with questions. The sessions are intended to be educational and not a sales and marketing event for the flame retardant clothing business. Further sessions will be planned as soon as OSHA administrators write the new safety requirements.



For further information about workshop content or future workshops, contact International Representative Jim Tomaseski in the Utility Department at the International Office, 202-728-6066 or [utility@ibew.org](mailto:utility@ibew.org).

The seminars were hosted by the IBEW, the Edison Electric Institute and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association with participation by OSHA, operating utilities, and fiber, fabric and clothing manufacturers. 



**It can take eight to 10 years for hydro projects like this to get relicensed.**

## IBEW Joins Water Coalition

In October 1999, the IBEW announced its membership in *Waterpower: The Clean Energy Coalition*. This coalition was formed to address inefficiencies in relicensing hydro projects.

As a member of the coalition, the IBEW joins in asserting that a multitude of statutes, regulations, agency policies and court decisions have made the hydroelectric relicensing process time-consuming, arbitrary and costly.

“Two thirds of all federally-regulated hydroelectric power plants—284 projects in 39 states, representing 28,917 megawatts of electricity generation—are due to be relicensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in the next 15 years,” said IBEW International President J.J. Barry. “An inefficient relicensing process jeopardizes all of

these projects and the future of hydropower as a clean, renewable energy source.”

In a 1999 AFL-CIO Executive Council resolution, President Barry and other council members expressed their support for hydro generation and the need to fix the relicensing process. A typical hydro project can take from eight to 10 years to weave its way through the licensing process—some have taken as long as 28 years. During that time, the relicensing process consistently resulted in higher costs, loss of operational flexibility and lost generation. 

# 1999 IBEW Nuclear Conference Delegates Visit Yucca Mountain

The 1999 IBEW Nuclear Conference was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, on December 2 and 3. The guest speaker, Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) Senior Vice President Angie Howard, discussed the positive benefits of nuclear generation and the future of the nuclear industry. Delegates then talked about changes in the industry, decommissioning, fuel pool capacities, organizing and other topics.

At one of the more spirited sessions, members from Local 94, Cranbury, New Jersey, discussed a U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division case against Public Service Electricity and Gas regarding overtime pay for workers studying during off-company time. Some workers at the company are required to be licensed in order to perform their jobs, but studying for this license has traditionally extended into their own time. Since holding this license is a work requirement, the case concerns whether

these workers should be paid overtime for their study time. After hearing this discussion, a delegate from Duane Arnold Nuclear Station in Palo, Iowa, pointed out a clause in their collective bargaining agreement allowing plant operators as much as 75 hours of overtime per year to study to maintain their licenses.

Prior to the opening of the conference, 70 of the 95 delegates arrived a day early to visit Yucca Mountain, the proposed nuclear waste storage facility,

which will be the world's largest when construction is completed. The tour of the facility, located 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and NEI.

Currently, scientists are studying the suitability of the site's geology to see whether Yucca Mountain will become the final resting place for the United States' commercial nuclear high level waste. Many knowledgeable observers anticipate that if the study is positive, the nuclear waste will be stored in canisters at a depth averaging 1,000 feet below the surface and 800 feet above the water table for as long as 10,000 years.

The IBEW represents workers at about 66 percent of the nuclear stations in the United States and also at Point LePreau Station in New Brunswick, Canada. Nuclear power plants generate 20 percent of our electricity carbon free while providing 70,000 union workers with jobs. ■

**Participants at the Nuclear Conference visit Yucca Mountain**

