National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee Director Michael Callanan has news that many IBEW members might find hard to believe.

"Six or seven years ago, I was warning that because of the graying of the baby boom generation and not enough recruits to the apprenticeship program, construction was facing a perfect storm," Callanan said. "The recession may have delayed it, but the problem is still out there."

With construction unemployment still running upward of 14 percent, the idea that there will be a shortage of skilled labor seems almost implausible. But many industry analysts and IBEW leaders say that is exactly what we are facing unless major changes are made.

In fact, says Callanan, the Great Recession, which forced tens of thousands of experienced workers out of the industry while dropping new apprenticeship recruitment to record-low levels, has intensified the coming labor crunch. It's a problem that threatens not only the nascent economic recovery but the future of the IBEW.

‘THE PERFECT STORM?’

Skilled Worker Shortage Looms for Construction Branch
said International President Edwin D. Hill. “If we can’t provide contractors with a steady stream of skilled labor, we won’t get the jobs and our market share plummets,” he said. “Unless we replenish our ranks with the next generation of workers, our future is limited.”

### Energy, Data Driving Boom

Eleventh District International Representative John Bourne, who’s charged with helping supply contractors with IBEW workers for upcoming projects, said he sees billions of dollars in new work coming down the pipe.

“In Iowa we’ve got three multi-million dollar fertilizer plants coming, and on the Gulf Coast, we’re looking at some huge projects,” he says.

Government data bears him out. The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the number of electrician jobs will grow by 23 percent between now and 2020; McGraw-Hill Construction found that nearly half of all general contractors say they are worried about recruiting enough skilled tradesmen to meet the coming demand.

Bourne says that the dramatic increase in natural gas and oil drilling— from the shale regions in the Midwest and the Great Plains to offshore—are driving billions of dollars in new investments.

The Gulf Coast is expected to get more than $50 billion in oil- and gas-related projects between 2014 and 2018.

And increased demand for data storage—driven by the growth of online giants Google and Facebook—means new data centers throughout the country.

Facebook has plans for a new center in Des Moines, Iowa, while Google plans to build a second facility in Council Bluffs.

A Facebook data center started in North Carolina last year put hundreds of IBEW members to work for more than two years.

Indiana, like many industrial midwestern states, was particularly hard-hit by the recession, but Terre Haute Local 725 Business Manager Joe Kerr says he sees the potential for the local job market to return to pre-recession conditions, when nearly everyone was off the books.

“If all these projects they say are going to get off the ground happen, then we will definitely be tight on manpower,” he says.

McGraw-Hill Construction predicts that by 2015, nonresidential construction starts will be 73 percent higher than 2011 levels.

While good news for workers on the bench, if even half these projects become a reality, the work force might not be there.

The Construction Users Roundtable has projected that there will be a shortage of 2 million commercial construction workers by 2015, making manpower one of the industry’s top concerns.

### Construction Crunch

The coming crunch is the result of two factors.

First, the existing construction work force is growing grayer by the year. The average age of a construction worker went from mid-30s in 2006 to mid-40s in 2011. At the same time, the number of workers over 55 will go from 20 percent of the workforce to 25 percent by 2020.

The second is the major drop-off in apprenticeship training—more than 25 percent in some areas—that occurred during the 2008-09 recession.

“We’re down anywhere from 12,000 to 15,000 apprentices—the lowest I’ve seen in my career,” says Callanan.

While not an immediate crisis in many areas, particularly in those regions still stuck with double-digit unemployment, the signs are there. And it’s an issue the IBEW must tackle if it wants to remain relevant in the industry.

Construction already had an image problem, derided by many career counselors, education officials and parents as a dead-end.

“The schools have been stuck with this no-child-left-behind mindset that says everyone must go to a four-year college,” says Callanan. “Well, college isn’t for everyone and construction can be a lucrative career path.”

And despite some positive words from President Obama about apprenticeships, federal policy is still overwhelmingly focused on supporting four-year universities.

As former White House policy adviser Stewart Eizenstat and American University economics professor Robert Lerman pointed out in a May 3 Washington Post column, government spending on colleges and universities tops $300 billion a year. Apprenticeship programs get less than $40 million.

The rise of nonunion construction, which has driven down wages and benefits, has also hurt the industry’s reputation, tarnishing it as low-paid and dangerous.

Where decent pay and benefits remain the norm, construction should be an attractive career option.

In union-dense New York City, for example, as reported by both the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times recently, young workers camped out on the sidewalks for days for a chance at a union apprenticeship.

“They’re offering a career, benefits and a chance to make everyone around me proud,” one 19-year-old applicant told Wall Street Journal reporter Justin Silverman. “If you know how to save your money, you’d be rich at the end of your career.”

The nonunion sector invests substantially less in training. In 2011, the anti-union Associated Builders and Contractors only invested $28 million in apprenticeships, compared to the building trades’ $750 million.

### Growing the Work Force

While many business managers are hesitant to recruit without being able to guarantee steady employment, Callanan says the IBEW’s weakness in the 18-29-year-old demographic means that putting off the future is no longer an option. That reluctance can start costing the IBEW work.

“Our focus has to be on getting people back to work, but we must have the manpower available to get jobs in the first place,” he says.

Terra Haute Local 725 has developed a successful track record when it comes to attracting new apprentices—even during some of the recession’s toughest days—graduating its largest class ever this spring.

The secret, says Business Manager Kerr: outreach.

“We keep up our visibility in the community,” he says. The local is active in community affairs, playing a prominent role in many local charities. Their members are engaged with the media, getting positive coverage for the IBEW in the newspapers and on TV.

“People know who the IBEW is, and what we do,” Kerr says. Local 725 is present at high school career fairs and works with local National Guard units to find quality recruits.

Younger people coming into the work force need to know that we are an option,” he says.

More aggressive bottom-up organizing efforts, including the use of alternative classifications like construction worries and construction electricians, are also helping to bring in younger workers to the IBEW and boost their skills.

“Almost 20 percent of this year’s graduating class came through organizing,” says Kerr.

More than 30 percent of the apprentices at Santa Anna, Calif., Local 441 came out of the CW/CE program.

In Michigan, Detroit Local 58 works with city and state officials to help prepare workers for the often rigorous training that comes with an apprenticeship.

Access for All and the Detroit Registered Apprenticeship Pilot Program are pre-apprenticeship readiness programs that put applicants through a drug testing and basic skills assessment to prepare them for the five-year trade’s curriculum.

The program also provides financial assistance, including help with books, tools and transportation.

It’s a win-win, says Gary Polulak, training director of the Detroit Electrical Industry Training Center.

“It brings us a higher level of apprentice while it helps the city put residents to work,” he says.

### Renewable Futures

A major component of the coming skills shortage is the green worker shortage.

According to McGraw-Hill, more than 50 percent of general contractors say they are worried about a shortage of workers trained in renewable technologies and green building techniques.

And the deficit is growing fast. By 2015, green building will account for nearly half of the commercial construction market.

“In Michigan, the main thing we are seeing is an increased need for specialized skills,” says Jennifer Mefford, director of business development for the
Southeastern Michigan Labor Management Cooperation Committee. “And green skills are continuing to increase in demand.”

The center has beefed up its renewable and energy efficiency training programs, offering courses in building automation and advanced lighting controls. It also offers certification in photovoltaic and electric vehicle charging station installation.

With manufacturing leaner and more cost-conscious than ever, Michigan industry is looking to cut costs by making its plants more energy efficient. And companies are reaching out to the IBEW for help.

Several large manufacturing facilities have called me directly asking if I had any contractors who specialized in lighting retrofits, advanced control systems and additional energy efficiency measures,” Mefford says.

Polulak says that the IBEW has to diversify its training programs to meet industry demand. “Today’s members have to know a lot more and handle much more sophisticated technologies than those from previous generations.”

Callanan says that promoting green energy may be one of the best ways to connect with the millennial generation entering the workforce. “A lot of them want to feel like they are doing something to make this planet better, so the sustainability aspect of the trade might be our best sell.”

“But we also must let the industry know that you don’t need a new renewable work force to do this,” he says. “The IBEW and the National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee are equipped to do this now and in the future.

“No matter what the future may bring, we are committed to working with the IBEW and our signatory contractors to meet the needs of our customers in the ever-changing and dynamic electrical industry.”

Promoting high-tech, renewables training is one of the best ways to attract the millennial generation to the IBEW, says the NIATC’s Callanan.

Calif. Local 595 Opens the Zero-Emissions Training Center

Dublin, Calif., Local 595’s new training center opened May 30, instantly becoming one of the most efficient and technologically advanced buildings in the country and the first commercial building retrofit to be recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy as “zero net energy.”

Over the course of the year, the Zero Net Energy Center produces as much energy as it uses by generating energy from solar arrays and by reducing the energy use—75 percent less than similar commercial existing buildings.

Speaking to a crowd of more than 500, Gov. Jerry Brown said the 46,000 square-foot facility is the wave of the future.

“This is really big,” Brown said. “We need thousands of these buildings — creating millions of new jobs.”

State Senate Majority Leader Ellen Corbett said the center sets the standard for the world.

“It offers the East Bay something to boast about to the state and the nation,” Corbett said.

Local 595 Business Manager Victor Uno said the event was a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the skills and values of the IBEW.

“We wanted to build a new facility that showed more than the skills and knowledge of our IBEW members,” said Uno. “We wanted to demonstrate our commitment to energy conservation and sustainability. We are helping to move California’s energy policies forward.”

America’s 120 million buildings use 72 percent of the nation’s electricity, and more total energy than manufacturing or transportation. Six years ago, the California Energy Commission released new building standards requiring all new commercial construction to match the zero-net standard by 2030.

Uno said he and Training Director Byron Benton wanted to make sure Local 595’s members were on top of the on-site power generation, building automation and efficiency technologies that would make that goal possible. But there was a problem; they didn’t fit the existing training center. It was too small.

The decision was made to start over and build the technologies they wanted to teach about into the very building where they would do the teaching.

“This isn’t about powering up. We powered down,” Uno said. “This is where the solar panels and helical wind turbines of Dublin, Calif., Local 595’s new training facility, the Zero Net Energy Center.

The solar panels and helical wind turbines of Dublin, Calif., Local 595’s new training facility, the Zero Net Energy Center.

we need to go for energy independence and to comply with California policy, and with this building, it is where we are.”

Uno says Local 595 is sending a message to Bay Area businesses that IBEW electricians are part of the region’s embrace of next generation building technologies, but he insists it is a message that any local can use.

“We do automation and lighting control. We do renewable energy generating,” Uno said. “This is IBEW work.”

IBEW Negotiators Score Win for Iowa Rockwell Collins Workers

Mo. more than six weeks of negotiations between the IBEW and avionics manufacturer Rockwell Collins yielded victory for the nearly 2,000 strong Iowa work force May 4, when members overwhelmingly ratified a new five-year contract.

The agreement covers members at Coralville Local 1634 and Cedar Rapids Local 1362 who build, test and maintain high-tech products for national defense systems and commercial industries.

Gains include 25-percent wage increases for the life of the contract, which is above average for the industry. The company will continue to match contributions on 401(k)s. New hires will continue to be eligible to participate in the 401(k) plan on day one, and will also be included in the company’s hourly pension benefit plan, which was stripped more than a decade ago from the company’s thousands of nonunion employees.

“These gains came as a result of having an engaged and informed negotiating committee that stood strong together and knew that by raising our collective voices, these jobs will remain solid, middle-class careers,” said lead negotiator Randy Middleton, who is the director of manufacturing at the IBEW.

Management also agreed to implement the IBEW’s Family Medical Care Plan on Jan. 1, 2014. This plan provides top-shelf health, prescription, dental, vision, disability, accident and life insurance coverage for members, their beneficiaries and covered dependents. “It’s a significant improvement over what the company was offering, which was a high-deductible health plan that would have kicked up costs for the work force,” Middleton said.

Negotiators also secured better, more comprehensive health care coverage for retirees aged 55-65, while beefing up the company-wide wellness program to ensure greater benefits for members while keeping costs low. Other gains include a longevity bonus, improved shift differentials and vacation rollover for the membership.

Negotiators got an added push from a company-wide newsletter—crafted by the IBEW Membership Development Department and the negotiating committee—mailed to Rockwell Collins employees in Iowa, Texas and Florida. The newsletter included bargaining updates, reports on possible company plans to reduce health care benefits and more, while highlighting the IBEW members’ vital contributions to volunteering in the community.

The committee also launched a Web site called IBEWRocks.com to keep employees updated on negotiations.

“Working at Rockwell Collins and being a member of the IBEW gives me a better life for my family,” said Local 1634 member Freedom Sims in a video on the site.

The contract also covers nearly 150 members of the International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers/Communications Workers of America (IUE-CWA) in Richardson, Texas.

Negotiators said that the new agreement proved mutually beneficial, especially in a time of increasing outsourcing in the manufacturing sector.

“Rockwell was fair at the table,” Middleton said. “We had our differences, but now our job is to keep doing what we do to help the company be successful while continuing to build our labor/management relationship.

“An all the end of the day, it’s a good contract—and it shows that Rockwell Collins cares strongly for their work force and for keeping well-paying, middle class jobs in Iowa,” Middleton said.

EWMC Honors Legacy, Empowers Young Workers

E ric Brown often thinks about the legacy of founders and visionaries as he scans the faces and absorbs the swelling energy and spirit that have come to personify the national conferences of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus. “The founders of the caucus,” says Brown, the 55-year-old treasurer of Los Angeles Local 11, “knew that to genuinely overcome discrimination within the IBEW, they needed to be progressive, active and establish their own model of inclusiveness.”

Brown now draws inspiration not just from the courage of the ovenharming African-American activists who formed the caucus in 1972, but from an expanding contingent of young workers and the EWMC’s own youth caucus that reflects the diversity of today’s work force. “Sometimes when members see the word ‘minority’ in our name, they don’t realize that we have members of all races and nationalities and that we are working for all members of the IBEW,” says Michelle Penny, recording secretary of the youth caucus, who topped out in 2012 as the first African-American woman to receive a journeyman wireman ticket in San Diego Local 69.

With thousands of local union leaders nearing retirement age, the EWMC is playing a critical role in educating young members in the history of the IBEW and passing on tools to help them lead new efforts in organizing and serving the members. But the caucus is also helping give the young members a voice that veterans like Brown say it’s time for more senior members to listen to.

The movement of young workers for a stronger voice in the IBEW and the labor movement doesn’t face the momentous obstacles of their predecessors like Gus Miller, an EWMC founder who was barred because of his race from getting a journeyman’s card, but whose perseverance later won his ticket and 17 years on the executive board of Portland, Ore., Local 48.

But the development of EWMC’s youth caucus in 2010 is following the footprints of its parent organization on the road to strengthening the IBEW’s reach and power by developing a more inclusive internal union culture.

Mentoring

The EWMC’s ethos, rooted strongly in African-American history, has set an important model for mentoring young IBEW members of all nationalities and backgrounds, giving them practical tools to employ in their home locals. Founders of the EWMC looked to build an even sturdier ladder for others to climb by passing on experience gained in struggle. “Each one teach one.”

EWMC Helps Build L.A.’s Next Generation Youth Caucus

Many members of the Local 11 Youth Caucus attend Organizing Committee meetings.

EWMC founder and current executive board member, “says Martinez, now 38.

Mike Byrd, Local 111’s business manager, factored Martinez’s success in building the local’s EWMC chapter into his decision to appoint him as an assistant. “Eppie is so involved with young workers,” says Byrd, who credits Martinez with helping to transform the local’s EWMC chapter from “a few guys meeting infrequently to 25 members meeting every month.” Martinez, who Byrd says, “sponges up” knowledge of the union, also showed that he could bridge the interests of younger and older workers.

Adrian Saxecess, 36, vice chairman of the EWMC’s youth caucus, has served as a Houston Local 767 member for 10 years. He says EWMC doesn’t just encourage participation by young workers, but “stays on the offense, looking for ‘standouts’—members they would like to see ‘on their crew’—just like a foreman would on a construction site.”

Constructive Dialogue

The EWMC’s history of bringing resolutions to the floor of the IBEW Convention, opening up dialogue and dealing constructively with controversy has been a template for leaders of the young workers movement to follow.

Wendell Yee, a New York Local 3 journeyman inside wireman, is president of the EWMC Youth Caucus. Yee credits his involvement in EWMC to the progressive leadership of Local 3’s Business Manager Christopher Erickson who has continued a long, progressive tradition. In 1974, former Business Manager Harry Vos Ansdale Jr. used his position as IBEW Treasurer to assist the EWMC founders to have their voices heard at the union’s convention.

We participated in the RENEW (Reach out and Energize Next-gen Electrical Workers) meeting at the 38th IBEW Convention in Vancouver. He and Lorena Arciniega, a member of VacaDall, Calif., Local 1245, who serves on the AFL-CIO’s young workers advisory council, joined with activists in three local unions to introduce a resolution there on the need for the IBEW to tap the initiative of young workers.

Combined with one submitted by IBEW’s officers, the resolution states, “The IBEW actively encourages and supports programs among local unions and affiliates aimed at bringing young workers into the labor movement and dedicated to the leadership development of younger members.”

Respect for IBEW’s internal process in the young workers’ resolution is reminiscent of the EWMC’s 1991 resolution, submitted by 24 unions to the IBEW International Convention in St. Louis that led directly to the formation of a Human

Tournament and a bowling event. Funds for activities have been raised by sponsoring bake sales at apprentice meetings.

Looking to bring trade unionism to youth beyond the local union, Next Generation has been conducting outreach at a local church, spreading the word about the skilled trades. “We’re trying to help students who are graduating with nowhere to go,” says Wilkerson. “If someone hadn’t introduced me to Big John, I still wouldn’t know about unions,” says Wilkerson. “A lot of young workers don’t understand how we won what we have. They don’t understand the fight the workers went through.”

After a recent emergency that required one of his daughters to have paramedical services and medication, Wilkerson says he realized how fortunate he was to be responsible for minimal out-of-pocket charges for quality medical care as a result of his union contract. He says he wants others to have the same opportunity.

Harrel, who is working as a general foreman supervising a 125-electrical crew building a hospital, says, “We’re so proud of Alton. The EWMC has helped him learn leadership skills that he is now transferring to youth. He’s soaring like an eagle.”

It was his own experience in the IBEW and the EWMC, says Harrel, that prepared him to approach the leaders of 2nd Call, which started as a hard-core gang intervention project, to help them find employment for young people who “were ready to put down the guns and flags, get up in the morn- ing, arrive on time at a job and work hard for a living.”

in the EWMC, young members are surrounded by veteran activists who want them to succeed,” said Carolyn Williams, youth caucus executive board member, “said Williams, “We’re trying to help students who are graduating with nowhere to go,” says Wilkerson. “If someone hadn’t introduced me to Big John, I still wouldn’t know about unions,” says Wilkerson.

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The longstanding EWMC tradition of engaging in civic and community activities—day-to-day in local chapters and during volunteer workdays during national conferences—melds well with young workers who want to bring trade unionism to peers who have no experience with or connections to organized labor or the skilled trades.

Years ago, EWMC’s leaders identified the same need to bring unionism to minority populations who—due to historic discrimination—lacked familiarity with the building trades. So they established ties with community leaders to foster pre-apprenticeship programs. And they sponsored volunteer community workdays as part of national conferences and local chapter activities.

Using new tools and social media, young activists like Alton Willerson, Michelle Penny and Josh Margolis (see accompanying profiles) are deepening the EWMC’s tradition of reaching out beyond the walls of their local unions.

The longest-serving African-American leader in the history of 1,500-member Local 569, Eric Brown has cautioned younger members like Willerson, president of the recently-formed Local 51 Next Generation Youth Caucus, to respect the experience of their more senior co-workers. Brown’s pragmatic approach is honed by his experience in the EWMC.

“In my day,” says Brown, “we would set up committees and hold two-hour meetings before we did anything.” Young workers are capable of much more “instantaneous response and action,” says Brown. “I’m proud of the role the EWMC is playing in the process,” says Brown, who adds that experience in his local is demonstrating that both veteran leaders and younger activists gain when the less-seasoned members are given the opportunity to “shadow” veterans in the course of their daily work on behalf of the union.

San Diego Member: ‘Stay Connected, Give Something Back to IBEW’

Michelle Penny could have been Everyonewoman of the service economy. The San Diego resident had wrapped burritos at Taco Bell, filed medical records, cut lawns and endured the boredom of a security guard post.

But her perseverance was bolstered by the long-standing EWMC tradition of engaging in civic and community activities, which provided a valuable way for Margolis, King, a 25-year member, and other local leaders for frank conversations. And he sponsored monthly meetings for new members to air concerns, keeping the environment casual so that new members “felt they were at a social event, rather than a structured meeting.”

While no longer president of the committee, he serves as an advisor and continues to play an active role with apprentices and young workers in the local.

“When we ask Josh to step up and get involved, he’s there,” says Harvey. Margolis returns the compliment. “The officers have been 100 percent supportive of our efforts to involve all members in the union, willing to listen to any idea to make our local union stronger. You can’t ask for more,” he says.

Margolis, who joined the EWMC, echoes Godfrey King’s conviction that the group’s greatest asset is rooted in the tradition of bringing together activists beyond their own local unions to learn from each other. “I have traveled across the country meeting amazing people representing my local and received an incredible education that I could not have anywhere else,” he says.

The young activists he has met inside and outside the caucus, says Margolis, “have a fire, a passion for the trade union movement.” He joins monthly conference calls with EWMC’s and AFL-CIO’s young worker groups. His new friends are not all far-flung. The EWMC has provided a valuable way for Margolis, King and others on Long Island to overcome insularity by linking up with members of New York Local 3 and their deep tradition of community involvement.

While Margolis has faced personal adversity throughout his activism, with his wife suffering from a serious illness, he says he is grateful that he has a career not just a job. His involvement in the EWMC—where he serves as vice-chairman to King—and his local union, he says, “gives me a sense of home away from home. It has created lifelong friendships and bonds. It gives me great satisfaction knowing that I am a useful member of my community and a useful contributor to my local.”

EWMC Activists Build Solid Bonds on Long Island

Michelle Penny is a San Diego Local 569 journeyman inside wireman.

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One day, while pumping gas for her car, she observed a young woman in attractive clothes at an adjacent pump filling the tank of a shiny new truck. The stranger said she was a member of the skilled building trades. She gave Michelle the address of one of the local hiring halls.

A week later, Penny, a mother of two, was on a construction site. “I got paid the same day and made more money than I ever had before,” she says. Returning to work, Penny watched electricians doing their jobs and decided to join them, whatever it took. She applied and was accepted in Local 569’s inside journeyman wireman apprenticeship training program. Last year, Penny topped out as the first African-American woman to complete Local 569’s apprenticeship.

She is confidently achieving her goal of moving up the economic ladder but Penny, who walked her first picket line in elementary school beside her mother, an AT&T worker, says that’s only part of her changed horizon.

“A whole new family opened up before my eyes,” says Penny, 32, who in January attended her third conference of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus. The networking encouraged her to work with her local’s former Political Director Jen Badgley to launch a Facebook page targeting young workers in her local.

In the spring, she joined other San Diego EWMC volunteers for an effort to apply craft skills to sprucing up and renovating area nonprofits.

“Volunteering gives us high visibility. It’s important, as union people, to build up our community and help neighbors who are less fortunate,” says Penny, who is active in her children’s school and has walked precincts for candidates in public office. While she leaves volunteer craft projects “feeling good,” Penny knows her involvement in volunteer craft projects also opens eyes.

Young people who see her doing electrical work are curious about how she ended up in an overwhelmingly male trade. She talks to them about what it means to be in a union and learn a trade.

Through more personal contact, she hopes to encourage more young workers to climb the apprenticeship ladder behind her. For now, she says, “I’m staying connected to IBEW brothers and sisters across the country.” She has encouraged them to swap T-shirts and go out on the job with colors from another local union. “It shows camaraderie,” she says.

Growing up in San Diego, Penny says she learned about hard work from family members who were farmers in the South. Penny’s father, a Vietnam veteran and postal worker, died when she was two years old, but she says a strong mother and her male martial arts instructor helped keep her focused on what’s important.

Later on Business Agent C.J. Townes, the first African-American to serve in that position in Local 569, helped her adapt to life in the electrical trade.

She says the pressure of being the first of her gender and race to become a Local 569 journeyman was substantial. But her perseverance was bolstered by an appreciation for the IBEW’s accomplishments.

“I wouldn’t be in my position today if not for my union brothers and sisters so I’m always giving back and pushing IBEW forward to greater success,” says Penny.

EWMC chapter leaders Godfrey King, left, and Josh Margolis, Long Island, N.Y., Local 25.
Minn. Memorial Honoring WWII Hero, and IBEW Member, Opens

One of 1,500 people attended the Memorial Day dedication of a Minnesota veteran’s monument built around the statue of an IBEW member and Marine who helped to raise the American flag on Iwo Jima.

The Honoring All Veterans Memorial in Richfield, Minn., includes the names of men and women who served in all branches of the military and nearly a dozen wars, but the centerpiece is Minneapolis Local 292 member and World War II veteran Charles Lindberg.

In 1945, Lindberg was part of the platoon that finally took the peak of Mount Suribachi after four days of some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. He helped cobble together a flagpole and hoist a small flag—letting thousands of Marines know the battle was over. It was the first time an American flag had been raised over captured Japanese territory since Pearl Harbor.

Several hours later, while Lindberg was fighting Japanese soldiers still dug in on the north side of Iwo Jima, the first flag was replaced by a much larger one. That second flag raising, captured by photographer Joe Rosenthal, became an iconic image of the fighting spirit of American troops and was recreated for the Marine Corps War Memorial. Less than a week later, Lindberg’s role in the war was over. He suffered a gunshot in the arm and was later awarded the Silver Star “for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States.”

While the Marines in Rosenthal’s picture became celebrities, Lindberg and the rest of the first flag team were nearly forgotten. A few short months after the battle, Charles Lindberg returned stateside to raise a family and build a career as an electrician and member of Minneapolis Local 292.

But the people who knew Lindberg—his family, his brothers in Local 292 and St. Paul Local 120—knew the true story and a small but determined campaign was launched to set the record straight.

The IBEW Journal wrote in 2001: “Charles Lindberg helped raise the flag that mattered to those who were there. Mt. Suribachi was the eyes of two, the highest point on the volcanic island, and it took four horrid bloody days for the Marines to get there, crawling inch by inch as Japanese guns from underground fortifications in every cave rained death on them.

Then they saw that U.S. flag go up. The troops started cheering, and some were crying, and the ships whistles sounded offshore. Brother Lindberg says, “It was something I will never forget.”

It took another month of severe fighting before the campaign was declared over. The American death toll at two Jima was 6,800—about 6,000 of them Marines—more than the Normandy invasion the year before and the most since Gettysburg in the Civil War.

Brother Lindberg’s weapon was a flame-thrower, a 72-pound rig he was strapped into throughout the trek with the flag and the fighting that followed its unfurling.

Brian Peterson, a retired member of Local 292, said that when a local artist, Travis Gorshe, was commissioned to build a monument in Richfield’s Veterans Park, Lindberg quickly became the focal point of the plans.

"The first raisers were never really recognized," said Peterson, who has been on the memorial’s board since 2005. "It was important to us that we did." Ground was broken for the memorial in 2007 in Richfield, where Lindberg lived for many years. Lindberg passed away only a few weeks later and never saw the statue carved in his image rise nearly a dozen feet in the air.

Construction has been steady but slow. "Until this year, it had still been mostly a vision," Peterson said.

At the memorial dedication, Maj. Gen. Richard C. Nash, adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard, spoke about sacrifice and memory. The men and women who built the memorial were called to the front and recognized for their work before the 34th Infantry Division Band closed the ceremony with taps. Then the crowds wave their way between the statue and the six granite columns covered with veterans’ names and services.

Rodney Lindberg, Charles’ son and a veteran himself, also spoke. He talked about how important it was that his father’s example would be honored in the place he called home built by people he called brothers and sisters.

“From the bottom of my heart, he was a hero,” Lindberg said. “Yes, for what he did, but the way he lived his life afterward made him just as much a hero.”

Photograph used under a Creative Commons license from Flickr user whitley88.

Telecom Workers To FairPoint CEO: Let’s Talk

On June 3, with a little over one year to go before their contract with FairPoint Communications expires, business managers and co-workers representing 1,700 IBEW members in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont traveled to the company’s annual shareholders meeting in Charlotte, N.C. Several weeks before the meeting, IBEW locals had sent a letter to the company calling for early negotiations. The company eliminated 300 union jobs in 2011 and, in April, cut 90 more. The union offered to sit down with FairPoint and discuss ways to improve business without more job losses. After they received no response, they decided to head south.

Outside the meeting, IBEW members handed out a flyer calling upon the company—Verizon’s successor in copper line service—to help address a deteriorating labor-management relationship by agreeing to early talks.

“Labor and management should solve problems, not create them ... It’s time for more cooperation and open dialogue ... Working in partnership benefits shareholders, customers, employees and management,” the flyer said.

Inside the meeting, Peter McLaughlin, business manager of Augusta, Maine, Local 2327 and chairman of IBEW System Council T-9, took the microphone. He agreed with FairPoint CEO’s assessment that the outcome of negotiations on a new agreement with IBEW is “pivotal for the company,” but expressed disappointment that FairPoint was refusing invitations to sit down and talk with the union. “It’s a shame we had to travel so far just to talk to the management of our company,” he said.

Manchester, N.H., Local 320 Business Manager Glenn Buckett told the blog VTDigger.org, “I’m disappointed by the company’s refusal to engage in a dialogue with us. We understand the challenges in the telecom industry, and we want to partner with management to find solutions and increase productivity.”

Says International President Edwin D. Hill, “IBEW members and FairPoint’s consumers deserve a better relationship with the company that flows from an understanding that everyone loses when the parties cannot sit down and work through problems. We will continue our efforts to build a more productive bargaining relationship with the FairPoint, whatever it takes.”

"It’s a shame we had to travel 3,000 miles just to talk to the management of our company,” said Peter McLaughlin, business manager of Augusta, Maine, Local 2327.
Outside Line Workers Win with Team Bargaining

I t is Union Bargaining 101: there is power in numbers. So when three IBEW locals representing workers at Emera Utility Services in Atlantic Canada prepared for contract bargaining early this spring, they decided to come together at the negotiating table.

“It wasn’t a radical idea,” says First District International Representative Brian Matheson. “We had three very similar contracts with the same company, so why not combine them?”

The more than 100 Emera workers do installation and repair work for Bell Aliant—Eastern Canada’s largest telecommunications provider—in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The technicians are represented by three locals—Fredericton, New Brunswick, Local 37; Charlottetown, P.E.I., Local 1432; and Halifax, Nova Scotia, Local 1928. All three had separate contracts with Emera, first bargained when the company was acquired by Bell Aliant in 2009.

Business managers and First District staff said that merging their efforts and bargaining for one contract across Atlantic Canada made more sense. Local 37 Assistant Business Manager Ross Galbraith, who headed up negotiations, says the collective approach to bargaining helped strengthen the team as a whole.

“I think we all learned from this experience and forged better ties with one and other. We emerged from this experience stronger and more united than when we entered,” he said.

Richard says it also gave IBEW leaders from different provinces the opportunity to compare notes and help everyone get a better picture of what is going on across the industry.

Management was also excited by the opportunity to streamline the bargaining process.

“They said they had hoped something like this could happen, but never dreamed it would be possible,” Richard said.

In the end, the team approach paid off. Despite tough economic times across Atlantic Canada, Emera workers maintained their competitive wages and benefits. In April, the contract was overwhelmingly ratified.

The Code of Excellence was also raised during negotiations. While it was not officially adopted, Richard says that the continues to educate members and management on the importance of living up to the code’s promise to work safely and provide professional and quality service.

“I’m really proud of our people,” he says. “They realize that they have to come in on time and put in a full day’s work in order to hold on to the gains they’ve won.”

IBEW leaders say that they hope the union’s success with team bargaining at Emera will inspire other locals in similar situations to follow suit.

“Particularly with companies that are spread out across a particular region where we have members in different locals, this approach makes a lot of sense,” says Matheson.

Last spring, three locals from Atlantic Canada bargained with Emera Utility Services as a single team for the first time. From left, front row, are: Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Local 1432 Business Manager Ray McBride; Halifax, Nova Scotia, Local 1928 Business Manager Jeff Richardson; Emera Labour Relations Manager Wendy Doone; Area Manager Mike Daigle and Fredericton, New Brunswick, Local 37 Business Manager Ross Galbraith; back row, First District International Representative Brian Matheson; Local 37 member Nick Law; Local 37 Assistant Business Manager Claude Richard.

C est une Négociation 101 : la force réside dans le nombre. Au début du printemps dernier, alors qu’elles se préparaient en vue de la négociation d’un nouveau contrat pour leurs membres à l’emploi de l’entreprise de services d’utilité publique Emera Utility Services dans la région de l’Atlantique, trois sections locales de la FIOE ont décidé de se présenter ensemble à la table de négociations.

« Ce n’était pas une idée radicale. Les dispositions de nos trois conventions collectives avec cette entreprise étaient similaires. Alors pourquoi ne pas les combiner ? » déclare Brian Matheson, Représentant international pour le Premier District.


Les gérants d’affaires et les représentants du Premier District ont expliqué que cette fois-ci, ils leur paraîsaient plus logique d’unir leurs efforts en vue de négocier une seule convention collective dans toute la région canadienne de l’Atlantique.

Selon le confrère Claude Richard, l’adjoint au Gérant d’affaires de la S.L. 37, qui dirigeait les négociations, l’approche collective lors de la négociation a contribué à renforcer toute l’équipe.

« Je crois que nous avons tous appris de cette expérience et que nous avons créé des liens plus étroits entre nous. Nous sommes sortis de cette expérience plus forts et plus unis. » dit-il.

Comme le mentionne le confrère Richard, le fait d’être réunis lors des négociations a permis aux dirigeants syndicaux de la FIOE de différents provinces, d’échanger des idées et de mieux saisir ce qui se passe dans l’industrie. Les dirigeants de la compagnie étaient aussi très enthousiastes à l’idée d’un processus de négociation simplifié.

« Tous espéraient qu’une telle situation se produise mais ils n’auraient jamais imaginé cela possible. » ajoute le confrère Richard.

En fin de compte, le travail d’équipe a porté fruit. Malgré la conjoncture économique difficile dans toute la région de l’Atlantique, les employés de l’entreprise Emera ont conservé leurs salaires et leurs avantages sociaux concurrentiels. Les membres ont voté massivement en faveur de l’entente en avril dernier.

Au cours des négociations, il fut aussi question du Code d’excellence. Le Code n’a pas été adopté officiellement, mais le confrère Richard souhaite qu’il continue de sensibiliser les membres et les dirigeants de l’entreprise à l’importance de respecter les dispositions du Code qui prévoient que les membres doivent travailler de façon sécuritaire et fournir un service professionnel et de qualité.

« Nous sommes très fiers de nos membres. Ils ont compris qu’ils doivent améliorer leur travail et faire une journée de travail complète afin de conserver les gains déjà réalisés, » ajoute-t-il.

Les dirigeants de la Fraternité espèrent que le succès obtenu par les sections locales lors de la négociation avec l’entreprise Emera, incitera d’autres sections locales à faire de même dans une situation semblable.

« Cette façon de faire est logique, spécialement dans le cas des entreprises qui sont dispersées dans une région en particulier où nous avons des membres répartis dans différentes sections locales. » conclut le confrère Matheson.

Les travailleurs de lignes sortent gagnants d’une négociation en équipe
Phillip Fleming

DECEASED

With sadness, the IBEW announces the death of First District Vice President Phillip Fleming on May 25. He was 68.

Brother Fleming was appointed First District International Vice President in 2003 to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Donald Lounds. He was elected to that post at the 57th International Convention in 2006, and at the Vancouver Regional Convention in 2009.

“He was a great guy to work with,” says retired First District International Representative Jerry Wilson. “He was so honest, that if he said it, everyone knew then that was the way it was going to be.”

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Fleming was initiated into Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Local 1432 in 1967.

He worked as an inside wireman for eight years before being elected business manager/financial secretary in 1976. Brother Fleming was also active in the island’s labor movement, serving as president of the P.E.I. Federation of Labour.

In 1980, he was appointed International Representative in the First District by then-International President Charles H. Pillard. He helped service locals in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1992, he transferred to Ontario, where he organized members in construction and manufacturing. One of his proudest achievements was helping to organize a 600-person plant in Toronto. In 1999, he was assigned to the First District office, serving as Vice President Lounds’ executive assistant. Succeeding Lounds in 2003, Fleming helped lead the First District through some of Canada’s biggest economic and political changes in decades. He presided over an aggressive membership development effort, which grew the IBEW’s First District membership even through the worst of the 2008 recession. The First District also beefed up its political action program, building a grassroots network across Canada.

One of his greatest accomplishments, says Wilson, was helping to start the First District’s NextGen initiative to reach out to younger members. “It was an uphill battle, but now has taken legs,” he says.

He also worked closely with contractors and others to boost skilled construction training to meet the demands of Canada’s energy boom and anticipated manpower shortage, helping to found the National Electrical Trade Council.

Nominating Fleming during the 2011 International Convention, Fredericton, New Brunswick Local 37 Business Manager Ross Galbraith said: “The First District has elected a leader with a passion for our union, a champion for working men and women, a man who has dedicated his life to the labor movement. His record shows a clear path, carefully considered decisions and willingness to tackle the tough issues.”

Fleming was a member of the Canadian Executive Board of the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO, and the Canadian Labour Congress’ executive committee.

“Brother Fleming was a powerful voice for working families whose presence and service to the IBEW was felt across borders,” says International President Edwin D. Hill. “The lives of every brother and sister are better because of his efforts. Phil will be greatly missed.”

He is survived by his wife Loretta, two sons, two stepdaughters and two grandchildren. The IBEW extends its most heartfelt sympathies to Brother Fleming’s family and friends.

APPOINTED

William F. Daniels

International President Edwin D. Hill appointed International Representative William Daniels as First District Vice President effective June 3, with the unanimous concurrence of the International Executive Council. We will have more details about the career of Vice President Daniels in the August issue of the Electrical Worker.

APPOINTED

Amanda Pacheco

International Representative Amanda Pacheco has been appointed director of the Education Department, effective June 1.

A native of Leadville, Colo.—a former mining town—Pacheco worked as a high-school teacher for 12 years in the Metro Denver area. She taught Spanish, while coaching basketball and volleyball.

A member of the teachers’ union, she says she was taught the importance of organized labor by her parents—both union members. “Without the good things the union brought our family, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

In 2006, she came to the International Office, assigned to the Education Department. In that capacity, she traveled the country, holding trainings for new business managers and officers. “In my first year, I must have spent 27 weeks on the road,” she says. “It was a really good opportunity to work with leaders on the local level, which helped me gain a broader perspective.”

In 2009, Pacheco joined former executive assistant to the International President Liz Shuler at the AFL-CIO, serving as assistant to the newly elected secretary-treasurer.

In that position, she helped Shuler organize the AFL-CIO’s NextUp effort to reach out and engage younger union members. “Working with young people who care so much about the labor movement was my favorite part of the job,” she says.

Pacheco is a member of Denver Local 121.

She says she looks forward to expanding the IBEW’s training programs to help members across North America become better leaders and activists.

“We can have a real impact on our membership,” she says. “We have strong leaders in the field and excellent opportunities to try out some innovative ideas to boost labor education.”

The officers and members wish Sister Pacheco great success in her new position.

Circuits

IBEW Comic Book Recounts Labor’s Story to New Members

In a genre best known for caped crusaders and mutants saving the universe, one IBEW local is using comic books to tell the story of another kind of hero: the union members and women who made the American middle class.

Earlier this year Vaxaville, Calif., Local 1245 published “First Day,” a 20-page comic book detailing the history of Local 1245 and the labor movement, which is distributed to all new members. And so far, it is a big hit.

“It is the first thing people turn to when they get their orientation packets,” says Eric Wolfe, communications director at Local 1245.

Wolfe worked with artist Tom Christopher to put the comic book together, based on a history Wolfe did of the local.

“First Day” tells the story of a new employee at California utility PG&E. The worker tells his son about the IBEW and all the good benefits that being a member brings his family, while recounting the struggles that helped create the labor movement and Local 1245.

It was a big project, says Wolfe, but rewarding for all involved.

“It was a rich experience trying to take labor history and turn it into engaging dialogue and drama without distorting the facts,” he says.

One of the main motivations for doing the comic was the desire to find new ways to reach younger members, says Business Manager Tom Dalzell.

Dalzell knew that Christopher—a veteran of the comic book industry—was pro-union, so he asked him about helping to make one for the IBEW.

The utility industry is undergoing a major generational shift, as the baby boomers exit work force with increasing speed. PG&E has recently undergone a hiring boom, posing a challenge to Local 1245 on how to best reach out to these younger members—many with little to no experience with unions.

“It is important to find new ways to communicate an old message: there is strength in unity and unions are the best way to gain some power over your work life,” says Dalzell.

Wolfe says that he hopes to use the comic book format in other local literature, including training material for shop stewards.

“A lot of the old guard is headed out the door,” Wolfe says. “If we don’t make a concerted effort to inform and engage this new generation of employees, we will lose out the ability to represent them effectively.”

IBEW/Utility Training Program Recognized

Faced with a “gray tidal wave” of retiring retirees in the nuclear industry, the IBEW and Florida Light and Power launched an innovative partnership with Indian River State College in Fort Pierce, Fla., seven years ago.

Now that collaboration known as the Power Plant Institute has been recognized as one of the best college/corporate partnerships by the American Association of Community Colleges.

The average age of workers at FPL’s two nuclear power plants, St. Lucie and Turkey Point, was close to 60 years old when the institution was launched in 2006, and it had been more than a decade since anyone had topped out of System Council U-4’s apprenticeship program.

“Our goal was to fill an immediate need for highly trained and skilled craft workers for Florida Power and Light and we’ve done that,” said Gary Aleknavich, business manager of System Council U-4, which represents FPL workers. “We’re excited about the program and the recognition it is receiving.”

By partnering with Indian River State, a new generation of apprentices learned to maintain mechanical, electrical and instrument and control systems. Some students joined the apprenticeship program from within FPL, but many others came in as students at Indian River, simply by applying for admission.

After two years of classes and summer internships, students were awarded an associate in science degree in electrical power technology.

Graduates employed or hired by FPL began a formal apprenticeship year at the St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant before becoming full journeymen.

About 200 graduates have been hired or promoted at St. Lucie since the program’s inception. A sister program housed at Miami College has fed a similar number of new employees to Turkey Point. In this right-to-work state, nearly all have become members of the IBEW, Aleknavich said.

“Through our agreement, we launched a whole generation of highly-skilled craft workers in time to get a transfer of knowledge before our veterans retire,” Aleknavich said. “Without it, there would have been a gap in the knowledge of the nuclear worker that would have been a threat to the IBEW and FPL.”
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*In Memoriam*
15th Annual Local Wide Picnic at Pico Rivera Sports Arena

LocalWide Picnic will be held at a new location this year. The picnic is scheduled for Saturday, July 27, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Pico Rivera Sports Arena, 11003 East Rooks Rd., Pico Rivera, CA.

Our picnic attendance continues to grow each year and this year’s event promises to be bigger and better with the addition of our members from the Engineers and Architects Assoc. We anticipate over 3,000 in attendance. This is a great event to mingle with friends, family, and union brothers and sisters for the day! There will be plenty of kid’s games and prizes, carnival rides, bingo, raffles with generous giveaways, live music, and lots of food and drinks. There will also be a health fair, a mini rodeo and a car show (bring your show cars). All of this is included in the price of the ticket donation.

Go to www.ibew11.org for more details. We all know you work hard; it’s time to play hard. Looking forward to seeing you all there!

Diana Limon, P.S.

Utility Local Update

L.U. 15 (u), DOWNS Grove, IL—The Illinois Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act passed both the Senate and House and at press time awaits action by the governor. The legislation is aimed at getting the “smart grid” back on track, creating jobs and reducing power outages.

At the fossil stations, Kincard Station owner Dominion announced that Energy Capital Partners bought the station and will use its operating division, EquiPower, to run the station. All employees will be offered jobs; the date of transfer is expected to be during 2013.

Midwest Generation, in the midst of bankruptcy, announced a “lean operations” initiative that will result in a reduction of approximately 90 bargaining unit positions. We negotiated a severance package of up to 16 weeks of pay for members electing severance or getting laid off.

In the nuclear stations, we got a favorable ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, stating that NRC regulations do not prohibit the use of a third party arbitrator in cases involving denial of access.

Our Transmission Underground Group was recognized for working nine years without an OSHA recordable injury. Local 5’s newly formed Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) meets at the Local 5’s office monthly and volunteers in the community.

Bus. Mgr./Pres. Dean Apple selected Local 5’s 2013 Scholarship Committee comprising six members: Christine Watkins, Lynette Fajer, Eric Harris, Amy Allison, Felicia Ibarra and Scott Fitzwater. These members will select winners of the ten $500 scholarships Local 5 awards annually.

Doug Wedas, P.S.

Work Picture Is Good

L.U. 17 (catv,em,ltt,ok,ca), DETROIT, MI—We congratulate Bro. Robert Capling for his 65 years of IBEW service. Robert’s “traveling card” was accepted by Local 17 on March 18, 1954. After serving in World War II, Robert joined the IBEW as a groundman. A short time later, he was promoted to apprentice lineman and completed the program in fine fashion. Upon completion and after serving five years with Local 876, he was hired by Detroit Edison Co., where he worked for 38 years before retiring. It was an honor to have him at our March general membership meeting to accept his certificate of recognition and his 65-year pin.

The 2013 work picture looks good. We have approximately 75 contract crews working on various distribution and transmission projects throughout the jurisdiction. There are currently 600 line clearance employees working for DTE Energy and International Transmission Co. There are three wind farms, all slated to be complete by the end of the construction season. We hope to have a busy year and keep on our minds the most important goal: “Safety First.”

Dean Bradley, B.M.

Contracts Ratified

L.U. 21 (catv,go,ht), DOWNS GroVe, IL—Our members and those in locals who are part of the SCT-3 Council ratified a new four-year agreement with AT&T. The membership was concerned about protecting their wages, benefits and jobs in emerging technologies, as well as retiree health care. The officers and delegates of the IBEW SCT-3 feel the agreement fulfills many of those goals. The contract also contains “successorship” language in the event AT&T decides to sell off any part of the company.

Members working for Frontier MIRA#2, Johnson Controls and Comcast West also voted to accept new agreements with their employers. We thank our members for their hard work and solidarity, without which reaching these agreements would not have been possible. Contracts still need to be reached this year for members working for CenturyLink, Peoria and Vermillion Counties, and members at Frontier not in MIRA#2.

During the midst of the ratification process, Local 21 members displayed their true professionalism as they assisted in the cleanup and restoration of services disrupted by devastating floods that hit our area. Their commitment to safe, quality craftsmanship is unwavering.

Bob Przybylinski, P.S./P.S.

Niagara Transformer Expansion

L.U. 41 (em,go,ht,leakspa), BUFFALO, NY—One of Local 41’s represented manufacturing facilities, Niagara Transformer, has begun its expansion. In 1993, John H. Darby formed Niagara Transformer; 80 years and two generations later the company is ready to position itself for the future under current owner John E. Darby, great nephew of the founder. The $35 million expansion will give the IBEW represented facility a humidity and dust controlled environment, positive pressure building with 150-ton crane capacity, state-of-the-art paint booth and prep areas that will only increase Niagara’s reputation as one of the premier transformer manufacturers in the world.

Owner John Darby (left) and Local 41 Steward Ron Bailey stand in front of Niagara Transformer’s building expansion.

Trade Classifications

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The 43,600-square-foot expansion, which is slated to open in the fourth quarter of 2023, will increase Niagara’s quality and improve production time, allowing for more of a workload. The new capabilities made possible by the expansion will allow Niagara to put on a full second shift with hopes of increasing the company’s total number of employees to 100. Niagara’s future appears to be headed in the right direction with the help of the skilled IBEW members making the highest-quality transformers they can. Thanks to those members for their commitment to excellence!

Gregory R. Ingold, A.B.M.

Donation to Community College
L.U. 43 (em,ak,vt,ct), SYRACUSE, NY—Our work continues to improve. Jobs such as the addition at Turning Stone Casino and the Upstate Hospital Cancer wing started hiring. New projects in our area that could bring more work for the members are: Bass Pro Shop and a proposed clean-room facility at Griffis Airport, both in the Utica area.

Recently, IBEW Local 43 and the NECA Finger Lakes Chapter partnered to give Onondaga Community College a generous gift totaling $350,000. This five-year endowment will be used to add additional funds to the existing “IBEW/NECA Community Scholars” program. It also supports the college’s SRC Arena and Events Center with the newly dedicated IBEW/NECA Box Office. (See photo below of dedication ceremony.)

We are saddened to report the death of long-standing member and past officer, Ken Spears. A veteran of World War II, Bro. Spears was initiated into Local 43 in July 1953. Kenny was first elected treasurer in 1968 and held that position until 1983. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

Jim Corbett, P.S.

On June 7 Edison International announced its decision to permanently shut down San Onofre nuclear plant, which has been closed since January 2012. IBEW Local 47 testified at numerous hearings in support of earlier SCE efforts to restart the station. Agreements were ratified at the Cities of Anaheim and Banning. Organizing continues to be a focus and our membership continues to increase. Tragedy struck the Local 47 family when SCE lineman Jose Raul Ros was killed in an under-ground 12KV accident. We are also sad to report the passing of David Quijas and Eddie Campos. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of our departed brothers.

Work safe, live well, work union!

Jose Raul Ros (1974 – 2013)

Contract Negotiations
L.U. 53 (ct,vt,ct,ri,ny,ct), SPRINGFIELD, IL—Our labor and benefits agreements with Dynegy were scheduled to expire June 30. At this writing, Dynegy has proposed to freeze our current defined benefit pension plan, eliminate retiree medical insurance, reduce employee medical insurance benefits, and slash hourly wage rates. This will likely be a tough round of bargaining and we will face difficult decisions. Additionally, Dynegy recently acquired Duck Creek, Edwards Station, Coffeen, Newton and Intermountain stations. Dynegy stated it will honor all labor contracts for bargaining unit employees. This transaction is expected to be finalized by the end of 2013 and Local 53 has filed at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as interveners.

The local recently organized clerical and technical workers at EnerStar Power Corp. in Paris, IL. We have submitted our contract proposals and, at the time of this writing, just started negotiations with the company.

We have open calls for linemen, substation techs and apprentices. We will also start more apprentices this year. Tree trimming has picked up and there may be a need to hire additional trimmers soon.

Our annual picnic will be Saturday, Sept. 21, at Clinton Lake. We will have a great fish fry and there will be plenty of children’s activities. Bring your family for the day!

Bus: Mgr. Jim Bates is running unopposed in our upcoming election. This is a tribute to Jim’s character and passionate dedication to our local and our members. Good luck to all candidates in the election.

Please work safely and attend your monthly unit meetings.

Karlene Krissiey, B.R.

Attending dedication ceremony at Onondaga Community College, from left, John Zibolsek, IEEE vice president for development, Margaret O’Connell, OCC interim president; IBEW Local 43 Bus. Mgr. Donald Morgan; and NECA Finger Lakes Chapter Exec. Mgr. Marilyn Oppedison.

Contract Agreements Ratified
L.U. 47 (ct,vt,ct,ri,ny,ct), DIAMOND BAR, CA—Happy Fourth of July to all! One day a year we are red or blue states, we are all Red, White & Blue states.

It was a productive spring at Local 47. Mgr. Pat Lavin successfully negotiated an agreement with Southern California Edison requiring that all transmission, distribution, substation, line clearance and communications work be done by IBEW Local 47 contractors. The agreement was long in the making. It was accomplished with a combination of pressure on and support for SCE.

On June 7 Edison International announced its decision to permanently shut down San Onofre nuclear plant, which has been closed since January 2012. IBEW Local 47 testified at numerous hearings in support of earlier SCE efforts to restart the station.

Agreements were ratified at the Cities of Anaheim and Banning. Organizing continues to be a focus and our membership continues to increase. Tragedy struck the Local 47 family when SCE lineman Jose Raul Ros was killed in an underground 12KV accident. We are also sad to report the passing of David Quijas and Eddie Campos. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of our departed brothers.

Work safe, live well, work union!

Jose Raul Ros (1974 – 2013)

Contract Negotiations
L.U. 53 (ct,vt,ct,ri,ny,ct), SPRINGFIELD, IL—Our labor and benefits agreements with Dynegy were scheduled to expire June 30. At this writing, Dynegy has proposed to freeze our current defined benefit pension plan, eliminate retiree medical insurance, reduce employee medical insurance benefits, and slash hourly wage rates. This will likely be a tough round of bargaining and we will face difficult decisions. Additionally, Dynegy recently acquired Duck Creek, Edwards Station, Coffeen, Newton and Intermountain stations. Dynegy stated it will honor all labor contracts for bargaining unit employees. This transaction is expected to be finalized by the end of 2013 and Local 53 has filed at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as interveners.

The local recently organized clerical and technical workers at EnerStar Power Corp. in Paris, IL. We have submitted our contract proposals and, at the time of this writing, just started negotiations with the company.

We have open calls for linemen, substation techs and apprentices. We will also start more apprentices this year. Tree trimming has picked up and there may be a need to hire additional trimmers soon.

Our annual picnic will be Saturday, Sept. 21, at Clinton Lake. We will have a great fish fry and there will be plenty of children’s activities. Bring your family for the day!

Bus: Mgr. Jim Bates is running unopposed in our upcoming election. This is a tribute to Jim’s character and passionate dedication to our local and our members. Good luck to all candidates in the election.

Please work safely and attend your monthly unit meetings.

Karlene Krissiey, B.R.

Attending dedication ceremony at Onondaga Community College, from left, John Zibolsek, IEEE vice president for development, Margaret O’Connell, OCC interim president; IBEW Local 43 Bus. Mgr. Donald Morgan; and NECA Finger Lakes Chapter Exec. Mgr. Marilyn Oppedison.

IBEW Day Kick-Off
L.U. 53 (ct,vt,ct,ri,ny,ct), KANSAS CITY, MO—The clerical union employed by Missouri Gas Energy has kicked off IBEW Day. To show solidarity and togetherness, we are wearing IBEW T-shirts on the day of our monthly meetings each month. (See photo, top right.)

Labor Day Celebration: We will celebrate labor at its finest again this year on Sept. 2. Details will be posted on our Web site, or you can call the hall for details. Hope to see you there!

Lineman’s Rodeo: The Lineman’s Rodeo will be held this year on Oct. 19.

Local 53 Recognizes Longtime Members: For 60 years of service—Lynn R. Coats; for 55 years of service—Donald Darrah; for 50 years of service—Larry D. Baker, Robert C. Brandon, R.J. Brown, Russell M. Kendall, Harry B. Nowlin, Joe Padilla and Melvin D. Simmons. Congratulations to all! Hope all finds and keeps you well ... Local 53

Tracy A. Riley, VJR

Workers Memorial Monument
L.U. 57 (ct,vt,ct,ri,ny,ct), SALT LAKE CITY, UT—Since April 28 fell on a Sunday this year, the Workers Memorial Day Service was held Saturday, April 27.

A sandstone monument was placed on the banks of the Snake River at Freeman Park, in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Both state and city proclamations were read to proclaim April 28 as Workers Memorial Day. This year’s service was in memory of Local 57 members Jimmy Westwood, who died on the job in 2011.

Approximately 100 family, friends and union members attended the ceremony. Thanks to the hard work of East Idaho Central Labor Council Pres. and IBEW Local 57 member Rory Cullen, along with the rest of the East Idaho ICU and Idaho State AFL-CIO, this permanent memorial can be viewed by all who walk along the banks of the river. An engraved brick in honor of Jimmy Westwood will also be installed at the Workers Memorial in Silver Spring, MD. Remember every day to “mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living.”

Scott Lang, P.S.

Annual Sports Night Results
L.U. 103 (ct,vt,ct,ri,ny,ct), BOSTON, MA—Results are in for Local 103’s 26th Annual Sports Night. The first game had 40 children, consisting of sons and daughters of Local 103 members, playing in the Mite, Squirt and PeeWee hockey games. This year, the Red team defeated the Blue team 12-6. Ryan Locicoso scored four goals for the Red team to help win the game. 

Journeymen and apprentices took the rink next. This year’s game was close, all the way to the final minute of the third period, as journeyman Dan Hall assisted A.J. Kern, who scored the winning goal to break the 1-1 tie with 43 seconds to go in the final period. Kern was named MVP for his game-winning goal.

On the court just down the hall, the journeymen’s basketball games was held. It was another close game all the way through; the first half ended with the apprentice team trailing 29-28. However, the journeymen won the game with a final score of 49-46. Apprentice Mike Poulson had the most points overall tallying at 15. Named as the MVP was journeyman Ottis Quinones Jr., who had 11 points for the winning team.

Thank you to everyone behind the scenes who made this day possible.

Kevin C. Molina, P.S.

Negotiations Underway
L.U. 111 (em,ak,vt,ct,ri,ct,ri,ct,ri,ct,ri,cc), DENVER, CO—It’s been busy around the hall. Nominations for officers and Executive Board and Examining Board members were completed at the end of April 2013, with ballots mailed to the membership in May. At press time, ballots were scheduled to be counted June 7. Results are to be reported.

At press time, negotiations continue for the following groups: San Miguel Power, WEC, and the PSCD I&T. While noticeable progress has
Local Lines

been made with WECC, the process for San Miguel Power and PSCo I&I Techs has been at a snail’s pace as of this writing.

The Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWM) has been in full swing. Their mission is to involve, encourage, educate, and train union members, creating solidarity and community participation. The EWM has been instrumental in getting the younger workers involved by hosting events and gatherings where members can get to know their fellow union brothers and sisters. This is essential in educating our younger generations on the importance of building a better environment for working families through community involvement.

Mike Kastelecky, P.S.

‘Join Us for Summer Activities’

L.U. 121 (1/lct,0,1lkn), PORTLAND, OR—Summer is in full swing, and your local is busy preparing for several annual events. We hope that you’ll join us and take the time to visit with friends and co-workers. Often, we’re so busy focusing on job duties and responsibilities that we forget a founding tenet of our union—fellowship. Please join us at these events because they’re not just about us. Money raised at these events support the Oregon Burn Center, which is our flagship charity. If you have any questions about the upcoming events, contact our business office at (503) 262-9215.


August 16, 2013: The local’s annual Bend golf tournament will be held at the River’s Edge Golf Course. Registration forms will be available at www.ibew25.com.

August 17-18, 2013: Grab your bats and gloves for the local’s annual Bend softball tournament. The kid’s raffle gets bigger every year and is a highlight of the event. Visit www.ibew25.com for more information.

Marcy Grill, P.S.

‘An Abundance of Work’

L.U. 141 (ees,LoBu), WHEELING, WV—We have been very fortunate this year helping many Buckhannon brothers and sisters get work in our area. We expect steady employment this summer with calls going into Book II. We thank the many travelers who have come here to help us get work and provide well-trained and qualified workers for the projects we have going.

One member of our local ran a write-in campaign for a local school board and was elected in April. Since that district will be doing some major construction soon, it is good to have a member on the board. Often we are faced with trying to get local elected boards to see the value of good contracting and using union labor. Instead of trying to convince elected officials to do the right thing rather than just use the lowest bidder, have those local officials be union members. This helps prevent corporate attorneys and management from pushing anti-union policies behind closed doors, because we are then in those closed meetings keeping them honest. So next election don’t just vote for a pro-union sounding candidate, be the candidate.

David F. Borchert, Pres.

Upcoming 2013 Summer Events

L.U. 193 (1/lct,0,1lkn), EVERETT, WA—As I write this article, summer is rapidly approaching and the work picture on the west side remains slow, while the east side is picking up. There are a lot of projects being talked about on the west side, but so far there hasn’t been much activity. The work on the east side should last into the fall and beyond, with enough work for those who wish to cross the hump.

For many of our members, the IBEW is a family tradition. “Young” Dave Brunie sent in a couple of photos showing five generations of Brunie wiremen. Young Dave is the great-grandson of Dave, grandson of Morrie, son of “Big” Dave and the father of Aaron and Ian. Rounding out the member tree is Big Dave’s brother Ed. The Brunies represent almost 60 years of active membership.

Mike Raikes, Pres.

Local 191 Brunes family members, from left: Dave, Morrie, Ed, Ian, “Big” Dave, Aaron and “Young” Dave.

‘Marching Into Spring’

L.U. 269 (1lkn), TRENTON, NJ—Although the trees were mostly bare, there was plenty of green to be seen throughout our territory early this spring as union members marched in St. Patrick’s Day parades in Mercer and Burlington counties in New Jersey, and in Buck’s County in Pennsylvania. The parades were spread out over three weeks turning the holiday into a month long event. Participation was up from past years. The electricians’ marching groups were led by a pick-up truck decorated with a

Local 197 congrats 2012/13 apprentice graduates. From left: Instructor Ken McLean, JATC Dir. Renee Ridelle, Jim Suppan, Josh Scaggs, Clint Johnson, Mike Russell, and Jake Goor. Not pictured is Josh Linton.

Apprentice Graduates & Building Trades Job Rally

L.U. 197 (emt,1), BLOOMINGTON, IL—Congratulations to our apprentice graduates of 2012/2013. We are proud of our new journeymen wiremen and look forward to them becoming leaders in the IBEW. A nice dinner was held at the Ozark House, and certificates and awards were handed out. Congratulations to Clint Johnson, awarded student of the year, and to Jim Suppan, who won the academic achievement award for having the highest grade point average over five years. This class has been involved with our local’s activities and we hope they will continue. This was Ken McLean’s last year of teaching. The JATC, the local and the IBEW are tremendously grateful for Bro. McLean’s dedication and knowledge he brought to the program.

We held a Building Trades Job Rally at the Kriger store on College Ave. Thanks to our retirees and members who showed up in solidarity against nonunion, out-of-town workers being handed our jobs. Also, thanks for calling the store management and sending e-mails to the Kriger corporate office. The work picture remains pretty slow in our jurisdiction. Anyone on Book I should be signing other books. We are grateful to other locals that have helped put our members to work. Our 37th annual golf outing will be July 27 at Fairlakes golf course in Secor. We encourage everyone to sign up and get on a team. Remember to stay involved in the local union!

Mike Raikes, Pres.

Local 197 JATC Dir. Renee Ridelle, Jim Suppan, Josh Scaggs, Clint Johnson, Mike Russell, and Jake Goor.

Don Hudson, P.S.

Local 197 stmttes awarded recipic: Bill Haase Jr. and Hank Bahr, and 50-year members Eugene Snyder and Dave Dressen. On hand for Hank’s 50-year pin presentation was his son Rob Bahr. Rob Bahr is a third-generation electrician; the Bahr family has a long tradition in the electrical industry.

At this writing, the work outlook was still slow. A lot of school work is planned for this summer and we hope it gets our members back to work. Our local union elections recently took place and we wish the newly elected officers well over the next three years.

Stan Miles, Pres./P.S.

Upcoming 2013 events include:

- Westside Golf Tournament, July 29, Avalon Golf Links, Burlington
- Eastside Picnic, July 27, Hyde Park, East Wenatchee
- Westside Picnic, Aug. 10, Nile Golf & Country Club, Mount Lake Terrace
- Eastside Golf Tournament, Aug. 10, Highlander Golf Club, East Wenatchee

Volunteers are always welcome to help with these events. Contact the hall for information.

Tim Siltzbach, P.S.

New Projects Underway

L.U. 193 (1/lct,0,1lkn), SPRINGFIELD, IL—The St. John’s Hospital addition and remodel is ongoing and Huen Electric has been hired. Memorial Hospital’s new wing is coming out of the ground with B & E Electric as the contractor. City Water, Light and Power’s new Water Building & Pump Station facility is underway with Anderson Electric on the job. Ten apprentice wiremen were started by the JATC, and City Water, Light and Power hired three apprentices.

The Workers Memorial Day had a nice turnout from Local 193 at the AFL-CIO Building in Springfield. Habitat for Humanity just finished a house on Eno Avenue in Springfield and has a new project starting on West Washington. Thank you to all Local 193 members for writing “fit for H” with outstanding, unmatched skill and dedication to “Joe’s Hometown.” The Local 193 softball team will be in the IBEW State Softball Tourney this year.

Contract negotiations this year resulted in ratification of the Outside Power Agreement, as well as the Inside Wiresman, St. John’s Hospital, S.E.A. Group Inc. and Nelson Tree Service agreements; and a wage opener for City Water, Light and Power. Negotiations for the South Central Illinois Telecommunications Agreement are underway.

Summer is slowly arriving in Illinois. Have a cool one!

Dan Hudson, P.S.

‘Local Lines’

Don Hudson, P.S.
brand new advertising wrap proudly displaying our local and International IBEW logos.

As April arrived the good works of our members continued, most notably with the annual cleaning of the Montville, NJ section of the Delaware-Raritan Canal Park and our ongoing Adopt-a-Highway efforts on both sides of the Delaware River. The canal crew took to kayaks and canoes to aid their efforts, while the highway volunteers used a boots-on-the-ground strategy to accomplish their mission. It was a job well done by our members and their families, and they deserve great credit. Through volunteering, our members can raise the profile of our organization and experience the reward of helping others. Thank you, everybody.

Brian Jacobs, P.S.

What’s It Worth?

L.U. 347 (c,i,m,t,rtb,rts&spa.), DES MOINES, IA— What’s It Worth?

brand new advertising wrap proudly displaying our tradesmen know, the construction pendulum swings to feast or famine. The present indicators include a new substation for the Microsoft Data Center, a Marshalltown Power House project, and a Lake Red Rock hydroelectric generating facility project. These are the larger projects that are poised to enter the Local 347 pipeline. There are many other smaller projects to this generally rosy picture. The local held its annual Pin Party & Recognition Night on March 9. Top service pin honors went to Patrick O’Brien for 60 years of service, and to Phillip Johnson for 55 years of service. We congratulate all the award recipients for their years of service and dedication to the IBEW! Just for fun, a golf outing was scheduled, as of press time, for June 1.

Mike Schweiger, P.S.

There is a $1.5 billion Facebook project that, as of press time, was scheduled to start in June 2013; that project may potentially require approximately 550 electricians. Other possible projects include: a new substation for the Microsoft Data Center, a Marshalltown Power House project, and a Lake Red Rock hydroelectric generating facility project. These are the larger projects that are poised to enter the Local 347 pipeline. There are many other smaller projects to this generally rosy picture. The local held its annual Pin Party & Recognition Night on March 9. Top service pin honors went to Patrick O’Brien for 60 years of service, and to Phillip Johnson for 55 years of service. We congratulate all the award recipients for their years of service and dedication to the IBEW! Just for fun, a golf outing was scheduled, as of press time, for June 1.

Mike Schweiger, P.S.

Apprentice Graduating Class

L.U. 357 (c,mtb,es), LAS VEGAS, NV—Congratulations to the apprentice graduating class of 2013:


Thank you to all the members who helped with the Member to Member drive. Because of you, we had a great response.

Jennifer Tabor, P.S.

Strong Work Picture Projected

L.U. 347 (em,un,t,rtb,rtts&spa), DES MOINES, IA— Should all the pieces fall in place, this local will be looking at a lot of work in the foreseeable future.

Local 269 members gather for one of the many highway clean-ups performed throughout the year.

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Local 347 retiree Philip Johnson displays his 55-year award.

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Locals 269 and 347 are involved in the Adopt-a-Highway efforts on both sides of the Delaware River.

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Jennifer Tabor, P.S.

Dedicated Leadership

L.U. 445 (as,blts), CEDAR RAPIDS, IA—Local 445 held its annual Retirement & Pinning Party on March 23. It is always a good time bringing members together at these banquets to hear the “war stories” from jobs they worked on and brothers they have worked with, but this year was a very special time. Not only did we recognize our new retirees (you know who they are by the permanent smiles on their faces), but this year we also were honored to present two 65-year pins and a 75-year pin. It is humbling to see these gentlemen and realize the contributions they have made to our industry and to our local. Thank you and congratulations to new retirees Harry Delaney, Jim Dermody, Ed Gibbs, Carl Greene and Steve Herman—and a heartfelt thank you to 65-year members Don Smith and Art Taylor and to 75-year member Manfred “Whitey” Johnson. The local initiated into membership 24 new apprentices at the April general meeting, and in May we acknowledged the accomplishment of 29 new journeymen inside wiremen, two voice-data video technicians and one residential wireman at a cookout held at the local union offices.

Bill Hanes, B.M.
local president; during May’s nomination night, Doug was nominated and ran unopposed for the position as president.

Bro. Chapell’s IB EW service history is extensive. He was initiated into the union in 1975. He served on the Executive Board in 1992 and again from 1994-1996. He was a business representative and assistant business manager in the late 1990s. From December 1997 to June 2003 he served as business manager.

During his time in office, Doug has been a strong, understanding and progressive leader, always with the working people’s and the IB EW’s best interest at heart. Doug has spent years putting Local 457 at the forefront of the labor movement in Orange County, and through his dedication we have every reason to believe the local will continue to flourish and set the standard for organized labor.

Richard Vasquez, B.R.

WWII Day of Honor

L.U. 457 (u), MERIDEN, CT—On April 27, members of the local assisted World War II veterans off the bus and onto the last five flights he headed to Orange County, and through his dedication we have every reason to believe the local will continue to flourish and set the standard for organized labor.

Richard Vasquez, B.R.

Class of 2013 Graduates

L.U. 531 (i), LAFAYETTE, IN—Congratulations to the apprentice graduating class of 2013. The graduates completed the inside journeymen wireman apprenticeship program.

The 2013 graduates are: Ryan Pierce, Chris Tizzi, Robert Allen, Matt Lerner, Joshua Payne, Adam Grass, Andrew Bendra, Sean Ryan, Ryan Belstra, Brad Kerkes, Andrew Tiffema, Allen Eason, Alvin Udvari, Scott Kelly, Ryan Wildfang, Dan Chmielewski, Wesley Wright and Russell Prichard.

We wish you all much success in your careers as tradesmen and as leaders within the local. Take advantage of the upgrade classes the JATC offers to keep improving your skills. Also, please attend local meetings and help with volunteer projects. This is your local now; take stock in it, consider running for office. At union meetings, you will gain valuable knowledge regarding the inner workings of the local and things happening on the jobsites that you should be aware of.

The volunteer projects help us befriend other community organizations, businesses, politicians and decision makers.

Dean F. Harmon, P.S.

Work Picture: Full Steam Ahead

L.U. 555 (i,Lkst), SANTA ROSA, CA—Greetings from the North Bay! Our work picture is in full steam ahead putting all hands on deck! We have also had the great fortune to put travelers to work, and we expect to have a great work picture through the summer.

And now we wish to present our Graduating Class of 2013. Congratulations! Work safe and have a prosperous career.

Inside wiremen graduates: Justin Aldeg, Adam Alcazar, Jacob Berg, Timothy Bower, Mark Dohner, Andrew Elliott, Andrew Geoffrion, Jeff Hutcheon, Brian Kelly, George LaFave, Jose Lopez, Ryan Modell, Jared Mumm, Ian Muskar, Nicholas Paglia, Gianluca Parenti, Kyle Payton, Brad Pierce, Victor Sangervasi, Blake Schindler, Qurban Strane and Christopher Thomas.

Sound and Communications graduates: Gabriel King and Christopher Kugler. Call your hall, brothers and sisters, and see how easy it is to become involved in your union and your community. Right now we are looking for volunteers at our building trades’ booth for the Sonoma County Fair in late July and early August.

Thank you and work safe!

Denise D. Sosa, B.R./P.S.

‘Work Outlook Warming Up’

L.U. 557 (i,mac,mt,tst&spa), SAGINAW, MI—Finally the cold, dark days of winter are behind us and the work outlook for spring and summer is starting to warm up.

With General Motors investing $146 million at the Saginaw Metal Casting Operations, that should help in keeping local hands busy for the immediate future. Additionally, school building work should be starting as soon as the school year ends, and a few other decent projects are also in the pipeline. Hopefully this work will get all the local hands back to work soon.

A remodel project to help revitalize the downtown area has been a fight for local labor. A pickup line was set up at the Eddy Building downtown to encourage an out-of-town developer to hire skilled local union labor to complete the project instead of posting help wanted ads on Craigslist to acquire the labor. I hope they come to their senses on this one.

Local 557 welcomes and congratulates our new first-year apprentices: William Brickel, Dan Kunde is retiring effective July 1. Doug was initiated in 1977 and graduated our apprenticeship in 1981. He was originally hired by then-business manager Al Shur in 1997, and then promoted to assistant business manager in charge of membership development by Bus. Mgr. Johnny Simpson in 2010. Thank you, Doug, for many years of dedicated service.

David Taylor, Pres./P.S.

Congratulations, Young Workers!

L.U. 595 (c,govt,i&st), DUBLIN, CA—We look forward to journeyman upgrade and apprenticeship classes starting in our new ZNE Center this August.

The work picture remains steady and we are cautiously optimistic about the outlook for upcoming years. We are expanding use of the CE/CW program and hope to have more of our contractors embrace the concept as we see the success it brings to the IB EW and NECA.

We sent members to Legislative Conferences and IB EW Construction and Progress meetings recently, the information shared and training received are invaluable. Some incredible challenges are ahead in the discussions about: health care, implementation of the Affordable Care Act and how it will affect multi-employer plans like ours, immigration reform, fights to protect Social Security and Medicare benefits, and the need for jobs. Serious decisions will be made soon that will affect policy for years to come.

Sadly, Local 595 lost one of its great leaders of the “We Generation,” Jack Bollinger. Jack was an active member of Rebuilding Together San Diego.

Local 557 members at the Eddy Building in downtown Saginaw, MI, include: Craig Work (front row, left), Bill Miller, John Hagarty, Dave Gregory, Phil Barnett, Russ Combs and Jason Rivette.

Christensen, Zachary Plank, John Roedel and Josh Williamsen.

Jason Rivette, P.S.

IBEW 569 Volunteers: Rebuilding Together San Diego

L.U. 569 (i,mac,mt,ts&spa), SAN DIEGO, CA—Local 569 journeymen and apprentices turned out on a Saturday for our Christmas in April charity event. Over 55 members helped in the rehabilitation of a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Hall, a church, a Masonic Lodge and four houses. We joined together with other volunteers from Rebuilding Together San Diego to clean, paint, and install electrical upgrades for low-income families and other worthy groups. It’s always rewarding to know that we have improved these homes for the families who live in them and helped make their lives just a little easier. We are always especially pleased when we have a chance to work on a VFW Hall or a Veterans Center.

A big thank-you goes to Dynalectric, Morrow Meadows, HMT Electric, Chula Vista Electric, Baker Electric and Southland Electric; altogether, they donated 12 service trucks for the projects.

Longtime member, agent and organizer Tom Kunde is retiring effective July 1. Doug was initiated in 1977 and graduated our apprenticeship in 1981. He was originally hired by then-business manager Al Shur in 1997, and then promoted to assistant business manager in charge of membership development by Bus. Mgr. Johnny Simpson in 2010. Thank you, Tom, for many years of dedicated service.

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David Taylor, Pres./P.S.
Compilation of various articles and excerpts from a publication:

**Apprenticeship Program**

L.U. 601 (i&rb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL—IBEW

Local 601 is very proud of its apprenticeship program. Currently there are 12 apprentices in the first-year class, 25 in the second-year class, six in the third year, 20 in the fourth year, and 20 in the fifth year.

Bob Withers is our invaluable apprenticeship coordinator and also teaches the first-year apprentices; he has served as coordinator since 2003 and has taught since 1979. Brent Stull teaches the second-year class, John Minge and Dana Nichols the third year, and Rich Minge and Dana Nichols the fourth year. Mike Apir is the Telecon Instructortodd Nicholas, Robert Mishler and John Allen also teach specialty courses for the apprentices. All of our teachers have been with the apprenticeship program for many years. We can never thank them enough for their dedication, time and expertise. When Local 601 built its new facility in 2006, the apprenticeship program was also able to build a new state-of-the-art building of its own to provide advanced training for both apprentices and journeymen. [Photo, top left.]

Our work outlook appears better for this summer. At this writing, there are 75 on Book 2, and 250 on Book 2; five apprentices are on the books. At this writing, Local 601 was scheduled to hold its election of officers on June 4.

Tom Mullinany, B.K.

**Advanced Stewards Training**

L.U. 627 (u), FORT PIERCE, FL—IBEW Int. Reps. Brian K. Thompson and Carmella L. Cruse recently conducted an Advanced Stewards Training seminar with Local 627. The local is very grateful for the excellent session they conducted. We wish Int. Rep. Cruse all the best in her new position as International Organizing Coordinator, Region 9; may she continue to affect so many people in a positive manner.

Nuclear apprentices Casey Kraus and Jason Hamson became new Local 627 members at our April meeting.

The local also recognizes the graduation from Indian River State College of nuclear employees Sid Pennington, Kevin Hewitt, Zaika Faulkner, Dan Lobo and Danny Hall.

Apprentice Linemen Chris Herrera, Gary Aleknavich Jr. and Kellen Lewis are now in the field and learning new techniques and skills as they advance to journeymen status.

Local 627 is proud to share a partnership with the City of Port St. Lucie in the “Adopt a Street” program. On the second Saturday of every month, we will gather litter and recyclable materials. I believe this action will send a positive message to all residents of this city.

Tom Griffiths, Pres.

**Project Benefits Veterans**

L.U. 659 (c,ca tv,em,i,lctt,o,st,t&u), MEDFORD, OR—

The outside line construction work picture continues to improve in Local 659’s jurisdiction. MECA contractors International Line Builders Inc. and Christensen Construction have been working on “re-conductor” and pole replacement projects with more work scheduled to be put out for bid.

The reps will be busy this summer with several contracts coming on.

All the line clearance contracts with Asplundh, Trees Inc. and Wright Tree will be open. The four inside agreements will also be open along with The City of Bandon for wages only.

There is no union picnic scheduled for this summer. This is the first summer in several years that it will not be held. This event is a fundraiser for our Brotherhood Fund and hopefully will be back on next summer.

Congratulations to Portland, OR, Local 48 on their 50th anniversary.

Tom Legg, Pres.

**Labor Roundtable Discussion**


The event was sponsored by the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, the Central Pennsylvania Area Labor Federation and the Harrisburg Regional Central Labor Council and hosted by our friends at the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 520 union hall. A collective of local unions from several trades attended ranging from the IBEW, Plumbers & Pipefitters, and Steelworkers as well as transportation workers, linemen, state workers, teachers and carpenters. All had questions pertaining to battles on the political forefront that will affect labor going forward. Local 777’s question was about EPA regulations on coal fired power plants and the closure of numerous plants across Pennsylvania and the U.S.—and the effects this will have on the job market, the cost of electricity, and the availability and reliability of electricity on the national grid. Sen. Casey understood and committed to discussing the matter with the EPA administrator.

Mark Power, P.S.
Newly Elected Officers


Suzanne M. Wallin, R.S.

Awards Presentations


Suzanne M. Wallin, R.S.

Transition Process

L.U. 1049 (lctt,o,u&uow), LONG ISLAND, NY—We, at IBEW 1049, are currently weathering the process of the work force being bifurcated between two employers. On Jan. 1, 2014, approximately 1,200 of our Utility Division members are scheduled to begin working for PSEG. Those members will continue to maintain and operate Long Island Power Authority’s electric Transmission & Distribution System. The remaining 3,200 Utility Division members will continue to work for National Grid. This entire process has been influenced by political factors. As of this writing Gov. Andrew Cuomo may be adjusting the plan. Bus. Mgr. Don Daley has assigned Sr. Bus. Rep. Pat Guidice to be our political liaison for the rest of the bifurcation process.

At our April general meeting we welcomed Dave Daley, PSEG’s senior vice president. He addressed the membership on the upcoming transition of our members from National Grid to PSEG. We look forward to a long, positive, productive and prosperous relationship with PSEG.

In our Outside Division, we recently completed negotiations on behalf of our line clearance tree trimmers and NECA members. Each three-year agreement included general wage increases as well as employer funded increases to the Health and Welfare, and Annuity Funds. Both contracts were overwhelming approved by the membership.

Thomas J. Dowling, R.S.

Safety on the Job: Volunteers Raise Awareness

L.U. 1245 (cab,em,gov,lctt,o,pet,u&i), VACAVILLE, CA—Approximately 120 volunteers from electricity, gas and tree trimming classifications met for two days in May to explore new ways of promoting job safety. These volunteers serve as “safety stewards” to raise awareness and resolve safety issues on a peer-to-peer basis. This initiative is a response to fatalities and serious injuries in recent years.

Our 100-plus units sponsor community sporting events and engage in charitable activities. Recent projects include: sponsoring a “relay for life,” numerous high school and Little League baseball teams, and restoring a famous San Francisco mural. Our Sacramento Area Organizing Committee’s recent charity bowl benefited the Boys and Girls Clubs. Members at Turlock and Modesto Irrigation Districts held their annual bowling tournament.

The local sponsored two soccer tournaments for our line clearance tree trimming members— in Merced and Fairfield, CA. The local is also sponsoring a sporting clay shoot, a motorcycle rally, a golf tournament and other activities that build solidarity.

Members at Sacramento Regional Transit competed in rodeos for light rail workers and bus workers. Members from several employers participate in line man rodeos, including the International Lineman’s Rodeo in Kansas this fall. We are also exploring participation in a gas rodeo.

On Earth Day, members deployed to 10 locations to make our communities cleaner and greener. Outside Construction work remains strong. Our Outside membership grew by 350 in 2012. Seven local members received the IBEW Life Saving Award for rescuing crew foreman Rayshawn Neely, who was attacked by a deranged motorist. Award recipients were: Richard Gonzales, Steve Hakker, Nicolas Starkey, Ken Simon, Nelson Pereira and Anthony Esposito.

Eric Wolfe, P.S.

‘Maine Initiative’ Gains

L.U. 1253 (l), AUGUSTA, ME—We recently came through our best winter in years, recording at or near full employment for the whole season. While large projects such as the Maine General Medical Center (MGMC) have meant a lot to us, smaller projects like the new Bangor Auditorium, the Woodland Mill liquefied natural gas project, switchyard work, the Margaret Chase Smith Federal Building, and numerous projects at paper mills around the jurisdiction have employed the majority of the local.

While large and industrial projects account for a large percentage of our employment, we have also seen great success with our CE/CW driven recovery work. We have ongoing work in educational settings and on small-scale hospital projects that we wouldn’t be able to win without the improved crew mix provided by our recovery agreement, The Maine Initiative. Over the past year we have increased membership and took to do the same this year, using the CE/CW program and the apprenticeship program to continue to grow our numbers.

Over the past three months we dropped the charter for the loss of several retired members. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of our members who passed away.

Scott Cuddy, P.S.
Congratulations to Retirees
L.U. 1307 (u), SAUSALITO, CA—Congratulations to our new retirees. From Choptank Electric Cooperative we have: Walter Waley Sr., electronic & load management technician; and James Harmon, operation utility person. From Delmanco Power we have: Marlene Griffin, customer information specialist; Gerald Ribble, hydraulic & equipment technician; Howard Slaughter, substation technician senior; John Hill, hydraulic & equipment technician; Herman Jackson, hydraulic & equipment technician; Gloria Millbourne, senior community outreach specialist; and Jack Kohland, stockkeeper. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for a job well done.

Local 1307 mourns the loss of Bro. Pat Sharkey. Bro. Sharkey retired from Delmanco Power as a journeyman lineman. He had also served in the U.S. Air Force and had many outdoor hobbies. Bro. Sharkey will be missed by many friends and family.

Even though the summer gets busy, try to make time to attend monthly union meetings. It’s a great time to get information and see some friends.

Charles T. Harris Jr., P.S.

**IBEW Career of Service**
L.U. 1393 (cat&tv,lctt,o,t&u), INDIANAPOLIS, IN—At this writing, our local union election of officers was scheduled to take place in June 2013. At press time, election results were not yet available. A newly elected business manager/financial secretary will replace our longtime business manager/financial secretary of nearly 24 years effective July 18, 2013.

Thomas J.致使owski

**50-Year Certificate of Service**
L.U. 1393 (ees,em,mo,pet,ts&k), BALTIMORE, MD—At a 2009 meeting of IBEW delegates, Bus. Mgr./Pres. Dion F. Guthrie was honored for achieving more than 50 years of continuous service to the IBEW. Int. Sec.-Treas. Salvatore J. Chilia, then Fourth District Vice President, was at those present and extended his congratulations to Bus. Mgr. Guthrie. Bus. Mgr. Guthrie stated it was an honor achieving such a milestone and reflected on those years with the delegates, who gave him a standing ovation. Shortly after the delegates meeting, Bus. Mgr. Guthrie received his 50-year IBEW Certificate of Service.

Thomas J.致使owski

**Recover Our Work**
L.U. 1547 (u&k), AUGUSTA, GA—The work picture in the Augusta metro area for the IBEW is improving. With the help of our local contractors as well as our out-of-town union contractors, this local is gaining market share.

Although we have most of the large projects in the area, such as the project labor agreement work at Savannah River Site and Plant Vogtle, we want more. Although this local has its members working, as well as many travelers, that is not good enough. We want it all! We should never be happy with the work we have until we achieve 100 percent of the work.

Currently, IBEW Local 1547 has about 36 percent of the employment share. Just imagine if we had 60, 70 or even 90 percent. Of course, this takes dedication and time as most of us want overnight results.

To achieve this, we have to do all of our part. From an administrative and a representation standpoint, we have worked hard staying on top of potential jobs for union contractors to bid and will continue to do so. The contractors are doing a good job bidding and getting work from nonunion contractors that pay their employees less than half of what we make. The IBEW (in many cases) is doing some jobs with half as many workers as their nonunion competition. This is what it is going to take to take all of this work.

Until next time, God bless.

Will Salters, A.B.M.

**Safety Revisited in St. Louis**
L.U. 1439 (i), ST. LOUIS, MO—Safety should always be first and foremost on your mind when handling power lines, but sometimes the unexpected happens and lives are affected dramatically.

We mourn the loss of Bro. David Burns, who was killed by an electrical contact while working storm restoration during a spring storm. Dave was known to be a safety advocate and safety rep for the local. Another brother lost a limb in October 2012 while working a routine transformer change.

Safety rules are designed for a reason. We applaud all members who serve on Joint Safety Boards, volunteer to be safety representatives for their work groups or participate in other aspects of safety on the job. We have come a long way since 1891. Safety is also a principle set out in our Code of Excellence.

“Right to Work” (for less) legislation, among other anti-workers bills, continues to be a major battle in Missouri. It appears that our defensive approach and tactics will be successful again in this 2013 session.

Mike Walter, B.M./F.S.

**2013 SBP Star Awards Luncheon—School Business Partnership**
L.U. 1547 (c,em,Lo,tku), ANCHORAGE, AK—Anchorage School Business Partnership (SBP) is one of many organizations Local 1547 works with to enhance our community. Local 1547 has been actively involved in the SBP program and has worked directly with Anchorage School District, the district schools, staff, students and families since 2001. The SBP program provides opportunities for students, teachers, businesses and community agencies to enhance educational experiences that nurture future employees and citizens.

Each year SBP holds a luncheon to recognize businesses and organizations that help make the program successful. Among those attending the 2013 SBP STAR Awards Luncheon from our local were: Local 1547 Bus. Mgr. Mike Hodsdon; Local 1547 Assoc. General Counsel and state Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Local 1547 Organizer and state Rep. Chris Tuck; and Local 1547 Records Mgr. and SBP board member Dora Wilson. Others in attendance included students, school officials and SBP officers.

Melinda Taylor, P.S.

**Local Luncheon—2013 SBP Star Awards Luncheon attendees include: Local 1547 Bus. Mgr. Mike Hodsdon (second from right); SBP Exec. Dir. Cheri Spink (third from left); Local 1547 Assoc. General Counsel and state Sen. Bill Wielechowski (far right); Local 1547 Organizer and state Rep. Chris Tuck (far left); and Local 1547 Records Mgr. and SBP board member Dora Wilson (third from right).**
The Electrical Worker was the name of the first official publication of the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in 1893 (the NBEW became the IBEW in 1899 with the expansion of the union into Canada). The name and format of the publication have changed over the years. This newspaper is the official publication of the IBEW and seeks to capture the courage and spirit that motivated the founders of the Brotherhood and continue to inspire the union’s members today. The masthead of this newspaper is an adaptation of that of the first edition in 1893.

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HOW TO REACH US

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

Send letters to:
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FROM THE OFFICERS

Defending Public Workers

Edwin D. Hill
International President

In the name of deficit reduction, federal employees have lost $126 billion in benefits and wages in the last five years. Proponents of the wage freezes and benefit cuts, including, sadly, our president, say the ballooning debt demands sacrifices. Yet there is a mountain of evidence that many of the sacrifices borne by public sector workers are so poorly thought out and executed that they actually cost more money than they save.

Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee released a 26-page catalogue of self-inflicted wounds that makes for grim reading. Millions of dollars in lost wages and benefits are leading to billions of dollars in increased costs down the road.

As only a small example from close to home, thesequel forced the Air Force to shutter both East Coast stations in the Space Surveillance System, known as the “space fence.” Two dozen IBEW members were laid off. The radar antennas keep track of everything that flies over the country and keep our satellites, including the International Space Station, out of harm’s way. For a savings of at best a small sliver of the federal budget, we create an unknowable risk to the billions of dollars of satellites we all rely on every day for work, safety and for communication.

Even if they won’t admit they were wrong, you would think that the self-described budget hawk shooting us all in the foot would at the very least quietly stop firing the gun. Instead, at least 36 more bills attacking public sector workers are under consideration in Congress.

One of the worst developments in the American economy has been the philosophy that workers are a problem, not an asset. When the time comes for companies to cut back, it has become commonplace for them to target workers’ salaries, benefits or jobs first. The result has been the impoverishment of working families and the largest transfer of wealth upward in our history.

This is nothing less than an effort to impose the predatory workplace on public workers who build and maintain our warships, safeguard the locks and dams on our rivers and keep the lights on across vast swathes of the United States.

The truth is, public sector workers—including nearly 70,000 members of the IBEW—are not the problem. This concerted assault by a corporate elite accomplishes nothing but pushing more Americans out of the middle class, corroding effective governance and blowing up the debt down the road with deferred costs.

The worst part might be the near silence and, at times, collusion, of political leaders who should know better. It’s past time for them—President Obama included—to find their voices and defend the public sector workers who defend the rest of us.

Man-Made Disaster in Philly

A trip to the Salvation Army store in Philadelphia shouldn’t have put people’s lives at risk. But on June 5, a building under demolition above the store collapsed, killing six victims.

Union tradesmen at a construction project across the street from the collapsed building had called OSHA on four occasions to report safety violations at the demolition site. Rather than removing a brick wall from the top by hand, they reported, the contractor was desalting the wall from the bottom, threatening everyone below.

Toxicology reports revealed that the project’s nonunion crane operator, who had a long arrest record, was under the influence of marijuana at work.

The blame game over this tragedy is playing out in the daily newspapers, which feature profiles of the victims, like 24-year-old Anne Bryan, a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts whose family described her as an “incredibly kind and loving person.”

And the tragedy is spreading. On June 12, the city’s building inspector in charge of overseeing the demolition project took his own life.

As only a small example from close to home, the sequester forced the Air Force to shutter both East Coast stations in the Space Surveillance System, known as the “space fence.” Two dozen IBEW members were laid off. The radar antennas keep track of everything that flies over the country and keep our satellites, including the International Space Station, out of harm’s way. For a savings of at best a small sliver of the federal budget, we create an unknowable risk to the billions of dollars of satellites we all rely on every day for work, safety and for communication.

Concerned about the safety of others, the union workers across the street from the collapsed building sounded a warning that went unheard, with catastrophic consequences.

Another warning needs to be sounded. Our warning is to politicians and business owners who think that union members are “too expensive” and unions have “too much power,” or who call us “thugs.”

Our warning: Weaken or eliminate unions and workplace safety regulation at your own risk. More buildings will fall. More innocent victims will die. More families will mourn. And more employers will be sued. Our unions choose another future.

We recognize that the vast majority of contractors, union and nonunion are good, decent people. We will continue to reach out and organize. We will promote excellence on the job and protect the safety of workers and our communities. That’s who we are.
Letters to the Editor

Union=Opportunity for All

One hot button issue now is women’s rights to equal pay for equal work. This is what trade unions are all about. Anyone who qualifies to carry a union ticket receives the same pay for the same work, regardless of gender. If you want your daughters to live with fairness in pay for work, encourage them to join a union. It’s where opportunity is truly available to all.

All of our local unions have some multi-generational members with two, three and four or more generations taking part in the union way of life. These days, that includes the ladies as well. If equal pay for equal work is a vital part of your personal desire for a career, then union membership is for you. It is a surety that you will not get it in the corporate world.

Reggie Marselus, Local 124 retiree
Kansas City, Mo.

The Underground Economy

After reading the May article “labor, Lawmakers Take on Payroll Fraud,” I became painfully aware of how deeply entrenched right-to-work supporters and conservatives are in Texas. Undocumented immigrants constitute a major problem in many states and, as was pointed out, the politicians only care to address this problem when tax revenues are falling short, due to the fraud perpetuated by these employ- ers. Of course by the time the shortfalls and causes are revealed, it is too far gone. I guess stiffer fines and penalties could be imposed on the perpetrators, but they and their cronies will be crying “too much government intervention” to their conserva-tive legislators. Every day this situation continues, we as a nation become closer to a third world country. Judging by the information presented in this article, it already has happened in Texas. Good luck in Texas, brothers!

Doug Szabo, Local 68 retiree
Denver, Colo.

Means of Production

Why don’t we control the product that is our livelihood? I’ve worked on a number of Means of Production coal, nuclear and gas-fired power plants. Coal is dirty, many of the nuclear plants receives the same pay for the same work, regardless of gender. The unions are the only place where opportunity is truly available to all.

Arizona and 2 million in Las Vegas. Union members could build, own and operate Southern Nevada could serve 40 million people in California, 12 million in Arizona and 2 million in Las Vegas. Union members could build, own and operate and invest in the plants. We seem to depend on others for our livelihood and let them make the money off our labor. Why can’t we control our own future?

Gerald Schmitz, Local 494 retiree
Pahrump, Nev.

picturethis:
YOUR PHOTO, in the Electrical Worker

[ Enter the IBEW’s Popular Photo Contest Today! ]

Look for entry forms & contest rules on www.ibew.org, and in the August issue of the Electrical Worker.

Connecticut Organizer Goes ‘Above and Beyond’

S cott Munson, a Hartford, Conn., Local 35 organizer, always knew that breaking through obstacles was part of his job description. “For every shop where you can get a campaign going, you get 20 doors slammed in your face,” But Munson, an 18-year member faced no ordinary obstacle when, after making major progress getting authorization cards signed by electricians working for Professional Electric, one of New England’s largest nonunion contractors, he heard the owner had laid off 13 union supporters.

To make matters more daunting, Munson was laid off, too. Business Manager Bruce Silva, says, “Scott was dedicated to the union 24/7. To let him go because of finances (due to a too slowly recovering construction market) killed me.” Munson said he drew strength during this time from a Locals 24 and 488 expected stiff resistance to their efforts he meets in campaigns up to the union hall where he showed them the training center.

“Who We Are

If you have a story to tell about your IBEW experience, please send it to media@ibew.org.

Who We Are

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Connecticut Organizer Goes ‘Above and Beyond’

Scott Munson

When the nonunion crews come face-to-face with the union’s accomplishments, they are much less likely to see the union as ‘this big monster, money-making machine,’ but as an organization where people come first.” Munson said.

Munson had received his first call from a Professional Electric worker in February 2011 requesting information. He and his fellow organizers from New Haven Local 90 and Bridgeport Local 488 expected stiff resistance to their coordinated organizing campaign. Volunteer organizers openly discussed their fear of being fired from the employer of 200 electricians in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Munson, told workers fearful of losing their jobs: “I will stick this out with you.” That included filing National Labor Relations Board charges if workers were wrongfully discharged.

The campaign had picked up early momentum with union mailings to crew members’ homes. When the company held captive audience meetings to discourage support for the union, workers questioned the sincerity of the owner, who showed no inclination to improve their nearly nonexistent health and retirement benefits and low pay.

Then a worker forwarded all of the names of in-house organizers to Professional’s owner. Munson and the other organizers made good on their promise to file charges at the NLRB after the 13 pro-union electricians were sud- denly laid off for what the owner deemed “lack of work.”

A diligent NLRB investigator supported the union’s allegation of wrongful discharge and even found new violations.

This year, the NLRB’s office and the company reached a settlement that provided for significant back pay for the 13 electricians who lost their jobs. But the affected workers were now dispersed and none of them would get a penny from the confidential settlement until they were all found and signed papers, stamped by a notary.

Despite the fact that he, too, was now looking for work—with unemployment climbing to 40 percent in local 35—Munson went to work tracking down the 13 electricians. That meant taking two trips to Springfield, Mass., spending a lot of time on his cell phone and using the social networking site Facebook as an investigative tool.

In time, Munson located all the affected electricians. And they were paid Healthy sums, the kind of money that could go a long way toward buying new vehicles or putting a down payment on a house.

Says, Munson, “I didn’t want these guys to have a bad taste about the IBEW.” With most of the 13 now working for other nonunion contractors, Munson hopes their recent experience and respect for the IBEW will “open new doors” for the union.

Second District Organizing Coordinator Bob Corrao, a veteran of 19 years in the field, says, “In all of my years in organizing, I have never seen anyone step up to the plate like Scott did. He’s a special guy, quiet and modest. He just goes about what he has to do.”

Munson says his commitment fol- lows in the footsteps of his younger brother Eric, a Local 35 inside journey-man wireman who joined the IBEW after the family home improvement company disbanded and Scott, Eric, their father and younger brother sought new jobs.

His father became a union carpen- ter. Another brother got a job as a union teacher. Eric got a job working as an electrician for Semans, a major New England nonunion electrical contractor, and got involved in a Local 35 organizing campaign while employed there, “wear- ing all the IBEW shirts and the buttons to work,” Scott said. When the campaign failed, Eric was hired by a Local 35 signa-tory contractor.

“My brother is a good electrician and union man,” said Scott, who tracked Munson’s example and “from day one” of his apprenticeship, attended ral- lies, picnics and union meetings.

Silva says Scott has “always gone above and beyond in everything that he does.” That means helping his employer by applying for a commercial driver’s license. But it also means long hours challenging law-breaking nonunion contractors or donating his time to wire a new pavilion for a veteran’s group.

Munson says he drew strength during the Professional campaign from Silva’s support, the resources of other IBEW locals, Corrao and State Organizing Coordinator Craig Duffy. “They were always just a phone call away, day or night,” says Munson.

Munson, a father of four and grandfather of two who enjoys camping and drag racing, says IBEW needs an “open-door policy” for nonunion electricians. He has invited many of the work- ers he meets in campaigns up to the union hall where he showed them the training center.

“When the nonunion crews come face-to-face with the union’s accomplish- ments, they are much less likely to see the union as ‘this big monster, money-making machine,’ but as an organization where people come first,” Munson said.

Munson is the economy picks up with new projects kicking off at the University of Connecticut’s Medical Center and campus, Silva said he looks forward to put- ting Munson back on his organizing job. “If you were going to model a union member,” says Silva, “Scott’s the guy you would clone. He does the right thing even when it hurts.”

Future Articles in the September Issue of The Electrical Worker

Your Safety Against Electrical Hazards

The Threads of Our Past

Your anti-cancer campaign is working

Pass a drink or a cold one;

The Role of the Lead Club

A media solicitation is the nudge needed

From the Land of the Free to the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave: Veterans of America

The History of the Union

The Ethics of Organizing

Look for these and other quarterly features in the September issue of The Electrical Worker.
One Year After ‘No’ Vote, Mass. Comcast Techs Go IBEW

In his years working as a Comcast tech in southern Massachusetts, Scott Hartman never worried about job security—even as an at-will employee. “I’d always felt secure on my job,” said the father of two with 25 years in the business. “It was never really a major issue in mind.”

But Hartman’s work climate turned colder one day four years ago when he heard about a group of co-workers serving a nearby area who were suddenly—and without explanation—laid off. Many were veteran cable and fiber optic installation technicians who had given decades to the company. Workers were forced to clean out their company trucks. Management stationed taxis outside to take home the newly unemployed, who were replaced with contractors.

“Those workers had families to provide for and mortgages to pay, and their hard work and effort suddenly meant nothing,” Hartman said. “That was an extremely harsh reality to accept.”

Despite that scare, Hartman said he still felt reasonably safe in his job. Known as a leader around the shop, Hartman’s years of experience and respect for management and co-workers alike have helped him earn a reputation as someone to be counted on. “I love what I do,” he said many times during a phone interview for this article.

The First Campaign

So when an IBEW organizing drive began in early 2013 to try to bring an amplified voice to workers covering the South Coast of the state, Hartman thought it over. And he decided he was better on his own.

“During that election, I was on the other side,” he said. “I used to be we needed it. Personally, I didn’t have a major issue in mind.”

He heard about a group of co-workers serving as part of what shook his foundation.

“At the same time, there was a separate group of techs who remained pro-IBEW. So when activists ramped up organizing efforts last fall, management pulled out the stops. Captive audience meetings. Union-busting attorneys. Disinformation about the IBEW’s intentions. And despite his confidence in his abilities, Hartman says he couldn’t shake that image of a mass layoff four years earlier.

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Failing Promises Change Attitudes

“All the election, and things got back to normal, I sat back and realized how I was suddenly not feeling so comfortable with things,” Hartman said. He cites a series of misleading statements from management as part of what shook his foundation.

“At the same time, there was a separate group of techs who remained pro-IBEW. So when activists ramped up organizing efforts last fall, management pulled out the stops. Captive audience meetings. Union-busting attorneys. Disinformation about the IBEW’s intentions. And despite his confidence in his abilities, Hartman says he couldn’t shake that image of a mass layoff four years earlier.

“As I sat through those (captive audience) meetings, it made me realize that maybe I do really need protection in a union,” he said. “I’m vulnerable.”

Then there were the headlines in the business sections of newspapers trumpeting massive company profits. USA Today also ran a feature last spring entitled “Eight Companies That Most Owe Workers a Raise.” At the top: Comcast.

“In fiscal 2012, Comcast’s net income was $6.2 billion, a nearly 50 percent increase from the previous year,” the editors wrote. “In the past 12 months, the company’s stock rose by roughly 44 percent. ... Comcast customer care and direct sales jobs often pay modestly. The average salary for a Customer Account Executive at Comcast was just $15.39 an hour.”

And while techs like Hartman make more than the front-line service employees, the pattern of low-wage work yielding high profits for management runs deep.

Redoubled Push Yields Victory

Changing course, Hartman and a majority of his co-workers voted “yes” for IBEW representation in an NLRB-certified election April 24, pulling off what was an admirably challenging quest for workers’ rights at a golliath company just one year before.

The 96 workers—who are based out of the Fall River and Fairhaven shops and service customers in more than a dozen cities in the Bay State—are now members of Middleboro Local 2322.

Activists are mobilizing for first contract talks, which they hope will happen soon.

Other IBEW activists integral to the campaign include International Representative Carol Fitzgerald, Local 2322 Business Manager Eric Hentiz and Local 2322 steward Derek Rose. Smith, the lead organizer, offered special appreciation to Second District International Vice President Frank Carol for his support.

“We have an awful lot of work ahead of us, but these employees are dedicated and want positive change,” Smith said. “This vote is a great beginning, and it should give hope to other Comcast workers nationwide looking to stand up for a stronger voice on the job.”

Comcast’s profits nearly doubled since 2008, which allowed CEO Brian Roberts to reap nearly $30 million last year, the USA Today reports. But the company will strongly oppose efforts to give workers their fair share of these profits, according to East Windsor, N.J., Local 827 member Rich Spierer.

“For workers to stand up and raise their voice for decent wages and security takes an extraordinary amount of guts, trust and solidarity in the workplace,” said Spierer, who sits on Local 827 executive board and is secretary-treasurer of an IBEW council representing Comcast workers.

Part of Comcast’s strategy to fight unionization, Spierer said, is to draw out the time between successful elections and first contract negotiations. In the interim, the company will attempt to sow discontent among employees in an effort to squash the efforts workers make to obtain concrete gains in wages and benefits.

But Spierer maintains optimism. In spite of these challenges, about 1,500 workers throughout the East Coast and beyond have secured agreements from the company. “Where we have seen strong bonds between workers who have organized, these IBEW members have gotten the company to agree to a fair contract despite Comcast’s intention not to,” he said.

The IBEW currently services contracts for members at Dawmers Grove, Ill., Local 22; Philadelphia Local 68; Sheffield, Ala., Local 518; East Windsor N.J., Local 827; and Bethlehem, Pa., Local 160.

And with tenacity, Spierer said, that list will only grow.

Gathering Momentum

Organizers and pro-IBEW employees say that spirit is spreading to other shops. With tenacity, Spierer said, that list will only grow.

Despite massive company pushback, Comcast techs in southern Massachusetts voted for IBEW representation in April. The 96 workers are now members of Middleboro Local 2322.

In Massachusetts, Hartman is quick to emphasize that his “yes” vote and continued activism aren’t reactionary or emotional. If anything, he says, it’s simply logical.

“I can’t stress enough that it’s not ‘us’ against ‘them,’” he said. “I never want to go to work and fight with my bosses. I get along great, and I’m certainly not looking to clash and bang heads. My support for the IBEW is all about job security—for my family’s well-being and to ensure my future at a company I enjoy working for.”

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