When the Great Recession struck with full force in 2008, many companies demanded deep concessions. Workers across North America, including thousands of IBEW members, made numerous sacrifices to help their employers make it through those tough times. Since then the economy has made a major turnaround—but most of its benefits are going to the top 1 percent of earners.

Profits have hit an all-time high. At the same time, wages as a percent of the economy have hit an all-time low. Even at unionized companies, IBEW negotiators are confronting cash-rich employers who have replaced mutually beneficial collective bargaining with a winner-take-all, adversarial relationship—an approach some union activists are calling “hard bargaining.”

“There are companies out there struggling, but even companies that are doing well are bullying everyone like it is still 2008,” said IBEW Manufacturing Department Director Randy Middleton. “They don’t need the concessions, their survival doesn’t depend on givebacks, but they know workers have been afraid and they’ve sharpened their knives.”

Across the nation, profitable companies like Rockwell Collins, Schneider Electric and GE are demanding the closure of pensions, pay freezes and higher health care costs. Even a company like Southern California Edison, which has maintained a constructive relationship with its workers for decades, recently hired a union-busting lawyer to lead negotiations.

The trend is clear: corporations can afford to pay higher wages, they just aren’t, and every day...
companies are paying their workers less. “Every business knows, in the long run, we rise together,” said IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill. “But what we are finding now are companies in one industry after the next, squeezing their workers without ever giving a thought to how it might end.”

In California, “Union-Busting 101”
For decades, Diamond Bar, Calif., Local 47 and Southern California Edison enjoyed a fruitful relationship, negotiating strong contracts beneficial to both employees and the company.

That is, until this year.

Negotiations on a new contract have been poisoned by the company’s refusal to bargain in good faith, said Local 47 Business Manager Pat Lavin.

Local 47 represents more than 4,000 workers at Southern California Edison.

“When we first sat down for pre-bargaining last year, we were led to believe it wouldn’t be contentious,” said Lavin, who also represents the Seventh District on the International Executive Council. “Instead we got hit with 90 takeover proposals.”

Among the company’s demands are cuts to overtime, weakening of seniority rules and cutbacks to paid sick leave and vacation.

Management hired anti-labor lawyer Adam Abrahams to assist with bargaining. He boasts on his website that he has assisted in more than 100 anti-union campaigns, including beating back organizing drives at San Francisco International Airport and decertifying a unit of the California Nurses Association.

Most galling, said Lavin, is the fact that the top officers cashed out more than $90 million in Edison stock options last year. “They’re making bank, while telling us to make givebacks.”

Members have been taken by surprise by the company’s insistent demands, especially considering the close working relationship Local 47 enjoyed with the company.

The IBEW often lobbied on behalf of Southern California Edison on legislative issues in Sacramento. Most recently, Local 47 worked with management to devise an agreement between the local building trades and the company around staffing the shutdown of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, SCE’s nuclear plant.

“The help we gave SCE kept the company going,” said Lavin. “In my 35 years as business manager and 48 years as an IBEW member, I’ve never seen Edi- son’s management treat its workers with such disrespect.”

SCE’s anti-worker approach isn’t limited to union members. In February, the company announced it would lay off more than 400 information technology workers and replaced them with workers from India. Many of the new employees are in the United States as guest workers.

The H-1B visa program “was supposed to be for projects and jobs the American workers could not fill,” one SCE IT worker told Computer World. “But we’re doing our job. It’s not like they are bring- ing in these guys for new positions that nobody can fill.”

Local 47 members have been encouraged to contact management to register their disapproval with the compa- ny’s “hard bargaining” approach.

The contract, which expired Dec. 31, has been extended.

“This has the tone of nothing more than simple union-busting 101,” said a Local 47 bargaining update newsletter. “We will stick to the path we are on to obtain a reasonable and positive outcome to these proceedings.”

Holding the Line in New England

A difficult contract negotiation can test the mettle of even the most dedicated trade unionists.

For nearly 2,000 FairPoint Communic- ations workers in New England who have been on strike since Oct. 17, the long winter and dwindling personal finances have been a profound test of solidarity and camaraderie.

“In many ways, it’s drawn people closer together, IBEW and CWA, who share a common interest,” said Bob Erick- son, IBEW international representative from the Second District. “We’ve seen a lot of strength. This group of union mem- bers has done an outstanding job. “At the same time, people want to get back to work,” he said. “This is tough on everybody. It’s difficult for people try- ing to make ends meet, being on a picket line in five feet of snow in 8-degree weather.”

In February, workers in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont entered their fifth month on strike. FairPoint has sought millions in concessions, canceled health benefits for strikers, slashed pensions and wants to outsource highly-skilled New England jobs to low-paid, out-of-state contractors.

The unions and FairPoint agreed to mediation talks in Washington, D.C., with the Federal Mediation and Concilium Service beginning Jan. 4. Under the terms of mediation, both the unions and Fair- Point are prohibited from commenting on negotiations.

In the meantime, workers and activists have been doing what they can to keep morale high while confronting the hard financial realities of being off the job. “We’re not looking to get rich, we’re just looking to sustain our families,” said Mike Gauther, a FairPoint service techni- cian and member of Montpelier, Vt., Local 2326. “We offered the company a com- promise that would save them millions in health care costs, but they refused. We’ve got to stand up for our families and for good jobs.”

One thing helping workers like Gauther make it through is a strike fund established by the union leadership. So far, fellow members and supporters have contributed about $150,000.

“At least we were able to get Christmas gifts for the kids, money to buy heating fuel, grocery store gift cards and some help with their mortgages,” Erick- son said. “Without the strike fund, a lot of people would be in worse financial shape. I’m talking lost homes, reposessed vehi- cles—it could be a lot worse.”

North Carolina-based FairPoint pur- chased Verizon’s landline network serv- ing Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont in 2008. Lacking the resources and expe- rience to maintain a vast telecomunica-
Putting the Squeeze on Manufacturing Workers

Although the relative size of manufacturing in the U.S. economy has stayed nearly the same, since 2000 nearly 5.7 million jobs have been lost, according to a report from the Brookings Institution, a nonpartisan think tank. Manufacturing is still highly profitable, for manufacturers. But even as profits have grown, wages have sagged. Fewer people do more and more specialized jobs, but still make less. “In 2008, workers everywhere were terrified about losing their jobs and told companies they just wanted to keep their jobs,” Middleton said. “So the companies took them at their word and declared all-out war.”

First companies went after wages. Middleton said. Time after time, companies in the black offered one-time payments to current employees to allow lower wages for new hires. “We’ve seen the data and two-tier wage structures cause dissension in the shop and hurt corporate performance, but they keep coming to the table and demanding it,” he said.

Recently, however, Middleton said companies are focusing less on squeezing more from wages and instead, attempting to eliminate pensions. In 2011, General Electric pulled in more than $14 billion in profits. That same year it closed its pension plan to new hourly hires and moved them all into 401(k) plans.

In 2013, Schneider Electric, the French multi-national electronic components manufacturer, earned more than $2.8 billion in profits. As contract negotiations began for nearly 600 IBEW-represented members, Schneider proposed ending retirement benefits entirely for new hourly hires. “They seemed shocked that we said no,” Middleton said. “The only reason they offered was that we had agreed to it somewhere else. They didn’t even bother with a business justification.”

Despite productivity growth over 3 percent in 2013, contract negotiations at Schneider were relentlessly negative and the dispute was only resolved after a two-week strike by more than 200 workers at Schneider’s Ohio plant. “I don’t think these companies are really thinking this through,” Middleton said. “They may not be intending this, but the trend now is that to get a decent contract, you have to strike.”

Middleton says next in the firing line for most companies will be health care benefits. Even with costs falling for the first time in decades, profitable companies are still trying to shift workers into high-deductible plans that cost more and offer less.

Defence manufacturer Rockwell Collins made nearly $1 billion in profits last year, but in contract negotiations with their 2,000 Iowa IBEW members, they attempted to raise deductibles and reduce benefits. Six weeks of negotiations saw the final offer but it was another case of high profits and high productivity growth benefiting stockholders and management and leaving the workers not much better off.

“At the end of the day, we only succeed when the company succeeds, but too many companies have convinced themselves it isn’t true the other way around,” Middleton said. “It’s greed and it won’t end well.”

ADT ‘Playing the Game’

ADT is a company following a well-worn playbook to prevent its workers from collectively bargaining. Nearly 20 technicians working for the multinational home and office security company voted in 2013 for representation from Winston-Salem Local 342. Since then, stalling tactics by the company prompted a 99-vote for decertification last October—mostly from newer, younger hires who hadn’t been part of the original campaign.

Lucas Aubrey, a labor attorney representing the IBEW who is familiar with the organizing efforts at ADT, said, “Sophisticated employers know how to play the game. Companies will drag out contract talks until some workers start to dissent, then some will call for a decertification.”

But IBEW representatives filed unfair labor practice complaints against the company put pressure on workers to vote “no” during a 24-hour period when ADT was restricted from certain forms of contact with the employees.

“We found out a supervisor had been contacting employees and encouraging them to oppose the organizing effort,” said Ninth District Lead Organizer David Haynes.

In this case, it backfired. The NLRB, agreeing with the union, threw out the decertification vote results and rescheduled a new election. Workers then voted on Jan. 14 to remain with the IBEW by a more than 2-to-1 margin. Haynes said the group is back on track to push for bargaining, despite the company’s opposition.

At American Water, ‘A Long Struggle’

Sometimes new company leadership and continued efforts by workers can open the door for change. That’s what happened last fall at public utility American Water, whose management put forth a settlement agreeing to pay nearly $50 million in lost benefits to members of 39 unions representing workers at the company. The settlement was ratified by union members in October by a margin of 2-to-1.

During contract negotiations four years ago, the company unilaterally implemented an agreement on its workforce that reduced or eliminated benefits. Nearly 3,500 employees got hit harder with health care expenses.

The unions filed an unfair labor charge that was upheld by the NLRB. But the company appealed the decision for years, leaving the workers’ fates in legal limbo.

American Water changed its leadership last spring, and “the Brotherhood had a decent relationship with a member of the management team,” said IBEW Utility Department Director Jim Hunter. That relationship, he said, was critical to unions reaching the settlement agreement.

“We are hopeful that this marks not just the end of a long struggle, but the beginning of a new relationship between American Water and unions representing thousands of employees,” said International President Edwin D. Hill. “These workers are deeply invested in their jobs—it stands to reason that the company should be deeply invested in its hard-working people, too.”
First District Readies for Federal Election

Le Premier District se prépare pour l’élection fédérale

Canada’s energy sector, which has been hurt by the rapid drop in oil prices.

The First District will be sponsoring two political “schools”—one in Ontario for members in eastern Canada and another one in British Columbia for members on the West Coast—to train members on election law and mobilizing members to vote.

“We’re trying to grow a grassroots movement in every province in Canada,” said First District Political Action/Strategy Strategist Matt Wayland. “We want to have local activists on the ground and ready to go when the election occurs.”

While scheduled for Oct. 19, Harper could move up the date if he so chooses.

Go to www.ibew.org/1stDistrict to see the video and learn more.

**First District Readies for Federal Election**


These are just some of the issues facing Canada’s working families when they go to the polls in October’s federal election.

While seven months away, the First District has been educating IBEW members since the start of the New Year on the importance of being an informed union voter.

A video message for IBEW members was posted on the IBEW’s YouTube channel on Jan. 16, featuring International Vice President Bill Daniels and international representatives explaining why they are voting in the upcoming election.

“On Oct. 19, you have the opportunity to vote in the next federal election,” Daniels says in the video. “Get educated and vote for the party of the candidates that best represent you, your career and your family.”

The video encourages members to get involved in their local political action committees and volunteer with a campaign. “Make sure your voice and your vote count in 2015,” Daniels said.

A slow economy has driven down wages and living standards, while nearly a decade of Conservative rule has shifted the ground against working families in favor of big corporations and Bay Street.

The economy still has not fully recovered from the 2008 recession, with few new jobs being created.

“This latest [jobs] report simply pounds home the point that underlying Canadian job growth remains anemic,” economist Sal Guatieri told the Financial Post last summer. “And, even those modest gains are almost entirely concentrated in the first half of 2015, with more tepid growth likely in the second half of the year.”

Income inequality is expanding in Canada. A report from the Broadbent Institute shows the top 10 percent of Canadians have seen their median net worth grow by 42 percent since 2005. At the same time, the bottom 10 percent of Canadians saw their median net worth shrink by 50 percent.

“This unequal distribution—particularly for the wealthiest and poorest 10 percent segments of the population—challenges the narrative that suggests Canadians are getting wealthier across the board,” said the report.

The Conservatives have taken a strong anti-union turn, passing Bill C-525, which makes forming a union in the federal sector more difficult. Tony MPs are also promoting Bill C-377, which singles out unions with onerous financial reporting requirements, while exempting other membership organizations.

There has also been talk by some MPs about introducing American-style right to work laws, overturning the Rand formula, which provides for automatic dues check-in. The major issues facing Canadians include:

- **Retirement Security.** Prime Minster Stephen Harper has chipped away at Canada’s retirement system, hiking the eligibility age for Old Age Security to 67, while refusing to beef up the Canada Pension Plan. Canadians relying on the CPP receive on average $15,000 a year—well below the minimum wage. Harper has also proposed legislation that would make it easier for private sector employers to walk away from their pension obligations to their retirees.

- **Mobility.** IBEW electricians in the construction sector often must travel long distances for jobs. The Canadian building trades are calling for a construction mobility tax (CMT) and personal tax exemption for construction workers and apprentices to help cover relocation expenses.

- **Infrastructure.** Canada’s aging infrastructure is in increasing need of renovation. Unions and many provincial lawmakers are calling on the federal government to increase infrastructure spending this year, which would boost both jobs and growth. Approval of energy pipelines projects—for both natural gas and oil—would help reinvigorate Canada’s energy sector, which has been hurt by the rapid drop in oil prices.

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THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

This Just In: PLAs Work

A special Massachusetts state commission recently confirmed what the IBEW has been saying for decades: project labor agreements work.

In its report, the special commission on the use of project labor agreements in road, bridge, and rail projects found PLAs promote quality, prevent labor disputes and help projects finish on time and under budget.

“The commission recommends the use of a PLA for any public infrastructure project,” said the report. “We found PLAs to be particularly beneficial on large public infrastructure projects.”

Project labor agreements are pre-hire, project specific agreements that govern wages and working standards on construction projects.

The commission was established in 2012. The five-member body was appointed by top state officials.

The commission took testimony from industry experts, studying more than 20 years of PLA case studies.

Among the report’s key findings:

- PLAs keep projects on time, streamlining the construction process and resolving disputes quickly, helping project completion.
- PLAs save money by keeping projects on schedule, preventing unnecessary overruns.
- PLAs prevent labor strife by giving employers and employees the tools to bargain collectively.

The commission also found that PLAs aren’t just appropriate for large-scale projects—smaller jobs can also benefit, citing a recent PLA-governed construction project for the Braintree school system that cost less than $25 million.

“The commission’s findings confirm what the evidence has always shown,” said Massachusetts Building Trades Council President Frank Callahan. “PLAs are a time-tested business tool that has been used successfully in both the private and public sectors to deliver quality construction, on-time and on-budget.”

Ky. Lawmakers Push Right-to-Work, County by County

Kentucky Democrats successfully maintained control of the state house last November, effectively dashing Republican lawmakers’ goal of passing right-to-work-for-less legislation.

But that hasn’t stopped right-to-work advocates from trying to push the legislation on the Bluegrass State by other means.

So far, three counties have approved right-to-work laws, sending a letter to the state attorney general earlier this fall asking about the legality of county lawmakers passing their own labor laws. Critics say the move is patently illegal. As Mar Volt reports:

“When asked by the Nation whether [former National Labor Relations Board chair Wilma Liebman] believes that the National Labor Relations Act permits this reading, she replied, ‘No. And it’s not even a close question.’ She read aloud the relevant provision of the act to me, paused, and then explained, ‘Section 14(b) is clear. It says “state or territory” that means no local or municipal ordinances.”’

Section 14(b) amended the original NLRA by allowing states or territories to go right-to-work under the 1957 Taft-Hartley Act.

Former Bowling Green Mayor Eldon Renaud told the Bowling Green Daily News that Warren County’s ordinance (the first one passed in the state) is against state law and that right-to-work legislation would require a vote from the legislature.

“It’s pretty absurd what they’re trying to do,” said Renaud, who is a UAW leader.

TRANSITIONS

DECEASED

Donald Lounds

The officers are saddened to report the passing of retired First District International Vice President Donald Lounds on Jan. 12.

A native of Oswego, Ontario, Brother Lounds was initiated into Local 894 in 1966. Two years later, Lounds began serving on the executive board of the local, which has since been amalgamated into Toronto Local 393. He was elected business manager in 1970.

“Donald Lounds was a good and loyal servant who performed well in whatever role he was asked to play,” says retired First District Vice President Ken Woods, who preceded Lounds in office.

In 1974, Lounds was appointed to the First District staff and assigned to Alberta and the Northwest Territories, primarily servicing the telephone industry. He served as an appointee of the provincial government on a workers’ compensation board and the Canadian Standards Association.

In 1979, Brother Lounds was reassigned to the First District Office and served as executive assistant to Woods from 1987 until he succeeded him in 1993.

“Donald really had my back in some of the tougher straits we were negotiating,” says Woods.

At the time of Lounds’ retirement in 2003, he was a member of the executive board of the Canadian Building and Construction Trades and a general vice president of the Canadian Labour Congress. He also served on the boards of the Construction Sector Council and the Canadian Labour and Business Centre.

In retirement, Brother Lounds split his time between Haliburton, Ontario and Port Orange, Fla. He enjoyed golfing and fishing.

On behalf of the membership and staff, the officers send our deepest condolences to Brother Lounds’ family.

Jerry Harris

The IBEW regrets to report that former Eleventh District International Representative Jerry Harris died Dec. 14. He was 72.

Brother Harris was initiated into Kansas City, Mo., Local 93 in 1967. He later transferred his card to the now-defunct Sedalia, Mo., Local 819. He worked as an outside construction lineman until 1982, when he became a journeyman lineman, employed by Missouri Public Service.

Local 819’s executive board appointed him business manager five years later. Harris led the local through turbulent times for the utility industry, particularly as deregulation gripped the country.

He served as a member of the Missouri Public Service Commission’s task force on utility restructuring, helping to stop the deregulation of the state’s utility industry. He also served as a leader of Missourians for Affordable Reliable Electric Service, a statewide coalition formed to save good energy jobs and affordable power for consumers.

“In those days, discussing deregulation could be pretty combative at times,” Harris told the Electrical Worker in 2008. “We had heavy opposition from some staunch supporters in the Republican Party. But through the efforts of the Brotherhood and our allies in the state Legislature, we were able to keep good-paying union jobs in place for working families.”

Then-International President J.J. Barry appointed Harris to the Eleventh District office in 1998, where he serviced construction and utility locals in Iowa and Missouri.

“Jerry was one of those rare people who took that extra step to help a member out,” said Mike Baker, who succeeded Harris as Local 819’s business manager.

“Jerry was one of those rare people who took that extra step to help a member out.”

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**THE ELECTRICAL WORKER | March 2015**

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CIRCUITS

Poll: Americans Will Pay for Grid Upgrades

More than 40 percent of Americans east of the Mississippi, and just over a third of those to the west, are willing to pay at least $50 a month more on their utility bills for grid upgrades according to a poll released this summer by Harris Interactive. The average utility bill in 2012 was just over $125 a month according to data from the Energy Information Agency.

One possible explanation for the difference was that respondents east of the Mississippi were three times more likely to report a power outage (three percent against one percent.)

The poll, conducted for GE’s Digital Energy business, surveyed more than 2,000 voting-age Americans last spring. The poll also found that more than 80 percent of respondents wanted their utility to do more to encourage energy conservation and nearly the same number wanted their utility to increase renewable energy generation with solar, wind and geothermal biogas.

The poll also asked questions about the public’s understanding of the grid. More than 50 percent believed weather was the greatest threat to the grid. In the Northeast, 61 percent thought so. Utility Department Director Jim Hunter said the poll provided valuable support for investments in manpower and infrastructure.

“There is nothing in this poll that we haven’t known anecdotally, but accurate polling data is very useful when we talk with lawmakers and regulators,” Hunter said. “But, a lot of this is just common sense. The more our lives depend on electronic devices, the more people realize how important the grid is. A smartphone isn’t very useful if you can’t charge it.”

A recent Harris Poll found many Americans would pay more for electricity if it were used to make the grid more reliable.

IBEW ON DUTY

Military Service Card: Benefit for Members on Duty

For more than 100 years, IBEW members have answered the call and served their nations in war and in peacetime—a tradition that carries on today.

For members on duty, an IBEW-issued military service card will maintain membership and boost pension benefits. Whether it is for a first-time enlistment or a deployment, the IBEW will cover dues for members on active duty.

But to get a military service card, members must follow these procedures:

- A member must be in good standing. In other words, they have to be current on their dues up through the month of entrance.
- The military service must last longer than 90 days.
- A member must present a copy of an official enlistment or call to duty order to their local’s financial secretary that indicates the active duty date.
- Within 60 days of being released or discharged from military service, the member must deposit the card with the financial secretary of the issuing local and receive payment of dues.
- A member must provide their local’s financial secretary with discharge papers (DD-214) indicating the date of discharge.

For more information, contact the Per Capita Department at the International Office at percapita@ibew.org or (202) 728-6225.

IBEW Underwrites PBS

After launching successful national television advertising campaigns during NFL games and on cable news programs, the IBEW is extending its message to new audiences.

In the first week of January, 30-second underwriting messages began running during the week on the flagship public television programs the News Hour and Washington Week.

The ads, produced by the Media Department and adapted from the commercial ads, extend the campaign to raise the IBEW’s profile and that of organized labor.

“There is a lot of misinformation—to put it generously—about who organized labor is,” said International President Edwin D. Hill. “I am proud that we are in a position to lead a charge in that conversation.”

The IBEW is the first union to underwrite the News Hour and the first to run a 30-second sponsorship message nationaly on public television. Historically underwriters have been large corporations, foundations and defense contractors.

“This is an opportunity to get our message in front of decision makers and business leaders who might not otherwise be thinking about the issues and accomplishments of working people,” said Media Department Director Mark Brueggenjohn. “These messages show the diversity of our membership and also our ambition as a union to have a greater say in national conversations.”

The spots will run through the middle of May.

RENEW Leader Energizes New Generation of Local 3 Activists

You could say that the IBEW runs in New York City Local 3 member Chris Erikson Jr.’s blood. His father serves as business manager, as did his great-grandfather, Harry Van Arsdale Jr., and great-uncle, Thomas Van Arsdale, and there was never much question that he would follow them into the trade.

So when the 30-year-old Erikson began his apprenticeship in 2007, he was well aware of the tradition of struggle and solidarity that made Local 3 what it is today.

But it’s something many workers of his generation don’t understand.

“A lot of them haven’t been told about this history and why they have to be involved in the union if they want to protect the lifestyles we enjoy.”

For more than a century Local 3 has been the leading force in the New York labor movement. Both Van Arsdales led not only Local 3, but the New York City Labor Council as well, leaving big shoes to fill for the next generation of members.

Since 2013, Local 3’s Young Worker Committee has focused on getting young IBEW members involved in the local and educating the next generation of leaders. Erikson chairs the committee. “One of our most basic tasks is communications,” he says. “We want to start talking with new apprentices as soon as they join and spell out to them why it’s so important for them to be involved with Local 3.”

Education is key, he says. The committee hosted a labor youth conference last September that was attended by more than 300 young workers. In addition to Local 3
members, the event attracted young members from other NYC building trades.

The committee ran workshops on the major challenges facing young workers and how the labor movement can address them, including using social media to communicate. It also sponsored short plays dealing with working class issues.

Community service is another top goal of the committee. “We’ve helped clean up parks, worked with church outreach programs for needy residents, helped install lights for Little League fields,” he said. “It’s a reminder how important it is for everyone to come together.”

It’s not all work however. Social events are vital for getting new members involved. The committee sponsored a big concert at Local 3’s union hall that attracted more than 200 members and their families last summer.

Erickson is now bringing his experience in organizing young workers to the Reach out and Engage Next-gen Electrical Workers (RENEW), the IBEW’s initiative to get young workers involved in the union. He represents the Third District on RENEW’s 12-person council.

“Education, community and social involvement are what we can do to move the NYC labor movement forward,” he said.

Go to www.facebook.com/pages/IBEW-3rd-District-Youth-Caucus for information on youth organizing in the Third District.

At EWMC Conference, Young Workers Serve Community

Giving back. It’s a fundamental premise of the IBEW and the labor movement in general.

That’s why about 60 members of the IBEW’s RENEW group gathered Jan. 19, in Atlanta to help renovate and beautify a community home for children in need.

Members of the young workers’ group traveled to the city to attend the 25th Electrical Workers Minority Caucus conference.

“It was really an eye opener to see

what the kids there needed,” said Seattle Local 77 member Damian Hernandez, a lineman working for Lewis County Public Utility District.

Members, gathered at the United Methodist Children’s Home to paint offices, perform yard and gardening work, assist with trash collection and more. The organization offers shelter for families with small children, houses older youth who are in transitional living programs and facilitates foster care.

“It gives you a good feeling inside,” said Hernandez, 39, who is a shop steward and serves on several committees at his local. “We all had our conference shirts on, and we just got into action. I’ve never done a community service activity before. I was there with so many people.”

The conference was planned to coincide with Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend, Jan. 14-16. Each EWMC conference includes a day of service in the host city’s community. Numerous faith-based and community service organizations across the U.S. mark the weekend with service activities in the spirit of King, who once said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”

About 600 IBEW members, including nearly 200 young workers, attended this year’s conference.

“It’s inspiring to help an organization like the children’s home, and it’s great to be working alongside so many people dedicated to the cause of making sure we have an inclusive union,” said Houston Local 76 member Mike Jackson, 31. The fifth-year apprentice serves on the Young Workers Advisory Council for the AFL-CIO.

The RENEW contingent also hosted its own day-long seminar Jan. 16, which featured workshops on technology and communication skills.

“Workers are often seen as the fountain for energy, excitement and passion,” said International Representative Tarr Goeling. ‘But enthusiasm alone can’t wipe away generations of struggle. We must always carry our collective beginnings within our hearts and grow from the lessons our predecessors learned.”

“ Like RENEW’s official Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RENEW.IBEW.

El Paso Local Hits Wage Theft

Nonunion Texas electrical contractors looking to turn a quick buck on prevailing wage projects often look for projects in El Paso.

Located on the Rio Grande River just across from Juarez, Mexico, the city teams with workers vulnerable to wage theft, targeted by contractors who pay them less than the prevailing rates by misclassifying the actual work they perform.

Last year, two workers who had been working as electricians on a large bus maintenance shop for the Sun Metro, the local bus company, showed up at El Paso Local 583’s union office. They told organizer William Markwell that, despite performing electrical work, they were being paid as laborers by Beltran Electrical Contractors, a nonunion outfit. Their hourly rates of pay hovered at a meager $9.50 per hour. Markwell had already had suspicions about wage theft after following the bus shop project on IBEW’s Project Tracker.

It wasn’t Local 583’s first encounter with Beltran. A few years back the local had issued a complaint about the company using unlicensed electricians. Beltran was fined $750.

“Beltran was liable for fines of $50 per day for wage theft by civil or criminal courts or by state or federal agencies,” said Markwell. “But it wasn’t a mistake,” says Markwell. “It’s how Beltran (and other irresponsible contractors in the border town) bid jobs,” calculating their savings from paying improper rates.

Markwell investigated the electricians’ complaint and found they weren’t even reported on the company’s certified payroll. But they brought pictures of the electrical work they performed along with pay stubs. Sure enough, they were performing electrical work and working well below scale. He reported the wage theft to the city.

The electricians, who had moved on to work for another contractor, went back to Beltran asking to be paid the difference between laborer rates and electrician pay. Beltran cut them checks but Markwell says they were still left shortchanged.

Soon, more Beltran electricians were contacting Local 583 with similar complaints. Markwell spoke with the local union’s attorneys, who advised him that Beltran was liable for fines of $50 per day for violating prevailing wage requirements.

Markwell heard the city was considering withholding its final payment to Beltran pending a settlement of the worker misclassification issue. He was told the issue would be discussed at the next city council meeting.

With working Lift Up El Paso, a local coalition of union, faith and community groups, Markwell addressed the city council on the need to address Beltran’s conduct. The city’s attorney announced El Paso was withholding payments to the Urban Associates, the general contractor that enlisted Beltran for the bus facility, until the wage theft issue was resolved.

As the city tries to recover lost wages for Beltran’s workers, Local 583 and Lift Up El Paso are working to pass an ordinance that would prohibit companies that have been convicted of wage theft from being able to bid for contracts by the city. A similar ordinance was passed in Houston.

The El Paso City Council passed a nonbinding resolution opposing wage theft in 2011. But it contained no enforceable procedures.

Jed Unterreker, legal director for the Psalm De Norte Civil Rights Project, told the El Paso Times that an ordinance would call for creating a database of “bad actors” who have been found guilty of wage theft by civil or criminal courts or by state or federal agencies.

ORGANIZING WIRE

Clean Coal Workers Organize in Ill.

Members of Springfield, Ill., Local 53 working in Bartonville have operated and maintained the Edwards coal-fired power plant for generations, all through the national debate over the role that coal will play in our nation’s energy future.

Seeking to reduce unhealthy emissions, Dynegy, owners of the station located south of Peoria, utilizes Clean Coal Solutions. The Colorado-based company uses a proprietary process to reduce mercury and nitrogen oxide emissions by refining coal headed into bunkers to be burned. Local 53’s operations and maintenance members worked alongside Clean Coal Solution’s crew of eight.

Madison, Wis., Local 965 and Kansas City, Mo., Local 53 have negotiated contracts covering Clean Coal Solutions workers at two power plants. But the company’s crew at Edwards was not represented by a union. So, seeking greater job security, savings and benefits, workers signed authorization cards for Local 53.

In August, a representation election was held and the workers voted 8 to 0 for a voice on the job with the IBEW.

“Clean Coal Solutions has been a good company to work with,” says Local 53 Assistant Business Manager John Johnson.

Robert Stuart, business manager of Local 53, said his local negotiated a five-year agreement with the company in 2011 providing for healthy wage increases each year.

Members of Springfield, Ill., Local 53 who maintain and operate Dynegy power plants encouraged workers at Clean Coal Solutions to vote for a voice on the job with IBEW.

“When Clean Coal Solutions first arrived at an IBEW-represented power plant in Southwest Missouri, we took the position that contractors working full time on the premises should be organized. Clean Coal Solutions had no real experience with unions, but didn’t stand in our way,” says Local 53 Business Agent Dexter Dreyer. Since negotiating an agreement, says Dreyer, “We generally work out almost all problems before they become grievances.”

Johnson says a good first contract has been negotiated covering workers at the Edwards power plant and, after winning an NLRB representation election with the Operating Engineers by a 9-8 vote, a new Local 53 unit has been formed at another Dynegy power plant in Baldwin, Ill., southeast of St. Louis.

More units could follow. Dynegy has a fleet of over 35 power plants nationally. While some may be shut down as a result of falling natural gas prices and increasing regulations, says Johnson, many will continue to run and are likely to turn to Clean Coal Solutions or other companies to reduce carbon-based emissions.

WWW.IBEW.ORG
Local Lines

IBEW Amateur Boxing Champ

L.U. 1 (asc,ces,el,em,et,fi,lm,lt,s,se,spa,stk,wo), ST. LOUIS, MO—IBEW Local 1 congratulates 25-year-old apprentice Jurmain McDonald on his victory at the Frost Electrical Supply trade show and amateur boxing event, bringing his amateur record to 6-1 with four knockouts. McDonald put on an energizing performance winning his fight early in the second round with a technical knockout. We look forward to following both his IBEW career and his boxing career.

Special thanks to our brothers and sisters in the St. Louis Electrical Worker Minority Caucus for their successful annual children’s coat drive. For the recent drive, more than 200 coats were collected—bringing the 11-year total to more than 6,000 coats provided to needy children throughout our area. Thank you to Local 1 members Leon Arties, Jim Brown, Yvette Goods and Sylvester Taylor as well as Local 1939 members Curtis Tungstel, Carl Burke and Derrick Carter for their outstanding community service.

We invite everyone to visit our new website at www.ibewlocal1.org. Bro. John Kahhoff, Local 1 recording secretary and business representative, has done an amazing job coordinating the modernization of our website and the addition of new functionality for our members and visitors alike. Check it out and stay tuned for more improvements soon.

We mourn the death of several members: David Emanuel, James Blankenship, Raymond Eisele, Clara Williams, Donald Jacquinin, Carl Webb, Timothy Jones, Charles Wick and John Martin.

John Mayo, P.S.

In Tribute & Service—EWMC National Conference

L.U. 21 (lt&k,ip,ctf), LOS ANGELES, CA—In honor of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Local 21 members attended several events in January. These included the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor’s MLK breakfast and 50th Annual MLK Day Parade, held Jan. 19. Also in January, an 18-member delegation from the Los Angeles Chapter of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus attended the 25th Annual EWMC National Leadership Conference in Atlanta, GA. The EWMC event included a Young Workers Conference and a Day of Giving and Community Service.

California recognized Cesar Chavez Day in 2000. Cesar Chavez was a farm worker, labor organizer and civil rights leader who co-founded the United Farm Workers. Most of our collective bargaining agreements in Local 21 recognize this day as a holiday, observing it the same day as the Los Angeles Unified School District. If you have the day off, join us in our Cesar Chavez Golf Tournament on April 6, 2015 (location to be determined). Last year 30-40 members participated. Contact Mario Barragan by email (mario.barragan@ibew.org) for more information, or visit our website at www.ibewlocal21.org.

Diane Limon, P.S.

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21 Days of Giving—Community Outreach Program

L.U. 21 (catv,em,lt&k,ctf), DOWNERS GROVE, IL—In 2015, we are continuing our “21 Days of Giving” community outreach program. The idea for the program began during the 2013 holidays with our first ever local-wide food drive. We built on that success in 2014 and held a school supply drive followed by a toy/coat drive during the holidays.

Now that we’ve completed a few different types of fundraisers and are working with more charities, we are learning what works and are making some adjustments to be more successful.

One of the important lessons we learned is that many organizations hold food drives during the holidays and that generosity, while appreciated, overwhelms many food banks. What many don't realize is that by the time summer arrives, many food banks need to be replenished. Throughout the school year many children rely on school lunches for nourishment. During summer break many kids go hungry. To help with that need we will move our food drive to the spring season.

Our community outreach program is a work in progress. We believe that by getting involved in the communities where we live and work we will become a stronger union.

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

Military Veterans Honored

L.U. 25 (catv,lt&k,ctf), LONG ISLAND, NY—Local 25 took some time out of our November and December general meetings to honor our military veterans. We invited

Local Lines Articles

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via email (locallines@ibew.org) or U.S. Mail. We have a 200-word limit. We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are based on the editor’s judgment. Our guidelines and deadlines are available at www.ibew.org/articles/journaldeadlines.htm. Please email or call the Media Department at (202) 728-6293 with any questions.

Local Lines

IBEW Local 7 apprentice Jurmain McDonald (facing camera) won his bout at the Frost Electrical Supply trade show’s amateur boxing event.

Solar PV Installation

L.U. 7 (l, SPRINGFIELD, MA—The crew from IBEW Local 7 installed another quality product for electrical contractor E.S. Boules Company Inc. at the Cottage Street solar photovoltaic site in Springfield. [Photo, top right]. Congratulations to all involved for a job well-done.

Mark Kuenzel, Tr. Dir.

At a Local 17 golf tournament (from left): Eric Brown, apprentice coordinator/treasurer; Luis Arida, civil service business agent; Gary Tomin, dispatcher/business agent; and Mario Barragan, organizer.

Trade Classifications

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<tr>
<th>Trade Classification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(aa) Alarm &amp; Signal</td>
<td>(f) Electronic Technicians</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ars) Atomic Research Service</td>
<td>(fm) Fixture Manufacturing</td>
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<td>(bo) Bridge Operators</td>
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<td>(cs) Cable Splicers</td>
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<td>(cable) Cable Television</td>
<td>(it) Instrument Technicians</td>
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<td>(cc) Communications</td>
<td>(lctt) Line Clearance Tree Trimming</td>
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<td>(cr) Crane Operators</td>
<td>(lp) Lighting Protection Technicians</td>
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<td>(ei) Electrical Inspection</td>
<td>(mo) Maintenance &amp; Operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>(em) Electrical Manufacturing</td>
<td>(mow) Manufacturing Office Workers</td>
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<td>(es) Electric Signs</td>
<td>(mar) Marine</td>
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Efforts are made to make this list as inclusive as possible, but the various job categories of IBEW members are too numerous to comprehensively list all.
Happy St. Patrick’s Day greetings to all!

SCE Contract Negotiations

Triple achievement for safety!

L.U. 37 (em,o&u), FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, Triple Success for Safety

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**LOCAL LINES**

**‘Transitions at Union Hall’**
L.U. 111 (em, gov, ltt, mt, rtb, spa&u), DENVER, CO—In August 2014, Journeyman Lineman Christopher “Chris” Beckett joined the Local 111 staff as the new contact for Membership Development Construction. Chris brings 23 years of experience and knowledge to the IBEW. Always an active participant with the IBEW, Chris stepped up his game in 2012. He renewed his service as a union steward; was elected to the Executive Board; remained actively involved with training as a part-time instructor with Mountain State Line Constructors; participated on the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus; served as a delegate to the Denver Area Labor Federation; and participated in COPE and the Young Workers Caucus.

In December 2014, Senior Asst. Bus. Mgr. Bruce J. Lawlor retired after 25 years as an active agent representing our membership. We wish Bro. Lawlor the best in his future endeavors, new adventures and travels. Bro. Aaron Snyder, from PSCO Energy Supply, was hired as Lawlor’s replacement to represent our members in the Denver power plants, Pawnee Power Plant, Rocky Mountain Energy, Blue-Source and Fort St. Vrain. Also in December 2014, Bro. William Ashley was appointed to the Local 111 Executive Board. Bro. Ashley is a Journeyman Lineman out of Unit 1 Construction and looks forward to this opportunity to serve in this capacity.

Please take the time to welcome the new faces around Local 111 as we embark on a new year with many challenges ahead.

**Mike Kostielecky, P.S.**

**Safety & Organizing**
L.U. 125 (itl, tibku), PORTLAND, OR—Happy New Year! As we are fortunate to begin a new year, let’s all commit to focusing on core IBEW principles: safety and organizing.

Our employer partners have a variety of safety programs designed to promote safe work environments. IBEW members should never lose sight of the responsibility to work safely. One of the most challenging circumstances that any of us face involves the job injuries, because they affect not only the injured but also the co-workers. Please stay focused on your job each day. Use your training and make sound decisions to ensure not only your safety but also that of your fellow IBEW members and the public.

Everyone is urged to assist with organizing. We bring value each day through our safe, quality work; so, we must ensure that employers are not diminishing our wages, hours, and working conditions, or jeopardizing customers by selecting what employers expect can be cheaper labor. Please keep your business representative updated if your employer uses nonunion contractors.

**Marcy Graal, A.B.M.**

**Festival of Trees Parade; 2015 Work Picture Promising**
L.U. 145 (em, ltt, mt, rtb, spa&u), ROCK ISLAND, IL—Greetings, brothers and sisters. We hope your holiday season was filled with family, friends and happiness! We extend best wishes for a wonderful and prosperous 2015 to you and your family.

IBEW Local 145 and the Quad Cities Chapter NECA joined hands for the annual Festival of Trees Parade. This cheerful parade is our community’s kickoff to the winter holiday season. Together Local 145 and NECA sponsored and participated in the parade as helmet “ballon handlers.” We had a tremendous turnout of members and families. This show of community involvement is just one of the many ways we promote the IBEW/NECA partnership.

We wish to pay tribute to the memory Local 145 members who passed away in 2014. They are missed and will long be remembered.

We wish to recognize all the brothers and sisters of this great Brotherhood. Let us remember everyone’s hard work and commitment to our industry.

2014 was a good year for the Local 145 membership. The 2015 work outlook for our local is also very promising!

**Dan Larson, P.S.**

**Strong Work Picture**
L.U. 257 (em, ltt, mt, rtb, spa&u), SPRINGFIELD, IL—Greetings, brothers and sisters. City Water Light & Power and IBEW Local 257 recently signed a two-year contract. Included in the contract is a modest wage increase of 1.2 percent for year one and a wage opener or only for year two. CWLP will take three apprentice linemen in the upcoming fiscal year.

The 2014 “midterm massacre” by anti-labor GOP will become a bitter pill to swallow. We have a long two years ahead, as the GOP won control of the U.S. Senate and House—as well as many state legislatures—as a result of the midterm elections. Can we expect that so-called “right-to-work” laws will be proposed? That is indeed the case. Such measures always leave labor with “The Right to Work for Less!”

Newly Elected Officers
L.U. 245 (gov, ltt, rtb, spa&u), TOLEDO, OH—Local 245 held its election of officers for a three-year term in September 2014. Re-elected to office were: Bus. Mgr. Larry Tscheme, Treas. Lisa Tracy and REC. Sec. Mike Tscheme. Elected for a first term were Pres. Ray Zychowicz and Vice Pres. Robert Coffman. Re-elected to the Executive Board were: Ken Kurtz, Joel Reeder, Kris Szmaja, Jack Schell and Tim Tscheme. New faces elected to the Executive Board: Stevie Kran and Bob Hamilton. We thank all the outgoing officers for their service and look forward to working with all those elected.

Local 245 continued its tradition of ringing the bell for The Salvation Army Red Kettle drive on the day after Thanksgiving. This tradition started several years ago and continues with the help of our many volunteers, whose ages range from 5 to 85. Everyone participating has a good time and enjoys giving back to the community. Local 245 collected $855 for the cause last year. We thank all who volunteered.

We will face some challenges in 2015, but if we work together we can overcome them. That’s our strength in being union. Remember to work safe; your family depends on you.

Ray Zychowicz, P.S.

**Solidarity & Participation**
L.U. 257 (em, it, ltt, rtb, spa&u), BLOOMINGTON, IL—We wish everyone a happy new year. In early December we held our annual Christmas party and pin ceremony. [Photo, above.] Congratulations to the service award recipients. The local thanks the pin recipients for their professionalism and long-term dedication to the IBEW. From the looks of smiles and sounds of laughter, it seemed clear that everyone had much fun. There was plenty of food and drinks, and some lucky attendees won door prizes.

As we move into the new year, we hope that others will get involved with the local’s functions, whether by attending monthly meetings, volunteering for various projects, walking picket, or participating in any local union event. The “B” in IBEW is for Brotherliness— and we all can strive to strengthen the Brotherhood in 2015.

We thank the locals that are keeping Local 257 members working on the road. We hope we can get our members home this year. At the time of this writing, the ground is frozen and there’s not a whole lot of projects getting ready to start.

In late spring/early summer, Illinois State University plans to build a new Center for Visual Arts, a $56 million project. The state should soon be awarding contracts for the medical marijuana facilities, which could lead to putting our members to work.

Please stay active and involved with the local!

**Mike Raikes, Pres.**

**University Stadium Project**
L.U. 257 (em, ltt, rtb, spa&u), JEFFERSON CITY, MO—IBEW wiremen worked on the Mizou Memorial Stadium renovation as part of the University of Missouri Tigers’ move to the Southeastern Conference. The 16-month electrical project was completed by a 100 percent union workforce from IBEW Local 257 along with IBEW travelers from across the area, often working six to seven days a week.

The total project was valued at $46.5 million. The electrical portion of the project was a joint effort by Meyer Electric, Kaiser Electric and Guarantee Electric—and it was completed on time, on budget and accident free.

The renovation added 4,100 upper deck seats and 1,200 premium seats. The project also included: new lighting as well as upgrades on the fire alarm, electrical power, data, phone, and speaker systems. New spectator amenities include: an expanded concourse; expanded/enhanced concession and restroom areas; new ticket office locations; more points of entry; and new field lighting.

At the kickoff to the winter holiday season, together Local 145 and NECA sponsored and participated in the Festival of Trees Parade; an event that brings 1,200 premium seats. The project also included:

**Local 257 Executive Board Chmn. Joel Reeder rings Salvation Army bell.**

**University Stadium Project**
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**Local 257 members and IBEW travelers at University of Missouri Memorial Stadium project jobsite.**
The project was finished just in time for the Tigers’ first football game of the 2014 season, and it set the team up for a great season. The university has plans for more renovations in 2015, and it is expected to continue using the new label.

Note: Thanks to L.U. 257 Bro. Dave Hurst for providing information for this article.

Joel Venderlicer, P.S.

Hope & Spirit of Giving

L.U. 269 (Ibso), TRENTON, NJ—Local 269 recently swore in the graduating apprenticeship class of 2015 as the local’s newest journeymen. We wish the new journeymen all the best as they pursue their goals and aspirations. Their success is our sincere wish, for as we all know, a high tide raises all boats. As some of our older members begin a well-earned retirement, our new members will do their part to help keep the ball rolling.

Once again the spirit of giving was displayed at Bro. Jake Soley’s annual benefit for the family of a terminally ill child. The family received a needed financial boost to help them deal with the overwhelming costs of supporting a sick child. Though the money may not change the ultimate course of events, it certainly may ease the burden.

And finally, what would the holidays be without a visit from old Saint Nick? The festivities brought smiles to the young (and not so young) alike. Members’ families were invited to the union hall and the children had an opportunity to visit with Santa. Hope everyone enjoyed the holidays. Happy 2015!

Brian Jacoppo, P.S.

New Unit Welcomed

L.U. 295 (em,i,o,rtb,rtsp&a&u), LITTLE ROCK, AR—New Unit Welcomed

Chamberlain (left), Terri Nagel, Sherri Bowe, Tara Monte, Local 269 welcomes Santa and office staff helpers Rachel ‘Hope & Spirit of Giving’

T. L.567 (c,i,k,m,nt,src,spkt), COLLINSVILLE, IL—The inside jurisdiction work picture has improved as of this writing. Local 309 is actively helping the Southern Illinois Building Trades seek approval for construction of a new St. Elizabeth Hospital in O’Fallon. The outside branch remains stable, while the outlook for 2015 appears better than last year.

Negotiations with Heloc Tree went smoothly with the ratification of a two-year agreement. We received a 3 percent wage increase for both years with a 25 cent increase to LINECO in the second year to be picked up by the contractor.

We will take a wait and see approach with the new Republican governor. We hope his pro-business stance won’t be too anti-union. A poor showing at the polls by our members and the general public at large should be a lesson to all of us that an apathetic populace does not work in our best interest.

Our Annual 50 Year Luncheon was held at Sunset Hills Country Club last November. This event is always well-attended. Last year, we celebrated two special honorees: Billy N. Lewis, retired journeyman wireman with 70 years of service; and Robert L. Hartman Jr., retired journeyman lineman with 75 years of service. Congratulations to all those who received service awards at the luncheon.

I hope to see you at the next union meeting.

Scott Tweedy, A.B.M.

L.U. 343 (Ipa,ktl), LE SUEUR, MN—Our contract expires in June this year. It is our contract. We are an assembled body—a union of members deciding what factors will influence our livelihoods, our careers and our trade. The business manager and staff do not decide our contract; they administer it. We, the membership, through the negotiating committee, make the decisions.

Area meetings to gather the membership’s input concerning negotiations either have started or will be coming soon to your corner of the jurisdiction. The local union is making an effort to empower our membership in the decision making process. This is the opportunity to suggest changes in contract language that will benefit the membership and the industry. Your direction is needed. Remember, it’s not all about wages. Our working conditions are also of great importance.

Keep Americans working—buy “Made in USA.”

Tom Small, P.S.

Holiday Festivity

L.U. 351 (c,i,k,m,nt,src,spkt), SOLVOM, NJ—On December 7, last year we had another successful Children’s Christmas Party at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Williamstown, NJ. Thanks to all the Christmas party committee members for all their hard work. They include: Wayne Bumm, Jim Breed, Don Morgan, Bill Hinuey, Ray Listman, Dennis Kleiner, Joe Trumbetti, John Blondi, Chuck Della Vecchia, Ed Rivier, Dan Cosner and Kathy D’Alonzo. Santa Jim Ruff also did a great job.

L.U. 357 (c,lt,m&kse), LAS VEGAS, NV—We wish to congratulate retired Bro. Al Harris on receiving his 35 year service pin! Brother Al has volunteered countless hours of his time and has served on many committees and on the Executive Board.

Throughout each year we have many gatherings for the members—from the Gary Pitts Golf Tournament to the family Christmas party. We also have many pickets and banners around town in the constant fight for the rights of electricians. All of these events would not be possible without the constant support of the brothers and sisters of this local. We thank all of the volunteers who step up and out to make all this happen!

Jennifer Tabor, P.S.

Volunteers Step Up

L.U. 295 (em,i,o,rtb,rtsp&a&u), LITTLE ROCK, AR—The inside jurisdiction work picture has improved as of this writing. Local 309 is actively helping the Southern Illinois Building Trades seek approval for construction of a new St. Elizabeth Hospital in O’Fallon. The outside branch remains stable, while the outlook for 2015 appears better than last year.

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I hope to see you at the next union meeting.

Scott Tweedy, A.B.M.

A night of celebration at Local 357 marks 100 years.

Local Celebrates 100th Year

L.U. 375 (cte,eks,ltc), ALLENTOWN, PA.—On Nov. 5 last year, Local 375 celebrated its 100th anniversary. The event was held at the beautiful, union-built ArtsQuest Center at Steelstacks, in the shadows of the now refurbished blast furnaces of the former Bethlehem Steel Co. site. These blast furnaces serve as a symbol of the great American Industrial Revolution. Labor history was made here! Since some of the original 17 chartered members were steelworkers, it was fitting that this recognition be made here! Since some of the original 17 chartered members were steelworkers, it was fitting that this recognition be made here!

Constitution and By-Laws Committee coming up this spring.

Cameron L. Bennett, P.S.

Political Action is Key

L.U. 429 (em,ubct,os,rtb,ta&u), NASHVILLE, TN—2014 saw a busy work picture with calls going unfilled at times. We appreciate our travelling brothers and sisters who helped us to staff this work and keep our jurisdictional lines strong.

We call on the strength of the Brotherhood to keep in touch with elected public officials to encourage labor-friendly legislation and discourage anti-labor legislation.

In the past, we have seen harmful bills avoided as a result of our members’ correspondence with legislators. Even when the opposition in Tennessee had a supermajority, such contact dissuaded the state legislature from passing some bad bills that would have negative effects on working people.

Today we see the U.S. Congress, controlled by members of the opposition. What worked in Tennessee could work nationwide. Pro-labor bills need our support to ensure passage. Lawmakers must be reminded that we are politically active and we vote. They must hear from us more frequently than from the opposition (which is daily). We must make our voices heard on matters important to workers.

We encourage our members to contact their representatives in the state, tell them what is happening in their locality, and vote for or correspond with labor-friendly lawmakers, we need to stay involved with our elected leaders. If we don’t, our livelihood could be in jeopardy.

As a result of our members’ correspondence with legislators, we have seen positive results for our industry. Lawmakers must be reminded that we are politically active and we vote. They must hear from us more frequently than from the opposition (which is daily). We must make our voices heard on important issues.

IBEW Members Volunteer

L.U. 449 (cte,eks,ltc,rtb,ta&u), ROCHELLE, IL—The summer of 2014 found Local 449 members extending a hand and volunteering their time and skill to wire a Habitat for Humanity house in Idaho Falls. With the help of the current fifth-year apprenticeship class, the IATC instructor, and one of our new small shops, we were able to rough the house in and complete it later that summer. Editor’s Note: The National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (NATC) rebranded in 2014 and transitioned into the Electrical Training Alliance. See “NATC Transitions into the Electrical Training Alliance,” The Electrical Worker Sept. 2014, and at www.IBEW.org.

The local really came together to help the community and less fortunate families. A reporter from the local daily newspaper came down to the Habitat jobsite and interviewed a couple of us and wrote up a nice article, published in The Post Register. Community service projects like this and other Local 449 service projects have made a positive impact on residents in the community.

We wish Bros. Brod Hansen, Richard Byington, Ulan Ben Gregory, Kevin Nobery and Kirk Thurman a well-deserved happy retirement.

We mourn the deaths of Bros. Charles Burk, Dean Wilhite and Melvin Danielson. They will never be forgotten.

Officers Elected


Work has picked up in our jurisdiction, even into Book 2 on some calls. The immediate work outlook is good, and Bus. Mgr. Mayfield has some ideas on increasing our market share.

Shown in the accompanying photo (at top, left) is the IBEW crew working on the new nine-story patient tower at Cox Hospital in Springfield.

Brad Cox, P.S.

2015 Work Picture Strong

L.U. 479 (Bk), BEAUMONT, TX—The work picture into 2015 is good with steady, continuous employment for Local 479 members along with traveling brothers and sisters.

At this writing, approximately 275 traveling brothers and sisters are working in our jurisdiction. A big thank-you goes out to them for helping man our work. Bro. Robert Truncale, who served as business manager/financial secretary in 2003-04, passed away last Dec. 2. From 2002-03 he served as an assistant. Robert served Local 479 well and will be missed.

Organizing is critical to our success. We have a market share of 47 percent. That is not enough. Our brothers and sisters are working in our jurisdiction and are an integral part of keeping the local on course due to her attention to details, dedication and genuine concern for the well-being of our members. She is greatly respected, appreciated and loved. We wish her a happy retirement.

Cathy Henderson, R.S. Apprenticeship Dir.

Thanks to Volunteers

L.U. 572 (RT,TS,SPA), GALVESTON, TX—Local 572 announces the retirement of Sister Faye Trotter. In her 35 years at Local 572, Faye worked as assistant office manager for four business managers and has been an integral part of keeping the local on course due to her attention to details, dedication and genuine concern for the well-being of our members. She is greatly respected, appreciated and loved. We wish her a happy retirement.

Cathy Henderson, R.S. Apprenticeship Dir.

Tribute for Career of Service

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Cathy Henderson, R.S. Apprenticeship Dir.

IBEW Apprentices Volunteer—Community Service Project

L.U. 567 (I,M), PORTLAND, ME—IBEW Apprentices contributed to a very worthy service project in the city of Portland, Maine.

A family in Portland was impacted by a tragic accident which was seriously injured. Area signatory contractors came together to remodel the family’s home to make it handicap-accessible.

IBEW Local 567 apprentices have contributed over 80 man-hours of combined labor to install the electrical work. NECA contractor E. S. Boulos Co. furnished material and supervision.

This was a commendable community service project and an excellent training opportunity for the apprentices, as well as being the “right thing to do.” Please thank these apprentices for their contribution of time and effort during a busy season of the year. The apprentice volunteers included: Geoffry Hosley, Travis Hale, Caleb Mulken, Dan Morris, Dave Burns, Adam Jabbert, Dave Duquette, Coby McGahey and Dave Temblett.

Portland JATC is also working on other projects in the community and more will be reported about that in the future. [Editor’s Note: The National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (NJATC) rebranded in 2014 and transitioned into the Electrical Training Alliance. See “NJATC Transitions into the Electrical Training Alliance,” The Electrical Worker (Sept. 2004), and at www.ibew.org.]

Makes one proud to be IBEW!

Allan Shepard, Pres.

‘A Year of Great Progress’

L.U. 569 (Unar,Unm,RT,TS,SPA), SAN DIEGO, CA—2014 was a year of immense progress for IBEW Local 569 and our members. We initiated 431 new members and organized 23 new contractors into the IBEW family.

A record number of members volunteered during the midterm election season with 425 individual actions. Nearly 75 percent of our endorsed candidates won their elections.

Nephi Hancock was our “super volunteer” and our own Nicholas Segura was elected to a school board.

We continue to benefit from California’s “solar gold rush.” New solar projects were recently approved with our support by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors, which means more jobs for our members.

We coordinated a new report that describes how California’s solar boom generates good-paying jobs. Additionally, IBEW Local 569 celebrated the installation of 1,000 megawatts of clean, renewable energy in Imperial Valley.

Our local Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) conducted numerous outreach events to create new career opportunities. Kat Sax was awarded an IBEW International Founders Scholarship.

San Diego City Council overturned its ban on project labor agreements. IBEW Local 569’s softball team won the 2014 IBEW Ninth District softball championship.

2014 was a great year and we’re heading into 2015 as a stronger local and labor movement, thanks to all of you and your hard work!

Gretchen K. Newsom, P.S.

Bay Area Rapid Transit Work

L.U. 595 (C,Gov,Loc,RT,TS,SPA), DUBLIN, CA—Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) is extending the Fremont line six miles to our neighbors in the South Bay. IBEW Local 595 is supplying this project with more than 750 inside wiremen and sound & communication members.

In the 1960s when BART started construction on the three main lines, the contact rail (also known as the “third rail”) was properly assigned to the IBEW.

Over the past 25 years as BART expanded, another labor organization claimed all rails, including the contact rail, in their scope. Before the recent project start, Local 595 former business manager Victor Uno, Bus. Rep. Matt Maloon and current Bus. Mgr. Daniel Chivello successfully re-claimed the contact rail work.

On the BART project, the IBEW crew members have not only met the expectations of the contractor’s unit rates but have also exceeded them, proving the lowest wage craft is not always the most profitable.

The project has been completed, and IBEW Local 569 members were approved by Imperial County Board of Supervisors for Wisteria Ranch Solar Energy Center project. The 250 megawatt solar power project will create hundreds of green jobs.
Diaz received the IBEW Lifesaving Award. Bro. Diaz had decisively employed his first-aid training and saved his 11-year-old son from choking. Ninth Dist. Int. Vice Pres. John J. O’Rourke, Local 617 Bus. Mgr. Mark Leach and SMATC Training Dir. Kathleen Barber presented Diaz with a plaque, letter and pin commemorating his heroic action. Int. Reps. Dominick Nolan and Victor Uno were also in attendance for the presentation.

[Editor’s Note: The National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (NJATC) rebranded in 2014 and transitioned into the Electrical Training Alliance. See “NJATC Transitions into the Electrical Training Alliance,” The Electrical Worker (Sept. 2014), and at www.ibew.org.]

On Dec. 13, members and their families enjoyed the annual Christmas party at the hall. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped gather commemorative photos, gingerbread men, food and drink, seasonal arts and crafts, gifts for the children and a phenomenal electric train display for the festive occasion. Special thanks to Santa. His visits and photos with the children are always highlights of the local’s holiday celebration.

The work picture continues to be the best the local has seen in several years. There is a variety of work, with projects that have a lengthy timeframe. 2015 is projected to be a new year of prosperity for Local 617 members and San Mateo County.

Dan Pasini, Pres.

Review of 2014 Events


Workplace Safety

L.U. 627 (u), FORT PIERCE, FL—Brothers and sisters of Local 627, we must always remember the importance of workplace safety. Safety is not just a six-letter word. It is a way of life for IBEW members working in our industry.

Safety practices always require the utmost attention to detail. If you happen upon a situation where safety can be reinforced, stop what is happening and reinforce what you know. The safety record is not just a number—it reflects the lives of human beings.

Please support Local 627 in keeping our workplace safe and workers free from injury.

Ray Vos, P.S.

Awards Meeting—Camaraderie & Solidarity

L.U. 673 (c,ves,em,ct,ct,sp,ak), PAINESVILLE, OH—Local 673 celebrated with members, both young and old, at our Dec. 3 Awards Meeting. It is always great to swap stories with longtime members and former coworkers. One “old-timer” really caught my attention when he asked me to explain more about our relatively new construction electrician/construction wireman program.

He listened attentively as I described the CE/CW program and its intended result. I thought he might stop me and interject that this was just another load of bull classification that would create infighting and lead to our downfall. But he heard me out and then said: “Jimmy, these kinds of issues are nothing new.”

He explained a divisive issue that the local had to deal with when he was a young journeyman. The issue then was residential work. He told me about all the huge housing developments throughout our jurisdiction that were wired by inside wireman. The local was beginning to lose this work to the nonunion and it was proposed to adopt a then-new classification of “residential wireman.”

The resistance at that time was great and many members were unhappy when this classification was approved—but it was either change or lose the work. His point was that we will always be under attack and we must be willing to do what it takes to preserve our work. It was a great evening and a great reminder that we have always faced great challenges, and that different decisions are just part of the job description for IBEW members.

Jim Braunlich, P.S.

Work Outlook Positive

L.U. 683 (em,k), COLUMBUS, OH—With the election and holiday season over, we are turning our attention to our upcoming contract negotiations. Our inside wireman contract expires in May this year.

Work has been slow, but the 2015 work outlook is very optimistic. Upcoming jobs starting in 2015 include a college dormitory project, county jail, casino hotel, hospital expansions, a county morgue and data centers. A big thank-you goes to the 20+ members who volunteered for the “Unions Care/Unions Shares” program, helping numerous unemployed union families from all trades with a week’s worth of groceries during the Christmas holiday season.

Tracy Starcher, V.P.P.S.

Spring Season Agenda

L.U. 667 (c,ves,em,ct,ct,sp,ak), GARY AND HAMMOND, IN—With major league baseball right around the corner, we welcome spring weather and the opportunities we will soon have to get outdoors more often. Coming up on our spring agenda are several events. Our annual Spring Blood Drive will be Friday, March 20. In April we will have the Credit Union Annual Meeting and the start of the golf league. On Sunday, May 3, we will participate in the March of Dimes fundraiser.

These events offer opportunities to get involved and participate in local union activities with your fellow local union brothers and sisters. Additionally, the blood drive and March of Dimes events offer the opportunity to participate in community service.

At this early January writing, we don’t yet have specifics to report regarding activities of the current state legislature, but we do know for sure that the attack on labor, both union and nonunion, is still quite alive in Indiana. Unemployment and workers’ compensation affect all working men and women in Indiana. Common Construction Wage rates protects wages and benefits for all construction workers in Indiana on state and municipal projects. Issues such as watered-down state licensing and certification requirements, “company store” legislation (the list goes on) stand as a reminder that we must stay engaged and active in the political arena.

Dan Waldrop, B.M.
Training Facility Open House; Kudos to RENEW Committee

L.U. 915 (Lktm), TAMPA, FL—Our annual Christmas party last year was put on by our local’s RENEW Committee—and what a fine job they did.

With our usual Spanish flair dinner menu, a balloon bounce and a hole-in-the-wall competition, there were activities for both the young and the young at heart. Lots of toys were donated as gifts for underprivileged children in the Tampa Bay area.

Jon Dehmel, the RENEW advisor, said the group took on the party as part of a larger mission where they were to pick one of the “objects” of the IBEW, as listed in the IBEW Constitution, and then do a project exemplifying that object.

Our recent open house for the new addition of our apprenticeship training facility was well-attended by members, city dignitaries and a crew from Electric TV. The new facility was dedicated in honor of Bro. Phillip Humphrey, who served as Local 915’s apprenticeship director for 35 years. Much of the equipment was donated by area vendors, and the electrical work was installed by our own apprentices under the direction of our in-house instructors.

Remember the importance of saving Americans’ jobs. Look for the union label and buy “Made in the USA.”

Theresa King, P.S.

L.U. 919 (catv,ctt,o,t&u), INDIANAPOLIS, IN—Local 919 members are awesome! The union won a grievance settlement in which one of our members was owed some back pay. This member chose to donate his back pay to a charity of our choice. Subsequently, the local’s RENEW (Reach out and Engage Next-gen Electrical Workers) Committee worked with the Jefferson County Salvation Army in Madison, IN, and we were able to “adopt” a family to assist during the Christmas season. Members from the greater Indianapolis area shopped for the family, and the office staff at the hall wrapped the gifts. Madison area members helped deliver the items to the family.

Due to the generosity of the member who made the donation, we were able to spend $2,000 to bring a family some needed cheer at Christmas.

Reason for Celebrating

For 2015, we have started a safety campaign to draw attention to the state’s Move Over/Slow Down law, which applies to utility vehicles as well as emergency vehicles and tow trucks. The law requires that drivers change lanes if it’s possible to do so safely.

If not, drivers are to reduce their speed to 10 mph below the speed limit, and proceed with caution. The local had a reflective bumper sticker designed and many of our signatory companies have jumped on board and are placing the safety stickers on their vehicles.

At press time, we are in contract renewal negotiations with Duke Energy. Our current contract expires May 1, 2015.

Robert C. Fox, B.M./F.S.

‘Reason to Celebrate’

L.U. 1439 (IU), ST. LOUIS, MO—Local 1439 will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2015. The local was chartered March 16, 1945. We are grateful to members both past and present who fought for the quality of life we enjoy under our collective bargaining agreements. Within the next five years the "boom" generation will pass the torch to the “X” and “Y” generations. It’s imperative that the younger generations stay active in the local and continue to fight for our job benefits, wages and conditions.

In November the union had conducted an informational meeting for those members interested in a lineman apprenticeship. Instruction was provided in the basic skills required to get into the overhead pro.

Matt Curry, R.S./P.S.

Local 919 RENEW Committee and volunteers delivered donated holiday gifts for a needy family.

Spirit of Generosity; 2015 Safety Campaign

L.U. 1993 (catv,kkt,o,t&u), INDIANAPOLIS, IN—Local 1993 members are awesome! The union won a grievance settlement in which one of our members was owed some back pay. This member chose to donate his back pay to a charity of our choice. Subsequently, the local’s RENEW (Reach out and Engage Next-gen Electrical Workers) Committee worked with the Jefferson County Salvation Army in Madison, IN, and we were able to “adopt” a family to assist during the Christmas season. Members from the greater Indianapolis area shopped for the family, and the office staff at the hall wrapped the gifts. Madison area members helped deliver the items to the family.

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Matt Curry, R.S./P.S.
Support for Kids Foundation

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, NASSAU CHAPTER—At our December 2014 meeting, we presented a check to the Michael Magro Foundation for Kids with Cancer, at Winthrop Hospital. Our club has been a supporter of this foundation for the last six years. Our late Bro. Joe Terino was an active volunteer at the children's cancer ward and through his efforts our club became involved with the Magro Foundation. With this recent check, our club will have donated more than $10,000 in total as well as hundreds of toys for children in the hospital.

On our one-day break for a holiday luncheon, we also raised $1,300 for American Recreational Military Services (ARMS), a group that sends needed supplies to our military service people overseas and assists military families. Retired Bro. Bill Fougere, who served in the Marines, has been a driving force for ARMS and the Toys for Tots drive. We helped to take in, sort and then send out the toys to needy families.

On our one-day break for a holiday luncheon, we also raised $1,300 for American Recreational Military Services (ARMS), a group that sends needed supplies to our military service people overseas and assists military families.

Last year, members of our Retirees Club volunteered to assist Toys for Tots drive. Special thanks go out to all of our members who have participated in these volunteer efforts.

John Milligan, P.S.

Retirees Assist Holiday Drives

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER—During the holiday season last year, members of our Retirees Club volunteered to assist the U.S. Marines with a Toys for Tots drive.

Twelve or more brothers went to the armory each day during the week to help with the project. We processed approximately 50,000 toys for the drive. We helped to take in, sort and then send out the toys to needy families.

On our one-day break for a holiday luncheon, we also raised $1,300 for American Recreational Military Services (ARMS), a group that sends needed supplies to our military service people overseas and assists military families.

Retired Bro. Bill Fougere, who served in the Marines, has been a driving force for ARMS and the Toys for Tots drive. We helped to take in, sort and then send out the toys to needy families.

Frank Liffner, F.S.

Annual Food & Toy Drive

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SUFFOLK CHAPTER—Thanks to the generous support of our club members, our Annual Food & Toy Drive was a great success. We donated 350 pounds of food to Long Island Cares, and we donated two boxes of toys for the Toys for Tots drive.

Attendees enjoyed lots of great food and music for the second year, at the Leewood Country Club in Eastchester, NY. There were 109 members and guests for the second year, at the Leewood Country Club in Eastchester, NY. There were 109 members and guests.

The Retirees Club has been on its winter break. Club meetings are held bimonthly on Tuesdays at all of our events.

Chet Maliszewski was awarded a trophy for making the lowest score at our annual Fall Golf Classic.

John Rich, P.S.

Gold Club Members & Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER—On Dec. 17 last year, our annual Christmas/Hanukkah luncheon was held for the second year, at the Leewood Country Club in Eastchester, NY. There were 109 members and guests in attendance. A northeastern storm, with heavy rain and wind, did not deter our members from attending this holiday affair. Brave souls!

Six members, 80 years of age, received a Certificate of Special Recognition for their longtime service and dedication to the IBEW, and were installed as Gold Club members. Honored members in attendance were Frank Carmaza, Genaro Pasquale, Douglas Reid and David Urban. Honorees William Johnston and Joseph Masi were unable to attend; their certificates were mailed.

F o r m e r C h m n. Dominick Pironti was honored with a plaque for his 10 years of service as chairman of the Westchester/Putnam Retirees Chapter. Dominick was also presented with a gift of a new Callaway Hot X driver, to help him improve his game.

Dominick’s wife, Roseann, was presented with a bouquet of flowers, in appreciation for her hard work at all of our events.

Chet Maliszewski was awarded a trophy for making the lowest score at our annual Fall Golf Classic.

John Rich, P.S.

Local 6 retirees and guests at the 2014 Senior Sixes Summer Barbecue.

“Senior Sixes” Extend Welcome

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 6, SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Greetings from the Senior Sixes retirees club. We have had a good year at Local 6 and we wish all our IBEW brothers and sisters, active and retired, the same in 2015. [Photo, top right.] Thanks go out to the Senior Sixes officers, the Local 6 business manager, all local officers and membership for their support. We also thank the Local 6 and EISB (Electrical Industry Service Bureau) office staffs for their help in keeping things running smoothly for our monthly meetings.

We meet each month at our local’s auditorium for a short business meeting and social lunch. In most cases the menu is selected and prepared by the retiree volunteers. The best part is sharing our experiences as we navigate and enjoy retirement. If you are a Local 6 retiree, get on the EISB mailing list to receive the monthly meeting agenda. Grab a fellow retiree and join us.

Steve Walsh, P.S.

Benefit Raffle & Travel Plans

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 26, WASHINGTON, DC—Our club raffles off five cash prizes every November to raise money for our Medical Equipment Program. The winners last year were: Greg Tewell, Edward Moscati, Tina Campbell, Patrick Latham III and Marvin Wood. Thanks to all who bought raffle tickets. The funds raised keep our program that supplies medical equipment to our members and their families at no cost to the member.

Items we supply include walkers, wheelchairs, hospital beds and much more.

Last year we traveled to England and Eastern Europe. In June we will fly to Hawaii, travel by cruise ship around the islands and then return via Vancouver, Canada. We would love to meet some of our Hawaiian brothers and sisters. We have 40 some members and their families joining us this year!

Also in June, we will take our annual bus trip to the Amish market in Amish and then head for a crab feast. If you plan to go in the area, let Bro. Rick Warner know. This trip generally sells out.

Last Nogs: this year we presented service awards to four brothers: 50-year member Charles Cusack, and 40-year members George Harrison, Raul Barrientos and Joseph Brehon.

Susan Flashman, P.S.

Annual Longuehue

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT—On Oct. 15 last year, the Local 35 Retirees Club enjoyed a luncheon at Adams Mill in Manchester, CT. The retired members and their spouses or guests were treated to a wonderful lunch compliments of the local. Bus: Bruce Silva and officer manager ViKi Dougherty also attended the luncheon. It was great for all of us to get together and enjoy catching up with one another.

We remember those members who passed on in 2014. Included in memoriam are: Sebastian Amenia, Paul Cassella, Robert Fuller, Joseph Gulliver, Raymond Rector, Frank Rejman, Mark Carter, Thomas Finnie and Lance Schors.

The Retirees Club has been on its winter break. Club meetings resume in March. We hope to see everyone there.

Best wishes to everyone for a great year ahead.

Kenneth R. White, P.S.

2015 Events Scheduled

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 42, HARTFORD, CT—The Retirees Club invites anyone who is a retired Local 42 member to join them. If you would like to get out of the house or take a few hours from your busy schedule, come and join them.

Club meetings are held bimonthly on Tuesdays at the Local 42 union hall. Annual dues are $12. Meet-
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Service pins were presented at the Local 110 Retirees Annual Luncheon.

ings start at 9 a.m. The meetings begin with discussion of upcoming business and events. Then attendees enjoy talking about old times over donuts and coffee. The Retiree’s Club would love to have you if interested, call us at 860-646-7297.

The Retirees Club thanks all the ladies in Local 45’s office for their hard work to make these events enjoyable, and for all they do to make everyone feel welcomed.

Save the following 2015 dates: April 25 – Dinner Dance/Apprentice Graduation (tentative) May 2 – Trap Shoot; June 6 – Annual Bike Run; June 27 – Dinner Cruise; July 11 – Chartered Fishing Trip; Aug. 29 – Annual “M” Picnic; Sept. 12 – Cod Trip; and Dec. 10 – Union Meeting/Christmas Party.

Jacqueline Moffitt, P.S.

Officers Elected


Pres. Wierowski presented ideas on future meeting locations, including some where our local was involved in the electrical installations.

To date we’ve held a meeting at Local 43’s new training building (featured in “Local Lines,” The Electrical Worker, January 2015), and at the Honeywell Visitors Center on the shore of Onondaga Lake. The restoration work for the lake is in its final phases and has been a steady source of employment for Local 43 members. Other destinations mentioned included the Turning Stone Casino and the Destiny USA mall complex.

Jim Corbett, P.S.

2015 Events & Volunteers

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TEX.—Once again Retirees Club members showed their appreciation and gratitude to military veterans by collecting funds and needed items for the Wounded Warrior Project. The donations were transported to the WWP headquarters at Fort Sam by Retirees Club Pres. Gene Chamberlain and his wife, Marilyn, after the Christmas meeting/luncheon.

Saying goodbye to our friends and brothers who passed away in 2014 was not easy. We will miss: Eric H. Bresnahan, then-Local 134 business manager, sent out 3,000 letters to retirees to form our Retirees Club. He was our club’s first president and founding member.

On Dec. 17 last year at the local union hall in Paramus, NJ, it was a rousing success. The food was great, the music was fantastic, and everyone enjoyed seeing familiar and “once-in-a-blue-moon” brothers and sisters. Over 120 people attended the gala party. A large bouquet of thanks to Eileen and Tom Barry for putting the holiday party together, with help from Jim Myers (food) and Dave Judovin (music and photos). We had more helpers setting up, cleaning afterward and working behind the scenes. And of course, many thanks go to association Pres. Rich Dougherty and Jane Dougherty.

We also thank Local 164 Bus. Mgr. Dan Gumble and Pres. Tom Sullivan, who presented service award watches and pins to eligible members with 50 or more years of service. [Photo at bottom, right]

We still have more events in 2015 to accomplish. Join in. There will be fresh- and salt-water fishing trips, golf outings, a Yankees baseball game, Atlantic City trip, monthly luncheons, and much more to enjoy. To see the 30 photos taken at the holiday party, visit our popular, informative website at www.l164reirees.squarespace.com/photos.htm.

David Judovin, P.S.

Welcome & Farewells

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 212, CINCINNATI, OH—The Retirees Club Annual Christmas Party, held Dec. 3 at the Meadows, was one of the best attended events ever. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed great food, refreshments, door prizes and sharing stories from the past. Thank you to Local 212 officers and staff for their support and kindness toward the retirees through the years.

Annual Retirees Luncheon

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 110, ST. PAUL, MN—We had our Annual Local 110 Retirees Luncheon on Oct. 2, 2014. Approximately 475 retirees and guests were in attendance at the Prom Center for a great lunch and service awards presentation. [Photos, top left, right]


Peter A. Koegel, R.S.

IBEW Service Pins Awarded

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 130, NEW ORLEANS, LA—We had our Christmas party Dec. 4, with 96 people in attendance. Hobnobber’s Restaurant did an amazing job decorating the hall and catering our party. The food was excellent.

On Dec. 16, we had service pin night. Yours truly George Cesi, Harry “Buddy” Carver, Donald Ondrige, Ralph Zulli, Philip Fielding and Sidney Theriot received an IBEW watch for 60 years of service and five years in the Retirees Club. Dinner and refreshments were served and everyone had a great time. There were two 70-year pin recipients, and a host of members received pins for 50 to 25 years of service. Our next Retirees Club meeting is in March.

It is with sadness that I report the passing of two retired brother members. Robert Rodriguez, a 62-year member, passed away Dec. 21 last year. Jerry Tognlet, who was a 75-year member, passed away Dec. 22.

May God bless America and bring our military service men and women home. Best wishes to everyone for a happy new year ahead.

George Cesi, Pres.

Service Award Recipients

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 59, PROVIDENCE, RI—the Local 59 Retirees Christmas Party was Dec. 16, last year at the West Valley Inn in West Warwick, RI. We enjoyed a delicious five-course family-style feast.

Retirees Club Pres. Robert Pierce and Local 59 Bus. Mgr. Michael Daley led a moment of silence in memory of brothers who passed away in 2014. Walter Chene was given an invocation of prayer and word. Pierce and Daley also presented 62 retirees with service pins in recognition of 25 or more years of service. George W. Smith received a 65-year pin. Service pin recipients also included: 60-year members Milton Demers, Charles Peterson and Umberto Zannicci; 55-year members Ernest Audet, Alfredo Pani, and Robert Day; and 50-year members Alan Marchand, Joseph Precozzi, Roger Thiessen and William Nash.


Frank Colucci, P.S.

Local 130 Bus. Mgr. Paul J. Zulli (left) presents service pins to Harry “Buddy” Carver (center) and Retirees Club Pres. George Cesi.

IBEW Service Pins Awarded

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 110 Retirees Club late-Pres. Emeritus Irvin Blaszynski with honorary plaque.

TRIBUTE TO LIFE OF SERVICE

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL—We are deeply saddened by the passing of Irvin Blaszynski on Dec. 14, 2014. He was our club’s first president and founding member.

Irvin, a World War II veteran who served in the U.S. Coast Guard. He was also a past president of North American Knights of Columbus.

In 1988 Bro. Blaszynski, with the help of Tim Brisben, then-Local 134 business manager, sent out 3,000 letters to retirees to form our Retirees Club.

In February 1988, a total of 75 retirees attended the first meeting, and Irvin Blaszynski was voted the first president of the Local 134 Retirees Club. Bob Regosh was elected vice president.

At that meeting Irvin Blaszynski asked for seed money to start the club, so the seed money was raised by establishing a $2 initiation fee. When Irv was designated President Emeritus of the Retirees Club, he stayed active in the club until his passing. His two sons are also Local 134 members.

Our sincere sympathies go out to the Blaszynski family. On Dec. 14 the Retirees Club lost a brother and friend. He will be missed. I can imagine Irv now forming the first “angels retirees” club in heaven.

Louis Rodriguez, P.S.

Holiday Party & Camaraderie

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 164, JERSEY CITY, NJ—The Local 164 retirees association had their holiday party on Dec. 17 last year at the local union hall in Paramus, NJ. It was a rousing success. The food was great, the music was fantastic, and everyone enjoyed seeing familiar and “once-in-a-blue-moon” brothers and sisters. Over 120 people attended the gala party.

There were two 70-year pin recipients, and a host of members received pins for 50 to 25 years of service. Our next Retirees Club meeting is in March.

With sadness that I report the passing of two retired brother members. Robert Rodriguez, a 62-year member, passed away Dec. 21 last year. Jerry Tognlet, who was a 75-year member, passed away Dec. 22.

May God bless America and bring our military service men and women home. Best wishes to everyone for a happy new year ahead.

George Cesi, Pres.

Local 164 presents service awards to retired members with 50 or more years of service.

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Retirees Club members enjoy Christmas luncheon at Local 257 Labor Temple.

**40th Anniversary Luncheon**

**RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 257, ALBANY, NY—**The Local 236 Retirees Club invites all Local 236 retirees to join us at our next club meeting. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every other month, at 10:30 a.m., in the second floor conference room at the Albany Labor Temple. Besides planning the annual luncheon and reminiscing about the old days, the club distributes gift baskets and makes house visits to provide comfort to our retired members and their spouses during times of need.

The Retirees Club thanks everyone who helped plan last year’s 40th Anniversary Luncheon, held Oct. 15 at Treviso in the Italian American Community Center. Once again the luncheon was a great success with more than 60 retirees and their spouses attending. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting and our next luncheon.

**Two Brothers Remembered**

**RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 236, ALBANY, NY—**The Local 236 Retirees Club invites all Local 236 retirees to join us at our next club meeting. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every other month, at 10:30 a.m., in the second floor conference room at the Albany Labor Temple. Besides planning the annual luncheon and reminiscing about the old days, the club distributes gift baskets and makes house visits to provide comfort to our retired members and their spouses during times of need.

The Retirees Club thanks everyone who helped plan last year’s 40th Anniversary Luncheon, held Oct. 15 at Treviso in the Italian American Community Center. Once again the luncheon was a great success with more than 60 retirees and their spouses attending. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting and our next luncheon.

Bob Schofer, P.S.

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**Breakfast & Service Awards**

**RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 306, AKRON, OH—**On Dec. 19, our retirees monthly breakfast meeting was held at our training facility to accommodate a larger turnout. Everyone enjoyed the catered breakfast buffet while catching up on the latest news. In addition, the retirees elected a new club president, John Horacek. Congratulations and good luck, John.

At the local union meeting that night many retirees received service awards. A 65-year award went to Wilbur Repp. Awards recipients also included: for 60 years of service—Harold Albright, Franklin "Jerry" Bowers, Robert Cannady, Norman Hisao, Donald Kinser, Thomas Wright, Mbr. Dev., and Glenn Stoltz; and for 50 years—Myron Stewart.

Bob Schaefer, P.S.

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**Sarnia Happenings**

**RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 353, SARNA, ONTARIO, CANADA—**Our club recently completed another successful year. Monthly attendance is healthy, peaking at 42 members who attended our annual Christmas luncheon. Janet Burdett and Marvin Lawton planned the holiday affair, and our club sincerely thanks them.

Our former president, Bob Kohut, and former secretary-treasurer Ed McCormack retired from office last November, after 13 years leading our organization. Our group appreciates all they have done for us and we say, "Thank you, men, for everything."

Mathiessen is our new president, and Fred Sterling is our secretary-treasurer. We wish them much success in their new positions.

In 2015, we will continue to come together and discuss old times, and make new memories. Our membership continues to change. We lost quite a few faithful members in recent years, but we also welcomed new retired members to our club. At our January meeting we held a minute of silence for a faithful member,

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**‘We Can Make a Difference’**

**RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 611, ALBUQUERQUE, NM—**Greetings, brothers and sisters. The Local 611 Family Christmas Party in December was great. Volunteers fed about 550 people, adults and children. Santa Claus (Bro. Bill Thompson) gave the children Christmas stockings and posed for pictures, taken by Bro. Darrell Blak. Approximately 12 retirees and their guests attended.

November 2014 elections didn’t go as we wished in New Mexico or across this great country—but we can make a difference in the 2016 election, not that far away. Our New Mexico Senate is holding its own; but if only three Democrats vote the wrong way, New Mexico could possibly become a so-called “right-to-work” state—and that is scary. Unfortunately, here in New Mexico, only 39 percent of eligible voters actually voted last November. I wonder how many union members voted, including retirees—apparently not as many as we should have.

We retirees must continue to support and encourage our younger brothers and sisters to register and vote. We can’t complain about how things are for our children and grandchildren if we don’t vote.

If any of you retirees are soon due for a service pin, please contact the hall to receive your pin.

We extend condolences to the families of several retirees who passed on since my last article (and through December 2014): Joe Hill, Robert F. Nelson, Tom Bachicha, Howard L. Coller and Robert E. Laird.

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**At Local 611 Family Christmas Party: George Romero (left), Jenaro “Jr.” Pedroncelli and Marlin Spreader.**

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**Retired ‘Working Buddies’**

**RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 640, PHOENIX, AZ—**The union hall was decked in its finest, and those attending our December meeting were treated to a free breakfast and special prizes in the raffle drawings. Jim Weaver, our treasurer, raffled off another of his rocking horse creations, won eventually by Mike Houston. Jim donates funds collected from ticket sales directly to the club. Thanks, Jim!

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**Tracy Hall, Pres.**
FROM THE OFFICERS

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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 telephone number. Family members should include the local union number of the IBEW member to whom The Electrical Worker is mailed. Send letters to: Letters to the Editor, The Electrical Worker, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Or send by email to: media@ibew.org

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Building Bridges?
Or Slamming Doors?

Edwin D. Hill
International President

On the other side of the country, utility Southern California Edison is demanding rollbacks in everything from overtime rules to sick time. This is a company where its top executives cashed in more than $90 million in Edison stock last year.

For the more than 9,000 IBEW members who have stood by this company, who put their lives on the line every day to make it work, management’s confrontational attitude comes as a shock.

What Wall Street has forgotten—and what some of America’s most successful business leaders throughout history knew—is that workers are not just another commodity to be bought, sold and traded. They are a company’s lifeblood.

As a union, we often disagree with management. But at companies like Southern California Edison, we could traditionally work out these disputes with mutually beneficial solutions. That’s what collective bargaining is all about.

The my-way-or-the-highway approach to collective bargaining on display in California and New England—an approach that treats employees as a problem, not an investment—breeds resentment and contention.

It might impress some hedge fund manager in lower Manhattan—but it’s poison to the long-term health of both business and the wider economy.

We are committed to building bridges and maintain good working relationships across the table. It’s time CEOs stop listening to Wall Street and start talking to their employees.

Tree Trimmers Rise Up

When it comes to dishin out common sense, Texas populist and worker advocate Jim Hightower has one of the best examples. It’s something that his father repeatedly told him while growing up:

“Everybody does better when everybody does better.”

Tree trimmers working under more than 80 IBEW bargaining agreements with Asplundh Tree Expert Co. have known this for years. With nearly 7,500 members across the U.S. and Canada employed at the family-owned company, workers have been winning better wages and conditions in a profession where the fatality rate is 10 times the average for all industries, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Now, more workers are getting even bolder. Since last July, nearly 800 Asplundh employees throughout the Fourth and Sixth Districts—in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia—voted overwhelmingly for a voice on the job with the IBEW. A handful of these votes were unanimous. And with about four in five workers voting, the “yays” total nearly 90 percent. As of this writing, six more NLRB votes are on the horizon, with more likely to follow.

While it’s not always been easy for the employees, company attitudes toward the organizing drives are changing.

CEO Scott Asplundh told Transmission and Distribution Magazine, “We put our heads together with the IBEW people and started training crew personnel to be crew foremen. I was surprised at the impact it had. Of course, all partners must work together. That’s the theme of the entire operation.”

For the IBEW’s continued growth, this campaign is incredibly significant. About 20,000 more Asplundh employees are without a union contract. If even a fraction of those continue to vote “union yes,” the IBEW will be closer to reaching its 2015 organizing goals, strengthening the Brotherhood.

But this isn’t really about numbers. It’s about people: men and women who know what it’s like to pull marathon shifts doing emergency storm repair, working in trees or bucket trucks high above solid ground with chainsaws and other powerful equipment. You have to be careful. You have to trust your crew. You have to look out for one another.

Now that we’ve begun negotiations in Michigan and Ohio, I feel strongly that members and management can take Hightower’s maxim to heart and recognize the mutual benefits we can offer each other. Let’s keep up that momentum for even more brave workers who want to ensure the prosperity of their families—and their company.
IBEW: Who We Are

Thank you very much for helping me explain to my friends and neighbors just what the IBEW means [through national television advertising campaign and television sponsorship of PBS programs NewsHour and Washington Week].

Before this, I only observed IBEW window stickers in Houston on the rear windows of Toyota's. Now I can show off my years of membership to the people who are unaware of what the IBEW is.

This gives me bragging rights, and I can spread them even farther than before due to the TV advertising presently going on.

I have been retired five years and intend to inform those around me just what my union is and what it is doing for the working class people in our country.

George Laiacona Jr., Local 728 retiree
Galveston, Texas

Been There, Done That

Having completed 60 years as an IBEW member, I was interested to read in the December 2014 edition of the "Electrical Worker" [“IBEW Offers Top-Notch Training”] that the IBEW has created a class to instruct electricians on becoming electrical contractors. This is long overdue. I did not see course content on overhead in business. I learned it the hard and expensive way.

When I first became a contractor in the 1970s as a master electrician, I had the knowledge and skills to bid and complete jobs, yet I was not making profits. I contacted the Small Business Administration for advice. Two retired gentlemen who had run large corporations in the Midwest showed up one day to review my operations, much of which were kept in a large loose-leaf notebook.

At the time I had been in business about three months, and working 80 hours a week. They said that I had not been in business long enough to advise and that I should contact them in six months. I told them if I survived that long I would have figured it out somehow, and I did.

The problem was overhead, which I knew nothing about, so it was not included in my pricing. “Overhead” simplistically defined is anything you pay for that does not earn a return, such as office rent, telephones, secretaries, fuel and truck repairs, even postage stamps, etc. It turned out I had to keep a minimum of four electricians employed to meet my overhead.

As work assignments are handled through the hiring hall procedures, you finish a job and return to the hall and get another one. Sometimes you never even get to meet the management who write your paycheck, especially on large jobs. So classes on these subjects should be taught to the rank and file.

A long time ago a business agent once told me, “To hell with the contractor. If he goes out of business, we will just send you to another job.” Hopefully by now that attitude no longer exists and unions and contractors work as teams.

Howard Gelbman, Local 398 retiree
Miami

“Overhead” Simplistically Defined

There’s no way to really describe doing the ride—it’s just such a high. You’re out there with thousands of riders who are there for the same reason.

— Charles ‘Mickey’ Rooney

Pitching In, Welcoming All

Regarding the article “At EWMC Conference, Younger Workers Serve Community,” [The Electrical Workers Minority Caucus and younger workers’ groups] are those that have been historically under-represented within our union. White males are and have been the majority for decades ... it’s not to alienate, it’s to help those who have felt alienated in the past.

For decades ... it’s not to alienate, it’s to help those who have felt alienated in the past. Now more than ever, we need to be more inclusive and inviting to those who need help.

For instance, we need to be more inclusive and inviting to those who need help. By welcoming all, we can ensure that everyone feels valued and respected.

— Bobby Agrella, Local 3 retiree

Power Professionals

Local 3 IBEW electricians are the most talented in the world! I should know! I’m a 38-year journeyman electrician in the “A” division!

Bobby Agrella, Local 3 retiree
New York

WHO WE ARE

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

Boston Retiree, Union Leaders Hit the Bikes to Help Beat Cancer

He rode to find a cure for cancer is both long and winding. And for the last three decades, Charles “Mickey” Rooney has taken that road—192 miles at a time.

Since 1981, the 76-year-old former president of Boston Local 104 has made a yearly trek across the Bay State by participating in the two-day Pan-Mass Challenge bicycle ride. The event serves as an annual fundraiser for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, one of the leading research and treatment facilities dedicated to finding a cure for the disease that kills more than 500,000 Americans annually.

Back then, Rooney and his family had never fashioned themselves as hard-core cyclists, he said. “We would go riding around Cape Cod, Gloucester, a few other places.” But following his mother’s cancer diagnosis, and hearing about the Pan-Mass, which began in 1980, Rooney decided to go all in.

In the early days, you’d just raise a few hundred dollars and camp out during the ride, he said. But the event, like its appeal, has grown by leaps and bounds. Last year, 5,500 riders from across the country, each committing to raise thousands from individual fundraising missions, took the Pan-Mass annual donation levels north of $40 million for the first time. Not bad, considering during the event’s first decade, riders raised just shy of $200,000 in all.

Today, you have to commit to raising about $5,000 per person to enter, Rooney said. Relying on the support of family, friends, colleagues and contacts in the Boston community, Rooney always easily clears this hurdle and has raised more than $100,000 during his decades with the event. It’s also become a family affair, with Rooney’s children and—once they were old enough—grandchildren participating.

This year’s Aug. 1-2 ride may be the capstone of Rooney’s cycling career. After initially quitting in 2014 after he was hanging up his cleats, “I’m going to do one more,” he said, with one caveat: “I’ve been saying that every year for a while now,” he said with a laugh.

Either way, Rooney’s efforts to pass the torch to a new group have begun paying off. Last year, Rooney drafted two local leaders to participate: President Ryan Demeritt, left, and Treasurer/Assistant Business Manager Hugh Boyd hit the road with Rooney for last year’s event.

Former Boston Local 104 President Charles ‘Mickey’ Rooney has raised more than $500,000 for cancer research via the annual Pan-Mass Challenge bicycle ride. Local President Ryan Demeritt, left, and Treasurer/Assistant Business Manager Hugh Boyd hit the road with Rooney for last year’s event.

To Rooney, the Pan-Mass has become increasingly meaningful. He lost his wife, Dorsey, to cancer in 2006, and he has been riding in her memory ever since. Rooney also donates blood platelets numerous times a year. It’s a two-hour process, and it provides blood-clotting cells needed for patients undergoing cancer treatments, as well as more than a dozen whole blood donations for transfusions.

Rooney joined the IBEW in 1963 after his term of service in the Marine Corps. The lineman by trade served as local president for much of the 1990s. He said his pension helps him have the time to do the kinds of training and fundraising necessary to complete the Pan-Mass Challenge year after year.

Local 104 leadership has actively started recruiting a team for 2015 and hopes to have at least 10 participants. Interested members are encouraged to call the local union.

Learn more about the ride and its fundraising mission at www.PMC.org.
Straight Facts on Pension Reform

Included in a recently passed congressional spending bill was a pension reform amendment that gives trustees of underfunded multiemployer plans the power to make changes to benefits to avoid default and the draconian cuts that would accompany it.

The “Multiemployer Pension Reform Act” was supported by many plan trustees, businesses and labor unions.

Many of the act’s provisions derive from recommendations contained in a report written by the National Coordinating Committee for Multiemployer Plans, an advocacy organization supported by unions, business associations and retirement experts.

“This law gives trustees the tools to save troubled plans from insolvency and avoid drastic cuts for retirees,” said NCCMP Executive Director Randy DeFrehn.

Multiemployer pension plans cover workers at multiple job sites and companies and are jointly managed by labor unions and management groups.

They are particularly common in the construction industry, where the average worker can work for dozens or even hundreds of employers over a career.

More than half a million IBEW members and retirees are covered by multiemployer retirement plans.

The 2008 recession wreaked havoc on private-sector pension plans. While most multiemployer pension plans have returned to full health, a significant minority of them remain on the verge of insolvency.

Insolvent plans became the responsibility of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, an independent government agency that guarantees private-sector workers’ pensions. However, the PBGC is also running short on funds, and is likely unable to guarantee benefits should larger plans become insolvent.

Below are questions and answers about the Pension Reform Act and what it means for you and your retirement.

Q: Who is affected by the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act?

The legislation only applies to multiemployer plans on the brink of insolvency. Less than 200 of the approximately 1,400 Taft-Hartley plans nationwide (all crafts and trades) are considered to be in financial danger. Healthy plans are expected to maintain existing benefit levels for retirees. Single-employer plans are not affected.

Q: Why did unions support this change?

Because it gives trustees the tools they need to rescue their plans from insolvency, avoiding dramatic cuts in benefits that would result from a PBGC takeover.

In the past, trustees of defined multiemployer benefit plans were required by law to maintain existing benefit payments, regardless of the financial health of the plan. For funds in danger of insolvency, this leads to a takeover by the PBGC. The PBGC isn’t required to maintain existing benefits, often slashing payments by more than half for beneficiaries of insolvent plans.

The PBGC’s precarious financial position makes it unlikely it will provide even minimal benefits in case of the failure of major pension plans. DeFrehn points to a plan in Delaware that was recently taken over by the PBGC. “Before the takeover, one retiree was getting $4,000 a month,” he said. “Now he’s getting $500 a month.”

Under the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act, trustees can avoid this worst-case scenario by making smaller cuts in benefits to avoid having to make much bigger ones down the road, preserving benefits for current and future retirees.

The act comes with numerous protections to prevent trustees from abusing their new powers:

• Only plans in immediate danger of insolvency are affected.
• Trustees can’t make cuts beyond what’s necessary to make the plan solvent.
• Trustees can’t make cuts beyond what’s necessary to make the plan solvent.

Q: I’m an IBEW retiree. Does this affect my benefits?

Not likely. “The vast majority of IBEW/NECA multiemployer plans are healthy and are projected to remain so,” said Larry Reidenbach, senior executive assistant to International Secretary-Treasurer Sam Chia.

Participants in single-employer plans are not affected.

Those who want to learn more should contact their plan administrators or local union for the current status of their plan.

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One of our senior members in attendance was Warren Williams, a club member since 1950. Bro. Williams has been married to his wife, Denise, for 60 years; he is a military veteran who served in the Korean War; and he is a spry 86 years old! Warren moved his family here from Iowa in 1954 and became an IBEW apprentice in 1955. He worked the next 35 years for contractors in and around Phoenix. Warren is proud of his union service, and he wears all of his earned service pins on his Roadrunner name badge.

We Roadrunners look forward to seeing Warren, a longtime member, since 1970. Both will be missed and we send our condolences to their families.

We invite any retired or unemployed brothers and sisters and their spouses who are in the area to come and join us. Our meetings are the second Thursday of each month, 11:30 a.m. at the Local 756 union hall, Port Orange, FL.

Diane Gibbs, P.S.

Holiday Dinner/Dance

RETIREES CLUB OF U.L. 955, BATON ROUGE, LA—We had a combination Christmas dinner and dance on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014. Our attendance was down a.m. to provide services at the union hall. Hope to see you there. Please contact the hall for information. The Retirees Club meetings are held the first Monday of each month starting at 9 a.m. Please join us.

Jim Harris, P.S.