After an 18-month organizing drive, a majority of Baltimore Gas & Electric’s 1,418 gas and electric transmission-distribution workers voted for IBEW representation Jan. 12.

“This is a fantastic moment for our new brothers and sisters,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “This will transform not only their lives, but the lives of their families, and I think it will be an inspiration for working people across the U.S. and Canada.”

BGE workers will now form a new local — Baltimore Local 410 — chosen because it is the area code served by BGE. It will be the first time Stephenson will charter a new local since becoming international president.

Despite a more hopeful atmosphere this time BGE WORKERS continued on page 2
“Without collective bargaining, we are just sitting on the bench, watching the game in front of us.”

— Dave Kelly, BGE lineman

“They scared everyone,” said Bill Riale, 25-year overheard line worker and a member of the volunteer organizing committee. “We had over 600 cards signed in one election, but got fewer than 400 votes. They smashed us.”

Union supporters were fired, threatened, transferred to units far from their homes and given the worst and least reliable trucks. The IBEW filed dozens of unfair labor practice charges against the company in 1996, said IBEW Utility Department Director Jim Hunter, who led that campaign as the then-business manager of Washing-

don, D.C., Local 1950. Two years later, the NLRB negotiated a

New Company, New Rules

Exelon owned one utility that wasn’t represented by the IBEW: BGE, and only one utility’s workers were falling behind the rest. BGE. They watched as wages and benefits improved at the rest of Exelon’s utilities, including Pepco, PECO in Philadelphi,

al, ComEd in Chicago, Atlantic City Electric in New Jersey and Delmarva Pow-

er in Delaware.

“It’s not a bad company. Everything I have is because of my job at BGE and I want them to do better,” said underground lines worker and volunteer organizer Eric Gomez. “We just want to do better too.”

BGE workers said they began to see more favoritism, arbitrary rules changes, unexplained disciplinary actions and more contractors on the job. It used to be, Ferster-

mand said, that when you went on a job with a trainee, you made a small amount per hour. Then one day, the company switched it to a gift card to Subway.

But often, the changes were big-

ger. The company called it flexible scheduling, but workers only knew they couldn’t plan ahead more than two days. New policies were handed down seemingly without any understanding of how work was done in the field, and no one could say where they came from.

“Our supervisors would say it was from headquarters, but we didn’t even know which one — BGE, Constellation or Exelon — let alone who to ask,” Ferster-

mand said.

For older workers, the main concern was retirement, said volunteer organ-

izer and BGE lineman Dave Kelly. The company kept raising the

renew in 30 days. Out of nearly 3,200 votes, the campaign lost by just 120.

“It was heartbreaking,” Hunter said. “We didn’t get close after that.”

The next two organizing elections, in 2000 and 2001, lost by more than 2,000 votes. “In the past, many of the workers saw this as a small, almost mom-and-pop company,” Johnson said. “The men and women building and maintaining the BGE system knew the managers who were making the rules. They met with them regularly, and they felt taken care of.”

Deregulation revolutionized the industry in the ’90s. Utilities had to shed power plants and new companies began growing and merging. What had been a sleepy, reliable and locally-based industry became a battle of giants. BGE became Constellation in 1999, and in 2012, the multi-billion-dollar utility con-

glomerate Exelon bought Constellation.

“That company from the last organiz-

ing campaign [in 2010] is gone, and we notice the changes and we don’t like them,” said BGE employee Ben Ferstermann.

“The main thing is job security. I’ve never worked anywhere where so many people quit or got fired,” Niland said. “We had a buddy get fired. He was in a room with HR and security. Just him. He’s out the door next week and nobody is sure what happened. Guys see that, and it opens their eyes.”

Getting fired from BGE, Ferstermann said, isn’t just losing a job. It meant you couldn’t work on any Exelon property for at least five years and nearly every utility within 200 miles was owned by Exelon. And because the training program at BGE wasn’t coordinated with any others, none of the linemen were licensed or had jour-

neymen cards they could take on the road.

“If you get fired, you got nothing, so… what? You have to just hope your supervi-

sor likes you?” Ferstermann said. “If we get a contract, we can negotiate a standard-

ized training program so that we can have a journeyman ticket and go anywhere.”

Exelon workers are among the best in the business. They have the lowest rate of lost time accidents of any electric utility in the country.

“If there was a reason for the worst, we always without ask-

ning — affecting linemen, gas workers, transmission and substation workers and clerical staff.

“Without collective bargaining, we are just sitting on the bench, watching the game in front of us.”

— Dave Kelly, BGE lineman

For older workers, the main concern was retirement, said volunteer organ-

izer and BGE lineman Dave Kelly. The company kept raising the

Baltimore City Council Member John T. Bullock, top, spoke at the Jan. 10 rally in front of Exelon’s building in Baltimore. Later that night, representatives of IBEW locals at other Exelon locals took questions at a general meeting hosted by Baltimore Local 24.

cost of retiree health care, the 401(k) match was at its discretion and was smaller than other Exelon utilities. There were, he said, “no enforceable promises at all.”

For those who had been on the fence about organizing in the past or young workers making good money and not particularly worried about retirement, the rise in arbitrary disciplinary actions was changing minds, said Mike Niland, a 10-year overhead line mechanic.

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sor likes you?” Ferstermann said. “If we get a contract, we can negotiate a standard-
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A Plan for Success

In May of 2015, Kelly, Riale, Niland and more than two dozen other BGE workers returned to the IBEW.

Cooper, Johnson and McDermitt came back to them with a plan that would involve a huge investment of time and resources from the IBEW, but in return, Cooper said, BGE workers had to agree to a substantial change from the failed cam-

paigns of the past.

“We were clear from the start. We were not organizing them. It was their campaign and we would do everything we could, throw everything we had, at supporting them. But they had to do it,” Cooper said.

Gomez said it was a welcome change. “It always felt like the union was trying to organize us, and I think that played

into the hands of the company. The union was ‘them,’” Gomez said. “Tony’s initial approach was, ‘This is about you. You have to want it. I am not going to do it for you. Here is my information, you guys go out and do it.’ And that worked.”

The plan had multiple fronts and lots of moving pieces. The IBEW took Exelon to two NLRB hearings to determine the unit before things got under way. With the help of IBEW attorneys Jon Newman and Lucas Aubrey, a stipulated election agreement was reached that reduced the unit from 1,468 to 1,418.

“Although it meant we didn’t have exactly what we wanted, we could live with it and there would be no more hear-
ings,” Johnson said.

Then they set a timeline. Starting in 2016, Johnson and McDermitt, with the volunteer organizing committee, would collect cards and hold meetings to answer questions until the first weeks of Decem-

ber. Then the IBEW would bring in dozens of volunteers to conduct a two-week blitz of site and home visits, phone-banking and a final push to collect cards.

Then a break over the holidays,
when many BGE workers were taking time off to be with family, and those on the job would be needed at their posts, making forced anti-union meetings unlikely.

The target was an election that would be held in the first weeks of January when everyone was back from vacation, the blitz would recommence with outside IBEW organizers flooding back into Baltimore focused this time on getting out the vote.

“IT was a great strategy for this camp-
aign and Kenny, Troy, Bert and the BGE workers delivered,” said Assistant to the International President for Membership Development Ricky Oakland.

The campaign also fit into Interna-
tional President Stephenson’s directive that organizing campaigns focus first on companies where we already represent some part of the workforce.

“We have a good relationship with Exelon and plan on continuing to have a good relationship. We believe that by these workers electing to have a voice in the work-
place, they will make Exelon a better and more successful company,” Cooper said.

Cooper said that in 2012 when Exelon bought BGE, the IBEW was one of the loudest public voices in favor of the merge. Two years ago, when they pur-
chased Pepco, they also received IBEW support, with a condition.

“We said we would like a commit-
ment that if the BGE workers want to orga-
nize, we won’t see the union busters,” Cooper said. “We got that commitment.”

That was the plan. But there were significant hurdles to overcome. Senior management may have gotten the mes-
 sage from Exelon, but two decades of anti-union culture was a hard habit to break. Could they get enough cards? The bargaining unit included some clerical workers. Would they feel common cause with linemen, gas workers and mechan-
ics? And those workers were spread across nine service centers in Maryland,

By those early weeks of December, the BGE workers had been collecting cards in sup-
port of an organizing elec-
tion for more than a year. Volunteer organizers were starting to get questions.

“Every day, we heard, ‘When is there going to be a vote?’” Kelly said. “And every day we told them, ‘When the time is right, When the time is right.’”

The Christmas Blitz

Dec. 6 was a bitter day in Baltimore to be standing outside for hours in a frigid rain-
storm. Yet, out in the cold, smiling and cheering, hour after hour, was an undaunted army of IBEW organizers near-
ly 50 strong.

For the next two weeks, they ral-
lly every day at the gates of BGE’s ser-
vice centers, waving signs, handing out leaflets, answering questions and keep-
ing up morale as one shift turned over into the next. They called every person eligible to vote at least once and made hundreds of house calls across the state and into Pennsylvania.

They had converged on the city from IBEW locals from more than a dozen states. Some were rank-and-file construc-
tion, utility, manufacturing and telecom-
munications members and some were international organizers pulled from regional and district offices. Some came from as far away as Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245. Some came from down the road in Washington, D.C., Local 26. Baltimore Locals 24 and 1501 played host for organ-
izing meetings and provided office space and their hall for general meetings.

“It was the first organizing camp-
aign that brought the full strength of the IBEW, all our brothers and sisters, con-
struction, professional and industrial, together in one common cause,” Oakland said. “International President Emeritus Ed Hill started building up this strength and President Stephenson is continuing that growth exactly so that when an opportunity like this comes along, we have the resources to win.”

30 Days and Counting

The night of Dec. 13, the workers and organizers held a meeting at Local 24. They had almost 900 cards, far more than they needed to schedule an election. But you always get some people who sign cards even if they will eventually vote no. Was 900 enough?

The room was optimistic. The company had so far kept to its word: no closed door meetings, no apop-
alyptic threats about what would happen if the union came through the door.

The IBEW organizers who had been phone-banking and house-calling told stories about the people they’d met.

West Coast Regional Organizing Coordinator Robert Brock talked to a 76-year BGE gas worker, a troubleman sent out to fix emergencies on BGE’s grid. He had always voted no in the previous elections. He told Brock that during a snowstorm, he and another troubleman were out making repairs, and a local news crew interviewed them. The other guy, responding to a question about why repairs were taking so long, said he didn’t know, they were bustling their humps, it was the managers who were home warm.

“Six months later, this guy gets called into HR and they cut his pay 5 per-
cent, and he didn’t even say anything,” Brock said. “This is a dangerous job, and for the first time, he felt like no one really knew or cared about what he did. He signed a card.”

Fourth District Lead Organizer Dale McCray visited the home of a 74-year-
old worker who didn’t want anything to do with him. At first.

“But we set to talking and we ended up being there for near half an hour. It was a real privilege to be there, to listen to him, and make sure he knew we were listening,” McCray said. “He may not be a yes yet, but the conversation went very well.”

It was time for the BGE workers to decide whether to file the cards with the NLRB. When Johnson called for the vote, a roomful of hands went up and cheers began.

More than 100 IBEW organizers from across the country volunteered calling workers, visiting their homes, answering their questions and making some noise at a rally at Exelon’s Baltimore headquarters.

BGE gas pipeline mechanic and volunteer organizer Marvin Austin hugs Fourth District International Vice President Kenneth Cooper at the offices of the Baltimore NLRB after the vote count was announced.

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Then Bill Riale’s booming voice cut through the noise.

“I appreciate all the promises from the company, but I still hear from a few of the younger workers that their supervisor is telling them they won’t get scheduled raises, or that you get voted in, but they won’t rise in the company, they’d say they’re guessing it won’t be able to talk to one another once the union is here,” he said. “Now we file for this election, it is real, and the company knows we’re for real. What I worry about is that we lower our guard and tomorrow they start punching in the mouth.”

President Stephenson stood up and addressed the room. “If anything like that starts, you get in touch with me and I’ll be on the phone with the CEO of Exelon as soon as I get off the phone,” he said.

After the meeting, Riale said, “I’ll breathe a lot easier when this is over.”

The next day, Johnson and McDermitt brought the 900 signed cards to the Baltimore office of the NLRB.

By early afternoon, the word began to spread. After more than a year’s work, the election was set for Jan. 11 and 12, two days so all shifts could vote, with a count the evening of the 12th.

The volunteer IBEW organizers returned home to their families. The campaign went quiet.

The New Year

After New Year’s, the pause ended. More than 80, mostly new, volunteer organizers converged on Baltimore to finish the campaign in strength. They were, among others, local (Baltimore Local 24); regional (Washington, D.C., Locals 26 and 70); from neighboring Virginia (Richmond Local 666) and off airplanes (Los Angeles Local 11, Vacaville Local 1245, Aurora, Ill., Local 19 and Indianapolis Local 481).

Of the nine service centers, Johnson and the BGE workers were most concerned about three: Rutherford Business Center, known as RBC, Front Street and Spring Gardens. They were the largest and had the most different classifications. Not gas pipeline technicians or overhead line workers or troubleshooters or truck mechanics but all of them, working out of the same building, but not often together.

“The message isn’t different at different locations,” Johnson said. “Everybody is worried about the same things: more contractors every day, more policies every day, more uncertainty about job security every day. The difference here is that personal connections aren’t as deep, and personal connection between workers is more important than anything else in an organizing campaign: someone you have a past with talking about your future.”

So IBEW volunteers came in especially large numbers to those locations for leafletting and “walk-and-waves,” where a line of IBEW organizers bearing signs of support stand outside the service center gates waving and singing.

President Stephenson joined lines twice. He was present throughout the campaigns, at organizer debriefs after a day in the field, at open meetings for BGE workers and even hosting a barbecue for the BGE organizers.

“Those were some of the best days I’ve had as president,” Stephenson said. “This is unions at their purest. Brothers and sisters reaching out and saying that improving your life is in your hands, and we stand here as proof of that. Men, women, black, white and brown, young and old, we are all in this together.”

Eleventh District Lead Organizer Mike Knox drove through a snowstorm from Iowa to work on the campaign. He stressed the importance of that diversity.

“They got great folks that work down here, and a lot of them are black and Hispanic workers. And we know that to reach those folks, it helps to have black and Hispanic organizers,” Knox said. “This is a lesson we learned too late on some past campaigns, but here, it was part of the planning and it is working to perfection.”

Knox spoke with a 26-year BGE worker during a home visit. He had not only voted against the union before, he had volunteered to be a company observer when the votes were counted. This time, however, he was voting yes. Too many good people losing their jobs, too many times he watched as benefits shrink.

“We’ve been telling him this for years. We said without a contract, the company can change your benefits however they want. Why? Because they can. And we didn’t change his mind. The company did,” Knox said. “I’ve been around a lot of campaigns. This feels like a winner.”

Three days before the vote, there was another general meeting at Local 24, this time with members from locals that represented workers at nearby Exelon-owned utilities in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Washington, D.C. More than 350 BGE workers filed into the hall.

As one after another spoke, a theme developed. BGE senior management were keeping their word. There were very few closed door meetings, no overt union-busting. We had a meeting with BGE CEO Calvin Butler, who made an announcement that there will be no union-busting. They will not spend any money trying to keep the IBEW out,” said gas pipeline mechanic and volunteer organizer Marvin Austin.

However, many attendees reported that there were lower-level supervisors who did not get the message. Members from Locals 15, 644, 1307 and 1500 representing the other Exelon utilities took more than two dozen questions that started, in one form or another, “My supervisor told me if I vote for the union...”

“We won’t get a contract for two years and raises will be frozen until then. I won’t be able to talk directly to my supervisor without a union rep there. My dues will be $400 a month. The company won’t even sign a better contract. You will go out on strike. Relations between employers and the company will only get worse,” Riale, the “natural pessimist,” was glad the company kept its word, but time was running out. He had collected cards from 100 percent of the workers at his shop in Perry Hall, 70 overhead line mechanics. He could see things were different from years past. But was it enough?

Record numbers of BGE workers continued to vote. They were, among others, keeping their word. There were very few closed door meetings, no overt union-busting.
Cautiously Optimistic
IBEW Leaders See Reasons to Like Proposed FairPoint Sale

FairPoint’s purchase of Verizon’s landline business in northern New England eight years ago was beset by problems from the beginning. That’s why IBEW leaders think FairPoint’s proposed sale to Consolidated Communications — which has been in the telephone business for more than a century — is potentially good news.

“We want a company to come in here and run the business and provide good telephone and broadband service,” said Augusta, Maine, Local 2377 Business Manager Peter I. McLaughlin, who is chairman of a three-state council that includes Manchester, N.H., Local 2320 and Montpelier, Vt., Local 2326.

“Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont are very rural states,” McLaughlin said. “Our connection to outside states is broadband in a lot of places. Our businesses up here really need that.”

Consolidated announced on Dec. 5 it had purchased FairPoint for $1.5 billion pending regulatory approval, which is expected by mid-2017. The majority of IBEW members employed by FairPoint are based in northern New England. Others are in New York, Ohio, Virginia, Missouri, Washington and Oregon.

“I think a new perspective and a fresh set of eyes are a good opportunity,” Broadcasting and Telecommunications Department Director Martha Pultar said. “We’re cautiously optimistic this will end up being a good thing.”

North Carolina-based FairPoint completed its $2.3 billion purchase of Verizon’s landlines in 2008. It filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy less than two years later and didn’t emerge from it until 2011. It later sued Verizon for $2 billion, alleging it lured it into the purchase that led to the bankruptcy. (The case was settled for $95 million in 2012.)

The impact on workers was felt in late 2014, when a four-month strike involving 1,700 northern New England employees who were IBEW and Communications Workers of America members began. That ended in February 2015 and about 220 employees were laid off in the summer of that year.

Things haven’t been much better recently. The Maine Public Utilities Commission is considering a $500,000 fine against FairPoint for failure to meet commitments to landline customers. The company laid off about 100 employees in Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire just before Christmas, despite a plea from Vermont senator and former presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. FairPoint had about 4,200 employees at the time of the purchase from Verizon. Now, it stands at 2,500.

Pultar noted the IBEW was opposed to the FairPoint purchase of the Verizon landlines from the start.

“We were fighting the sale because we knew they didn’t have the ability to run the business,” she said. “We thought it would be about three years until the bankruptcy. Instead, it was 18 months.”

Consolidated is based in Mattoon, Ill., and opened for business in 1894, as the Mattoon Telephone Company. It currently has operations in 11 states. It will more than double in size from 1,800 to 4,400 employees after the sale’s approval, company officials said. The size of its fiber optic network will increase from 14,000 to 35,000 miles.

IBEW leaders are encouraged the network will be managed by people with firsthand knowledge of telecommunications, which wasn’t the case with FairPoint’s private equity owners.

“They have a lot of homegrown senior management who are telephone people,” McLaughlin said. “The head of human resources seemed to have a working knowledge of the telephone business when I spoke with him. I was glad to hear that.”

That wasn’t necessarily the case with FairPoint, especially after hedge fund Maglan Capital gained equity during the 2009 bankruptcy proceedings as part of its loan-to-own deal with the company. Maglan called for four FairPoint directors to resign earlier this year and for the company to sell itself.

“Once the [2009] deal was made, the hedge funds took over,” McLaughlin said.

Northern New England has an educated consumer base in search of a reliable telecommunications company with a commitment to superior customer service, McLaughlin said.

“There is so much room for growth in these three states,” he said. “Someone that comes in here and does a good job has a real opportunity.”

McLaughlin noted that IBEW members usually are the ones who deal with public complaints about FairPoint’s poor service — whether it’s a technician visiting a home or a customer service employee answering a call. They want a company with a commitment to quality, he said.

“We live here,” he said. “Our friends and neighbors and family live here, too. They know we’re the telephone guys. When it gets messed up, they knock on our doors and ask why we can’t get service.”

Congressional Republicans Introduce National Right-to-Work Law

Emboldened by the freewheeling first days of single-party control of the federal government, Republicans in Congress took aim on Feb. 1 at a longtime target — working people.

Reps. Steve King of Iowa and Joe Wilson of South Carolina introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to enact a national right-to-work law, legislation aimed at destroying unions that would likely lower wages across the county.

The laws, already in force in 28 states, prohibit union security agreements, which require workers to contribute to the costs of collective bargaining and legal representation provided by the local on their behalf. Aiding dues requirements leads to freelancing, union leaders say.

“Imagine you’re a member of a hunting club, and somebody passes a law tomorrow saying I can walk into your club and use your facilities, drink your beer, shoot all the deer I want, but you can’t charge me a dime in membership fees,” said Fourth District International Representative Neil Gray. “You wouldn’t like that very much, would you? Well, right-to-work works the same way.”

In right-to-work states, workers at union-represented shops can opt out of dues payments, unfairly putting the burden for representation costs on their co-workers while still reaping all of the benefits of belonging to a union.

“The IBEW and other unions are required by law to go to bat for every single worker in a bargaining unit,” Gray said. Whether it’s negotiating a contract or sending staff and lawyers to represent an employee if they’re unfairly disciplined or fired, union dues are the only way to ensure those services are available.

“The real aim of right-to-work is to deplete your local’s treasury to the point it can’t represent you effectively,” said Dan Gardner, an international representative in the Political and Legislative Dept.

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Leadership, Determined Workers Lead to Vancouver Organizing Win Over ‘Fake’ Union

A leadership and an organizing drive combined into a powerful movement.

Andersen said he looked forward to Local 213 building a positive working relationship with the company. He found himself a new career as an organizer. He said his job satisfaction comes from helping workers stand up to a group that failed to represent them.

“It was extremely rewarding to see the CWU kept accountable for a lack of action,” he said. “It’s a union’s role to keep the company honest. Those checks and balances are essentially to keep a good relationship between the company and its employees. To see that further enhanced in the labour movement is very rewarding. But for me as an individual, I was doing my job.”

Un leadership et des travailleurs déterminés mènent à une victoire syndicale contre des « faux » syndicats à Vancouver

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CIRCUITS

IBEW Electrician/Congressman Appointed to Labor-Focused Committee

New Jersey Rep. Donald Norcross — the only active member of the IBEW in Congress — has been appointed to serve on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The Education and Workforce Committee oversees all government programs related to education as well as health care, job training and retirement security for workers. It was called the Education and Labor Committee until the Republican majority renamed it in 2010.

Norcross, who was elected to his second term in Congress last fall, will be the only union member to serve on the committee.

“It’s an honor to represent New Jersey’s working families on the Education and Workforce Committee. This is a continuation of my lifelong fight to defend hardworking men and women and make certain that every person has the dignity of a good paying job,” Norcross said in a statement.

A journeyman inside wireman and member of Folsom, N.J., Local 351, Norcross worked with the tools for a decade as a state senator. In his first term in Congress, he was the only active member of the IBEW in Congress — has been appointed to serve on the House Education and Workforce Committee, the bipartisan Building Trades Caucus.

“Any legislation related to education as well as health care, job training and retirement security for workers is critical to the IBEW,” Norcross said. “The Education and Workforce Committee oversees all government programs related to education as well as health care, job training and retirement security for workers. It is an honor to represent New Jersey’s working families on this committee.”

Millennial Minority Workers Look Forward While Giving Back

The young members of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus are growing their ranks and the next generation of the IBEW, and that includes a commitment to service.

On Jan. 12, these millennial members joined in the annual EWMC conference’s day of service, held each year around Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day to honor the civil rights leader’s legacy. At sites around southern California, some volunteered their skills doing repairs on veterans’ homes while others went to local food banks where they filled almost 1,500 boxes, each with enough food to feed someone for a month.

“It’s a great way to get involved in the community and it paints unions in a better light,” said Alton Wilkerson, president of the young members group of the EWMC. “It also builds camaraderie among members. I’ve met people from across the country.”

Meeting on the first day of the conference, the young members also attended workshops on educating members about the IBEW and encouraging involvement in their unions. “It’s about empowering young workers, especially those who may not see themselves as leaders,” Wilkerson said.

The group’s goals for the year include increasing the number of members and their activism, said Wilkerson, and instituting a challenge among chapter heads for workers to provide advice to newer members.

“These people will stay in contact on a consistent basis,” Wilkerson said. “They’ll be there for guidance and whatever the members need to be successful.”

A member of Los Angeles Local 11, Wilkerson was appointed EWMC RENEW president at the conference. As president, he also serves on the RENEW/NextGen Advisory Committee. RENEW/NextGen is IBEW’s initiative focused on young members.

As members of the EWMC, the young members group shares a commitment to equal rights and opportunities for minority workers.

Wilkerson says his group is committed to doing its part, which entails fostering new leaders and increasing the representation of people of color in IBEW leadership.

“We’re building the next generation,” Wilkerson said. “We’re providing the tools that let them know they have a voice.”

TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

Brother Alan Freeman

After 34 years in the IBEW, Membership Development International Representative Alan Freeman has retired, effective Feb. 15.

Freeman is a second generation inside wireman from Mansfield, Ohio, Local 688.

“I always knew I wanted to be an electrician,” Freeman said. “I was the first-born son, so there was following my dad [Truman Freeman], but I was also just fascinated by electricity. I loved it.”

Freeman applied for the apprenticeship on his 18th birthday, before he had graduated from high school, and was accepted a year later. He topped out in 1986, graduating from high school, and was accepted a year later. He topped out in 1986, taking six years for his apprenticeship because work was slow. Freeman’s career spanned the days when the industrial Midwest was transforming into the Rust Belt.

“I traveled my whole career, from Hartford, Conn., to Denver and everywhere in between,” he said.

In 1993, Freeman was appointed to the organizing committee by then-Business Manager Kenneth Cooper, now the Fourth District International vice president. As Freeman recalls it, Local 688 was historically a construction local, but by the mid-90s, telecom members outnumbered wiremen nearly 3 to 1.

“I asked whether we should probably focus more attention on organizing and pretty soon I found out it was my job,” he said.

Freeman became a part-time organizer focused primarily on construction while still working with the tools and taking on leadership roles at the local. In 1995, he was elected to the local executive board and as vice president and a year later he was elected president.

Cooper said Freeman never set out to be an organizer.

“Sometimes you choose your career, sometimes it chooses you. Alan was the latter,” Cooper said. “He was good at organizing because of his dedication and belief that this made people’s lives better.”

In 1996, the employees of Neer Manufacturing, a local conduit fitting plant, came to Local 688 for help after the local owners had sold out to a national company.

The challenge was that no one at the local could remember the last time they had run a traditional, NLRB election organizing campaign.

“It was trial and error. We were young enough and dumb enough to give it a whirl,” Cooper said. “And it worked out.”

Freeman said the night, a year after the election victory, when the workers signed their first contract was one of the highlights of his career.

At the success of the Neer campaigns, Local 688 was asked to send someone for more organizing training. Cooper sent Freeman. He volunteered to work on organizing campaigns around the country — Baltimore Gas & Electric, Boeing and others — still working with tools between campaigns.

In 1999, then-International President J.I. Barry asked Freeman to become the first international representative in the newly formed Special Projects Department, which would later become the professional and industrial wing of the Membership Development Department.

It was Freeman’s first full-time office job and he said he remembers standing in front of a mirror, after he moved to Washington, D.C., trying to teach himself how to tie a tie.

Freeman helped shape the Membership Development Department, from the contest of the annual conference to developing the curriculum for organizing training courses.

Freeman says he will kick off retirement by refurbishing the 1950 Ford pickup he has owned for nearly 50 years.

“It starts, but won’t run,” said Freeman.

Freeman and his wife are looking forward to getting back to freshwater fishing after a decade-and-a-half hunting striped bass in the brackish waters of the Chesapeake Bay. He also bought more than 52 acres of land near his home in Ohio to get back to hunting, which he hasn’t done since moving to D.C.

“To many people there,” said Freeman.

The IBEW officers, staff and members wish him a long, healthy and adventurous retirement.

New Jersey Rep. Donald Norcross, a journeyman inside wireman from Folsom Local 351, has been appointed to the House Education and Workforce Committee, which has jurisdiction over federal agencies that affect hundreds of millions of American workers.

The Electrical Worker | March 2017
Tribute for IBEW Service

Louis Crnko, Dennis Mahoney and Theodore Plack.

Wilga, Arthur Schumm, Milton McSalley, Donald Auer,

Gibbons, Earl Shannon, Dolores Schrum, Alphonse

Messersmith, Joseph Newman, Paul Siebel, Richard

Kevin Umbach, James Hartman, John Peek, Kenneth

and Sylvester Taylor; and Bus. Rep. Mike Newton.

ining Board members Tom George Jr., Joshua Peniston

bers Steven Dussold and James Reinheimer Jr.; Exam-

Jr.; Rec. Sec. Chris Clermont; Executive Board mem-

journeyman wiremen.

Gena Gober. His three sons — Anthony, Timothy and

Representatives, 74th District. When asked what he

years. The Future Energy Jobs Bill will allow Quad Cit-

in Illinois. This legislation was worked on for over two

Dean Apple and Vice Pres. Terry McGoldrick along

Local 15. Through the hard work of Illinois AFL-CIO

members related to the Exelon Infrastructure Mod-

lized Act (EIMAA). This work is also related to leg-

passed in Illinois (allowing ComEd to invest in the

and distribution system, creating

jobs while modernizing the system). The current state

of Local 15 is healthy.

Sam Studer, R.R./P.S.

Utility Sector Negotiations

L.U. 19 (il), AURORA, IL — At the time of this writing, Local 19 had started its negotiations with Southern

Company, as the current contract was scheduled to

expire Feb. 28, 2017. At press time, with negotiations

underway, we were looking for a five-year contract

and improvements in wages, insurance, pensions,

and contract language for our members.

Also, on Jan. 3 this year, Local 19 sent three of

our members, Victor Pena, Rachel Lee and Brandonn

Ellis, to help support IBEW members employed by Bal-

limore Gas & Electric in their organizing campaign. We

wish the BGE workers the best of luck and hope to

soon welcome them as IBEW brothers and sisters.

[Editor’s Note: After an 18-month organizing drive, a

majority of Baltimore Gas & Electric’s 1,418 gas and

transmission-distribution workers voted to join the

IBEW on Jan 12. To read more, see news article “Vic-

tory: More than 1,400 BGE Workers Join the IBEW,”

in this issue of The Electrical Worker and posted online

at www.ibew.org/media-center/Articles/.]

For more Local 19 news and information, please

visit us online at www.IBEW19.org and Facebook.

Natalia Guzman, Exec. Board

Gratitude to Members — The Power of Solidarity

L.U. 21 (ct), DOWNSERS GROVE, IL — We thank all IBEW sisters and brothers who donated to our Mem-

ber Assistance Fund. Your support is overwhelming and

demonstrates the power of our Brotherhood.

Just after Thanksgiving, one of our brothers who

works for AT&T was robbed and shot. After the shock

wore off, Local 21 members began taking collections

in their work locations and asked how they could help.

On ibew21.org we used our online donation

store as a portal to collect donations. Using Action

Network we sent an email blast to our 5,700 sub-

scribers with an update and offered to accept dona-

tions. Within minutes more members donated.

Also amazing were the immediate messages we

received from IBEW’s newest sisters and brothers

working at AT&T DirecTV. These members from other

locals inquired how they could help their co-worker

and brother. One of them said: “We’re all in this togeth-

er and when one part of the body hurts, it hurts us all.”

News of our brother’s tragedy spread to all branches

of the IBEW. Ninth District Intl. Rep. Rick Hite received our email and asked his folks to please

consider assisting our brother and to pray for him.

Later we received a call from Seattle Local 77

asking how they could help. Arizona Local 769 also

mailed in a donation. Our brother was still being

help. On ibew21.org we used our online donation

page to provide community service at Mercy Home in Chicago during 2016 holiday season.

Gregory R. Inglat, A.B.M.

CNY Labor Council Presents

Distinguished Service Awards

L.U. 43 (RI,vt,es), SYRACUSE, NY — The Central

New York Labor Council, AFL-CIO, held its ninth annual

Sam Gompers Distinguished Service Awards Dinner

on Oct. 21 last year at the Teugega Country Club in

Rome, NY.

Honored from IBEW Local 43 were Membership

Development Coordinator Alan Marzullo and Member-

ship Development Reps. Pat Harrington and Kevin

Crawford, recognized for their tireless work in organizing.
Illinois Nuclear Plants & ‘Future Energy Jobs Bill’

**L.U. 51 (catv,ct,nt,pcc,ptb,1L,1kowi), SPRINGFIELD, IL** — Local 51 worked hard for passage of Illinois Senate Bill 281A, which was signed into law Dec. 7, 2016, keeping Clinton Power Station and Quad Cities nuclear plants online and producing clean energy. For Clinton, this means job security for our 275 members there and an uninterrupted flow of tax revenue to entities such as the Clinton school district. Altogether, this bill preserves a total of 4,300 jobs in Illinois. Many of our members helped get this bill passed by writing, emailing and/or calling state legislators.

[Editor’s Note: To read more, see news article “Now Hiring: New Life and New Jobs at Illinois Nuclear Plants,” in the February 2017 issue of The Electrical Worker, Pg. 7, and posted online at IBEW website www.ibew.org/media-center/Articles.]

For the spring legislative session, we will continue working to save jobs in our downstate generating plants. We did get verbal commitments to work on additional legislation for downstate generation from plants. We did get verbal commitments to work on additional legislation for downstate generation from plants.

**Lackawanna Energy Center**

**L.U. 81 (l), SCRANTON, PA** — Lackawanna Energy Center is a three-unit shaft combined-cycle power generation station currently under construction in Jessup, PA, just north of Scranton. It is owned by Invenergy and reportedly will be the single largest international representative.

Bro. Martinez was hired on to the Local 111 staff in January of 2012. He has been a member in good standing since 1998. He worked for Public Service Company of Colorado (PSCo) in various classifications until he completed his apprenticeship as a journeyman lineman. During his time at PSCo, he was very active and participated on various committees, and also served as a steward.

He also served Local 111 as an assistant business manager and as a fully active participant with the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) at the local and national level, as well as with NRECA/NextGen.

Additionally, Bro. Martinez has served on the PSCo System Supervisory Joint Apprenticeship Committee; the PSCo Safety Advisory Board; and the PSCo Medical Appeals Board. He participated in: Poudre Valley REA negotiations; San Luis Valley negotiations; PSCo general negotiations; PSCo wage opener negotiations; and PSCo Instrument & Control Technicians negotiations. Bro. Martinez also organized and negotiated on behalf of the PSCo System Operations administrative assistants.

**Denny Wallace, P.S.**

**New Business Manager**

**L.U. 111 (em,gov,t,nt,p,rb,spa&u), DENVER, CO** — Effective Jan. 25, 2017, Bro. Epifanio “Eppie” J. Martinez was appointed business manager/financial secretary to fill the unexpired term of office, due to the appointment of former business manager/financial secretary Sean P. McCarville as an Eighth District international representative.

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**Denny Wallace, P.S.**

**Stand Up for Working People**

L.U. 256 (lx,102,rb), PORTLAND, OR — Like any year, our local will be preparing for negotiations and working to maintain our standards while too many employers find ways to eliminate the standards that have defined the IBEW for 125 years. All IBEW members must continue our efforts to push for the wages, hours and working conditions, even when we are angry, disappointed, frustrated or scared — because we are the foundation of America’s middle class. Our willingness to stand up and push for fairness allows those with no voice to have standards that otherwise
Local 343 congratulates the retirees of 2016: Richard Sandeno, Gary Freeman, David Christensen, Tony Dickey, David Kraft, Raymond “Pete” Weis, Michael Kelly, Douglas Haines and Harold Luhrman.

We also remember the passing of several members in 2016: John Williams, Douglas Ovens, Ronald Ginapp, Dennis Doherty, Donald Doheny, Kenneth Whittaker, Donald Lohse, John Guyse and Clarence O’Neil.

Come join your brothers and sisters at the annual awards banquet in Winona on April 22 for a night of food, fun and solidarity.

Support American workers and promote American jobs by buying “Made in USA.”

Tom Small, P.S.

CPR Training & Quick Action to Assist

L.U. 347 (em,mt,tb,rtb&spa), DES MOINES, IA — When taking CPR classes, it’s common to hope we never are called upon to use the techniques we’re being trained for.

On Nov. 16, 2016, a Local 347 member suffered a massive heart attack at the conclusion of a journeyman training class while in the classroom. His misfortune had an element of good fortune in that there were well-trained CPR providers in the classroom.

Bros. Rick Corbin, John Schoelles, Matt Marchese, Derek Sandy and Sister Barb Mentzer stepped forward and started administering CPR, and continued until the Clive, Iowa, Rescue Team arrived some 12 minutes later. The rescue team then used a defibrillator to re-establish a regular heart beat. The heart attack victim later suffered another heart attack at the hospital, but he survived.

These IBEW brothers and sister are to be commended for the immediate action they took at the moment of another brother’s need. Also thank you to all the others who helped and cleared the way for the rescue team to enter the building to give needed care to the victim.

This episode speaks to the value of keeping current on our CPR training, and also to the trust we place in the brothers and sisters who surround us.

Mike Schweiger, P.S.

Holiday Children’s Party

L.U. 351 (c&l,ul,ctt,tt,oe,se,spak), FOLSOM, NI — The local’s 2016 Children’s Christmas Party was another success with 70 in attendance.

I would like to thank the Christmas committee and all who helped make the festive occasion possible, including: Wayne Bumm, Don Morgan, Steve Dimatteo, “Santa” Jim Ruff, Bill Hoose, Jim Bresh, Joe Trumbetti, Chuck DelaVechia, Ray Listman, Ed Reser, Rick Signor, Natallia Fritchman, Lou Jacopello, Tom Small, P.S.

Some of those who helped make the Local 351 Children’s Christmas Party a great success.
Greetings, brothers and sisters. In 2016 we made some gains in terms of our attrition rate. Six apprentices graduated, and was initiated in July of 1973, following in the footsteps of his father, Carson Reichard. Over the course of 43 years, Dave has remained a steadfast member and leader of the local. Twenty-four years after his initiation, he looked on proudly as his son Steven was also initiated into the IBEW.

During his career, Dave has worked in the field as a journeyman wireman, assistant general foreman, and general foreman. Before moving into a full-time position in the Local 375 office, he was general foreman at the Conectiv Energy power plant project. It was this transition that allowed Dave to work diligently for the local and for labor as a whole. Over the years Dave served on numerous committees. Within the local, he also worked tirelessly as an organizer/business representative, as assistant business manager and ultimately as president. In these roles, he has helped shape policy for labor within Lehigh Valley and Pennsylvania.

His commitment to the IBEW and to all of labor has left a positive and lasting impact for generations to come. It is with sincere appreciation that we wish Dave all the best as he begins a new chapter in his life. We thank you for everything, Dave, and we are proud to call you brother.

**2016 Apprenticeship Graduates**

**Local 465**

Our local did some great things for the community this past year. We had a change of venue for the party for the first time ever. The 2016 event was held downtown at the Wool Warehouse instead of at our union hall. The committee did a great job as usual and, of course, Santa was there to take pictures and hand out stockings.

At the time this article was published, the Facebook job sure hasn’t been any calls for the Facebook job yet, but by the time this article is published, the job should be manning up. An article in the Albuquerque Journal reported that Cupertino (the main electrical contractor) will need 250 workers immediately and another 100 by the spring or summer.

**New Apprentices Welcomed**

**Local 595**

The future of our local is bright! I would like to thank the families of each graduating apprentice for sharing in the sacrifices to help make these accomplishments possible. We had a special guest at the apprenticeship graduation ceremony: Bill Haines, son of famous author William Wister Haines, who wrote “Slim the Lineman.” Our friend provided a personalized and signed copy of “Slim” to each outstanding apprentice! Thank you to everyone who attended the graduation ceremony.

**2016 Apprenticeship Graduates**

**Local 557**


**Giving Back to Community & Supporting Working Families**

**Local 569**

We also supported families-in-need during the holiday season with a $50,000 contribution to San Diego’s Food & Toy Drive, and with the affiliated unions of the San Diego Building Trades Council we collected and donated over 50,000 diapers to local mothers-in-need, in coordination with California Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher!

Additionally, we are providing free electric vehicle charging to our members and employees under our new partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy’s Workplace Charging Challenge. IBEW electricians have installed hundreds of charging units locally and we anticipate thousands more thanks to California’s groundbreaking climate policies.

Finally, IBEW 569 welcomes Tammy Spinks as our new Apprenticeship Training director! Congratulations, Tammy, on your new position – we look forward to your efforts to expand apprenticeship opportunities.

We’re heading into 2017 as a stronger local thanks to YOU and your hard work together! We will continue to make an impact and build better communities.

**Bond Measures to Bring New Jobs for Local Members**

**Local 559**

This past fall season was busy in Local 559. Here in this region, local elections proved to be victorious, and some of the bond measures that passed will create hundreds of jobs and generate thousands of hours of work for Local 559 sisters and brothers.

Work is well underway at Washington Hospital in Fremont, and as of this writing work was expected to begin on the V.A. Clinic in French Camp in early 2017. As always, the Local 559 Old Timers Night and Member Recognition Night were well-attended.

From our longtime Years of Service Award pin recipients to our first-year apprentices, Local 559 continues to pass the torch to our next generation of wiremen to move our local forward.

**‘Stay Active & Involved’**

**Local 611**

Our local extends condolences to families and friends of the many members who have passed away over the past year. We extend our Special thanks to苗族s, Robert Raymond King, Arlie A. Tedford, John P. Curran, Norval G. Hughes, Tommie F. Strand, Seferino Baca, Robert Raymond King, Aleia A. Dixon, Arsenio Sanchez and Morris Kline.

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.
Friends of IBEW Breakfast; Officer Transitions

L.U. 625 (c,ees,em,i,it,mar&mt), HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA — Last December we local the annual Friends of the IBEW Holiday Breakfast. This occasion is a great opportunity for rank-and-file members to meet and have conversations with their elected public officials in a relaxed atmosphere over a warm meal. This bipartisan gathering has for many years been one of the more anticipated events in the holiday season. Many members of the Georgia state legislature were in attendance, along with local sheriffs and county commissioners. With an Atlanta mayoral race coming in late 2017, several candidates enjoyed their morning getting to know the workforce that will build the future of Georgia’s capital city.

2017 has seen changes in our local. Former business manager Gene O’Kelly has stepped up to accept an appointment as an IBEW international representative. The Local 625 Executive Board appointed Max Mount Jr. as business manager to fill the unexpired term of office. Bus. Mgr. Mount served as the local union president for over a decade. The Executive Board also appointed Brian King as Local 625 president to fill that vacated position. These two gentlemen will sit at the table and guide our local through contract negotiations later this spring.

James Williams, P.S.

2016 Updates & New Projects


2017 Contract Negotiations

L.U. 625 (a), FORT PIERCE, FL — Unit #2 at St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant has entered into another refueling outage as of press time. Outages bring in many personnel. As always, remember to practice safety on the jobsite and keep a watch out for the other person. Bus. Mgr. Pres. Mark MacNichol announced that the 3rd Annual Bike Run will take place on May 6. Please join the brotherhood of riders and participate in this run. There is still plenty of time to prepare. Players are not yet a member of the Local Union’s Men’s Alliance (USA), visit their website at http:// unionsmen.org. You will find a lot of interesting information there.

Contract negotiations will take place this year. Stash some of your outage cash for reserve. Members are advised to be prepared and put aside some cash to have on hand for their families.

Ray Hos, P.S.

Tribute to Lives of Service

L.U. 659 (s,catv,i,rts,spa,t&u), PAINESVILLE, OH — Over the years, Lake Health, a community system of hospitals and health care facilities, has done many millions of dollars worth of work under project labor agreements (PLAs). Recent projects — including the Old House Building renovation, the Mentor Aquatic center and the Willoughby women’s health care center — are reminders of how our political involvement helps to shape our paychecks and put our members to work.

I would like to thank all our members who have given their free time to do political walks and phone banks. Apprentices, journeyman, retirees, CE/CWs, officers and registrars have banded together for a common goal, which is to elect politicians who will support our goals and further the purposes of our organization.

Dave Phillips, P.S.

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Dave Phillips, P.S.

2017 Events Scheduled

L.U. 683 (a), PORT PIERCE, FL — Unit #2 at St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant has entered into another refueling outage as of press time. Outages bring in many personnel. As always, remember to practice safety on the jobsite and keep a watch out for the other person. Bus. Mgr. Pres. Mark MacNichol announced that the 3rd Annual Bike Run will take place on May 6. Please join the brotherhood of riders and participate in this run. There is still plenty of time to prepare. Players are not yet a member of the Local Union’s Men’s Alliance (USA), visit their website at http:// unionsmen.org. You will find a lot of interesting information there.

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Dave Phillips, P.S.

2017 Contract Negotiations

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Ray Hos, P.S.
Local 965 from Wisconsin Rapids, Tomah, Portage and Fond du Lac, WI.

The day was spent cutting, splitting and stacking a winter’s worth of firewood for Jessie and her family. They were very thankful for a job well done by fellow members of IBEW Local 965.

Robert Jung, P.S.

OSHA 30 Training

L.U. 1245 (emu), WESLACO, TX — IBEW Local 1245 congratulates recent OSHA 30 training class graduates. On Dec. 17 last year, graduates of the class were awarded their OSHA certificates. [See photo at bottom, left.] With their persistence, hard work and determination — along with the help of OSHA instructor Raul Torres, Rio Grande Valley Laredo Electrical JATC Training Dir. Servando Munguia, RGVLE JATC office manager Christina Martinez, RGVLE JATC secretary Yasmin Deleon, and Local 1245 Bus. Mgr. Sergio A. Salinas — these students were able to complete their 30-hour OSHA course. The purpose of the “general awareness” OSHA course is to provide workers with introductory information about OSHA. The mission of OSHA is to save lives, prevent injuries and protect the health of America’s workers. Some required training covers topics such as lockout/tagout procedures, blood-borne pathogens, noise, confined spaces, fall hazards in construction, personal protective equipment, and a variety of other topics.

The Rio Grande Valley Laredo Electrical JATC was able to provide this OSHA training free of cost through grant funding of $110,000 awarded by the Texas Workforce Commission and signed by Julian Stephenson, P.S. of the Texas Workforce Commission.

Yasmin Deleon, P.S.

Officer Transition

L.U. 1245 (lulu@lulu.com), LONG ISLAND, NY — After 15 years of service, Bus. Mgr. Donald Daley Jr. announced his retirement, effective Feb. 1, 2017. Don has served the IBEW as a steward, Executive Board member, vice president, president, and as business manager of former Local 1381. In 2008, after Locals 1349 and 1381 amalgamated, Don became Local 1049’s assistant business manager. In 2010 he was appointed business manager and was subsequently elected to that post. Under Don’s leadership, Local 1049 has prospered, grown and flourished. The membership, in all divisions, have seen steady and consistent increases in their wage and benefit packages. Under Don’s leadership we have grown the membership into nontraditional areas of utility work. Our membership numbers are at all-time highs.

In 2014, Don had the vision to facilitate the local’s purchase our new union office and training center. And with the sale of our Hauppauge Building, our general fund has never been healthier.

On behalf of my fellow officers, the Executive Board and the business staff, I want to wish Don all the best in retirement. May God continue to bless him and his family.

In December, with the full support of the officers and business staff, the Executive Board appointed then senior business representative Ron Bauer as our new business manager. Throughout his career, Ron has been an active steward, safety advocate, Executive Board member, a member of the business staff and a strong advocate for labor.

We are confident that under Bus. Mgr. Bauer’s leadership, Local 1049 will continue to thrive.

Thomas J. Dowling, R.S.

Military Veteran Honored

L.U. 1105 (l), NEWARK, OH — Local 1105 would like to proudly introduce Bro. Brian R. Burkhart, who has been a member of IBEW Local 1105 since 2007. Prior to his IBEW apprenticeship, Bro. Burkhart served in the 82nd Airborne Division of the U.S. Army from 1989 through 1993.

On Dec. 20, 1989, the 82nd Airborne Division invaded Panama to capture drug lord Manuel Noriega during Operation Just Cause. Upon this mission, Bro. Burkhart was struck by a bullet on the left side of the head by sniper fire during a firefight. He recovered at Walter Reed Memorial Hospital at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. He was subsequently awarded the Purple Heart for his service to the country during that mission.

On Veteran’s Day 2016, Bro. Burkhart was nominated by a fellow paratrooper, who served with him in Operation Just Cause, as this year’s Wishes for Warriors event in Temecula, CA. Rick Gravesen of Patriot Ordinance Factory presented Burkhart with a POF 415 rifle with the 82nd Airborne Division patch engraved for his duty in combat. IBEW Local 1105 was honored to sponsor Bro. Burkhart’s trip to the Wishes for Warriors event.

Danny Rutledge, P.S./Organizer

‘Run to Remember’ Memorial Marathon in April

L.U. 1141 (esaf,wt,txls,spa), OKLAHOMA CITY, OK — Greetings, brothers and sisters.

It’s been a positive 2017 so far at our Local. As of this writing, we are looking for volunteers for the upcoming Oklahoma City “Run to Remember” Memorial Marathon on April 30. This will be our third consecutive year staffing water stop #3 at Lake Hefner. Last year, not only did we get 75 volunteers at the water station, but also dozens of our fellow brothers and sisters ran in the race representing our local union. Call the union hall at (405) 670-4777 to sign up to volunteer. And check out footage and photos of last year’s event at www.bit.ly/1141marathon.

We were also happy to host our latest Apprenticeship Graduation on Friday, Nov. 18, 2016, at the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame. Thanks to all the families who came out and helped make it a very special occasion. Congratulations, graduates, on the next step of your careers! [See photo at top, left.]

Until next time, please work safe, and thank you for all you do on the job and in the community.

Dewayne Wilcox, B.M./F.S.

Contract Agreements Ratified

L.U. 1245 (katslv,em,govt,lctt,op,o,pot,sku), VACAVILLE, CA — IBEW members who work for the City of Vallejo recently received their first general wage increase in nine years, thanks to a newly ratified agreement. The City of Vallejo workers, who were formerly represented by IBEW Local 2376, voted to merge with IBEW Local 1245 in December 2015, and Local 1245 finally secured a succes- sor agreement after 25 separate bargaining ses- sions over the course of 12 months.

Thousands of Local 1245 members at Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) also secured a new four-year agreement in late 2016, which includes a combined 2.5 percent wage increase, along with improvements to short-term disability and paid family leave.

Local 1245 supported the successful organizing effort at Baltimore Gas & Electric. The local dis- patched five member-organizers and one staffer to help spread the word about the union and collect authorization cards during December, and sent another group out in early January to get out the vote for the union election. [Editor’s note: See news story about the victory at BG&E on Pg. 2 of this issue.]

In Outside Construction, the work outlook remains very strong, and we expect to see an increase in 2017 in all types of work, including distribution, transmission, substations and underground.

Rebecca Band, P.S.

Local 1245 congratulates 2016 apprentice graduates. Front row, Tyler Gleim (left), Hunter Bassett, Jacob Hensley, Jonathan Wright, Robert Buil, Jarrett Moniz, Pete Newell; back row, Instructor Chance Solomon, Nate Nation, Keean Cox, Matt Lunev, Rory Mathews, Aaron Davis, Training Dir. Clift Stewart and Instructor Steve Gibson.

Local 1245 organizing stewards and IBEW Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson (front row, third from left) show their support for the union at Baltimore Gas & Electric.

Fundraiser for NSUJL — “Grow a Beard for a Brother”

L.U. 1249 (katslv,em,govt,lctt,op,ot,sku), SYRACUSE, NY — Local 1249 hosted a fundraising event, “Grow a Beard for Your Brother.” Members started with a freshly shaven face on Nov. 1 last year and then put away the razor for the rest of the month. The 23 brave participants donated money to join the competition and then raised money from family and friends. Proceeds went to the National Sisterhood United for Journeymen Linemen (NSUJL). Over $3,000 was raised.

The competition ended Nov. 30. There were six categories to compete for. Following are the lucky winners: Hairless Cat (saddest beard) — Jared Maker; Life is Not Fair (ugliest beard) — Nate Parkman;
In addition to your monthly issue of The Electrical Worker, check out the wealth of IBEW-related information online.

www.ibew.org
Our Web site has news and info not available anywhere else. Visit us to connect with the IBEW on Facebook and Twitter.

And read The Electrical Worker online!

YouTube
Seattle Local 46 is building a nearly two-mile long tunnel beneath the city to replace the aging Alaskan Way Viaduct. “We’re putting a highway in a tunnel under the ground,” one member said. See how they’re doing it here: https://vimeo.com/zo3w56b

Vimeo
There are more lights inside Detroit’s Cobo Center during the North American Auto Show than on Broadway. No wonder organizers turn to Detroit Local SB and NECA signatory contractor Conti to meet their lighting needs. Watch it here: https://vimeo.com/199188256.

HourPower
Not all linemen climb poles. IBEW members from Grand Junction, Colo., Local 969 and around the country work on XCEL Energy lines in the Rocky Mountains while hanging from helicopters. Learn more on IBEWHourPower.com.

ElectricTV
The Code of Excellence gives NECA and the IBEW an edge over the competition. Northwestern Mutual officials knew that when they brought in the Powering America Team to build the company’s new office tower in Milwaukee. Watch now on ElectricTV.net.

LOCAL LINES

ZZ Top’s Competition (longest beard) — Tim Daley; GQ Style (prettiest beard) — Gene Bailey; The King (best all-around beard) — Jason Nesi; and Future Politician (most money raised) — Ryan Youngman.

Local 1216 thanks everyone who participated and donated. We can’t wait to do it again next year!

Jennifer Schneider, P.S.

IBEW Community Outreach

L.U. 1347 (ees,ema,u), CINCINNATI, OH — IBEW Local 1347 members stepped up to help spread care, warmth and gifts during the holiday season last year. The holiday season can be tough for so many people. Part of our IBEW Local 1347 mission is community outreach. We are proud and humbled by the amazing donations members made for our Thanksgiving Coat Drive and Meals for the Cincinnati Community projects.

During the 2016 Christmas holiday season, we provided every child in Cincinnati Children’s Hospital with a teddy bear. Thank you to the Local 1347 fundraiser participants and to all members who donated their time to deliver over 600 teddy bears to hospitalized children. We are proud to be able to share warmth and care with the community during the holidays.

Andrew Kirk, B.M.

New Projects Underway

L.U. 1701 (atw,ees,loa), OWENSBORO, KY — 2016 was a successful year for Local 1701. Work was good for our membership and several travelers. The 2017 outlook is also optimistic with several projects already underway and more scheduled after the first of the year.

The International Bluegrass Museum in Owensboro is under roof and I.L.S. has the electric contract; Belltime Electric has the work at three Convenient Care Centers in our jurisdiction; union contractors are bidding work at the Hanson, KY, Carhartt manufacturing plant; and several utility plant shutdown projects are scheduled for spring.

Local 1701 held elections in June of 2016. Timothy Blandford was elected business manager, and Andy Daniel was elected president.

Our annual picnic was Sept. 10 at Golfland USA. Members enjoyed a fine meal including BBQ chicken and Boston butt roast.

Thirty-seven service pins were presented at our December meeting for eligible members with years of service ranging from 20 to 65 years. Carroll Hagerman received a 65-year pin. And 50-year pins were awarded to: Virgil Abet, John Babetscher, James Baggett, John Chappell, James Cook, James Kamuf, Jesil Lowe, Larry Mahlon, George Moore, Gordon Payne and Ronnie Townsend.

The 2016 elections have destined Kentucky to become a so-called “right to work” state, with prevailing wage repealed. How this will affect our bidding process and standard of living is uncertain.

[Editor’s Note: On Jan. 7, the Kentucky Senate passed so-called “right-to-work” legislation and approved a bill repealing the state prevailing wage law. To read more, see news article “Kentucky Republicans Sealed Off the Door”]

A Career Highlight

L.U. 1501 (ees,em,mo,pet,ts&i), BALTIMORE, MD — Bus. Mgr./Pres. Dion F. Guthrie attended his 12th straight IBEW International Convention last year. The first International Convention he attended was in Seattle in 1970.

The 39th IBEW International Conventions took place in September 2016 in St. Louis. Bus. Mgr. Guthrie noted that his appointment by Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson to serve on the Finance Committee at the 2016 convention was an honor and one of the highlights of his career.

At the 2016 International Convention, Int. Pres. Emeritus Edwin D. Hill swore in Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson and all of the IBEW leadership team. Renewing our IBEW legacy and charting a new course for our future was clearly on the table and has been achieved.

James Boyd, F.S./P.S.

First Contract Ratified

L.U. 1837 (rtb&u), MANCHESTER, ME — Eversource New Hampshire field technicians and specialists overwhelmingly ratified their first contract agreement. The workers organized under an Armour-Globe NLRB petition and their agreement is an addendum to the existing Utility Group contract at the company.

“We think it is a good agreement for the field techs and I’m pleased we were able to include them in our current contract with Eversource,” said Tom Ryan, IBEW Local 1837 assistant business manager for New Hampshire. “We were able to maintain most of the benefits that our members enjoy.”

One of the biggest successes for the union bargaining team was stabilizing and equalizing the pay rates for the classifications covered by the agreement. Every field technician and specialist received a wage increase to at least cover the cost of their union dues and most received more than that. Since the contract expires on May 31, it is likely that they will receive an additional wage adjustment upon ratification of the successor agreement.

As union members, they will have the opportunity to make proposals and vote for the Utility Group Contract as well as vote for IBEW officers and leadership positions. For the first time, field technicians and specialists now have a contract that guarantees that all work performed outside of their normal schedule will be paid at overtime rates.

The field technicians and specialists are commonly referred to as “writers” and are responsible for work associated with the design, maintenance, construction and operation of the Eversource electric distribution system in the Granite State. Currently, there are 27 workers in the Field Technician A/B/C and Field Technician Specialist classifications.

On the union negotiating team were: technicians Vaughn Taylor and Dan Pariseau; Local 1837 Bus. Mgr. Dick Rogers; Administrative Asst. Sue Ekoja; and Asst. Bus. Mgr. Tom Ryan.

Matthew Beck, Organizer/B.R.

Local Lines

Local 1701 Pres. Andy Daniel (left), 65-year pin recipient Carroll Hagerman (center), and Bus. Mgr. Timothy Blandford.

Union Rights,” posted on the IBEW website at www.ibew.org/media-center/Articles.]

Richard Thomson, P.S.
The chapter meets on the second Friday of the month, from October to May, at 10 a.m. at the South County Civic Center, 16200 Jog Road, in Delray Beach. We welcome all Local 3 retirees to our meetings.

Bob Rosenhouch, Co-Chmn.

**NYC Bus Trip & Holiday Party**

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SUFFOLK CHAPTER — After enjoying bagels, coffee and cake, we started our December meeting. It was reported that our Toys for Tots Drive was very successful due to our members’ generosity. Our Annual Food Drive again hit its mark. We donated over 300 pounds of nonperishable food for Long Island Cares, Harry Chapin Food Bank. At meeting’s close, Chmn. Jack Foley and his wife, Ann, wished everyone a happy holiday season.

Our Annual Holiday Party at the Watermill Caterers was a wonderful success. There was plenty of food, 50/50 basket of cheer, and best of all many good friends to share the day with. We thank Cathy and John Schoening for their hard work to make the party a success. We also thank their committee — Lois and Andy Weiss, Loretta and Frank Bono, Maryann and John Aredit, Eileen and Vinnie Crisostomo — for the beautiful favors. The chairman presented our annual plaque awards to Alan Eimer, Olivia and Hank Schmidt, Cathy and John Schoening, and Michael Zoldack to thank them for their hard work for the club.

Our New York City bus trip was again a great success. Thank you to Olivia and Hank Schmidt for all their work planning the trip. We visited Rockefeller Center and went to see the famous holiday tree, St. Patrick’s Cathedral and Bryant Park. We walked down Fifth Avenue to see the holiday window displays. We also boarded a bus for the ride and got to see street performers at Columbus Circle and along 7th Avenue.

We wish everyone a happy, healthy new year.

Harvey Goldman, P.S.

**Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon**

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER — On Dec. 13 last year, 90 chapter members and guests attended our 29th annual Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon, at the Leewood Golf Club in Eastchester, NY. The beautiful setting, affordable prices, and the fact that the Leewood employees are union members, keeps us coming back year after year.

For 2016, only four of our members became Gold Club members, reaching the golden age of 80. Those members, Sidney Gitler, Michael Brennan, Daniel Greaves Jr. and Neil Peterson, were awarded plaques, recognizing their many years of service to the IBEW.

As we are very supportive of our military, the reading by Carole Mills of the poem “Old Glory” was the perfect ending to a very pleasant afternoon.

Richard Mills, Treas.

**Festive Holiday Party**

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, NORTH FLORIDA CHAPTER — Our chapter had its annual Christmas/Hanukkah party at the Delray Beach Country Club on Friday, Jan. 13. The food and the entertainment were excellent and enjoyed by all the guests.

**Bowling League**

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, NASSAU CHAPTER — Our Nassau Chapter Bowling League is a terrific activity for all. [See photo at bottom, left]

Bowling is a lifetime sport that you can play for, well, your whole life. All of us have bowled as a child with family or at a birthday party, in high school or college on a team or with friends. Bowling is a sport that can grow as you grow, but you do not have to have a 220- or 300- or even a 60-pin game average to enjoy bowling. Bowling is a sport, a social interaction and a low impact exercise all in one. People of any age enjoy bowling. Bowling is a sport, a social interaction and a low impact exercise all in one. People of any age can participate. The oldest player in our Bowling League is 91, and he can still throw a strike.

We meet at Massapequa Lanes on Mondays for open bowling. All club members and friends are welcome to come and play. We play three games each, and with self-serve coffee and bagels all for $5.75 a deal. On Wednesdays we have our regular league bowling of about 25, but any club member can also play as a fill-in or a pacer. Bowling in retirement is a great way to reconnect with old friends or make new ones while staying healthy and active.

John Milligan, P.S.

**Spirit of Camaraderie**

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — As you read this, we will be coming into the spring of a new year. We hope everyone had a great holiday season and wish you all the very best for 2017.

For those who may not be aware, there is a group of retirees who started getting together every other month for lunch. We meet at the Lumberyard Grill and Pub at 201 Main Street in Leawood, Missouri, at 11:30 am on the second Thursday of the odd months. We would welcome any retired members who would like to join us. A big thank you to Bro. Ron Schock for getting this started. As you can see in the accompanying picture below, it’s a pretty good group of retired members.

Mark your calendars: the annual Local 53 Crap-Pie Tournament will be held June 3, 2017, at Truman State Park in Warsaw, Missouri. You can contact the hall for more details.

**At the Local 3, Westchester/Putnam Chapter, Retirees Club holiday luncheon: Richard Mills (left), David Torres, Richard McSpedon, Paul Ryan, Dennis McSpedon, Tom Capurso and Dominic Malandro.**


**Local 53 retired members enjoy camaraderie at a lunch get-together.**
Local 93 will be celebrating its 100-year anniversary in 2017. More details will be passed along as they become available.

It is with sadness that I report we have lost two retirees since our last writing. Bro. Harold “Dean” McKinnie passed away in November. Rest in peace, brother.

Duane Pearce, P.S.

Golf Tournament Fundraiser

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TX — The year 2016 was a very unforgettable year …

Welcome RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TX — The Golf Tournament Fundraiser

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longtime IBEW Local 99 service and leadership. Of great help are the volunteers who donate their time and assistance, and gathering together the items, placing signs of hole sponsors, etc. Anything and everything is very much appreciated. For more information, please give me a call at 830-444-1242 or e-mail me at sandyrogers24@hughes.net.

Sandy Rogers, P.S.

Festivities & Service Awards

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 59, PROVIDENCE, RI — The Local 99 Retirees Christmas Party was held Dec. 20, 2016, at Ralph’s Catering & Kitchen in Cranston, RI, with about 200 people in attendance.

We had a feast of family-style soup, pasta, chicken, roast pork, salad, and dessert and coffee.

Retirees Club Pres. Robert Pierce noted the brothers who passed during 2016 by leading a moment of silence for remembrance. Mary Gember-Shaun received an award in commemoration of her father Raymond’s 60 years of service in the IBWE and his creation of the Local 99 Retirees Club.

Local 99 Bus. Mgr. Michael K. Daley presented service pins to 153 members for IBWE service of more than 25 years. Awarded 45-year pins were: August Peck, Robert Pierce, Richard Reynolds, Charles Laferte, Ronald Leddy, Kenneth Mathieu, Donald Coutu, Gerald Dolin, Frank Dombkowski, Richard Glenn Petrarca, Gary Philkrantz, Frederick Porter, and Bro. Brown, a 36-year member of the Local 99 Retirees Club, played a major part in a successful fundraiser, such as donating items for door prizes and goody bags. Cash donations go to prizes for the winning teams and help finance the luncheon that will be served to all after the tournament. Also of great help are the volunteers who donate their time and assistance, gathering together the items, placing signs of hole sponsors, etc. Everything is very much appreciated. For more information, please give me a call at 830-444-1242 or e-mail me at sandyrogers24@hughes.net.

Sandy Rogers, P.S.

Great Events & Activities — ‘Don’t Wait — Participate’

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 105, HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA — Another successful year for our seniors! Some of our more popular events have been the Tuscuba Club, Bowling team, Best Western Carin Court, Mohawk Raceway, Octoberfest, Pig Roasts, dinners at Michelangelo’s, and trips to St. Jacob’s Market and Playhouse Theatres. Such great times were enjoyed by all, including our returning members — Don’t Wait, Participate! All of the above events were made possible by our hard-working Executive Board. Our sincerest thanks to each and every one of them!

Eden McLean, P.S.

News Report from 1916

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 113, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — A few months ago, a member of our club shared with us an article from 1916 that was reprinted in our local Colorado Springs newspaper, The Gazette. It was titled “Back Pages.” One of the paragraphs in the article contained what I found to be very interesting, because it reported some historical information about our local union. It brought to mind the dedication, commitment and sacrifice of those generations who came before us. This historical account is 105 years old and was written when our local union was only 16 years old.

The 1916 article reads as follows:

“The Colorado Springs local of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has been granted its request for higher wages and better working conditions. The scale raises the wages from $4.50 to $5 a day, and provides for double time pay for overtime after 9 at night or on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays.

It behooves us all, both retirees and active members, to carry on and work to improve that which has been provided by those who came before us. May we ever be vigilant in carrying out the objects of our IBWE.

Bill Campbell, P.S.

Friends of Working Families’

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 154, CHICAGO, IL — Spring is on its way, and most of the population in the northern half of the United States looks forward to saying goodbye to the winter season. The polar vortex that put a deep freeze in the North and reached all the way to the South right before the holiday season was brutal. Thank you to all of our IBWE electricians who work so hard to keep our power on in all types of weather conditions.

I don’t know what the future has in store for us. With Press. Trump and his administration now in place, will this be very good or very bad? I’m hoping that the Democratic Party and elected officials in Washington, D.C., and across the nation who are friends of working families will keep the scales balanced for all the people in America.

The Chicago Cubs won the 2016 World Series, marking a first in 108 years, since 1909. That means many Cubs fans never got to see this in their lifetime. It was a first time in my life so far. Cubs World Series T-shirts, hats and jackets went flying off the store shelves. Five million people lined our streets for the victory parade. It was quite the celebration. I look forward to the 2017 baseball season.

Sue Kleczka, P.S.

2017 Trips & Events

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 164, JERSEY CITY, NJ — Retirees Association Pres. Jerry Ryder oversaw our holiday party on Dec. 21 celebrating Christmas and Hanukkah. The well-attended luncheon brought in donations to help families in need. Attendees enjoyed a great meal, music, dancing and friendship. Thanks to Tom and Eileen Barry and Jim Myers, along with a large cast of helpers, for helping to make the party a success.

We have plans for 2017 including fresh-water and salt-water fishing trips; a New York Yankees game; trip to Atlantic City, Golf League; and a Scholarship Golf Tournament & Raffle. Last year we gave out five scholarships for children/grandchildren of our members, totaling $15,000. Our luncheons bring out about 75-100 brothers each month. Stories fly, exaggerations grow, all in good nature. And we laugh a lot. We enjoyed working with each other in our active days and still have a ball with each other.


Local 164 has a great history of building up the area west of the Hudson River, including Jersey City and Newark, for over 100 years. Great luck to all our active IBWE brothers and sisters for another 100 years of prosperity and success.

Dave Judwin, P.S.

Tragedy Strikes a Member

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 212, CINCINNATI, OH — Our deepest sympathy to the families of recently departed longtime members: Bros. Henry Abel, Robert Schulte and Hubert Brown. Bro. Abel was a 64-year IBWE member, Bro. Schulte was a 33-year member, and Bro. Brown, a 36-year member.

We mourn for all our recently departed members. The death of Bro. Hubert Brown is especially tragic, as he was ejected from his tractor after being rear-ended by a drunk driver, resulting in fatal injuries. Known as “Brownie,” he served Local 212 as a trustee of the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Trust Fund, E-Board member, assistant business agent and organizer. He also served for 20 years as a Whitewater Township trustee.

He was a dedicated and trusted member and friend. We pray for God’s mercy upon all our departed brothers and their families.

More than 150 members and guests enjoyed food, drinks and friendship at our Annual Christmas Party on Dec. 7, at that date marked the 75th anniversary of the beginning of World War II at Pearl Harbor, club members Henry Abel, Jim McNerny and Wayne Myers Sr. were honored for serving our country during that epic era of American history. Kudos also to Mike and Brenda Himes for lovingly parting gifts, including IBWE Christmas ornaments.

Jim Porter, P.S.

2016 Holiday Show & Luncheon

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 257, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The Local 257 Retirees Club finished 2016 with a Christmas show at the Main Street Music Hall at the Lake of the Ozarks and our annual Christmas luncheon on Dec. 13 at guests of the Local 257 retirees. After the luncheon we collected money for St. Jude’s Children’s Research Center, and also held an auction of IBEW-related items that were donated from our retirees’ personal archives. Proceeds from the auc-

Attendees enjoy 2016 Christmas party hosted by Local 257 members.
Standing ovation, and this is the reason why:

Canada — On Friday, Nov. 18, last year, many of our Retirees Club of L.U. 530, Sarnia, Ontario, Sarnia Happenings.

Canada — On Wednesday, Nov. 30, last year over 50 Local 353 retirees took part in this protest with working members, to show their displeasure with this action that removes protection for workers and the public that they had fought for. All organized within five days.

April 19 this year is the date for our 7th Annual Pin/Award Presentation Breakfast to honour members with 50 years of service or more. We removed the service award presentation from the Retirees Christmas Dinner/Dance, as this large presentation and group pictures took away from the Christmas Dance celebration.

This year we will present service awards to those able to attend. To be awarded are: 85 50-year watches and pins; 22 55-year pins; 46 60-year pins; 17 65-year pins; and 17 70-year pins. Pictures will be taken of each group and published in our local's newspaper. This will bring the number of Local 353 living members with 50 or more years of service to approximately 500 members.

"Listen to the heart beat of your union! What five men with vision gave us — financial security in our retirement years! God bless all five of them.

Dekores Melloway, P.S.

Awards Breakfast in April; Building Trades Protest

Retirees Club of L.U. 353, Toronto, Ontario, Canada — On Wednesday, Nov. 30, last year over 5,000 Toronto building tradesmen and women protested on Queen’s Park lawn, due to the Ontario Liberal government’s continuing attacks and dismantling legislation being buried in omnibus bills.

Over 50 Local 353 retirees took part in this protest with working members, to show their displeasure with this action that removes protection for workers and the public that they had fought for. All organized within five days.

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"Listen to the heart beat of your union! What five men with vision gave us — financial security in our retirement years! God bless all five of them.

Nancy Stinson Philbin, P.S.

Welcome to Retirees’

Retirees Club of L.U. 531, Laporte, IN — The Local 531 Retiree’s Christmas Party was Dec. 14. The local union Executive Board catered our holiday lunch. Attendees participated in our annual gift exchange and everyone had a great time as always. We had a good turnout of about 33 members, which included newly retired members as well.

We are always glad to see more interest in our club. Our meetings are the second Wednesday of April, June, August, October and December, at 12 noon at the union hall. All Local 531 retirees are welcome. Thanks to everyone. Be happy and stay safe!

John Talenico, Pres.

Holiday Party a Success; Important Reminder

Retirees Club of L.U. 611, Albuquerque, NM — Our Christmas Party in December was a great success. The party was held at the “Old Wool House” on 1st Street. The food was catered by La Hacienda and the music and decorations were also hired out. Santos Griego was in charge of planning and did a great job. Bill Thompson from the IATC played Santa and gave out holiday stockings. Sorry, no retiree group picture this year … too crowded and busy!

Important Reminder: Please keep your paperwork on file with the local union office updated and current regarding information such as marital status, addresses, family names, etc. It’s important that members keep their union file updated and current, which helps facilitate the death benefit process for family members following a death. It’s simple — contact the union office and update your information to confirm the information on file is correct and current.

In the local’s jurisdiction is increasing as the new Facebook project gets underway in Los Lunas. The local has already had an increase in apprenticeship applications and this work should help the out-of-work list. The project’s first phase will take about three years with more phases to follow. The local union general contractor has a good reputation for hiring union labor.

We extend condolences to the families of several retired members who recently passed away: Raymond C. Tedford, John P. Curran, Norval G. Hughes, Tommie Strand, Selena “Seff” Baca, Robert R. King and Alie A. Dixon.

Tracy Hall, Pres.

A Season of Giving

Retirees Club of L.U. 1245, Vacaville, CA — IBEW Local 1245 retirees celebrated the holiday season through giving. The Yerington IBEW Local 1245 Retirees Club purchased 10 wreaths for “Wreaths Across America,” an annual ceremony that commemorates fallen soldiers by laying wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery, and 1,100 additional locations in all 50 states. The club also donated to Yerington Animal Protection Society, the Yerington Senior Center and a nonprofit dental office called Healthy Smiles. Local 1245’s Reno/Sparks Retirees Club also continued their tradition of giving around the holidays in 2016. By selling raffle tickets at its monthly meetings, the group raised $900 and divided the proceeds evenly among three worthy charities — the Ronald McDonald House, Reno Veterans Guest House and Northern Nevada Children’s Cancer Foundation.

Rebecca Band, P.S.

Local 995 retirees and spouses enjoy a luncheon get-together.

Some of the members are talking about going back to Drusilla Restaurant for a luncheon again in March. This leads me to inviting all you retirees to come join us at our first meeting of the year. It will be the first Monday in February at the union hall. The meeting usually starts at about 8:30 a.m.

I want to let everybody know that Mr. Herman Milton, one of our retirees and a NECA contractor, won the Comstock Award for outstanding contributions to the industry.

W. Roland Goetzman Sr., P.S.

Sarnia Happenings

Retirees Club of L.U. 530, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada — On Friday, Nov. 18, last year, many of our retirees attended the local’s 73rd Annual Dinner Dance Banquet. When Bob Morrison came forward to receive his 60-year service pin, he and Tom Randall received a standing ovation, and this is the reason why.

In 1972, Bob Morrison, Tom Randall, Cecil Mills, Roger Catorford and another member, whose name we could not recall at press time, made it known they wanted Local 530 to have a Pension Fund. It was a bold move at that time, as no construction workers had any pension plan, other than the government plan. Roger Catorford was appointed chairman, and the five men made their convincing arguments to the members. They held meetings until 3 o’clock in the morning. Many younger members were against the idea; they wanted the money to remain in their take-home pay. Because of the wisdom of many of the older men, who would not really benefit from the plan, but who could see that it would be a wonderful benefit for those down the road, the plan was put into motion.

The committee made collections, retroactive to 1962, for the fund and it cost everyone 10 cents an hour. The membership started out with $30,000, minus $3,000 required to hire a pension actuary from Toronto to put the financial facts and figures in place.

Bob Morrison tells me that when he retired in 1997, there was $30 million in the Pension Fund. Bus Mgr. Mick Catorford said there now is $150 million in our Pension Fund. Bob and Tom are the only surviving members of each group and published in our local’s newspaper.

1st Street. The food was catered by La Hacienda and the public that they had fought for. All organized within five days.

April 19 this year is the date for our 7th Annual Pin/Award Presentation Breakfast to honour members with 50 years of service or more. We removed the service award presentation from the Retirees Christmas Dinner/Dance, as this large presentation and group pictures took away from the Christmas Dance celebration.

This year we will present service awards to those able to attend. To be awarded are: 85 50-year watches and pins; 22 55-year pins; 46 60-year pins; 17 65-year pins; and 17 70-year pins. Pictures will be taken of each group and published in our local’s newspaper. This will bring the number of Local 353 living members with 50 or more years of service to approximately 500 members.

"Listen to the heart beat of your union! What five men with vision gave us — financial security in our retirement years! God bless all five of them.

Nancy Stinson Philbin, P.S.

Local 611 retiree Roger Padilla and wife at the local’s 2016 Christmas party.

Invitation to Retirees

Retirees Club of L.U. 995, Baton Rouge, LA — We had a combined luncheon with the wives at the union hall on the first Monday in December. Attendance was good and the food was great.

We are always glad to see more interest in our club. Our meetings are the second Wednesday of April, June, August, October and December, at 12 noon at the union hall. All Local 531 retirees are welcome. Thanks to everyone. Be happy and stay safe!

John Talenico, Pres.

Important Reminder

Retirees Club of L.U. 611, Albuquerque, NM — Our Christmas Party in December was a great success. The party was held at the “Old Wool House” on 1st Street. The food was catered by La Hacienda and the music and decorations were also hired out. Santos Griego was in charge of planning and did a great job. Bill Thompson from the IATC played Santa and gave out holiday stockings. Sorry, no retiree group picture this year … too crowded and busy!

Important Reminder: Please keep your paperwork on file with the local union office updated and current regarding information such as marital status, addresses, family names, etc. It’s important that members keep their union file updated and current, which helps facilitate the death benefit process for family members following a death. It’s simple — contact the union office and update your information to confirm the information on file is correct and current.

In the local’s jurisdiction is increasing as the new Facebook project gets underway in Los Lunas. The local has already had an increase in apprenticeship applications and this work should help the out-of-work list. The project’s first phase will take about three years with more phases to follow. The local union general contractor has a good reputation for hiring union labor.

We extend condolences to the families of several retired members who recently passed away: Raymond C. Tedford, John P. Curran, Norval G. Hughes, Tommie Strand, Selena “Seff” Baca, Robert R. King and Alie A. Dixon.

Tracy Hall, Pres.

A Season of Giving

Retirees Club of L.U. 1245, Vacaville, CA — IBEW Local 1245 retirees celebrated the holiday season through giving. The Yerington IBEW Local 1245 Retirees Club purchased 10 wreaths for “Wreaths Across America,” an annual ceremony that commemorates fallen soldiers by laying wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery, and 1,100 additional locations in all 50 states. The club also donated to Yerington Animal Protection Society, the Yerington Senior Center and a nonprofit dental office called Healthy Smiles. Local 1245’s Reno/Sparks Retirees Club also continued their tradition of giving around the holidays in 2016. By selling raffle tickets at its monthly meetings, the group raised $900 and divided the proceeds evenly among three worthy charities — the Ronald McDonald House, Reno Veterans Guest House and Northern Nevada Children’s Cancer Foundation.

Rebecca Band, P.S.
Growing from the Ground Up

Over years of trying, and four votes that didn’t go their way, as of Jan. 12, the men and women of Baltimore Gas & Electric have something they’ve never had on the job before: a voice. This victory proves to me that the best days of organized labor are still front of us, because our message is getting out. We all want more than a job. We want work that lets us live with dignity, with purpose and the resources to take care of our families. We want work rules that respect us now and retirement plans that respect us later. And the only way to guarantee you get dignity and respect is by joining together.

Baltimore Local 540 will be the first local I will charter as international president. I traveled to Baltimore several times to talk with the BGE workers and to stand in the lines of organizers outside BGE service centers. Those were some of the best times I have had as president because it is the purest expression of the labor movement there is. Side by side, standing up for ourselves and our union and inviting other workers to do the same.

I asked the men and women I met, “Why keep coming back after all those painful losses?” and one reason I heard again and again was that they had met IBEW members when there was a big storm and they came from other, organized utilities, or when the BGE workers went on the road to get the lights back on somewhere else. They told me they heard about the wage and benefit differences, but the BGE workers also said they heard the pride in being a member of the IBEW.

They also heard about a relationship between union and an employer that was far different from the one painted by the union-busters BGE had brought in during previous campaigns. They heard that, when companies want the best for their workers, the IBEW can be the best partner in the world and everybody can do better. Exelon’s experience working with IBEW-represented workers has been positive for the company and its bottom line. It’s also been a boon for our members.

We succeed when we grow from the ground up. It was the connections our members made with BGE workers on those emergency calls that made this campaign successful. Nonunion workers, like those at BGE, pay attention.

We can all take pride in this win. Doing your job well and speaking up about your union is where our next victories will come from.

The Right-to-Work Con

Since 2011, four traditionally pro-union states have gone right-to-work thanks to Republican sweeps in the 2010 election. Missouri passed right-to-work on Feb. 6 and right-to-work bills are pending in two more states due to GOP gains last November.

Even more disturbing, last month Reps. Steve King of Iowa and South Carolina’s Joe Wilson introduced legislation that would make right-to-work the law of the land across the country.

Around the same time King and Wilson put forward their bill, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer told reporters that President Trump was in full support of right-to-work laws.

Supporters claim that it will free workers to make their own decisions and will encourage new job growth and that it has nothing to do with attacking unions.

Let us cut through the rhetoric. Right-to-work has nothing to do with protecting the rights of the individual. No one can be forced to pay union dues if they don’t want to under current labor law — just a maintenance of contract fee.

And it has nothing to do with creating jobs or attracting new business. On the annual surveys of manufacturers by Area Development magazine, right-to-work has never ranked in the top 10 factors influencing location decisions.

The last state before 2010 to go right-to-work was Oklahoma in 2003. Supporters said it would bring desperately needed jobs to the state. Instead, 14 years later the number of new jobs coming to Oklahoma fell by one-third.

Right-to-work is about tilting the balance of political power in America toward the 1 percent and big-money lobbyists; all the while unfairly punishing businesses that play fair and engage in collective bargaining, by letting the government tell employers how to manage their relationships with employees.

Right-to-work advocates will not tell voters the truth, but we will. It is up to us to start making phones calls and letting our representatives know that any legislation that lowers wages and muffles the voice of working families is the wrong direction for this country.

Salvatore J. Chilia
International Secretary-Treasurer
Making America Great

It’s 2017 and we have a new president, maybe not our favorite choice but our president just the same. So what do we do, brothers and sisters? Give up? Or ramp up? Ramp-up sounds like the better choice to me. We are the best trade out there because of our hard work. Making a commitment to get more involved in our union activities, support American-made products, help our brothers and sisters in need, and always work like our general foreman is watching us is a good place to start.

Remember, unions are what made America great, and unions are what can make America great again.

Brian Lewis, Local 9 member
Wilmingtom, Ill.

Once an Organizer...

I am a 46-year member of Jefferson City, Missouri, Local 257 and a retired business representative. My wife and I and our family spent Christmas on an island near Bradenton, Florida, where in the local newspaper, I saw a photo of an unemployed electrician who had traveled to Bradenton to seek work and was eating Christmas dinner at the local Salvation Army. I know from reading social media sites that several locals currently had calls going unfilled. I found myself wishing there was some way I could reach out to the man pictured and explain how he could better his future with the IBEW.

Later that day, I needed to cross a drawbridge. As I neared the bridge control office, bells began ringing and the cross-arms were beginning to come down. The bridge operator asked me to step inside with him while he raised the span to allow a boat through. While I was there, I noticed written on a dry-erase board “IBEW Local 824,” along with a contact name and phone number. I asked and he said, “Don’t tell me you’re an IBEW member?” He was thrilled to tell me that the operators had gotten together in an effort to better their wages and benefits. Since they had joined Tampa Local 824, their wages had almost doubled and they had benefits they had only once dreamed of. He could not praise Local 824 enough.

In just a few hours, I saw one man who would have benefited from asking the IBEW for a hand-up, and another who did ask and could not have been more pleased with the result. Time and again after taking a test drive with IBEW, I have heard organized brothers say, “I wish I had joined years ago.”

Jim Winemiller, Local 257 retiree
Jefferson City, Mo.

Who We Are

Fired While his Wife was in Labor, Man Gets a Second Chance with the IBEW

Lamar Austin became an unwitting public figure when he was fired for missing work while attending the birth of his son on New Year’s Day. News of the incident spread on social media after it was reported by newspaper and television stations in New England. It’s a story that may have a happy ending, however, due in part to the IBEW.

Austin, 30, has received several job offers, but is applying for a spot in Dover, N.H., Local 490’s apprenticeship program after being invited to do so by Business Manager Denis R. Beaudoin. Austin lives in nearby Pittsfield, N.H., with his wife and four children: the youngest, Cainan, will receive the credit for the positive career track of his father after his birth.

“The AEW understands family values,” Beaudoin said. “We live it and support them.”

Austin grew up in Newark, N.J., and served in the U.S. Army before settling in New Hampshire because his wife Lindsay was from there. Their son Cainan was born at about 7:30 a.m. on Jan. 1.

Earlier that morning, Salerno Protective Services informed him he was out of a job as a security guard for failure to show up for work. Austin, who said he informed the company that his wife was in labor, was within his 90-day probationary period. New Hampshire is an “at-will” employment state, meaning employees can be terminated for little reason and without warning. But it struck many as unfair and anti-family. One New Hampshire woman set up a GoFundMe account for the family and several businesses made job offers.

Austin said his mother was a union carpenter and reminded him of the importance of unions for working families. He remembered that and he’d always wanted to be an electrician, so Beaudoin’s offer nailed it.

“Shes always told me that you need some job security,” he said. “As a kid, I didn’t quite understand what she was talking about.”

Austin said he’s good with his hands and a quick learner. He’s talked with Local 490 Training Director Jonathan Mitchell and will officially apply for a spot when he receives his transcript from his New Jersey high school.

“This is part of my job when you see someone saying they want to be an electrician,” Mitchell said. “We reach out to those people and encourage them to come in.”

Both Beaudoin and Mitchell noted Austin has plenty of work ahead. He still must meet the requirements for entry and he’ll have to commit to a five-year apprenticeship program. But they said his military background should work to his advantage.

“We’ve had great experience with military guys before,” Beaudoin said. “They already know you need to be organized. They understand you have to attend classes.”

Austin said he is thankful for the chance. His story has shown up in media outlets all over the world and he did an interview with People Magazine.

“It’s been kind of weird for me,” he said. “At one point, I thought no one really cared about anyone else’s struggles. But at this point, God has showed me that people really do care.”
Billion Dollar Texas Build Lays Path for ‘Clean Coal’

New carbon capture technology could be the solution the struggling coal industry needs.

On Jan. 10, America’s first large-scale “clean coal” power station was declared operational, and IBEW members from Houston Local 66 are playing an integral part in making the groundbreaking technology work.

The billion dollar Petra Nova project, located at NRG Energy’s W.A. Parish power plant in southeast Texas, is the first of its kind to recapture a coal plant’s emissions and extract harmful carbon dioxide from it for commercial use in the U.S. The retrofit to one of the plant’s four existing coal units aims to strip 90 percent of the greenhouse gas each year. Under pressure from environmental regulation and changes in public opinion for decades, the coal industry needs to find a way to clean up its carbon footprint if it’s going to survive long-term. “Petra Nova proves we can do that,” Lucero said.

Although the project captures emissions from just 240 megawatts of the W.A. Parish plant’s more than 3,500 megawatt output, it still qualifies as the largest carbon capture system fitted to a coal plant in the world.

“I’m proud of this system,” Lucero said. “Anything we can do to get our members in on the ground floor of a new clean technology like this is great as far as I’m concerned.” The system and its small gas-fueled generator have also added 15 to 20 bargaining unit jobs to the nearly 200 already at W.A. Parish, mostly for Local 66 members who were in danger of being laid off at one of NRG’s nearby coal plants.

Of course, the real question determining the future of carbon capture and sequestration, or CCS, technology is whether there’s a profit to be made that justifies the expense.

“The short answer,” Hunter says, “is ‘Not right now.’”

In Petra Nova’s case, about $190 million of the total $1 billion cost came from the U.S. government, part of the Department of Energy’s Clean Coal Power Initiative. Tax credits for carbon capture also helped to pad the bottom line. But for NRG and its partner in the project, JX Nippon Oil & Gas Exploration Corp., the real money comes from a unique plan the two companies have to make the captured CO₂ work for them.

Just 80 miles to the southwest, the West Ranch oil field has been in operation since 1938, having produced 390 million barrels of crude in its lifetime. But, as with all oil fields, they eventually stop producing on their own, leaving millions of barrels of oil in the ground and billions of potential profit there with it.

That’s where the CO₂ comes in. Through a process called CO₂ enhanced oil recovery, the West Ranch field is pumping liquid carbon dioxide captured by the Petra Nova system and pumping it into new wells, where it mixes with leftover oil and allows crews to extract more of what’s left in the ground. Much of the CO₂ is then “sequestered” underground in the oil’s place, where it solidifies over time, doing none of the environmental damage it would have done if released into the atmosphere. Since last September, Petra Nova had captured and pumped 100,000 tons of liquid CO₂ to West Ranch by the start of the year.

The process has been used since the early 1970s, but it has never been coupled with carbon capture from a coal plant. In oil production, the initial recovery phase often leaves 80 to 90 percent of oil trapped in place once standard pumping has been completed. That leads to a secondary phase, where water is pumped into the ground, “repressurizing” the wells to allow more oil to be extracted. Even after this effort, as much as 50 to 70 percent of the oil is still out of reach.

The third phase, using captured liquid CO₂, allows oil producers to give new life to depleted oil fields. NRG hopes production at West Ranch will skyrocket from about 300 barrels a day to as much as 15,000 using Petra Nova’s captured gas.

“Any [per barrel of oil], we’re economically viable, which means that it can pay all the debt, it can pay for the capital cost, it can pay for the operating cost, and it actually makes a bit of money to pay for this,” NRG spokesman David Knox told IBEW News.

But is it enough? Hunter isn’t so sure — yet. “When they started planning this project,” he said, “oil was up at $160 per barrel or more. There was a near-universal assumption that the government was going to put a price on carbon emissions. When you combined that with an existing tax credit for capturing CO₂, it made a lot of sense. But with oil at $50 per barrel, I don’t think you’ll see many more companies trying this near-term.”

NRG has admitted as much. “At $100 [per barrel], this project would make an incredible amount of money,” Knox said. With prices what they are at present, however, the company has no plans to build a second CCS system.

Still, Hunter and Lucero say Petra Nova provides hope for the future of carbon capture. “Even at just 240 megawatts, this is still CO₂ that would be spewing into the atmosphere,” Hunter said. “This system is grabbing that, using it to produce a valuable commodity, and then sequestering the carbon underground where it doesn’t damage the environment.”

“That makes lots of people happy, plus it’s putting IBEW members to work. If they can figure out the economics, we could look at the future of coal power, and at even more IBEW jobs installing and running these kinds of systems all over the U.S. and Canada.”