In their first 100 days in power, the Trump administration and the Republican Congress have repealed and blocked worker safety regulations that were years, sometimes decades, in the making.

Through legislative action, executive orders and the use of the Congressional Review Act, the executive and legislative branches jointly and repeatedly shifted the cost and responsibility of keeping workers safe from corporations to workers and the public.

In total, IBEW Safety Department Director Dave Mullen said Republicans in Congress have targeted more than 225 rules and standards affecting U.S. workers.

But even more than specific regulations, Republicans have the power to achieve a decades-old dream of dismantling the entire system of workplace and consumer protections built since the birth of the labor movement and cemented into place during the New Deal.

The 2016 Republican party platform called that system “the quiet tyranny of the ‘Nanny State.’”

The Occupational Safety and Health Act, requiring employers to protect their workers from preventable injury and death, is called “exploitation.”

The regulations that bar bankers from ripping people off are “burdensome.”

The Environmental Protection Act’s bans against dumping toxic chemicals into waterways are called “punishing.”

Now that they have all the levers of power in their control, Republicans are delivering on their platform’s promise to “make regulations minimally intrusive” and “respectful toward the creation of new and small businesses.”

“They have been making regulation synonymous with burdens, with costs,” said Celine McNicholas, labor counsel for the Economic Policy Institute.

“By only focusing on the cost to business of keeping workers safe, they ignore the cost to everyone else when workers get hurt.”

Getting rid of workplace protections doesn’t just shift the economic burden from companies to workers, it increases costs to everyone. The company saves money by not providing facemasks that filter out asbestos, but the cost of treating long term respiratory illness, premature death and disability vastly exceeds the savings to the company.

In fact, every regulation, by law, goes through a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Office of Management and Budget. On average, McNicholas said, for every $1 a regulation “costs,” it saves or returns $7.

“Someone benefits from repealing or delaying rules,” McNicholas said. “We should always ask who it is? Is it workers?”

SMASHING WORKER PROTECTIONS

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SAFETY REGULATIONS continued on page 2
SAFETY UNDER ATTACK

Continued from page 1

‘Ludicrous. Meritless. Insane’

Mullen said he is most concerned, so far, about an executive order issued in January calling for executive agencies to get rid of two regulations whenever a new one is issued. When he signed it, Trump said the U.S. can “cut regulations by 75 percent.”

“It is ludicrous. Meritless. Insane,” Mullen said. “It’s like saying that asbestos causes cancer, but if you want to protect your workers from asbestos you have to get rid of seatbelts in their trucks and take away their full protection.”

McNicholas is also puzzled by the order.

“If you just wanted to make things randomly worse, it would look like this order,” she said. “You would line up all the regulations and target the ones that cost the most to implement in the short term, ignore any information about the benefit they provide, and kill them.”

Trump also went after specific standards.

In March, Trump ordered the Department of Labor to delay implementation of the silica dust standard. Silica dust is a known carcinogen commonly found at any construction or mining site where concrete is sawn, ground, milled, or hammered. In other words, nearly all of them.

Attempts to reduce exposure to silica have been ongoing for decades, Mullen said, and OSHA has been in the process of issuing new regulations since at least Obama’s first term. The final rule, which was set to go into effect in June, came after years of consultation with industry, labor and health experts.

Trum, however, delayed implementation for three months and reopened the rule for additional guidance.

The National Association of Home Builders lauded the order, saying it was “pleased.”

“There is no reasonable justification for delaying this rule. It has been studied to death and that is what is at stake here: 600 lives, every year. From dust. Six hundred construction workers every year will leave behind husbands and wives and kids and communities that rely on them from completely preventable deaths. For what? To save a few hundred or few thousand bucks on gear,” Mullen said. “It’s [baloney], Complete [baloney].”

In March, Trump also signed an order that requires the head of each federal agency to appoint a regulatory reform officer to identify existing regulations for replacement or repeal. No directives have been issued about how they would be selected or what qualifications they would need to have.

“Think about how complicated some of the safety issues are in the jobs our members do. Construction sites. Power plants. Shipyards. Old buildings, new buildings. Will this person, appointed by a president committed to gutting safety regulations, look out for us? Even if they wanted to keep workers safe, will they have the knowledge to do it?” Mullen said. “We have no reason to think they will. We just don’t know.”

In late April, Trump also launched another front on his battle against workplace and consumer protections when he chose Neomi Rao to run the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

A formerly low profile, technical office buried in the Office of Management and Budget, OIRA ensures regulations issued by executive agencies align with best practices and technical standards. They also issue the government’s official assessment of how much a regulation will cost and what its benefits will be.

In the past, the cost-benefit analysis was a technical question, left to politically neutral civil servants who were experts in their field. But Rao, a non-technical expert, she is a law professor and former clerk to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

Rao has been a vocal opponent of the existing regulatory system, well outside the mainstream of legal opinion even in conservative circles, McNicholas said.

As the Washington Post reported, “In past administrations, the OIRA administrator has played the role of a check on ideology, but with Rao and many department chiefs all pushing for deregulation, OIRA’s role as objective analyst could be compromised.”

The Death Penalty for Safety Regulations: The Congressional Review Act

At a press conference in February, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said, “We’re directly attacking the over-regulation issue, thanks to the Congressional Review Act, and plan to take as many of these job-killing regulations off the books as possible.”

The CRA is one of the most powerful, yet least well-known tools, at the government’s disposal to attack worker protections. It gives Congress the authority to repeal any regulation issued in the last 90 “session” days of the previous administration. The process is rapid, cannot be filibustered, and if successful, it bars the executive branch from issuing a “substantially similar” regulation until a new law is passed expressly authorizing it.

Unlike an executive order, which can be easily reversed by the next president, regulations repealed under the CRA are gone until the opposition party takes back both the White House and Congress.

“It is the death penalty for regulations,” Mullen said. “It is more than weakening a rule. It is more than repealing it. It’s a black hole.”

Congress can target rules passed by the Obama administration at least as far back as May 2016 and they had until mid-May to act.

Before Trump took office, the CRA had only been used once, to repeal ergonomic safety standards issued in the last months of President Bill Clinton’s administration.

Since Trump took office, however, the CRA has been used successfully at least 17 times, at least four of which directly affect worker protections. The U.S. Senate is considering two more resolutions.

Of those regulations that have already been repealed under the CRA, McNicholas and Mullen identified many that clearly leave IBEW members more vulnerable, on the job and after they retire.

First, Trump and the Republican Congress killed the Occupational Safety and Health record-keeping rule. This rule required employers to keep records of on-the-job injuries for five years, replacing the previous six-month standard. The new rule improved the chances that Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors investigating incidents would find previous violations they may have missed as well as patterns of negligence.

By revoking the five-year standard, the Trump administration is imposing a kind of corporate memory loss, but only about workplace injuries. Companies are required by the IRS to keep tax records for at least three years, seven if they claim certain kinds of losses.

“There is no cost in keeping paperwork you already created. They don’t have space on their computers for another document,” Mullen said.

The President also signed the CRA repeal of the Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces rule which prevented contractors that cheat their own workers or violated basic safety standards from getting additional contracts with the federal government.

McNicholas said the repeal sets a new, lower standard, for federal contractors. Instead of rewarding companies that do right by their workers — or at the very least staying neutral — the federal government is now hamstringing the good guys.

“If says ‘This is how we expect you to bid: low cost, low safety, low respect for workers,’” McNicholas said. “Severe injuries? No problem. Deaths? No problem. This is now the standard operating procedure. It’s what makes you competitive for federal money.”

Congressional Action: Highway to the 19th Century

Despite the delays, repeals and orders from the White House, the power to dramatically change workplaces for the worse lies down Pennsylvania Avenue with Congress.

Several bills are under consideration in the House of Representatives that all claim to update the entire regulatory
system that has been built up over the last 100 years.

“Whenever members of Congress start talking about modernizing regulations I put my hand over my heart and check for my wallet,” Mullen said. “Based on what these bills actually do, modernizing looks like an awful lot like making the future look like the past.”

One bill would require congressio

Rules protecting workers from silica and beryllium have been delayed, paralyze the regulatory process if not by “interested parties,” an invitation to.

It would also require the agency to analyze

agencies to put compliance cost consider-

the federal government. It would require

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But, Mullen said, the lesson to all IBEW

members is watch out for one another.

“For now, the reality is, safety has to

be in each individual’s hands. It is not a

click it anymore—your first, second and

third job is to get home safe and whole,”

Mullen said.

Candidate Trump had a message that was more appealing to working-class

voters, including many union members, than the traditional pro-corporate mes-

sage of the Republican Party.

The evidence of the first few months

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“Reading his campaign speeches is a reminder of how hollow the promises he made are,” McNicholas said. “It was all talk before. It is his actions we have to

watch now.”

One of the bills, McNicholas said, give regulated entities, people or

organizations, more opportunities to bend the law their way outside the public hear-

ing process that unions and public inter-

est advocates will be restricted to.

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watch now.”

New York Local 3 members walk a picket line after about 1,800 members and employees of Charter/Spectrum went on strike against the company on March 28.

With Talks at a Standstill, New York Officials Step Up for Striking Charter Employees

ew York Local 3 hasn’t been get-

ting anywhere with Charter/Spec-

trum officials in its battle for a fair

contract for striking workers. That caught the attention of leaders of the city’s five boroughs, who have taken

issue with the company’s refusal to

negotiate even while it is bringing in mil-

lions in profits. Meanwhile, its CEO’s sala-

ry has quadrupled, making him the high-

est paid in America last year.

The nearly 1,800 Charter employees

represented by Local 3 worked without a

contract for nearly four years before going

on strike March 28. In early April, New York City Public Advocate Letitia Adams

wrote a letter to Charter CEO Tom Rut-

dedge, saying the workers had “continued

working in expectation that a contract

would be negotiated by new manage-

ment,” referring to Charter’s merger with

longtime city cable provider Time Warner

Cable in 2016.

The public advocate is the sec-

ond-highest elected official in New York

City. Adams’ letter was dated April 4 and

co-signed by 35 members of the city coun-

cil, Local 3 represents technicians, engi-

neers and warehouse workers at Charter/ Spectrum. Local 3 officials noted they have reached good-faith agreements with every single predecessor company since 1972.

“Just as these workers stayed on

the job in good faith, we are calling on

Charter to come to the table in good faith

to resolve this dispute and do what is

right for its employees and its custom-

ers,” Adams wrote.

No talks had been held by early May

and none are scheduled, Local 3’s business representative Derek Jordan said.

“They haven’t moved off their initial

proposals and haven’t shown they’re going to,” Jordan said.

Charter officials have emphasized

they are offering workers a raise, but it

won’t come close to offsetting proposed
cuts in pensions, 401(k) plans, health

benefits, paid holidays, accrued sick time and contributions to an educational trust fund that allowed employees and their spouses to attend college.

The company also would like to con-

tract out some work previously done by Local 3 chapters. Charter has brought in replacement workers from around the country to fill in for the striking workers, which Local 3 believes is a violation of its franchise agreement with the city.

All that wasn’t lost on Adams.

“(Charter) is seeking to eliminate or

diminish basic provisions of overtime,

healthcare and retirement security,” she

wrote. “Charter is not on the verge of

bankruptcy or amidst any hardship that

would justify such steep concessions of its working-class families. In fact, you

have record profits.”

Support from public officials is

always important, but even more so when a company refuses to negotiate, Jordan said. It lets customers know that what Local 3 is asking for is reasonable, he said.

Three legislators from Queens — one a city council member, the other two members of New York’s General Assem-

bly — followed up with their own letter to

Charter officials.

“We urge you to return to the bargain-

ning table with a new approach, one that will

lead to a speedy and fair resolution of the

contract dispute,” they wrote. “You must

protect the workers that make your compa-

ny function and the New York consumers

who rely on your service with as much fer-

or as you protect your bottom line.”

The company reported profits of

$189 million in the third quarter of 2016,

nearly triple the amount it reported during the same period of the previous year.

Charter attributed that to closing on its

purchase of Time Warner Cable and Bright

House Networks, which makes Charter

the second-largest cable provider in the

country after Comcast.

Rutledge took advantage of a big

grant of stock options to boost his pay to $38.5 million in 2016, the Wall Street

Journal reported. His compensation had been $6.4 million in 2015.

Yet, despite those profits, the

company has been slow to answer consumer complaints. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman sued Charter earlier this year over allegations it failed to meet pledges to update internet speeds.

That’s part of another issue in the
dispute. Technicians for the company are routinely sent to a customer’s home with company officials knowing the equipment won’t fix the problem and promised inter-

net speeds are unobtainable, Jordan said.

Those workers are disciplined when a company representative makes a return trip to the home. Charter has resisted pro-

posals to change the policy even while knowing it is unfair to workers, he said.

“They are punishing us for service failures, even if it has nothing to do with craftsmanship,” Local 3 member and

Charter technician Dennis Burgess told the Stamford Advocate. “The new man-

agement doesn’t care about craftsmen-

ship, the equipment or anything except making their numbers look good.”

When the New York State Public Ser-

vice Commission approved Charter’s pur-

chase of Time Warner in 2016, it anticipat-

ed “significant investments” that would likely lead to an expansion in the compa-

ny’s New York workforce.

“Surely the PSC did not contemplate

Charter engaging in negotiations that seek to undermine the financial livelihood of New Yorkers,” Adams wrote.
IBEW Helps Railcar Construction Return to Chicago’s South Side

Trains, trolleys and legendary sleeping cars rolled out of the Pullman Company’s Chicago factory for a century until it was shuttered in 1981. Its demise signified the end of railcar production in the United States.

Now, with the IBEW and Chicago Local 134 leading the way, modern railcars will be built not far from the site of that old plant.

CRRC Sifang North America, a subsidiary of a China-based railcar manufacturer, formalized plans to build a $1.3 billion facility in the Hegewisch neighborhood during a ceremony on March 16. It will construct up to 846 of the new 7000-series railcars for the Chicago light-rail system.

Officials hope that will lead to work on railcars for other public transportation projects across the country. CRRC Sifang is bidding to build new cars for California’s BART, which services San Francisco and Oakland, and METRA, which services northeastern Illinois, and plans to build them at the Chicago facility.

About six of the plant’s 170 full-time manufacturing employees in Chicago will be represented by the IBEW, Local 134 Business Manager Donald Finn said. Construction will provide work for possibly another 150 members.

“We have a project labor agreement on the whole facility,” Finn said. “From the first shovel going in that ground, there won’t be anyone but union people working there.”

It’s not only a boost for IBEW members, but also for a struggling neighborhood.

“IBEW Training is Key

Both Ohde and Finn said good-paying manufacturing jobs now require technical training that’s increasingly like apprenticeship programs in other IBEW sectors.

Finn said Sifang officials were particularly impressed when they looked at the IBEW’s training programs.

“It’s gratifying to work with an international company to bring jobs to the United States,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. “That’s exciting because it fights back against the notion that manufacturing jobs should be fleeing the country.

“But in one way, it’s no different than what we’ve been doing for the last 125 years. We’re providing hard-working men and women with the skills and training they need to move into the middle class. That’s the IBEW at its best and I’m so proud we’ve had a leading role in bringing this facility to Chicago.”

Along with Emanuel, Illinois Sens. Richard Durbin and Tammy Duckworth attended the dedication ceremony. Finn and Sixth District Vice President David J. Ruhmkorff represented the IBEW.

Ohde said he’s lived on the south side his entire life and witnessed the change in manufacturing trends. Too many have been troublesome and harmed working families.

“This one will provide a needed boost. I got goosebumps when I was there for the groundbreaking,” Ohde said. “It’s pretty emotional.”

“IT’s a huge job for the IBEW, but just as important, it’s great manufacturing jobs for this community,” he added. “Instead of going overseas, they’re coming here.”
The Electrical Worker  | June 2017

IBEW Health Plan Fuels Organizing Boom at Texas Utility

At its core, the IBEW/NECA Family Medical Care Plan has a pretty simple mission — to provide high-quality health insurance to IBEW members and their families at the best possible price.

But in Texas, leaders at Houston Local 66 have found the FMCP to be much more than that, namely as an extraordinarily effective organizing tool.

The plan, which was started in 2006 primarily for construction locals, has expanded over the last 12 years to cover members working in multiple branches, including utilities, telecommunications and manufacturing. Today, it has more than 95,000 participants at 55 local unions, and the longer it grows, the greater the cost savings it is able to achieve.

FMCP Executive Director Larry Bradley takes great pride in the fact that, because FMCP members care so much for profits, advertising or ever having to do it because they love the IBEW. They’re doing it because it makes financial sense.

That financial sense is whatprompted Local 66 Business Manager Greg Lucero and executives at CenterPoint Energy to adopt the FMCP for active employees during contract talks in 2013.

Making the switch saved the company almost $2 million a year for what turned out to be a much better health plan for members, he said, and everyone on both sides of the negotiating table walked away happy.

The plan was working so well, in fact, that the company and Local 66 agreed a year later to bring CenterPoint’s future retirees into the FMCP as well at a full 100 percent subsidy.

Shortly after CenterPoint’s active employees joined the FMCP at the start of 2014, Lucero brought the plan into contract negotiations with the STP nuclear plant southwest of Houston. The company’s 375 IBEW employees and another 60 or so retirees would be covered by FMCP starting in May. Lucero said even with the free retiree health care, the move still saved the company $250,000 annually.

But that wasn’t the only benefit.

In July, the plant’s reactor operators voted to join the union, enticed by the generous medical coverage the IBEW had already been able to secure for its members.

By August, two more units — maintenance planners and chemistry department — had voted to join the union as well.

In February 2015, STP’s metrology lab employees followed suit, and a little more than a year later, in May 2016, all four new units ratified their first contracts.

Last November, a fifth unit, the procedure writers, elected to join Local 66, adding another 13 members once they reach a first agreement, expected this summer, as five other units at the nuclear plant have expressed interest in joining the IBEW.

In all, nearly 120 new members have joined the union, bringing almost 50 percent of the nuclear plant’s employees into bargaining units.

“Since we adopted the FMCP, we saw a lot of interest from members who are looking for change and better insurance than what the company has,” Lucero said.

That financial sense is what prompted the IBEW during contract talks in 2013 to recommend the FMCP to the STP nuclear plant in Palacios, Texas, as well as other local unions.

“I believe that our membership voted to join the IBEW/NECA Family Medical Care Plan in 2014, and leaders at Local 66 have been using the plan’s popularity to organize new members ever since,” Lucero said.
When Fredericton, New Brunswick, Local 37 Business Manager Ross Galbraith learned NB Power had won Canada's Best Health and Safety Culture award for 2016, he was happy for their achievement, but not especially surprised.

Over his career, Galbraith, who is also a member of the International Executive Council, has worked diligently with the Local 37 membership and leadership to make safety the local’s top priority. That work has been reinforced by New Brunswick Power, the local utility that employs roughly 30 percent of Local 37’s members.

“There are a lot of things that go into being a good union member and a good employee, but nothing is more important than working safely so you can come home to your family at the end of a long day,” Galbraith said.

The award is the top prize in the Canadian Safes Employer competition. It’s unique in that it’s partly chosen based on results of employee surveys that measure how deeply the concepts of health and safety have permeated the culture of the workplace.

“For our members at NB Power to have earned this prize is recognition of the pride they take in their work and the commitment they have to their own safety and to the well-being of their union brothers and sisters,” Galbraith said.

Duff Boyd, NB Power’s director of health and safety, told Canadian Occupational Safety Magazine, “Of course job competence is important, but how you get the work done, for us, is far more important than how fast you get it done.”

Company executives cited their partnership with the IBEW as a major factor in creating the safety culture that led to the award, principles outlined in a document called the NB Power/IBEW Shared Commitment to Safety.

The commitment, which codifies the employer-employee consensus on six key elements of the safety culture, grew out of a Canada-wide effort from utility locals to make safety the local’s top priority. That, and we’re going to keep working to maintain that and we’re going to keep working to do even better.”

2,000 members.

The first bullet point for “Safety,” states, “We make safety our No. 1 priority.” “This award for our members at NB Power shows they’re living up to that commitment,” Galbraith said. “We’re proud of that, and we’re going to keep working to make even better.”

A u moment où le géant d’af- faires Ross Galbraith du sec- tion locale 37 situé à Fredericton, Nouveau-Brunswick, a appris que NB Power a remporté le prix pour la meilleure culture de la santé et de la sécurité au Canada en 2016 (Canada’s Best Health and Safety award for 2016), il était heureux de leur réalisation, mais n’était pas spécifiquement étonné.

Au cours de sa carrière, Galbraith, également membre du comité exécutif international, a travaillé sans relâche avec les membres et les leaders de la section locale 37 pour faire de la sécurité une priorité absolue au sein du local. Ce tra- vail a davantage été mis en évidence par le New Brunswick Power, le service public local qui embauchait environ 80 pour cent des membres de la section locale 37.

“Il y a un bon nombre de critères qui entreront en ligne de compte pour être un bon membre du syndicat et un bon employé, mais il n’y a rien de plus impor- tant que de travailler de façon sécuritaire et de renoncer à la maison pour voir votre famille après une longue journée de tra- vail,” dit Galbraith.

Le prix est unique, parce qu’il est en partie sélectionné basé sur les résultats des sondages auprès des employés qui mesurent la manière dont les con- cepts de santé et de sécurité ont pro- fondément marqué la culture dans le milieu de travail.

“Pour nos membres chez NB Power qui ont remporté le prix, annonce une recon- naissance de fierté pour leur travail et l’en- gagement qu’ils ont pour leur propre sè- curité et la bien-être de leurs confères et de leurs consorts,” dit Galbraith.

Le directeur de santé et sécurité Duff Boyd chez NB Power a dit en Canadi- an Occupational Safety Magazine, « bien sûr que la compétence professionnelle est importante, mais pour nous c’est la façon dont le travail a été exécuté qui est plus importante que la vitesse à laquelle le travail a été exécuté. »

Les dirigeants des entreprises men- tionnent que leur collaboration avec la FIOE a été le facteur décisif pour mettre en place la culture axée sur la sécurité, ce qui a rendu possible de remporter le prix, on retrouve ces principes au sein du doc- ument NB Power/IBEW Shared Commit- ment to Safety.

“C’est un endroit où toutes ces sections locales peuvent piper des idées chez l’un et les autres et partager de l’information et de découvrir ce qui fonctionne ou pas. » Hayes mentionne que le NB Power/ IBEW Shared Commitment Safety a été conçu depuis une idée qui a été partagée au cours d’une réunion CUSP avec des représentants de la section locale 28 de Vancouver en Colombie-Britannique, qui avait développé un document semblable avec BC Hydro quelques années plus tôt. « Nous avons aimé l’idée, et nous avons proposé à NB Power et ils l’ont aimé aussi, » dit Hayes, « et cela a porté fruit en remportant le prix. »

Voici les six éléments clés du docu- ment auquel les membres de la FIOE et les dirigeants obéissent:

- Suivre les règles;
- Planifier la sécurité dans notre travail;
- Refuser un travail non sécuritaire;
- Signaler pour que nous puissions tous nous améliorer;
- Être un leader en matière de sécurité;
- Avoir le courage (exprimez-vous)

De l’avis de l’auteur, cette disposition est une excellente idée, mais personne n’a demandé de détails.

“Quelques uns d’entre nous jugeons nécessaire de trouver un endroit pour mettre l’accent sur la sè- curité, aucune conversation de contrats, ni de politiques, simplement la sécurité, » dit Hayes. Le groupe c’est nommé CUSP, le Canada Utility Safety Program, (le programme de sécurité dans les services publics au Canada). En juin, le groupe de 30-35 représentants des sections locales travaillant dans le service public a tenu sa réunion en Alberta.

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“C’est un endroit où toutes ces sections locales peuvent piper des idées chez l’un et les autres et partager de l’information et de découvrir ce qui fonctionne ou pas.” Hayes mentionne que le NB Power/IBEW Shared Commitment Safety a été conçu depuis une idée qui a été partagée au cours d’une réunion CUSP avec des représentants de la section locale 28 de Vancouver en Colombie-Britannique, qui avait développé un document semblable avec BC Hydro quelques années plus tôt. “Nous avons aimé l’idée, et nous avons proposé à NB Power et ils l’ont aimé aussi, » dit Hayes, « et cela a porté fruit en remportant le prix. »

Voici les six éléments clés du docu- ment auquel les membres de la FIOE et les dirigeants obéissent:

- Suivre les règles;
- Planifier la sécurité dans notre travail;
- Refuser un travail non sécuritaire;
- Signaler pour que nous puissions tous nous améliorer;
- Être un leader en matière de sécurité;
- Avoir le courage (exprimez-vous)

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CIRCUITS

They’re the Experts: Iowa Generating Plant Members Recognized

Emery Generating Station in Clear Lake, Iowa, has been recognized as one of the best power plants in the nation and it’s due in part to the work of its employees, many of whom are members of Cedar Rapids Local 204.

The Alliant Energy-owned plant earned a spot in a list of the top 20 combined cycle gas-fired power plants for heat rates, a measure of the plant’s efficiency. The list is published annually in Power Engineering magazine.

“It’s an amazing accomplishment,” said Kathy Lubbert, Local 204 member and materials coordinator. “And it’s because of the culture here.”

“Everyone here is striving for the same thing.”
— Mick Merrill, Local 204 steward

Local 204’s 16 members work as control room operators, assistant operators, maintenance technicians, electricians, warehouse procurement materials coordinators and in instrument control. Emery operates two gas turbines and a steam turbine.

“Everyone here is striving for the same thing,” said Local 204 steward Mick Merrill, a maintenance technician. “Every megawatt matters.”

Lubbert and Merrill say there is a sense of ownership among the members, which contributes to the plant’s efficiency. Decisions come from management, but everyone has a voice and is encouraged to offer input, they said.

“We don’t look at it as ‘us’ and ‘them;’ it’s ‘we,’” said plant manager Craig Crawford. “Everyone shares ideas — good or bad — and everyone gives and accepts feedback.”

Safety at the plant is equally important; it’s been 13 years without a loss time accident.

“To go as long as they have [without an accident] is quite an accomplishment,” said Local 204 Business Manager David George. “They take pride in their work, and in doing it right the first time.”

Each day begins with a sit-down meeting among employees. They talk about everything from complacency and fatigue to maintaining balance and traction, whatever is needed to complete their responsibilities. If rigging is needed, for example, they make sure the proper protective equipment is worn.

“The same thing.”

Due in part to the work of its employees, Iowa, has been recognized as one of the best power plants in the nation and it’s Iowa Generating Plant ‘them;’ it’s ‘we,’” said plant manager Jim Smith.

“Everyone here is striving for the same thing,” said plant manager Jim Smith. “We don’t look at it as ‘us’ and ‘them;’ it’s ‘we,’” said plant manager Jim Smith.

Mick Merrill, Mark Lowe, Kathy Lubbert, Shaikoski, Mike Heaford, Mike Borrelli, Baker Jr., Todd Mathers, Steve King, Neal Lubbock, Abram Frein, Jeff Hawbaker, Ted Baker Jr., Todd Mathers, Steve King, Neal Shaikoski, Mike Heaford, Mike Borrelli, Mick Merrill, Mark Lowe, Kathy Lubbert, Jeff Calland, Hugh Hugi, Gary Johnson and Jim Smith.

In Canadian Schools, Prioritizing On-the-Job Safety

In Canada, young workers are three times more likely to be injured or killed in a workplace accident than more experienced counterparts. That’s why an organization called My Safe Work goes into high schools to educate students on workplace safety — before they enter the job market.

In April, Hamilton, Ontario, Local 205 RENEW/NextGen members Rich Dipietro and Sam Mercel joined a team from My Safe Work at Cathedral High School to talk to students about their own experiences with safety on the job.

“We’re lucky at the IBEW,” said Mercel, 26, an inside wireman and journeyman welder. “Safety is part of our training from day one, but young people in non-union jobs or trades don’t often get the same education.”

My Safe Work founder Rob Ellis knows the consequences of improper training all too well. In 1999, his son, David, was killed at age 18 on his second day on the job at an industrial bakery. His compelling story is the starting point at the forums he and his organization hold, which reach more than 100,000 students each year.

Volunteers like Dipietro and Mercel, along with business leaders and other members of the local communities, called “safety champions” by program leaders, then participate in a question-and-answer session where they connect with students using examples from their own careers.

“The main session, and then a smaller setting afterwards in classrooms, was a great opportunity to talk to the kids about the IBEW and about how you shouldn’t feel afraid to say ‘no’ if an employer asks you to put yourself in a risky situation,” Mercel said. “University isn’t the right choice for every kid, so I was glad we got to introduce them to the trades and to a union where we prioritize safety,” he said.

First District Strategic Coordinator Kate Walsh says she’s been encouraging NextGen committees at locals across Canada to get involved with My Safe Work whenever the organization comes to schools in their communities. “These kids relate to people who are closer to their own age, so young IBEW members can have a real impact.”

Walsh, who attended the Hamilton session with Dipietro and Mercel, said one young woman in the classroom session asked her, “What’s a union?” a question she was pleased to answer. “If we can teach these young people that there are opportunities for great, lifelong careers while we talk to them about safety, that’s an added benefit,” Walsh said.

Toronto Local 636 Business Manager Barry Brown is thrilled to see more young IBEW members across Canada getting involved with My Safe Work. His local has been involved with the organization for years, participating when they can and donating the proceeds of an annual golf tournament to the group for at least five years.

“The late First District Vice President Phil Flemming introduced us to Rob Ellis and My Safe Work years ago,” Brown said, “And it’s a cause we’re really committed to. I’m happy to see other locals, and especially young members, getting involved.”

As for Mercel, he says he’s looking forward to his next opportunity to be a “safety champion” with My Safe Work. “It was my first time participating in an event like that, and it’s nice to think you’re helping some young person learn to ask the questions that will keep them safe on their first job.”

www.rwe.org

Find breaking news and more stories about your brothers and sisters on the IBEW website — and get the online version of the Electrical Worker: www.IBEW.org.

YouTube

San Francisco Local 8 members are powering a project dubbed the Grand Central Station of the West. The Transbay Transit Center will bring together 11 different transit systems, serving 100,000 people a day. Watch it here: bit.ly/IBEWTransbay.

Vimeo

Renovating a historic theater and broadcasting a nightly show isn’t easy. New York Local 1212 just makes it look easy. Watch them reinvent the Ed Sullivan Theater for “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert”: bit.ly/IBEWLateShow.

HourPower

The Hour Power Award winners were honored at the 2017 Construction and Maintenance Conference. Find out who won instructor, journeyman and apprentice of the year at IBEWHourPower.com.

ElectricTV

The District Detroit is a 50-block investment in the Motor City’s renaissance and the NCD/IBEW team is helping to power it. Watch how the Code of Excellence can be part of a city’s revial at electricdtv.net.
THE IBEW's 2017 PHOTO CONTEST

ENTER TODAY! DEADLINE: OCT. 31

1ST PLACE: $200
2ND PLACE: $150
3RD PLACE: $100
HONORABLE MENTION: $50

A lot goes into a good photo: light, contrast, composition. But more than that, it needs to tell a story. And who better to tell the stories of the IBEW than its membership?

For almost 20 years, members from all over the U.S. and Canada have submitted the pictures that tell those stories. In the space of a few pixels, these images show who we are, what we do, and how well we do it. Now it's your turn. What's your story?

Photo Contest Rules:
1. The contest is open to active or retired IBEW members only. The person submitting the photo must be the person who took the photograph. Members may enter more than one photo.
2. International Officers and staff are not eligible.
3. Photos can be submitted as digital files or hard copies. If you are submitting a hard copy, enter more than one photo.
4. All submissions become the property of the IBEW Media Department.
5. Photos must have an IBEW theme of some sort, with IBEW members at work, engaged in a union-related activity or subjects conveying images of the electrical industry or the union.
6. If members are featured in the photo, they should be identified. If large groups are pictured, the name of the group or the purpose of the gathering (e.g., a safety committee, a linemen’s rodeo, a union meeting) can be submitted in place of individual names.
7. Photos previously published in IBEW publications or on the website are not eligible for submission.
8. The preferred method of entry is through the Photo Contest application on the IBEW website at www.ibew.org. If entering via U.S. mail, please fill out the contest entry form and affix it to each photo you submit for the contest and mail it to the IBEW Photo Contest, 900 Seventh Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.
9. Fifteen finalists will be selected and posted on www.ibew.org for final judging by the public. The winners will be featured in an upcoming issue of The Electrical Worker.

Photo Contest Guidelines:
- Photos can be entered digitally or as hard copies. For more information about digital photo sizes, go to www.ibew.org.
- Photos should be at least 300 dpi, in color or black and white, on slides or prints. The preferred print size is 8”x10”.
- Photos must be submitted in their original form and not as copies or reproductions.
- Photos are eligible for submission if they are entered through the IBEW Media Department.
- Photos previously published in IBEW publications or on the website are not eligible for submission.
- The preferred method of entry is through the Photo Contest application on the IBEW website at www.ibew.org.

Prizes:
1st Place: $200
2nd Place: $150
3rd Place: $100
Honorable Mention: $50

Rules and Photo Guidelines:
- Photos must be submitted by the person who took the photograph.
- Photos must be received by the contest deadline.
- Photos must meet the contest rules and guidelines.
- Photos will be judged based on creativity, composition, and relevance to the IBEW.

After nearly 50 years with the IBEW, Government Employees Department Director Dennis Phelps retired May 1. Brother Phelps was initiated into Washington, D.C., Local 26 as a residential apprentice in 1970. By 1975 he was working in the public sector, where he would spend the rest of his career. The inside wireman worked at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, then moved to the Government Printing Office, where he joined Washington, D.C., Local 26.

It only took about six months at the printing office before Phelps became chief shop steward, following in his family’s labor activist footsteps. A great uncle organized alongside John L. Lewis, the famed labor leader and former president of the United Mine Workers of America.

“If I didn’t have a moment to lose, I’d just go into the union, which represents 8,000 local 26 members, and say ‘Where’s my steward? We need to do something. We just told the government that we’re not going to be bought out.’”

In 1990, he was elected president and business manager of Local 221, which represented 4,500 federal employees, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing as well as the printing office. The bureau is one of a handful of government employers that allow employees to bargain for wages, a status he had to constantly fight to retain, he said.

“If we couldn’t negotiate, we’d have been paid less,” Phelps said. “When I was there, we kept wages within $5 of local 26 rates, and with benefits. And back then, they were good benefits to have.”

Brother Phelps was part of a 15-year battle over the right of bureau members to maintain that bargaining status. After 12 years in the courts and two years of negotiations, they got their first wage agreement in 1998.

Phelps stayed at the bureau until he was appointed to the Brotherhood. In 1965, the second-generation member of Mobile, Ala., Local 345 followed his father and grandfather, three uncles and a host of other family members into a job at Alabama Power. But Phelps retired in 2017 after 50 years working his way up at the utility, starting as a helper, then an assistant plant control operator, and finally as a plant control operator on coal units at the James M. Barry steam plant just north of Mobile. He was电厂 control operator on coal units at the James M. Barry steam plant just north of Mobile.

“I thought I could use my expertise with government laws to support more members than just those at my local,” he said. “It’s been very rewarding.”

More than 70,000 IBEW members in the U.S. and Canada are government employees, working for federal agencies including the departments of Energy and Interior and on ships, harbors, navigational locks and dams and power generating plants.

Phelps says he’d miss the people he’s worked with and the friends he’s made across the country. If he had one wish for the IBEW’s government employees, he says it would be to remove the increasingly hostile threats they’re under from political wrangling.

“I would protect them from political wrangling. They’re civil servants who don’t see them for what they are,” he said. “Devoted civil servants who go in and do their job and don’t deserve to be bad-mouthed. Let them be good civil servants and pay them fairly.”

In addition to dealing with hiring freezes and government shutdowns, government employees often bear the brunt of political disputes. In January, House Republicans resurrected a rule from the 19th century that would allow Congress to target specific federal workers and programs, opening the gate for indignities like shrinking a person’s salary or to eliminating an entire class of workers.

President Trump’s budget proposal, if enacted, could cut almost 200,000 federal jobs.

A native of Charlestown, Md., Phelps served for eight years on the country’s Democratic Central Committee, including two as chair. He also served on the Maryland AFL-CIO executive committee as secretary-treasurer.

He has campaigned for several candidates, including the first congressional race for Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland in 1982. Hoyer is now the second-ranking member of the House Democratic leadership.

Phelps plans to spend more time with his family, including visiting his children and grandchildren who live in Connecticut and Washington. He also wants to work on his golf game, he said, and get out on his boat more.

The IBEW members, staff and international officers thank Brother Phelps for his many years of service and wish him a long and happy retirement.

Dennis Phelps
IBEW card number ____________________________

After 45 years of service to the IBEW, Fourth District International Representative Don Vidourek retired on April 1.

Brother Vidourek got his first taste of the electrical trades in 1964 when he was working as a summer helper for his uncle, a member of Hamilton, Ohio, Local 648. After a short stint working at Southernmost Ohio Steel, Vidourek quit in 1970 when months of
THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

Driving Down Wages in the Construction Industry

When the Davis-Bacon Act became law in 1931, there was a belief that government should use its buying power to enhance the welfare of working people. It was a way to ensure good wages served the local economy. That point of view is slowly losing sway as the race to the bottom continues in the construction industry.

Passed during the Great Depression, Davis-Bacon requires contractors working on federally funded projects of $2,000 or more to pay their workers a local prevailing wage and benefits. The prevailing rates are determined by the Labor Department using wage surveys from across the country.

“If state officials want to hit construction workers in the pocketbook while folding to business interests, repealing prevailing wage laws is an effective way to do it.”

— EPI’s Ross Eisenbrey and Teresa Kroeger

The IEWB is saddened to report that R.W. “Red” Purcell, a retired international representative, died in his hometown of Greenville, Texas, on March 18. He was 99.

Brother Purcell had a long history with labor before joining the International staff in 1966. He was a member of the United Auto Workers, serving as president and financial secretary of a local. He also worked for the Congress of Industrial Organizations from 1946-53, leaving two years prior to its merger with the American Federation of Labor.

He was working for the International Union of Electrical, Electrical, School and Machine and Furniture Workers when he moved to the IEWB. Former Seventh District Vice President Orrville Tate Jr. said Purcell was hired because he had a reputation as a strong organizer.

“He was one hell of an organizer,” said Tate, who worked closely with Purcell. “He was an older, slow-talking country guy who people loved. He was a master at breaking things down to where they were nice and simple and people could relate to it.”

Assigned to the Organizing Department in Washington, D.C., two of Purcell’s most successful organizing drives came at a GTE Lenkart plant in Albuquerque, N.M., and at Pennsylvania Power & Light Co.

Tate also worked on the GTE drive and said it took more than two years and added more than 2,000 members to the IEWB in the early 1970s while also exposing deplorable conditions at the facility for workers, many of whom were Hispanic.

“Once that man got his mind set on something, if he thought it was right, there was no stopping him,” said Cynthia Phipps, Purcell’s daughter. “He was very stubborn, very quick-witted and very smart. You might as well not argue with him because you weren’t going to win.”

Her father kept those strong opinions up until his death, she said. Purcell was an outspoken, loyal Democrat and union person in a conservative area of northeast Texas.

“Everybody he met, any working person, would ask if they had a chance to join a union,” Phipps said. “If he heard of anyone not receiving fair treatment at work, his first statement was, “You should always get together and see what you can do about forming a union.” He believed in that with all his heart.”

Purcell retired in 1982 and returned to his native Texas. He and his wife Gladys were married for 50 years until her death in 2015 and his health slowly deteriorated after that, his daughter said. He is survived by three children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was commonly called “Red” because of his red hair and freckles, Tate said.

Phipps said she talked to her father the night before he died and he was in good spirits.

“His mind was clear until the end,” she said.

On behalf of the entire IEWB membership and staff, the officers extend our deepest condolences to Brother Purcell’s family and friends.

A law older than the Golden Gate Bridge, here with members of San Francisco Local 6, was designed to ensure construction workers earned a solid wage. Today it’s under attack from anti-union forces.

In Nevada however, a Democrat-led Assembly bill introduced a bill to suspend prevailing wage requirements for federal highway spending in January. If passed, it could put union contractors at a serious disadvantage from competing on potentially trillions of dollars of infrastructure projects under consideration in Washington.

On Jan. 30, Rep. Steve King of Iowa introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to fully repeal Davis-Bacon.

Some states have their own version of the prevailing-wage laws, often known as “mini” or “little Davis-Bacon” laws. Like the federal version, they also address concerns about working conditions and displacement of the local workforce by itinerant workers and prevent a downward spiral of wages.

“Mirroring federal-level attempts, 20 states have removed prevailing wage laws and several more have weakened them, said EPI. In those states, median construction wages are far lower — 21.9 percent — than state prevailing wages.

In Wisconsin, Republican lawmakers are pushing for a full repeal of the state’s prevailing wage law.

In Nevada however, a Democrat-led Assembly bill was introduced to lower the threshold when prevailing wages must be paid, reversing a Republican-backed measure that increased it, reported the Las Vegas Review-Journal. Under the current Republican version, only projects of $500,000 or more were subject to the mini Davis-Bacon law. If the Democrat version passes, the new amount would be $250,000.

The EPI report notes that, for more than 40 years, big business interests and the Republican Party worked to drive down construction wages by attacking unions and advocating for right-to-work laws as well as the repeal of Davis-Bacon and project labor agreements.

“If state officials want to hit construction workers in the pocketbook, while folding to business interests, repealing prevailing wage laws is an effective way to do it,” said author Ross Eisenbrey and Teresa Kroeger.

King also introduced a national right-to-work bill in February, which would make the union-busting legislation that has been spreading across the states the official law of the land.


**LOCAL LINES**

**Referendum Petition; Active RENEW Committee**

L.U. 2 (ct,ct,ct,07,08), ST. LOUIS, MO — IBEW Local 2, at the time of this writing, is working on the referendum petition to stop the so-called “right-to-work” law that is scheduled to take effect in Missouri on Aug. 28, 2017. We are working with the Missouri AFL-CIO on petition signature campaigns, including events at our training center in Saint Clair, MO. We will use stewards, social media and our website to communicate events throughout the process.

The local formed a RENEW Committee in February. The committee is meeting the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at our union hall in St. Louis. Some action items for the committee include: gathering materials and signage to participate in career fairs, having poles and hardware donated to build an HR structure at the local’s training center, and putting together a float for the Labor Day parade in St. Louis and Jefferson City in September.

IBEW Local 2 congratulates members who recently retired this year: Joseph Riesel, with 22 years of IBEW service; Raymond Zelle, 50 years of service; Kenneth Staples, 31 years of service; and Brad Cameron, 37 years of service.

**Strong Work Picture**

L.U. 8 (ass,em,ns,gt,cs,07,08), TOLEDO, OH — Hello, brothers and sisters. Local 8 is proud to be hosting the 73rd Annual IBEW Bowling Tournament. About 250 keglers will congregate in the Glass City on June 9-11. Toledo last hosted the tournament in 1956. We would like to express our gratitude to former Exec. Tim Reilly and current Exec. Greg Benton for all their hands-on contributions to making this event happen. We would also like to thank the 250+ members of our local who will compete.

**District Organizing Meeting**

L.U. 22 (Loiske), PUEBLO, CO — Local 22 hosted the Eighth District Quarterly Organizing Meeting on Feb. 2-8 this year. We had 24 locals represented, bringing us to nine international representatives attending. A very healthy Member to Future Member campaign concluded the second day’s activities. On Feb. 9, a well-advertised Job Fair was very successfully orchestrated with over 100 applications taken that evening. Special thanks to the following for sticking around to help: Brian Bradley, Zack Esquivel, Jeremy Redman, Joe Maloney, Tuett Thompson, Barry Tuttle, Guy Runco, Willie Kniffin and Les Thompson.

As we know, many seasoned journeymen will be retiring in the near future. The next generation needs to be trained now. We are working with the area high schools to get the word out. We have 30 potential apprentices taking an aptitude test as part of this writing. Luck is when preparedness meets opportunities. So, get ready — the time is now.

**Upcoming Events; 125th Anniversary Party**

L.U. 26 (es,es,es,govt,18,19), WASHINGTON, DC — Local 26 is extremely proud to have an historic event occurring on Sept. 23, 2017! This is the date of our 125th Anniversary Party and the event will be held at MGM National Harbor. To purchase tickets or for more information and sponsorship opportunities, please view our website at www.ibewlocal26.org. Please remember upcoming scheduled events: The Manassas, VA picnic will be Saturday, June 24 and the Edgewater, MD, picnic will be Saturday, Aug. 26. Please update your calendars for these fun-filled events!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Electrical Workers Motorcycle Riding Club’s 6th Annual Poker Run for Special Love on May 6 and to all those participating in our Dollars Against Diabetes Golf Outing, scheduled for June 5.

Local 26 officers and agents attended the IBEW Construction Conference and the National Building Trades Conference in Washington, DC. At press time, they also were scheduled to attend the IATC apprenticeship graduation on June 3.

We mourn the following members, who passed away since our last issue: Kevin A. Wheatley, Danny H. Blaylock, Frank Y. Smith, Kurt W. Fraser, Peter V. Parodi, James K. Davis, Charles S. Martin, Randy Chandler and John K. Jones.


Gary C. Hogan, B.M.

**Regional Elections & Project Labor Agreements**

L.U. 34 (em,em,em,rt,cs,07,08), PEORIA, IL — Unfortunately, local and regional elections don’t draw the voter turnout of federal or state elections. These area elections greatly and directly impact the amount of work available to union tradespeople.

Recently, elections in the Local 34 area made it possible to secure more project labor agreements (PLAs) and implement responsible bidder language in our communities. It is easiest to witness the impact of both on the local labor market when the action is in our own backyard.

Area school districts, with cooperation from the West Central Illinois Building Trades Council, passed a sales tax increase providing revenue for building maintenance and construction. Passage has led to entire districts signing PLAs and utilizing responsible bidder language to complete the bidding process. This is beneficial to all entities. Local 34 will take all the school work we can secure, especially after Caterpillar announced it no longer intends to build a new world headquarters in Peoria. Caterpillar is moving executive positions to Chicago. That announcement has caused a slowdown in new construction.

Congratulations to members who recently won election or re-election to public office as follows: Jeff Jenkins — ward alderman, Chiliicote, IL; Andy O’Neill — Bartonville trustee; Grant Debbord — Princeville School Board member. Thank you to all our members who held elected public office.

Mark Burnap, P.S.

**Projects Underway**

At Historic Site in Cleveland

L.U. 38 (i), CLEVELAND, OH — The Old National City Bank of Cleveland, at the corner of Euclid Avenue and East Sixth St., is undergoing a transformation to become the anticipated Marble Room Steak and Raw Bar.

The site features solid marble staircases, chandeliers, rows of floor-to-ceiling pillars and a below-ground bank vault. Located inside the historic Garfield Building, it is a sprawling, high-ceilinged space that hovers around 10,000 square feet. Now in the hands of Frank and Malisse Sinito, who also own Lockkeepers restaurant in Valley View, the historic lobby is undergoing a transformation into an upscale bar.

IBEW Local 24 members rally at State House in Annapolis, MD.

**Trade Classifications**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>(ae) Alarm &amp; Signal</th>
<th>(mf) Electronic Technicians</th>
<th>(mpt) Motion Picture Studios</th>
<th>(rta) Radio-Television Service</th>
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<td>(ftm) Fixture Manufacturing</td>
<td>(nats) Nuclear Service Technicians</td>
<td>(sos) Service Occupations</td>
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<td>(s) Shopmen</td>
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<td>(mar) Marine</td>
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Efforts are made to make this list as inclusive as possible, but the various job categories of IBEW members are too numerous to comprehensively list all.
Anti-Worker Bill Defeated — Letter Writing Campaign

L.U. 68 (lco), DENVER, CO — Greetings, brothers and sisters.

On March 8-9, Local 68 hosted letter writing campaigns against the “right to exploit workers” bill that went to a state House of Representatives committee on March 15.

Over the course of the two nights, we collected 233 letters to present to the House legislative committee. In addition to the letters asking for a NO vote on this bill, Local 68 members, along with other concerned locals and citizens groups, were present at the committee hearing to give testimony against this bill. Testifying on behalf of Local 68 were Journeyman Ken Gavito and, as well as our apprentices, Jason Brown and David Gosset. If you work with or see these brothers, be sure to thank them for their time and effort. The “right to exploit workers” bill was defeated in committee by a 6-3 vote. Thanks to all for your help in this effort.

Negotiations on a new Inside Agreement continue, with nothing new to report as of this writing.

A “Better Know Your Legislature 2017” training was presented at the union hall on Saturday, March 18, by Kjresten Forsell, Colorado AFL-CIO political and legislative director. Thirty people attended this very informative class.

Morgan Buchanan, Pres.

Work Picture Update; Apprenticeship Graduates

L.U. 146 (c&kts), DECATUR, IL — The work picture looks pretty good. We have a wind farm project, an outage at Clinton Power Station, with more capital projects there, and several other commercial and industrial projects underway in the area.

Fourteen inside apprentices and one telecom apprentice graduated in May: Jodie Botts, Zachary Buchanan, Nick Delahunty, Josh Flood, Darin Hill, Robert Jonquet, Christopher Lening, Dillon Lewis, Josh McLain, Tyler Pierschalski, Kenan Reed, Brandon Reininger, Tyler Smock, Kaleb Swarts and Gregory Pruemier (telecom). The graduates were honored and received their certificates at a May 20 graduation ceremony.

Members Jim Carroll and John Heise recently retired and received their IBEW pensions. Congratulations to these two for a lifetime of hard work, and good wishes to them for many-relaying years to come.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of two brothers in late March: Jonathan Thompson, who was 70, and David Ward, who was 51. Bro. Thompson was a 50-year IBEW member, and Bro. Ward was a 25-year member. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their families.

Steve Tilford, R.S.

Summer Activities

L.U. 150 (es,lt&kts), WAUKEGAN, IL — Summer is here and with its arrival all the attendant Local 150 activities. We will have our picnic on June 24. Our golf outing will be Aug. 19. You can sign up at the Hall for these events. For the golf outing we are looking for 50 or more electrical workers to participate.

On March 8-9, Local 68 hosted letter writing campaigns against the “right to exploit workers” bill that went to a state House of Representatives committee on March 15.

L.U. 234, CASTROVILLE, CA — We recognize and congratulate all graduating apprentices.

With each graduating class from Local 234, our spirits are elevated knowing the graduates are preparing to meet ever-increasing industry challenges. Such challenges include the pressures of rapidly declining, outdated infrastructures requiring repair or replacement; and multiple social demands that the many new energy developments to rapidly deployed. The best examples today are lighting controls, demand response, facility-based storage, micro grids, solar, and other green energy developments.

We thank our members for their hard work and dedication to safety and workmanship that they bring to our utility companies.

Let’s not have them ever forget that.

Wendy J. Cordts, P.S.

Graduating Apprentices

Local 234 Inside Graduating Class of 2017: Ryan Porter (left), Juan Palacios, Chris Olsen, Trudi Teller, Corey Cardenas-Perron, Gilbert Sanchez and Steve Risio.
To the recent graduates — Chris Olsen, Corey Cardenas-Perron, Gilbert Sanchez, Juan Palacios, Ryan Porter, Steve Rios and Trudi Teller — we look for-ward to you leading our workforce to meet head-on the challenges of the 21st century. You are well-prepared and appreciate the need to prudently maintain that stock and trade of skills you have learned. Everyone here at Local 254 — fellow members, family and friends — congratulates the graduates and salutes their achievements of today and into our future. Congratulations.

John Brielg, B.M./F.S.

LOCAL LINES

City of Calgary Award

L.U. 254 (ees,em,ml,mt,rt,ts&u), CALGARY, ALBERTA, City of Calgary Award Calgary 9-1-1.

LOCAL LINES

receives Award of Excellence for her work at Local 254 member Jacqueline “Jacqui” Skelton from that situation to support the leads during the service were upheld. She then used lessons learned quickly came up with great ideas to ensure levels of Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) outage last May. She communicated this information to her team.

Jacqui is a Sentry Systems subject matter expert. Her dedication to making the transition to a computerized system has demonstrated a high level of competence in her work, she is expected to pick up by early summer. Thanks to the IBEW brothers and sisters who volunteering her time as a shop steward and serves on the Employee Satisfaction Committee, the Critical Incident Stress Management Team and the Peer Support Team. She coordinates fundraising nights and food nights. Jacqui personifies The City of Calgary’s 4 C’s — character, competence, commitment and collaboration.

Jacqui, thank you for your efforts on behalf of Local 254 and congratulations on receiving this prestigious award.

Stephen Slouck, P.S.

Workshop on Organizing

L.U. 280 (ees,em,es,li,ml,mt,rt,ts&u), SALEM, OR — Earlier this year, with the help of labor leader Mark M. McDermott of Seattle, WA, IBEW Local 280 held an organizing meeting in central Oregon. McDermott helped by officiating a S.W.O.T. session — focusing on strengths, weaknesses, opportuni-ties and threats — to help with formulating a plan to organize work and members in central Oregon. After assessing and recognizing strengths and weaknesses as well as the threats and opportunities, a plan began to be formulated. We also formed a voluntary organizing committee, which will meet once a month. We have a long fight ahead but feel this is a step toward increasing market share. [See photo at bottom, left.)

Work was slow as of this writing, but it is expected to pick up by early summer. Thanks to the IBEW brothers and sisters who traveled to help man our work this past year.

We have 15 new journeymen who recently gradauated and passed the state journeymen exam. Congratulations to all!

Our state continues to see an increase in solar projects planned and starting. Local 280 is just starting a 65-megawatt solar field near Prineville, scheduled to be completed sometime in August. Let’s hope for a continued good work picture in the coming years.

Drew Lindsay, B.M./F.S.

Big Projects Underway

L.U. 292 (em,govt,i,rtb,rts&spa), MINNEAPOLIS, MN — As the proud host city for Super Bowl LII, Minneapolis is busier than we have been in more than a decade.

The positive work picture is not only due to the big NFL game, as we also have many large projects including several solar jobs and substantial airport improvements.

With the extensive commercial and residential work, our members are keeping very busy. So much so that we are extending an invitation to members across the country to help us man our work. Local 292 will need additional wiener this summer. There will also be a specific need for those from the following states that carry the Minnesota Class A electrical license or equivalent: Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Eric Peterson, P.S.

Mobilization & Solidarity To Hold Developers Accountable

L.U. 332 (ees,es,i&st), SAN JOSE, CA — Through recent strengthening of the bonds between the mechanical crafts, Local 332 has seen phenomenal success in mobilizing and empowering members to take leadership roles in securing work for us. At the MEPS Leadership Conference, over 250 members of four craft unions gathered to learn strategies and interact with elected officials of local municipal districts. The resulting "MEPS Army” will be a driving force in ensuring new development has every opportunity to be built by union craftsmen. (MEPS stands for Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing and Sprinkler Fitters.) We would also like to congratulate the 88 Inside, 20 Sound & Communications, and 10 Residential apprentices who will receive their completion certifi-cates this year. We also welcome the 46 Inside apprentices who have been indentured so far in 2017.

David Bini, Organizer

Making Great Strides — Organizing Success

L.U. 340 (lt,rt,ksa), SACRAMENTO, CA — In late March 2017, Bro. Chuck Cake visited the union hall to bring by some IBEW mementos he has collected during his 54 years as a Local 340 member, which included 24 years working in the business office — as a representative for five years, and as business man-ager for 18 years. We visited for quite a while and he was gracious enough to share some of his memories of the history of Local 340 with me. He also came to say goodbye, as he and his beautiful wife, Mary, are pulling up stakes in Sacramento and moving to Flori-da. Bro. Cake will be reachable on Facebook and via email and I am sure I will be talking to him again. I know you all join me in wishing him and Mary a long and beautiful retirement in sunny Florida.

Speaking of moving, Local 340 is most definite-ly moving in the right direction regarding getting the work and growing our membership! Our Organizing Department is stronger than ever, and it is exciting to witness the results of their hard work. Being a former organizer myself, I have great respect and gratitude for the job they do every day for Local 340 members.


Robert D. Ward, B.M.

St. Patrick's Day Parade;
Apprentice of the Year

L.U. 420 (es,i&k), ASBURY PARK, NJ — The annual Bel-mar St. Patrick’s Day Parade took place on March 5, 2017. The Local 420 membership was led by Bro. Pete Sparrandera’s monster-sized truck as a great represen-tation of the strength of our brotherhood. The member-ship displayed union pride as they gathered and walked along with other local trade unions in the parade.

The Apprentice of the Year Award went to Jared Friske. Jared displayed the utmost dedication and had a grade average in the upper 90s for all five years of the apprenticeship. Local 420 is proud of his efforts and hopes to see many apprentices following his lead. Jared was also rewarded with a plaque and a $500 check from the Retline Committee for all his hard work throughout the apprenticeship.

Local 420 continues to be committed to the Code of Excellence. All apprentices and a great major-ity of our membership have been trained and certi-fied. More classes are being planned and we hope to have the entire membership trained shortly.

Raven Morris, P.S.
April 28 was again a big day in Sarnia. Every year on the floor of the Congress last year. Below is an edited to remember all workers who have lost their lives or suffered injury or disease due to workplace related hazards and incidents. Thank you to all those who joined us for this event.

With a small out-of-work list and our short-term work picture looking good, we have been fortunate and this seems that it will be a successful year.

We would like to thank Thunder Bay Local 402 for providing work opportunities for our members at a helpful time.

Local 530 is saddened to report the recent passing of Bros. Gary Clark and Don Hendra.

Al Byers, P.S.

Three-Year Contract Ratified

L.U. 558 (cat,em,un,mt,arb,ts,spak), SHEFFIELD, AL — Greetings, brothers and sisters. We celebrated our local’s 8th Annual Picnic on May 6 this year at Spring Park in Tuscaloosa, AL. Everyone enjoyed the cook-off competition of barbecue and ribs, bingo, music, and fellowship among members and their families. We are excited to see this event increase in size each year.

We are proud to announce that we have ratified a three-year agreement at the Sheffield Utilities Department. Annual wage increases were negotiated and ratified for Muscle Shoals Electric Board and Russellville Utilities.

We want to thank everyone for very successful spring outings at TVA Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant in Athens, AL, and Cache Valley at Nucor Steel in Decatur, AL. Our appreciation goes out to all those who helped make this possible.

Tony Quillet, Pres./A.B.M.

University Medical Center Towers Project is Underway

L.U. 570 ( uno,spak), TUSCON, AZ – Sturgeon and Stark, signatory electrical contractors, are working on the Banner University Medical Center Towers project in Tucson, which seems to be going well.

The building steel has topped out and the contractors are steadily manning up.

Sturgeon Electric has also picked up the Central Utility Plant project that will tie in with the new nine-story Banner Hospital.

Members, keep your eyes open for the upcoming events. Thank you to all who participated in the May 6 Golf Tournament.

At press time, inside negotiations as well as negotiations with some of the units are scheduled.

We are also looking to put together a picnic committee for this year’s picnic, which should be in the fall. Contact the hall to get involved. Thank you and be safe.

Scott W. Toot, Pres.

Open House a Success

L.U. 654 ( l), CHESTER, PA — On March 26, IBEW Local 654 held an Open House for potential applicants and people interested in learning more about our apprenticeship training program. Bro. Ed Kikut, training director for the Chester (ATC, addressed the 150-200 attendees and presented our program to them. [Photo at top, right.]

We have had several Open Houses in the past, and this year’s presentation had the most participants by far. Attendees had a chance to tour our classrooms and meet our instructors as well as several of our committee members. We had a few vendors participating, including Greenlee and Klein Tools. There was a question and answer session that lasted well over an hour.

It was great to see the interest in our trade from the community. We look forward to continued success.

John Bondrowski, P.S.

Habitat for Humanity Project

L.U. 494 ( em,mt,ts,spak), MILWAUKEE, WI — At this writing, work continues to progress on the Plymouth Habitat for Humanity home that is being wired by the Plymouth High School Panther Construction team alongside members of IBEW Local 494. Thanks to all those participating on the project. Thanks also to retired Local 494 members Mike Gradinjan and Phil Kissinger for helping teach the trades.

Kurt Jante, B.R.

A Day of Remembrance; Work Picture Improves

L.U. 530 (Lo,mb), SARNIA, ONTARIO, CANADA – April 26 was again a big day in Sarnia. Every year on this date we mark the International Day of Mourning, a view of conduit racks and runs installed by Local 570 members on fourth floor of Medical Center Towers project.
Petition Campaign

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 5, ST. LOUIS, MO — Greetings to all. I hope everyone is enjoying the spring season. The Republican-controlled Missouri Legislature in Jefferson City passed so-called “right-to-work” legislation, and the newly elected Republican governor signed the bill into law. Petitions will be circulating for us to sign, to put a referendum on the 2018 ballot to rid Missouri of the anti-worker law. Please ensure that your families and friends are informed about the devastating effects “right to work” will have on all residents of Missouri. You must be a registered voter to sign the petition.

The next two RETIrees Club meetings are scheduled for July 19 and Sept. 20 (the luncheon).

Pictured in the accompanying photo are two of our IBEW commemorative knives. One is from the convention that marked IBEW’s 100th anniversary, and the other is my new IBEW 125th anniversary commemorative knife, which recently arrived in the mail. The older knife has seen some wear, especially on the blade.

Ron Heitzman, P.S.

55-Year Service Award

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER — Once again, officers of the Local 3, Westchester/Putnam Chapter, RETIrees Club had the honor of meeting with Mr. Kenneth Fisher, CEO of the Fisher House Foundation, on March 7 this year, to present him with a check for $10,000 as a contribution to the Fisher House Foundation.

This contribution marks a milestone in our association with Ken Fisher and the Fisher House Foundation, which helps military families by providing housing close to a loved one during hospitalization, and other programs.

We now have, over the past five years, contributed a total of $50,000 to this worthy cause. We are able to raise this amount through our golf outing sponsors, our sister chapters from Brooklyn and Queens, our affiliation with the Bronx Shore Kiwanis, and mostly through donations from our membership, who, as we all know, are retired and living on fixed incomes. Without these partnerships, our goal could not have been attained.

Our fund chairman, Dominic Malandro, has worked tirelessly on keeping records and making sure...
On Jan. 25, a delectable breakfast was enjoyed by many at Michelangelo’s, and our club returned on Feb. 12 for the annual Valentine’s dance. On March 8, we revisited Michelangelo’s for a lovely dinner that included penguins, cabbage rolls and sausages. On May 23, we enjoyed a lunch at the Mandarin Chinese Buffet Restaurant.

From April 4 – 7, 60 of our retirees checked into the Best WesternCarlthotel, Niagara Falls, for a relaxing break. Pleasant times were spent by the pool, visiting Niagara Casino, playing cards and enjoying an afternoon wine and cheese party.

On April 9, the Retirees Club returned to Michelangelo’s for a breakfast to congratulate 50 brothers and sisters on their retirement! We wish them the very best and hope to see them at our events!

Remember our motto: Don’t Wait – Participate!! All of the above events were made possible by our hard-working local members and Executive Board. Our sincerest thanks to each one of them!

Eden McLean, P.S.

## Golf Tournament a Success

 RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TX — The Local 60 Retired Members Club will be on their summer break for the months of June, July and August.

Before the break, the club’s annual golf tournament was held in April. With all the interest the golf tournament generated, it could only add up to another huge success.

Club members thank all who played an important part in this year’s golf tournament fundraiser. Many hours of planning and executing such a fundraiser is a task. The club is self-supporting and the money raised will be for the club’s meals and activities.

The Retirees Club meets the second Thursday of each month at 12 noon, at the Plumbers and Pipefitters Bldg., 3630 Belgium Lane. Some of you may wonder why we meet at that location. When the club had no place to hold its meetings, the Plumbers and Pipefitters invited us to use their building. We thank them for their kindness and respect.

The purpose of the Retirees Club is to continue the practice of brotherhood in retirement. A friend once told me: “Once an electrician, always an electrician.” That is very true.

Circle Sep. 14 on your calendar — that is the date of our club’s next meeting. Join us.

Sandy Rogers, P.S.

## Great Turnout for Activities

 RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 105, HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA — 2017 commenced with our Euchre Club on Jan. 19 and our Bowling Club on Jan. 11.

There was a great turnout for our first meeting of the year on Jan. 18. Thanks to all who attended — it does make a difference!

Sue Klecha, P.S.

## Retiree Happenings

 RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 141, WHEELING, WV — The Local 141 Retirees 6th Annual Christmas Party was Dec. 3, 2016, at Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino and Racetrack. There were 103 in attendance. The retirees thank the officers and active members for their financial support for our dinner.

The retirees also meet for breakfast on the third Tuesday of every month, at Rigas’ Restaurant in Bellaire, OH. We would like to recognize retiree George E. Miller, who is celebrating his 71st year with Local 141. Initiated on April 29, 1946, George sets a Local 141 record for the most years of IBEW service. Currently, we have 321 retirees with a combined total service of 5,850 years.

Finally, we extend condolences to the families of the following retirees who passed away in 2016: Kenneth Casillitou, Carson Cox, John Cunard, Lucanas Dillou, Homer Hill and Richard Mayeres. They will be remembered.

Joseph A. Donovan, P.S.

## Speaking Up for Seniors

 RETIREES CLUB of L.U. 104, SHREVEPORT, LA — The Local 194 Retirees Club has initiated a letter-writing campaign on the issues that affect “gray hair” Americans. Our efforts are called “L4S,” which stands for Louisiana for Seniors Saving Social Security.

At the January meeting Retirees Club Pres. John Tyler announced that all retired members are encouraged to participate in our effort to make known our positions to our elected U.S. senators and representatives. We respect our elected officials, but for too long (this scribe included), we have not voiced our opinions. We are the ones charged with letting our elected public officials know how we feel, not the other way around.

Although retiree membership is up, we don’t have as much participation as we would wish. Retirees Club meetings are held once a month, on the last Tuesday of the month. Members like me enjoy the good food brought by other members. It’s better than a four-star restaurant. Our chefs have
really got “Southern cuisine” down to an art. We eat at noon and have a short meeting, and then go home and take a nap.

For more information please contact Local 194 at 318-688-0194. We’ll be glad to see you.

Herbert L. Prestidge, P.S.

‘Seize the Day’ — In Tribute & Remembrance

RETIREEs CLUB OF L.U. 212, CINCINNATI, OH — May God’s loving kindness be upon the following recently departed brothers and their loved ones: Ralph Weckendorf, who was a member of the IBEW for 64 years; Harvey Lowery, a member for 60 years; Robert Steinmetz - 60 years; Fred Holthaus - 52 years; Rodney Dennis - 43 years; Gary Gimmer Jr. - 24 years; and Paul Jeson - 23 years. Remember these brothers, as well as our sick members, and their loved ones in your prayers.

As I write these quarterly newsletters, my own mortality becomes apparent. I remember my friend Bro. Al “Fat Albert” Ille, who passed away in 2015, telling me: “Bobby, I would tell my enemy this, so I sure will tell my friend — whatever you want to do, do it now while you are able because you don’t know what shape you or your wife will be in a year from now.”

Time takes its toll on us. Whatever is on your bucket list, don’t delay. The window of opportunity can shut quickly. To quote a phrase coined by ancient Roman poet Horace: “carpe diem” (seize the day).

Bob Schofer, P.S.

‘Thanks to IBEW Volunteers’ Skills USA Competition

RETIREEs CLUB OF L.U. 277, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The Retirees Club had their luncheon/meeting at Westphalia, MO, on March 28.

Unfortunately, so-called “right-to-work” legislation was recently passed in Missouri. Although everyone worked very hard to defeat the legislation, the Republican-controlled state legislature finally passed the bill, and the newly elected Republican governor signed it. We thank Don Cessna for his many informative articles in opposition to the bill. [Editor’s Note: As of press time, a campaign started by the state AFL-CIO was underway to get an initiative on the 2018 ballot that would essentially make “right-to-work” laws illegal in the state. The Missouri right-to-work law takes effect Aug. 26, but could be delayed if enough petition signatures are gathered for a public vote.]

We were saddened by the passing of member Carl Hoffman on March 14. He was 93. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

We thank the volunteers who helped again this year with the Skills USA Competition at Linn State Technical College on April 1. This makes the 13th or 14th year that our members have helped with this event. The retirees’ activism includes joining in fellow-activities, and invites others to ask them to share their wisdom of our trade.

Annual Retiree Luncheon

RETIREEs CLUB OF L.U. 702, WEST FRANKFORT, IL — The Annual Retiree Luncheon was held at 2:00 p.m., on Tuesday, April 11, in Mount Vernon at the Cedarhurst Center for the Arts, with over 100 in attendance.

At the luncheon, club Pres. Gary King and Local 702 Bus. Mgr. Steve Hughart addressed those present and thanked them for their participation in the club. Bus. Mgr. Hughart reflected upon some of the struggles the local faced in the past, and commented that we all owe a huge debt of gratitude to those who came before us in paving the way for the conditions and pay our members currently enjoy.

The brick, along with the certificate, purchased by the local in honor of the Retirees Club for the Henry Miller Museum was on display. A trip to the Henry Miller Museum was planned for the second week in May, with bus transportation provided by the local.

Club Pres. King went over the business of the club, including the reading of deaths since the last meeting, and the treasurer’s report. Bus. Mgr. Hughart announced the door prizes winners and encouraged those present to take home some of the leftover food. The luncheon gathering was a success and concluded at 2 p.m.

Mark Baker, P.S.

Chili Cook-off & Low Country Boil a Success

RETIREEs CLUB OF L.U. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — Happy spring! We have had good turnouts for our meetings this year. Our chili cook-off was a success with 11 competitors. It was a tough decision, but our judges did a great job. We congratulate the champions and thank our team of judges. Our low country boil as always was delicious and we are grateful to Greg Stone and those who are always there to help with making our meals so wonderful. Please keep up the great attendance; we love seeing everyone!

We are saddened to report that since our last article, several members have passed. We send our condolences to the families and friends of Bros. Joseph C. Stellato, Joseph P. “Pete” Davies, Edward R. Egner Jr. and James H. Brown.

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

Diane Gibbs, P.S.

Chili Cook-off & Low Country Boil a Success

RETIREEs CLUB OF L.U. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — Happy spring! We have had good turnouts for our meetings this year. Our chili cook-off was a success with 11 competitors. It was a tough decision, but our judges did a great job. We congratulate the champions and thank our team of judges. Our low country boil as always was delicious and we are grateful to Greg Stone and those who are always there to help with making our meals so wonderful. Please keep up the great attendance; we love seeing everyone!

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Diane Gibbs, P.S.
Currently there are two separate retirees lunch meetings that are held monthly. The Tampa Bay Chapter retirees of Local 955 meet at noon on the first Monday in the assembly hall of Local 955. One brother brings the entirety of the contents of the retiring plant.

The Petersburg/Clearwater Chapter retirees of Local 955 meet at noon on the third Monday of each month at Perkins on Park Boulevard in Clearwater. All traveling retirees are welcome to join and share in the brotherhood. Theresa King, P.S.

Annual Luncheon
RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 955, BATON ROUGE, LA — We met at The Drusilla Seafood Restaurant on the first Monday in March for our annual luncheon. As usual the seafood was great and we had good food at W.C. O’Reilly’s.

At our bimonthly meeting on the first Monday in April, we discussed and voted on having our luncheon with the wives on the first Monday in June. We hope to have everybody there by 11:30 a.m. so we can determine how much meat we will need. The meat will be furnished by the club, and each couple is to bring a covered dish. I’m praying that all our club members and their wives can be there.

W. Roland Goetzman Sr., P.S.

Local 955 Tampa Bay Chapter retirees attend December 2016 meeting.

In Memoriam

Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in April 2017

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A Better Way to Work

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

A union’s job is to look out for its members. Sometimes — especially in the early days of organized labor — that meant speaking uncomfortable truths to employers. Sometimes it requires more than words. It can take actions all the way up to a strike to make sure those words are respected.

But while it might happen, conflict is never this union’s goal. Employers and union workers can look out for their own best interests and, at the same time, look out for one another. The position of the IBEW is that the best long-term strategy for companies and unions is partnership built on common interests.

This is how it should work. And it isn’t a dream. For hundreds of thousands of our members, this is their reality. We have many hundreds of partnerships with employers in all of our branches.

Some examples are highlighted in this issue.

A solar contractor in Massachusetts that went from an open shop to an IBEW signatory has watched its profits grow, customer satisfaction improve and market share with it.

AT&T and the IBEW signed a nationwide five-year contract that positions the company to succeed in a rapidly changing and highly competitive industry while giving workers the pay and security they need to help.

There are many, many more examples. A Chinese company partnered with the IBEW to bring railcar manufacturing back to Chicago for the first time in decades, and the IBEW/NECA Family Medical Care Plan is bringing better and less expensive health insurance to companies in Texas and around the U.S.

In December, a bipartisan coalition, including the IBEW and Exelon, successfully lobbied for a law that saves Illinois’ two nuclear power plants, and creates hundreds of new jobs. The close relationship we’ve built with Exelon was crucial to the success of that bill.

None of this is new of course. It has been the heart of the Code of Excellence program we founded nearly a decade ago. We say our members are the best trained, most productive in the world and we prove it every day. Employers should want to work with us.

I am proud when I see an employer lauding the benefits of signing up with the IBEW, but I’m not surprised. Union means many things: brotherhood, security and pride as well as professionalism, quality workmanship, training, and — for companies wise enough to reach for it — partnership.

I look forward to serving you in the years to come as we work to ensure a healthy future for all electrical workers.

My Commitment to You

Kenneth W. Cooper
International Secretary-Treasurer

The greatest honor of my life has been to serve the members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. From my days as a wireman back in Mansfield, Ohio, to serving as Fourth District vice president, I have made the mission of this union my calling. And I have devoted everything I have to making it a better place and to helping it grow and build power.

That is why I am truly humbled to take on the new challenge of serving as your International secretary-treasurer.

Brother Sam Chilla leaves behind a legacy of success and commitment that is hard to match. The tools he has passed on to me have helped the IBEW meet the pressing challenges of our time — from economic recession and a hostile legislative landscape for organized labor to spiking health care costs and the across-the-board squeeze felt by all retirement funds — and emerge from them stronger than before.

Thanks to his efforts, our benefit funds are healthy and growing and serve as a model for the entire labor movement.

I am committed to continuing that legacy.

Over the years I’ve seen how the IBEW can change the lives of working families for the better. Every new contractor or member I have helped sign up over the years re-emphasizes to me just how important the work we do is.

One of the things I have learned is that being a leader of this union means being part of something much bigger than any of us as individuals. Because of this union, more than 700,000 workers across the United States and Canada have a voice in their workplace, the right to safety on the job and decent wages and benefits. Most of all, they enjoy the respect and dignity that comes with carrying an IBEW card.

In the IBEW play such an important role in the lives of our two great nations. A stronger IBEW means a growing middle class and a stronger democracy.

I look forward to serving you in the years to come as we work to ensure a healthy future for all electrical workers.
IBEW Goes Nuclear

About the story, “Nuclear Physics Gets a Boost from the IBEW,” [in the May Electrical Worker and posted at ibew.org], America works best when you say union yes! It proves that IBEW electricians are the best trained and most productive in the world. We are so proud of our sisters and brothers who worked on this project.

Hale Landes, Local 134 member Naperville, Ill.

WHO WE ARE

From ‘Broken’ to Independent and Honored

Five years ago, Charleston, W.Va., Local 466 member Tara Turley was, in her own words, broken.

Laid off. Limited skills. A single mom.

“I was left with nothing,” Turley said about being laid off from her telemarketing management job after 25 years at the only company she had ever worked for.

“When I was let go, I felt something I never had before: helpless. I was a failure.”

March 13, Turley was something else: Union member. Fifty-year inside wireman apprentice on her way to holding a journeyman ticket no one could ever take away that would mean a lifetime of work on her terms. She was also a college graduate, and, on that day, the American Council on Education’s 2016 student of the year, speaking from the podium to more than 350 people about the journey in between.

“Today I am not only mended, but humbled and honored to accept this award,” Turley said. (Watch Turley’s speech at bit.ly/tarataturleyACE)

ACE runs a program that helps people get college credit for on-the-job training, including in the military and apprenticeships. The student of the year award is given to an individual who has benefited from the use of ACE credits who “demonstrates outstanding achievements in their community or workplace while successfully balancing demands such as family, career and education.”

“Today I am not only mended, but humbled and honored to accept this award.”

Mary Beth Larkin has been involved with the committee that chooses the winner of the award for years, and every year she reads through each of the 50 to 60 applications for the $1,000 scholarship. This year was different.

“This is the first time it was unanimous,” Larkin said. “For her persistence in what she is doing, the difficulty she was in and her determination to get out from under it. There is love of her work, love of learning and there is just an obvious devotion to her community that came through. She was everyone’s No. 1.”

Turley went to work as a telemarketer right out of high school and never looked back. She rose through the ranks, first to trainer, then sales consultant, then management. Then, suddenly, she was redundant. Eight months after her promotion, the company was sold, and she was shown the door.

“I had nothing to fall back on. I started there at 18. I thought I had a career already. I thought I would retire there,” she said. Instead she had two girls to take care of and no way to do it.

“I was looking at maybe getting work at McDonald’s,” she said. “Maybe.”

But Turley’s father had opened a small electrical contracting shop and Turley asked him if she could learn how to do that.

“I have always been hands-on, doing projects around the house since I was a girl,” she said. “And I love hard work.”

Turley went to a local vocational school, took a 44-week electrical technology course and started working with her father, seven days a week. In June 2013, after a year working with her father, she applied for the inside apprenticeship and was accepted. Her father, she says, shut her down as soon as she entered.

“He didn’t want to be doing it anymore, but he took work just to keep me working,” she said.

Turley got her chance in June 2016, when historic flooding shattered parts of Clendenin. Hundreds of homes were washed away, 26 people died and power was out for tens of thousands.

Turley and her brothers and sisters from Local 466 returned to Clendenin for weeks, rebuilding houses and reconnecting lives.

“It was awful there. Our local went in with material to help these people start over,” she said. Turley says she was “only” there for two weeks and wanted it said that other members of Local 466 were there for much longer.

“There were people there for weeks and weeks,” she said. “Their dedication to workmanship and commitment to community are unmatched, and I feel so grateful to be part of such a wonderful organization.”

Turley’s application required a recommendation, and hers came from Tom Samples, director of the West Virginia Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee.

“She’s a single mom with two kids, plus a college student, plus working on construction sites and, somehow, she also found a way to keep top grades and perfect attendance with both her employer and the apprenticeship,” Samples said. “She is the best of what this Brotherhood can be and she deserves every good thing that she receives. She has worked for all of it.”

From the podium, Turley thanked her parents, ACE and then she thanked the IBEW.

“The IBEW has armed me with invaluable skills and knowledge that have allowed me to not only attain a degree, but also give back in ways I never thought I could,” she said.
Possibly the IBEW’s Happiest Contractor Shines in Mass.

“However you measure it — callbacks, meeting schedules or customer satisfaction — the feedback is phenomenal.”

Hiring the best trained, most productive electricians in the business — IBEW members — leads to successful contractors and happy customers.

They’ve even brought in new customers eager to hire a union shop. The Joseph Abboud suit factory in New Bedford is not only the largest tailored clothing shop in the U.S., its 800 employees are all members of UNITE HERE. When the company wanted to install solar panels on the south-facing, saw-toothed roof of its 1909 factory, it only had to look up the street to find Beaumont.

“They were so happy that a union contractor could do the work,” Fenton said. “A union solar contractor from New Bedford did the solar roof on a union textile factory in New Bedford. That’s perfect.”

The solar business is booming for Local 223. Beaumont may be one of the most enthusiastic solar contractors using members from the Brockton hall, but it isn’t alone, or even the biggest. Beaumont has more than 45 members working long term. Mass. Electric Construction has 50 members now and will nearly double its demand this year, Fenton said. Fishbach Electric has 35 and Aldon Electric is running between 25 and 30 members.

Half of our total man-hours in 2016 were in solar projects,” he said. “Cavallo wants to be the biggest solar contractor in the Northeast. We told him what we tell all our contractors: ‘Go on. We’ll go with you all the way.’

“Rob was ready to make a huge sacrifice to help buy me more time with my kids and to get me off this dialysis machine and back to work,” Amalfitano said. “Even now that we’ve gotten this news, he’s still my brother, and I’m so grateful to him.”

Rob’s life-saving donation. Amalfitano, here with his three kids, now starts his search from scratch.

“Organ Donor Rejected, a Brother’s Search Starts Anew”

In last month’s Electrical Worker, we shared the news of Wilmington, Del., Local 313 wireman Dave Amalfitano, who found a kidney donor in Chicago Local 9 apprentice Rob Vargas after the 28-year-old read an Electrical Worker story last August.

On April 19, the two IBEW brothers, who’d been talking nearly every day for months, finally met for the first time in Baltimore. The emotional meeting came as Vargas and his family flew in to complete the final medical evaluations before the hospital scheduled Amalfitano’s life-saving surgery.

Unfortunately, during a preliminary scan, doctors found an anomaly in Vargas’ kidneys that prevented him from making the donation.

“It’s heartbreaking,” said Amalfitano, 47, who needs a transplant to treat his life-threatening polycystic kidney disease. “We’d all gotten our hopes up that this was the end of a very long journey with this disease, and for it to be ripped away like this has been really tough to wrap my head around.”

Amalfitano’s three kids, Anna, 15, and twin boys Matthew and Lee, 13, were excited for their dad, who has had many ups and downs during his two-year pursuit of a suitable donor.

“Now I’ll go back on the list,” said Amalfitano, referring to the national kidney donor list, which has more than 30,000 people on it; and where some recipients wait as many as 10 years for a transplant. Each year, nearly 5,000 patients die waiting for a matching donor.

“Rob was ready to make a huge sacrifice to help buy me more time with my kids and to get me off this dialysis machine and back to work,” Amalfitano said. “Even now that we’ve gotten this news, he’s still my brother, and I’m so grateful to him.”

Vargas, too, was devastated by the news that he wouldn’t be able to fulfill his promise to his new friend. It wasn’t until he arrived in Baltimore that he learned his kidneys never fully separated in the womb, leaving him a single horseshoe-shaped kidney that poses no health risks, but can’t be split for donation. Roughly one in 600 individuals born in America have the condition.

“I couldn’t believe it,” he said. "I was so ready to do this for Dave, to help him have a better life with his kids, and this is just such a letdown.”

Local 313 plans to put the sign back up on their hall’s roadside marker in Wilmington, which drew local media attention last summer, but Amalfitano knows the odds are stacked against finding a perfect match.

“I had dozens and dozens of people go through the tests, and none were a match except Rob,” he said. “So now we start again.”

Anyone with the blood types O+ or O- who would like to see if they might be a match can call Amalfitano at (302) 757-3738 to be connected with his donation coordinator at the University of Maryland. Those who would like to help but don’t match Amalfitano’s blood type can donate to help him overcome deep financial hurdles at www.gofundme.com/2cepedw.

“It took a lot of people for me to find Rob, and it will take a lot more people to find another match,” Amalfitano said. “But I’m not giving up. I can’t.”