With a significant victory in New England, the IBEW announced a new era in outside construction organizing. JCR Construction, one of the Northeast’s largest nonunion transmission line contractors, had been the target of unsuccessful organizing attempts for decades. But since the 2016 International Convention, the way the IBEW organizes new members and new companies has been changing.

“When I say we are making this brotherhood into an organizing union again, that doesn’t just mean locals organizing more. I mean we’ll use all the resources at our disposal in a coordinated fashion to maximize our success,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson.

Director of Membership Development for Outside Construction Ed Mings began the latest JCR campaign a year ago as the first director-level outside organizing specialist in nearly two decades. Since then, he and Special Assistant to the International President for Membership Development Ricky Oakland have worked to bring the overwhelmingly successful new organizing model from the professional and industrial and inside construction sectors to the outside as well.

“Our market share is down to 35% and International President Stephenson said, “We have to organize this branch,”’” Oakland said. “As a brotherhood, we have the resources, but we have to be smart about how we attack this. The locals know the workers, the contractors and the work. The international organization brings coordination and leverage.”

At stake is a fundamental battle to regain power in an industry that is in a golden rush. Renewables like wind and solar are being built at a record pace. The high-voltage transmission lines connecting them to population centers are the main bottleneck to faster expansion. Distributed generation that sends power into the grid from every direction requires radically rebuilding distribution networks. There is also the new national first responders’ network and the 5G mobile networks to build out, in addition to the regular repair and replacement of the existing distribution infrastructure. Hundreds of billions of dollars of work is here, and it is happening now, just as the industry runs headlong into a demographic dilemma years in the making.

Complicating this golden age of line construction is a “silver tsunami,” where a generation of up to 100,000 linemen — at contractors and utilities, union and nonunion — will become eligible for retirement in the next five years. But it’s also an opportunity.

“No one can man all the work. The skills of the linemen have never been in greater demand, and workers have never had more leverage than right now,” Oakland said. “It would be crazy to simply

More than 130 outside line workers joined the IBEW when JCR Construction signed on with Boston Local 104 after decades of organizing attempts. It was the largest single organizing win in years and the first of what could be many as the IBEW’s new organizing strategy is extended to the outside branch.
Why We Chose Joe Biden

Endorsing a candidate for president before the end of the primary process wasn’t a decision we took lightly. But the urgency of the issues at stake in 2020 compelled us and the rest of your IBEW officers to take a stand.

Those issues — energy jobs and health care, especially — were the reason we’re backing Joe Biden.

Over the last three years, we polled thousands of our members, from first step apprentices and newly organized call center workers to elected local leaders and retirees with decades of hard work behind them.

We listened, and we know not all of you will agree with this choice.

But, at the heart of every decision we make at the IBEW is the duty we have to preserve and protect IBEW members and their jobs.

Thankfully, because we belong to a union, our American Dream of good jobs, safe workplaces, decent wages and benefits and the promise of a dignified retirement is still alive.

But it is at risk.

More than 85% of IBEW members work in the energy industry, and the most important and urgent issue to our vast and diverse membership is a realistic approach to energy decarbonization that preserves our jobs. Getting that right informed our decision.

Joe Biden has been a presence at IBEW meetings and conferences for decades. He has listened to and shared our concerns. His plan to rebuild American infrastructure is shaped by an open dialogue with the very IBEW members who will build and maintain the energy grid of the future. His policies are based in realistic, science-driven approaches that will protect jobs and working families.

Vice President Biden stood out among the candidates in his willingness to listen, learn and follow through on the kinds of energy policy that will protect our members’ livelihoods. That’s why we chose to speak up when we did.

Now, let us be clear, on the issues of working people’s rights on the job, safety, health care and freedom to collectively bargain, any of the leading Democratic candidates would be an improvement on the current administration.

Over the last three years, we have watched President Trump’s policies and actions in office. We know some of our members strongly support him, but we have to be extremely frank: the Trump administration has been disastrous for our members and for the rights of working people. Corporate power has never been more ascendant. Job sites are more dangerous. Organizing and collective bargaining are harder.

Every working man and woman in this country faces relentless opposition from this administration and the judges he has appointed. Our rights as union members are under attack because right-wing judges in the courts and the National Labor Relations Board are overturning years of pro-labor laws that threaten the rights of our members daily. While Trump followed through on his promise to deliver another tax break to millionaires and billionaires, he failed to expend any effort on the bipartisan infrastructure bill that would have put tens of thousands of us to work.

Worse, his wholesale denial of climate change is not only foolish, it is cowardly. In its failure to look a problem square in the eye, put on gloves and get to work, it runs against the very ideals that we as working Americans hold dear.

Meanwhile, the IBEW has trained more workers for the green economy than any other organization in the world, and we are uniquely positioned to lead the transition to a carbon-free economy.

But we cannot let the pressing need for climate action lure us into fantasy. Unrealistic policies that ignore nuclear power and carbon-capture or grid reliability and resilience fail our basic responsibility to the future and the present.

This is where Vice President Biden separates himself.

On health care, Joe Biden’s plan would ensure that Americans who want a viable government-run plan can get the quality care they desperately need. But he also recognizes that many of us who fought and bargained year-after-year for the kind of health benefits that are the envy of the working world want to keep those plans.

On retirement security, Joe Biden will fight for and sign the Butch Lewis Act and turn back Republican efforts to tax our pension plans into bankruptcy.

We want to thank Sen. Bernie Sanders, in particular, who came to our Political and Legislative Conference last year, answered our questions and truly listened to our members’ hopes and struggles. He showed up. There is no doubt that both he and Vice President Biden are with us on important labor issues such as the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which passed the House last month. Where they differ lies at the heart of the IBEW — preserving the energy jobs that put food on IBEW members’ tables.

In the end, we hope our endorsement of Joe Biden sends a clear message to every candidate: we need a president whose policies will support working class jobs and unite Americans around a vision that lifts all of us up, not just the ultra-wealthy.

It’s clear that candidate is not Donald Trump. As leaders in the energy industry, we hope each of the Democratic candidates takes a long look at why we chose to endorse Vice President Biden and seeks our input on energy policy going forward.

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

Kenneth W. Cooper
International Secretary-Treasurer

EDITORIALS
From the Officers

Why We Chose Joe Biden

A Pitch for the Brotherhood

I and most brothers and sisters would agree that we are in a line of duty of great importance to this country. Our work pales in comparison to the great women and men who serve in the military protecting our freedom and risking their lives, but the jobs we do are vital here at home. Our work can be dangerous, too, and that’s why the training we receive has to be the best in the industry. Our apprenticeships are second to none, and we take pride in our craft.

Our Code of Excellence, our perfectionism, our refusal to bend on proper procedure, our distaste for shortcuts, and above all, our bond of brotherhood sets us apart.

That bond requires love, compassion and charity for our fellow brothers and sisters, and it should always take precedence and remain the cornerstone of our union.

I’m writing this because I think we should all be making this pitch to everyone who doesn’t know about the IBEW. I hope each of my brothers and sisters will take time to help spread this message to their own communities.

Doug Sanner, Local 861 member
Lake Charles, La.

We Want to Hear From You: Send your letters to mediarelations@ibew.org or Letters to the Editor, The Electrical Worker, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

Organizing Takes Courage

If you’re not organized and don’t have a local union representing the employees, then unfortunately you are disorganized and doomed, eventually, for failure. Safe work practices, professional training, decent wages, health care and pensions after giving 40 to 50 years of your sweat and blood don’t happen with wishful thinking. It takes courageous brotherhood and commitment to achieve “an honest day’s pay for an honest day’s work.”

Gene Clemans, Local 483 member
Tacoma, Wash.

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My IBEW Story

Leyton Torda, Journeyman Wireman
Honolulu Local 1186

Before my apprenticeship, I was attending college full-time and working long hours in retail to pay tuition. I barely had time to study or finish my homework — not the best way to get an education.

My girlfriend at the time and I had a long conversation about me leaving school to join the apprenticeship. She’s now my wife, and while we weren’t sure back then, it turns out we made the best decision for us and our future family.

In the IBEW, I got the best training out there, and I made a living while I learned. My benefits and the money I made as a journeyman allowed us to buy a house and raise two children comfortably. I still count my blessings and never forget that the life I live now is because the IBEW made it possible. We get to live, work and play in one of the most beautiful places on Earth — Hawaii.

In Hawaii, part of the aloha spirit is sharing your blessings with everyone else. Membership in the IBEW has been one of my greatest blessings. Mahalo rui loa for allowing me to share my story.”

Share your story at ibew.org/MyIBEWStory

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AND THE WINNERS ARE ...  
2019 IBEW Photo Contest

HONORABLE MENTION

Desiree Bates | San Diego Local 569

Second-year apprentice Desiree Bates caught this San Diego sunrise behind Local 569 journeyman wireman Dwight Faulkner as the pair prepared to run conduit – an inspiring way to start the day.

FIRST PLACE

Natalie Anaya | Los Angeles Local 11

This year’s winner comes from deep underground, where third-year apprentice Natalie Anaya captured this hero shot of journeyman wireman Ron Torres preparing for work. The Local 11 pair work for signatory contractor Dynalectric on Metro LA’s Regional Connector, which will expand and connect Los Angeles’ sprawling rail system through downtown by 2022.

SECOND PLACE

Chris Manzotti | Providence, R.I., Local 99

Bridge work isn’t for those with a fear of heights. But Local 99 journeyman wiremen Chris Manzotti and Paul Hallam (pictured) were up to the task when changing bulbs atop the Newport Bridge in preparation for its 50th anniversary celebration.

THIRD PLACE

Adam Brinkman | Tacoma, Wash., Local 483

Sometimes a great photo comes from simply noticing what others don’t, and journeyman lineman Adam Brinkman proved the point with this shot of a day’s work reflected in a puddle of water. The Local 483 member works for Tacoma Power.

Emanuel Yllescas | New York Local 3

Manhattan’s Labor Day parade is an annual tradition for the Local 3 motorcycle club. Journeyman wireman Emanuel Yllescas captured this unique perspective during a pause in the action.

As always, the winners were chosen by your votes. Congratulations to all of them on their outstanding work.

The IBEW’s 2019 Photo Contest results are official, and thousands of you weighed in on IBEW.org, Instagram and Facebook.

Submissions came in the hundreds from across North America. They featured IBEW members at work, at play and everything in between, reminding us just what it means to be a member of the greatest union in the world.

This year’s top prizes depict individuals at work both below the earth’s surface and high above it. Third place pictures an IBEW line crew’s work literally, and artfully, reflected in that surface.

Look for the launch of 2020’s IBEW Photo Contest in May’s Electrical Worker and on IBEW.org. We can’t wait to see what our members are up to in the year ahead.

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Outside Organizing for the 21st Century: A Golden Age, a Silver Tsunami and an Ironclad Plan

Continued from page 1

match the growth in demand. We have to win market share now.”

Throughout the 1990s, utilities spent on average $2 billion a year on transmission and distribution infrastructure. Since 2014, they have spent that much about every month and a half. Industry analysts at the Brattle Group expect that number to be maintained for the next two decades.

“The industry is blowing up. Interest rates are historically low, and the demand is historically high,” said Director of Business Development Ray Kasmark. “We expect a 4% growth in demand for linemen every year for the foreseeable future.”

“It’s simple math. If you want to increase market share, you have to beat that spread between growth and retire- ment,” Kasmark said.

The Old Way — Dying Slowly

Mings was appointed director in 2018 to gain the confidence of the outside locals, hire organizers in the field, set organizing targets and lay out our strategic plan. For years prior, the outside effort lacked a comprehensive strategy, Mings said. Organizing was scattered, with Mings handing out business cards and running a social media campaign nearly alone. In many places, the only time a company was organized was when it needed the union to help win a job.

“It was whoever walked through the door for a long time. It was all by chance. That’s why we were at 60% market share when I joined in 1978 and we’re at 35% now,” he said.

Some parts of the country, including Northern Illinois where Mings is from, had traditions of organizing and their market share stayed strong, but for many places, the focus was on replacing the workforce through training apprentices and stripping the occasional worker from a nonunion operation.

“There is simply no way we can do this through apprenticeship and a lineman or two here and there. No way,” Mings said. “We have to organize companies into the IBEW or we will disappear.”

And it’s not that the apprenticeship programs aren’t trying.

“We currently have 1,100 outside construction apprentices. That is the most we have ever had,” said Mick Van Natta, line-men training coordinator at the Northeastern Joint Apprenticeship and Training Program. The story is much the same at the IBEW’s eight other outside training centers.

Set a Strategy. Pick a Target. Execute.

Oakland was given a goal at the 2016 International Convention of 0.5% per year growth by the next convention in 2021. And a new strategy was needed to meet that goal.

Many organizing drives are handled at the local level, but some campaigns need more. Some targets, Oakland said, need additional resources from the international, up to and including full-time international organizers and all-hands-on-deck ground pushes that bring dozens of volunteer organizers from locals across the country for months at a time.

“We are seeing great results with this recipe in other sectors, and it makes sense to bring that same thinking to the outside,” Oakland said.

The strategy is relatively simple: Organize. So many workers that contractors are forced to accept the IBEW or risk losing their workforce.

“We don’t want to go into an election in the construction side of the house,” Mings said. “What we are after is voluntary recognition.”

Choosing JCR as the first target was almost a no-brainer.

“We started at JCR because the line-men were interested in organizing. They came to us,” Mings said. “We had several meetings, and in a bargaining unit of about 150, we had 50 to 70 people showing up.”

During the organizing drive, JCR was bought by Quanta, a Texas-based “roll-up” contractor that has purchased about 50 outside electrical contractors in less than decade. With revenue of over $13 billion last year, Quanta are a giant in the industry and, like most of the half-dozen or so similar operations, they have both union and nonunion companies in their portfolio.

“I think that made a very big difference because it wasn’t the same longtime owner saying, ‘We won’t organize.’ It was a big company in Texas that owned two other union shops, and these guys had all worked together,” Mings said. “When they compared pay stubs with workers from unionized Quanta companies, they could see the difference the IBEW made.”

After collecting enough signed cards from JCR employees, Mings said he and Assistant to the International President for Construction, Maintenance and Business Development Jerry Westerholm went to the leadership of Quanta.

Westerholm has known CEO Duke Austin and founder John Colson for two decades. It wasn’t actually Quanta that bought JCR, but a Quanta-owned company, MJ Electric. Mings has known MJ Electric President Ed Farrington for nearly as long. When Westerholm called Austin to tell him they had more than a majority of cards, a long history of mutual respect was an important factor in the company’s response.

JCR agreed to voluntarily recognize the new members. At 150 new members, it is one of the largest single construction groups organized, inside or outside, in a long time, Oakland said. And the majority of the credit goes to Boston Local 104.

“They get the kudos; they held the meetings. This was their campaign and we helped however we could,” Oakland said. “For us, it was a way to shake off the cobwebs.”

The next target on Mings’ list — the drive that would show the true power of the fully operational organization — was coming, and the target would be a much tougher, much larger Quanta company in one of the most anti-union parts of the nation.

Starting from Zero

If JCR was low hanging fruit, Sumter Utilities in the Carolinas is the opposite.

“We have, effectively, zero market share and none of the linemen there really know who we are. That’s not anyone’s defini-tion of low-hanging fruit,” Mings said.

Sumter Utilities is a Quanta company, and for decades, founder Colson had said to Westerholm that they wouldn’t just hand companies over, but they wouldn’t play dirty. “Colson said from the very beginning, ‘If you want a group, go after it. If they want to go, they can go.’ And, for the most part, Quanta has been living up to it,” Westerholm said.

In the case of Sumter, Westerholm went further and negotiated an official neutrality agreement from Quanta. After that, it was time to bring every tool to the campaign.

First, the team got more help. Stephenson appointed the first outside organizer employed by the International, Shannon Davis from Nashville Local 429. Davis had been a utility lineman at a rural electric cooperative fired for trying to organize. Within a few months he was joined by two more new outside organizers: Will Sherick from Tulsa, Okla., Local 1022 and Jason Allis-on from Kansas City, Mo., Local 53. A fourth, John Harrell from Orlando, Fla., Local 222, was hired in January.

“It won’t be structured exactly the same way as inside. We won’t have people in every district because the numbers don’t justify it,” Oakland said. “They will be covering more ground and, because the major contractors work in many places, they’ll all help wherever a particular campaign is.”
Nonunion line workers often work side by side with IBEW members, especially on storm work. This creates perfect opportunities to talk about the advantages of joining a union without anti-union management stepping in. But organizer Jason Allison cautions that talking paychecks before connecting personally can come across as arrogant.

At Sumter, the team reached out to local unions to start planning a ground game, including Charleston, S.C., Local 776, the outside local, and utility locals Charleston Local 938 and Columbia Local 772. The utility locals knew where the Sumter linemen were, what projects they were working on, where they gassed up in the morning and where they grabbed breakfast. Most of the nonunion linemen don’t travel. They work on the grounds of the utility, just like the IBEW utility members. Half of the ground game is knowing where to show up, and Local 938 Business Manager Mark Corn knew where to find them.

“I said, ‘Give me a few weeks’ notice before you come in, and I can find you where they are going to be working so you can catch them on the jobsites,’” Corn said. “And we could warn them this is coming down the pike. If they see people around and don’t know who they are, they’re probably IBEW.”

Next came the ground push. Once in February and twice in April, nearly 50 organizers from the Construction, Membership Development and Business Development departments, as well as Linemen from Grand Rapids, Mich., Local 876 and Columbus, Ohio, Local 71, descended on the Carolinas. They spread out across dozens of job sites provided by Corn and others to gas stations and breakfast spots. And they had valuable information like the names and concerns of some of the linemen they’d be talking to.

“I was hoping to show these nonunion linemen that we are here to help, and to let them know we weren’t going anywhere,” Mings said. “Sumter will take a long, long time. It won’t be overnight, and that’s our fault. We left that part of the world alone for too long.”

That kind of personal connection is crucial in a state as historically hostile to unions as South Carolina. Former Gov. Nikki Haley once announced that she would not allow new unions in the state and would “run out” every union already there.

“It is hard here, very hard here,” Corn said. “You have the government pushing back at the state and federal level right now. These workers fear for their jobs. They’re afraid to sign cards. They think management is writing down license plates at meetings and, whether it’s true or not, they believe it.”

Corn told a story about a “safety meeting” that a Sumter foreman called in December. This caught his attention, because he had never seen one called on utility property.

“I was worried someone had died, and I didn’t want it to happen on our site,” he said. “Well, I go and he was talking about knives and gloves and I’m waiting to hear the big boss talk about the big deal. And then he starts going on about how bad unions are.”

Corn stepped into the circle.

“I told him, ‘I don’t know who you are walking onto my property saying that about my members, but you can turn your bleepity-bleep around and walk right out that gate.’” Corn said. “Well, that spread like wildfire.”

As word of the incident (and the utility’s refusal to discipline Corn) got around, he got plenty of questions from Sumter workers.

“Could you talk like that to the boss?”

“Could you if you were union. When they cross the line of the contract, they are wrong and you can tell them so,” he said. “Even after that we didn’t get a whole bunch of people signed, but they saw something there.”

Mings said he calls the campaign a first step.

“This is the first of multiple campaigns launched in the last year, with targets in the Carolinas, Texas, Missouri, Florida and everywhere in between.

Before we got there, hardly anyone was walking into our halls. We stripped hundreds of guys,” he said. “How many are still with us is hard to say, but we were hearing from the contractors. They were squawking about all the manpower they lost.”

Making a Pitch That Resonates

Outside construction organizer Allison said it was all very familiar to him. From 1997 to 2004 he worked as a nonunion lineman.

“We lived paycheck to paycheck, me and my wife. We were literally budgeting for babies, but we couldn’t start a family,” he said.

A year after Allison joined the apprenticeship with Kansas City, Mo., Local 53, he and his wife finally started a family even though he was a few years from topping out.

“I knew I would make it. There was no way I was going back,” he said.

He message he and the other outside organizers bring to the nonunion line men isn’t complicated. And he has learned that starting out by comparing pay stubs turns many people off. Linemen are proud, he says.

“If I start out by asking ‘How are they treating you?’ These folks sometimes hear ‘We make more money’ as ‘We are better than you,’” he said. “Then I listen. Once they know I care how they are being treated, then we can talk about money.”

Allison is now working on Mings’ third target, and likely the last before Mings retires this month, Great Southwest, an NYX company. Allison travels all over the Eighth and Eleventh districts, getting cards signed and stripping workers.

“If the company doesn’t want to talk to us, we’ll strip workers to our side and that brings them to the table pretty quick,” he said. “If we see another nonunion company out there, don’t just make a note and drive on; we’re stopping.”

The Third Side of the Coin

Historically, there have been two main ways to organize: bottom up and top down. You organize the workers, or you organize the company. Obviously, when done right, one leads to the other. But this is no longer the whole story.

“Business development is the third side of the coin,” Kasmark said. “A contractor needs workers and work. If we can organize the work, contractors have nowhere to go but us.”

It also makes Business Development’s outside construction representatives — Tiler Eaton and Joel Bell — indispensable resources during ground pushes and organizing drives.

“Joel and Tiler know all the projects on the books for the next 6 to 24 months: where they are, who is doing them and what the opportunities are,” Kasmark said. “We can answer linenmen’s questions and convince a business manager that there is merit in growing.”

At the moment, there is so much opportunity everywhere, project owners and contractors are ready and willing to sign if they get the manpower they need. Bell said.

“Our biggest limitation on organizing right now is that many outside locals don’t have the structure to support organizing,” he said.

It all comes back, Mings said, to what Stephenson means when he says the IBEW will become an organizing union again. Everyone, everywhere, is back in the game until we meet the goal of the IBEW’s founders: organize the whole electrical market.

“We don’t have one target, then another, then another. Our target is national. Our resources are sufficient to go after every part of the country,” Mings said.

See our video about the ICR Organizing campaign at bit.ly/ICROrganizing
I It's a nearly 2,100-mile drive from his home in Newfoundland to the jobsite in western Pennsylvania. But Damian Hogan jumped at the chance to join construction crews at the Shell Pennsylva-
nia Chemical project north of Pittsburgh.

“There’s not a lot of work in our local,” said Hogan, a journeyman inside wireman and a 20-plus-year member of St. John’s, Newfoundland, Local 230.

“The way my number was on the [call] list, I didn’t see myself getting work of this nature anytime soon.”

Geoff Wayne did not have as far to travel. He’s a member of London, Ontario, Local 120, about six hours away. There is more work in his local’s jurisdiction, but not as much as in most of the U.S. Wayne also enjoys working as a traveler and jumped at the chance to cross the border.

“The American brothers have treated us phenomenally,” he said. “When you come down here, you wonder if guys might be talking about taking their jobs, but there’s been absolutely none of that.”

In some ways, the moves by Wayne and Hogan are no different than any trav-
eliers within the IBEW.

With most U.S. construction locals at full employment, travelers often have their pick of big jobs. In the case of large-

scale projects like Shell Pennsylvania, the help is welcome — and needed.

Officials from Beaver, Pa., Local 712, where the plant is located, have worked with the Construction & Mainte-
nance Department to ensure contractors have enough workers to fill the calls. The small local has relied on travelers from the very start to help meet the demands of the US$6.5 billion gas project [See “Building the Gas Boom” in the August 2019 issue of the Electrical Worker].

But cross-border travelers are still rare. That’s why many Canadian wiremen, especially those in areas where the local economy isn’t great, jumped at the chance to gain temporary visas and work south of the border.

“It’s not for a reason,” First District Vice-President Thomas Reid said. “We serve two great countries. Our goal is always to strive for full employment, no matter if our mem-
bers have to cross the border in either direction. We’re meeting the needs of the contractor while also providing jobs with high wages and good benefits for our members. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

“We’ve been trying to find a way to get our members to go south because we’re getting calls all the time from busi-
ness managers down there,” Executive Assistant to the First District Vice Presi-
dent Paul Dolsen said. “They tell us they have plenty of work and need wiremen. ‘Can you get your people down here?’”

The short answer was no. Unlike

Canadian Members Find Good Wages, Good Friends at Massive Pennsylvania Project

Workers at the Shell Pennsylvania Chemical Project near Beaver, Pa., where one of the largest single construction projects in the U.S. is putting IBEW members to work from both the U.S. and Canada.

His work visa was waiting for him when he crossed over into the United States at the border with Maine. He and others had to commit to working a year on the plant’s construction. There were 295 visas filled, Dolsen said.

Hogan said the kindness shown by Lonie 712 and other members has been overwhelming. Local 712 member Phil Divit-

tis gave him the name of a mechanic to work on his truck while he was gone for the Christ-

mas holiday. When he returned, Divittis had paid the mechanic and told Hogan to reim-
burse him at his own convenience.

Wayne had tried in 2018 to work on the Vogtle nuclear plant in Georgia, but those visas were not approved, so he especially appreciates the work in Penn-
sylvania. There are always challenges adapting to a new jobsite, but the bene-
fits far outweigh that, he said.

“Good Friends at Massive Pennsylvania Project” was published in the Electrical Worker’s March 2020 issue.

“Building the Gas Boom” was published in the Electrical Worker’s August 2019 issue.

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NORTH OF 49° AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

De belles occasions pour nos membres canadiens au grand projet en Pennsylvanie

C’est une route d’environ 2 200 miles depuis son domicile à Terre-Neuve jusqu’au chantier de construction dans l’ouest de la Pennsylvanie. Mais Damian Hogan a sauté sur l’occasion pour aller rejoindre les équipes de construction au Shell Pennsylvania Chemical project situé au nord de Pittsburgh.

« Il n’y a pas beaucoup de travail dans notre local, dit Hogan, un électricien compagnon et membre du local 2310 à Saint-Jean-de-Terre-Neuve depuis plus de 20 ans. L’endroit qui figurait sur le numéro de téléphone sur la liste d’appel, je ne me voyais pas obtenir du travail de cette nature aussi rapidement. »

La distance que Geoff Wayne devait parcourir n’était pas aussi grande. Il est membre du local 120 à Londres en Ontario situé à environ six heures de route. Il y a plus de travail dans le territoire que couvre notre section locale, mais pas autant que dans la majeure partie des É.-U. Wayne aime bien voyager pour le travail et il a sauvé l’occasion pour traverser la frontière. « Nos compagnons américains nous ont traités extrêmement bien, ajoute-t-il. Lorsque tu es de l’autre côté, tu veux parler de toi pour avoir volé leurs emplois. Mais il n’y a absolument rien eu de ca à cet égard. »

Il existe une autre façon, ce que Wayne et Hogan ont fait et n’est pas plus différent des autres voyageurs au sein de la FIOE. Avec la plupart des locaux dans le domaine de la construction aux États-Unis qui sont à plein emploi, les voyagistes ont souvent le loisir de choisir les grands projets. Dans le cas d’un projet d’une grande envergure comme celui de Shell Pennsylvania, l’aide est la bien-


evne et elle est dans le besoin.

Les responsables du local 712 de Beaver, Pennsyl., où la centrale se trouve, ont travaillé avec le département de la construction et de la maintenance pour veiller à ce que les entrepreneurs aient assez d’employés pour répondre à la demande. Depuis le début, le petit local comptait sur les voyageurs pour répondre aux besoins du projet de pétrole de 65 milliards dollars américains [voir l’article du mois d’août 2019 intitulé Building the Gas Boom dans l’Electrical Worker].

Mais les voyageurs transfrontaliers sont uniques. C’est pour cette raison que plusieurs électriens canadiens, plus spécifiquement ceux dans les régions où l’économie locale n’est pas forte, ont profité de cette rare occasion et ont obtenu leurs visas temporaires en vue de travailler au sud de la frontière. « L’international est dans notre nom pour une raison, » mentionne Tom Reid le vice-président international du premier district. « Nous desservons deux pays for-
midables. Notre objectif est de s’efforcer de parvenir à un plein emploi, peu importe si cela doit traverser les frontières dans les deux directions. Nous répondons aux demandes des酶
trepreneurs tout en fournissant à nos membres des emplois avec des salaires élevés et de bons avantages. Tout le monde en sort gagnant. »

« Nous essaierons de trouver de nouveaux membres au sud, parfois les gérants d’affaires de ces locaux nous appellent tout le temps, » dit Paul Dolsen l’assistant exécutif au vice-prési-
dent international du premier district. « Ils nous disent qu’ils ont beaucoup d’emplois pour le poste d’électricien. “Est-ce que ces membres peuvent venir ici ?” La réponse courte était non. Con-
trairement aux monteurs de lignes qui peuvent facilement voyager du Canada pour aider à rétablir le courant à la suite d’une catastrophe naturelle, les électriens sont traités différemment sous les règlements du gouvernement des États-Unis, et ils ne sont pas autorisés à faire de même. C’est-à-dire que les entreprises souhaitant les embaucher doivent en faire la demande auprès du Labor Department pour obtenir le visa H-2B. On ne sait pas si des programmes comme celui de la Pennsylvanie vont con-

tiner, dit Dolsen. Mais pour le moment, le travail est la bienvenue. L’économie canadienne est forte dans certaines par-
ties du pays, mais pas aussi forte qu’aux É.-U., en grande partie à cause du prix de la pétrole trop faible qui est venu épuiser les emplois liés au pétrole. 

Hogan nous informe que le proces-
sus d’approbation n’était pas aussi laborieux qu’il pensait. Il a rencontré le représentant international Cordell Cole du premier district qui lui a montré les formules à remplir auprès du gouvernement des États-Unis et celui du Canada.

Le processus s’est bien déroulé, dit-elle. Une fois avoir traversé la frontière pour aller aux États-Unis avec le Maine, son visa de travail l’attendait. Lui et les autres devaient s’engager à travailler pour une année à construire la centrale. Il y a eu 295 visas qui ont été déposés, dit Dolsen. La gentillesse démontrée par le local 712 et les autres membres a été incroyable, dit Hogan. Le membre Phil Divittis du local 712 lui a donné le nom d’un mécanicien pour réparer son camion lors-
squ’il était parti pour la période des fêtes. À son retour, Divittis avait payé le mécani-
cien et avait offert à Hogan de le rem-
bourser au moment qui lui conviendrait.

En 2018, Wayne avait tenté de tra-
vailler à la centrale nucléaire de Vogtle en Géorgie, mais les visas n’ont pas été approuvés, il apprécie donc particulère-
ment le travail en Pennsylvanie. Il y a tou-
jours des défis à relever lorsqu’il veut le temps de s’adapter à un nouveau chantier de construction, mais les avantages com-

mentent largement, dit-il.

“Tu travaillais six jours par semaine et l’argent en vaut vraiment la peine, » dit-elle. “La taille de la retraite est immense. Et lorsqu’on t’ajoute le taux de change, c’est un bon endroit pour travailler. »
Workplace Organizing Gets Boost with PRO Act Passage

An effort in Congress to make it easier for working people to join labor unions like the IBEW took a big step forward on Feb. 6 when 234 members of the U.S. House of Representatives voted to approve the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act.

“It’s unfortunate that workers need an act of Congress to get us back to the original intent of the National Labor Relations Act,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “But it’s heartening that House members from both parties can agree on a strategy for strengthening this landmark law that has helped make the lives of countless working people better over the last 85 years.”

Sponsored by Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia and introduced last May, the PRO Act calls for modernizing the definition of unfair labor practices and for allowing fines or lawsuits against employers who keep workers from forming workplace bargaining units, among other reforms.

“Evidence and experience demonstrate that labor unions are one of the most powerful tools workers have to improve the standard of living for themselves and their families,” said Scott, chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor. “The PRO Act is a comprehensive proposal to ensure that workers have the right to stand together and negotiate for higher wages, better benefits and safer working conditions.”

The act, H.R. 2474, aims to repeal so-called “right-to-work” laws, enacted in 27 states, that openly discourage workers from organizing and allow employers to be free riders, reaping the benefits of union membership without contract negotiations and enforcement without contributing to their costs.

“The PRO Act would help stabilize the power balance in the workplace and empower the middle class to grow stronger,” said Political and Legislative Affairs Director Austin Keyser, who noted that recent national polls have shown that approval of unions in general is trending upward, with about half of all non-organized workers saying they would join a union if they could.

Labor activists hope the stronger penalties prescribed by the PRO Act will make employers think twice before interfering with workers’ rights to organize and bargain for contracts. The bill also targets the captive audience meetings that employers often use to bully workers who are thinking about unionizing.

The House Education and Labor Committee approved the PRO Act in September, and then it sat untouched for months. But thanks largely to a steady stream of pressure from members of the IBEW and other labor unions, Keyser said, 76 representatives were moved to sign on to a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California in January asking for a full House vote on the measure.

Folsom, N.J., Local 352 member Donald Norcross, a former business agent who has represented New Jersey’s 1st Congressional District since 2014, was among those who signed the letter to Pelosi. He was also one of the PRO Act’s original co-sponsors.

“As an IBEW member and a lifelong labor leader, I can attest to the importance of giving workers a voice in the workplace by protecting them from violations of the labor law,” Norcross said. “The PRO Act restores fairness to an economy that’s rigged against workers by closing loopholes in federal labor laws and increasing transparency in labor-management relations.”

With about 35 members from six locals, IBEW members were a major contingent in the union army that descended on the Capitol in Boise for Lobby Day in mid-January.

“They always make us proud,” said Idaho AFL-CIO President Joe Maloney, a journeyman wireman and organizer with Pocatello Local 455, who was elected to lead the state federation two years ago. “The PRO Act is really strong here in Idaho.”

In addition to Maloney's local and Boise locals 20 and 287, Seattle Local 72, Spokane, Wash., Local 73 and Salt Lake City Local 57, all sent out the representatives who make up the state’s labor contingent.

“I believe many states, a major issue for Idaho’s building trades is saving the journeyman-apprentice ratio on construction sites,” said Kristi Deviney, a journeyman and insurance representative for Pocatello Local 455. “It’s an uphill battle, and some damaging legislation has already passed, but I can’t see us getting out on the streets. We have a lot of people that believe in this and are willing to go there.”

Alicia Davila, president and co-founder of the workers’ committee at Local 291, had a unique perspective among IBEW members on the ratio, which ensures safe, quality construction while providing unparalleled training for apprentices.

“People were really curious, asking, ‘Are you an electrician?’” Davila said. “I told them, ‘I work in telecommunications. I told them, ‘I’m here because I don’t want somebody who isn’t trained in our registered apprenticeship to be working on my house.’”

Local 291 Business Manager Mark Zaleski said it’s too early in the legislative session to know what all the 2022 challenges will be, but there’s concern that state licensing requirements for tradesmen could be watered down, or worse.

“We haven’t seen a bill yet, but I think there’s a creeping attack, possibly doing away with licenses altogether,” Zaleski said. “Many in Idaho government think that licenses are a hurdle for people to go to work. The fact is, we have people lining up to be apprentices. There’s no hurdle there.”

Assaults on licensing and on the journeyman-apprentice ratio are threats to good jobs and public safety, he said, and the IBEW will continue to be vigilant. “We have a good relationship with the governor, where at least his door is open and he’ll sit down and listen to what we have to say,” he said. “He’s not a champion for labor, but he’s not out to hurt us.”

Maloney is encouraging unions to spend more time with lawmakers on the opposing side, even by sponsoring tables at GOP fundraisers in their districts “so they see you in the public eye.”

“We don’t care whether you’re a Republican or a Democrat as long as you’re voting for labor,” he said. “We strive every day to break those barriers down.”

“I have a good relationship with Governor Bevin and he’s bringing the IBEW to the next level,” said IBEW President Tomo Norden, who signed the letter to Pelosi. “He’s a champion for labor, and he’s not out to hurt us.”

Maloney said the PRO Act “will be free riders, reaping the benefits of unionization without the cost of organizing or providing benefits to workers.”

Among the original co-sponsors of the PRO Act was Folsom, N.J., Local 352 member Donald Norcross (in bucket), a former business agent who has represented New Jersey’s 1st Congressional District since 2014.

Shortly after the letter was sent, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland promised, via Twitter, to bring the PRO Act to the House floor for a vote prior to the President’s Day district work period.

Next, the bill heads to the Senate, although the Republican majority there has shown little interest in considering worker-focused legislation. Even so, Stephenson said, IBEW members should be proud of the progress that we’ve made so far.

“It took years for working people to finally get the Cadillac tax repealed,” Stephenson said. “We won that fight against unfair taxes on our health benefits, and we’ll win this one too.”

Although labor should keep up the pressure on our senators by telling them to support H.R. 2474, Stephenson said, “by reminding all of our legislators that working people will remember their support for our priorities — or their lack of support — on Election Day.”

Idaho Locals Helping Lead Statehouse Battles for Good Jobs, Workers’ Rights

Lobbying for union jobs and workers’ rights isn’t easy in a state as red as Idaho, but IBEW activists are playing a robust role in bridging the divide.

Idaho IBEW members converged on the state Capitol in January to lobby for pro-worker bills and legislation vital to safety and quality in the building trades.

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Kentucky’s New Labor-Backed Governor Moves Quickly to Protect Workers

IEBW activists and other working people in Kentucky can claim another victory as labor-backed Andy Beshear, in one of his first official acts as governor, reinstated the state’s Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board in January.

“Organized labor helped get us the vote for Gov. Beshear last November,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. “And within months he brought back the standards board, showing us that when he said he’d stand up for working people and the-worker, he meant it.”

Established in 1972 and chaired by the governor-appointed Labor Cabinet secretary, the 12-member standards board is tasked with enforcing Kentucky’s worker safety rules, required by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act to be at least as stringent as the national standards.

The previous governor, Republican Matt Bevin, was Beshear’s polar opposite when it came to labor issues. In 2017, Bevin signed into law two bills that the General Assembly had rammed through as “emergency legislation”: one making Kentucky a right-to-work state, and the other repealing the law mandating payment of the prevailing wage on public construction projects.

The following year, Beshear issued an executive order eliminating the standards board and placing sole authority over workplace safety decisions in the hands of his labor secretary.

“The men and women who are most knowledgeable of the safety and health of our workers must, by law, make up the board, not an ‘at-will’ employee who answers to the governor and not our workers,” argued Beshear, a Democrat who was serving as Kentucky’s elected attorney general at the time.

Frank Cloud, a Fourth District International representative who supervises the IBEW’s grassroots political and legislative activism program in Kentucky, agreed. “This order took labor out of the picture and made our workplaces less safe,” Cloud said.

Not long after Beshear’s order, an...
POLITICS & JOBS continued

Investigation by the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting discovered that the state’s worker safety program had neglected to follow up on almost all of the workplace deaths that had occurred over the previous two years.

Fed-up labor activists around the state rallied to help Beshear defeat Bevin in last November’s elections, emboldened after Bevin’s proposal to replace teachers’ pensions with a hybrid investment and defined-benefit plan, which prompted statewide teacher walkouts in 2018 and 2019.

“This was our first chance to respond to Bevin directly, and our members spoke loud and clear at the ballot box,” wrote Bill Fitz, a former business manager of Louisville Local 369 who now serves as director of the Kentucky State Building and Construction Trades Council, in an email to the members of Kentucky’s AFL-CIO chapter.

Beshear’s father, Steve, served as Kentucky’s governor from 2007 to 2015 and was himself a noted friend of working people, so it came as little surprise to Gene Holthouser, Local 369’s political director, that the younger Beshear didn’t just re-establish the board at the very start of his term, he packed it with labor voices.

“He also wanted to make sure he was thinking he already knew everything,” Holthouser said. “It’s relying on us to be the experts, and we have a seat at the table now. Before, we were kicked out of the room altogether. It’s like night and day.”

In fact, one-third of the board’s members come from unions: Caitlin Blair, from United Food and Commercial Workers’ Local 275 in Louisville; John Holbrook, business manager of United Association Local 248 in Ashland; Keith Murt, from UA Local 184 in Paducah; and John Stovall, president of Teamsters Local 783 in Louisville. And new labor secretary, Larry Roberts, is a former state director of the Kentucky Building Trades who previously served in that role from 2012 to 2013 under Beshear’s father.

“This is just one step that we are going to take to make sure that when our Kentuckians leave their family in the morning and head to work, it’s in the safest environment possible and that they know that they’ve got a state government that is looking out for their safety,” Beshear told the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting.

But with worker-friendly representatives in Kentucky’s General Assembly in the minority, other labor priorities like repeal of right-to-work and restoration of prevailing wage realistically seem out of reach for now.

“Elections have consequences, too,” Holthouser said, “and we’re never going to let those things get out of people’s minds.”

Bluegrass State voters will have a chance to select more advocates for working people in November, when Beshear and his wife, First Lady Kim Beshear, will run for re-election. New Lou.

IBEW Leader Appointed to Key Role in Michigan’s Labor Department

Michigan’s working families have a powerful new voice in government with the recent appointment of Muskegon, Mich., Local 275 member Sean Egan to the state role of Michigan’s Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

“We couldn’t have a better representative of the IBEW in Michigan government than Sean,” said Local 275 Business Manager Jonas Talbott. “His focus has always been on labor and working families over himself. It’s evident in every much everything he does.”

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer appointed Egan deputy director for labor in the Michigan Labor Department. The role is part of the executive leadership team and provides direct oversight of the state’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Michigan Workers Disability Compensation Agency, the Michigan Bureau of Employment Relations and the Michigan, more and more Division. The larger department also encompasses the Unemployment Insurance Agency, the Workforce Development Agency and a new Department of Prosperity.

“The department touches on nearly all aspects of a person’s working life, so it’s imperative for labor to have a voice at the table,” Egan said. “We usually do have friends in the legislative halls, which is important, but the real work of government happens in the departments and the agencies that establish the rules of the game.”

A journeyman wireman by trade, Egan served as business manager of Local 275 from 2007 to 2017, and as president and assistant business manager before that. During this time, he also attended law school, graduating from Western Michigan University’s Cooley School of Law in 2013 with honors.

“Law school just kind of happened for me,” Egan said. “There were times when I’d be in meetings with executives and realize that, while I had their respect, I felt they were still looking at the trades as less educated because I didn’t have a college degree. Being a hardened Irishman, I decided I would get a degree with classes in the evenings and weekends.”

Egan has also served as president of his local labor council and as the local labor building trades president. In 2017, Grand Rapids, Mich., Local 876 was going through a leadership transition and Business Manager Chad Clark asked Egan if he would come on board and assist the local as it navigated 30-plus contracts, the transition, operational needs and other issues. So Egan made the move to serve as the local’s general counsel. He credits the move with giving him experience in the utility, government, and outside branches of the union.

“I had never really intended to leave Local 275, but a culmination of factors pushed me in a different direction,” Egan said. “Having the ability and fortitude to pursue this level of education has proven invaluable for our brothers and sisters through negotiations, grievances, organizing and so much more.”

Egan’s background isn’t one often found in government positions, even those tasked with overseeing the lives of working people. He and other Michigan labor leaders know they’ll bring a unique pro-worker perspective to the role.

“I have not yet met an attorney on our side or management’s that has the mix of experience I have,” Egan said. “The most important thing we bring with us from the field to our leadership roles is in our union, in politics, or in my case the department, is our experience. As a wireman, I fully understand what our brothers and sisters experience every day and the threats they face.”

Egan also volunteers with the A. Philip Randolph Institute’s annual “trunk or treat” event at Halloween, as a tax preparer through the United Way for low-income people to maximize the Earned Income Tax Credit and Michigan-specific tax credits.

In Quest for ‘Someone to Advocate for Us,’ New Jersey Librarians Turn to the IBEW

Library lovers in Vineland, N.J., are getting their latest recommendations from IBEW-member librarians, and it’s thanks to an unlikely organizing campaign brought on in the wake of the Supreme Court’s anti-union Janus decision.

In 2018, Atlantic City, N.J., Local 210 Business Manager Anthony Pettito and Financial Secretary Walt Young responded to the Janus decision — which made all public-sector workplaces right-to-work — by meeting with bargaining units across the local’s jurisdiction to remind members of the value unions offer them and their families.

Neither expected it to add members, but that’s just what happened following a meeting with municipal workers in the southern New Jersey city of Vineland.

Two employees of the city’s library were sitting in the back of the room that day, curious about the IBEW and the potential of union representation. About one year later, they and their colleagues had finished off a successful organizing campaign and approved a two-year contract.

“This is actually a case of something positive coming out of a negative situation,” Pettito said.

Helen Margiotti, head of Children & Young Adult Services at the library and now a Local 275 member, agrees. “I had never really thought about organizing before,” Margiotti said.

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Whitmer, a Democrat, won election in 2018 and ended eight years of Republic- leader under Gov. Rick Snyder who was hostile to unions and working families, including pushing through a controversial right-to-work law in 2012.

“Gov. Whitmer has been a friend to working families for her entire life and fulffefully comprehends the role that labor plays,” Egan said. “After ending eight years with an administration that had no interest in communicating, supporting or otherwise engaging labor or working fami-

local 275 member Sean Egan will be a powerful voice for Michigan’s workers in his new role with the state’s Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

Juni Ruiz, a senior assistant, joined with the rest of his colleagues at the Vineland Public Library and accepted representation from Atlantic City, N.J., Local 210. The bargaining unit recently approved a first contract.

“Local 210 went into negotiations optimistic and it’s very clear that the community has an interest in the success of that library,” Pettito said.

Margiotti was aware of that decision, but the reason she attended the 2018 meeting was the opportunity to meet with a Local 210 official.

“Want they wanted was a voice,” Pettito said. “They wanted security. They were OK with the status quo, but they wanted protection.”

Even before the final vote was taken, Local 210 went to work for affected employees. Five library employees were passed off by the city in early 2019 due to a funding reduc-

tion, including four who would be bargaining unit employees. Local 210 negoti-

ated on their behalf to secure severance pay, Pettito said.

The contract that was approved in October 2019 includes grievance and arbitration procedures as well as the new members having increased input into their schedules, which is important because they are expected to work some holidays and weekends. Librarians also saw their work hours increased to 37 1/2 per week after they were cut to 30 in recent years.

As evidence that security was more important to them, there are no salary increas-

es, although Local 210 hopes to negotiate that in a future contract. For now, the library employees have the respect they deserve, Pettito said. Vineland is a city of 65,000, about an hour’s drive west of Atlantic City.

“Local 210 went into negotiations optimistic and it’s very clear that the community has an interest in the success of that library,” Pettito said.

Margiotti said the vote was unanimous in approving the first contract. About 14 employees are members of the bargaining unit, depending on how many part-timers — who also are covered by the contract — are employed.

“Pulls here has much experience with unions,” she said. “We’re still in the learning stage. It’s nice to have someone in there advocating for us.”

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lies, she has opened the door. We have a seat at almost every table now.”
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CIRCUITS

IBEW Members Deliver Another Super Performance on the World Stage

Football fans across the world aren’t likely to realize it, but most years IBEW members are as critical to their Super Bowl viewing experience as chicken wings and guacamole.

This year’s game on Fox marked the 29th time that IBEW professionals provided the pictures and sound from the big game. The Kansas City Chiefs beat the San Francisco 49ers 31-20 at Miami’s Hard Rock Stadium, and the game was broadcast to 102 million viewers around the U.S.

More than 400 IBEW members were in South Florida working as camera operators, sound mixers, graphic artists, replay technicians and other responsibilities. The IBEW has had a relationship with Fox Sports since the early 1990s, when the network was just beginning its sports division. This was the ninth Super Bowl televised by the network.

“We’re incredibly proud of our long-standing partnership with Fox Sports and thankful that it gives our talented and hard-working members a chance to work on the biggest stage of all,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. “They always do us proud and they did just that during this year’s game. They’re the best at what they do.”

The IBEW has a relationship with another Super Bowl broadcaster, CBS, dating back to 1979, when it was a radio company. Members have provided the behind-the-scenes personnel for the 20 Super Bowls televised by that network. That means IBEW members have worked more than half of the 54 Super Bowls played.

Other IBEW members were in and around Miami working for local television stations and other production companies covering the game and events surrounding it.

“As I visited the stadium the week before the game, I saw firsthand all the hard work and knowledge required to prepare for the most-watched television event of the year,” Broadcasting & Telecommunications Director Robert Prunn said.

“Fox Sports is a great partner of the IBEW, and our members contribute so much to the success of all sporting events on the network. The Super Bowl is always fun to watch, and it hope it meant a little move to the rest of our members knowing that their brothers and sisters were bringing the game into our living rooms.”

The quality of the IBEW members’ work was not lost on Fox Sports executives either.

“The Super Bowl is the day that we all live for as sports television professionals, and none more so than the talented men and women working with us down in Fort Lauderdale,” said Michael Davies, Fox Sports senior vice president for field operations and technology. “We are truly grateful for our relationship with the membership and leadership of the IBEW, not to mention the amazing crew that’s working on the game with us. It’s what goes into making Super Bowl Sunday a huge success.”

Hard Rock Stadium is in Miami but Fox Sports has much of its operations based in nearby Fort Lauderdale.

Code of Excellence Boosts Safety and Morale at Colorado Utility

The energy running through La Plata Electric Association in southwestern Colorado these days isn’t limited to the utility’s power lines.

For nearly 70 members of Denver Local 111, which represents workers statewide, a new Code of Excellence agreement is reordering a workplace that had suffered for years from low morale.

“It’s starting to heal the divide,” said Derek Burns, one of the local’s assistant business managers. “People are saying how refreshing it is to see the union and the company working together like this.”

Flawed policies, unjust discipline and other mismanagement had long frustrated La Plata workers, leading to high turnover. Meanwhile, their ideas for improving safety and training went nowhere.

But the environment began to change last summer when new CEO Jessica Matlock arrived.

“She’s been a breath of fresh air for us on the union side,” said chief steward Ryan Peacock, a substation foreman who’s been at La Plata since 1998. “There was very little communication between the last CEO and employees. Hopefully now we’re flying some broken bridges.”

On Matlock’s first day at the cooperative in July 2019, Burns and Local 111 Business Manager Rich Meisinger drove six hours from Denver to Durango to meet her. They’d heard good things from IBEW leaders in Washington state, where she was a top manager at a large public utility. They weren’t disappointed.

“She told us her biggest issue was safety — making sure that her people are safe and that they have the tools, equipment and training they need,” Burns said.

With that door open, he and Meisinger brought up the Code of Excellence, the IBEW’s trademark program bringing management and workers together on issues of safety, professionalism, accountability, relationships and quality.

Matlock embraced it. Growing up with a mother who was one of Colorado’s first female firefighters, she said, “safety was just paramount to me. I want to make sure that all my employees, no matter where they’re at, are being cautious and that they’ll come home safely.”

She also saw the broader benefits of the Code. “It’s a commitment to each other, how to treat each other and how to act,” she said. “We all know that, but having it in writing, making a paper commitment that we’re going to do our best for each other and our customers, is really important to me.”

Within a few weeks, a core group of managers, union leaders and workers began meeting to hammer out the details, finding common ground in the process.

“There’s accountability, honesty and integrity for our membership and the company,” Meisinger said of the agreement. “There’s no lip service from either side.”

Steward Aubrey Gillespie, one of nine customer service representatives, was part of the COE committee.

“Honestly, when I first heard about it, I felt like it was going to be something that was talked about, but that the follow-through wasn’t going to be there,” she said. “The meetings, the collaboration, really opened my eyes. It was empowering.”

Matlock also made the rounds individually, meeting one-on-one with every employee for about 45 minutes. Union leaders encouraged members to make the most of it. “We told them, ‘If you have a beef with the company, this is the time to bring it up,’” Burns said.

Fairly quickly, he saw a shift in management’s approach. “Driving was a big issue,” he said, as an example. “We’ve got a lot of snow here in the winter, and we’ve had accidents with vehicles sliding off the road. In the past, it would get written up and there would be discipline. Now the focus is more ‘let’s learn from this.’”

The morning of Jan. 9, the entire staff at La Plata — about 200 union members and managers — gathered for breakfast burritos and a presentation that made the Code of Excellence official.

After 11 years at the utility, Gillespie said it feels like a new workplace, one with real connections and a shared mission.

“We’re more a team now, and that’s been so fantastic,” she said. “Everyone plays such a critical role, not just the line men, but customer service, the mapping department — without each other we’re not complete.

“This is a great company and we want to have the respect, to let our community know that we care about safety and morality. That takes all of us working together.”

Local 111 members at La Plata Electric Association gathered to celebrate a new Code of Excellence agreement that workers and managers say is building morale and a spirit of a teamwork at the Durango, Colo., utility.

IBEW.org
Get the latest IBEW news, including the online version of The Electrical Worker, at IBEW.org.

YouTube
The IBEW Canadian women’s conference was full of “fierce, hardworking, loyal sisters” who are passionate about being sisters in the Brotherhood. Get inspired at YouTube.com/TheElectricalWorker.

Vimeo
Sacramento, Calif., Local 340 has had a lot of ups and downs. Find out how they revitalized their local and doubled their market share at Vimeo.com/IBEW.

HourPower
The IBEW has partnered with Electrical Safety Foundation International to educate our members on how to maintain safe and secure work environments. Watch the latest safety message at IBEWHourPower.com.

ElectricTV
Allegiant Stadium, the new home of the Las Vegas Raiders, is on schedule thanks in part to IBEW members. It is set to open for the upcoming 2020 football season. Learn more at ElectricTV.net.

IBEW Hour Power
In addition to your monthly issue of The Electrical Worker, check out the wealth of IBEW-related information online.
Susie Barber, a retired Sixth District interna-
tional representa-
tive and early member of the Electrical Work-
er's. Minority Caucus, died in
December after a long illness. She was 76.
Barber's IBEW career began in 1969
when she went to work at a Western Elec-
tric plant, rising to chief steward and execu-
tive board member for Local 1942, now
Downers Grove, Ill., Local 21.
"She was larger than life," said Royetta Sanford, retired director of human services at the International Office, who worked with Barber on the
EBWC and the Women's Conference.
"Susie had the ability to communicate effectively with any and everybody; it
didn't matter their race or ethnicity, whether they were women or men, young or old. People were drawn to her"

“She was larger than life. People were drawn to her.”
— Royetta Sanford, Retired Director of Human Services

EWMC President Emeritus Robbie Sparks knew Barber as a "union sister, activist, organizer and friend" for more than three decades. They had the oppor-
tunity to work together in the early 1990s when Barber was assigned temporarily to the
Mid-District interna-
ational rep. Sparks said Barber's creativity and reliabil-
ity helped the EWMC grow and thrive. "She always thought outside the box and she could always be counted on when things got tough," Sanford said.
Barber, who was born in Tennessee and grew up in the suburbs southwest of Chicago, was active in A. Philip Ran-
dolph Institute, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and other organizations throughout her IBEW career.
She continued to serve workers and her Illinois community after retiring in 2004. Those roles included chairing the Joliet Housing Authority and being the first black woman elected to the Joliet City Council, where Sanford said she brought her "union sensibilities."'

"When she was running for the council seat, she was way ahead of the game because she had her union organiz-
ing skills, her community skills, and she drew on all of those. It's no surprise that she won that seat,"

Sparks, Sanford, and Edwards visit-
ed Barber last July in a Chicago-area nurs-
ing home. "As soon as we got there, we
started talking about old times. She perked up and started laughing and
talking. It was a wonderful experience for all of us," Sanford said.
Barber's survivors include her son, Shadow Barber, a past member of Down-
ers Grove Local 25, and numerous grand-
children, great grandchildren, nieces and
nephews. "He was preceded in death by his
wife of 38 years, Donald, an audi-
cur of Boston Local 103.
"He's just a steady hand, and that's exactly what you want from a business man-
ger or an international rep," Monahan
said. "The guy just handles everything.
I think the world of the guy. He's just a
decent, decent human being."
In retirement, Deering and wife Deb-
bie plan to spend more time with four
adult children and three grandchildren.
Two children live in Maine, another in
Michigan and another across the Canadi-
ian border in New Brunswick. The couple plans to keep their home near Portland.
"I was blessed with those three grandchildren later in life and I absolutely adore spending time with them and their families," he said.
The officers and staff thank Deering for many years of service and
wish him a happy retirement.

"He's never had a situation he couldn't handle. Having Dick on staff made my job a whole lot easier."— Second District Vice President Michael P. Monahan

"I was very happy and confident in my respon-
sibilities as a general foreman for a large employer," he said. "But a lot of people approached me and asked me to run [for business manager], and I saw a lot of things that were important and needed to be addressed." Deering was appointed business man-
ger in 2008 at a time when Local 567 needed strong leadership. Like much of the
country, Maine's construction indus-
try collapsed during the economic crisis. He cut travel and expenses for the local office staff and eliminated job-staffers — and took the politically unpop-
ular step of promoting alternative job classifi-
cations into the union.

The addition of those construction
wirermen allowed signatory contractors to successfully bid on jobs they might have previously bypassed. [Workers in CE/CW alternative classifications have not com-
pleted apprenticeship training but have performed lower-level work at jobsites, usually nonunion ones, and their wages are lower.] The move helped those con-
tactors survive, and many are thriving today — along with Local 567.
"There were a lot of dark days during the recession, to be honest with you," Deering said. "But we survived and came out in one piece."
In 2014, having been re-elected twice
without opposition, Deering moved to the Second District office. He finished his career serving 15 locals throughout Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts and New Hampshire in a variety of branches, includ-
ing construction, government, broadcast-
ing, utility, railroads and manufacturing — the latter of which includes paper mills, which are vital to the state's economy.
Carroll said Deering was respected by management because of his low-key, thoughtful presence and he took its con-
cerns seriously while also being able to argue forcefully for members.
Carroll said there was "no running your mouth with him." Carroll said. "He was a calming presence who always found a way to get things turned around.

"Carroll retired in 2015 and Deering

"Myron had a hand in many of the district's organizing victories, he said.
"It's something he and her particularly proud of: the campaign to affiliate the Independent Communication Telephone Workers Union, bringing more than 2,000 mem-
bers into the IBEW in 1987.
In a story when she retired in
2005, she marveled at how much had changed during her four decades in the union. "We are seeing more and more women with bigger roles at the IBEW, more women involved in the construction side and on the local level," she said.
Myron's survivors include four sisters and many nieces and nephews. The IBEW sends sincere condolences to her friends and family, and gratitude for decades of service that touched many lives.
Apprenticeship Social Club’s Trivia Night Benefit Event

L.U. 1 (jasc,ees,ei,em,es,et,Fm,Unnt,s,c,spa,slsl,wa), ST. LOUIS, MO — The IBEW Local 1 Apprenticeship Social Club held their first ever Trivia Night at the union hall on Saturday, March 7.

Tables of eight for the Trivia Night event were $240. Beverages and snacks were provided. There were 10 categories. Each category had 10 questions. The top three tables were awarded the following prizes: first prize — $300; second prize — $200; and third prize — $100. In addition, there was a 50/50 raffle and also silent auctions. All proceeds were donated to the IBEW Local 1 Relief Committee.

Special thanks to IBEW Local 1 Apprenticeship Social Club Pres. Bill Clements for chairing this event. Bro. Clements said, “We hope everyone enjoys it. Let’s get the word out about how we are trying to help members and have a good time. We’d like to encourage union brothers and sisters to participate in more Local 1 events.”

We mourn the loss of the following members: Larry Carlson, Ralph Freund Jr., Byron Utley, George McLean Jr., Claude Coffman, Virgil Lee, Lester Dudley, Robert Grobe, Daniel Smith, Howard Miller, Gerald Pitchett, Robert Snyder, George Reid, Richard Thurman, Donald Julien and Harold Kingston Jr.

Jan Bresnan, P.S.

Safety Awareness Class

L.U. 35 (i), HARTFORD, CT — Local 35 hosted a “SAFE” (Situational Awareness & Fundamental Empowerment) class last fall. It was a safety awareness class for women and was offered to our female members. The class was a four-hour workshop that explored the nature of real-world violence and offered a practical nature of real-world violence and offered a practical

tion and hands on self-defense practice. The attendees were pleased with the class and the skills they learned. Several commented on the feeling of empowerment after taking it. All felt that it was a worthwhile experience.

William Moriarty, B.M./S.

Local 35 retired former business manager Dominic Rivera (center) with his sons Jeff (left) and Mike.

ICEW Members Volunteer For American Legion Project

L.U. 41 (em,es,govt,Le,spa), BUFFALO, NY — Local 41 was honored to volunteer at American Legion Post 735 in West Seneca to modify the bathrooms there to be ADA accessible. Steve Gaiser took the lead, performing the work and coordinating with multiple contractors on site to ensure the project stayed on schedule. Bus. Mgr. Mike Gaiser accepted a plaque from Post 735 and from Erie County Clerk Mickey Mears honoring Local 41 for the electrical work our members volunteered. Thanks to Steve and all who helped our veterans at American Legion Post 735!

Our union and others are under attack every day from businesses and the politicians who do their bidding. Any employer is in business to make money, and as much as they can. They do not have to negotiate how much they pay for wages and benefits; they want to tell you what you are worth. They can accomplish this by weakening unions, especially through right-to-work for less laws. With another important election year ahead of us, and as I have written in the past, please strongly consider the politicians we endorse. We have vetted them and believe they are the best option for our union and our paychecks. There are many days where we are working with our local elected public officials attempting to gain opportunities for our members to go to work. When elected officials do not believe in what we do, it becomes more difficult to work with them. Vote for your paycheck and lobby for your hobby.

Gregory R. Ingull, A.B.M.

Contract Negotiation Updates

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters.

Greetings, brothers and sisters. Our local held its annual Christ

St. Patrick’s Day Float

L.U. 55 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), DES MOINES, IOWA — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Our local held its annual Christ

We're sad to report the deaths of Bros. Andy Salcido and Bill Blake. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe, live safe and free — and buy union.

Mitch Smith, A.B.M.

‘Welcome to Tree Trimmers’

L.U. 51 (catv,ktt,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — We would like to welcome the line clearance tree trimmers from Enduzzi Contracting, which recently signed a project labor agreement with the local union. Line clearance tree trimming remains at full employment and at this writing was expected to be steady all winter.

St. Patrick’s Day Float

L.U. 55 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), DES MOINES, IOWA — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Our local held its annual Christ

With 2020 being a presidential election year, now is the time to get registered to vote if you aren’t already registered. Please be sure to vote pro-labor and protect your pay and benefits!

We were a collection site for the Toys for Tots campaign this past holiday season and collected many toys and donations. Thank you to everyone who helped out. Make it your 2020 resolution to attend your union meeting and give eight hours of work for eight hours of pay.

Karlene Kosiey, B.R.

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via email (locallines@ibew.org) or U.S. Mail. We have a 200-word limit. We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are based on the editor’s judgment. Our guidelines and deadlines are available at www.ibew.org/media-center/IBEW-News-Media-Center/Submitting-Local-Lines. Please email or call the Media Department at (202) 726-6291 with any questions.

Trade Classifications

| (as) | Alarm & Signal | (et) | Electronic Technicians | (mpa) | Motion Picture Studios |
| (ars) | Atomic Research Service | (fm) | Fixture Manufacturing | (nst) | Nuclear Service Technicians |
| (ba) | Bridge Operators | (govt) | Government | (o) | Outside |
| (cs) | Cable Splicers | (i) | Inside | (p) | Powerhouse |
| (cbs) | Cable Television | (it) | Instrumentation Technicians | (pe) | Professional, Engineers & Technicians |
| (cc) | Communications | (lct) | Line Clearing Tree Trimming |
| (cr) | Crane Operators | (plt) | Lightning Protection Technicians |
| (ees) | Electrical Equipment Service | (mt) | Maintenance |
| (ei) | Electrical Inspection | (mo) | Maintenance & Operation |
| (em) | Electrical Manufacturing | (mow) | Manufacturing Office Workers |
| (es) | Electric Signs | (mar) | Marine |

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.

Local Lines
L.U. 177 (lctt,mt,ot,bk), SEATTLE, WA — Local 177 delegates had an opportunity to meet with all our Washington state elected officials while attending the 2019 IBEW Political/Legislative Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C. We continued to discuss the issues that matter to labor, maintaining the prevailing wage and the right to organize. In addition, we stressed our concern for multi-employer pension plans and eliminating the excise tax on our healthcare plans. The November conference hosted an exceptional lineup of speakers ranging from U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R) from Pennsylvania’s 1st congressional district. Our IBEW Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson hosted a town hall-style session with presidential candidates Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders.

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A purchase of a new property in Spokane Valley is finalized. The upgraded 5,200-square-foot main building is the new home for our Spokane union hall. We are currently renting the smaller 3,000-square-foot building and will review our building needs in the future. This property will better serve our membership and allow room for training, general meetings, conferences and adequate parking. The sale of our old downtown union hall is complete, and the treasury has been dedicated to the purchase of our new Spokane union hall. Stay tuned for our open house.

At 2019 Political/Legislative Affairs Conference, from left: Matthew Heper, executive director; Certified Electrician of Washington; Local 77 Pres. Rick Johnson; IBEW Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson; U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA); and Local 77 Sec. Damian Hernandez.

2020 Construction Projects

L.U. 153 (c&i), BOSTON, MA — 2019 is a wrap, in the books and put away. We’re on to 2020 and looking forward to another solid year of construction work in Boston. This year, we will welcome 10 new projects of 40 stories or higher. Whether under construction or set to break ground, these projects will include the long awaited 55-story South Station Tower and a new 46-floor signature office tower, which is part of the redevelopment of the Congress Street Garage and future home and headquarters of State Street Bank.

L.U. 25 (lctt,j,sk), PORTLAND, OR — As we get into spring, there are a lot of distractions for us all — changing weather, yardwork, increased projects at work, and oh, yes, primary elections will be in full swing. Many people think the IBEW is anti-Republican; that simply is not true. The IBEW is against any person or entity who does not support working people — and their rights to organize and collectively bargain. Regardless of your political opinion, please remember to respect others’ opinions and avoid attacking each other due to differences. The IBEW does not tolerate harassment, discrimination, workplace bullying, or hostile work environments. These types of actions simply don’t promote our founders’ values, and this local won’t accept them either.

Join us March 14 for our annual Casino Night. This is a great opportunity to fellowship while raising money for the local’s Brotherhood Fund and contributing to a local food bank. Also, don’t forget about our other annual events to support the Oregon Burn Center — golf tournament (Hood River), the Pacific Northwest Linneman’s Rodeo, and the local’s golf and softball tournaments. We hope to see you there!

It’s a new year, but our priority — our members’ safety — hasn’t changed. Be safe every day.

Marcy Grill, A.B.M.

2019 Holiday Festivities

L.U. 141 (ees,l,ok), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters! As of this writing work is slow, with 56 members on Book 1. Diet is being moved at the site of a very large petrochemical complex tentatively planned to be built in our jurisdiction, although at press time an official announcement has yet to be made by company and government officials.

December was a very busy month for Local 141, with lots of holiday events for the membership and their families to enjoy. The local participated in several area holiday parades, with our own Local 141 holiday float. The local also held a very nice Christmas dinner for our retirees, had a Christmas breakfast with Santa for the members’ children and grandchildren, and hosted a Christmas dinner/dance for the membership and their families. Many thanks to Bros. Art Oakland, Dave Jurkow, Joe Donovan, and all the members of the Local 141 Social Committee and all others who helped organize all of these events.

Local 141 congratulates Bro. Fred Russell, who received his pin for 70 years of service to Local 141 in December. Fred’s son, Jim, is also a recent retiree from Local 141. Congratulations and thank you to both of these fine men for their dedication and service to Local 141!

Kurt “Bug” Reed, P.S.

L.U. 142 (es,m,ok,go), JEFFERSON CITY, MO — It was with a heavy heart that we learned December 2019 was Brother Ray Zychowicz’s last year with the company and the local. Brother Zychowicz has been with the company for over 47 years, starting as a journeyman in 1972 at the Rockwell Company and retiring on December 31, 2019. Ray was a valued employee and a Calculated Energy, the NEBF Pension fund. This project is owned by National Real Estate, the development arm of our NEBF Pension fund. Investing our pension assets into construction projects is a win-win for IBEW members. The return on investment (ROI) on real estate projects, like this one, have been among our portfolio’s best and most reliable performers. At the same time, it puts our members to work on good, union-built projects. Office, residential, education, biotech, health-care, transportation, hospitality, retail, sports and entertainment developments continue to drive our diverse Boston economy forward.

At press time, Local 55 was making plans for the Feb. 27 banquet. Our local is known for training some of the best linemen in the world. Good job.

Mynor Green, P.S.

A New Union Hall; 2019 Political Conference

L.U. 177 (lctt,mt,ot,bk), SEATTLE, WA — Local 177 delegates had an opportunity to meet with all our Washington state elected officials while attending the 2019 IBEW Political/Legislative Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C. We continued to discuss the issues that matter to labor, maintaining the prevailing wage and the right to organize. In addition, we stressed our concern for multi-employer pension plans and eliminating the excise tax on our healthcare plans. The November conference hosted an exceptional lineup of speakers ranging from U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R) from Pennsylvania’s 1st congressional district. Our IBEW Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson hosted a town hall-style session with presidential candidates Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders.

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Damian Hernandez, R.S.

Transitions at Union Hall

L.U. 111 (em,gov,lctt,mt,ot,bk,spakl), DENVER, CO — It is an honor to announce the asset to Bro. Duane J. Lawlor, a 44-year member, who also served on the staff representing the membership since June 2014. The Lawlor family has a long-standing history with Local 111. Duane’s father, Gordon Lawlor (who passed away in 2015), and brother Bruce Lawlor were very active in the labor movement. Bruce served on the staff for 25 years until his retirement in 2014. The Lawlor family has a total of 66 combined years of service with the IBEW.

Bro. Duane spent his career with Public Service Company of Colorado in the Gas Department. He also served as Local 111 steward, chief steward, treasurer, president, assistant business manager, and senior assistant business manager. His experience and membership have been a great asset to the local and we most sincerely wish him the very best on his retirement and future endeavors.

We also welcome Suzann Kuhns and Alen Goff to the union staff. Sister Kuhns brings 18 years of service and experience to the position and came from the Design Department. Bro. Goff brings over 15 years of experience in the Pawnee Power Plant. These new union representatives are both from Public Service Company of Colorado. More information will be provided on all new faces at the hall in our newsletter.

Patrick S. Quinn, P.S.

Solidarity for Working People

L.U. 125 (lctt,j,sk), PORTLAND, OR — As we get into spring, there are a lot of distractions for us all — changing weather, yardwork, increased projects at work, and oh, yes, primary elections will be in full swing. Many people think the IBEW is anti-Republican; that simply is not true. The IBEW is against any person or entity who does not support working people — and their rights to organize and collectively bargain. Regardless of your political opinion, please remember to respect others’ opinions and avoid attacking each other due to differences. The IBEW does not tolerate harassment, discrimination, workplace bullying, or hostile work environments. These types of actions simply don’t promote our founders’ values, and this local won’t accept them either.

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Marcy Grill, A.B.M.
Memorial Site Created

L.U. 269 (Iko), TRENTON, NJ — The membership recently approved the creation of a memorial park in front of the main building housing the union hall and main offices. The park is intended as a space dedicated to the memory of all our union brothers and sisters who died while on the job working to provide for their loved ones and helping build stronger communities. The park features reflective benches set amongst an intimately landscaped sitting area adorned with landscape bricks with donor names inscribed on the face of each brick.

All members will have the opportunity to have a donated brick placed in the memorial grounds. The memorial itself is 6,500-pound boulder with a polished face that has the names of members of IBEW Local 269 who lost their lives doing their job, dating back to 1933. It is a fitting and enduring memorial to our fellow brothers and sisters who made the ultimate sacrifice while simply performing their chosen trade and doing to the best of their ability. It is a solemn reminder that this field we have chosen can be rewarding sacrifice while simply performing their chosen trade.

The membership can be proud to have the creation of this memorial as part of their legacy.

Brian Jacoppa, P.S.

Dedicated Career of Service; ‘Welcome to New Members’

L.U. 309 (lcttc,mont,ors,spaku), COLLINSVILLE, IL — Beginning with the new year, Local 309 welcomed our new Training Dir. Chris Huckins. Over the last eight years, Bro. Huckins and outgoing director Dave Kokotovich have transformed our apprentice program by launching a new standard of excellence — distinguished at both the local and international level. It is impossible to overstate the energy and dedication that Bro. Kokotovich devoted to his post. Dave has always been respected for his academic integrity, forward-thinking mentality, and concern for producing the best apprentices. Local 309 will forever be grateful for his leadership and the new trajectory that he has set for us. Thanks, Kokotovich.

Back in November, the professional staff at Clinton County Cooperative voted unanimously to be represented by IBEW Local 309. The new members were concerned about keeping their current benefits package and having a grievance procedure. Thanks to assistant business agent Steve Duft, organizer Chris Hankskin, shop steward Mike Faust, and the existing members at the cooperative for a successful organizing effort.

Congratulations to Executive Board member Jimmie Wildhaber on his retirement. Initiated in 1984, Bro. Wildhaber spent much of his career in line clearance and finished for the City of Highland as a utility locator and storekeeper.

Carlos S. Perez, R.S.

‘Play the Long Game’

L.U. 313 (lkapla), WILMINGTON, DE — Our retirees enjoyed another Christmas meeting last year (see photo at top, right). They are glad to see Local 313 continue to prosper and their pensions funded. However, we have learned that not all trade union pensions are doing well.

The American Mineworkers’ pension fund has averted insolvency as a result of the bipartisan American Miners Act passed by Congress as a provision of the end-of-year spending bill — so that was good news. However, the Teamsters’ Central States pension fund is reporting to become insolvent in five to seven years if no action is taken, and that still has to be solved. This will certainly shed a spotlight on multimillion-dollar pension plans once again in the near future.

[Editor’s Note: To read more, see recent news articles — “There’s a Terrible New Plan to Tax Your Retirement — Help Us Fight It Today” (Dec. 6, 2020); “Tell Your Senators, Don’t Tax My Retirement” (Dec. 10, 2020); and “Two Major IBEW Priorities Finally Made Law” (Jan. 23, 2020) — posted on the IBEW website at www.ibew.org/media-center/articles.]

I am glad to report that when the I.O. asked business manager to get their memberships to respond, we did — and we should every time initiatives come out against the working people. We can never let the opposition see us down. As long as the powers that be try to attack any of our benefits that we have fought for, they will get a fight each and every time. Be ready — they will keep coming.

So I ask you, if we don’t fight against them, who will?

Bruce W. Esper, P.S.

‘Happy St. Patrick’s Day’

L.U. 343 (lspakid), LE SUEUR, MN — Happy St. Patrick’s Day, brothers and sisters! As March 17 approaches, it seems we all claim to have a “whee bit” of the Irish in us. Over the course of history, a number of notable labor leaders were known for their Irish roots. One female activist was Irish-American Mary Harris Jones. She earned the nickname “Mother Jones” during her nearly 50 years of labor, community and political activism. She helped organize coal miners in 1873 and railroad workers in 1877. She was a founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World, known as the “Wobblies.” Mother Jones gave inspiring speeches across the country during Knights of Labor strikes. She fought to end child-labor abuses and political activism. She helped organize coal miners in 1873 and railroad workers in 1877. She was a founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World, known as the “Wobblies.” Mother Jones gave inspiring speeches across the country during Knights of Labor strikes. She fought to end child-labor abuses until her death in 1930.

Labor unions continue to be the voice of the working class. Membership is our ticket to financial security and family stability. We all can be leaders, activists and organizers within our communities, our politics and our local unions. Follow the contract, attend a union meeting, volunteer at a local union function, assist a brother or sister in need. “Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living” is a quote from Mother Jones.

We remember the Local 343 brothers who passed away in 2020: Alan Kestner, John Gleisner, Patrick Simmons and Steven Shane. Buy “Made in USA” — American workers depend on it.

Tom Small, P.S.

Projects Underway; Local Union Transitions

I.U. 357 (lcntkce), LAS VEGAS, NV — There is a lot going on in Local 357.

Last fall, Bro. Al D. Davis stepped down from his role as business manager/final secretary and went to work as an international representative in the IBEW Construction and Maintenance Department in Washington, D.C. Bro. Davis successfully led the local union through the worse construction recession in our local’s history. Despite the challenges, our local was able to increase market share and union density under his leadership. We are grateful for his years of service and wish him well in his new position.

We would also like to welcome Bro. James Halsey, who replaced old smoke detectors for retirees, is joined by residents of Sun City Summerlin, NV, for a group photo.

Making Strides in 2020

L.U. 347 (lmtb,rs,spaku), DES MOINES, IOWA — At this writing we’re backing in the afterglow of the holiday season. Local 347 thanks all the brothers involved in the set-up and tear down and packing up all the holidays displays. The local also participated in the Toys for Tots gift collection drive. And lastly we celebrated the holidays with a party for the kids, but aren’t we all kids during the holidays? The Christmas party was a huge success. These social events are some of the best ways we can ensure that families of the members are able to see the value of our union.

Having just closed a license cycle, the IATC is preparing for the next round of journeyman courses. A tip from Mr. Obvious: “Take classes early to keep the pressure off.” Watch for the schedule of classes to be announced soon.

Many of the brothers and sisters are feeling pretty good about the direction the local is headed. The local has purchased a piece of commercial property in Ankeny, Iowa, with plans to build a new union hall. This bodes well for the future of the local. It will provide more space for meetings, and preliminary sketches indicate that the new building can also display some of the energy efficient technology we are installing for our customers. Another exciting aspect of the building is the high visibility we will have on the I-35 corridor. We will have a building with our own private billboard.

By the time this article is published, Iowa’s spotlight on the political stage will have diminished. The Iowa caucuses will already have taken place. Yet we want to encourage all brothers and sisters across the nation to get involved in the political process. Having our voices heard is extremely important. Keep speaking up. Enthusiasm can’t be bought.

Mike Schweiger, P.S.
as our new business manager/financial secretary. He previously served the local as assistant business manager and political director for the last nine years.

We are in the midst of a building boom in Las Vegas. Ongoing projects include the $2 billion Las Vegas Raiders stadium, the $4 billion Resorts World Hotel & Casino, the $1 billion Las Vegas Convention Center expansion, and a $1 billion MSG Sphere Arena.

In December the local union was honored by the City of Las Vegas for its volunteer action work in Sun City Summerlin. We had a union brothers and sisters come out on a Saturday to replace outdated smoke detectors for retirees. We take pride in keeping our community safe.

Hope everyone has a safe and successful 2020.

Jennifer Templin, P.S.

New Five-Year Contract With Service Electric Cable TV

L.U. 375 (catv,es,gtv@lvca.com), ALLENTOWN, PA — On Dec. 31, 2019, we had a contract set to expire with Service Electric Cable TV & Communications. We represent 165 members and their families. At this location and getting a fair contract was our top priority. It was a pleasure to work with the management team from Service Electric during the negotiation process. Not only were they fair and honest in their approach at the table, they also showed their understanding that their employees are what make the machine run properly.

Local 375 members Rich Byrne (SE Unit chair), Brayden Winters (SE Unit vice chair), and Chris Liberti (SE Unit steward) did a wonderful job of representing and explaining the needs of all the members from all departments. For those three gentlemen, it was their first experience negotiating a contract and they were natural.

Congratulations to all the members from Service Electric on your new five-year contract and thank you for standing behind your officers as they negotiated on your behalf. Once again, we must also say a sincere thank-you to the management from Service Electric for their professionalism, and we look forward to a continued partnership.

Justin Grimshaw, A.B.M.

Work Picture Steady

L.U. 402 (c,lt,ts&i@reno.nv), RENO, NV — The work picture in Reno, Nevada, is steady with the hope of some large companies moving to the area and starting projects in the spring of 2020.

The apprenticeship has 60 new pre-apprentices ready to go to work.

Pictured in the photo (below) are Bro. Eric Keller and Bro. Josh Cantu, working in the service department for a local contractor, installing a generator at the top of McClellan Peak, Nevada. At 7,800 feet in elevation in December, you need to ride to work in a Snow Cat. To members: Please remember that there is always work in the service department.

Scott Betz, P.S.

Membership Grows; New Contractors Welcomed

L.U. 449 (catem{"u},oltz,ts,spa@iowa.com), POCADELLO, IDAHO — Brothers and sisters, Local 449 had one of our best years ever in 2019. Our membership grew, our hours worked was near the best ever, and we had a couple of new contractors join our contractor base. As of this writing, it looks like we will have a bit of a fall at the beginning of the year, but some larger projects are expected to get going as we move closer to summer.

We closed out 2019 with a fantastic turnout for our annual Christmas party and had a great time of food, fun and visiting. It was great to get together and catch up with everyone who could make it to the party.

Now we are looking forward to 2020 summer events. We will have our annual summer picnic on July 18. And we will have the Chukkers baseball night on June 26.

Congratulations to our most recent retirees: Tod Humberger, Hal Blake, Roger Kim Grover and Robert Reno.

Ned Jones, B.M.

Annual Service Pin Night; New Journeyman Linemen

L.U. 455 (em@uml,es,gtv@uml.com), SPRINGFIELD, MA — Local 455 recently held its annual service pin night at our December union meeting. Pictured (bottom) is Bro. Bill Smith receiving his 40-year pin from Pres. Dan Hamel.

Congratulations, Bro. Smith.

Also pictured: Pres. Dan Hamel congratulating recently topped out first-class journeyman linemen: Ryan Serrella, Dave Williams, Executive Board member Connor Pulasan, and Shane Kasala.

Sarah Faber, P.S.

Tribute to Retirees; New Opportunities Ahead

L.U. 481 (res,em@uml,ts,s@iowa.com), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — IBEW Local 481 closed out the year with our annual Retirees Christmas Lunch and Pin Ceremony. It was great to see all the retired members come together in the same room and share stories of their days in the industry. Without their sacrifice and dedication, we would not be where we are now. It was an honor to be present in the room with such great history that these retirees represent. One day we will all be there, and we must continue to do our part to advance Local 481, as well as the IBEW.

Like many locals I am sure, we are thankful for the many accomplishments in the year 2019. IBEW Local 481 has been pleased with all the work in our jurisdiction and the work projected for the future. With that being said, Local 481 looks forward to the new opportunities that 2020 will bring.

Hope you all had a merry Christmas and a happy New Year’s. Here at Local 481, we look forward to seeing what all the locals have in store for 2020.

Blake A. Andrews, B.R.

IBEW 569 Gives Back To Support Working Families

L.U. 569 (i,u,m,nt,ts,s@iowa.com), SAN DIEGO, CA — 2020 is a big year for IBEW 569 — we’re celebrating our 90th anniversary and we’re negotiating our Inside Agreement. We’ll be sure to keep you updated on our progress and anniversaries events, including our big Local 569 90th Anniversary Gala Celebration on Saturday, May 30.

In other news, we are proud of our collective efforts to give back and support working families! IBEW 569 members helped the San Diego & Imperial Counties Labor Council distribute toys and food to hundreds of local families in need of a little help during the holiday season. Thank you to all the union members who helped light up the holidays!

Additionally, we supported the Diaper Drive with California Assembly member Lorena Gonzalez with a contribution of 5,000 diapers.

Lastly, our IBEW 569 retirees took action to “Protect Our Pensions,” and met with the district directors of U.S. Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris. Thank you to Joe Heiser, Nephi Hancock, Steve Wilcox, Tom Kunde, Jaime Leon, Alan Paul and William Steelman for delivering IBEW’s strong message.

[Editor’s Note: To read more, see three news articles — “There’s a Terrible New Plan to Tax Your Retirement — Help Us Fight It Today” (Dec. 6, 2019); “Tell Your Senators, Don’t Tax My Retirement!” (Dec. 10, 2019); and “Two Major IBEW Priorities Finally Made Law (Jan. 23, 2020)” — posted on the IBEW website at www.ibew.org/media-center/articles.]

We’re heading into 2020 as a stronger local thanks to you and your hard work! Together, we will continue to make a difference and build stronger communities.

Gretchen Newsom, Political Dir./Organizer

JATC CLASSES

L.U. 611 (catem@uml,es,gtv@uml.com), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — Our annual Children’s Christmas Party was Dec. 7 at the Wool Warehouse. The event has become so popular that at some point we will have to start looking for a different venue. In the last couple of years, it has attracted a large number of people. A huge thank you to all the people who have volunteered over the years to put this successful event together.

The JATC is always putting on classes for those of you who need to keep up your 16 hours of continuing education courses (CECs). For a list of classes, dates and times, please contact the JATC during normal business hours.

Just a reminder: the regular Local 611 union meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m.

On behalf of the local, I would like to send condolences to the friends and families of two members who recently passed away: Dave M. Woodard and
The Electrical Worker | March 2020

Local 611 members at the 2019 annual Children’s Christmas Party.

Vincent Gallegos. They will be missed.

Remember, this is an election year. Please get out and vote. If you are not registered, please contact Santos Griego at the union hall.

Dannell L. Blair, P.S.

Strength in Solidarity; Annual EWMC Conference

L.U. 617 (c,Unkotl), SAN MATEO, CA — Greetings, sisters and brothers. We have been blessed to be living in the Bay Area, where the work picture continues to grow, especially in the tech and health sectors.

In December 2019, Santa and his elves arrived just in time for our annual holiday party. Sounds of laughter filled the hall, as bright-eyed children took photos with Santa and decorated cookies.

The 30th annual Electrical Workers Minority Caucus Leadership Conference was held in Chicago, IL, on Jan. 15. Thirteen delegates from Local 617 participated in the many workshops, seminars and other activities, while renewing old friendships. One of the most rewarding events was the Day of Giving/Service where participants serve the community by helping with local projects. Much gratitude to all who attended.

With great sadness, we report the sudden passing of Nancy Thompson, a 30-year member. A beloved sister who exemplified what it meant to be an IBEW journeyman electrician with her passion and humanity. Also rest in peace to Bro. Joseph Radetch, who passed away at age 100 and was a member for 79 years. They will be dearly missed.

The 2020 presidential elections are fast approaching. We are strongest when united, not divided. Please vote for those who support unions and act upon it.

May the Great Spirit bless your home with peace, joy and abundance in the new year.

Kathy Havenier, Mrs. Clous (Kathy Havenier, Local 617 bookkeeper) attends the local’s annual holiday party in 2019.

Local 649 Service pins were awarded as follows: for five years—Alan Rubenstein, Larry Becker, Christopher Beiser, Dana Morrow, Frederick Stutz, Michael Wright; for 40 years—Dan Kruse, Thomas Albrecht, Terry White, Rodney O’Dell, Bradley Wheaton, David Renner; for 45 years—Bernard Hinners, Robert Frank, William Stropek; for 50 years—Gabriel Bourland; 55 years—James Parker; and 70 years—William Rister, whose son Joseph Rister accepted on William’s behalf.

Negotiations were completed as follows: P66 Refinery/four-year agreement; Inside Agreement/four-year agreement; Outside Agreement/four-year agreement; Outside Commercial/Industrial Power Line, four-year agreement.

At press time negotiations are ongoing for a Tree Trimmers agreement, and a Donco agreement.

The 2020 work outlook includes the following projects: P66 Refinery; Rosana City Hall and Safety Building; Warehouse work; and Capital Projects/State Illinois.

New members include: 18 operators at Veola North America (three-year agreement through June 2022); and three employees at Wood River Levee District (two-year agreement through September 2021).

Community service: Local 649 retirees donated time dedicated to help area communities with electrical issues/projects. Local and members donated time to Jersey County Animal Rescue.

Thank you to Bro. Alan Rubenstein for compiling the information included in this article.

Terry White, P.S.

Local 649 service award recipients were honored at a Dec. 11, 2019, service pin presentation dinner.

Community Service Projects

L.U. 649 (c,Unkotl), ALTON, IL — Local 649 has been engaged with the events listed below.

Service pins were awarded as follows: for five years of service—Cole Strasses; for 10 years of service—Jeffrey Senko; 15 years—Jacob Goebel, Mark Lotus; 30 years—Mark Behme, James Bowler, Tracey Jones, Carol Lord, Timothy Stinson, Scott Wagner, Dennis Weaver; 35 years—Alan Rubenstein, Larry Becker, Christopher Beiser, Dana Morrow, Frederick Stutz, Michael Wright; 40 years—Dan Kruse, Thomas Albrecht, Terry White, Rodney O’Dell, Bradley Wheaton, David Renner; 45 years—Bernard Hinners, Robert Frank, William Stropek; 50 years—Gabriel Bourland; 55 years—James Parker; and 70 years—William Rister, whose son Joseph Rister accepted on William’s behalf.

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Thank you to Bro. Alan Rubenstein for compiling the information included in this article.

Terry White, P.S.

Local 697 (c,Unkotl), GARY AND HAMMOND, IN — The Sisters of 697 made sure everyone in northwest Indiana stayed warm this winter by hosting a Coat Drive. Over 50 bags of coats, hats, gloves and boots were donated to those in need. The Veterans of 697 along with unions from across the state, participated in the museum’s annual Labor Day Parade followed by a barbecue for all. A special write-up about Local 697 appeared in a program handed out to attendees at the parade and barbecue.

It was a great event and Local 697 was humbled by the recognition.

Susan M. Wallin, R.S.

JATC Training Director

L.U. 1015 (c,Unkotl), LONG ISLAND, NY — At several recent general meetings, Bus. Mgr. Ronald Bauer has encouraged members to become more engaged and involved. There are several clubs and committees in which one can participate. The newest of these clubs is the Veterans Club, chaired by Bro. Joseph Diliberto. The aim of the Veterans Club is to promote solidarity amongst the members who are veterans of the U.S. armed services. One of their goals is to support veterans and their families, not only within the local, but in the Long Island community as well.

If you are looking to give back to the Long Island community, you can get involved in either the Community Affairs Committee, the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC), the Motorcycle Club, or the Sportsman Club. These committees/clubs work to promote Local 1015 in the community by contributing to and participating in numerous charitable community outreach programs. In 2019, the combined groups raised and donated several thousand dollars to Local 1049 members in need, as well as to various charitable organizations. If interested in participating in any of the committees or clubs, please contact the hall.

In March, on behalf of our members in the Electric Craft Division, we will be negotiating our NECA Agreement.

At the March general meeting, we will hold nominations for the offices of business manager/financial secretary, president, vice president, recording secretary, treasurer and for all Executive Board seats, as well as nominations for delegates to the 2021 IBEW International Convention.

Thomas J. Dowling, R.S.
IBEW Donates Toys To Cincinnati Children’s Hospital

L.U. 1347 (l.e.e.m.p.t.u.), CINCINNATI, OHIO — For a fourth year in a row, the children staying at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital during the month of December received stuffed animals as a gift from Local 1347. This donation is made possible by selling pins for the local union and puts a smile on every child’s face. We plan to continue this tradition for many years to come!

Andrew Kirk, B.M.

Tribute to Life of Service

L.U. 1579 (b.i.d.), AUGUSTA, GA — IBEW Local 1579 is saddened by the loss of former longtime business manager Tommy Yarbrough. Tommy passed away Nov. 18, 2019, at the age of 84.

Tommy Yarbrough was our business manager for 27 years. He served this local and dedicated his life from 1972 to 2006. He saw this local through both good times and bad. He kept his cool throughout the Reagan years, when union membership was declining at a rapid pace. He built relationships with our political friends and was the voice of the membership. He served the local by sitting on many other boards and councils. He served as an officer on the Augusta Building Trades Council, the Georgia Electrical Workers association and the Central Labor Council just to name a few. He was a great leader!

Tommy was a great business manager to us all, as well as a great family man. He was widely respected and a friend to many, but his best friend was his beloved wife, Helen; she made him an even better man. Tommy often bragged about his family and we all knew how proud he was to have the family life that he had.

We will miss our former business manager and will look forward to seeing him again someday in heaven.

Until next time, God bless!

Will Salters, B.M./P.S.

Important Election Year

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 1, ST. LOUIS, MO — Happy new year from St. Louis. It’s 2020 — holy cow! I hope everyone had a good holiday season. Try to get out of the house and get some exercise as the weather will be warming up.

Remember to send or drop off your annual contribution to the Voluntary Fund. Very important elections are coming up. Make sure you and your family are informed about labor-friendly candidates.

The Retirees Club meetings for this year are March 18, May 20, July 22, Sept. 16 (luncheon), and Nov. 18. Meetings start at about 10 a.m. There should be an open house for our newly remodeled union hall soon.

Neal McCormack, P.S.

2019 Summer Picnic

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 3, new york, ny, nassau county chapter — Nassau County Chapter Local 3 Retirees had their well-attended annual summer picnic in beautiful Brady Park. Brady Park is located in the Town of Massapequa Park, a part of Nassau County. Mother Nature blessed us with a warm and sunny day. The day’s activities began with a bocce ball tournament, followed by bean bag and horseshoe tournaments. At lunchtime a bountiful catered gourmet bar and entertainment were the order of the day. The day’s activities began with a bocce ball tournament, followed by bean bag and horseshoe tournaments. At lunchtime a bountiful catered gourmet bar and entertainment were the order of the day.

2019 Summer Picnic

At Local 3, Northern New Jersey Chapter, Retirees Club holiday party, attendees congratulated Anthony “Tony” Labate’s 100th birthday. At right is club Vice Chair Les Rothstein.

Holiday Luncheon

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, NORTHERN NEW JERSEY CHAPTER — Greetings and a happy, healthy new year to all! Everyone enjoyed our Holiday Luncheon and dancing to a lively DJ, along with the delicious food at Seasons in Washington Township!

A highlight of the day was celebrating member Anthony “Tony” Labate’s 100th birthday, with a beautiful cake and singing a rousing birthday song to Tony! We wish Tony all the best of health and happiness!

We continue our monthly meetings through the winter, although missing our many snowbirds! We’re looking forward to our spring luncheon, and many of us will be enjoying a week at Woodloch Pines resort in June!

John Kristo, P.S.

Toys for Tots & Holiday Party

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER — We had a fantastic end of the year season for 2019. From Dec. 1 through Dec. 24 last year, retirees led by Vice Chmn. Lou Cohen and Vice Chmn./Rec. Sec. Charles DeSaro, along with members of the U.S. Marine Corp. Reserve - Red Bank, NJ, received, distributed over 500,000 toys for kids in New Jersey.

On Dec. 18, 2019, we had our holiday party. Our raffle winners were Joe Cronin, Tom Viola and Charles DeSaro. Thank you to everyone who helped make these events a great success!

Nancy Savarese, P.S.

RETIRES Donate to Food Bank

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SUFFOLK CHAPTER — Our Annual Holiday Party was a great success — thanks to the hard work of our Holiday Committee (pictured below, left to right): John Arendt, Eileen Criciostomo, Frank Bono, Loretta Bono, Chmn. John Schoenig, Lois Weis, Cathy Schoenig, Vice Chmn. Andrew Weis and Walter Kern. It was great to see new and old friends. There was lots of food, music for dancing and raffle prizes. Everyone had a fun time.

John Vodika reported that we donated over 400 pounds of food for the Long Island Cares, Harry Chapin Food Bank.

We look forward to planning some interesting trips for our club as well as scheduling some informative guest speakers. We hope everyone enjoyed a happy holiday season.

Our Pres. Richard Duva and his wife wished everyone a happy and healthy new year.

Harvey Goldman, P.S.

Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon

RETIRES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM CHAPTER — The Westchester/Putnam Retirees’ 30th annual Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon was Dec. 11, 2019. For the past four years we’ve held this event at the Leewood Golf Club, in
Eastchester, NY, the same location that we hold our two golf outings every year. The cocktail hour and the lunch, as always, were excellent. The highlight of the day was the unexpected visit by Local 3 Asst. Bus. Mgr. Elliot Hecht, and newly elected Local 3 Pres. Thomas Cleary. Although they could not stay for the luncheon, they were able to meet many of our members during the cocktail hour.

As always, at the luncheon, we present any member who has turned 80 years of age with a plaque, honoring that member. This year there were three recipients present, Ed Frisone, Ron Celentano and George Winternuth, four other recipients could not attend.

At every Christmas/Hanukkah luncheon we have a 50/50 raffle, to benefit the Fisher House Foundation. This year’s first-prize winner was Pat Mucci, and oddly enough, the second prize was won by Pat’s wife. Both winners graciously donated their winnings, a total of $500, to the Fisher House Foundation.

**An Event Filled Year**

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — Greetings to all by the time you read this, spring will be here! Hope you all have a happy, healthy and prosperous 2020.

We had our Retiree Luncheon on Oct. 29 hosted by Local 53. We had a great turnout. Thank you to everyone who donated for Toys for Tots, and a big “thank you” to Joe Padilla for organizing this every year. The local’s annual Christmas Party on Dec. 29 had the largest crowd so far with over 500 people. It was a good time with great food and entertainment. Thank you to Local 53 and the staff for all their hard work.

A lot will be going on this year. The annual Crape Myrtle Festival and Fish Fry will be May 1 at Truman State Park. Contact the local for more information.

At our May Retiree Luncheon, we will elect officers. The local will be electing officers this year also. This is a big year for local, state and national elections, so get informed, get involved and vote. We have to get rid of some of these anti-union/anti-worker politicians!

We still have our Retirees Club meetings at the Lumberyard Bar & Grill in Ulrich, MO, at 11 a.m. on the second Thursday of the month. We did make one change — instead of meeting every other month, we now meet every month. Please come join us.

Sadly, since our last article we lost some brothers: George Drabek, Les Irwin, Bruce Brundege, Dean Dymond, Greg VanHooser and Terry Gilbert. Rest in peace, brothers.

Duane Pearce, P.S.

**Club Participation Grows**

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS — Retirees are looking forward to a new year and the continued growth in attendance. The club’s attendance at their monthly meetings has almost doubled this past year. Everyone enjoys a catered meal, or a meal furnished by the members, and the dessert table is always full. After a short business meeting, the fun continues with 10 games of bingo. Camaraderie and fellowship best describe the purpose of these monthly meetings. The club meets the second Thursday of each month at Local 60’s new hall, 3518 N. Loop 1604 E., starting at 11:30 a.m. The months of June, July and August the club takes a summer break and does not meet. Local 60 retired members, please join us.

The Golf Tournament committee members are making preparations for another very successful fundraiser. This year’s fundraiser will be held May 9, at the Pleasanton Golf Club. Details will be outlined in the Local 60 newsletter.

Club members honored the memory of the following members, wearing their wings, with a moment of silence in 2019: Jason Hough, John Landendorf, John Webber, Ernest Knappnik, Thomas Kazak, Thomas Frazier, Clyde Day and Mike Wright. Rest in peace, brothers.

Sandy Rogers, P.S.

**December Holiday Party; Pension Improvements**

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 53, DETROIT, MI — Greetings from the Association of Retirees, Wives and Widows. Our Christmas Party was a success with a good crowd and generous donations. Our members donated over $3,000 divided between our four children’s charities, and Local 53’s benevolent fund.

Saturday, April 25, is our Annual Spring Flap Party, which honors members with 40 years or more of IBEW membership with a presentation of service pins. Honorees receive lunch, with guests attending for $5 each. This is always a great celebration, bringing together members, friends and family to celebrate these milestones. Invitations will go out to honorees, so be sure to reserve your seats by calling Ray Owen at 248-348-3626 with an RSVP. All retirees and their guests are welcome to attend.

Let’s remember that this is a very important election year. 2020 will bring us numerous opportunities to assist in the political system that our country employs. Be sure to consider some volunteer work and/or donations to the candidates who most support our union brothers and sisters and our communities. 2020 brings us the most important presidential race to date.

Be sure to exercise one of your most precious rights as an American — vote!

Pat Nuzzo, P.S.

**Annual Spring Flap Party**

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 58, DETROIT, MI — Greetings from the Association of Retirees, Wives and Widows. Our Christmas Party was a success with a good crowd and generous donations. Our members donated over $3,000 divided between our four children’s charities, and Local 53’s benevolent fund.

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Pat Nuzzo, P.S.
with 70+ years of service, and 12 retirees with 60+ years of service. Local 141 currently has 135 retirees with a combined total of 6,466 years of service! The Local 141 Social Committee wishes to extend its gratitude to Ron, Joe Donovan and his wife, Cheryl, for the terrific job they have done putting this dinner together over the past several years.

The Local 141 Retirees Club would like to remind all active retirees that the club meets at the Guest House restaurant in Moundsville, WV, on the third Tuesday of every month, at 8:30 a.m., for breakfast.

Kurt “Bug” Reed, P.S.

Community Service Donation

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 160, MINNEAPOLIS, MN — Our local retiree group donated $2,000 to the Firefighters for Healing Minnesota Chapter. Thank you to all who contributed for this worthy cause in service to the community.

Fran Stade, V.P./Treas.

Gala Dinner Dance; Community Service Project

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 164, JERSEY CITY, NJ — Big events happened in December 2019. The Local 164 Retirees Association was invited to the Local 164 Gala Dinner Dance, where our 50-year members were honored with a pin, watch and certificate, receiving a standing ovation. And we danced the night away to a great band.

We followed two weeks later with our own holiday party with fine food and smiles galore. Many thanks go to Tom and Eileen Barry and the greatest kitchen crew ever. But rest assured, many people helped make it happen. And we raised donations for needed holiday toys, too.

Besides our monthly luncheons, this April we held our 164 Retirees Golf League followed by seasonal fishing trips, an Atlantic City summer excursion, and scholarships for children/grandchildren with funds being raised from our Annual Golf Outing. We also conducted our annual charitable project — his past November where our association helped collect over 200 winter coats for New Jersey families in shelters and the homeless through Jersey Cares.

David Judovin, P.S.

1913 Monument in Tribute To Fallen IBWE Member

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 212, CINCINNATI, OHIO — Local unions 134 and 212 share a bit of IBWE history. Many of Local 212’s early records were destroyed by a flood, but the facts remain unchanged.

In the early 1900s, Brother Joseph H. Alandar was obligated into Local 212. What year Brother Alandar transferred to Chicago Local 134 is unknown. A search of “The Electrical Worker” online archives proves fruitless as to the date Joseph “was murdered by a cowardly assassin.” Joe was 27 years old. However, in the November 1913 issue of “The Electrical Worker,” a detailed account, with photos, of the unveiling of a memorial monument erected in his honor (on Oct. 6, 1913) is recorded.

Then-Int. Pres. F. J. McNulty delivered the eulogy. Local 134 purchased an impressive monument at Spring Grove Cemetery honoring Joseph. Local 212 assumed maintenance care of the monument. Seventy years ago, we had it pressure-washed to a like-new appearance. After 107 years, trees have grown — shading Joe’s final resting place, peaceful and serene.

His father, mother, sisters, and IBWE Brother Eugene Alandar are buried with this IBWE hero. Rest in peace, Brother Joe.

For more information, go to ibew.org and under “Media Center” click on “Archives” — then go to year 1913, month-November, Page 116, and also Pages 115-36.

Bob Schafer, P.S.

Service Pins Awarded

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 306, ARAWON, OHIO — On Dec. 20, the Retirees Annual Christmas Breakfast was held at our Training Center. Attendees enjoyed a nice breakfast while catching up on the happenings of the past year. Later that evening, many attended our local union meeting, where numerous retirees received awards for their longtime service to the IBWE.

Citations and pins were awarded to the following honored retirees for 65 years of service — Harold Abrietz, and for 60 years of service — Frank Bredtmeier, Gary Carpen- ter, Richard DeMott, Gerald Ferrall and Glenn Stotts; for 55 years — Myron Stewart; for 50 years — Harold Baker, Eugene Bickes, James Betz, Leonard Bolts, Joseph Corrado, Edward Fenton, Kenneth Fett, Thomas Fred-holm, Bentley Hudson, James Huston, John Johnson, John Ke, Patrick Marion, Charles Nanna, William Neil-son, Stephen Schilling and David Strabel.

To all our retirees, Local 306 thanks you for your many years of dedicated service.

As we gained many more retirees this past year, we also lost quite a few.

With sadness we report the passing of the following retired brothers: Russell Beanham, William Deshon, Michael Tanka, Roger Caseday, Silvano Malvaro, John Weber, Richard Muha, Robert Fitt, Donald Combs, Daniel Popa, Richard Coey, John Spangler, James Carney, Edward Fenton, Donald Kro-mer and William May. We send our deepest condolences to their families.

Thomas Wright, P.S.

55-Year Service Pin

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 317, HUNTINGTON, WV — The Local 317 retirees have a luncheon on the second Tuesday of every month, at 1 p.m., at the union hall on Madison Avenue in Huntington, WV.

We would like to congratulate Bro. Doug Pfylyon (pictured below) receiving his IBWE 55-year service pin recently.

Jerry Booth, Pres.

Local 317 Retirees Club Pres. Jerry Booth (left) presents 55-year service pin award to member Doug Pfylyon.

2019 Holiday Festivities; Upcoming Pin/Award Breakfast

RETIREE CLUB OF L.U. 353, TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA — We began our new year after celebrating all our 2019 successes, such as the events that we have shared with Locals 105, 303 and 804 — including our largest Retirees Annual Christmas Dinner/Dance with over 700 retirees present. A special guest at the party was Bro. Peter Reed, who previously served as a Local 353 rep working for the building trades; as a result of an auto accident some time ago he was paralyzed. Peter and his nurses enjoyed attending this event.

We are presently planning our Annual Pin/Award Breakfast for Wednesday, April 15, where we will honor our 50- to 70-year members for their service.

This year, a total of 40 Local 353 members are eligible to receive IBWE service awards. These include 135-150 years members; 205-250 years members; 30-60 years members; 37 60-year members; 55-65 years members; 70-80 years members, and 85-100 years members. If half of the eligible award recipients show up for the Pin/Award Breakfast, this will be the largest breakfast to date, thanks to the organizing in the past.

As we give thanks for all that we have, we will continue to acknowledge and contribute to the needs of our community, as without the contributions from unions, our society would be in dire shape.

All the best for 2020 and continue to “build our communities with dignity.”

Robert Rynyk, P.S.
‘Fellowship & Camaraderie’

RETIREES CLUB OF U.L. 443, MONTGOMERY, AL — We held our retiree meeting on Dec. 6, 2019, with 30 members and guests in attendance. The meeting went very well with lots of camaraderie and fellowship. All enjoyed a delicious pot-luck lunch prepared by our members and their spouses. We had a short business meeting followed by “Dirty Santa,” and everyone had an enjoyable time.

Our next scheduled meeting will be April 3 at the Local 443 union hall starting around 11 a.m., with a pot-luck lunch to follow at about noon.

If you are IBEW retired (or over age 55) we would love for you to come fellowship and have lunch with us. In brotherhood,

Barry W. Harrison, P.S.

Activities & Events

RETIREES CLUB OF U.L. 649, ALTON, IL — The Local 649 Retirees Club’s recent events, activities and updates include those reported below.

Retirees Club monthly meetings take place the last Thursday of each month, except for schedule changes due to holidays.

The Retirees Christmas Party was Dec. 14, with 70 retired members and guests attending.

Retirees volunteered their time to assist projects at Gordon Moore Park, the Salvation Army, St. Mary’s Parish in Alton, and the Jersey County Animal Rescue.

Retirees Club Pres. George Stumpy has problems with his knee but is improving at the time of this writing.

Local 649 transmits email notices to members both active and retired. For any members (including retirees) who are not receiving emails, please contact the union hall to provide updated email addresses.

Thank you to Vice Pres. Bill Gotlib for presiding in Bro. Stumpy’s absence. Thanks also to Rec. Sec./Treas. Marlin Wagner for keeping us abreast of Bro. Stumpy’s progress as he recovers.

Our thanks and appreciation also go to Bro. Jack Tueth, who compiled and submitted the Retirees Club’s “Local Lines” articles in the past.

Thank you to each of you for your participation, and also thanks to Bro. Alan Rubenstein for compiling the information for this article.

Terry Willhite, P.S.

Meeting Updates

RETIREES CLUB OF U.L. 702, WEST FRANKFORT, IL — The Retirees Club met on Oct. 3 and Dec. 5, 2019, at Golden Corral in Carbondale, IL.

Pres. Gary King welcomed those in attendance. Minutes from the previous meetings and the financial report were read and approved, followed by the reading of the deaths and a moment of silence for those dearly departed.

Under old business, the club discussed the great Labor Day picnic at Rent One Park in Marion, IL, and the possible return of the picnic to the DuQuoin State Fair. A thank-you was extended to all those who helped with the Labor Pavilion. At the December meeting, it was decided to present a placard to Bro. Jim Campbell at the Annual Retiree Luncheon in Mt. Vernon, IL, which will be held Tuesday, April 7.

In new business at the October meeting, retired Executive Board member John Sims joined the club for the first time since his retirement, and he informed attendees about the Homecoming Tailgate at Southern Illinois University. Additionally, the club voted unanimously to spend $200 for the purchase of a plaque that shows when the Retiree Club was founded, etc.

The raffle drawings were held and the deposit for both meetings was announced, followed by adjournment.

Mark Baker, P.S.

‘Happy New Year 2020’

RETIREES CLUB OF U.L. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — We wish you all a happy and healthy new year! We love seeing each and every one of you! We want to thank Greg Stone, George Pettingill and all the others who help make such wonderful meals — we are so blessed to have them.

We had a good showing of our retirees at the Local 756 Christmas Party, and we thank the local for inviting us for a wonderful evening! Congratulations to our annual January Chili Cookoff 2020 winners: 1st place — Greg Stone; 2nd place — Bonnie Pettingill; and 3rd place — JoAnn Gardner.

With sadness, we send our condolences and prayers to families and friends of members who recently passed away: Bros. Robert W. Nelson III, Frederic Z. Due, Daniel L. Gray and Larry R. “Butch” Frohock.

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

Diane Gibbs, P.S.

Local 756 Retiree Club Treas. Dow Graham (left) presents a 50-year service pin to retired member Don Carter.
IBEW Members Dominate ‘Super Bowl for Electricians’

In what has become a yearly tradition, IBEW members dominated the competition at the fourth annual Ideal National Championships, which draws union and nonunion electricians from across North America and is considered the top competition of its kind for inside wiremen.

Leading the way in 2019 was Greg Anliker, an inside wireman from Elgin, Ill., Local 117, who finished first in the individual pro competition for the second consecutive year. Longtime friend and former competition partner Clay Noga from Somonauk, Ill., Local 701 finished third in the same division.

Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 member Jordan Finrock finished first in the apprentice competition, leading an IBEW sweep of the top three places. He was followed by Watertown, N.Y., Local 910 member Benjamin Budd and Le Sueur, Minn., Local 343’s Marty Evans.

Noga joined with Aurora, Ill., Local 461 member Keith Runkle to win the contractor challenge, which pits teams from a single employer against one another. Minneapolis JATC students and Minneapolis Local 292 members Jacob Theonnes and Angela Bissonette-Penna won the student competition. The finals were held Nov. 7-9 at Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

“I just take it easy and do it methodically ... and I still get finished before guys jumping around like a maniac.”
— Elgin, Ill., Local 117 member and Ideal national champion Greg Anliker

“This has become an annual highlight for me, and I congratulate all the winners and participants who represented our brotherhood,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. “Their success reaffirms what we and our signatory contractors already know: IBEW electricians are the best in the industry. I’m honored to represent the men and women proving it.”

Contestants must advance through state competitions before qualifying for nationals, where they complete a series of electrical tasks over two days. Speed is one of the criteria, but less emphasis was put on it than in the past, Anliker noted; it only comprised about 20% of the score in 2019. The rest was based on quality and safety.

Anliker walked away the big winner, earning the $75,000 first prize and continuing his dominance of the event. He finished first in the pro competition in Ideal’s initial competition in 2016. He followed that up by finishing second in 2017 before the first-place finishes during the last two years.

“I honestly thought they wouldn’t let me win anymore,” he said with a laugh. “I figured they would just yank off a wire breaker so something wouldn’t work. They put a lot of money out there, and I’m sure they would give it to a lot of people instead of just one guy.”

But Anliker still earned the top prize, which he credits to his IBEW apprenticeship. He has a bachelor’s degree in biology from Benedictine University (Minn.) University, but opted for a career in the trades after he realized he would need graduate-level education to make better use of his biology training.

“I don’t think I would be where I am if I didn’t go to college,” said Evans, who lives in Cannon Falls, Minn., about a 45-minute drive southeast of Minneapolis. “That helped me mature as a person. But I’m definitely happy with what I am doing now.”

Evans improved on an eighth-place finish in last year’s ideal competition. He is on track to top out and earn journeyman status later this summer.

“Minnesota is a really hard place to keep qualifying from,” he said. Fellow Minnesotans Thoennes and Bissonette-Penna won $20,000 and earned the Minneapolis IATC’s $10,000 by winning the school competition.

Sometimes called “the Super Bowl of the craft,” the 2020 Ideal Nationals will be held Nov. 3-5 at Music City Hall in Nashville, Tenn. Electricians have to advance through state competitions to quality. Visit IdealNationals.com to register.

Ideal was founded in 1936 and has been a leading maker of electrician’s tools and supplies ever since. Its headquarters are in Sycamore, Ill.