

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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The Ellensburg 6

Linemen's Inspiring Campaign Proves No Fight's Too Small

Six Ellensburg, Wash., linemen, aided by Seattle-based Local 77, won the support of their community and union members in a battle that led to a new contract in April and is inspiring other utility workers. From left, Tyler Carson, Jordan Fallwell, Avery Miller, Mike Hegemeier, Tyler Matthews, and Bryan Ring. Inset: Allies picket outside City Hall in March.

The story of the “Ellensburg 6” almost seems scripted for Hollywood. Almost.

Six union linemen at a small utility in the eastern shadow of the Cascades face down an employer determined to outsource their jobs by making them miserable enough to quit.

Morale is at rock bottom. Their safety is at risk. So is the central Washington town that counts on its trusted, year-round crew to keep the lights on.

Then, as icy contract talks drag on, a movement erupts. “I stand with the Ellensburg 6” becomes a rallying cry.

Residents and union brothers and sisters far and wide flock to social media. Yard signs pop up everywhere. Shopkeepers line windows with placards. Farmers offer land to pitch jumbo signs along the road. A billboard on wheels rolls up and down the streets. Hundreds of people clamor for virtual seats at a City Council meeting. Drivers honk their salutes as supporters picket City Hall in campaign T-shirts and face masks.

Solidarity and kinship are abundant. In two months’ time, the linemen have a new three-year contract with raises the city had bitterly refused.

That’s where moviemakers would roll the credits. The reality is more complicated for Seattle-based Local 77, its Ellensburg crew, and beleaguered members at other public utilities where turnover at the top has swept in rabidly anti-union managers.

In late 2019, the Kittitas County Public Utility District succeeded at browbeating its linemen to the exits and contracting out their jobs.

With the same tactics in play in Ellensburg, the county seat, Local 77 pulled out the stops to avoid an encore. The linemen won their community’s hearts,

but the city is still waging war.

Now, a new front has opened up 95 miles southeast in Richland, where managers treated their dispirited, underpaid line crews with even more rancor during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In early June, as the unit’s 30 members geared up for a splashy mid-month launch, signs and banners were on order, flyers being printed, and a social media offensive was quietly humming, ready to pop the day that workers planned to start knocking on doors.

Like their Ellensburg brothers, they want the people they serve to see them in the same light as police

THE ELLENSBURG 6 continued on page 4

THE IBEW's
**2021
PHOTO
CONTEST**

Deadline: Oct. 1
See page 5 for details



FROM THE OFFICERS

An End in Sight



Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President



Kenneth W. Cooper
International Secretary-Treasurer

Sisters and brothers, we're writing to you together this month to mark an important milestone in this pandemic: the reopening of our cities and the resurgence of communities and our economy.

Now, for many of you who have been working as usual throughout the last year, this may not seem like much of an occasion. You've been doing the hard work of keeping the lights on and the water and gas flowing. As leaders in the IBEW, we're so proud to represent each and every one of you.

We're proud of the way you kept the construction sites humming and the manufacturing lines and railcars turning out products and getting them to people who needed them. We're proud of our telecom members who kept us connected, our broadcast members who kept us informed and our government members who performed key national security and other important work throughout this pandemic.

The U.S. and Canada would be dramatically different places today if not for your personal sacrifices and your dedication to your work. So, thank you to each and every one of you for all that you've done and continue to do.

Thank you, also, for taking care of one another.

We've talked in these pages recently about being one another's keeper, about looking out for your union sisters and brothers and about your responsibilities to each other. Over the last year, that's meant wearing masks and socially distancing to minimize the spread of COVID-19, and you've risen to that challenge and done the right thing by your co-workers, your families and your employers.

But now that summer's here in full force, we know masks are hot and uncomfortable and no one wants another summer like last year's where extra PPE and worksite restrictions were required to safely do our jobs. And

there's good news on that front as well.

More than 140 million Americans have been fully vaccinated. More than 20 million Canadians, too. Worldwide, more than 500 million people are now fully protected against this horrible virus and more than 2 billion shots have gone into arms.

Back in January, the front-page story in this paper was about the critical work IBEW members have done and continue to do to develop and manufacture these life-saving vaccines.

From Silicon Valley to Boston, St. Louis to Kalamazoo, Mich., IBEW members have been a critical part of the research, production and distribution of these vaccines.

Your fellow members have built the labs, wired the production lines and installed the freezers that make storage and distribution possible. Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson simply could not have made this medical miracle happen without the men and women of the skilled trades, including the IBEW.

Now, it's almost over. We can see the end in sight. As vaccination rates tick higher, the world economy is set to go off like a rocket ship. Demand for workers is already off the charts, and wages are up as a result of that.

Our industries are going to benefit greatly, and we're ready here at the IBEW to meet those manpower challenges head-on.

In the U.S., we're excited about the possibility of a long-promised infrastructure plan that will put hundreds of thousands of you to work creating the transportation and energy distribution systems of the future, and we're working hard to make sure it's not held up by politicians who would rather give tax cuts to billionaires than invest in working families.

We'll need your help to make that happen, and we'll keep asking you to call your senators and demand action on the American Jobs Plan.

We're excited about travel returning and the border restrictions that have kept us from seeing many of our Canadian brothers and sisters for so long being eased.

And we're looking forward to being able to safely hold our 40th International Convention in-person next year in Chicago.

There's so much to look forward to after the year we've had, and we hope as more people are vaccinated and it's safe to do so that you all take advantage of the benefits of your contracts and take time off to reconnect with friends and family that you've been unable to see the past 16 months.

In the meantime, please keep following your own state, provincial and community guidelines off the job and your employer and worksite rules on the job. It's important that we don't let the encouraging news distract us from driving this virus from our communities for good.

Thank you for all that you do for the IBEW, for your communities and your countries. We're proud to call you our sisters and brothers. ■

“LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

Helping People in Need

Brothers and sisters, I'd like to remind you about last year's article, "Light Up Navajo: Linemen Bring Electricity and Love to a Nation in Need," from the January 2020 issue of The Electrical Worker.

I'm challenging you to have your local union donate to this cause. \$5,500 lights up one home in the Navajo Nation, where 15,000 of the 55,000 homes have never had electricity. Because the houses are spread so far apart, there's enormous cost just to get power lines to many Navajo homes. As individual members, I hope you'll contribute what you can to this cause, too. As IBEW members, it is our calling to help people with their power issues, and there's nothing more gratifying than helping a family in need get basic things like refrigeration or lights that we take for granted. This situation is unacceptable in 2021, and we can all do our part to help rectify this.

Visit the American Public Power Association's 'Light Up Navajo' page for information on how to donate: publicpower.org/donate-light-navajo.

Thank you.

*Gary Johnson, Local 332 retiree
San Jose, Calif.*

Expanding Solar

I read with great interest about how the IBEW stepped in to rescue an Ohio solar project [May 2021 Electrical Worker, "IBEW Steps in to Rescue Ohio Solar Project"]. The article mentioned that there are more than 30 solar projects in the pipeline in the state.

I live in Wadsworth, Ohio. Our city owns its electric distribution system and has since the early 1900s.

The city recently completed two solar fields. I believe the solar fields contribute about 20% of the electricity requirements for the city.

I don't know if this is unusual that a city built its own solar field, but I thought it might make an interesting story for the Electrical Worker.

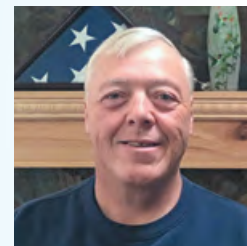
Thank you for producing an interesting paper. Keep up the good work.

*Robert Delong, Local 306 retiree
Akron, Ohio*

Editor's Note: On Page 13 of this issue, read about the largest municipal solar installation in the U.S., also in Ohio. While the city of Cincinnati won't officially own the \$125 million New Market solar site, it has entered into an agreement to buy the power generated there for the next two decades.

My IBEW STORY

Timothy Cayton, Retired Journeyman Wireman
Brockton, Ma., Local 223



“I think I was always slated to become a member of the IBEW. My father, my uncle and my two older brothers were IBEW members, and the union was always a part of our dinner table conversations.

After completing my apprenticeship, I set out to do everything I could within the union. I volunteered on many committees, was appointed as the first local organizer at Local 223 and served 10 years as business manager, a year as training director and six years as a union contractor.

I consider myself the luckiest man alive. I had a great career and earned a good living, and I was able to retire with dignity and respect. I thank God every day and realize I wouldn't be where I am today if not for the IBEW. I'm thankful for every member and officer that came before and after me, and I'm glad to have been put in a position to help other members and their families. That always was the best part of the job.

Thanks for everything, from the bottom of my heart.”

Service to Country: Cramped Quarters, Extra Training and Exacting Standards Are Just Part of the Job for Elite Group of New York Wiremen

Most Americans are accustomed to hearing the national anthem before sporting events or other major public gatherings. But for about 40 members of Albany, N.Y., Local 236, it's a daily ritual on the jobsite.

They work for Newport News Shipbuilding at the Naval Nuclear Laboratory's Kenneth A. Kesselring site in nearby West Milton, N.Y., where they help build and maintain the nuclear submarine prototype used to train Navy officers and enlisted personnel. The current S8G prototype is in the final stages of a re-fueling and overhaul that Navy officials say will extend its life another 20 years.

Every day, at 8 a.m., the national anthem echoes throughout the 2,500-acre complex. No matter what is going on, all of the site's approximately 1,100 employees and contracted personnel stop and place their right hand over their heart — even outside during the frigid upstate New York winter mornings.

"They take it very seriously and I love that," said journeyman inside wireman Phil Waller, an electrical foreman for Newport News. "It's a reminder of what you're doing here. You're not just getting a paycheck. You're supporting the U.S. Navy."

"My father was a Marine and I grew up in a military family," said journeyman inside wireman Riley Pitcherale, who has worked at Kesselring for nearly five years. "This site is important to the country and it means a lot to be here. What we do gets [Navy members] ready for sea."

The Kesselring site began work in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program in 1950 and Local 236 members have been there nearly from the outset. The first nuclear sub prototype was ready for use five years later. Nearly 50,000 Navy personnel have been trained since that initial prototype — the most famous being future President Jimmy Carter, a Naval Academy graduate and officer who went through training at Kesselring in 1952.

"We've enjoyed the work and we've been very proud to play our part in national security," Business Manager Michael Mastropietro said. "It's something we take a lot of pride in. The members up there put in a lot of time and hard work and have a real commitment to quality. They're doing the right thing for the country."

That service to the nation is a big draw for Local 236 members but far from the only one.

"To me, the biggest thing is it's just a cool experience," said Waller, who oversees welding operations for Newport News. "If you've never been in this place, it leaves a lot to the imagination."

Inside wireman Kyle Jones applied for work at Kesselring after a family friend told him how much he enjoyed the work



Top: Naval personnel and civilian staff outside the Kenneth A. Kesselring Site in West Milton, N.Y., where Albany Local 236 members have worked on a nuclear submarine prototype since the 1950s.

Right: Local 236 Business Manager Michael Mastropietro, third from left, is joined by members who work on the nuclear sub prototype at the Kesselring site. They include, from left, Paul Nylin, Phil Waller, Scott Bush, Andy Harrington and Riley Pitcherale.



back in the 1970s.

"It's something different," he said. "It's not the same old roughing-in wire."

The Kesselring site demands much from the people working there. Electricians are used to exacting standards and emphasis on safety at other jobsites. But Local 236 members now at Kesselring say nothing is close to the standards there.

All employees and contracted personnel, including Local 236 members, go through a rigorous security clearance process that can take up to two years. For many jobs, topping out and having a journeyman's license is enough to put a member right to work. Not at Kesselring. Local 236 members and workers from other trades still face several weeks of classroom training for a pretty obvious reason.

Even the most experienced inside wiremen isn't often asked to work on a nuclear submarine prototype vital to national security. It's a totally different experience, and the Navy's construction requirements must be met to the letter.

"There's not too many jobs where you go and sit in a classroom for eight hours after you're hired," Jones said.

Often times, parts and equipment have different names than other jobs. For instance, Waller noted that a cable connector used to join electrical conductors is called a stuffing tube by the Navy and federal government. There are numerous examples of that and it takes time to adjust.

"It's almost like a whole different code book that you follow," he said, "like re-learning a job that you did before. There are similarities, but everything is done to the shipboard method."

Once work starts, Local 236 members are watched closely by government and Navy officials due to security and defense issues and so the prototype matches exactly what is being used in the naval fleet. They regularly consult with leaders on a variety of topics, including college professors and experts on nuclear energy.

They also have hundreds of pages of directions they are expected to follow to

the letter. There's no such thing as improvising or going alone on this job.

Local 236's Kesselring members are trained to work as crane electricians — meaning they are licensed to perform electrical work on a crane — but much of their work is done inside the exceedingly cramped quarters of the prototype sub, alongside employees from other trades, such as Carpenters, Pipefitters, Boilermakers and Operating Engineers. Maintaining a positive working relationship sometimes is difficult but essential, said Paul Nylin, Local 236's shop steward at Kesselring.

"We spend a lot of time with the guys up here," he said. "We need to maintain good relationships with everyone. You need to make sure we're all getting along."

That proved even more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. A coronavirus cluster infected about 50 workers in the summer of 2020. Even with the recent drop in cases around the country, most of the safety protocols instituted in the early days of the crisis remain.

"There were some jobs you simply had to put less guys on because of the need to maintain six feet [between employees]," Nylin said. "We ran into a few different scenarios where jobs slowed down a little bit, but we kept pushing through and got it done."

But despite those issues, an assignment at Kesselring remains a valuable one for most Local 236 members — and not just because of service to country.

Members assigned there usually remain for 3-5 years, longer than most other assignments within Local 236's jurisdiction, said Scott Bush, a member who works as the asbestos supervisor and also coordinates the wiring of the head of the reactor. Some assigned to maintenance stay even longer.

Wages are high and there are ample opportunities to work overtime. Plus, the trades members assigned to Kesselring are some of the best you will find anywhere, Bush said.

"Because of all these different things we do up here, craftsmanship is at a premium," he said. "Everything is done at such a high skill level. You have the time to do it and are paid to do it as well as you possibly can."

"It's complicated but every guy in this shop is one of the best in the local. It's incredible the talent that is here."

Bush has more than 30 years of experience as a journeyman wireman and is nearing retirement. Wrapping it up by finishing the upgrading of the sub prototype would not be a bad way to go out, he said. Kesselring officials identified a 12-step process that needed to be met and workers currently are on No. 10.

"I'm ex-military," said Bush, who served six years in the Navy. "We feel like we make a difference. It sounds corny but some days, you really feel you're giving it up for defending your country." ■

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Continued from page 1

The Ellensburg 6 Linemen's Inspiring Campaign Proves No Fight's Too Small

officers and firefighters — essential, local troubleshooters who guard against calamity.

"We want to make the public aware that it's critical to stand up for local workers in local jobs that invest local dollars right back into the community — jobs that protect their families, their homes and their businesses," Local 77 Business Manager Rex Habner said.

FOR A STRETCH of time beginning in the 1990s until trickling off after 2010, many utilities around the country made a bad bet on outsourcing.

"For a hundred years, they'd use contractors for the hills and staff for the valleys," Utility Director Donnie Colston said.

The valley utilities started to let attrition deplete their experienced, local workforces.

"They kind of thought of themselves as virtual, meaning they didn't need employees, and started subcontracting these technical, highly skilled jobs to non-union contractors," Colston said. "What they found out is that it was costing them 1½-2 times what their own workforce cost."

For example, he said, a utility might send a truck or two, with up to four linemen, to replace a damaged pole. Nonunion outside contractors, with training so subpar they'd been known to promote apprentices to journeymen in barely a year, would dispatch and bill for at least twice as many vehicles and workers.



The Local 77 line crew in Richland, Wash., southeast of Ellensburg, pictured as they prepared to kick off their own campaign in mid-June for fair wages and local jobs.

Utilities wised up and began rebuilding their own crews. What's happening in central Washington is "going against the trend," Colston said.

Local 77's bargaining agreements require utilities to use IBEW labor, whether in-house or through National Electrical Contractors Association signatories.

The industry requires both — itinerant outside construction crews and local utility workers rooted in their communities, familiar with every line, and available for callouts at all hours. Replacing them is a slippery slope that employers will exploit, Colston and others said.

"Any time you start subcontracting out fixed positions, they've now separated you from being a worker at the utility to being a line item," said Dominic Nolan, a Ninth District international representative. "When you're an employee you have a contract with the utility and a relationship with the community. Outsourcing erodes that."

Brian Gray has long represented the Ellensburg 6 and many other utility workers in central and eastern Washington. He fumes thinking about how much harder it's gotten for them in recent years under new city and PUD managers "who are all hostile to unions and all talk to each other."

It's not universal, the Local 77 assistant business manager said, citing utilities that are more worker-friendly. And he's hopeful the

outpouring in Ellensburg leads some of the other employers to back away from similar schemes.

But where union-busters are in charge, he said there always seem to be plans to replace hometown crews and curtail their year-round schedule of service and maintenance.

It goes to show how little they understand, said Habner, whose own job as a young journeyman was contracted out.

"They don't know what it means to have a fire-hardened, winter-hardened utility," he said. "Maintenance costs money, but maintenance is also what allows you to control your costs."

THE CAMPAIGN in Ellensburg, population 20,000, went from zero to 60 with the speed of a blast text in early February that sent people to a Facebook page.

"I would be happy to put 100 signs in my yard if it helps!" one person posted.

"I don't have a yard, but I have a window!" another said.

"People were liking the page,



Brian Gray, left, an assistant Local 77 business manager who represents the Ellensburg 6, with journeyman line clearance tree trimmer Michael Young at an informational picket March 5 that drew honks and cheers from passing drivers.

messaging us, asking what they can do to help. It got huge so fast," said Local 77 organizer and campaign coordinator Sara Langus, hailed by her teammates as a cyclone of innovative ideas and strategy.

Initial calls for action led residents to flood City Hall with emails demanding the mayor and city manager do right by the linemen.

"It was the talk of the town," said unit steward and journeyman Bryan Ring. "It felt like our support was doubling and tripling. I called up Sara and said, 'You're going to have to get us a lot more signs.'"

An army of union allies grew across the state, even crossing the borders of Oregon and Idaho. Some IBEW mem-



bers drove for hours in March for an informational picket that was a socially distanced sea of "I stand with the Ellensburg 6" T-shirts.

But nothing was more fundamental, Ring said, than the linemen's conversations with townspeople.

Those nameless men they'd seen up poles and in bucket trucks turned out to be neighbors and customers and class parents — dedicated, highly skilled workers doing perilous jobs to keep Ellensburg lit, powered and safe.

Hearing how they were being demeaned at work and insulted at the bargaining table with a 1-0-0 wage offer didn't sit well.

A week after the first text went viral, the Ellensburg City Council faced an epic online audience. Early birds snapped up the virtual gallery's 100 seats, a Zoom link that typically draws a smattering of observers. More than 700 other supporters spilled over to Local 77's YouTube stream.

Council members seemed uninterested in public comments championing the linemen's cause. Ring could see some of them playing games on their phones — a sign of the disrespect that he and others say won't be forgotten at the ballot box this fall, when three council seats are up for grabs.



Ellensburg unit steward Bryan Ring.



Community and union allies turned out in force for the March picket in support of the Ellensburg 6.



Steward Bryan Ring's wife and their four daughters were among the Ellensburg 6 family members who picketed with special enthusiasm in March.

THE BROTHERHOOD

in Ellensburg is strong, but young. Ring was one of nine employees when he arrived from Utah in 2016. Only one of his five current co-workers goes back as far. The others have less than two years on the job, though one worked for the Kittitas PUD until, he said, his bosses made it unbearable.

"We had a bond with those journeymen," Ring said of the Kittitas crew, which had its own bargaining agreement but was part of the Ellensburg unit.

The city linemen showed up whenever the county linemen needed extra hands, and they saw each other at unit meetings. "We always knew what was going on," he said. "We saw it escalate. You'd watch

them come in and you could see the pressure, the negativity, in their faces."

The Kittitas workers pointed to safety shortfalls, poor-quality gear and disputes over meal periods, callouts, equipment and more — problems that were all too familiar to the Ellensburg 6.

It was easy for the public to relate to the workplace battles. Talking to them about money was trickier. The linemen's wages are below the comparable average, but high by Ellensburg standards.

Explaining the training, skills and risks their jobs involved was often persuasive, Ring said. With businesspeople, they were more blunt.

"We're six guys and we make 70% of the revenue for the city," he said, summarizing their argument. "Would you strip their tools and treat them like dirt? If it were me, I would do everything I can to make sure the department keeps doing as well as it is. There's no way I'd jeopardize losing that 70%."

City officials were unmoved. They cried poverty through bargaining and mediation, claiming COVID-19 had starved their

Lana Straight, a Local 77 shop steward at Puget Sound Energy, was among many members who drove hours to show support for the Ellensburg's linemen.

The linemen took turns at the wheel pulling a mobile billboard around town past businesses and homes where windows and yard signs expressed support for their cause.

budget. When they settled on 3% annual raises in April — the unit started at 5% — they barely hid their disgust.

"We went through the process and got an outcome the city could live with that provided the IBEW what they voted on," the mayor told the local newspaper.

The very next day, he and the city manager revealed that they'd been sitting on \$4.5 million in federal pandemic relief funds.

They announced that all nonunion employees were getting 6% raises.

IT WAS A shocking display of spite, even to union leaders who'd seen it all.

Months into bargaining in Richland, officials disclosed their own COVID-19 windfall. Flush with \$7.3 million, they bumped up their paltry wage offer — by half a percentage point.

That slap in the face piled on to a hellish year for the workers, who earn less than almost all their utility counterparts in Local 77, staff representative Will Power said.

Even though their state was the first to record COVID-19 deaths, Power said Richland officials were slow to acknowledge the danger and balked at guidelines to minimize risks. But they acted with purpose, he said, in finding a loophole to deny them paid federally mandated sick leave if they caught the virus.

He said three workers have quit this year and others are on the edge.

But as they prepared to kick off their campaign, the magic in Ellensburg spurred hope. Could lightning strike twice?

HABNER, who graduated from high school in Ellensburg, marvels at how swiftly and robustly his old town responded.

It was never a sure thing, he said, not in a state where politics are defined by a mountain range. Labor gets less love to the east, and any pro-union message, no matter how nonpolitical, can be a tough sell.

Yet in a matter of days, a small city in Washington's deep-red center was rooting its heart out for six union linemen.

The team behind the all-out-blitz hopes it inspires other locals that feel like they're facing impossible odds.

"It shows what the IBEW can do," Gray said. "No unit is too small to fight for. Whether it's one person or a thousand, we'll be there." ■



THE IBEW's 2021 PHOTO CONTEST

Enter Today!
Deadline: Oct. 1

1st Place: \$200

2nd Place: \$150

3rd Place: \$100

Honorable
Mention: \$50

The 2021 IBEW Photo Contest is here, and with it a chance to show your union sisters and brothers what being a member of the greatest union in the world means to you. So, grab your cameras and smartphones and get to it! We want to see your best shots of 2021. See below for rules and details, and as always, contact us at media@ibew.org for more information.

Photo Contest Rules:

1. The contest is open to active or retired IBEW members only. The person submitting the photo must be the person who took the photograph. Members may enter up to five photos each.
2. International officers and staff are not eligible.
3. Photos **MUST** be submitted as digital files of at least 300 dpi, measuring 1,200 by 1,800 pixels at minimum, in color or black and white. Larger files of at least 2,200 pixels are encouraged.
4. All submissions become property of the IBEW Media Department.
5. Photo entries must have an IBEW theme of some sort, with IBEW members at work, engaged in a union-related activity or featuring subjects conveying images of the electrical industry or the union.
6. If members are featured in the photo, they should be identified. If large groups are pictured, the name of the group or the purpose of the gathering (e.g., a safety committee, a linemen's rodeo, a union meeting) can be submitted in place of individual names.
7. Photos previously published in IBEW publications or on the website are not eligible for submission.
8. **Entries MUST be submitted electronically** via the Photo Contest link on IBEW.org. Please contact the Media Department at media@IBEW.org or 202-728-6102 with additional questions.
9. Up to 15 finalists will be selected and posted on IBEW.org for final judging by the public. The winners will be featured in a future issue of the Electrical Worker.

IBEW Unveils **LARGEST CONSTRUCTION ORGANIZING DRIVE** in Memory



Organizers from more than a dozen IBEW locals mobilized before Memorial Day weekend to banner 26 Bergelectric worksites across six states.

“We don’t need to be intimidated by the size of any nonunion contractor, not one.”

On Memorial Day weekend, at 26 job sites across the U.S., the IBEW announced the existence of the largest construction-side organizing campaign in its history, targeting Bergelectric, one of the top-10 largest electrical contractors in North America.

What had looked like a regional organizing campaign that had stripped hundreds of workers, including many dozens of foremen, general foremen and superintendents, never was intended to be just that. Berg is national; so are the IBEW’s intentions.

From San Diego to Seattle, Orlando to Austin, IBEW organizers from dozens of locals flew identical banners advertising a website — BergsGoingUnion.com — and something more: ambition, coordination, and professionalism.

“We’ve been showing our cards slowly over the last year, keeping management off balance, and turning up the pressure. Up until that Friday, I’m sure the company thought they had a southern California issue. We picked a long weekend to give them plenty of time to realize the truth,” said Special Assistant to the International President for Membership Development Ricky Oakland. “We’re not just recruiting their best workers in Orange County; we’re welcoming them everywhere.”

The goal, he said, is a national agreement between a national contractor and an international union.

A key component of the campaign has been highlighting the stories of Berg workers who have left for the IBEW.

Mike Lowitzer worked nonunion for 13 years, traveling from place to place to see the country. He’d sign a 6-month lease

someplace interesting and then pick through electrical contractors in the yellow pages, negotiating a salary from open shops and building a resume.

In 2014 he joined Denver Local 68 and in 2019 came on staff as an organizer.

For a few months back in 2007, he worked a job for Berg in Las Vegas. The note he left in his resume about why he left the position said, “Wasn’t treated like a professional; left for a prevailing wage job.”

That feeling that you aren’t getting what you’re worth resonates with the workers he and the rest of the IBEW are organizing today.

And that includes the money they were due.

“When I was working nonunion, I always had to remind HR, ‘Hey my raise is coming up.’ Or remind my foreman, my general foreman, ‘I’m due for a raise. It’s been a year. Two years.’ For a couple of cents,” said Angel Navarette, a Los Angeles Local 11 member who worked nonunion for 15 years, including at Berg. “Here it’s a contract. Now it’s every six months. That’s automatic.”

For journeyman wireman Irving Ochoa, like Lowitzer, it was the benefits.

“When I was at Berg, they started changing our medical plan. Little by little they started taking away everything from when I started. Right before I left, they changed it to a high-deductible plan,” Ochoa said.

Ochoa said the switch made a career he was proud of impossible.

“I have a family; three kids and a wife and I am the only breadwinner, so it was really difficult,” he said.

State Organizing Coordinator Aaron Jones, who runs the day-to-day operations

of the Berg campaign, said the cost of working non-union is a key part of the campaign.

“Companies scare the hell out of their workers talking about union dues, so we tell them about the cost of working non-union. We call them the Berg dues,” Jones said. “They add up fast.”

Lower wages are Berg dues. Health care that comes out of your paycheck and can hang you with a huge bill or self-funding a 401k instead of a having pension are Berg dues. Always hustling to find the next job and fighting every time for a fair wage? Berg dues.

“You pay your dues either way. The question is, why pay the bosses instead of your brothers? Why pay more to work for less?” Jones said.

Berg wasn’t always nonunion. Founded in the 1940s, it was a union shop for 50 years.

“In many ways, Berg continued to operate like a union contractor, just without the wages and benefits,” said Ninth District Organizing Coordinator Greg Boyd.

Internally, they kept a similar education model with apprentices working with journeymen over years and a structured supervisor program of foremen, general foremen and superintendents.

They still go after the prevailing wage, Veteran’s Administration and military projects that are the IBEW’s bread and butter.

And when they win them, their workers make prevailing wage. But on other

jobs, Lowitzer said, you get only what you negotiate, the health care is worse, and the pension is absent.

“Making up numbers, we may make \$40 an hour and pay \$4 in dues, but you can’t talk down to them if they are making \$30. We are proud when we get \$30 an hour, proud of the resume we built up on our own to get it,” he said.

You even have to negotiate wages if you stay inside Berg, moving from a job in Texas to one in California.

“The cost of living is a bit higher in California, but until you speak up for yourself, they will take advantage of you,” Lowitzer said.

Nothing about this makes Berg particularly special, Boyd said. Berg grew from a single storefront to a Southern California powerhouse with IBEW workers. But after a series of bad years in the ’70s and ’80s, culminating in deep recessions in the state and a strike in 1981, Berg went nonunion in San Diego in 1988 and in Los Angeles in 1991.

Ninth District International Vice President John O’Rourke says the campaign is about helping nonunion workers, of course, but it’s also about building a bright future for Berg.

“Over the years, hundreds and possibly thousands of Berg workers dropped the company and joined the IBEW and I am sure they want them back,” O’Rourke said. “Berg saw their greatest growth when they were signatory and that is absolutely possible again now.”

As work picked up in the early 2000s, Southern California locals — Ventura Local

952, Local 11, Santa Ana Local 441, San Bernardino Local 477, Riverside Local 440, and San Diego Local 569 — were actively and successfully stripping workers from nonunion contractors, but the contractors themselves were slipping between and across jurisdictional boundaries in ways where locals struggled to adapt.

At the Membership Development conference in 2018, O’Rourke and Boyd brought all the Southern California business managers and their organizers together in a room to hammer out a plan that would smash down those walls and make life a bit harder for open shops.

“That’s when we created Organizers Without Borders,” Jones said.

The prime achievement, Boyd said, was a universal transition agreement that all the locals signed on to. The standard contract often has lots and lots of rules. They are there for a reason, for both sides, but they can often be too steep a climb if they come into force all at once. Transition agreements make allowances and exceptions from those standard rules, for a set period, but which rules and for how long makes a big difference.

Having a common language for all of Southern California meant they could get started putting our members to work quickly and they could bid jobs anywhere with confidence, Jones said.

The Organizers Without Borders locals also held regular meetings where they talked about nonunion contractors who were bidding work in their jurisdictions and strategized and coordinated campaigns to intervene, strip workers and, if the new members wanted it, get them on jobs closer to home. One company came up



more than any other: Berg.

"We did not get a memo from our leadership saying, 'Go after Berg.' This came up from the organizers, not down from the International Office. Over and over, we were hearing that Berg was a problem we needed to solve, but what could we do? They were so big and, for years, we thought we would never have the tools, coordination, expertise or resources to go after them," Boyd said. "Turns out that was wrong."

That was the genesis of the "Berg's Going Union" campaign.

Like Berg, the effort started local, went regional and is now a national campaign to carrot-and-stick a Top-10 electrical contractor back into the fold.

The stick is underway. In the last 18 months, the IBEW has stripped hundreds of Berg workers, targeting superintendents, foremen and general foremen.

A coordinated effort has also been underway to expose unfair practices and chronic underbidding by the company, particularly on prevailing wage jobs.

The carrot has been handled by O'Rourke, consistently reaching out to Berg leadership to explain the benefits of returning to the fold.

"I am a firm believer in extending the hand of friendship," O'Rourke said.

So far, the letters and calls have gone unanswered, so the pressure continues to rise and what began in Southern California has not stayed there.

The standard leafletting, site and home visits and cold calls continued, of course, but there are powerful new tools available to make that first contact.

In April, the Berg's Going Union coordinated online campaign went public with a website, Instagram and Facebook accounts directed at Berg's employees and filled searches for the company with IBEW results.

Jones and State Organizing Coordinator Jillian Elliot also filled job sites like Indeed and LinkedIn with targeted ads aimed at Berg employees touting the benefits of membership and the stories of the men and women who made the jump. The culmination was the coordinated banner event nationwide: same time, same message. The message of the campaign is familiar but targeted to the specific concerns of Berg workers.

"Our message is simple: Prevailing wages on every job; health care that comes with membership, not out of your paycheck; and the opportunity to work better jobs closer to home," Boyd said.

The IBEW is not only using all the

available online personalization and ad targeting tools, but organizers are doing it without using high-priced ad agencies. It's all in-house.

"That is maybe what I am proudest of, personally. These tools are ours, forever. Anyone who wants to use these tools to reach out to people only has to call us and they can have access as well," Jones said.

And every Friday, they up the pressure, expand the campaign and make the stick a little bigger and the carrot a little sweeter.

On the Friday before Memorial Day, they upped the ante again, making it clear just how high the IBEW's ambitions are and showing how coordinated and efficient the brotherhood can be.

Jones said much of the ambition, the tempo and even the feel of the campaign was inspired by the IBEW's recent experience in organizing on the professional and industrial side of the house, including at Baltimore Gas & Electric, Atlanta Gas Light and Electrolux.

There, the IBEW brought organizers from all parts of the country and all levels of the union, from local activists to international leaders, for the same task. Construction organizers worked side-by-side with utility and manufacturing organizers.

"I worked on BGE, and I remember thinking, 'We can do that in construction. We need to do that in construction,'" Jones said.

Most construction organizing campaigns don't end in an NLRB-sanctioned representation vote. The collaboration, the diversity of voices and the pace and structure of the P&I campaigns were crucial experiences for the organizing in the IBEW's spiritual home of construction.

"It struck me one day while I was on a honk-and-wave line for AGL that we didn't need to be intimidated by the size of any nonunion contractor, not one," Jones said. "Because the truth is, the IBEW is bigger than any of them. Workers outnumber owners and bosses. This is a basic truth that we somehow need to be reminded of: organizing is the solution to every problem the American worker has."

For the first time, Oakland said, the IBEW can take advantage of a national labor shortage to make permanent changes to the industry.

"It is something we always wanted to do, but we have never picked this big a target before. We are learning as we go. We have the courage to take this on and technology has really allowed us to meet our ambitions," Oakland said. "This is a blueprint for going after anyone. No one is too big." ■

A Decade's Fight Ends in a Win for Comcast Techs

After more than a decade of dedicated, tireless efforts to reach a negotiated agreement, Comcast technicians working in Fairhaven, Mass., agreed in February on a first contract between Middleboro, Mass., Local 2322 and the massive cable conglomerate.

"It's been scary stuff for a lot of the men and women there," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "Comcast has a reputation for being one of the most ardently anti-union companies in America, and this win could be just what it takes to give more cable techs the courage to take the leap and organize with the IBEW, too."

Job security, said Second District Lead Organizer Steve Smith, was the chief issue solved by this new, two-year pact, ratified by the eligible membership 42-11 on Feb. 3.

"They saw that the company was making big changes and consolidations and increasing the use of contractors," Smith said. "They understood the benefits of being in a union, to get the job security they needed, and they rallied around that."

Founded as a small local cable operator in Mississippi in 1963, Comcast has since grown to become the largest cable TV company and home internet service provider in the U.S., worth an estimated \$273 billion in 2020. The Fairhaven technicians install Xfinity cable service and are among very few union-represented Comcast shops in the U.S.

"They're good at keeping the unions out," said Local 2322 Business Manager Eric Hetrick, who estimates that less than 2% of Comcast is organized nationwide. His techs from Fairhaven are the first group of Comcast workers in New England to unionize, he said.

The push to organize was about job security from the start, Hetrick said. "Being at-will employees, they witnessed guys being laid off," he said. "From day one, we wouldn't let them accept a contract that we wouldn't sign ourselves."

In 2013, Fairhaven technician Scott Hartman told The Electrical Worker about one particularly outrageous stunt Comcast had pulled four years earlier, when a group of his co-workers — many boasting decades of service to Comcast — were suddenly fired and replaced with independent contractors. While the workers cleaned out their company-supplied trucks and vans, Hartman said, Comcast's managers called in a line-up of taxis to take the newly unemployed workers to their homes.

All over the U.S., Comcast managers usually employ these and other, all-too-common corporate tactics, such as claiming that the cost of union dues outweighs any benefits of unionization. And because the company is so massive, it can afford to play the long game to try to wear down workers wanting to organize.

In Massachusetts, the IBEW proved that it, too, can be tenacious. The union's battle in the Bay State started in 2010, when the technicians from the Fairhaven and Fall River shops, which have since



Credit: Rand Wilson



For the newest members of Middleboro, Mass., Local 2322, the road to their first contract with Comcast began in 2010 when Rep. Stephen Lynch (top photo, center) verified that a majority of techs — such as Ray Pacheco (bottom left) and Josef Shaker (bottom right) — wanted the IBEW to be their collective-bargaining representative.

merged, sought voluntary bargaining-unit recognition from Comcast. The following year, they successfully petitioned the National Labor Relations Board to supervise an election. So far, so good.

But then, Comcast's bully tactics won over too many of the shops' technicians, and the unit lost its first vote to join Local 2322 in December 2011, 52-42. That didn't stop the local from continuing to try, though, and a little more than a year later in 2013, the technicians at both garages voted 49-41 in favor of joining the local and beginning negotiations for a contract.

Afterward, Comcast twice backed efforts to get the technicians to decertify affiliation with Local 2322, Smith said, "but we had small victories along the way." A March 2016 decertification vote lost badly, 51-27; two years later, a similar effort went down in flames, 48-22.

Even so, it still would take another 2½ years after that second decertification vote before the parties would reach a tentative agreement. That happened this past January; the pact that was ratified on Feb. 3 was crafted as a blueprint for other potential IBEW shops across the U.S. interested in pursuing their own organizing efforts.

"Comcast continually tried to convince us that joining a union was a risk, but we knew that collective bargaining would actually help us improve every part of our jobs," said Brian Almeida, a Comcast tech with nearly 20 years of experience. "We

now have protections against unfair discipline or discharge, a written grievance procedure, and new protections in writing against layoffs and our garage closing."

"When we were going through organizing, Comcast held long captive audience meetings," Hetrick said. "Brian and the other guys were courageous enough to push back. The techs showed amazing determination and perseverance to win." The business manager credited his local's success to the support it received from other IBEW and sister-union members, state and local elected officials and community organizations that helped workers sustain their fight.

"I always stayed in touch. I don't go away until they tell me to go away," said Smith with a laugh. "This was a savvy group, and a lot of the time, they really fought hard. It took a long time, but they stayed hopeful."

Smith also noted the courage of some of the workers, who appeared on television programs running on local cable access channels — some, ironically, owned in some cases by Comcast — to make their case for unionization.

"It's all about the great leadership of this workgroup," Smith said. "They kept the members informed every step of the way."

Life changed for the techs in another important way after the ratification vote. "They realized how much their stress levels dropped," Smith said. "They started to think, 'Gee, this isn't a bad job.'" ■

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Labour Community Anxiously Awaits Impact of Alberta's Anti-Working Family Bill

The IBEW and other unions in Alberta are bracing for the implementation of Bill 32, which was passed by the United Conservative Party-dominated provincial assembly last year.

The measure was framed by Premier Jason Kenney as a way to protect business and aid a struggling economy. Critics saw it as a poorly-disguised attack on workers' rights to join a union and the protection it provides, especially after the gains labour made in Alberta in recent years. The law imposes onerous new financial reporting requirements for unions and could potentially limit how much money unions can even donate to charitable organizations.

IBEW leaders in Alberta say they will have a better idea of Bill 32's impact after it is proclaimed and Labour Minister Jason Copping releases guidelines on following the law. But unions are likely to be hit hard.

"It's patterned after some of the right-to-work laws in the U.S.," Calgary Local 254 Business Manager John Briegel said. "We're kind of calling it right-to-work lite."

Bill 32 includes:

- Limits on where unions can picket during strikes or lockouts, including a prohibition of picketing a secondary work site without permission from the province's Labour Relations Board.
- A prohibition on blocking or delaying someone from crossing a picket line.
- An "opt-in" provision, where members would have to regularly give their local union permission to deduct the portion of his or her membership fees going to political activities in retaliation for unions supporting parties and politicians that stand up for workers.

Unions also would be required to prepare more detailed financial statements, ostensibly for members' benefit, even though members already have access to their local union's budget and expenditures. Advocates for working families view it as a move to burden unions with excessive costs in an attempt to make them less effective.

"The next possible bill the UCP would pass is requiring union members to opt in on paying union dues all together," Edmonton Local 424 assistant business manager Scott Crichton said.

That is common in the 27 U.S. states that have right-to-work laws but something that would be a major shift in Canada, even under its most conservative governments. Unions' right to organize and operate freely has been upheld by courts throughout the country under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"Even with the bill's passage, we will continue to educate assembly members on the important work IBEW members do," First District International Vice President Thomas Reid said. "Whether it's in

utility, construction or railroad, IBEW brothers and sisters provide vital services to everyone living in Alberta. Damaging the movement that ensures those members receive good wages and safe working conditions is a travesty, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic."

"For this attack on union workers to be coming during the COVID-19 pandemic is especially tough to swallow," said Edmonton Local 1007 Business Manager Steve Southwood.

"This current government does not understand the good unions do in our communities or understand the impact a collective bargaining agreement has on fair treatment of workers or a family's ability to make ends meet, or the complicated and skilled work they do for the



Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, whose United Conservative majority government has scaled back the rights and protections of working families since taking power in 2019.

good of all Edmontonians and Albertans," Southwood said.

The bill could also allow the provin-

cial government to determine what is charitable and what is political, Crichton said, having a chilling effect on the good works unions do in their communities.

"During the pandemic, as the number of unemployed people increased, Albertans have turned to these organizations for help," Crichton said. "This legislation ties our hands and restricts our ability to donate to these charitable causes."

Alberta has traditionally been one of the most hostile provinces toward labour and working families but there were signs

of hope in recent years.

The New Democratic Party won a majority in the 2015 provincial elections, ending 34 years of control by the Progressive Conservatives. The worker-friendly NDP instituted a number of reforms but was voted out of power in 2019.

Briegel said he expected some pushback against those gains after the 2019 election but Bill 32 went further than anyone expected. The Alberta Federation of Labour, of which the IBEW is a member, has already said it will challenge the bill in court after it is proclaimed.

Until that proclamation, it's hard to tell exactly what the impact might be, Briegel said.

"This is a pretty frank case of the devil being in the details," he said. ■

La communauté syndicale attend l'impact qu'aura le projet de loi 32 de l'Alberta

La FIOE et d'autres syndicats en Alberta se préparent pour la mise en œuvre du projet de loi 32 qui a été adopté l'an dernier par l'Assemblée provinciale dominée par le Parti conservateur uni.

Le premier ministre Jason Kenney a vendu cette mesure législative comme moyen de protéger les entreprises et d'aider une économie en difficulté. Les critiques l'ont perçu comme une attaque camouflée contre les droits des travailleuses et des travailleurs d'adhérer à un syndicat et la protection qu'il procure, surtout depuis les gains réalisés par les syndicats en Alberta ces dernières années. La loi impose aux syndicats de lourdes tâches en matière de rapports financiers et pourrait éventuellement limiter la somme que les syndicats peuvent donner aux organisations de bienfaisance.

Les leaders de la FIOE en Alberta disent qu'ils auront une meilleure idée de l'impact du projet de loi une fois qu'il sera promulgué et lorsque le ministre du Travail Jason Copping aura publié les directives sur l'application de la loi. Mais les syndicats seront probablement durement touchés.

« Il a été calqué du droit au travail sans adhésion syndicale obligatoire dans un milieu de travail syndiqué des É.-U., » déclare le gérant d'affaires John Briegel de la section locale 254 à Calgary. « Nous l'appelons le droit au travail sans adhésion syndicale obligatoire dans un milieu de travail syndical moins lourd que celui des États-Unis. »

Le projet de loi 32 comprend :

- Les syndicats se verraient limités à des endroits pour tenir des piquets pendant les grèves ou les lockouts, y compris l'interdiction de faire du piquetage sur un deuxième lieu de travail sans la permission de la Commission des relations du travail de la province.
- L'interdiction de bloquer le passage ou de ralentir quelqu'un de franchir la ligne de piquetage.
- Une disposition qui donne le « choix » aux membres de donner régulièrement l'autorisation à leurs sections locales de déduire une partie de leurs cotisations syndicales pour financer les activités politiques qui servent à défendre les syndicats qui soutiennent les partis politiques et les politiciens en faveur des travailleuses et des travailleurs.

Les syndicats seront aussi tenus de préparer des états financiers plus détaillés, soi-disant pour le bien des membres, même si les membres peuvent déjà avoir accès au budget et aux dépenses de leurs sections locales. Les défenseurs de la classe moyenne le perçoivent comme une tentative d'imposer des coûts excessifs aux syndicats dans le but de les rendre moins efficaces.

« Le prochain projet de loi que ce Parti pourrait faire adopter et de donner le choix aux membres de ne plus payer de cotisations syndicales, » mentionne l'assistant gérant d'affaires Scott Crichton de la section locale 424 à Edmonton.

Les 27 États des É.-U. qui disposent des lois sur le droit au travail sans adhésion syndicale obligatoire dans un milieu

de travail syndiqué, ceci est commun. En revanche, ceci sera un changement majeur au Canada, même sous le pouvoir des gouvernements des plus conservateurs. Le droit aux syndicats de recruter de nouveaux membres et de travailler en toute liberté a été défendu par nos tribunaux à travers le pays sous la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés.

« Même si le projet de loi est adopté, nous continuerons d'informer les membres des assemblées sur le travail important effectué par les membres de la FIOE, » déclare le vice-président international Thomas Reid du premier district. « Que ce soit dans les services publics, dans le secteur de la construction ou dans les chemins de fer, nos confrères et nos consœurs fournissent des services indispensables à toutes personnes vivant en Alberta. Porter atteinte au mouvement syndical qui garantit à ces membres de bons salaires et de bonnes conditions de travail est un drame, particulièrement pendant la pandémie de la COVID-19. »

« Le fait que cette attaque contre les syndicats survient pendant la pandémie de la COVID-19 est particulièrement difficile à avaler, » mentionne le gérant d'affaires Steve Southwood de la section locale 1007 à Edmonton.

« Le gouvernement actuel ne comprend pas le bien qu'apportent les syndicats aux communautés ni l'influence de la convention collective sur le traitement équitable des travailleuses et des travailleurs ou sur la capacité aux familles de joindre les deux bouts, ou le travail compliqué et qualifié effectués pour le bien de

tous les Edmontoniens et les Albertains, » mentionne M. Southwood.

Le projet de loi permettrait aussi au gouvernement provincial de déterminer ce qui est charitable et ce qui est politique, dit Crichton, en refroidissant le bon travail effectué des syndicats dans leur communauté.

« Alors que le nombre de chômeurs a augmenté pendant la pandémie, les Albertains se sont tournés vers ces organismes pour obtenir de l'aide, » déclare Crichton. « Cette législation nous lie les mains et limite notre capacité de donner à ces causes humanitaires. »

Alberta a toujours été la province la plus hostile envers les syndicats et la classe moyenne, par contre, dans les dernières années, il y avait une lueur d'espoir.

Lors des élections provinciales de 2015, le Nouveau Parti démocratique a obtenu la majorité mettant fin à 34 ans de contrôle des progressistes-conservateurs. Le NPD en faveur des travailleurs a instauré un certain nombre de réformes sous la première ministre Rachel Notley. Le NPD a été chassé du pouvoir en 2019.

M. Briegel informe qu'il s'attendait à faire face à des obstacles suite aux gains réalisés après l'élection de 2019, mais le projet de loi 32 est allé plus loin que tout le monde pensait. La fédération du travail de l'Alberta, dont la FIOE est membre, a déjà mentionné qu'elle contestera le projet de loi devant les tribunaux après sa promulgation.

Jusqu'à cette promulgation, il est difficile de savoir exactement quel sera l'impact, déclare M. Briegel.

« C'est assez clair qu'il s'agit d'un cas où le diable est dans les détails, » dit-il. ■

THE FRONT LINE: POLITICS & JOBS

Ambitious N.J. Green Energy Plan is Achievable with IBEW's Help

IBEW members in New Jersey are lauding Governor Phil Murphy's announcement earlier this year to spend nearly \$100 million on an effort to develop and expand emission-free transportation projects in the Garden State.

"It's good for the environment and it's good for the IBEW," said Jersey City, N.J., Local 164 Business Manager Dan Gumble. "Clean air, green jobs, what could be better? Thank you, Governor Murphy, for making the union trades part of this effort."



New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy (second from left) inspects just one of the hundreds of electric garbage trucks for which IBEW members around the state will be called upon to help install charging and other infrastructure in the coming years.

Murphy's ambitious proposal comes with an equally ambitious goal: for his state to be powered fully by green energy by 2050. The kinds of things that IBEW members work on every day — electrification programs, electric mobility vehicles, and charging infrastructure — are major components in the plan.

"We have a very good relationship with the governor," Gumble said. "Talking with him and his staff, we were assured that these jobs are going to be union jobs."

A part of Murphy's plan, for example, is deployment of electric garbage and delivery trucks that require a lot of power. "Some of them have batteries the size of a commercial refrigerator," Gumble said.

One garage where such trucks are stored is more than 75 years old, he said. "Right next to it are all these mechanicals," Gumble said. "It's structurally good, but the electrical service is inadequate for handling what the governor wants to do, and it needs to be upgraded. That's typical of a building that's over five generations old, and it's something we can handle."

Rapidly evolving 21st-century technologies complicate things further, he said. "Even something five years or older is inadequate," Gumble said. "But part of what we do is to be cutting edge and be prepared for the next wave."

Millions of dollars under Murphy's plan also will go toward equitable mobility projects across the state designed to bring electric ride-hailing service vehicles to various communities. They, as well as increasing numbers of electric vehicle drivers throughout the state, will need hundreds of fast-charging stations that exist only on paper so far.

Here, the IBEW's Electric Vehicle

Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP), developed by St. Louis Local 1, will come in handy, Gumble said. "All municipal vehicle purchases going forward will be battery operated, electric. Obviously, they'll need charging stations for all of these things, so this is a massive home run for the IBEW."

Murphy's announcement also established a state Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy and created a council to help guide the office's strategies and new initiatives. Gumble, New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Council President Bill Mullen and New Jersey AFL-CIO President Charlie Wowkanach are labor's representatives on the 20-member council, with New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo serving as a co-chair.

"Any time labor gets a seat at the table, it's to the IBEW's advantage," Gumble said. "Anytime we get asked to be there, we say yes."

Most of the funding for Murphy's plan comes

from New Jersey's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a cooperative effort of 11 North Atlantic states that mandates the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions resulting from power generation by 30% between 2020 and 2030.

"Climate change is the single greatest long-term threat currently facing humanity, and our state and economy are uniquely vulnerable to its devastating effects," Murphy said. "The investments we are announcing today signify our commitment to environmental justice and equity, while building a cleaner economy that works for all."

The RGGI is the beneficiary of the millions of dollars allocated to New Jersey from the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust, a \$3 billion settlement resulting from the Environmental Protection Agency's finding in 2015 that the car manufacturer had secretly installed devices in certain models of diesel vehicles that were designed to cheat federal and state regulator emission tests.

Millions more dollars from this trust, under Murphy's plan, will help keep IBEW members working on electrifying the state's ports and industrial areas, as well as buses used by school systems and NJ Transit.

"They want to train people here in New Jersey, too, and manufacture the infrastructure materials they need for renewables, storage, transformers and more," Gumble said. "The IBEW is in a strong position to make and install the building blocks for a fully green New Jersey."

"Murphy's plan is great for the environment, and it's really important for the working class in this state. We are the backbone," Gumble said. "Infrastructure never ends. We'll get many man-hours and put a ton of people to work." ■

The Cost of Eroding Collective Bargaining

The cost of declining union membership has been extraordinarily high for both union and nonunion workers, a new study found.

The report from the Economic Policy Institute found that the erosion of collective bargaining has been a driving factor depressing wage growth for middle earners over the last four decades. And that same inability to join together at work is also a major factor influencing the growth of wage inequality.

"These findings show once again that unions are the best check on corporate greed," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "When workers have a voice on the job, it benefits everyone, not just union members."

The report, authored by EPI's Distinguished Fellow Lawrence Mishel, states that the decades-long erosion in union membership has lowered the median hourly wage by \$1.56, a 7.9% decline from 1979 to 2017. These losses equate to about \$3,250 annually for a full-time, full-year worker.

"For decades, the erosion of collective bargaining was a major factor depressing wage growth for the typical worker and driving the growth of wage inequality. But this decline of unions wasn't inevitable — it was a deliberate policy choice made on behalf of wealthy interests and corporations, and it can be reversed," Mishel said. "Rebuilding collective bargaining is a necessary component of any policy agenda to reestablish robust wage growth for the vast majority of workers in the United States."

In 1979, 27% of working people were covered by a contract they had bargained for. By 2019, that share had dropped to just 11.6%. Not coincidentally, that time period is also when income inequality widened to levels not seen in decades. According to another EPI report, the top 1% of Americans made 26.3 times as much income as the bottom 99% in 2015. Put another way, this rarefied group of rich Americans took home more than 22% of all income — the highest share since a peak of 23.9% just before the Great Depression in 1928.

Mishel also noted that, because

more men than women were union members in 1979, that the decline has been especially harmful to men's wages. At that time, 31.5% of men were covered by collective bargaining versus 18.8% of women. However, current trends show that broadening unionization would benefit women at least as much as men.

The report, released in April, also pointed to research on the "spillover effects" of unionization on nonunionized workers, finding that, when the share of workers who are union members is relatively high, as it was in 1979, wages of nonunion workers are also higher. Had private-sector union density in 2013 remained at its 1979 level, weekly wages of nonunion men in the private sector would have been 5% higher, the equivalent of an additional \$2,704 in earnings for year-round workers.

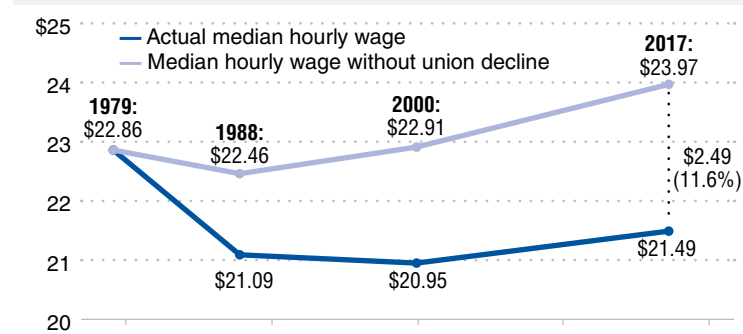
"This research demonstrates that the erosion of collective bargaining has been the largest single factor driving a wedge between middle- and high-wage male workers," the report stated.

In another study by Mishel, co-authored by the EPI's director of research Josh Bivens, found that workers would be making \$10 more an hour if their wages had kept up with increases in productivity. The authors state that, when policies were oriented toward sharing productivity growth across income classes, wages kept up. But when the policies shifted — more toward employers, and at the expense of their employees — wages faltered. Among those policy shifts is the erosion of collective bargaining.

All this comes at a time when multiple research studies are showing that support for unions is strong. Almost half of all workers would join a union if they could, one study found. And Gallup's 2020 poll put union support at 65%, the highest in a decade.

"Unions disproportionately benefit workers with low and moderate wages, workers with lower levels of education, and Black and Brown workers. Collective bargaining not only benefits union workers, but nonunion workers as well by raising wage standards across industries," Mishel said. Policymakers, he continued, "must urgently restore workers' freedom to form a union, and that includes passing the Protecting the Right to Organize Act."

Median Hourly Wages vs. Project Wages If Unions Had Retained Membership Levels



A report from the Economic Policy Institute studied how the decline in collective bargaining has affected both union and nonunion workers' wages, contributing to rising inequality. Source: Economic Policy Institute

The PRO Act is major, comprehensive legislation that would make it easier for working people to join a union, while also increasing penalties for employers who try to stand in their way. It passed the House of Representatives in March, and has the support of President Joe Biden, but faces an uphill battle in the Senate. ■

Local 3 Sister Earns Historic Role on New York Joint Industry Board

New York Local 3 member Michele Maldonado recently added another achievement to her long list of career accomplishments: the first woman assistant employment director of the Joint Industry Board.

"I'm incredibly grateful for this opportunity," Maldonado said. "Being the first woman in this role is truly humbling. And it provides yet another example of how committed to diversity and inclusion Local 3 is."



New York Local 3 member Michele Maldonado was named assistant employment director of the Joint Industry Board, the first woman to serve in the role.

The JIB is a joint partnership between Local 3 members and contractors in the New York electrical industry. Founded in 1943 to promote harmony between the two groups, the board administers benefits for members and their families and coordinates all labor-management efforts for not only Local 3's Construction Division members and more than 300 affiliated contractors, but most of Local 3's membership and signatory employers.

Maldonado's duties run the gamut from ensuring everyone is up to date on their safety certifications to making sure that contractors are hiring the right number of electricians. And if for some reason they aren't, she'll reach out and do what she can to solve it so things don't go to a place like arbitration.

"My job is to be the heavy, and they're not always used to getting that call from a woman," she said. "But I try to be positive. It's ultimately about helping both the union and the contractor."

The journeywoman also brings her personal experience as a woman of color and single mom. She knows first-hand the importance of things like having your job-site close to your home and the daycare that will take your child at 5 a.m.

"I understand the struggle," Maldonado said.

POLITICS & JOBS continued on page 10

POLITICS & JOBS *continued*

nado said. “I think it makes me more tolerant. I want to hear their stories, why they need what they need, so I can help.”

It’s also a job that takes a certain type of personality, says Local 3 Business Manager Chris Erikson. You need to be fair and even-handed but also able to deal with the contractors — and members — who need to be dealt with.

“In all this you need to be just. But sometimes you have to go outside the usual boundaries to get there. Michele is smart enough and wise enough to do that,” Erikson said. “She can bob and weave. She knows it’s not always a straight line.”

Maldonado brings not only her electrical and forewoman experience to the role, but also her leadership skills from several of Local 3’s numerous clubs. She’s served as president of the Amber Light Society, the local’s women’s group; founder of the Family Wellness Club and the Electrical Workers’ Minority Caucus Pride March committee; and as a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Laws and Resolutions Committee. She was also a member of the Board of Elections committee.

As many IBEW members can attest, it can be a bit of a culture shock to go from working on a construction site to an office setting. But Maldonado, who began her new role in January, says she’s adjusting well, thanks in large part to her team.

“I can put an electrical outlet in the wall easier than I can use the computer,” she joked. “But I have a great team full of talented and fun-loving people. We’re a pretty well-oiled machine.”

Erikson and Maldonado are quick to point out that while the native New Yorker is the first woman to serve in her particular role, she’s not the first woman to assume a leadership position in the local or at the JIB. Nor will she be the last.

“We’ve had women serving as representatives and officers for years, long before it was fashionable,” Erikson said. “It’s the natural progression of things. Somebody opens the door and that sets the stage for more women to come through, and up, the ranks.”

With Maldonado’s new job being full-time, she’s had to step down from many of her other roles with Local 3, but she’s happy to do it since it opens doors for next generation.

“That’s my favorite part,” she said. “Being a union activist is what’s kept me in the industry. I’m more than happy to give these opportunities to other women and people of color.”

Maldonado’s appointment does mark the end of at least one era though. She’s the last of her immediate family to work in the field. She and her sister went through the apprenticeship together back in the ’90s, with their mother following one year behind. Her mother has since retired and her sister now works as a nurse.

“My mom was the most studious electrician. She would get like 98% on her tests. My sister was the most mechanically inclined, and I was the most well-rounded,” Maldonado said.

Maldonado says her appointment to the Joint Industry Board is proof that all her time spent as a union activist has paid

off and that Local 3 is a great place to acquire not just electrical skills but leadership experience.

“I’m a testament to my union’s growth as much as my own,” Maldonado said. “A lot of times a woman can become the ‘It Girl’ because you’re the only one. That’s becoming less and less the case. And now that I’ve been able to move on, I can help groom the next generation. My career is full-circle now.” ■

NY HERO Act Signed Into Law

Legislation to provide workplace protections against the coronavirus, as well as future outbreaks, has been signed into law in New York. It’s the first state to make such safeguards permanent.

“Every day, working people have gone above and beyond to carry us through the COVID-19 pandemic, and for too many of them the cost has been dire,” said Mario

Cilento, president of the state’s AFL-CIO. “That is why the New York HERO Act is so critically important. It will help ensure a safer working environment moving forward.”

Signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo on May 5, the New York Health and Essential Rights Act amends existing labor law by codifying regulations to prevent the spread of airborne infectious diseases like COVID-19. The new standards include protocols on testing, staffing, personal protective equipment, social distancing and other issues. It also requires most larger employers to create health safety committees with their workforce included.

The law, which went into effect 30 days after being signed, will be available in English and Spanish, and includes anti-retaliation measures to protect employees who speak out about their working conditions.

“This is a historic step forward for working people and a preventative measure that will ensure we’re better prepared for the next public health crisis,” Cuomo

The New York Health and Essential Rights Act is the first of its kind to permanently establish workplace protections against the coronavirus, as well as future airborne outbreaks.



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user MTA

said in a statement. “I was proud to sign this bill into law and look forward to reviewing the new standards to protect workers and build a stronger New York.”

Syracuse Local 2213 Business Manager Barb Carson, whose members work for Verizon’s call centers, says they’re still waiting on details about returning to the office, but are cautiously optimistic.

“There’s still a lot of apprehension about going back,” Carson said. “It’s going to be quite an adjustment after being at home for over a year.”

Carson says they’ve started to have conversations about returning to the offices, which are spread throughout upstate New York, and that Verizon has committed to following all Centers for Disease Control guidelines.

“It’s going to be a new normal, and a big adjustment no matter what,” Carson said. “Knowing that our offices will be safe to return to and that there are standards in place will go a long way to easing everyone back in.” ■

TRANSITIONS

RETIRED

John Murphy



After 40 years, Tenth District Regional Organizing Coordinator John Murphy is retiring.

Brother Murphy was born into a clas-

sic Florida agriculture family working citrus and cattle.

“I thought we were lower middle class but, really, we were probably upper lower class,” Murphy said.

In 1981, he was hired as an auxiliary operator at Tampa Electric Company, TECO, and joined Tampa Local 108.

“It was an entry-level, foot-in-the-door job I did not want to do, but it put me on the path,” Murphy said.

Gannon Station where he worked was filled with Vietnam War veterans, and Murphy said they brought their understanding of the life-or-death value of camaraderie, loyalty, and brotherhood to the local.

Encouraged by the stewards in the plant, he started attending local meetings, talking to new hires and volunteering at pickets. He was often the youngest person there and welcome because of it.

“They were hard as woodpecker lips,” he said of his union brothers.

By 1988, Murphy was a journeyman mechanic certified welder and he was tapped to be a steward.

“After welder, I never had another career goal,” he said.

But other people had plans for him. In 1993 he was invited to join a slate of candidates to run the local.

“In the end it was guys on my crew who pushed me to do it,” Murphy said.

For 15 years he did whatever the local’s 14 units needed.

“There ain’t a hat rack big enough if you are working at a local union,” he said.

His true love, he discovered, was organizing.

“You can get up every morning and know you may get a chance to help moms and dads raise their kids better,” he said. “That doesn’t mean you will. Sometimes the phone will ring and it won’t work out, but every day there’s a chance.”

Over time he got good at it; not just the connection with the workers, but the logistics of a campaign, working with the volunteer organizing committee, and judging within a vote or two either way, where the campaign stood.

“Ninety-nine percent of the time, there is no rabbit in the hat,” he said. “People can accept an ugly truth, but if you risk their livelihoods on a pretty thing that isn’t there just because you want it so much, they will walk away and never come back.”

Of all the campaigns he’s worked on over the decades, one that sticks out was one of his earliest.

TECO Energy controlled coal mines, coal barges and unloading docks in addition to the utility. Everybody was union except the dockworkers.

“When I think of their working conditions and the abuse it just made me... any person would be angry,” Murphy said. “I worked across the fence from them for 14 years and they weren’t any different. Half were kinfolk who didn’t get in at the utility. It was just luck.”

An organizing drive in 1989 failed, but 10 years later, they were ready.

Troy Trice was there when the drive failed and still there in 1999. In his 15 years nonunion, Trice says he got a single raise: a nickel bump to \$8.15 an hour. Complaining about safety was a quick way to get fired.

“Murphy was just straight with us. He didn’t sugarcoat anything and when we called him, he always showed up,” Trice said. “He is a good man.”

Twenty years on, everything has changed on the docks. The stevedores make the same pay and can bid on jobs inside the utility. Astonishingly, Trice said, eight of the 12 current dock workers bid in from the powerhouse because the opportunity is better to move up.

“That was unheard of before we joined the IBEW,” Trice said.

Every year on the anniversary of the representation vote, Trice calls Murphy to thank him and Murphy thanks him right back.

“That campaign made me,” Murphy said.

In 2008, then-International President Ed Hill appointed Murphy to the still young Membership Development Department as lead organizer for the Carolinas.

“For the first time in my career, the IBEW was putting real resources, effort, manpower, and talent into organizing. I thought, ‘This might be cool,’” he said.

Once again, he had much to learn.

“The IBEW runs on a combination of a small number of elected and appointed full-time officials and a slew of unpaid volunteers. In the Tenth we had 52 locals and only 19 full-time business managers, 17 in construction,” he said. “The key to succeeding was figuring out what size campaign was needed and how to meet that need with the resources at hand.”

So, while the most rewarding part of his job was talking with nonunion workers, the most important part was organizing the IBEW itself, breaking down the artificial boundaries that kept different locals, classifications and job titles from working together.

In 2012, Hill appointed Murphy as

the Tenth District regional organizing coordinator and Murphy moved to Chattanooga, Tenn., to continue working to unify the IBEW’s organizing resources.

The culmination was the Electrolux campaign in Memphis.

“That was the first campaign in the southeast where we brought in local and international organizers with rank-and-file activists from all classifications, construction and P&I and put them all together. The southern guys teaching and learning from the northern guys. The kid from Los Angeles teaching and learning from the old guy from rural Georgia,” Murphy said. “It was clear, this is the future — tearing up the lines, tearing down the silos.”

Murphy is amazed when he sees the multimedia campaigns he oversees today, like when they organized 465 TVA nuclear security officers and created Chattanooga Local 911. Because of the pandemic, it went entirely virtual for months.

“I am the last propeller plane pilot. The ROC of the future is going to be like an astronaut,” Murphy said.

The decision to retire was a tough one, he said.

“With the team we have, and with a friendly White House, it would be easy to keep going. But it is kind of like I have been pushing a rock for 20 years and now I know there are other people who can continue that work.”

Murphy and his wife Gerry are moving back to Tampa, his hometown, to reconnect with old friends and family.

“I tell people in every measure I won the lottery. I am the luckiest SOB in America. And you can be too. You just have to have a ticket to win. And that ticket is an IBEW card in your pocket,” he said.

Please join the officers in wishing Brother Murphy a long and healthy retirement. ■

CIRCUITS

West Virginia Flaggers Vote to Join the IBEW

High-voltage line work comes with more than its fair share of dangers, from shocks and falls to hazardous underground conditions. But when IBEW lineworkers are up in buckets or working below street-level, they depend on professional flaggers to keep them safe from a lesser-known, but no less dangerous hazard: traffic. More often than not, however, the men and women working on the roadways aren't protected by a union like the men and women they're there to keep safe.

That's changing, and for a few dozen men and women in West Virginia who work for Area Wide Protective, it's already making their jobs safer and improving their quality of life. Working with Charleston Local 978 and the IBEW's Fourth District, the AWP flaggers from the Huntington and Parkersburg offices voted in March to join the IBEW, and first contract negotiations are underway.

"Their working conditions can be horrible," said Fourth District Lead Organizer Dale McCray. Just like lineworkers, flaggers are on the job in every type of weather. They typically understand what they're signing up for when they apply for these jobs, he said, but it can be very tough, dangerous work.

One guy [was] dead set against unionizing. When he saw how ... workers were being treated, he became a true believer.

— Fourth District Regional Organizing Coordinator Bert McDermitt

AWP, which has 60 offices in 20 states across the eastern U.S., provides traffic-management services to support a variety of infrastructure and utility projects. Members of Local 978, which primarily represents American Electric Power lineworkers in the Mountain State and southwestern Virginia, are well-acquainted with the role AWP's flaggers play in keeping IBEW members safe.

"Their main issues were job security and the relatively low pay," said Local 978 Business Manager Jim Richards. Right now, hourly rates typically start around \$10 an hour, he said, which is not much more than some folks could make working at a fast-food restaurant or a big box store. "The turnover rate was 50% annually. Terribly bad."

The two offices' service area covers the counties roughly north of Interstate 64 and west of Interstate 79, up to the top of the state's northern panhandle. They also serve nearby portions of Ohio and Kentucky, and McCray noted that Local 978 had received lots of support from nearby



The job conditions of dozens of professional flaggers who protect IBEW lineworkers in West Virginia recently got better — and safer — after a successful vote to join Charleston Local 978.

IBEW locals, including Huntington, W.Va., Local 317, Parkersburg, W.Va., Local 968, and Marietta, Ohio, Local 972, which is across the Ohio River from Parkersburg.

With such a large coverage area, and depending on a given day's location, Richards said, workers might be forced to drive two or three hours just to get to work. That trip also might include a required detour to pick up co-workers who don't have access to reliable transportation. The fact that these long, required trips went uncompensated, he said, helped motivate the workers seeking IBEW representation.

"Things got rolling when someone at one of the offices contacted the IBEW via the website," said Regional Organizing Coordinator Bert McDermitt. "They reached out to us and we started interacting with them." That was two years ago, the start of an often-contentious battle to bring new members into the union.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, AWP first brought in a union-busting firm out of Ohio, McCray said. Then it deployed an even larger, more expensive California-based company that boasted leadership by a former NLRB member.

That first vote, an onsite election, was an "absolute disaster," McCray said. "AWP violated every rule in the book."

"We lost that election," McDermitt said. "During the ballot count, they tried to get the vote thrown out, and then they actually fired every supporter we had." Immediately, the IBEW filed unfair labor practices charges with the National Labor Relations Board.

McCray noted that, although the national-level NLRB didn't exactly have a reputation for worker-friendliness over the last few years, the career employees out of the nearby regional offices were easier and more reasonable to work with. As a result, the IBEW was able to reach a settlement with AWP, and the NLRB ordered the company to allow a new election to be held.

But AWP's notoriously high turnover rate further threatened the IBEW's chances for success. "Between the first election and the second, half of the employees were gone," McCray said. Even so, "the older employees that stuck around realized AWP didn't keep their promises. They saw that

the company didn't seem to care."

There were a few positive outcomes that helped keep spirits high among organizers and supporters. "One guy started out dead set against unionizing," McDermitt said. "When he saw how he and his fellow workers were being treated, he became a true believer. That helped our cause."

In the second vote, notably only 26 of the 60 eligible workers from the Huntington and Parkersburg shops cast ballots, a result of the company's intimidation tactics. Nevertheless, of those 26 men and women, 20 voted to join the IBEW, and that's all it took.

All of this has been happening in a state where, after a prolonged legal battle went all the way to the state's Supreme Court, a right-to-work law officially took effect in 2019. Three years earlier, the state's Legislature also repealed the prevailing wage laws that for decades had helped set a fair standard of pay and benefits for contractors and workers in line with what local businesses normally would provide for similar private-sector work.

Surprisingly, Gov. Jim Justice, in a virtual town hall meeting in February shortly after the start of his second term, admitted that neither of those moves have done anything to help the state's economy or its workers.

"We passed the right-to-work law in West Virginia," said Justice, who was elected as a Democrat in 2016 but switched his affiliation to the Republican Party a year later. "And we ran to the windows looking to see all the people that were going to come — and they didn't come. We got rid of prevailing wage. We changed our corporate taxes and we've done a lot of different things. And we've run to the windows and they haven't come."

Now, the hard work of hammering out a first contract is underway, and the IBEW recently filed a formal request with the NLRB to begin bargaining with AWP.

Richards, who was elected business manager just two years ago, said he'll lean on the help of experienced local leaders to guide things along. "I'm hoping bargaining will move quickly," he said, "to raise the pay and benefits of every worker at AWP and help improve

their job security and safety."

The business manager also believes this could be the start of something good for the IBEW and for AWP employees across the Appalachian region and the U.S. "I feel like we'll be working to bring the protections of a union to workers at the state's other two AWP offices in Charleston and Beckley," he said, and that the union will work to expand efforts to flaggers in other offices, too. ■

Women Finds Career in the Trades after COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has hit the tourism and hospitality industries particularly hard, leaving cities like New Orleans with sky-high unemployment rates among the women who make up the majority of workers in those sectors. But opportunities await those women in another field with higher wages and benefits to boot: construction.

"If someone doesn't know what they want to do in life, they should join the IBEW or any other apprenticeship," said New Orleans Local 130 apprentice Grace Kluesner in a webinar that accompanied the release of a report on women in construction in the New Orleans area. "Being paid to learn a skilled trade that you will use and profit from throughout your life is much better than trying to figure out what's next in a minimum wage job without good benefits or the skills to get you a better job."

The Institute for Women's Policy Research released a report earlier this year on the economic effects of COVID-19 in New Orleans, focusing on women, one of the hardest-hit demographics. In a city known for festivals, live music and a vibrant entertainment culture, the pan-

demie lockdown cut deep into the financial fabric of the city, and a lot of those cuts disproportionately affected women. According to the LA Workforce Commission, the New Orleans metro area lost close to 57,000 jobs in 2020, with over 40% concentrated in leisure and hospitality. The industry isn't expected to recover for several years.

A union construction job is good for anyone who can do the work, but it can be particularly beneficial for women, especially those who are the main breadwinners in their households. In New Orleans, that accounts for more than three-quarters of homes with dependent children.

"When women make smart choices to pursue high-demand, high-wage jobs, it's transformational," said Nunez Community College Chancellor Dr. Tina Tinney. "It not only changes the quality of her life, it changes the quality of her family's life, and it changes generations behind her."

The fact that women working in female-dominated industries make less than men in male-dominated fields isn't unique to New Orleans. IWPR reported that being a woman, especially a woman working in a female-dominated occupation compared to a man in a male-dominated occupation, is much more predictive of earnings than educational attainment. For those women who do enter the trades though, the payoffs are there, if at a cost.

"On a construction site, a woman stands out brighter than a 1000-watt metal halide lamp," said Janelle Dejan, a Local 130 member since 2001 who also participated in the webinar. "There was no switch for me to flip to turn off my skin color or gender so I had to just test the water one day at a time. But I'm very satisfied with my

CIRCUITS continued on page 12



Janelle Dejan, a Local 130 member and electrical instructor, credits her IBEW apprenticeship for fostering a strong relationship between apprentices and journeymen that took precedence over things like race and gender.

CIRCUITS *continued*

decision to step out of my comfort zone into a nontraditional career path.”

While that path may not be common for women, it’s not for lack of interest, says Kluesner. Women will stop her at the grocery store after work, while she’s still in her boots with her safety glasses holding her hair back, and ask her what she does. One woman approached her outside a Walmart. Another actually entered the apprenticeship after Kluesner told her how.

“These women stopping me were interested enough to have a conversation with a complete stranger. How often does that happen?” Kluesner said. “And it wasn’t until hearing that I also began with their same lack of knowledge and experience that they realized it was a real opportunity they could pursue too.”

With typical “women’s work” jobs predicted to recover slower than jobs in the skilled trades, it’s a good time for women to consider a career change. But knowing where to look and what options are out there isn’t necessarily straightforward.

IWPR noted that after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans adopted a charter school model to rebuild the public school system and in doing so eliminated career and technical education classes in favor of an emphasis on college preparation. Removing these opportunities can have real consequences for women. Kluesner herself says she was encouraged to take the college route, but eventually decided to pursue other opportunities.

“I quite literally Googled, ‘How to be an electrician,’” said Kluesner, who works for Barnes Electric and will top out this October. “Here I am five years later, having grown in knowledge and character, hopefully, but also my bank account.”

Kluesner was able to avoid racking up student loan debt while learning a trade that pays her a living wage, something that appeals to all kinds of people. But they have to get in the door. And they have to know that there is a door for them to open.

“So many men that I work with are electricians because they ‘didn’t know what else to do,’ so they simply became a tradesman like their dads or other family members. For women, when we’re unsure of what we want to do, working in the trades is not our, ‘whatever, I’ll just do this for the time being,’ fallback option. But it could be! And it should be if the interest is there. Each woman I have met in the trades is here because we chose to be here. Not because we didn’t know what else to do.”

As for how to get more women to apprenticeships, IWPR recommended increasing high school programs and pre-apprenticeships, setting gender and diversity goals for public projects, and ensuring that women have the support they need, which includes addressing issues like childcare and reliable transportation as well as things like women’s committees and anti-bullying training.

In 2000, when Dejan walked into the Local 130 office to apply for an apprenticeship, she knew she would be one of very few women in the classroom and on the job. But she did it because she believed the benefits would be worth it.

“I was willing to contend with being

in the minority for the opportunity to receive equal pay, structured advancement from apprenticeship to journeyman status, and the ability to earn money while being trained,” Dejan said. “I thought I was going to have to be strong and brace myself for the worst, but it turned out it wasn’t nearly as bad as I imagined. My co-workers and the contractors I worked for always treated me with respect and equality.”

“When women make smart choices to pursue high-demand, high-wage jobs, it’s transformational.”

— Nunez Community College
Chancellor Dr. Tina Tinney.

That’s because the IBEW fosters a strong dynamic between apprentices and journeymen, Dejan said.

“We were a team and my advancement was a reflection of their ability to train,” said Dejan, who is now an electrical instructor with NOTEP, a local trade school that works with high school students and young adults interested in the trades. “Clear-cut expectations and standards of what makes a good apprentice and journeyman took precedence over gender.”

Dejan says she’s seeing more and more ads promoting women in the trades and the variety of opportunities that await them, especially in a place as historic as the Big Easy.

“New Orleans is a city that’s 300 years old. We have a lot of historic buildings here. I love to get my students to think about what it took to build them, how they function to serve residents or businesses, and how long the buildings have endured,” said the New Orleans native.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the IBEW and others to recruit and retain more women, Local 130 Business Manager Paul Zulli says some contractors still need to come around. Three of the local’s largest contractors have a fitness for duty test that requires a person to lift 75 pounds in order to get hired, something women can struggle with.

“I am very disappointed that we do all we can to encourage women and high school girls to apply to our program only to have these contractors erect this unnecessary barrier,” Zulli said. “We can bring them in and send them to school, but most can’t go to work for those employers.”

Zulli says the contractors who use the test claim it’s to make sure their employees are healthy enough for the job, but only new hires are subjected to it.

“If they honestly cared about their employees, then everyone would have to take this test, but they don’t,” Zulli said. “As a former general foreman, we put our members on several different tasks based on their ability. We wouldn’t put a member in a situation where they will be lifting

materials, tools or equipment that would cause injury.”

Such a questionable requirement doesn’t just hurt women either. Zulli says it can also disqualify older members with years of experience. And if someone fails the test, they have to wait three months before they can take it again.

“What are these people supposed to do in the meantime? I have members who are looking to get out because they can’t work for some of my biggest contractors, who have the most work to offer.”

That work is going to have to be done by someone. IWPR noted that before the pandemic, construction, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing jobs were estimated to increase substantially by 2026. And the 2019 Greater New Orleans Jobs Report highlighted the need for a pipeline of workers for jobs in these fields, as they’ve grown more than four times as fast as overall employment in the region, leading to skilled worker shortages — which will likely only get worse once the aging workforce starts to retire. While the pandemic has slowed some projects, the Building Trades Council in New Orleans noted that, as of December 2020, there were no signs of retrenchment of major commercial construction projects.

There will always be people — women and men — who simply aren’t cut out for a job as an electrician. As any member can attest, it’s hard work. But if Kluesner and Dejan’s stories are any indication, there are a lot of women and girls who can in fact do the work. And that helps them, their families and their communities, not to mention the trades.

“I love learning new things as an electrician,” Kluesner said. “I was just telling my foreman that I think what I’ve learned from the IBEW apprenticeship, in skills and as a person, will take years to reveal and realize. I’m continuously learning new things each day that can be applied elsewhere and it builds my confidence and self-reliance.” ■

St. Louis Local Gives Back to Community, One Home at a Time

For almost 20 years, members of St. Louis Local 1 have volunteered their time and skills to repair the homes of their low-income neighbors, and while the coronavirus put a pause on their efforts last year, they were out in full force this spring.

“It’s a feel-good day,” said Local 1 Financial Secretary Dave Roth, who has been heading up the effort for the last 10 years. “It’s a great opportunity to be able to help your neighbors in need.”

On a rainy Saturday in April, some 150 journeymen and apprentices, along with 22 signatory contractors, came out and teamed up to repair 15 homes in the St. Louis area. The effort is part of the work of the Electrical Connection, a partnership between the flagship IBEW local and the National Electrical Contractors Association. In collaboration with local nonprofit Rebuilding Together St. Louis, members

provided much-needed repairs to the homes of residents including the disabled and the elderly, as well as veterans.

“While everyone has struggled during the pandemic with unprecedented challenges, it has been especially hard for those who do not have the means or ability to make home repairs themselves,” said Local 1 Business Manager Frank Jacobs to area publication Construction Forum. “Our workforce and contractors believe it’s important to help stabilize lives and communities, especially after such a challenging year.”

For the apprentices who participate, they not only get to log some community service hours, they also get an education in working on what can be 100-year-old homes with outdated electrical wiring.

“Some of these homes still have old knob-and-tube wiring, which dates back to the turn of the last century,” Roth said. “It’s not something they’re likely to see anywhere else in the field.”



Roughly 150 St. Louis Local 1 members volunteered this spring to repair the homes of their neighbors in need, a program they’ve participated in for close to 20 years. Only last year, due to the coronavirus, did they have to pause their efforts.

Another thing the volunteers get is the very real satisfaction of helping a person in need. A lot of the work that Local 1 members do is commercial, or it’s work on new homes. While rewarding in itself, it doesn’t necessarily come with the benefit of helping someone who may be on a fixed income or otherwise unable to afford the proper repairs: someone who could really use the help and might not get it otherwise.

“The people are really grateful. It’s incredibly rewarding when you see someone’s face light up after you’ve fixed their ceiling fan and they can finally feel that air on their face,” Roth said. “That personal connection isn’t something our members always get in the field. You don’t get to touch the hearts of people in stress. These volunteer days are a benefit for our members as much as the people we’re helping.”

Repairs included installing new light fixtures, ceiling fans, switches, security and porch lights, and where needed, service changes and new lines.

“There’s really nothing we won’t tackle,” Roth said. “We’ll go to the bitter end.”

Over the years, Local 1 and its signatories have provided over \$800,000 worth of supplies and helped more than 500

families, reported local news station Fox 2, who came out to cover the event.

“It’s good to see why we do what we do ... keeping people safe, lighting up the neighborhood,” J. West Electrical owner Sabrina Wesfall told Fox 2.

Roth says much of the work members end up doing is fixing the subpar work of the nonunion contractors who came before them.

“People have done some very dangerous things to people’s homes,” Roth said. “They’re cutting and splicing old wires and they don’t know what they’re doing. In a way, we kind of get to show off that day by coming in and bringing everything up to code. We can show people what we’re all about, and how we’re a step above.”

The annual volunteer day often brings out community leaders as well, including the mayor of St. Louis. For Local 1 though, it’s all part of their year-round volunteer efforts. Members also work with churches and food pantries and wire all the Habitat for Humanity homes in the area.

“Local 1 makes giving back to our community a priority,” said Business Representative Chris Clermont, who also helped with this year’s efforts. “Rebuilding Together is just one of the many programs we’re involved in that supports our communities.”

Even the random person who calls the local, possibly from seeing members out in the community doing volunteer work, can count on help. Sometimes the Electrical Connection will pay for a journeyman who’s between jobs to help. Sometimes it’s Roth himself, like the time he helped a retired ironworker who had fallen on hard times and lost power.

“It stole my heart. I kept picturing that being my dad,” Roth said. “I told him, ‘you’ll have power before I leave here.’ And he did. He got his heat back.”

“Local 1 makes giving back to our community a priority.”

— Business Representative
Chris Clermont

It’s that sense of community mixed with the ability to perform such an essential service that motivates so many members like Roth.

“It’s kind of a treat to have a skill that provides so much to others. There’s nothing better,” Roth said. “Sometimes all you need is a pair of electrical pliers and a screwdriver, and you can change a person’s life.” ■

As Work Starts on One Major Solar Farm in Ohio, Legislation Threatens Others

Dozens of IBEW members in southern Ohio are set to start working not only on what is being touted as the first utility-grade solar installation farm in the Buckeye State, but also on what Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley is calling the largest municipal solar array in the U.S.

The IBEW was well represented at the May 13 groundbreaking ceremony for developer Hecate Energy's New Market solar project, with Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 Business Manager Dan Shirey, whose jurisdiction covers the project site about an hour east of Cincinnati, on hand to mark the start of the important new green-energy project.

"We'll probably have 70 to 80 of our members on it at peak," said Shirey, whose local is coordinating with signatory contractor PayneCrest Electric to staff the project. Additional operations and maintenance jobs at New Market should provide work opportunities for Local 575 members for years to come, he said.

"There's been a history in the Midwest, and Ohio, of people taking our resources and not leaving much for us," said Mayor Cranley during the ceremony. "We owe it to our kids and grandkids to move to a cleaner future." Also there to show support for the project were representatives from developer Hecate Energy, Highland County, the local Chamber of Commerce and nearby landowners.

Hecate officials said that the company chose the New Market site based in part on studies by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory, which considers Ohio's southwestern region the sunniest part of the state. When the project is finished, the developers plan to connect it to a nearby transmission line substation owned by Dayton Power and Light.

Solar work is relatively new for Local 575, which historically has worked mainly in industrial settings, Shirey said — for example, at the Kenworth truck assembly plant in

Chillicothe. But Shirey, who has provided public testimony in support of this and other nearby solar and wind projects, said he isn't worried about any manpower challenges when it comes to the construction of solar farms like the New Market project.

"We're excited to add some folks to the local," said Shirey, noting that work is being completed on a new training facility that will help prepare future generations of electrical workers for what lies ahead for them throughout southern Ohio.

But basically, he said, electrical is electrical. "It's not all that different in the long run from what we've been doing," he said. "Solar covers a lot of space, but it's the same types of cabling and high-voltage connections we do every day."

New Market's 310,000 photovoltaic panels, spanning an area roughly the size of 750 football fields, are expected to generate 203,000 megawatt-hours of energy a year, which ought to provide plenty of power to meet the needs of Cincinnati's various municipal services.

With most of New Market's generated power set to flow into Cincinnati Local 212's jurisdiction, Crum noted that Local 212 Business Manager Rick Fischer was instrumental in helping Local 575 gain access to a project labor agreement, locking in guarantees that New Market will be built using union workers, contractors and developers. The project's estimated \$125 million cost is being covered by a 20-year power-purchasing contract between Hecate and the city of Cincinnati.

Crum said that many solar energy development companies like Hecate appreciate the availability of skilled, local union electrical workers that the IBEW provides, not to mention the state's payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program, which allows a steady revenue from such projects to get reinvested in their local communities. In New Market's case, that should come to about \$9,000 per generated megawatt per year going to help fund local government services such as schools and first responders over the life of the project. Weather permitting, the site should be fully operational by January.

"The New Market project sends a clear signal that the IBEW's concerted

efforts toward finding more work for current and future union members is paying off," said Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper, whose jurisdiction includes Ohio as well as West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

"We're going after every project that we can," Crum added, noting that there are more than 30 major renewable energy projects before the Ohio Power Siting Board District right now. This has kept local and district officials from the IBEW busy, Crum said, attending dozens of community and public-input meetings.

Unfortunately, these other projects could be paused, if not outright stopped, if a pair of bills before the Ohio Legislature become law. The companion Senate Bill 52 and House Bill 118 aim to create additional, unnecessary hurdles for wind and

solar projects throughout the state.

If enacted, these measures would grant vocal opposition groups within townships the power to vote down or force expensive modifications on future projects, even ones that already have completed the Ohio Power Siting Board's thorough — and expensive — project-approval process.

A 2020 study by Ohio University found that utility-scale solar projects in the state could generate nearly 55,000 construction jobs and over 600 operations and maintenance jobs. But IBEW members in Ohio are rightly concerned that if the companion bills become law, those projects could move to neighboring states, taking away potential opportunities from members.

The solar community, educators, the Ohio Farm Bureau, and chambers of commerce across the state are joining the

IBEW to oppose the legislation, Crum said, and the union's fight against the measures is ongoing as legislative committees meet and hold hearings throughout the summer.

"We're trying to keep the locals educated about when meetings are and turning out the membership to show up and make our voices heard," Crum said. "We're trying to bring balance to the conversation, talking about jobs and family-sustaining wages and benefits, with the real potential for workers to take on one job after another over years-long careers."

Cooper urged all IBEW members in Ohio to call and write letters to their representatives in the Ohio Legislature to voice their opposition to SB 52 and HB 118. Members with questions should contact the Fourth District office at IVPD_04@ibew.org. ■

GROUNDING IN HISTORY

Restoring Lady Liberty

On July 4, 1986, America celebrated not only its 210th anniversary of independence from Great Britain but also the 100th birthday of the Statue of Liberty. That day marked the completion of a two-year restoration project of the statue involving the working hands of many trades. But when it came to upgrading the power source for Lady Liberty, the project engineers turned to the IBEW.

The Statue of Liberty was designed by French sculptor Frederic Bartholdi. Fabrication began in France in 1877 and the finished copper plates and internal iron frame were shipped to New York in 1885. Upon its assembly on Liberty Island, the statue stood 151 feet high and formally opened on Oct. 28, 1886. A small power station was built on the island to light the torch and for other electrical needs, but it proved to be insufficient. There was no exterior lighting system and the torch glow could barely be seen from the city at night.

It wasn't until 1916 that an underwater power cable was installed, bringing electricity from the mainland. The copper plating of the torch was replaced with stained glass and floodlights were placed along the statue's pedestal. On December 2, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson pressed a telegraph key that turned on the lights, successfully illuminating the statue and the torch for the first time.

By 1982, the statue had developed dangerous signs of age from damaged copper, rusted iron, and an inadequate power system. That year, President Ronald Reagan formed the Statue of Liberty — Ellis Island Centennial Commission to restore the statue in time for its 100th birthday. After two years of fundraising, the project began in earnest in 1984. Members from several trade unions, from both the U.S. and France, were involved. IBEW members were tasked with manufacturing and installing a new underwater cable to serve as the statue's primary source of electrical power.

The contract for the cable was secured by the Okonite Company of New Jersey and the Simplex Wire and Cable Company of New Hampshire. Okonite employed members of IBEW Local 1992 in Brunswick, N.J., and Simplex employed members of Local 2208 in Newington, N.H. After an intensive six-month review process, overseen by engineers from both firms, the finished design featured the latest in power-cable materials as well as a fiber-optic core, allowing it to carry communications to and from Liberty Island with lightning speed. And to mark its patriotic purpose, the cable featured a red, white, and blue-colored insulated protection. The cable was manufactured in May of 1986 with IBEW members at both facilities donating their time.

The cable was installed in June by members of Jersey City, N.J., Local 164 and New York Local 3. It was strung across the bottom of New York Harbor, stretching from the Public Service Electric and Gas Company in Liberty State Park, N.J., to the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island. On July 4, 1986, Reagan flipped on a switch, bringing state-of-the-art illumination to the Statue of Liberty for her 100th birthday.

This Independence Day, our American sisters and brothers can take pride in knowing that Lady Liberty shines brightly thanks to the hard work and generosity of members of the IBEW. ■



Credit: Creative Commons / Flickr user Pedro Cambra



A cross-section of the submarine cable installed in 1986 by IBEW members to light the Statue of Liberty is housed in the IBEW Museum in Washington.



Credit: Julian Foglietti

Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley (left) recently joined Portsmouth, Ohio, Local 575 Business Manager Dan Shirey in breaking ground on what may become the largest utility-grade municipal solar array in the U.S.

For more on how to support the IBEW's preservation of its history, visit nbew-ibewmuseum.org. Have an idea for this feature? Send it to Curtis_Bateman@ibew.org.

In Memoriam

Members for Whom PBF Death Claims were Approved in May 2021

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
1	Cloninger, W. B.	2/22/21	38	Sheehan, D. J.	11/13/20	126	Kern, G. R.	6/24/20	309	Wegmann, H. J.	11/18/20	551	Hancock, J. L.	12/4/20	876	Goodwin, W. H.	12/29/20
1	Heine, R. C.	1/4/21	38	Smart, O.	2/9/21	129	Stuck, T. L.	4/13/20	313	Kuhlman, S. D.	11/9/20	567	Larlee, H. R.	11/7/20	876	Reagan, A.	11/8/20
1	Keith, W. N.	1/4/21	38	Thanos, A. D.	12/6/20	130	Gray, G. J.	11/15/20	317	Kaylor, W. W.	1/26/21	568	Tousignant, P.	11/30/20	903	Farr, J. M.	2/8/21
1	Lohmann, R. D.	2/6/21	41	Balogh, F. J.	3/9/21	134	Agliato, C. J.	1/15/21	325	Edwards, R. T.	8/6/20	569	Romero, H. H.	12/11/20	903	Godwin, W. M.	12/14/20
1	Roermerman, J. W.	1/14/21	41	Schwarzenholzer, D.	5/21/20	134	Battain, D. F.	1/19/21	332	Hammond, A. W.	11/30/20	570	Ellsworth, N. P.	1/21/21	906	Damuth, R. H.	12/19/20
1	Sachse, D. M.	1/13/21	43	Fortunato, E. J.	2/22/19	134	Benedick, J.	10/30/20	332	Jelesko, J. W.	1/18/21	570	Megerle, G. L.	1/12/21	906	Kinnunen, E. J.	10/13/20
2	Flessa, C. L.	5/10/20	44	McDonough, D. J.	11/27/20	134	Daly, J. H.	2/3/21	340	Duncan, C. E.	10/23/20	583	Luna, J. L.	12/5/20	932	Day, A. N.	10/3/18
2	Stuart, D. A.	1/31/21	44	Simonson, F. H.	11/11/20	134	Eisenstaedt, C. M.	12/24/20	342	Wood, H. D.	1/3/21	584	Hardesty, R. E.	3/25/20	934	Cobb, G. A.	12/8/20
3	Adams, J.	1/3/21	46	Behar, I. D.	12/3/20	134	Gill, E. J.	12/2/20	343	Peterson, D. D.	9/23/20	584	Hendricks, J. A.	10/27/20	948	Metcalfe, C. E.	12/17/20
3	Barcavage, A. J.	4/24/20	46	Epperson, E. V.	1/9/21	134	Gregerson, D. P.	1/29/21	343	Vandenhoevel, J. H.	12/29/20	596	Casto, D. R.	1/26/21	952	Cross, G. D.	1/20/21
3	Block, L. R.	10/24/17	46	Holquin, E.	2/20/21	134	Holm, I.	10/22/20	347	Brown, C. L.	1/9/21	601	Faullin, J. H.	8/22/20	985	Mullen, G. W.	1/9/21
3	Brophy, A. J.	12/31/20	46	Kaiser, D. W.	2/7/21	134	Jacobs, T. R.	10/30/20	349	Del Valle, R.	1/30/21	601	Ruthstrom, E. L.	2/22/21	995	Milton, H. L.	11/25/20
3	Cokley, W. T.	1/22/21	46	Ruddell, W. E.	1/28/21	134	Eisenstaedt, G. A.	1/9/21	349	Ellis, J. B.	1/6/21	602	Byars, S. A.	1/5/21	1055	Miller, D. E.	12/14/20
3	Crowley, M. D.	4/23/20	47	Castillo, R.	12/23/20	134	Kimzey, D. E.	1/16/21	349	Witzen, W. W.	1/6/21	605	Sistrunk, T. W.	2/2/21	1077	Martin, E.	2/15/21
3	Gasparini, D. D.	12/14/20	48	Baca, T. M.	1/9/21	134	Koleff, J.	12/12/20	353	Duke, L. C.	11/26/20	606	Holmes, M. R.	1/12/21	1142	Taylor, I.	11/10/20
3	Harrington, M. J.	2/15/21	48	Bowen, L. L.	12/26/20	134	Kucala, J. T.	1/24/21	353	Hammond, W. D.	1/10/21	606	Taylor, R. L.	1/26/21	1186	Zakahi, S. K.	12/1/20
3	Illustrato, J. P.	1/15/21	48	Hanks, D. A.	12/26/20	134	Lakoma, H. J.	1/30/21	353	Kuehne, M. A.	11/11/20	611	Porter, M. D.	1/20/21	1245	Maynard, T.	7/24/20
3	Kissane, M. J.	5/8/20	48	Loebig, E.	8/30/20	134	McCray, M. H.	12/30/20	353	O'Leary, D. D.	4/6/20	613	Bennett, J. R.	9/13/20	1245	Munn, F.	3/1/21
3	Kunkes, H. J.	2/15/20	48	Shirley, A. E.	1/11/21	134	O'Connell, J. P.	2/7/21	353	Robinson, E. A.	1/14/21	613	Campbell, C. J.	9/6/20	1253	Colpitts, R. W.	12/13/19
3	Lehman, M. W.	1/10/21	48	St John, W. G.	1/14/21	134	Rybka, R. T.	9/18/20	353	Sottile, J.	12/31/20	613	Chupp, J. L.	12/14/20	1253	Miller, R. K.	1/9/21
3	Levy, I.	1/20/21	48	Tycer, K. V.	1/5/21	134	Szymanski, A. A.	1/22/21	353	Tuncbilek, S.	12/27/20	613	Salguero, R.	11/15/20	1289	Bacque, J. P.	12/23/20
3	Lewis, I.	1/28/21	51	Espinoza, D. R.	4/7/21	134	Wolffschneider, L.	2/1/21	353	Velocci, A. G.	1/16/21	617	Holly, R.	8/20/20	1316	Gardner, M. H.	11/29/20
3	Lopez, L.	11/11/19	53	Wilson, C. G.	1/1/21	136	Matthews, A. L.	12/19/19	354	Chaplin, W. E.	11/30/20	622	Williams, P. M.	2/3/21	1319	Robson, D. M.	12/30/20
3	Rosa, M. S.	1/2/20	55	Garcia, M.	2/6/21	139	Affeldt, F. P.	9/25/20	357	Stahl, N. F.	1/22/21	625	Dillman, C. O.	7/31/20	1393	Baker, J. A.	1/3/21
3	Rosa, R.	1/24/21	55	Mahon, B. F.	1/1/21	141	Tepe, P. J.	3/5/21	357	Vornberg, R. T.	10/17/20	639	Isaacson, E.	1/15/21	1393	McClure, O.	1/1/21
4	Kordik, W. J.	4/11/21	57	Phillips, G. L.	12/17/20	146	Mitchell, T. J.	1/22/21	363	Colombo, P. C.	11/20/20	640	Baldwin, A. D.	12/27/20	1426	Boen, R. M.	10/21/20
5	Bianco, A. A.	1/19/21	57	Wood, R. L.	12/16/20	150	Smith, J. J.	12/3/20	363	Goodfellow, G.	7/26/20	640	Hansen, W. R.	1/31/21	1516	Calaway, J. W.	1/4/21
5	Fritz, R. H.	2/13/20	58	Floreno, P. A.	12/7/20	159	Cummings, J. B.	12/23/20	363	Roye, S.	11/2/20	647	Williams, L. L.	11/12/20	1547	Foster, T. B.	10/28/20
5	Schultz, A. D.	1/6/21	58	Kadlitz, G. P.	1/21/21	159	Huggett, G. R.	1/4/21	363	Sparks, E. C.	12/3/20	649	Bickmore, R. L.	11/19/20	1547	Martin, R. J.	12/18/20
5	Schunk, T. H.	3/27/21	58	Ochoa, D. W.	2/4/21	163	Shadie, R. G.	12/25/20	363	Torch, P. F.	2/26/21	654	Miller, F. H.	11/29/20	1547	Nelson, H. W.	1/3/21
6	Benckendorf, M. E.	9/30/20	64	Giampietro, C. N.	1/18/21	164	Sears, R. M.	1/21/21	364	Garza, O. A.	8/2/20	659	Gatchet, S. W.	11/15/20	1579	Spence, C. W.	1/6/21
6	Shults, J. G.	11/23/20	64	Schettino, L. W.	2/8/21	175	Chambers, J. L.	1/24/21	364	Tongue, J. L.	12/20/20	659	Prado, G. L.	1/10/21	1591	Floyd, W. R.	1/24/21
7	Almeida, A. J.	9/18/20	66	Abarca, J. A.	11/26/20	175	Mincy, A. J.	12/20/20	365	Bivins, C. V.	3/8/20	659	Shay, H. L.	11/28/20	1615	Clarke, R. G.	12/1/20
7	Fournier, C. N.	1/13/21	66	Muery, H. E.	1/20/21	176	Hoerner, J. R.	2/28/21	369	Backherms, P. L.	4/27/20	659	Souza, D. S.	1/30/21	1701	Rafferty, A.	1/15/21
8	Bowersock, W. L.	9/10/20	66	Sohl, R. V.	10/26/20	176	Thurwanger, G. A.	2/28/21	369	Baete, B. A.	8/21/20	665	Kowatch, G.	10/6/20	2085	Bodnar, G.	12/29/20
10	Hoffman, R. O.	12/30/20	66	Vazquez, P. R.	11/29/20	193	Cox, J. L.	1/10/21	369	Baize, P. T.	1/28/21	666	Hufner, J. D.	12/10/20	2085	Stockmann, H. J.	12/25/20
11	Avila, D.	7/12/20	68	Lewis, J. T.	10/11/20	197	Ashenbrenner, R. D.	1/2/21	369	Bennett, K.	6/29/20	666	Kurzman, R. I.	12/20/20	2286	Stephens, R. O.	3/23/21
11	Bernard, D. G.	12/20/20	70	Deeds, D. J.	1/22/21	212	Myers, W. A.	1/9/21	369	Legler, D. R.	1/19/21	666	Pasco, R. D.	1/6/21	I.O. (4)	Sade, H. J.	12/7/20
11	Cadenbach, W. A.	12/19/20	70	Hyde, R. C.	2/11/21	213	Brown, R. H.	1/14/21	369	McCubbins, R. L.	1/8/21	667	Wiant, D. E.	12/31/20	I.O. (5)	Keirn, J. V.	12/24/20
11	Kaler, H. Y.	11/10/20	71	Patton, E. D.	12/13/20	213	Hagel, C. M.	7/10/20	369	Queen, J. G.	11/5/20	668	Humphrey, J. L.	12/13/20	I.O. (110)	Goetz, T. A.	1/30/21
11	Kirnjig, J. W.	2/24/21	80	Dillon, R. L.	9/2/20	213	Johnson, W.	6/13/20	375	Woroniak, J.	11/7/20	673	Brown, F.	1/11/21	I.O. (134)	Bates, T. W.	1/1/21
11	Lee, P. C.	12/13/20	80	Norton, L. W.	2/25/21	213	Lentz, J. M.	11/24/20	387	Lopez, A. L.	1/20/21	673	Digiovine, D. R.	12/27/20	I.O. (134)	Dowling, J. T.	1/30/21
11	Modugno, S. F.	1/18/21	86	Burke, T. C.	9/5/20	226	Morris, C. C.	12/1/20	388	Hamerski, E. P.	11/18/20	676	McGhee, R.	1/9/21	I.O. (134)	Kurak, J. J.	1/28/21
11	Shuffield, J. E.	12/2/20	90	Leger, R.	11/14/20	226	Shughart, D. A.	10/19/20	401	Corker, R. L.	1/16/21	683	Stover, J. A.	1/3/21	I.O. (160)	Pobuda, D. G.	2/1/21
11	Washington, P. D.	11/19/20	98	Leach, J. A.	1/25/21	229	Fortino, M. D.	3/7/21	401	Scelirine, S.	12/21/20	683	Wiggins, P. J.	1/25/21	I.O. (545)	Schultz, L. J.	1/12/21
13	Smith, M. R.	1/20/21	98	Yates, R. W.	9/27/20	230	Ramsay, P. S.	11/25/20	415	Cox, B. J.	12/11/20	697	Coates, A. N.	4/10/21	I.O. (582)	Garrett, W. J.	2/6/21
16	Bohleber, G. R.	1/10/21	100	Libby, T. J.	11/25/20	231	Sencenbaugh, D. A.	2/26/21	424	Fithen, R. D.	12/5/20	697	Miller, J. P.	2/18/21	I.O. (1749)	Arrighi, J. W.	1/2/21
17	Appleberg, W. A.	10/24/20	102	Bojkovic, J.	11/15/20	233	Bishop, B. A.	11/8/20	424	Graham, M. B.	12/20/20	697	Watroba, C. W.	2/14/21	I.O. (2085)	Cruickshank, J. C.	1/18/21
17	Daniels, K. R.	12/8/20	102	Smith, A. L.	10/23/20	233	Knoedler, F. R.	1/21/21	424	Palm, T. R.	12/9/20	697	Zulawinski, S. P.	1/15/21	I.O. (2085)	Sweeney, G. M.	1/18/21
17	Laeder, S. C.	1/9/21	102	Triolo, F.	11/27/20	233	Krouse, L. E.	12/11/20	424	Priegnitz, B. H.	12/11/20	700	Stringer, L. A.	11/13/20	Pens. (835)	Kilpatrick, H. W.	1/8/21
20	Dohner, C. K.	11/23/20	102	Vene, L.	12/29/20	234	Martinez, J.	1/14/21	424	Smail, B.	12/1/20	701	Hajek, G. A.	2/24/21	Pens. (1788)	Bjerno, B.	1/1/21
20	Ellis, B. W.	1/26/21	103	Butler, R. P.	9/18/20	236	Jennings, M. J.	1/30/21	424	Tessier, E. H.	1/6/21	701	Ham, R. W.	3/12/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Alfred, G.	7/14/20
20	Garcia, J. H.	10/23/20	103	Ivany, D. F.	11/8/20	258	Baker, R. C.	10/9/19	440	Hicks, K. L.	1/22/21	701	Pluta, E. R.	8/25/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Berg, R. E.	1/10/21
20	Hargrove, S. H.	11/5/20	103	Lindsay, R. A.	2/24/21	258	Kreke, L. A.	1/10/21	441	Fields, G. E.	2/15/21	702	Campbell, J. A.	11/24/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Booth, W. R.	12/15/20
20	Johnson, W. D.	1/24/21	103	McCann, R. J.	10/21/20	258	Weir, J. H.	9/20/20	441	Hoffmann, M. J.	12/14/20	702	Niederhofer, L. D.	9/21/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Brooks, W.	1/1/21
20	Ladd, W. A.	12/8/20	103	McDonald, S. J.	11/10/20	269	Fregans, J. G.	10/31/20	443	Kelly, J. T.	2/5/21	712	Nixon, R. E.	12/7/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Cannon, A. W.	8/8/20
20	Lightfoot, B. J.	12/29/20	103	McNiff, J. L.	12/13/20	269	Nielsen, F. C.	1/26/21	446	Manning, J. F.	12/17/20	714	Schatz, N.	9/29/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Cox, J. E.	2/1/21
20	Slagle, R. W.	10/14/20	103	Murphy, A. F.	11/1/20	278	Beyer, J. J.	12/9/20	449	Collins, R.	1/13/21	716	Agrella, A.	9/13/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Day, E. P.	1/3/21
22	Ziemba, T. J.	12/29/20	103	Viveiros, M. A.	12/1/20	278	Esquivel, O. R.	11/10/20	456	Melkowitz, R. T.	12/9/20	716	Henderson, C. W.	12/4/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Enwright, C. A.	1/22/21
24	Gardiner, J. A.	12/12/20	103	Washburn, G. B.	2/15/21	280	Church, C. J.	1/16/21	459	Mostoller, G. J.	12/20/20	716	Joachim, H.	1/26/21	Pens. (I.O.)	Evansen, R.	1/30/21
24	Kraft, H. C.	2/3/21	104	Murray, E. R.	12/23/20	288	Reiter, R. J.	3/8/21	474	Cothern, H. B.	2/4/21	716	Key, H. K.	4/12/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Frouz, C. J.	11/17/20
24	Nazarenus, F. E.	11/15/20	110	Harris, R. J.	12/2/20	292	Barr, T. J.	2/25/21	474	Harrison, J. W.	12/10/20	716	Michalski, G. T.	12/25/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Gorman, R. L.	12/13/20
24	Price, T. M.	1/7/21	110	Rivera, M. A.	12/25/20	292	Baum, G. C.	1/14/21	474	Tribble, D. G.	11/7/20	716	Peacock, C. E.	11/30/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Hannon, J. E.	12/21/20
24	Reed, C. V.	2/25/21	110	Sniker, D. F.	1/19/21	292	Beyer, H. R.	12/7/20	474	Tuck, J. L.	1/8/21	716	Perot, R. H.	12/24/20	Pens. (I.O.)	Hilton, W. D.	12/25/20

LOCAL LINES

Helping Our Community

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,rt,s,s,se,spa,st&ws), ST. LOUIS, MO — On Sat., April 24, for the 18th year, our local, NECA and the Electrical Connection joined forces with Rebuilding Together St. Louis for Rebuilding Day.

Rebuilding Together relies on Local 1, other building trades and volunteers to improve the homes and lives of U.S. veterans and disabled, elderly and low-income homeowners unable to afford much-needed upgrades and repairs.

Local 1 Financial Secretary and Rebuilding Together Board member Dave Roth explained, “Our members get satisfaction from knowing they provide the workmanship which helps the person have a more comfortable, safe and secure home. All because of the education and training members receive through Local 1. It’s a great day to give back to the community.”

One hundred forty-three members volunteered their time and skills and 32 service trucks were donated for the event.

Business Manager Frank Jacobs secured April 20 and May 11 for Local 1 members to receive both doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at the Machinists Hall in Bridgeton, Mo. Members and their spouses were eligible to participate; 350 members were vaccinated.

The first annual IBEW 1 RENEW Food Drive was on April 17 at the local’s union hall in St. Louis. Brother Jacobs stated, “2,800 pounds of food were collected and \$1,050 was donated.” Twenty members volunteered, and all proceeds benefited the St. Louis Area Foodbank.

Jan Bresnan, P.S.

Editor’s Note: See our story on Local 1’s Rebuilding Together effort on Page 12.



Congratulations to new Business Manager Colin Lavin (left) and retired Business Manager Pat Lavin (right).

Pat Lavin Retires

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters! On March 9, Business Manager Pat Lavin reported his last parent body meeting as business manager/financial secretary; Pat retired on March 12. Pat thanked the members and staff for their support for the last 22 years. He congratulated Senior Assistant Business Manager Colin Lavin on being appointed business manager/financial secretary by our Executive Board.

Pat, enjoy your retirement and congratulations — it’s well deserved.

We filed an unfair labor practice against SCE for not bargaining when moving Bishop Control Center to Lugo Control Center. Bargaining continues for two new classifications, supervising dispatcher and supervising grid operator. Negotiations continue with the city of Anaheim. We are bargaining with the city of Colton

for both electric and water/wastewater units. Negotiations are ongoing with city of Banning for its utility and general units. Negotiations are set to begin with Irvine Ranch Water District. AltaGas Blythe Energy Center operations are approximately 2% a year for 3 years.

All of Local 47’s upcoming events are canceled until further notice.

We’re sad to report the deaths of Darrell Jackson, Eugene Kokenge, Richard Lua and Richard Wilson. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union.

Mitch Smith, P.S.

Monthly Meetings Resume

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — Our monthly unit meetings have resumed. As a reminder, the meetings are as follows: first Tuesday is Bloomington; first Wednesday is Clinton, Lincoln, LaSalle; first Thursday is Galesburg, Wood River, Springfield; second Tuesday is Champaign; second Wednesday is Baldwin, Jacksonville; second Thursday is Decatur, Peoria; and finally, the second Friday is Construction. See our website (ibew51.org) for specific times. We look forward to seeing you!

Our local mourns the death of Brother David C. Armstrong. Davey was a 57-year IBEW member who retired from Ameren as a journeyman lineman in 2006. He stayed active in the local by attending the majority of our monthly union meetings and ran the putting contest at our annual scholarship golf outing for many years. Our thoughts and prayers go to his family and friends.

We will have work at four wind farms this year. Our first solar farm was completed, and line-clearance tree trimming is at full employment.

Enjoy your summer and be safe.

Karlene Knisley, B.R.

Work Picking Up

L.U. 55 (c,lctt,o&u), DES MOINES, IA — Hello to all my union brothers and sisters, especially Ed Kooker. It looks like Iowa is on the road to success with its handling of the COVID-19 outbreak. All of our kids are back in school and we can go out to eat and meet with friends. Our local has been very blessed throughout this period of time.

Work is really picking up, and we have a need for journeymen linemen and operators. We have several transmission projects beginning, and we will have several wind farm projects starting up. Give our office a call at 515-265 6193 for more details!

Our retiree breakfasts have not started back up yet. We’re still waiting on Prairie Meadows to give us the green light. A big shout-out to Lee in Arkansas!

The road project in front of the hall has just started up so finding your way to the entrance might be difficult. Give them a call if you need a little help. Let’s remember to have someone help when backing up. Watch out for kids on bikes, too. If you don’t understand something, ask questions.

Work safely and have a great summer! I’ll be going on several vacations!

Myron Green, P.S.



Lineman Dan Clausen (left) and Foreman Leonard Thompson (right) work on a street light illumination project along Merle Hay Road in Johnston, Iowa.

Getting Back Into Full Swing

L.U. 103 (cs&i), BOSTON, MA — The good weather has arrived, and we are getting back into full swing. Union meetings are being held outside, under a tent in the parking lot. It’s great to be getting a little closer to normal. The economy is reopening: Work has really



Local 1 Rebuilding Day volunteers (courtesy IBEW Local 1 images)

Submitting Local Lines Articles

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via email (locallines@ibew.org) or U.S. Mail. We have a 200-word limit. We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are based on the editor’s judgment. Our guidelines and deadlines are available at IBEW.org/LocalLines. Please email or call the Media Department at (202) 728-6291 with any questions.

Trade Classifications

(as) Alarm & Signal	(et) Electronic Technicians	(mps) Motion Picture Studios	(rts) Radio-Television Service
(ars) Atomic Research Service	(fm) Fixture Manufacturing	(nst) Nuclear Service Technicians	(so) Service Occupations
(bo) Bridge Operators	(govt) Government	(o) Outside	(s) Shopmen
(cs) Cable Splicers	(i) Inside	(p) Powerhouse	(se) Sign Erector
(catv) Cable Television	(it) Instrument Technicians	(pet) Professional, Engineers & Technicians	(spa) Sound & Public Address
(c) Communications	(lctt) Line Clearance Tree Trimming	(ptc) Professional, Technical & Clerical	(st) Sound Technicians
(cr) Cranemen	(lpt) Lightning Protection Technicians	(rr) Railroad	(t) Telephone
(ees) Electrical Equipment Service	(mt) Maintenance	(rtb) Radio-Television Broadcasting	(tm) Transportation Manufacturing
(ei) Electrical Inspection	(mo) Maintenance & Operation	(uow) Utility Office Workers	(u) Utility
(em) Electrical Manufacturing	(mow) Manufacturing Office Workers	(ws) Warehouse and Supply	
(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

picked up in the last few months and the rest of the year looks to be a busy one here in Boston.

Local 103 hosted new Mayor of Boston Kim Janey in May. On her arrival, Mayor Janey fist-bumped and talked to many of our apprentices, who gave her a warm welcome and round of applause as she entered the building. She spoke to many of the city's labor leaders about her plan to safely re-open the city as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, and she talked about her pro-labor agenda and all the good things Local 103 is doing to offer equitable opportunities for all.

Stay safe, brothers and sisters! #LetsGetToWork

Jimmy Fleming, P.S.



Boston Mayor Kim Janey meets with first-year apprentices (left to right) Jose Herpin, Phi Tran and Paul Fitzgerald.

Staff Changes and Negotiations in Progress

L.U. 125 (lctt,o&u), PORTLAND, OR — Staff changes have led us to saying thank you and goodbye to Business Representatives Shane Watson (PGE) and Pat Winter. "Thank you to both Shane and Pat," said Business Manager Travis Eri. "Our membership benefited greatly from their service." Best wishes to Shane and Pat as they venture into retirement with their families. Of course, we hope to continue seeing them at our local's events and celebrating their retirements.

Journeyman linemen Jude Jolma and Hank Williams have been selected to fill the vacancies. Additionally, Tommy Lux, journeyman line-clearance tree trimmer, has been named to staff as a business representative. We will feature Jude, Hank and Tommy in the upcoming issue of Local Lines in the Northwest Labor Press.

Our staff is busy preparing for negotiations with BPA, PGE, Pacific Power, line-clearance tree trimming and TransAlta. We will need all members' support to help raise awareness about and communicate why unions matter as we fight for our wages, hours and working conditions. Ultimately, it is on all of us to uphold the IBEW's legacy and prepare for our future.

As our business manager always reminds us: Stay safe — your family depends on it!

Marcy Grail, A.B.M.



Local 129 members at the new Bendix North American Headquarters project.

Better Days Ahead

L.U. 129 (i) LORAIN, OH — Looking back on the past year, we extend our thoughts and prayers to our IBEW brothers and sisters and their families who have experienced loss and devastation caused by the pandemic.

Through hope, science and our competent and compassionate leadership team in Washington, we will have better days ahead!

At present, Book 1 has been steady and looks good through the year's end.

We also have some Book 2 hands who are providing much-needed support. Thank you, travelers!

The Bendix North American Headquarters project is currently in full swing, and the Ardugh Metal project should start manning up in early summer.

Business Manager John Novak and Organizer J.R. Roark have made it a top priority to re-energize organizing efforts. Open and constructive communication with Executive Board members and the general membership has provided valuable feedback on different ways to promote and sell the IBEW. We all agree that all members can be organizers.

Even with the arrival of better days, Ohio, like many other states, continues to be tormented by senseless right-to-work legislation proposed regularly in Columbus.

We encourage all members to step up and pressure their elected officials.

An important fact is that during last year's election season, Local 129's political team had positive feedback from both political parties. The common consensus was that good wages and benefits drive the Ohio economy.

Paul Kress, P.S.

Project in the Pipeline & Returning to Normal

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV — Greetings, brothers and sisters. As of this writing, the work picture remains slow, with 89 members on Book 1.

Chapman Corporation has been awarded the Williams Ridgeline Natural Gas Compressor Station in Marshall County, W.Va. This project should put many of our members back to work for a few months. Williams constructed several of these compressor stations within our jurisdiction and has trusted the craftsmanship of IBEW members for a vast majority of these projects.

Local 141 is beginning a slow return to normalcy amid the pandemic, with in-person union meetings resuming. It's very hopeful that we will begin to return to some of our social events, especially the Local 141 Family Picnic and Golf Scramble.

Our local is also prepping to go into negotiations for our upcoming contract. Our current labor agree-

ment is set to expire in Sept. 2021.

Local 141 is sad to report the passing of Brother Paul Tepe. He will be sadly missed.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Kurt "Bug" Reed, P.S.

Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

L.U. 159 (i), MADISON, WI — With spring, we are pleased to see work continuing to pick up and our book numbers dropping — a welcome sign of normalcy.

Our winter Holiday Fantasy in Lights exhibit gives back to the community year-round: Our LMCC just donated sets of tools to 15 new Habitat for Humanity homeowners.

We worked hard supporting candidates in local spring elections, and we were especially happy to see one first-time candidate — a union Steelworker — win a seat on Madison City Council. We want to increase members' political education and involvement through 2022 and beyond.

With our Building Trades Council, we look forward to both the annual Take Kids Fishing event and working on a conservation project.

Many of our members are part of the Tradeswomen of South Central Wisconsin (TWSWCW), which is now a subcommittee of our Building Trades Council. TWSWCW will also become a chapter of Wisconsin's statewide tradeswomen group, empowHER.

empowHER will have multiyear funding from the Wisconsin Building Trades Council to effect positive change for women in the construction industry.

Local 159 is committed to working with our partners to advocate for, recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Sue Blue, B.M.



Local 159 fourth-year apprentice Cassie Schuler bending 1 1/4" EMT, no problem.

Welcoming a New Assistant Business Manager

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH — We would like to welcome Justin Cappelletty, who has just accepted the role of assistant business manager. Justin started at First Energy (Toledo Edison) 13 years ago as a lineman, has been a union steward for the last four years and was recently elected to the Executive Board.

Also, we would like to congratulate Greg Walter, who was recently appointed to the Executive Board. Greg started at Davis-Besse as a nuclear reactor operator, and has been a union steward for most of his career and a chief steward for the last five years. We are happy to have them both aboard.

As of this writing, our monthly union meetings at the union hall have been canceled due to the rise of COVID-19 cases in Ohio. Hopefully, as you are reading this article, we will be back to our normal meetings.

Work on the outside remains steady, but the ALBAT Lineman apprenticeship has been closed until further notice. WNWO-TV 24 contract was extended for one year into 2022. Contract negotiations with Davis-Besse are still ongoing. Future negotiations for 2021 include Walleye Power, which has an expiration date of November; Rossford Firefighters, whose contract will expire in December; and Wolf Creek at NASA Glenn Research Center, whose contract will also expire at the end of this calendar year.

Until next time, stay safe and remember: No shortcuts at work or at home and enjoy your summer!

Brian Gendaszek, P.S.

Seasons of Loss

L.U. 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ — Trick-or-treating at Halloween. Big family get-togethers at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Sporting events from T-ball to high-school championships. We've lost so many things to the pandemic that we are almost surprised when we lose something or someone to what used to be a natural occurrence.

In late April of this year, Local 269 experienced just such a loss. Brother Jeff Johnson died suddenly of natural causes while tending the garden he loved so much outside his home in Morrisville, Pa. Jeff was a member of the IBEW for 30 years. He held a position on the Executive Board at the time of his passing and was one of the most active and engaged members of the local during his time with the organization. Jeff was also active within his local government, serving as a councilman and a member of the Municipal Board of Morrisville.

Jeff was an avid outdoor sportsman, a diehard Green Bay Packers fan, a devoted husband and a loving father and grandfather. But above all, Jeffrey S. Johnson was not just a good union man — he was a good man, period. He will be dearly missed. Rest in peace, Brother.

Brian Jacoppo, P.S.



Brother Jeff Johnson (1959-2021).

A Welcome Return to Union Meetings

L.U. 291 (c,i,mo,o, rtb&rts), BOISE, ID — Things are going well in our local. We have wrapped up negotiations with J&J Worldwide Services and Intralot, Inc. Both of these contracts bring security and stability to workers in each respective unit.

Congratulations to our newest inside journeyman: Matthew Adair, Jonathan Banta, Tyson Bean, Jose Casillas, Jonathan Cook, Ted Duman, Jesse Hanson, Nicholas Harmon, Joshua Hewitt, Zachary Krishnek, Tyler Mott, Taber Nelson and Isaac Palmer-Groves.

We have been able to begin in-person union meetings by renting a larger room and practicing all the safety protocols put in place by local officials. These meetings seem a little different than the past, but it was great to assemble in that union meeting atmosphere again. A big thank you to the traveling

brothers and sisters who took calls over the last year to help us man our work. We are very appreciative of you.

Condolences go out to the families of recently deceased members Gordon Bullock, David Owen and James Theiss.

In March we celebrated the retirement of office manager Dawn Walsh, who served our local for 25 years! We wish her the best in her retirement.

Stay safe out there, sisters and brothers, and remember IBEW STRONG!

Mark Zaleski, B.M.

Celebrations and Retirements

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — Happy Independence Day, brothers and sisters!

July is full of celebrations. One such festival to the north is the Minneapolis Aquatennial. The history of the event began as a battle in July 1934 where Minneapolis police shot 67 striking teamsters, killing two. The day was to become known as “Bloody Friday.” The NLRB settled the strike between Teamsters Local 574 and the CA, a business association, awarding the teamsters the right to organize. For the next six years, festivals, parades and memorials commemorated the union’s victories. The teamsters’ annual free picnic on Bass Lake gathered 15,000 to 20,000 members and public supporters. Union membership was on the rise throughout the city and union labor held the power. The CA was determined to regain control. In 1940, the CA devised the Minneapolis Aquatennial, held during the third week in July, as an event to sway public support away from the unions’ achievements and promote businesses as the leaders of the city.

We congratulate the following retirees: Holly Barnes, Robert Borchardt, Laverne Dudas, Scott Friesse, Kim Kestner, Edwin Kramer, Mike Liebenow, Micheal Martinson, John Penkava, David Peterson, Kevin Petersen, William Reiter, Micheal Sammon, Scott Shonkwiler, Jeffery Sprick, Anthony Toft and Gregory VanRyswyk.

Celebrate the union way, buy “Made In U.S.A.”

Tom Small, P.S.

Losing a Brother, Friend and Leader

L.U. 375 (catv,ees,et,govt,i&mo), ALLENTOWN, PA — Our local has lost a great brother, friend and leader. After serving in the U.S. Army Air Corp. during World War II, Andy S. Kubik became a member of IBEW Local 375 in May of 1949 as a journeyman wireman. On Aug. 4, 1971, he became the business manager and remained in that position until he retired in July of 1989.

Andy cared deeply about each and every member that he served during his time as the business manager. Brothers like Mr. Kubik have laid the foundation for the things we take for granted today: earning a living wage, receiving adequate healthcare, retiring with dignity, and the list goes on. His contributions were formally recognized in 1976 when he was awarded the highest honor a person can receive from Local 375: the addition of his name to the Harry B. Parks Sr. Memorial Award.



Three generations of Local 375 members (left to right), Andy S. Kubik, Andy J. Kubik and Andy R. Kubik.

This achievement has only been awarded to a few members “who contributed most to promote the ideals and principles for which the IBEW was founded.” For his exemplary representation of the beliefs of the brotherhood, Andy Kubik will forever be revered.

Brother Kubik has left a legacy within our local, as his son Andy J. Kubik recently retired as a journeyman wireman in March 2020, having also served the local as the safety director during his tenure. His grandson, Andy R. Kubik, is currently a journeyman wireman within our ranks.

Brother Kubik, thank you for everything you contributed to Local 375 during your time. You can rest assured that we will keep fighting the fight for not only Local 375, but for the labor movement as a whole.

Justin Grimshaw, A.B.M.



Local 481 members (left to right) Ryan Cline, Scott Cline, Eddie Lyster, Collin Cline and Quantez Mims took home the team event.

Solidarity on the Lanes

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rts,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — This past April, our local hosted the sixth annual IBEW Midwest Regional Bowling Tournament with bowlers from Locals 1, 58, 134, 369, 481 and 531 attending the event. It was a great time, and it was wonderful to see brothers and sisters from the other locals.

Local 481 not only hosted the event, but brought home some hardware as well. The team, made up of Collin Cline, Ryan Cline, Scott Cline, Eddie Lyster and Quantez Mims took home the team event, and Trevor Goewey took home the singles event. Congrats to all the winners and thanks to all who participated. A special thanks to Ryan Cline for all his hard work in making sure the event was a success. See you all at next year’s tournament!

Blake A. Andrews, B.R./Treas.

A Working Model for Apprenticeship

L.U. 557 (i,mt,rts&spa), SAGINAW, MI — Our local has been fortunate to work on the Mary Free Bed project located in downtown Saginaw. This 3-story, total patient rehabilitation center brings with it unique design challenges and has been a great learning opportunity for our apprentices. The smaller crew has allowed time to build bonds needed in every local. Hospital-grade jobs require special attention to code details, which can require more time and planning. When we have JIWs with a level of passion for their craft and the ability to take time to teach and direct, we can feel confident in our work quality and continuing to secure future work. We have a strong sense of brotherhood among this crew, and our JIWs have taken great pride in passing on knowledge of the union along with hands-on trade knowledge. What a great example of the true meaning of a union apprenticeship.

COVID-19 has completely changed the way we work together in the trades. It’s no different for the members of Local 557. As walls go up, conduit is bent and drywall taped, open spaces close in and present social-distancing problems for all trades involved. With chal-



Members of Locals 557 and 692 stand in front of color-coded conduit between patient rooms at Mary Free Bed.

lenges seemingly at every turn, our members stayed diligent in following CDC guidelines, with most opting for the vaccine. These efforts helped keep our members and their families safe. The local contractor for the Mary Free Bed job has provided adequate PPE and shown a strong concern for the safety of this crew. It has been interesting for companies and people to adapt to these changing times and extra precautions. But even with all the bumps this job has faced, this has been and continues to be a great experience for

some true brothers.

Breanna DePottet, P.S.

Local 569 PLA Win & Picnic

L.U. 569 (i,mar,mt,rts&spa), SAN DIEGO, CA — Our local’s members successfully advocated for the approval of the \$350 million California Theater Project with Australian developer Caydon. This will be the largest skyscraper constructed in San Diego, with 41 stories of mixed-use development, and will be built over multiple years with a PLA that puts Local 569 members to work!

We thank San Diego City Council for moving this



Rendering of the California Theater Project, coming soon to the San Diego skyline (photo courtesy of Caydon).

DEER DAYS GIVEAWAY

YOU COULD WIN ALL THIS AND MORE!

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance wants to help you gear up and get outside this archery season!

\$1,800+ VALUE NO COST TO ENTER! DEADLINE: AUGUST 30, 2021

ENTER TO WIN UNIONSWEESTAKE.COM

LOCAL LINES

better come August, and we invite you to join our 2021 IBEW 569 Family Picnic for a full day of fun, food and sun!

SAVE THE DATE: The 2021 IBEW 569 Annual Picnic for our members and families will be on Saturday, Aug. 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Santee Lakes #5, 9310 Fanita Parkway, Santee, Calif.

Make sure to RSVP so we'll know how much food to order and that we can send you additional updates (bit.ly/2021picnic).

Gretchen Newsom, Political Dir./Organizer

Meetings Return & Project Updates

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUERQUE, NM — On May 19, the local held its first in-house union meeting since the pandemic started; there was a good crowd in attendance. Now that the state is opening up, hopefully things can get back to normal soon, and just as a reminder, union meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.

Due to the rising cost of material, the much-anticipated Orion project has been pushed back until later in the year, possibly as far back as September or October.

In July, the Intel project should be ramping up. Intel is pumping \$3.5 billion into the project, and B&D has picked up quite a bit of the work and should be putting in calls soon.

The JATC just finished up a 5,600-square-foot addition, which consists of four new large classrooms. With all of the work that has been going on in our state recently, we have had to hire a lot of apprentices, and our current building was too small.

On behalf of the local, I would like to send condolences to the family and friends of Elmer R. Bebee and Ronald L. Bossard.

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.

Steady Work & Congrats to Retired Members

L.U. 649 (i,lctt,mt&o), ALTON, IL — Here is an overview of Local 649 activities: Work has been steady with projects and turnarounds at P66 Refinery; work progresses at Alton Schools, the warehouse work with a new Fed Ex project and Team Industrial Services warehouse; and work continues with World Wide Technology in the warehouse district. The Local 649 JATC has completed the interview process of candidates. A new inside wireman class of 16 new apprentices has been referred out to contractors to begin working in May.

Congratulations to our newly retired members, one of which is me. Thanks to each of you for years of service with to the IBEW, and we will miss you at the

jobsites: Thomas E. Albrecht, Keith A. Becker, Kenneth A. Kleeman, David A. McIver, Jeffrey M. Nappier, Terry W. Wilhite and Tim Zini.

On an added note, please keep our deceased members and families in your thoughts and prayers!

Thanks to Alan and Terry for providing information to share with the local!!

Terry Wilhite, P.S.



(Left to right) Local 673 Business Manager Dave Phillips poses with retired journeyman wireman Richard Johnson, receiving his 50-year service award.

Congratulations to a Trailblazing Brother

L.U. 673 (catv,i,rts,spa,t&u), PAINESVILLE, OH — We'd like to congratulate retired member Brother Richard Johnson on his prestigious 50-year service award. Rich wasn't only the first African-American member initiated into Local 673 back in 1970; he also paved the way as he served in multiple capacities for the local including the Executive Board, Examining Board and the Joint Apprentice Training Committee. Throughout Rich's 37-year storied career, he was a foreman on multiple projects, held the role as union steward at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant and traveled across the country to numerous locals to help his fellow brothers and sisters man their work. In his spare time, Rich enjoys hanging out with his wife and his grandkids and even manages to carve out some precious time for his two dogs. We hope Rich continues to enjoy his retirement for many years to come! Congratulations!

John D. Rusnak, Mem. Dev.

Progress Brings in Change

L.U. 683 (i&ptc), COLUMBUS, OH — The work outlook in our jurisdiction continues to look great. With many data-center projects in progress, the new Crew Stadium and multiple ongoing and upcoming projects at

OSU, there will be many calls going into Book 2. Thank you to our traveling sisters and brothers for helping us fill calls.

Local 683 has experienced some transitions recently, with Business Manager John "Ed" Moore moving on to be a Fourth District representative. We are very proud to send one of our own to the district ranks. During Ed's tenure as business manager, our local experienced abundant growth in membership and market share. Patrick Hook has been appointed to the business manager position, transitioning from president/business representative.

We resumed union meetings again in April after four months without having one. The April meetings were well attended considering the restrictions in place due to COVID-19. It was nice to see some familiar faces again, and we look forward to it again in the future.

Thank you to all of our members who continue to prove that we are essential.

Mike Morey, Pres.



Local 1105 Business Manager, Bill Hamilton (left), signs Luke Hurst (right) of Axxel Electric as a union contractor.

Welcoming a New Contractor

L.U. 1105 (i), NEWARK, OH — Amidst the past year's craziness, our local is proud to have signed new contractor, Axxel Electric. Owner Luke Hurst can only be described as a go-getter. His passion for electrical work and his family background in construction inspired him to start Axxel Electric in 2020, and he has big dreams for his company.

Luke worked nonunion for six years prior to becoming a member, and since joining the IBEW he has spoken about the importance of becoming a union contractor. When asked, Luke said, "The IBEW is full of individuals who are proud to do their job with precision and excellence. As an employer, I wish to develop a work environment where my employees find they enjoy their job. Personally, I feel it is a moral responsibility to make sure that the people who work for me are taken care of. By hiring union employees, I am offering excellent pay, with excellent benefits, and I believe I will always employ the best of the best because I offer the best deal. I am in this to leave a footprint, and I am excited for this journey."

Ashley Labaki, P.S.

Recognizing One of Our Own

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,ptc&u), CINCINNATI, OH — A big shout out to all the workers that help run the show behind the scenes: This one goes out to all of you! This month we wanted to do a special piece on our office coordinator, Rachel Glover. She has worked at Local 1347 for the past four years and has gone above and beyond each and every day. With the stress level for our membership at an all-time high



Local 1347's Office Coordinator Rachel Glover, hard at work.

this past year, having someone ready and available to answer any questions and ensure things are running smoothly (despite the chaos happening outside of the office walls) has really helped keep our membership on track. She is the glue to our operation, and we appreciate her efforts. Each one of us can make a difference, but together we can make change.

Andrew Kirk, B.M.

Sticking Up for Labor in the U.S. Senate

L.U. 1501 (ees,em,mo,pet,rts&t), BALTIMORE, MD — President/Business Manager Dion F. Guthrie met with Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren earlier this year and had some discussion about how the Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee, of which Sen. Warren is a member, provides

details on the national coronavirus preparedness and response efforts. This information is vital in protecting the safety, health and economic security of labor and their families.

Sen. Warren assured President Guthrie that she had met with the Labor Secretary and was convinced that they are doing everything possible to protect labor. Sen. Warren stated, "As businesses are continuing to work and develop plans to respond to COVID-19, it is critical they are taking the best interest of labor into account. Businesses and labor must be provided with up-to-date information so they can base decisions on facts and science."

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



Mass. Senator Elizabeth Warren and Local 1501 Business Manager/President Dion F. Guthrie, with former Business Manager Gary Griffin (Local 24), in the background.



Local 611 apprentices in front of the new 5,600-square-foot expansion at the JATC.

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LOCAL LINES

IVP Visit and Negotiations
with Raytheon Technologies

L.U. 1505 (et, it&mo), WOBURN, MA — On Feb. 19, our local hosted a workplace visit by Second District International Vice President Michael Monahan. IVP Monahan toured the Raytheon facility in Andover, Mass., where a majority of our members work. We were extremely pleased and proud to show off our world-class work supporting our U.S. warfighters here in America and around the world. Mr. Monahan was impressed with our efforts and the excellent quality of our work demonstrating the IBEW Code of Excellence.

Local 1505 will be the first large union (approximately 2,500 members) to negotiate a contract with the new Raytheon Technologies. Working with RTX became our reality when United Technologies bought out Raytheon last year. Our current four-year contract expires in Sept. 2021, and for more than 75 years we have been successfully negotiating contracts with the Raytheon Company. But, for reasons we do not understand, the new Raytheon Technologies is already taking a hardline stance on many issues important to our members. This will present an uphill challenge to our committee.

Company leadership no longer resides here in Massachusetts, and they seem to have forgotten that Local 1505 workers built the legacy Raytheon Company from its roots over seven decades! As many as four generations of our family members have worked here on vital military programs, including HAWK, AMRAAM, PATRIOT, AEGIS and LTAMDS. So, we will be working tirelessly to bargain a fair agreement with Raytheon Technologies, reminding them that our skilled and dedicated workforce both built this company and kept it afloat during the COVID-19 crisis.

Finally, Local 1505 has been strong in its support of the 700 Massachusetts Nurses Association members who are on strike at

St. Vincent's Hospital in Worcester, Mass., with our local members joining MNA members in a strike line.

Stay strong, sisters and brothers!

John Donald, P.S.

Our Labor-Friendly President

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — It is a great feeling to once again have a president who is labor friendly.

Based on what President Biden has already done in his first few months in office, I would say that he is the most union-friendly president in my lifetime and most likely in the history of this great country. When President Biden speaks, he always speaks about the middle class and how we would not have a middle class without unions. I have often heard the phrase “good-paying union jobs,” and he has mentioned the IBEW many times when he talks. He doesn't just get up on the podium and make a lot of promises and say a bunch of words, he backs up those words with his actions.

The president so far has introduced legislation that will create jobs for the middle class and union members. The American Jobs Plan will create millions of good union jobs, rebuild our country's physical infrastructure and workforce, and spark innovation and manufacturing here at home. The American Families Plan is an investment in our children and our families — helping families cover the basic expenses that so many struggle with now, lowering health insurance premiums and continuing the American Rescue Plan's historic reductions in child poverty.

Together, these plans reinvest in the future of the American economy and American workers and will help us out-compete China and other countries around the world. The president also has a plan to restore the tax deductions for IBEW members for travel expenses, tools, work clothing and union dues, deductions that were ripped away from us when the last president gave a tax cut to the wealthy.

This investment will cost money, as all investments come at a cost. However, when creating jobs for the middle class and unions, tax dollars are being paid from wages from those newly created jobs, and these tax dollars will go back to the government to pay for the investment.

I know that there are critics out there that say that the president is running up our debt, but those same critics had no problem when the mega rich got a huge tax break that ran up debt. That tax break was nothing but free money for the wealthy that never made its way into the economy — it only made its way to their bank accounts.

I know that we have a bright future as long as the middle class and unions have a voice in Washington.

Until next time, God bless.

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



(Left to right) Second District Representative John Horak, Local 1505 Asst. Business Manager/President Kevin Legere, International Vice President Michael Monahan, Local 1505 Business Manager Michael Zagami and Asst. Business Manager John Bruno.



The Electrical Worker was the name of the first official publication of the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in 1893 (the NBEW became the IBEW in 1899 with the expansion of the union into Canada). The name and format of the publication have changed over the years. This newspaper is the official publication of the IBEW and seeks to capture the courage and spirit that motivated the founders of the Brotherhood and continue to inspire the union's members today. The masthead of this newspaper is an adaptation of that of the first edition in 1893.

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HOW TO REACH US

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

Send letters to:

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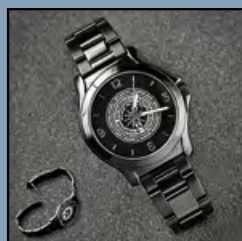
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WHO WE ARE

Boston Wireman Cycles Solo Across U.S. in Honor of Ailing Co-Worker

Michael Myers is a Boston Local 103 member who, over the last 30-plus years, has spent a lot of his spare time cycling. For him, it's more than just a hobby: His adventures have carried him across 41 states, Canada, Europe and even Australia, often in support of charitable causes.

So, when the 32-year journeyman wireman learned that co-worker and fellow member Leo Cooney had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), he decided to make his 18th long-distance cycling tour one that raises money to help research into the prevention and cure of this degenerative and fatal disease.

Since January, Myers has worked for signatory contractor McDonald Electrical Corp. on an inside wiring project at Northeastern University. He had only been there for about a month when he learned of a brother in need. "Six of us were meeting in the electrical room one evening at the start of the second shift," he recalled, "and my foreman hands a box to one of my co-workers." Inside was a baseball cap that had the words "Friends of Leo" printed across the front.

Leo Cooney is the brother of McDonald Electrical co-founder Tom Cooney and was diagnosed in 2017 with

ALS, a progressive disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord by attacking the motor neurons that control muscle movement. Those who have ALS gradually lose their ability to speak, eat and breathe on their own.

Myers discovered that Leo Cooney had been active for most of his early life, playing football on trophy-winning teams throughout high school and college. After receiving his degree, Cooney worked as a health insurance administrator while continuing to play football semi-professionally, moonlighting as No. 66 for Massachusetts's minor-league Randolph Oilers. Tom Cooney eventually encouraged Leo to enter the electrical trade and join the IBEW as a member of Local 103.

"I found two videos of Leo that stood out," Myers said. "The first was of him sitting on his front step talking about his new diagnosis in 2017. The second was from a few years later, with Leo petting his dog while a friend spoke on his behalf." By that point, the disease had taken away Cooney's ability to speak, Myers said.

Seeing the man's condition resonated with Myers, who has vivid memories of his own father's battle with a similarly



Boston Local 103 journeyman wireman Michael Myers, a frequent long-distance cyclist, is riding cross-country in honor of a co-worker who has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). He drew inspiration from his late father, Frank (top photo, right), who died in 2014 from complications caused by multiple sclerosis, a similarly degenerative disease.

ton Marathon with his father, who was still fit enough then to compete in the race's wheelchair division. But eventually, Frank's condition weakened to where he was forced into a medical retirement, and he died in 2014.

Some of Myers's long-distance rides have raised money and awareness for charity, including one for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in honor of his father, so he contacted Tom Cooney about making a similar trip focusing on Leo and others living with ALS. Cooney readily agreed.

Myers then connected with ALS ONE, a nonprofit that bills itself as a partnership of researchers and doctors searching for effective treatments for ALS. Soon, the wireman was planning a mid-June departure on a 4,000-mile trek from Fort Stevens, Ore., to his home in suburban Boston with a goal to raise at least \$30,000 for ALS ONE. His somewhat indirect course, mainly along established cycling and rail-trail routes, would allow him to check four more states off his list: Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota and Iowa.

The ride's plan included early wake-ups to take advantage of the relative morning coolness, daytime rest breaks where possible, then a few more hours of eastward riding into the evening, all on a Koga Worldtraveller, a touring bicycle designed to withstand long trips.

out at home, doing resistance training."

Myers's initial fundraising goal of \$30,000 was reached by Memorial Day, thanks largely to donations from fellow IBEW members, family members and friends. McDonald Electrical kicked in a generous \$5,360 to the effort, while another contractor, Granite City Electric Supply, not only gave \$5,000 for the cause, but it also used its connections with the Boston Red Sox to arrange for Myers to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at Fenway Park on Sunday, June 13, before a game against the Toronto Blue Jays.

Boston Local 103 members also raised \$5,000 for Myers's ride, and scheduled a kickoff event to wish him well on his journey. "We are so proud of these two brothers," said Local 103 Business Manager Lou Antonellis. "Leo, for being so courageous while fighting and battling ALS, and Mike for doing such a selfless and honorable gesture in his ride across country to raise money for ALS ONE."

A new fundraising goal, inspired by Leo Cooney's jersey number, 66, was set at \$66,000.

Myers said that Tom Cooney granted him as much time off as needed for the ride. "I've saved up money for the trip, tucked away what I could," he said, noting that among the many benefits of his decision to become an IBEW journeyman inside wireman has been steady, good-paying union work. Myers's wife, Bonnie, herself a cycling and hiking enthusiast, also gave her husband her full support. And by the time this newspaper reaches members in the mail, Myers ought to be around halfway toward the finish line. Readers can track his progress on his Facebook page, www.facebook.com/groups/crosscountryforals.

"But this is not about me at all," he stressed. "I'm focused on the ride and on raising money for Leo and ALS ONE, which is a job on its own. I just enjoy the adventure of it."

Visit Friends of Leo, friendsofleo.com, or donate to ALS One at give.classy.org/CrossCountryForACure. ■

