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## WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST RIGHT-TO-WORK

'We're Not Stopping With Michigan'



hen Michigan repealed its so-called right-to-work law in March, it wasn't just a huge victory for working families in that state. It was a shot across the bow.

It was the first time a state revoked a rightto-work law in nearly 60 years and a major victory for the IBEW and all unions that have fought against such laws since they were invented in 1947. These laws weaken unions by allowing workers to free-ride, enjoying the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement without contributing their share of the costs of negotiating and enforcing that contract.

"What an absolutely great day for the IBEW and especially our members in Michigan," International President Kenneth W. Cooper said. "I wish I could personally thank each and every one of them who worked to make this a reality. I salute the state legislators who stood with us and especially Gov.

# NICHIGAN

Gretchen Whitmer, who has been a friend of working families.

"But this is just a start. Let this be a message to all the states still putting up roadblocks to fair wages and fair representation for working people. We're watching, and we're not stopping with Michigan."

Whitmer also signed into law a bill that reinstates prevailing wage laws on public projects. Prevailing wage laws require wages to be paid at fair market value, whether the work is done by union or nonunion workers. They also ensure the work is high quality and on time, and often done by local contractors.

### **Restoring Workers' Rights**

Michigan is the first state to repeal such a law since 1965, when Indiana did so, although it passed a new one in 2012 that remains in effect. The only other state to repeal a right-to-work law was New Hampshire in 1949. There are now 26 states with such a law.

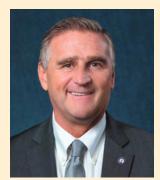
Supporters of these laws paint them as giving employees a choice, but they are intended to suppress the power of working families, not to mention their wages and benefits.

From the beginning, they've proven to be a popular way for state legislatures to strike back against the influence of unions — and, in the 21st century, they have been a primary tool for Republicans to do so.

DEFEATING RIGHT-TO-WORK continued on page 4

### FROM THE OFFICERS

### **Michigan Is Just the Start**



Kenneth W. Cooper International President

ichigan repealing its so-called right-to-work law is one of the greatest victories for working people in decades.

The deceptively named "right to work" has always hidden a toolkit of ways to reduce the power of unions and jeopardize the livelihoods of millions of workers.

For those of us in the labor movement, its greatest sin is that it erodes our collective power by letting some people steal the food out of the mouths of others, to benefit from the work a union does while not contributing to that effort.

It encourages habits of slyness, lying, and stabbing your brother and sister in the back. That lack of character gets baked into our culture and keeps all of us poorer, lonelier and too familiar with the taste of defeat.

It is good for the soul of America that Michigan ended that hateful law. Now it's beyond time for the rest of the states that welcomed these laws in the last decade to follow suit.

That's you, Kentucky, Wisconsin, West Virginia and Indiana.

Because even beyond the immoral habits it builds, right-to-work fails to deliver even the smallest of promises its supporters make.

Did Michiganders experience a massive expansion of economic prosperity once right-to-work was passed a decade ago? That's what was promised.

Could anyone walk from one factory to the next and take their pick of jobs as they could in my hometown of Mansfield, Ohio, when I was a boy and unions were strong?

Did a greater share of profits go to the people who made those profits possible?

Once unions were harmed by right-to-work, as they hoped we would be, did safety improve? Did benefits? Did anything get better for you or me?

Enough is enough.

Michigan is the first to repeal but won't be the last. We will do it the hard way, state by state, trench by trench. But it would all be a lot faster if the House and the Senate send the PROAct to the president for his signature. Among a host of other benefits for working people, it would hammer a stake into the heart of right-to-work once and for all.

And while they're at it, Congress should get to work removing the speed bumps that are holding back America's energy future.

First, can we cut miles of useless red tape that slows permitting for new transmission lines, unleashing gigawatts of planned clean generation in the process that simply need the reliable promise of a connection to the grid?

And instead of wringing their hands about a worker shortage, Congress has two hammers that would break the dam. First, it could update the nation's apprenticeship laws for the first time in nearly a century, and second, it could keep the existing workforce employed in carbon generating by offering it support while utilities retool and build new facilities.

You will hear much more about all these political battles in the months and years ahead at our new home for the IBEW's political priorities: **ibewgov.org**.

I am extraordinarily proud of what is contained in those pages. It is a blueprint of specific, tested, effective policy ideas and the strategies that will make them possible.

I urge everyone to read up and then speak out.

Michigan is just the start. 🛽

### **Our Work Through Your Lens**

n 1921, an American advertising executive was the first person known to say a picture is worth a thousand words. As of this year at the IBEW, you can say it's worth a thousand dollars.

That's because \$1,000 is the new top prize in the annual IBEW Photo Contest, a sum that reflects how impressed and proud we are of the stories our members tell through their entries.

From first place to honorable mentions in the 2022 contest, as featured in last month's issue of The Electrical Worker, we saw an outside line crew making repairs in moonlight, workers restoring a runway against a snowcapped Alaskan backdrop, a lone worker running conduit in a bleak cement-block room, hurricane recovery in Florida and a close-up of a technician at The New York Times' printing plant.

Your entries are priceless snapshots of the IBEW's diverse and evolving work. But there's much left to see. Our Brotherhood comprises more than 40 trade classifications, and we'd love to peek inside every one of them.

So we've revamped our Photo Contest. You'll find more details on page 20, but here's the big news: Along with the \$1,000 first-place prize, we'll be awarding \$750 for second place, \$500 for third and a \$200 honorable mention for each of the IBEW's branches: Construction (one each for inside and outside), Utilities, Manufacturing, Broadcasting, Telecommunications, Railroads and Government.

Being a shutterbug has never been easier. We're all walking around with cameras in our pockets. And you can take as many photos as you like in pursuit of the perfect image, whether you use your phone or a digital camera.

So shoot to your heart's content, but with two important caveats: One is the IBEW Code of Excellence, which means that when we're on the clock, we're giving our employers 100%. Make the most of breaks and lunchtime. And, as always, safety is our No. 1 priority. We don't want photographers taking risks, and we disqualify any images that even hint at workers failing to properly use safety equipment.

Wherever you work, each of you is uniquely positioned to tell our story through your lens. I can't wait to see what you add to our family album this year.

### "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR"

### **The Last Storm Call**

On the night of Jan. 17, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Local 37 member Colin Hume was fatally injured while working to restore power after an ice storm. His Local 37 brother Scott Markowsky suffered serious injuries in the accident but survived. Other members of their crew witnessed the tragedy, including Everard Logan. He wrote about the experience in a poem:

The clouds turned grey And the wind started to blow No one knew if it was going to be rain or turn to snow.

We knew the storm was going to hit, So volunteer now or be forced to be picked.

Pack your bags now!

Time to hit the road. Give your family a kiss, It's part of the lineman code.

lt's just another storm I'll be back soon.

Or so we think, Not taking in account that things can change in a blink.

My friends went up that structure that night, 60 feet in the air. Pole covered in ice, Barely a light for glare. See, an ice storm had hit and caused mass destruction. It was all crews on deck Working storm restoration.

Working that pole trying to fix those wires Something awful happened, And an event transpired.

They were both up high when the pole suddenly snapped. Everything came crashing down, no

time to react.

An angel from heaven flew from the skies, Wrapped his wings around the fallen No time for goodbyes.

I am not a poet and don't normally write. I'm just expressing my emotions keeping everything in tight.

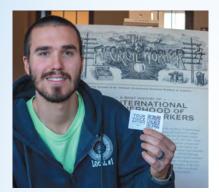
I was in the safety stand down where big men did cry.

Until the next storm, This is never goodbye.

> – Everard Logan Jan 2023

### **My IBEW STORY**

**Paul Nuspl**, journeyman wireman St. Louis Local 1



College never appealed to me. I enjoyed working with my hands and attended a technical high school. I was working for a supermarket after graduation when someone told me a contractor was looking for help. I knew nothing about

unions. I applied, then dropped everything I was doing and went to work.

Through that, I completed an apprenticeship with Car-

penters Local 57. It wasn't the best training. I learned a lot more in high school. I was helping other apprentices more than the instructor did.

After eight years, I was starting to get burned out. The contractor was making me not want to be an electrician anymore. They made you fear for your job all the time and forced you to work overtime when you didn't want to.

It was then that I learned about Local 1 and talked with Business Representative John Kahrhoff. I knew right away that joining the IBEW would be very beneficial, but it still made me and my wife nervous. We have a house and three young children to support, and change is hard. But once we looked into the pension plan, we decided that for our future, the IBEW was the way to go.

I tested out of the Local 1 apprenticeship and went right to work. My wife was able to stop working and stay home with our kids. I have a good relationship with the contractor I work for. I am going to have more money contributed to my pension in the next two years than I would have in eight years with my previous job.

I now work with John and my Local 1 brothers and sisters explaining the power of IBEW membership to Carpenters members and nonunion electricians. I always go straight to that pension. Even with the older guys, I remind them that they are fully vested in Local 1's pension plan on their first day.

Joining the IBEW was one of the best decisions I've made. I encourage anyone to join me. You are part of a community that's more than work. It's family.



International Secretary-Treasurer

Paul A. Noble



## Trudeau Pledges Anti-Scab Legislation During Local 213 Visit

ustin Trudeau used a fitting backdrop to pledge support for one of Canadian labor's highest priorities. It was during a town hall hosted by the prime minister on March 1 at Vancouver Local 213's training center in front of members and apprentices, along with leaders from the IBEW's First District.

"I have made a commitment, and I am going to hold to that commitment, that we are going to introduce anti-scab legislation [in the House of Commons] before the end of this year," said Trudeau, who immediately received a round of applause.

The time appears right. The ruling Liberals have a minority government but have formed a relationship with the New Democratic Party to pass workerfriendly pieces of legislation.

The pledge came on a big day for Local 213, a leader in expanding workers' rights not just in the IBEW but in all of Canada.

"When the government says it wants to come and talk to you, we're going to open our door," Business Manager Jim Lofty said. "The timing was perfect, to be able to talk to the prime minister and tell him our story."

Farid Poursoltani, the training center's director of business development, oversaw the event's setup after the prime minister's office informed Local 213 that it wanted to hold an event there. He was impressed that Trudeau took about 10 minutes to speak with him, Lofty and other Local 213 officials.

"He's just a very charismatic guy and very supportive of union training and workforce development," Poursoltani said.

Legislation to ban replacement workers in federally regulated industries has been discussed for years, with Local 213 serving as leader in the effort. The local has sent members to Parlia-



ment in Ottawa, including as recently as February, to lobby for the change. But it came to the forefront again

recently in a big way. About 240 employees of the Led-

cor Group, a construction company based in Vancouver, voted in 2017 for Local 213 representation. But Ledcor stretched out negotiations for a first contract and the employees eventually went on a three-year strike, during which the company replaced them with workers who crossed picket lines.

Local 213 eventually won the battle. The Canadian Industrial Relations Board ruled the company did not negotiate in good faith and, for just the seventh time in the country's history, instituted a first contract itself.

Still, the long strike taxed Local 213's finances — and, even more importantly, the financial and mental health of the striking workers.

Trudeau's comments at the local were his most definitive yet on the subject.

"It is the middle class that has built this country in every possible way," said Trudeau, who was accompanied by Carla Qualtrough, Canada's minister of employment, workforce development and disability inclusion. "It is organized labor and unions who have been at the center of fighting for a stronger middle class for this country forever."

Lofty was pleased to hear the prime minister's comments and expects a bill to be passed by Parliament. But he'll hold off on celebrating until he reads the final version.

"They could pass something that creates a lot of different loopholes and isn't necessarily an effective piece of legislation," he said. "We need legislation with teeth."

For instance, if companies aren't required to pay stiff penalties for not following the law, some might choose to ignore it — something U.S.-based unions have had to battle against.

Trudeau said the federal government remains committed to the Union Training and Innovation Program, commonly called UTIP, which provides CA\$25 million annually to the trades in support of apprenticeship training with the goal of making it more accessible to historically underserved groups, such as women, minorities and the Indigenous population.

Trudeau praised Local 213 for its work in attracting people from those

Local 213 Business Representative Manny Randhawa greets Prime Minister Justin Trudeau before a town hall in March. Trudeau's visit was a recognition of the important role the IBEW plays in Canada's transition to clean energy.

groups, adding that reaching out to underrepresented communities can address the shortage of skilled construction workers in Canada.

Meeting that challenge remains a priority. Trudeau said the country's goal of moving to a net-zero electrical grid by 2035 isn't being done just to address climate change. Increasingly, investors in Canada are calling for clean energy to be used on their projects, he said.

"As Canada continues to make bold moves to tackle climate change and substantially increase our clean tech and clean energy sectors to meet our electricity needs, Prime Minister Trudeau and his government know that they can count on the highly skilled sisters and brothers of the IBEW to do that work, not only across the country but throughout North America," First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk said.

Poursoltani said federal funding has helped the training center increase the number of women in apprenticeship programs from 2% to 13% and the number of Indigenous people enrolled from 2% to 14%.

He thanked Trudeau for the commitment, but he also urged him to increase funding so training centers Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, insert, held a town hall at Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213's training facility in March. Trudeau pledged to introduce anti-scab legislation in Parliament before the end of the year.

can expand their physical size. That will allow the IBEW and other trades to accept more apprentices and better address the skilled worker shortage. "We need that brick and mortar,"

he said.

The Liberals have had a good relationship with most unions since coming to power in 2015. The IBEW in Canada regularly is included in discussions on important issues with Trudeau's advisors and cabinet ministers, and sometimes with the prime minister himself. He visited Edmonton, Alberta, Local 424 in 2016, not long after being elected.

He noted during his Local 213 visit that one of the first things the Liberals did when taking power was to repeal legislation passed during the 10 years of Conservative-led government designed to punish unions. That led to onerous, redundant financial reporting requirements and made it harder for Canadians in federally regulated workplaces to join a union.

"It wasn't about doing the right thing for people that supported us," Trudeau said. "It was making sure that unions and organized labor are seen as absolutely foundational partners in the success of this country."

Trudeau answered questions for nearly 90 minutes — and not surprisingly, IBEW members and officials challenged him at times.

Theresa Davidson, the training center's entry-level trades training coordinator, asked Trudeau why the federal government is changing a program that provides financial incentives to underrepresented groups entering the trades.

The program provided eligible female apprentices CA\$8,000 annually. That was cut to CA\$4,000 on March 31. Davidson said she got her picture

taken with Trudeau afterward.

"When he got to me, he said: 'I heard your questions. I'm going to look into them for you, "she said.

### Winning the Battle Against So-Called Right-to-Work Laws

#### Continued from page 1

The GOP passed and Republican governors signed into law right-to-work bills in Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia and Wisconsin soon after Republicans took complete control of state government.

That is changing. Voters in conservative Missouri took advantage of a clause in the state constitution that allowed a referendum on the issue. They voted down by a 2-1 margin a right-to-work law previously approved by the GOP-dominated Legislature. Attempts to pass right-to-work laws in New Hampshire and Montana — two other states where the GOP controls all levers of state government — have failed.

A Gallup poll taken last year found that 71% of respondents approved of unions, the highest since 1965. Americans elected a pro-union president in Joe Biden, who has made organized labor a part of his signature legislation, such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Then in March came the news from Michigan. Union membership in the state dropped from 16% among the non-management workforce to 13% during the decade after right-to-work became law. Perhaps even more telling, the percentage of workers enjoying the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement but paying nothing toward it increased from 3.5% to 14%.

"Today, we are coming together to restore workers' rights, protect Michiganders on the job, and grow Michigan's middle class," Whitmer said.

### How the Fight Was Won

IBEW and union members packed the state Capitol in Lansing during the House and Senate votes and also during committee hearings.

They included Jeannette Bradshaw, recording secretary and registrar for Detroit Local 58, who testified in favor of prevailing wage laws before a House committee on March 8. She reminded legislators that the higher wages will help retain skilled construction workers. Michigan, like the rest of the United States, has faced a shortage of them for years.

"As more people move into the building and construction industry, shouldn't we be paying those workers for the training and expertise they have, regardless of whether or not they're represented by a union?" Bradshaw asked the committee.

IBEW members volunteered to help reelect Whitmer and flip the Legislature to Democratic control last November. It was the first time Democrats held the Legislature and governor's mansion since 1984. But the hard work started long before that.

Republicans controlled the Michigan Legislature and the state had a Republican governor in Rick Snyder when right-to-work was passed into law in 2012 and when prevailing wage laws were repealed in 2018.

They had that power in part due to gerrymandered legislative maps. The IBEW and other unions helped get out the vote for a successful ballot initiative in 2018 that turned redistricting over to an indepen-







Clockwise from top left: Detroit Local 17 was among the groups protesting when the Michigan Legislature passed a right-towork law in 2012; a member of Saginaw Local 557 watches from the gallery in March as the Senate prepares to vote on the repeal; IBEW members watch the votes being tabulated on screens inside the state capitol; Bay City, Mich., Local 692 Membership Development Director Brian Klele, left, with his father, Mike, a Local 692 retiree. Brian testified before a Senate committee about the benefits of working construction as a union member.

dent commission, taking it away from partisan legislators. That took away many of the advantages anti-union legislators had gerrymandered into the process.

"Having the ability to have competitive districts throughout the state allowed us to have the success that we did," said Michigan Political Director Joe Davis, a member of Lansing Local 352.

Davis said it was crucial to get the right-to-work repeal and the reinstitution of prevailing wage laws finished before the General Assembly went on a twoweek spring break beginning March 27. Democrats hold just a 20-18 advantage in the Senate and 56-54 in the House. No Republicans crossed the aisle to vote for either the right-to-work repeal or prevailing wage law legislation.

"In the world we live in now, it's a never-ending campaign cycle," Davis said. "The further you go into that twoyear legislative calendar, the less opportunity there is to get anything done. By the summer, people are talking abo

summer, people are talking about getting ready for next year and getting ready for their primaries."

Sixth District International Vice President Michael Clemmons, whose district includes Michigan, also celebrated the news.

"We're ecstatic and excited Gov. Whitmer and the Legislature reversed what Gov. Snyder and his group of folks did and returned Michigan back to the workers' rights state it's always been," Clemmons said.

"It's been a long, hard fight. The IBEW pours a lot of time and resources into political races, and this is a prime example of why we do that. When you elect pro-worker politicians, this is what happens."

For IBEW members in Michigan employed in construction, the restoration of prevailing wage laws is as significant as the right-to-work repeal, Clemmons said. "Enacting prevailing wage ensures our members are paid a fair wage for a fair day's work," he said. "It stops the trend of trying to force wages and benefits downwards by some of our construction competitors.

"You look at states that have prevailing wage laws and they have safer work conditions and higher wages and benefits for construction workers. That is taxpayer money. When you use taxpayer money on a project in Michigan, the Michiganders working on that project should expect the safest working conditions and be compensated fairly."

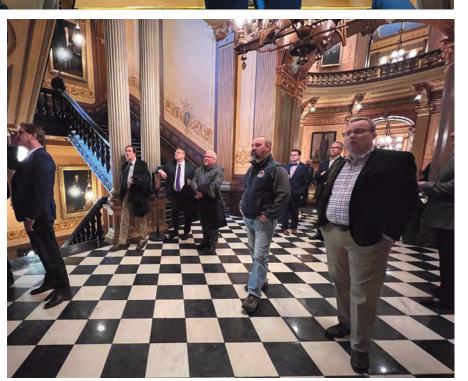
**Indeed.com**, one of the nation's leading employment websites, found that 14 of the top 15 states for construction worker pay all had prevailing wage laws. They weren't all high-cost East Coast states, either.

Minnesota, which is also in the Sixth District, was No. 1. Others on the list included Oregon, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri. The one outlier was Wisconsin, which came in at 13th-highest-paying but repealed prevailing wage in 2017.

### **The Battles Ahead**

Many Democratic leaders in Michigan pledged to repeal right-to-work and reinstitute prevailing wage if they gained control of the Legislature. Davis said it was obvious during the party's state conference in Detroit earlier this year that coalition was holding.

"No one should be surprised that we are in this moment," Whitmer said in an interview with The New York Times. "We've done what we've said we were going to do, and we're going to continue



### **Defeating Right-to-Work**

The repeal of Michigan's right-to-work law continued a run of successful fights against a measure meant to harm workers and depress wages. They include:

#### **NEW HAMPSHIRE & MONTANA**

In 2021, the IBEW and other unions help beat back attempts to pass right-to-work laws in New Hampshire and Montana, even with the GOP controlling the legislatures and governor's mansions. Several Republican representatives in both states voted against the legislation. 2021

#### 2019 **ILLINOIS**

In 2019, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed legislation banning cities and counties from passing municipal laws declaring themselves right-to-work zones. One of the sponsors was Rep. Marty Moylan, a retired business representative for Chicago Local 134.

#### **MISSOURI**

By a 2-1 margin, voters in Missouri reversed a right-to-work law in August 2018. The GOP-dominated legislature passed the law 18 months earlier, but it never went into effect. A coalition that included the IBEW and other unions campaigned to ensure the final margin.

#### 2022 **ILLINOIS**

In 2022, Illinois voters approved the Workers' Rights Amendment, which adds language to the state's constitution saying that workers have a fundamental right to organize and bargain collectively effectively making right-to-work laws unconstitutional.

#### OHIO

2011

In 2011, Ohio voters overwhelmingly rejected a measure to implement a right-to-work law during Gov. John Kasich's first year in office. Nearly 61% voted against it. There has been no serious attempt to bring up a right-to-work measure since, even though Republicans have controlled the legislature and governor's mansion.

UNION SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE

#### 2018 **DELAWARE**

In 2018, the Delaware Legislature passed and Gov. John Carney signed a law banning municipal right-to-work after one county tried to pass such a law. State Sen. Jack Walsh, a 34-year IBEW member, was one of the sponsors.

YOUTUBE SERIES

Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist, center, with leaders from Ann Arbor Local 252 and the state AFL-CIO. From left, former Local 252 Business Representative Ron Motsinger, Assistant Business Manager Dave Bianco, Michigan AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Daryl Newman, Sixth District International Representative Tim Hutchins and Local 252 Business Manager Ryan Husse.

to live up to the promise we made to people and live our values."

Or as Senate Majority Leader Winnie Banks told the Associated Press: "It's a new day here in Lansing."

Like Cooper, Cle thanked all IBEW members for their work in getting the bills passed into law. They've earned the right to celebrate. But the battles will go on, including

in Michigan, he said. "It is imperative we keep our majori-

ties in Michigan," Clemmons said. "We see what happens when we do. We have a huge

victory today but have to ensure those majorities in the Legislature and keeping the governor's mansion going forward."

The next battle may come in Wisconsin, which has a strong union tradition and only recently passed a right-to-work law, just like Michigan.

Even though the number of Democrats and Republicans in the state is roughly equal, the GOP used gerrymandered maps to solidify nearly total control of the Legislature. That, along with the election of a fiercely anti-union governor in Scott Walker, led to the passage of a

right-to-work law in 2015. But there is hope. Walker was defeated in his attempt for a third term by current Gov. Tony Evers in 2018. Union supporters also will have a 4-3 advantage on the state Supreme Court following the election of Janet Protasiewicz. That could lead to changes in the

gerrymandered districts. Another challenge for those fighting against right-to-work is to convince legislators in states that have had the laws for generations - such as Nevada and Virginia – to change them. Neither had a serious attempt to do so even

when Democrats had control of the Legislature and the governor's mansion.

Those battles are in the future. For now, the IBEW and its many allies can celebrate the victory in Michigan and the better times that are ahead.

"Unions made Michigan a hub of American business and an engine of America's middle class," President Joe Biden said on Twitter. "A strong middle class benefits everyone. Michigan is leading as a great place to be a worker and a great place to do business."



### **IBEW MEDIA** WORLD

In addition to your monthly issue of The Electrical Worker, check out lots of other IBEW-related content online.

### www.ibew.org

Get the latest IBEW news, including an electronic version of this and previous newspapers, at IBEW.org.

### YouTube

Cincinnati Local 212 apprentice Robert Lewis spent 11 years in prison but proved he deserved a second chance, and he got it with the IBEW. Watch his story at YouTube.com/ TheElectricalWorker.

### Vimeo

Did you know that the IBEW has an official song? It's called "Where Electricity Goes, There Goes the IBEW," and you can learn all about its history at Vimeo.com/IBEW.

### **HourPower**

National **Real Estate** Advisors, in partnership

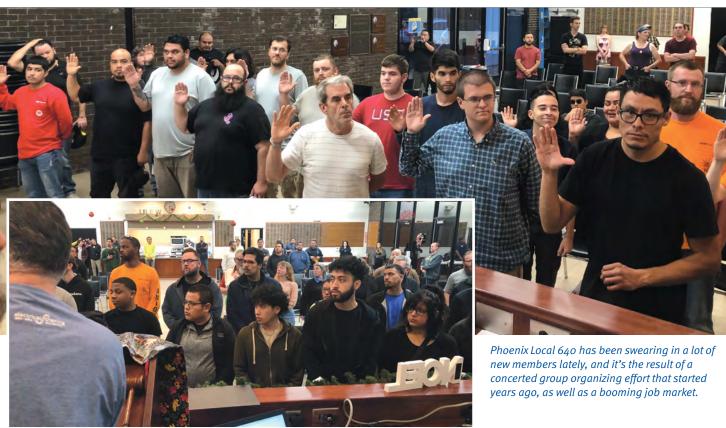
with Catalyst Healthcare Real Estate, is poised to grow its portfolio, and that means jobs for IBEW members. Learn more

at IBEWHourPower.com.

### **ElectricTV**

Kansas City Local 124 powered

the revitalization of the airport with a "harmony agreement" that mandated that all electrical work be done by members. Get the full story at ElectricTV.net.



### Long Organizing Push Pays Off for **Fast-Growing Arizona Local**

rganizing is often described as a marathon. It takes time to build relationships and establish trust. For Phoenix Local 640, that long effort has come to fruition, and the local's rolls are swelling.

"This is the culmination of a lot of things that we've been trying for a long time," said Dean Wine, Local 640 business manager and International Executive member. "It's like dominoes falling into place."

In 2015, Local 640 had fewer than 1,500 members. By January of this year, that number had more than doubled to 3,600, and it's still growing, with much work filled by travelers.

As for how 640 made it happen, Wine said there was no magic bullet. It wasn't one campaign or one person. It was the result of a concerted group effort, from the leadership down to the members, and a willingness to try new things - alongside a booming job market.

Business in Arizona really started to open up in 2019, said Wine, with data centers and chip factories popping up all over, as well as facilities like hospitals. There's so much going on in tech, said organizer Kevin Maher, that Phoenix is now being called the Silicon Desert.

"We have more work than we can shake a stick at," Maher said.

Arizona was fortunate in that few jobs were lost during the worst of the pandemic, and the economy has quickly surged since. And legislation like the CHIPS and Science Act, which promises federal dollars for domestic manufacturing of semiconductors, has helped as well. In fact, said Maher, one project went from having a price tag of \$12 billion to \$40 billion. So it's no surprise that Local 640 has been bringing in a lot of travelers to help meet the demand.

"We've been employing around

900 travelers," Wine said. "There's work all over."

With so much going on, Local 640 has been trying everything it can to fill the jobs. There's the tried-and-true tactics of attending job fairs, doing organizing blitzes, going out to area schools and running ads, which have all played an important role. But they've also engaged in some out-of-the-box thinking and are doing things like offering bonuses to any member who brings in a nonunion worker who stays for at least 90 days.

"It's been pretty popular," Wine said. "It's brought in close to 100 guys so far."

And when that worker comes over, their friends are more likely to follow. More dominoes falling into place.

"We now have the ability to strip entire crews and place them with a contractor," Maher said. "And these are guys who know each other already and have been working together. It's a winwin for everybody.'

The local is also making it easier to become a member and start getting benefits. Now, workers with certain journeyman qualifications who haven't yet taken the journeyman exam can become full-fledged members, which wasn't the case before. And for anyone who comes in and can show that they have health insurance through their current employer, Local 640 offers to cover them immediately upon getting a job.

"We have some very forwardthinking things going on," Maher said. "If there's a front we can be effective on, we're on it."

Another avenue that Local 640 has been using is the construction wireman/construction electrician classification, which allows those who fall somewhere between a journeyman and an apprentice the chance to join the union and get additional training. Wine and Maher say it has been vital in terms of filling the jobs gap.

"The CW/CEs saved our butts," Wine said. "We couldn't possibly bring in enough people, with the amount of work we have, through just apprenticeships."

### 'The nonunion side knows we're here. And we're not stopping until we have everybody under our umbrella."

#### – Kevin Maher, Local 640 organizer

The members were skeptical at first, said Wine and Maher, but they kept the conversations going, explaining how important it was to the local and their ability to bid more jobs. Eventually, they said, the members came around.

"The key is getting members to understand that most CW/CEs will eventually become journeymen, and that they're not taking jobs away but are actually allowing us to be more competitive," Maher said.

In fact, getting the membership on board has been a core component in the local's organizing. Wine and Maher said they've been talking to the members about welcoming all newcomers, underlining the principle that organizing is everybody's job.

"Don't be afraid of the membership," Maher said. "They will help you if you educate them on what the goal is."

Wine and Maher also credit their organizing team for working so well together and with partners like the National Electrical Contractors Association and the Labor Management Cooperation Committee. It's a team that includes organizers Javier Ortega, Robert Lopez and Carmen Eaves and previously had Phil Aguayo, Benny Cabarloc, Enrique Perez and Greg Kelly, with new organizers Steven Perez and Roxana Barrett coming on board. Wine also extended his appreciation to organizing administrative assistant Paula Korintus and membership administrative assistant Margaret Rinker.

"It's a complete and total group effort," Maher said. "We're rooting for everyone's success."

And it's a team that includes bilingual organizers, as well as the local's first woman organizer.

"Having a diverse staff who look like the people we're trying to organize has been extremely helpful," Wine said.

Wine meets weekly with the organizers, so everybody stays in the loop and can share ideas on what's working and what might need to be tweaked.

"You need to keep an open mind," Wine said. "Sometimes you have to break the mold and find a combo that works for you."

Local 640 has also been using tools like Action Builder, which digitizes much of an organizer's paperwork, making it easier to get out in the field, and the Workforce Recruitment Task Force. The WRTF generates leads from social media and forwards to organizers.

"WRTF has been valuable in building a database of electricians, especially areas that are not licensed where it would be public information," Maher said.

Local 640's success has not been lost on the nonunion contractors, either.

"The nonunion side knows we're here," Maher said. "And we're not stopping until we have everybody under our umbrella."



## Locals' Outreach Programs Give Young Women a Glimpse of the Electrical Trade

here's more construction work than construction workers, and that means the race is on to recruit more people to the trades. Local unions across the IBEW are casting a wider net by welcoming historically underrepresented groups like women and people of color.

Some are even starting in middle school. "Knowledge and an understanding of what the building trades are and how these careers can lead to a rewarding life are too often reserved for young men while they are in high school, or even younger," said Philadelphia Local 98 Business Manager Mark Lynch Jr. "Reaching women at a younger age, before they make their career choices, invites them into the conversation and gives them an option that they may not have known existed."

That's the impetus behind Rosie's Girls, Local 98's pre-apprenticeship program for girls in Philadelphia and the surrounding area. Run through the local's training arm, Apprentice Training for the Electrical Industry, the program is for young women who are entering 11th and 12th grades.

Named after the iconic image of a woman factory worker from World War II, it is designed to introduce these young women to the electrical and building trades by familiarizing them with topic areas including safety, tools and material, the theoretical basics of electrical and telecommunications installation, and jobsite conditions.

"While there have been some Local 98 female recruitment programs in the past, we felt there was a need to reach them at a younger age, to introduce them to the field and provide them with the technical and emotional support to enter the industry," Lynch said. "Both Local 98 and ATEI wanted to demonstrate to young women that they can pursue a rewarding career with us."

Austin, Texas, Local 520 is starting even younger. It sponsors a construction camp for middle school girls put on by Rosendin Electric and the Austin chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction. The free week-long camp gives the girls a safe and supportive space to explore career paths in the construction industry while getting hands-on experience.

Outfitted with a hard hat, safety glasses and



work gloves, first-year campers learn how to safely use power tools and spend the week constructing concrete planters, lamps and doghouses that are then donated to a local animal shelter.

Those seven days can be transformative, said Jolsna Thomas, president of The Rosendin Foundation, Rosendin Electric's charitable arm.

"A lot of the girls are hesitant and shy at first because they've never touched tools before. And some are very petite — the tools are as tall as they are," Thomas said. "But once they start working with the tools, their confidence increases to no bounds."

These programs offer middle and high school girls the opportunity to try out the trades at a crucial time in their education. In Texas, state law require students have to pick a career path when they enter high school.

"Without exposure through Camp NAWIC and other similar programs, girls who don't have mothers or other female role models in their families who work in construction would not know that construction could be a viable career path for them," Thomas said.

Added Local 98's Lynch: "Introducing students to these topics and receiving industry-recognized credentials at an earlier age provides them with the confidence that they can pursue this non-traditional career. Rosie's Girls is designed to demonstrate to young women that the electrical industry can offer a rewarding career with family-sustaining wages."

And as women have been proven, they are more than capable of doing the work.

"Historically, it wasn't that women couldn't thrive in the construction industry, but rather that they simply weren't afforded the same opportunities," Lynch said.

By offering these opportunities to school-age girls, these programs show them that not only are there great careers out there, but that they are wanted and will be supported as workers.

"It is very important to support our sisters in the trade," said Local 520 Vice President Marc



At left, volunteer instructor Cathy Schernik works with campers at the construction camp Austin, Texas, Local 520 IBEW sponsors for middle school girls. Above, from left to right, are Teila Allmond, Director Brian Myers and Elaine McGuire with Philadelphia Local 98's training arm.

Pendleton, who often goes out to talk to the girls during camp. "They are always great electricians."

At Camp NAWIC, nothing is pink, said Thomas. What the campers get instead are adult-size tools that they can take home and the chance to hear from women in the trades about all the opportunities that are available in the construction industry.

"To see a panel full of women, it's awesome," Thomas said. "I wish I'd seen stuff like that when I was young."

While Rosie's Girls is just getting started this year, Camp NAWIC has been around since 2019 and has camps across the country. It is even hosting another opportunity, TRF Camp Build, this summer, which will be for both girls and boys at the Austin Electrical Training Alliance.

"I intentionally established TRF Camp Build at the AETA because I wanted to showcase the amazing apprenticeship program and get the campers and their parents familiar with the facility and location," said Thomas, who previously worked as a Local 520 business development representative.

Not only do programs like Rosie's Girls and Camp NAWIC give girls the chance to work with tools, but they also expose them to the industry itself and show them how to get in, something that isn't usually afforded to girls and women unless they already know someone in the trades.

"The camp is a great opportunity," Pendleton said. "If students go through these types of programs it looks really good in their apprenticeship interview and they're more likely to get accepted."

To that end, both programs offer interview tips and mentorship opportunities as a way to set the girls up for success.

"We need to make it easy for kids who aren't children of members to get in," Thomas said. "We need to make sure that unions don't seem like country clubs."

With the coming influx of construction jobs, there's a crucial need to train as many people as possible, and that includes women and girls.

"Women stepped up to the plate during World War II and are more than ready and capable to step up now," Lynch said. "This effort to increase the number of women in our pre-apprenticeship program is about exposure to the possibilities that are available to women. And the IBEW is a great place to acquire a career and help move this country into the next age of advanced technology."



Austin, Texas, Local 520 brings members, often women, out to the construction camp to teach the girls basics like bending conduit.

### 'Unions Are Cool Again': Generation Z Finds Its Place in the IBEW

oung workers are entering a workforce that is still recovering from the pandemic while also dealing with high inflation and rampant income inequality. There is no shortage of economic anxiety.

While the circumstances may be new, the core issue — how to get a good-paying job with benefits that will lead to a secure retirement — is not. For many in Generation Z, the answer is clear: Join a union.

This generational momentum gives the IBEW an excellent opportunity to shore up its own future and raise a new crop of leaders.

"Unions are cool again," said Toronto Local 353 member Tim Shilson, who also chairs his NextGen committee, the IBEW's young-worker initiative in Canada. "You might think Gen Z is on their phone watching TikTok videos, but they're also watching giants like Apple, Amazon and Starbucks employees demand representation and sign a union card. Gen Z is just starting to see that a union is the best path to the middle class."

That sentiment is borne out in data from the Center for American Progress showing that Generation Z is more supportive of unions than Baby Boomers, Generation X and even Millennials, who are regarded as particularly pro-union.

For the study, which used data from 2020, Gen Z members were 23 or younger, Millennials were 24 to 39, Gen Xers were 40 to 55 and Baby Boomers were 56 to 74.

The report showed Generation Z with a mean approval rating of 64.3 out of 100 for unions, compared with 60.5 for Millennials, 57.8 for Generation X and 57.2 for Baby Boomers. What's more, Gen Z is also more supportive of unions than older generations were at their age.

"Gen Z sees the value in organizing," said Madison, Wis., Local 965 Business Manager Dillon Gorman, a 31-yearold. "Compensation is part of it, but they also want a voice in their workplace. They're getting the message from older generations of 'Don't work like I did."

Gorman, who is also a member of RENEW, the U.S. counterpart to NextGen, said Gen Z is willing to learn and listen, but they recognize their own value and won't stick around if they're not being treated right.

"Money is important, but it's also everything else," Gorman said. "They don't want to have to work on their days off. They want fair scheduling and time off for family and the ability to have a conversation with the boss if they want."

The CAP report found that Gen Zers with college degrees support unions at roughly the same rate as those without a degree. By contrast, Gen Xers and Baby Boomers without degrees tend to be more pro-union than those who graduated from college.

The findings aren't surprising given how many of today's college graduates are saddled with debt in a job market that no longer promises them a



Above: RENEW members from Charlotte, N.C., Local 379. At right: RENEW members from Raleigh, N.C., Local 553.

comfortable middle-class lifestyle.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Local 405 President Jeff Cooling said his wife took the college route, and after getting her degree she was making half of what he made as an inside wireman.

"Thank goodness for IBEW wages. We still got to build a house," said Cooling, who also serves on the 11th District RENEW Advisory Committee.

His wife went on to apply for an IBEW apprenticeship and now works as a voice and data video technician.

"Now we're a dual-income IBEW house," Cooling said. "We've definitely seen the benefits."

Cooling, who also serves in the lowa House, said he sees a lot of energy in Millennials and Generation Z, which is good for unions and groups like RENEW and NextGen.

"Younger generations are fired up. They're ready to take the fight on," he said. "RENEW gives them a space to talk about what's going on in their locals. It gives them a voice."

It's something that Charlotte, N.C., Local 379 member Melissa Reyes has seen as well.

"I think there is more of an activist's spirit in our younger members," said Reyes, who has been involved with RENEW since 2019. "I've been able to mobilize young members in our local to participate in leafleting and canvassing with little effort. They just get it."

Reyes also noted that the younger workers have been successful at changing the safety culture at work.

"Our younger members are much more attuned to working safe and understand that no job is more important than their lives," she said.

The security of a union job is appealing for a generation entering the workforce at such an economically precarious time. According to a 2022 survey by Deloitte, only a quarter of Gen Z reported that they can comfortably cover their monthly living expenses, and nearly half



said they live paycheck to paycheck.

Meanwhile, a recent Cornell University paper found that union members make about \$1 million more over the course of their careers compared to nonunion workers. And unions help reduce racial and gender pay gaps, according to research by the Economic Policy Institute.

"What the union does is it prevents hiring discrimination and promotes job security," said New Orleans Local 130 member Hunter Allums, a Gen Zer. "No matter what company I go to in my city, I'm making the same wages and my skills are recognized before they even see my face because I'm union-certified. On top of that, I can also travel the U.S. to find jobs if I want to and the union will do all the footwork for me. That feels a lot better than scouring hiring sites to see if anyone can take you in your field and pay you properly while the bills are piling up."

The CAP report, which came out last fall, noted that young Americans' strong support for unions is exceptional even when compared with historically high union approval across the board a record 71% according to an August 2022 Gallup survey, the highest since 1965. And a 2021 Pew Research Center study found that 69% of Americans ages 18 to 29 believe "labor unions have a positive effect on the way things are going in the country" compared with 55% of adults overall.

One reason CAP cited for the pop-

ularity of unions among younger workers is the racial and ethnic diversity of Gen Zers and Millennials. While 75.5% percent of Baby Boomers and 65.2% of Gen Xers are white and not Hispanic, according to 2020 data, only 59% of Millennials and 52.4% of Gen Zers fall into that category. By contrast, the share of adults who identify as Hispanic or Latino — 23.3% for Gen Zers and 16.4% of Millennials, compared with only 12.6% of Gen Xers and 7.8% of Baby Boomers — has grown with each subsequent generation.

"This demographic shift toward a more diverse America, which will likely continue for decades, has played a role in shaping pro-union attitudes among younger Americans, as nonwhite workers typically support unions more than white workers," the report stated.

For the IBEW, groups like RENEW/ NextGen and the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus are good ways to bring that diverse workforce in.

"RENEW and other affinity groups make the IBEW more cohesive and welcoming. There is a place for you here. We want to hear from you and what you have to say," Cooling said. "As we build a more diverse membership, more and more people will see themselves reflected, and they'll want to knock on our door and join our ranks."

Cooling, Gorman, Reyes and Shilson all pointed to RENEW and NextGen as an effective tool for recruiting and retention. "By investing our resources into our youngest members, the IBEW stands to gain the biggest return from them over time," Shilson said. "A member who obtains strong union values at the age of 30 could put in 30 years of active engagement with their membership just before they begin to look forward to retirement."

Reyes, who last year became a lead organizer for North Carolina and South Carolina, said RENEW is also a great way to find and train the next generation of leaders.

"I have seen several instances in my own local where RENEW members go on to serve as an officer," Reyes said. "RENEW gives young members an opportunity to learn the ins and outs of the union by giving them reasons to stop by the union hall and have conversations with our business manager and president: opportunities they otherwise would not have had if there was not an affinity group to keep them engaged."

Added Gorman: "There's no apprenticeship for being a union leader. RENEW is how you find the next generation."

Having an involved younger membership can seed a new generation of workers as older members look to retirement.

"With a RENEW committee, a local union can ask RENEW members to speak at high school job fairs or at apprentice orientation," Reyes said. "That younger audience may gravitate more to the message if they see it coming from their own peers."

Tarn Goelling, director of the IBEW's Civic and Community Engagement Department, noted that the union is committed to providing training and mentorship to its young members through local union affinity committees and other regional and international opportunities, including hosting the International RENEW NextGen Conference, which is scheduled for August this year.

"It is a unique conference that is organized by young workers for young workers, and the energy and enthusiasm it brings is vital to sustaining the IBEW and our organizing efforts," Goelling said.

That sense of union solidarity is something engaged members spread to others.

"The affinity groups help develop a sense of camaraderie that members may not experience on the job," Reyes said. "This sense of togetherness is what will help with internal organizing, because when a member feels like he or she is truly a part of their union, their testimony to nonmembers about what the union means to them will be heartfelt."

Gorman said RENEW also is a way to transition into something bigger, into the Brotherhood.

"The IBEW is not just another job. There's a legacy, with over a hundred years of history," he said. "RENEW helps members understand that."

### NORTH OF 49° AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

### 'Get Creative, Dream Big': Canadian Conference Fuels Organizing Momentum

nergized by four days full of ideas, information and inspiration in Toronto, an army of First District organizers raced back to their locals in late March, ready to supercharge their efforts to grow the IBEW across Canada.

The Canadian Membership Development Conference, which hadn't been held since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, drew 120 delegates, along with dozens of speakers, presenters and guests.

"We need everyone to think outside of the box, get creative, dream big, and seek out opportunities that may be unconventional," First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk said, citing the aggressive national organizing plan he launched after taking office last year.

He pledged that officers and staff will support locals every step of the way as organizing in Canada rebounds after years of decline.

"From worst to first!" Shewchuk said, revving up members to outpace U.S. organizing and build ever greater and more diverse bargaining and political power on workers' behalf. "We have many irons in the fire, and we are on our way there."

Toward that end, the conference featured a jobsite blitz, a reception with signatory contractors and three days packed with speeches, workshops and more casual yet invaluable opportunities to learn from one another.

"The part I really like is meeting people, exchanging stories," said organizer Richard Prasad of Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804. "There's not one book that fits all for us organizers. It's these stories and the camaraderie that help us become more effective."

That kind of personal outreach helped journeywoman electrician Chrissie Caprani feel more comfortable in her role as an organizer at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Local 529. "I'm learning a lot, especially from seasoned organizers," she said. "It's been pretty awesome."

Shewchuk's goals for Canada dovetail with International President Kenneth W. Cooper's mission to grow the IBEW to 1 million members throughout North America over the next five years.

"It's ambitious," Cooper acknowledged in his address. "But we didn't get to where we are today by lowering the bar. I know the last decade here has been tough. But I'm proud to report that you have not only stopped the bleeding, you are growing for the first time in years.

"Momentum is on our side. The construction industry continues to grow across Canada. If we can provide the workers, we get the work," he said, emphasizing that "the basics of good organizing haven't changed that much since 1899: It's about building relationships and trust, one conversation at a time."

Delegates did exactly that as they fanned out in teams with members of Toronto Local 353 to survey workers at area construction sites and determine which projects are, and aren't, using union labour.

"We're collecting data on signatory and non-signatory contractors," Reggie Latulippe of Ottawa, Ontario, Local 586 said during the survey. "It's been a good day. So far we've hit about six sites and had access everywhere." Three days later, the conference welcomed signatory contractors to an "industry night" reception with members.

"It's a relaxed atmosphere," said Graeme Aitken, executive director of Ontario's Electrical Contractor Association. "You learn about each other as people, and when you learn about each other as people it helps you as business partners. And we are without a doubt, as partners, the strongest industry in the construction sector."

Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213 Business Manager Jim Lofty said the gathering made it possible "to have a different flavor" of conversation.

"Casual, friendly, open," he said.



Canada's high-energy Membership Development Conference in Toronto in March welcomed industry partners. At podium, Graeme Aitken, executive director of the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario, talks with First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk, center, and International Representative Martin Duckworth, left.

"The IBEW Constitution says friendly relationships with contractors, so I think if we're not doing this, we're not doing our members a service."

In his opening-day remarks, Shewchuk shared his excitement about the reception in Canada and the doors it could open. "We must remember that the enemy is not our signatory employers," he said. "In fact, they are our allies. Our greatest weapon when it comes to fighting the nonunion and the unorganized. More IBEW contractors under our umbrella equates to better wages and benefits for all."

### L'élan de syndicalisation alimenté par la conférence canadienne inspire la créativité et de rêver grand

la fin mars, une armée d'organisatrices et d'organisateurs du premier district réunie à Toronto est retournée vers leurs sections locales, motivés par quatre jours remplis d'idées, d'informations et d'inspirations prêts à doubler leurs efforts pour faire croître la FIOE partout au Canada.

La conférence canadienne sur la croissance de l'affiliation syndicale, qui n'a pas eu lieu depuis 2019 en raison de la pandémie de la COVID-19, a accueilli 120 déléguées et délégués ainsi qu'une douzaine de conférencières, conférenciers et d'invitées, invités.

« Nous voulons que tout le monde sorte des sentiers battus, de faire preuve de créativité, de rêver grand et de chercher des solutions qui peuvent être non conventionnelles », a déclaré le vice-président international Russ Shewchuk, en citant le plan de syndicalisation rigoureux lancé l'an dernier lors de son entrée en fonction.

Il a promis que les officiers et le personnel épauleront les sections locales à chaque étape du processus de syndicalisation au Canada qui reprend après des années de déclin.

« Des derniers aux premiers! », a déclaré Shewchuk pour motiver les membres à devancer le taux de syndicalisation des É.-U., d'acquérir du poids politique et de renforcer le pouvoir de négociation toujours plus grands et diversifiés au nom des travailleuses et travailleurs. « Nous avons beaucoup de projets en cours et nous sommes sur le droit chemin. »

À cet égard, la conférence a mis de l'avant une campagne de syndicalisation visant divers chantiers, une réception destinée aux entrepreneurs signataires et trois jours remplis de discours, d'ateliers et des rencontres informelles, mais précieuses pour apprendre les uns des autres.

« Ce qui me plait le plus est de rencontrer des personnes, d'échanger des histoires », a mentionné l'organisateur syndical Richard Prasad de Kitchener en Ontario du local 804. « Il n'y a pas une formule qui s'applique à tous les organisateurs. C'est grâce à ces histoires et à la camaraderie que nous sommes plus efficaces. »

Ce genre de contact personnel a aidé la compagnonne Chrissie Caprani à être plus à l'aise dans son rôle d'organisatrice syndicale à Saskatoon en Saskatchewan du local 529. « J'en apprends beaucoup, plus particulièrement des organisateurs qui ont plus d'expériences », déclare-t-elle. « Je trouve ça formidable. »

Les objectifs de Shewchuk pour le Canada s'harmonisent avec la mission du président international Kenneth W. Cooper d'augmenter le nombre des membres de la FIOE à un million partout en Amérique du Nord d'ici cinq ans. « C'est ambitieux », a reconnu Cooper lors de son discours. « Mais nous ne sommes pas arrivés ici en nivelant par le bas. Je reconnais que la dernière décennie a été difficile. Mais je suis fier de vous annoncer que vous avez non seulement arrêtez l'hémorragie, mais que vous prenez de l'expansion pour la première fois depuis des années. »

« Le vent souffle dans notre direction. L'industrie de la construction continue de prendre de l'expansion partout au Canada. Si nous pouvons fournir les travailleurs, nous obtenons le travail », dit-il, en soulignant que « les principes d'une bonne campagne de syndicalisation qui n'a pas vraiment changé depuis 1899 : il s'agit d'établir des relations et de créer des liens de confiance, une conversation à la fois. »

C'est exactement ce que les délégués ont fait en se regroupant avec des membres de la section locale 353 de Toronto dans le but d'interroger les travailleurs sur les chantiers pour savoir s'ils sont syndiqués ou non.

« Nous recueillons des données sur les entrepreneurs signataires et non signataires », mentionne Reggie Latulippe de la section locale 586 d'Ottawa en Ontario lors de ces rencontres. « La journée a été bonne. Nous avons jusqu'à présent visité six chantiers et nous avons eu accès partout où nous sommes allés. »

Trois jours plus tard, la conférence a accueilli des entrepreneurs signataires à une réception avec les membres.

« C'est une ambiance détendue », a déclaré Graeme Aitken, le directeur exécutif de l'*Electrical Contractor Association* de l'Ontario. « On apprend à se connaitre et lorsqu'on apprend à se connaitre ça l'aide en tant que partenaire d'affaires. Et comme partenaires d'affaires, nous sommes sans aucun doute l'industrie la plus solide dans le secteur de la construction. »

Le gérant d'affaires Jim Lofty de la section locale 213 à Vancouver en Colombie-Britannique a mentionné que la réception a donné lieu à des conversations avec une « saveur différente ».

« Décontractées, amicales et sincères », dit-il. « La Constitution de la FIOE mentionne d'établir des relations amicales avec les entrepreneurs et si ce n'est pas ce que nous faisions, nous ne rendons pas service aux membres. »

Lors du discours d'ouverture de Shewchuk, il a partagé son enthousiasme en lien à la réception au Canada et les possibilités qui peuvent en découler.

« Nous devons nous souvenir que les employeurs signataires ne sont pas nos ennemis », dit-il. « Ils sont en effet nos alliés. C'est notre outil le plus précieux lorsque vient le temps de lutter contre les entreprises et les personnes non syndiquées. Le fait d'avoir plus d'entrepreneurs avec la FIOE veut dire de meilleurs salaires et de meilleurs avantages sociaux pour toutes et tous. »

### CIRCUITS

### 'Huge' Win for Code of Excellence: On-Clock Training at Raytheon Plant

More than 2,400 Raytheon Technologies missile and defense workers are getting on-the-clock training on the IBEW's Code of Excellence program, thanks to a years-long effort by the leaders of Waltham, Mass., Local 1505 and representatives from the Second District office.

"This is the biggest Code of Excellence implementation in the Manufacturing branch," said Director of Manufacturing Brian Lamm, explaining that rank-and-file workers and managers alike will receive code training over the coming year. "The contract ensures 100% participation. It's huge for us."

Launched by International President Edwin D. Hill in 2007, the Code of Excellence was designed to ensure the highest standards in every IBEW workplace. Where the code is formally embraced, leaders and members are expected to commit to demonstrating the union's core values in everything they do: safety, professionalism, accountability, relationships and quality.

"It's taken us a long time to get here," Lamm said of efforts to bring the Code of Excellence to this Raytheon facility, where workers manufacture such things as radar systems and their components, missile launch systems, and the unarmed missiles for them. (Explosive ordnance for these is installed later at another location.)

Over those years, representatives from the Second District, whose purview includes Massachusetts, negotiated alongside leaders from Local 1505 to begin implementing the Code of Excellence, with Raytheon finally agreeing to allow classes to begin in 2021.

"Code training was going to be voluntary at first, but then we negotiated to make it mandatory," said Second District International Representative John Horak, who services Local 1505.

One of the IBEW's biggest remaining implementation hurdles was convincing Raytheon that it would be worth its while to allow the hourlong Code of Excellence classes to be conducted on company time. "One hour per employee is not a small expense" when multiplied by 2,400 employees, noted Lamm.

The company recently agreed to budget for code classes to be held as part of an employee's regular workday, said Local 1505 Business Manager Michael Zagami, and this iteration of Code of Excellence training is now officially underway.

"There are so many departments and a lot of different skill sets," Zagami said. "It's going to be a challenge for us, but the company is committed, and we're willing to do what it takes." He added that Local 1505 was the first IBEW local to negotiate a contract with Raytheon in the late 1940s.

"We have a commitment from Raytheon to give every employee this training," Horak stressed. "It's mandatory for all new employees, too - a condition of their employment."

Members of the IBEW's Education Department, led by International Representative Craig Duffy, have been conducting train-the-trainer sessions for a group of 10 to 12 chief stewards and 30 to 40 department stewards, with continuing support provided by the department during this first year. "The local is handpicking the core group of trainers, and we're doing meetings of 20 or so workers at a time," Horak said.

Lamm credited Zagami for assembling the team that made it possible. "They even got Raytheon to commit to flying a Code of Excellence flag outside its entrance," he said.

"The local's been all-in, too," Horak added, with Zagami meeting regularly with Raytheon's labor relations team. "Everyone knows that this is not something we can do a couple of times. There's no second chance with this."

Horak said the training agreement also should help other businesses take notice of the IBEW's commitment to such things as quality, professionalism and safety, helping the union further expand its reputation for being the first choice for the job.

"We're talking about a company that's a huge defense contractor. It's the largest Raytheon office in the Northeast," Horak said. "We're helping them see how the Code of Excellence truly fits their culture."

Greg Munday and Gail Nadeau of Waltham, Mass., Local 1505 work on radar for Patriot missile systems in Raytheon's hardware integration center, which is getting on-the-clock Code of Excellence training.

### 'Exciting' Agreement Brings Fiber Jobs to IBEW Lineworkers at Alabama Power

IBEW utility lineworkers in Alabama will soon be running fiber-optic cabling for broadband internet, thanks to a recent agreement with Alabama Power. The pact stands to have far-reaching jobgrowth and training implications for IBEW utility workers across the U.S.

"This is the result of the IBEW lobbying Congress to invest in expanding fiber optic networks and to better allow utilities to build out the middle mile of those networks," said Utility Department Director Donnie Colston.

The agreement covers the installation, handling and attaching of fiber-optic cable, plus the intermediate splicing and testing of new-construction fiber.

"Traditionally, we've just been utility linemen, dealing with nothing but electrical wires," said U-19 Business Manager Casey Shelton. "We've never really stepped into communications service. But COVID opened our eyes to the ways that technology has changed, and we started giving thought to broadband work."

Electrical utilities are increasingly interested in adding broadband expansion, thanks in part to the billions of dollars in subsidies being made available in recent years under such government funding programs as the American Rescue Plan and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

"The IBEW lobbied hard to include money in these laws to build out broadband networks," said Colston. He and Austin Keyser, assistant to the international president for government affairs, have also been working with the White House and the Edison Electric Institute, which represents investor-owned utilities, on developing a national broadband strategy.

"Broadband and high-speed internet service is on the way to every part of the U.S., especially in rural and traditionally underserved communities," Keyser said. "We're talking with lawmakers on Capitol Hill and policymakers in the Biden administration every day to make sure IBEW members are the ones who will get that work and, just as importantly, keep it."

Colston said that ongoing efforts to maintain good working relations on the part of labor and management alike has helped move Alabama Power to the head of the pack in this arena. "There are other utility companies that are wanting to build out the middle mile and take advantage of using IBEW workers to do it," he said, "but they are not as far along as Alabama Power."

Just as significant is the fact that Alabama Power also negotiated adding fiber-optic training to its apprenticeship program with the National Utility Industry Training Fund, Colston said, which will benefit all the utilities and locals that use the NUITF program at IBEW training centers across the U.S. NUITF is



IBEW members at Alabama Power are learning how to splice fiber optic cable. Foreground from left: Patrick Sims and Dylan Garner. In back, from left: Bradley Anderson, Lynn Garrison and Ronny Monk.

a joint project of the IBEW and major U.S. utility companies to boost recruitment and training.

"Alabama Power reached out to NUITF and said: 'We've already put the criteria together. We want everyone to come along with us on this and add it to their apprenticeship programs. We want all of NUITF to benefit from this,'" Colston said.

The agreement didn't happen overnight. "We brought it to the company, and then there was 2½ years of discussion," he said, which helped Alabama Power recognize the many benefits of having the IBEW members they already trust take on this work. His system council is made up of nine locals representing Alabama Power workers: Mobile Local 345, Gadsden Local 391, Dothan Local 796, Montgomery Local 801, Jasper Local 833, Birmingham Local 841, Tallassee Local 904, Demopolis Local 1053 and Wilsonville Local 2077.

"Now, utilities are trying to figure out the advantages of applying for IIJA funding, and the NUITF program stands to benefit as well," said Mark Baker, an international representative with the Utility Department and the executive director of NUITF. "This is a phenomenal reflection of why politics matters."

"Our industry is updating how to communicate with substations, where we're already pulling in fiber-optic cable, while also addressing cyber security," Colston said. "What utilities want to do is run the actual fiber-optic cable itself, and then let communities tap into that and use it. What we want is for the IBEW to build it out together with them."

The Alabama Power agreement is helping make that happen. "It's all in training now, learning how to splice and test 288-strand fiber-optic broadband cable," Shelton said.

Connecting these lines to homes and businesses — the "last mile" of fiber-optic networks — will continue to be handled by telecom workers.

"These are exciting times," Shelton said. "There's so much potential for growth, in installation and maintenance alike. We're looking forward to continuing to make sure that as many of these jobs as possible go to IBEW members."

The Alabama Power agreement specifically calls for a "roving connectiv-

ity crew" to handle all aspects of fiber-optic cable installation throughout northern Alabama, including makeready work such as pole setting, moving distribution equipment on the poles to make communication space available for cable, pulling in and attaching cabling, and intermediate cable splicing. Nine new IBEW Alabama Power jobs are being created with these crews, Shelton said, with another crew set to start work in 2024.

"The main thing is that Alabama Power is using its existing workforce to build out fiber," Colston said. "It's an investor-owned utility that said, 'We want to take advantage of the IIJA funds, we want the IBEW to partner with us, and we're going to use our own union linemen.""

The agreement not only means more IBEW jobs, it means access to life-changing broadband for rural Alabamans.

"Considering how much kids nowadays are relying on remote learning, this is extremely important," Shelton said. "Long term, we might see the day that it's almost more important to restore broadband first, then power."

He is grateful during this exciting time. "We've got to constantly be digging in to do more work, and this could mean years upon years of work, installing and maintaining fiber lines."

"It's a real steppingstone for us," he said. "It's a huge win for the IBEW and the customer."

### Stephenson, Utility CEO Honored as Labor-Management Partners

A visionary partnership between International President Emeritus Lonnie R. Stephenson and former American Electric Power CEO Nick Akins led to a joint honor in March for their achievements in the energy industry.

The Edison Electric Institute and the IBEW presented the leaders with the 2023 Edwin D. Hill Award during an annual conference of management and labor.

"Nick and Lonnie are true champions and leaders for organized labor and the electric power industry," said EEI



President Tom Kuhn, who leads the association, which represents U.S. investor-owned electric utilities. "They have worked hard to make our labor-industry partnership stronger than ever."

The award is named for the late IBEW international president who retired in 2015, turning the reins over to Stephenson. Under Hill's leadership, the union and EEI created the National Labor and Management Public Affairs Committee, or LAMPAC, to address the nation's energy challenges and the shared goals of safe jobs; a highly skilled workforce; and well-managed, efficient utilities.

"This award — named after one of the great IBEW leaders of our time — is an honor of a lifetime," said Stephenson, who retired in January after a 48-year career that began as an apprentice wireman at Rock Island, Ill. Local 145. "I take great pride in the partnership [we] built with the EEI over the years. We showed the nation that labor and management can unite to promote stronger, safer and more productive workplaces."

Citing legislative victories that include saving Illinois' nuclear power industry and fighting deregulation, he lauded Akins, who retired as CEO in 2022 and currently serves as executive chair of AEP's board of directors, as one of his closest partners on the battlefield.

"The IBEW and EEI worked together with one goal: to ensure a bright energy future for the nation and the men and women who kept it running," Stephenson said.

The March 13 event also recognized the teamwork of U.S. Sens. Maria Cantwell, a Washington Democrat, and Shelley Moore Capito, a West Virginia Republican, who are pushing for a broadband buildout that would create jobs and bring high-speed internet to communities across the country.

Rep. Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat, presented the senators with the John D. Dingell Award, named for her late husband and the longest-serving member of Congress. His nearly 60-year tenure on Capitol Hill included chairing the House Energy and Commerce Committee and fostering labor-management collaboration on a wide range of issues.

International President Kenneth W. Cooper hailed the senators as proof that "Washington can find bipartisan solutions to modernizing our nation's electrical infrastructure."

"Things like high-speed broadband, a reliable energy grid and good energy jobs aren't partisan issues but basic common sense," Cooper said. "I thank Senators Cantwell and Capito for their leadership and commitment to crossing the aisle to do what's best for the nation." International President Kenneth W. Cooper accepts LAMPAC's Edwin D. Hill Award on behalf of his predecessor, Lonnie R. Stephenson, for Stephenson's leadership the power industry. With him from left: EEI President Tom Kuhn, American Electric Power CEO Julie Sloat and AEP Chair Kick Akins.

He also saluted his predecessor at the IBEW, along with Akins.

"Lonnie and Nick's careers are testaments to the power of labor-management partnerships in the energy industry," he said. "Because of their leadership and vision, the IBEW and the energy industry are working closer than ever to ensure a modern electrical infrastructure, good energy jobs and a low-carbon future for America."

### Future Leaders: Apply for the Founders' Scholarship

Every year, the IBEW awards scholarships worth up to \$24,000 to help cultivate a new generation of leadership in the union and the electrical industry.

For 2023, the Founders' Scholarship application deadline is June 1, and International President Kenneth W. Cooper wants every eligible member to consider applying.

"Our industries are some of the most dynamic and challenging, not just in the trades but everywhere. A constant striving toward excellence is the hallmark of the IBEW worker," Cooper said. "The Founders' Scholarship is our way to ensure union members are in every conversation shaping the future of our work."

The four scholars in the newest class are all seeking graduate degrees: two in human resources and labor management, one in learning design and technology in education, and the fourth in construction management.

Award decisions are based on an essay, transcripts from high school or college, and "potential, social awareness and career goals," said Jim Voye, director of the Research Department and head of the scholarship committee.

"The scholarship is one of the benefits of membership, and more people should take advantage of it," he said. "It can make the difference between getting and not getting a degree, which can be life-changing."

CIRCUITS continued on page 12

### **POLITICS & JOBS**

#### Senate Lines Up Bills to Put Money Back in Workers' Pockets and Expand Rights

Several bills introduced in the U.S. Senate would give working people more financial security and power if they become law.

The bills would reverse the Trump/McConnell tax increases on working people, prevent bosses from spying on workers on the job and off, defend locked-out and striking workers from losing their health coverage, and generally make it simpler and easier to organize.

Passing these new bills will be more difficult with pro-corporate Republicans in charge of the House of Representatives, but the membership of the IBEW has never been in a better position to be heard and respected than it is right now, said Austin Keyser, assistant to the international president for government affairs.

"There is no path forward for the U.S. economy without the skills we have, and no one is in a better position to train and organize new workers with those skills than us," he said. "Working men and women will build this country's future, and this country's laws need to stop punishing us and rewarding the bankers and bosses who eat from our plate." "It's ridicul

Director of Government Affairs Danielle Eckert said the two bills that would have the fastest, most direct impact on members' lives are the Tax Fairness for Workers Act and the No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act.

The first would reverse tax increases signed into law by former president Donald Trump and once again let working people deduct from their taxes the costs of doing their jobs, just like businesses deduct the costs of running their businesses.

Since the Republican-controlled Congress passed the tax increases in 2017, working people have not been able to deduct the cost of work clothes, tools, personal protective equipment, travel or looking for a new job.

The bill, sponsored by Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey and

co-sponsored by 40 other Democrats, would also reinstate the deduction for union dues. "Companies can deduct the cost of negotiating contracts. Workers should be

able to, too," Eckert said. "Companies deduct the cost of hiring lawyers and accountants who look out for their interests. It was grossly unfair that Mitch McConnell and the Republicans stopped us from doing the same."

The No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act, also introduced by Casey and co-sponsored only by Democrats, would end taxpayer subsidies for companies running union-busting campaigns.

Political speech and lobbying are not tax-deductible, but the cost of worker surveillance, intimidation and even the bonuses paid to "union avoidance" contractors come right out of a company's taxes.

"The next time you hear about Starbucks or Walmart holding a captive-audience meeting, remember you're covering part of their cost out of your taxes whether you shop there or not," Keyser said.

Another bill under consideration would close a gap opened by fast-moving technologies that are further distorting the balance of power between workers and employers.

Today, American workers have no power over how their employers collect and use data about them. Companies can use mouse and keyboard trackers, require workers to wear devices that track their location and activities, and sell or transfer that information to anyone as long as it has some business-related justification, and they don't have to tell workers a thing. The Stop Spying Bosses Act, introduced by Casey as well, would not only limit the tools employers can use to spy on people at work but also require them to inform employees when they start snooping: when, for instance, an "artificial intelligence" program is put in charge of analyzing information about workers and making automated decisions affecting job prospects.

The bill would also outright ban surveillance in bathrooms, breakrooms and while a worker is off duty, or surveillance targeting union organizers or whistleblowers. "It's ridiculous that we have to pass a law that employers can't spy on us at

home or in the bathroom or at volunteer organizing meetings. It's so un-American. No company should have to be told not to do it, but here we are," Eckert said.

Another seeming no-brainer of a bill, she said, comes from Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, a Democrat.

His bill would prohibit employers from terminating health coverage for workers the company is locking out or who are on a lawful strike.

> "Losing a paycheck is a big deal, but the risks of not having health care in America today can be ruinous for an entire family. It can wreck decades of saving and planning," Eckert said. "That deep vulnerability keeps many, many people from standing up and using the power we have."

> The bill has 11 Democratic co-signers and Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders.

The Senate is also considering a bill that would end tax breaks for companies that send jobs overseas.

Sponsored by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, a Rhode Island Democrat, the bill would close tax loopholes that many companies doing business in the United States exploit for profit at the expense of workers.

Finally, the Senate is considering a bill that would put a workers' advocate in the highest halls of the Federal Reserve Bank.

Sen. Jack Reed, another Rhode Island Democrat, wants to change the rules for the bank's Board of Governors, requiring at least one of its seven members to speak for the American worker.

Looming over all these bills is the Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize Act, or PRO Act, which would radically rebalance the American legal system to claw back rights taken away from workers almost since the day the National Labor Relations Act was passed in 1934.

The bill was introduced Feb. 28 in the House and Senate with more than 200 co-sponsors, including one Republican in the House.

Most notably, it would end so-called right-to-work laws nationally, but it also takes aim at all the now-legal ways companies get between workers' desire to join a union and their ability to actually join.

Nearly three-quarters of Americans approve of unions, the highest level since 1965, according to a 2022 Gallup poll. Yet less than 8% of private-sector workers are members. The PRO Act is about getting the law out of workers' way and letting them take back power in the workplace.

"Each of these bills would make working people's lives better," Keyser said. "Dignity, respect and decency on the job are within our power to deliver. There's never been a better time to demand it."

"It's ridiculous that we have to pass a law that employers can't spy on us at home or in the bathroom or at volunteer organizing meetings."

–Danielle Eckert, government affairs director

### **CIRCUITS** continued

#### The 2022 Winners

Filmon Ali topped out of Everett, Wash., Local 191's apprenticeship program in 2021, the same year he earned a bachelor's degree in construction management from Rowan University.

Ali resurrected the local's Electrical Worker Minority Caucus committee, said Business Manager Craig Jones, and he now chairs it. He will use the grant to complete a master's in construction management with the goal of strengthening the IBEW's commitment to diversity in our membership and expanding opportunities for all people in the building trades.

This is Chicago Local 134 member Ryan Madiar's second go-round in graduate school. He started a master's in applied linguistics after earning a degree in German as an undergraduate before taking a Local 134 apprenticeship.



The 2022 Founders Scholarship winners are (clockwise from top left) Everett, Wash., Local 191 member Filmon Ali, Chicago Local 134 member Ryan Madiar, South Bend, Ind., Local 153 Assistant Business Manager Jason Piontek and Indianapolis Local 481 member Paul Meyers.

Twelve years after topping out, he is now a business representative in Chicago managing almost 30 collective bargaining agreements at more than two dozen employers representing 500 members.

Since 2017, Madiar has been enrolled almost continuously in workshops, certifications and college classes about labor-management relations.

"To continuously improve, you must never stop learning. There is always more to do," Madiar said. "The work of the labor movement is never done."

While earning a certificate in union labor leadership at DePaul University, Madiar wrote a reference guide and handbook on collective bargaining for the local's reps and stewards. The guide, said Matthew Cleveland, Local 134's general counsel, was concise, effective, accurate and useful. It also showed in bright relief the qualities the scholarship committee is looking for: character, heart and a drive for excellence.

"He not only has a thirst for knowledge but wishes to share that knowledge through action and education," Cleveland said.

Madiar will use the scholarship to complete a master's in human resources and employment relations at Penn State

University with a double concentration in labor law and collective bargaining.

Indianapolis Local 481 member Paul Meyers is not just a lifelong student but a full-time master instructor with his local JATC and a curriculum specialist for the Electrical Training Alliance.

He wrote a textbook used across the country as part of the inside apprenticeship and was the lead author of two classroom lab manuals, including the electric vehicle charging installation program frequently highlighted by the White House.

"The building trades' apprenticeship system is one of the few opportunities that affords individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds an opportunity to live a life fulfilled with a stable income, health care and a supportive community," he said. "I have witnessed firsthand the power of education to provide upward mobility for students born into an environ-

ment that otherwise provided few opportunities."

Meyers is returning to the other side of the lectern to learn new techniques and educational models for teaching the tech-savvy younger workers now dominating the IBEW's apprenticeship system. He is working toward a master of science in education degree at Purdue University.

Local 481 Business Representative Lance Bradbury put the goals of the Founders Scholarship succinctly in his recommendation of Meyers.

"His goals are our goals," Bradbury said. South Bend, Ind., Local

153 Assistant Business Manager Jason Piontek is the fourth recipient of the 2022 scholarship awards. After six years in the U.S.

Army, Piontek was initiated into the IBEW in 1998 and earned his bachelor's in labor studies at Indiana University while working as a foreman and serving on the examining board.

Local 153 Business Manager Brian O'Donnell said some of Piontek's most critical work is done on the many public boards and commissions he has served on, including the South Bend Plan Commission and South Bend Public Works and Property Vacation Committee and as vice president of the Northern Indiana American Labor Federation.

Piontek will use his scholarship to complete his studies in the human resources and employment relations graduate program at Penn State.

"The Founders' Scholarship is a program to support the leaders in our ranks to become leaders throughout our industries and our nation," Vove said. "Every one of the winners is among the best we have to offer, but we know there are many, many more of you out there."

More information and the application for the Founders' Scholarship can be found at ibew.org/foundersscholarship.

### TRANSITIONS

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RETIRED **Greg DeVries** 

DeVries was growing up, the Sioux Falls, S.D., Local 426

So was his grandfather James. His older brother James was a member.

"They all had different middle names," DeVries said. "It was a family thing.'

James A. (his grandfather) was business manager, and James L. raised Greg and his older brothers, James O. and John, into the trade.

His uncle William was not a James, but he was a business manager, too. DeVries' son Jason is also a

journeyman. It's a rich and deep history that

stretches back nearly as far as the trade itself on the Great Plains.

And after nearly 40 years, Greg DeVries is retiring, effective May 1.

After some time out of high school working as a groundman, DeVries had a brief flirtation with the Laborers before coming back into the fold.

It was not a hard decision.

"An electrician's work is so much better than digging ditches and pouring concrete," he said.

He started the apprenticeship in 1984, was initiated a year later - as was the tradition then - and topped out in 1988.

For the next 10 years, DeVries worked almost entirely on the road, from as far east as Cordoba, Ill., to as far west as a mine in Carlin, Nev.

"Mostly in Minnesota though," he said.

He saved trips to the coasts for vacations, mostly chasing music with his wife. Robin.

It wasn't until 1999 that he settled at home, switching his ticket to Huron, S.D., Local 1959 and hiring on at the Western Area Power Authority.

WAPA sells the power generated by 57 federally built and owned hydroelectric dams across the West from the Missouri River in Montana to the Rio Grande in Texas and the whole length of the Colorado River. That power is then delivered to utilities and industry in 15 states over 17,000 miles of high voltage transmission lines.

The IBEW represents WAPA workers in five locals and negotiates with the agency's management through Government Coordinating Council-1.

DeVries said he just wanted to see his kids more.

"I wanted something more stable, where I wouldn't be living in motels," he said.

DeVries said the work wasn't that different, just bigger. A transformer the size of a trash can is not so different from one the size of an elephant or two. "Same physics," he said.

DeVries ran for and was elected business manager of Local 1959 in 2002, three years after joining the local. Two years after that, he was elected chairman of GCC-1. Three years later, he was reelected to both posts.

As his terms were expiring, then-International President Edwin D. Hill appointed DeVries an international representative for the Eleventh District, within a few weeks of the appointment of Eleventh District International Vice President Mark Hager.

"He became our go-to guy for all the government employees in the district and coordinating with the reps in all the other districts with WAPA entities," Hager said.

He was effective, Hager said, because he understood the complexities of the issues, of course, but it was also just who he was: good at his craft, good company and humble.

"He's a great guy," Hager said.

When he wasn't running multi-jurisdictional meetings with billion-dollar federal agencies, DeVries also serviced the smaller locals, pitching in on negotiations, grievances and arbitrations. He said some of his proudest achievements were turning around the often bitter relationships that developed with private utilities after the 2008 financial crisis.

"At one company, MidAmerican, we were constantly in grievances and arbitrations for things that had never been an issue before, sometimes two or three grievances a month. It was horrendous," he said. "The company wanted to freeze wages and was going after the pension and benefits. It was way over the top."

Over time, DeVries said, the relationship was rebuilt, not least through a Code of Excellence (called "commitments" at Berkshire Hathaway companies) that got management and labor talking again. Nitpicking managers heard from upper management to show a bit of discretion. Workers who were walking the wrong side of the line heard from the steward.

"It took time to rebuild trust, but I don't think I have been to an arbitration in at least five years," he said.

The biggest challenge he sees for the Eleventh District is making the membership understand and value the reality of political power in this country and who a union worker's friends are. New members especially, he said, must hear from their union.

"It's not the most popular thing to bring up in union meetings, I know. It is very different around here from when I was starting out. A lot less friendly," he said. "But I believe our job as union activists is to do what is right for our membership and their family and not back down. If the other stuff owns their vote, so be it, but it can't always be 'agree to disagree.'"

DeVries said he intends to stay involved politically in South Dakota, between trips to music festivals with Robin. He has his first one already planned with tickets to the Gulf Coast of Florida for May 2nd, the day after his official retirement.

"I'm looking forward to traveling without a tie," he said.

Please join the officers in wishing Brother DeVries a long, healthy and harmonious retirement.

### RETIRED **Philip W. Young**



Fifth District International Representative Philip W. Young, whose positivity and persistence helped improve the

lives of thousands of IBEW members throughout the Southeast, has retired from the IBEW, effective April 1.

Originally from the southwestern Tennessee town of Toone, Young earned an associate's degree in computer engineering before taking a job at Mississippi Power and Light in 1985. He was initiated into Jackson, Miss., Local 605 three years later.



www.ibewmerchandise.com



"Once I got into the local, I kind of went searching for something to do," Young said. "I knew that I wanted to do something useful."

So Young quickly became a steward. He went on to serve on the local's training, safety and negotiations committees, and in 1994 was appointed assistant business manager.

His attention to detail impressed his fellow members. "He's got a photographic memory," said current Local 605 Business Manager David Killingworth, who has known Young since 1985, when Young started working at the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station in suburban Jackson. "He doesn't think he does, but he remembers things from 30 years ago."

In 2010, Young was appointed Local 605's business manager and financial secretary after his predeces-

### -In Memoriam ———

sor, Albert May, retired. He ran unopposed for those positions when they came up for election two months later.

"He would get excited about stuff," Killingworth recalled of his friend. "He's very persistent."

When then-Fifth District International Vice President Joe Davis asked Young in 2012 to join the district office as an international representative, Young said he was somewhat torn between continuing to work at his home local and accepting an opportunity that few in the IBEW are offered.

"I thought about it for a couple days," Young said. "Once I got in and saw what I would be doing, I knew I'd made the right choice."

The Fifth District services IBEW members in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, as well as Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Panama Canal Zone. Across the mainland side of the district, Young specialized in professional and industrial organizing. He serviced nearly two dozen locals representing a variety of workers at utility companies, manufacturers, paper mills, television stations and other workplaces.

Young said one of his biggest challenges was that most of the locals under his purview were led by part-time business managers who were dealing with 30 to 80 members. With that in mind, Young said, he made himself available to help them out anytime, day or night.

And he was called on for help quite a bit, Young said. Like most district office international representatives, Young spent a lot of time on the road, sometimes driving as much as nine hours to reach a particularly farflung local. To him, however, it was all worth it because he knew it was helping members.

"He's always happy and laughing. He has a good disposition," fellow Fifth District International Representative Glenn Brannen said of Young. Working on things like workshops, conferences and district progress meetings, "he was always eager to dive in and do the work."

Among his many achievements over his nearly 40-year IBEW career, Young noted modestly that he successfully helped to organize and gain a first contract for workers at such companies as Mississippi Power, SAIC and Entergy Nuclear.

"When you try to negotiate a first contract, you don't ask about crazy stuff," Young advised. "You just want to be treated like everyone else."

"He's about as good a fellow as you'd want to deal with," Killingworth said. "He's through and through a union man. His dedication is absolute."

In retirement, Young's priority will be his family, but he also plans to improve his golf game.

"I enjoyed being a rep, but for the last 11 years, I've been away from home four to five nights a week," Young said. He and his wife, Terri, plan to do a lot of traveling around the country, with some of those journeys being short-hop trips to visit his three children and six grandchildren. "They'll finally be able to see their granddad," he said.

The officers and members of the IBEW wish Brother Young a long and happy retirement.

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
3 Bird, E. F. 12/20/21	48 Yager, M. J. 6/29/22	126 Filipovich, W. J. 11/26/22	340 Gordon, D. C. 4/17/22	538 Clay, D. E. 10/15/22	760 Ingle, H. L. 2/16/23
3 Brehm, G. 11/13/22	53 Campbell, J. D. 2/3/23	130 Raines, R. V. 10/31/22	343 Stowers, P. C. 6/29/22	540 Hykes, T. L. 11/22/22	760 Bryant, A. W. 1/11/23
3 Conte, D. 12/13/22	57 Lyon, G. L. 7/13/22	134 Bitter, E. 10/15/22	343 Wetzel, K. H. 11/26/22	557 Urbany, R. E. 12/17/22	760 Fergueson, C. F. 1/12/23
3 Dalton, M. F. 11/7/22	58 Collins, K. L. 11/13/22	134 Cederstrom, P. R. 10/22/22	349 Griffitts, W. V. 3/24/22	558 Belew, J. R. 11/30/22	760 Lay, J. R. 12/17/22
3 Davis, A. 8/28/22	58 Dunn, W. L. 11/20/22	134 Gomez, C. R. 9/23/22	349 Little, N. B. 10/23/22	558 Blackburn, H. D. 12/12/22	760 May, J. M. 1/18/23
3 Flaiz, B. M. 11/13/22	58 Ekdahl, F. W. 12/2/22	134 Johnson, J. B. 10/18/22	351 Frantz, H. R. 9/6/22	558 Delano, C. A. 11/16/22	760 McPeters, R. L. 12/15/22
3 Fuchs, M. 1/3/23	58 Ficorelli, A. 3/12/22	134 Kara, A. J. 11/19/22	351 Hallowell, L. C. 11/27/22	558 Hunter, C. D. 12/11/22	760 Taylor, C. F. 2/8/23
3 Marton, S. 10/4/22	58 Johnson, R. E. 10/26/18	134 Lemke, M. C. 9/20/22	353 Bassett, B. M. 1/15/23	558 McCormack, W. K.	760 Varsalona, N. S. 11/30/22
3 Meyer, H. 11/3/22 3 Morales, J. P. 11/19/22	58 Sisitka, J. 9/20/22	134 Mosqueda, W. T. 2/6/23	353 Bielec, S. 12/1/20 353 Kostiak. W. 11/29/22	12/25/22 558 Newbern, T. R. 11/1/22	773 Poliquin, P. 9/28/22 840 Callaway, E. W. 11/3/22
3 Morales, J. P. 11/19/22 3 Parga, A. P. 11/19/22	60 Wolff, R. D. 10/9/22 64 Lewis, R. E. 10/22/22	134 Motsinger, B. R. 1/27/23 136 Dickie, B. H. 11/17/22	353 Kostiak, W. 11/29/22 353 Mellor, E. 12/26/22	558 Newbern, T. R. 11/1/22 558 Nix, C. T. 11/29/22	840 Callaway, E. W. 11/3/22 855 Black, C. N. 11/15/22
3 Ronchi, E. 12/10/22	66 Nelson, C. D. 7/16/22	158 Keehan, J. M. 10/22/22	353 Naughnessy, T. J. 11/20/22	558 Williams, J. T. 11/20/22	855 Roth, J. M. 12/7/22
3 Vega, F. L. 11/3/22	68 Cavenagh, K. R. 10/14/22	164 Roscitt, J. M. 6/22/22	354 McEwan, L. C. 11/16/21	558 Yates, O. J. 12/15/22	876 Wolkowicz, R. E. 11/9/22
3 Whitlock, A. M. 11/25/22	68 Franz, A. W. 9/23/20	164 Vetter, W. J. 1/11/23	357 Cabrera- Morales, F.	568 Barrette, G. 11/10/22	890 Hady, J. C. 1/12/22
3 Wisniewski, S. 9/28/22	68 White, D. W. 9/21/22	175 Byers, W. H. 12/13/22	10/24/17	569 Ricci, D. B. 3/8/22	906 Danis, A. L. 10/31/22
6 Dusuau, R. G. 3/25/22	71 Doran, J. A. 10/23/22	175 Chase, C. T. 9/26/22	357 Fritchley, W. R. 12/18/22	570 Cooper, R. H. 1/1/23	948 Yager, R. L. 10/24/22
6 Tiglas, G. K. 8/6/22	73 May, D. J. 12/26/22	175 Head, J. R. 11/16/22	357 January, L. C. 9/2/22	573 Seekins, W. J. 12/10/22	953 Markos, M. T. 10/30/22
9 Boness, W. C. 12/15/22	77 Schwendeman, G. D.9/9/22	175 Nelson, J. D. 7/8/18	357 Nelson, H. C. 10/24/22	577 Kasper, W. S. 11/17/22	995 Chartier, J. E. 10/3/22
9 Knudson, M. V. 12/10/22	77 Thompson, F. A. 10/12/22	175 Smith, S. B. 8/30/22	357 Ross, S. D. 9/8/22	577 Luck, M. 10/20/22	1002 Oxford, A. D. 8/29/22
9 Lowery, T. 12/31/22	77 Whitaker, W. W. 1/8/23	177 Heichberger, A. 3/10/22	364 Hopwood, B. J. 11/30/22	586 Griffin, D. T. 10/5/22	1205 Bohne, T. S. 8/15/22
9 Schneider, G. L. 12/9/22	77 Williams, S. 11/12/22	197 Johnson, J. H. 10/12/22	364 Johnson, M. R. 1/2/23	596 Gainer, J. B. 5/28/22	1249 Winterhalt, J. J. 11/11/22
9 Serpico, G. A. 12/31/22	80 Gamiel, J. D. 10/21/22	204 Rhone, M. A. 8/6/22	364 Mattson, D. A. 10/8/22	596 Jones, R. E. 12/19/22	1393 Cornelius, B. N. 11/18/22
9 Skala, J. 12/4/22	81 Mulrooney, J. J. 11/19/22	212 Glass, L. G. 11/30/22	369 Oakley, R. C. 8/24/22	607 Morgan, R. J. 11/5/22	1426 Laffoon, D. J. 9/15/22
9 Stefaniak, W. J. 10/14/22	82 Baker, D. R. 10/14/22	212 Harding, J. R. 10/26/22	379 Brown, E. E. 11/9/22	613 Dye, D. S. 12/22/22	1516 Bell, C. M. 8/29/22
11 Bruce, W. T. 2/1/22	82 Fisher, W. J. 1/2/23	213 Hopkins, F. N. 9/8/22	388 Wojtalewicz, D. 10/28/22	613 Golden, W. K. 11/28/22	1547 Moberly, W. S. 10/7/22
11 Chiaravalle, H. A. 12/8/22	82 Riegle, G. D. 11/28/22	213 Tough, R. W. 11/9/22	400 Testa, A. T. 9/9/20	613 Ivey, E. E. 11/18/22	1579 Lewis, J. L. 11/4/22
11 Ryals, H. L. 10/4/22	86 Nuetzel, B. 9/24/22	220 Stoddard, J. R. 10/2/22	424 Ferguson, M. R. 5/17/22	613 Mabee, J. A. 11/17/22	2038 Hrappsted, K. C. 9/18/22
<ol> <li>Samuelson, R. A.11/21/22</li> <li>Ascheman, A. W. 5/19/22</li> </ol>	97         Bottari, R. J.         8/27/22           98         Allen, S.         10/2/22	223 Clark, W. H. 12/28/22 223 Kullas, W. J. 12/24/22	424 Geisler, K. R. 11/19/22 424 Johnston, F. N. 11/2/22	613 McKiness, G. G. 8/2/22 613 Morris, F. T. 11/25/22	2113 Stewart, C. G. 3/12/21 2113 Thompson, A. J. 11/4/22
14 Hogberg, C. J. 8/22/22	98 Eschbach, J. J. 12/17/22	234 Miller, R. C. 10/5/22	424 Spooner, W. E. 12/17/22	640 Sparpana, W. P. 12/19/22	2150 Priesgen, J. R. 11/11/22
16 Nicholson, H. S. 11/11/22	98 Marvel, J. C. 10/31/22	236 Marinucci, A. W. 11/26/22	429 Pistole, J. D. 10/26/22	654 Murray, D. P. 11/12/22	2166 Rousselle, F. P. 12/17/22
20 Loosier, M. G. 11/28/22	98 McCabe, H. J. 8/26/22	236 Naylor, C. G. 4/1/22	429 Pitkin, W. S. 11/16/22	659 Hill, J. W. 5/26/22	2286 Ardoin, T. 12/16/22
20 McGill, D. E. 10/17/22	99 Chabot, G. 10/18/22	257 Melloway, D. D. 9/26/22	436 Bratton, G. A. 12/9/22	659 Walker, G. W. 11/22/22	I.O. (111) Davis, J. L. 8/24/22
21 Rucker, C. V. 11/9/22	99 Dodd, R. W. 11/3/22	265 Cheney, C. K. 1/1/23	459 Marron, P. J. 6/25/22	666 Clark, W. B. 12/8/22	I.O. (1379) Baker, G. W. 1/28/23
22 Himmelberg, G. J. 11/16/22	102 Cameline, E. C. 8/15/22	265 Urbach, C. J. 12/17/22	459 Mentzell, H. L. 11/2/22	666 Parrish, W. E. 11/25/22	Pens. (I.O) Cahoon, R. H. 9/9/22
22 Mang, R. A. 11/9/22	102 Reichert, G. W. 11/28/22	266 Oizumi, D. M. 8/15/22	466 Morton, G. D. 12/27/22	676 Aeppli, J. E. 10/15/22	Pens. (I.O) Hindsley, J. 10/19/22
22 Warner, T. J. 11/15/22	103 Bernazani, G. L. 6/20/22	270 Davis, C. G. 10/9/22	474 Ackerman, R. C. 1/4/22	683 Fitzpatrick, E. J. 11/13/22	Pens. (I.O) Jannush, C. A. 9/30/22
24 Himelrick, R. L. 9/23/22	103 Galante, L. 8/25/22	275 Brufladt, E. I. 5/19/22	474 Cochran, L. B. 10/6/22	697 Cadle, G. E. 12/20/22	Pens. (I.O) Jeffers, R. A. 11/24/22
25 Brandoff, D. R. 5/16/22	103 Lundgren, K. F. 11/23/22	278 Gonzales, R. R. 12/7/22	477 Knuth, J. S. 10/3/22	697 Manigold, J. B. 11/13/22	Pens. (I.O) Jewell, D. R. 8/1/22
25 Finger, W. C. 1/2/23	103 Minghella, C. P. 5/27/22	280 Harris, R. J. 12/19/22	479 Brown, P. D. 12/17/22	700 Newman, J. G. 5/23/22	Pens. (I.O) Kappl, M. 9/10/20
26 Brown, T. J. 10/26/22	103 Powers, F. S. 9/6/22	280 Sullivan, M. T. 10/2/22	480 Freeman, J. D. 1/3/23	701 Conner, G. A. 1/1/23	Pens. (I.O) Powers, J. L. 7/8/22
26 Day, R. W. 7/3/22	104 Peterson, T. A. 12/2/22	291 Harness, D. K. 10/21/22	480 Gibson, D. C. 11/16/22	712 Monahan, J. R. 10/31/22	Pens. (I.O) Principale, J. J.
26 Reckeweg, F. A. 11/4/22	105 Neal, A. 6/1/22	292 Sutherland, J. R. 10/22/20 294 Schaefer, R. K. 12/11/22	481 Kessler, D. E. 12/11/22	714 Perius, T. H. 9/27/22	10/25/22
26 Rosasco, P. J. 11/19/22 38 Lucas, M. 11/14/22	105         Rielly, B. D.         12/15/22           110         Bergman, J. R.         9/9/22		488 Jurgens, R. 1/29/22 488 Price, W. J. 11/30/22	716 Desporte, M. W. 11/27/22 716 Wren, R. W. 10/17/22	Pens. (I.O) Vaught, A. R. 10/30/22 Pens. (I.O) Weitz, L. L. 9/6/22
38 Lucas, M. 11/14/22 38 O'Malley, T. 12/28/22	111 Loth, M. G. 10/1/22	295 Roper, H. 1/26/23 295 Sisk, T. R. 1/21/23	488         Price, W. J.         11/30/22           490         Vitale, J. J.         6/12/22	725 Scott, L. H. 11/17/22	Pens. (I.O) Well2, L. L. 9/0/22 Pens. (I.O) Williams, H. E. 12/4/22
38 Way, D. R. 12/30/22	112 Bates, K. R. 9/23/22	302 Coulon, A. L. 11/19/22	490 Vitale, J. J. 0/12/22 494 Gestwicki, V. W. 11/8/22	728 Belanger, D. 12/22/22	Pens. (I.O) Winkler, M. S. 10/25/22
41 Meyer, P. E. 12/21/22	115 Omalley, R. C. 1/5/23	303 Moyer, K. D. 10/24/22	494 Krizmanitz, P. M. 12/14/22	728 Horne, J. M. 10/30/22	Pens. (I.O) Wittman, J. W. 2/4/22
43 Christman, V. L. 11/4/22	115 Williams, G. L. 11/18/22	304 Powell, J. D. 10/21/22	494 Reimer, H. A. 11/8/22	728 Locke, T. M. 12/31/22	Pens. (I.O) Wolfe, L. R. 10/20/22
46 Basinski, P. E. 10/17/22	124 Bedsworth, E. L. 10/19/22	304 Valigura, W. W. 10/27/22	520 Fritcher, A. L. 11/24/22	728 McKinney, R. M. 3/9/22	
47 Johnson, W. F. 6/14/22	125 Emberton, R. R. 12/19/22	305 Parker, D. E. 12/4/22	520 Nickel, R. A. 2/28/22	743 Hefter, C. G. 10/25/22	This list shows members for
47 Simontacchi, A. J. 8/8/22	125 Minter, S. J. 11/30/22	309 Wilson, M. D. 12/19/22	531 Acuna, L. A. 12/2/22	756 Doughty, A. B. 10/18/22	whom PBF death claims were
48 Eng, C. R. 12/24/22	125 Skinner, T. T. 11/19/22	340 Franz, F. 12/7/22	538 Anderson, S. E. 12/10/22	756 Fernandez, D. J. 9/27/22	approved in March 2023.

### **LOCAL LINES**

### Local 1 Volunteering

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,rts,s,se,spa,st, ws&ptc), ST. LOUIS, MO - This past winter, like many before, our members assisted Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in laying wreaths and retrieving them when the season ends. Our yearround coat drive for citizens in need and our "Shop With a Cop" are a few examples of the many ways our members give back and volunteer.

In April, our local members and NECA chapter volunteered their time and material to helping residents in St. Louis city and county with code updates and home improvements. These residents are on fixed incomes and some needed repairs beyond their means. It is the 20th year we have partnered with Rebuilding Together St. Louis to assist the less fortunate in our community.

Enjoy the spring, and continue to organize, Organize, ORGANIZE!

Kyle Hunter, P.S.



From left, longtime Local 15 Business Representative Dave Grooms celebrates his retirement with President Terry McGoldrick.

### Happy Retirement, **Brother Grooms!**

L.U. 15 (u), DOWNERS GROVE, IL – Our longtime business representative Dave Grooms retired on Jan. 13. He started working at Waukegan Station in 1975 and has more than 47 years of experience in the generation industry. Dave worked in both coal and nuclear-generating stations and was an operator and an instrument maintenance technician. Brother Grooms honorably represented the IBEW and Local 15 for more than 25 years as a steward, chief steward and business representative. He will go on to enjoy his time fishing and golfing with his wife Karen and spending time with his children and grandchildren.

John Richards, Bus. Rep.

### **Submitting Local Lines Articles**

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd local number schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via our online form. For deadlines and questions, please visit ibew.org/mediacenter/submitting-local-lines or email locallines@ibew.org.

We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news: however, all final content decisions are made by our editorial team. Please adhere to a 200-word limit.

If you have an idea for an Electrical Worker story, please contact the Media Department at (202) 728-6219 or media@ibew.org.

### **2023 Legislative Priorities** and Events

L.U. 17 (catv,em,lctt,o&u), DETROIT, MI - With a surprise Democratic trifecta (control of the governorship, state Senate and state House) for the first time in 40 years, the Michigan labor movement is looking to see sweeping legislative changes that help working families. At the top of our list are repealing "right to work," restoring prevailing wage laws and eliminating the state tax on pension benefits. With our allies, we will also press for other worker-friendly changes throughout the new legislative session.

Save the dates for these upcoming familyfriendly events in 2023:

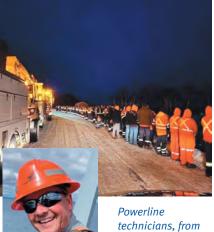
- Local 17 Softball Tournament May 20
- LCTT Jamboree June 24
- Linemen's Rodeo Aug. 5
- Local 17 Golf Outing Aug. 11

We look forward to seeing you there! Editor's Note: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed a repeal of Michigan's "right-to-work" law and a reinstatement of the state's prevailing wage on March 24. Congratulations!

James Shaw, B.M.

### 2023 Fundy Coast Fatality

L.U. 37 (o,u,c,ptc&rtb), FREDERICTON, NB - The last storm call for many was the 2023 ice storm off the Fundy Coast in New Brunswick. On the night of Jan. 17, disaster struck when the NB Power TLM storm-restoration crew was repairing a line. Two Local 37 members were up a transmission pole



far and wide, stand in solidarity to pay their respects to their fallen brother Colin Hume.

doing the task they loved when the pole came crashing down. Colin Hume was fatally injured that night: He was a member of Local 37 for 13 years. Colin was a man who was always up for an adventure, be it in his personal life or traveling for his career as a lineman. Colin will be dearly missed by his wife Heidi and two daughters – he was a devoted husband and father who extended his kindness to others.

Scott Markowsky survived the accident but suffered serious injuries; Scott has been a member of Local 37 for 14 years. He is a devoted, handson family man to his wife and children, and he has a long road of recovery ahead of him, both mentally and physically.

Editor's Note: See the poem written by Local 37 member Everard Logan in the Letters section on Page 2 of this issue. Brother Logan was on scene the night of the accident and recorded his thoughts in verse.

Scot Hale, P.S.



Local 43 Veterans Committee members and family volunteered to clean up and lay wreaths at Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Onondaga County, N.Y.

### **Veterans' Committee Members Lay Wreaths**

L.U. 43 (em,i&rts), SYRACUSE, NY – Members and family of our local's Veterans' Committee volunteered on Dec. 17 to clean up and lay wreaths during the holiday season at Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Onondaga County, N.Y. Volunteers included Brother Ryan Cabiles, family member Ava Cabiles, Brothers John Laplante and Kevin Mullen, Sister Haley Parker and Brothers Bill Towsley and Dave Wierowski (see accompanying picture). Thank you, brothers and sisters, for volunteering and honoring our veterans.

Jeff Cassano, P.S.



Local 47's Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin presents Assistant Business Manager Arnold Trevino his 40-year IBEW pin.

### **SCE Members Accept Agreement**

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA – Business Manager/ Financial Secretary Colin Lavin presented Assistant Business Manager Arnold Trevino with his 40-year IBEW pin. Thank you, Arnold, for your 40 years of dedication and service. Congratulations!

SCE members have accepted an agreement, with the second tentative agreement voted on and ratified Feb. 3 by 71%. The SCE discharge of three saddleback journeymen (one foreman and two journeymen linemen) was arbitrated on Feb. 24

and Feb. 28 before arbitrator Nancy Hutt, with both hearing days virtual. In the city of Anaheim, general contract, professional management and customer service part-time negotiations continue. For the city of Banning, general unit, the contract was voted on and approved and goes to the city council for final approval.

Local 47's Safety and Steward Conference was March 25, and Local 47's picnic is May 6. See you there!

We're sad to report the deaths of Eric Alfaro, Tony Bernales Sr., Richard Garcia and Johnny Kinkade. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union!

Mitch Smith, A.B.M./P.S.

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	(0)	Outside	(s)	Shopmen
(cs)	Cable Splicers	(i)	Inside	(p)	Powerhouse	(se)	Sign Erector
(catv)	Cable Television	(it)	Instrument Technicians	(pet)	Professional, Engineers &	(spa)	Sound & Public Address
(C)	Communications	(lctt)	Line Clearance Tree Trimming		Technicians	(st)	Sound Technicians
(cr)	Cranemen	(lpt)	Lightning Protection Technicians	(ptc)	Professional, Technical & Clerical	(t)	Telephone
(ees)	Electrical Equipment Service	(mt)	Maintenance			(tm)	Transportation Manufacturing
(ei)	Electrical Inspection	(mo)	Maintenance & Operation	(rr)	Railroad	(u)	Utility
(em)	Electrical Manufacturing	(mow)	Manufacturing Office Workers	(rtb)	Radio-Television Broadcasting	(uow)	Utility Office Workers
(es)	Electric Signs	(mar)	Marine	(rtm)	Radio-Television Manufacturing	(ws)	Warehouse and Supply
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 131 is planning to go to watch the Tigers game

on July 8. If you have not signed up, call the hall

(269-382-1762) for details. The local has booked

Local 141 Graduates

**New Class of Inside Wiremen** 

L.U. 141 (ees,i,o&u), WHEELING, WV - Greetings,

brothers and sisters. The work picture for our local

is promising into the spring and summer months of

2023, with 39 currently on Book 1. At the time of this

writing, there are numerous projects kicking off at

the AEP Mitchell Plant, as well as other projects in

at the Wheeling Island Racetrack Casino for our lat-

est graduating class of inside wiremen. Congratu-

lations to Keith Burge, Colton Campbell, Kyle

Groves, Brian Murphy, Jason Perry and Cole Rob-

steward for one of our local contractors for over 20

years, as well as serving on the Local 141 credit union

advisory committee. He will be greatly missed.

Local 141 and the Wheeling JATC held a dinner

Local 141 is saddened to report the passing of

Kurt "Bug" Reed, P.S.

the chemical and gas/oil industries in our area.

The first-year class of traditional and hybrid

Morris A. Applebey, B.M.



The Wrobleski family recently received pins for their years of IBFW service.

### **Local 51 Members Receive** Life-Saving Awards

L.U. 51 (catv,lctt,o,ptc,rtb,t,u&uow), SPRINGFIELD, IL — Local 51 line-clearance tree trimmers were given life-saving awards from the city of Moline, Ill., in February. Brothers Gary Jens, Myles Peck, Kevin Wardrip II and new hire Austin Church were working for Asplundh in January when they saw black smoke coming from the top of an apartment building. They quickly grabbed ladders and assisted people off their balconies, and everyone made it out safely. Thank you, brothers, for your quick action!

Retiree Robert Wrobleski was awarded his 55-year IBEW service pin. His sons and journeymen linemen Robert Jr. and Trever were awarded their 25- and 30-year pins (see accompanying photo, above). Congratulations!

Our annual Scholarship Golf Outing will be held June 17 at the Piper Glen Golf Course in Springfield. Please contact the hall if you would like to register a team.

Karlene Knisley, Bus. Rep.

### Local 55 Helps Bring **Glasses to Students**

L.U. 55 (c,lctt,o&u), DES MOINES, IA - In December, our local partnered with the United Way of Central lowa and its Vision to Learn program to host an exciting distribution event at a local elementary school. Thanks to this program, 88 students received two pairs of free glasses. You don't always get to experience results in real time, but when a student puts on their eyeglasses for the first time, you can see immediately see the impact as their faces light up! Can you imagine how having the opportunity to see will impact their education and, ultimately, how they experience life?

United Way and Vision to Learn are doing incredible work. It was truly a blessing and privilege to have the chance to help make experiences like these happen. I encourage all locals to reach out to their area United Way and see how you can help.

Rusty McCuen, A.B.M.



### **Super Times at** Local 99

L.U. 99 (govt&i), PROVIDENCE, RI -In October, our local took part in a successful rally at the Providence City Hall for the \$223 million reconstruction of the Industrial Trust Co. Building, commonly known as the Superman Building for its similarity to the "Daily Planet" building in the Superman comics. The Providence City Council's finance committee heard many testimonies from a packed meeting chamber of trade-union workers that flooded the entire entrance and looped around the building. This rally led to the passing of the tax-stabilization

agreement of \$29 million, assuring many job opportunities at prevailing wage for our local members. With the apprentice utilization rate in place, positions are guaranteed to our ever-increasing number of apprentices. At the time of this writing, this job alone is ensuring our members two years' worth of work.

The reconstruction of the Superman Building is just one of many upcoming job opportunities within our local. Solar and offshore wind projects make a major contribution to the consistent employment among our members. We currently have no journeymen looking for work, and most who sign the book are sent out before the end of the week. Through our diligence and united efforts we have been successful in making our mark in Rhode Island. Congratulations, Local 99!

Sidney Jablonski, P.S.



International Vice President Monahan, International President Emeritus Stephenson and Local 103 Business Manager Antonellis in Naples, Fla.

### **Retirees' Winter Luncheon in** Naples, Fla.

L.U. 103 (cs,i&ptc), BOSTON, MA - We recently held our ninth annual Retirees' Winter Luncheon and Golf Outing in Naples, Fla. After a round a golf, retirees gathered back at the Clubhouse for a light lunch. Rich Bohane, John Mallet and Michael McDonough earned bragging rights as the firstplace winners. The following day, more than 220 retirees and guests enjoyed a day of reminiscing with old friends over lunch at the Naples Grande Beach Resort. This year, we were honored to have recently-retired International President, Lonnie Stephenson and his wife. Dawn, as our special guests. During lunch, Business Manager Lou Antonellis gave a brief update on the happenings at home at Local 103 and in Boston.

A few retirees even took advantage of the locale to watch their beloved Red Sox play ball at Fenway South spring training base in Fort Myers, Fla. Many of our retirees have attended each year, but we had a large number of first-timers who vowed to be back in 2024. This event is one of our most popular, and we are looking forward to next year!

Jim Fleming, P.S.



### Kalamazoo Local 131's class of 2027.

### Happy Retirement, Joe Gass!

L.U. 125 (lctt,o,t,u&ptc), PORTLAND, OR - Local

union elections will be held this spring. Nominations were made at the April unit meetings; ballots will be mailed May 16 and counted June 8. Please review your Febru-Northwest

Labor Press for election details. Brother Scott Spiering has been

arv

2023 local union elections.

The Pacific Northwest Lineman Rodeo will be held July 22. Plan on joining us to support this annual event. Whether you attend as a competitor, spectator, volunteer or judge, we hope to see you! Visit www.pacificnorthwestlinemanrodeo.org for more details.

General Electric. Joe will comto retirement.

along with his brother John, worked hard to repre-

upheld the office of treasurer with integrity and professionalism every day. We will miss him."

cers, staff and members, we wish loe and his wife. Alyse, a wonderful retirement. Thank you for your 38 years of service, Joe.

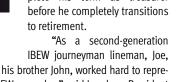
### Welcome,

Several projects are keeping the book cleared. Travelers are working in the jurisdiction. Thank you to everyone who has helped us fill the calls.

The local participated in a food drive for the benefit of Twelve Baskets, and it's always good to see our members give back to the community.



Local 125's Treasurer Joe



erts: May these young men have a very long and Gass has retired from Portland prosperous career in the IBEW! plete his term as treasurer Brother Joseph Bidka. Brother Bidka served as union



On behalf of our offi-



From left, graduates Jason Perry, Kyle Groves, Cole Roberts and **Newcomers** 

Local 141 Apprenticeship Director Mark Dunfee. L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rts,se&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI - Cur-**Family Night of Hockey** rently the work outlook is steady in Kalamazoo.

L.U. 245 (govt,lctt,o,rtb&u), TOLEDO, OH - Our local started the year off with our annual family night watching the Toledo Walleye hockey team,

who came just short of a win. We had a great turn-

out and it was nice coming together and spending



Local 125's Treasurer Joe Gass has retired from Portland General Electric.

appointed as the election judge to serve over the

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#### LOCAL LINES

time with our brothers, sisters and their families.

As of this writing, negotiations are ongoing with Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative, Nelson Tree Service and Bryan Municipal Utilities. Local 245 is also beginning to prepare for its election of officers that will be happening in the fall.

We hope to see everyone at our next union meeting. Remember to take time to spend with your families and friends.

Brian Gendaszek, P.S.

### **Marching In Unison**

L.U. 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ - Cloudy skies and persistent drizzle were not enough to dampen the spirits of our local's members and their families as they gathered to celebrate and participate in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in Bucks County, Pa. Tents were set up and cold weather hats with the Local 269 logo were handed out as the marchers were determined not to let the inclement weather get the better of them during what many consider to be a rite of spring. The local made yet another strong showing in other parades in our territory. With Mount Holly, N.J., the week before and Hamilton, N.J., to come the week after, the bucket trucks and new mobile billboard truck have seen plenty of high-profile use, rolling along the parade routes surrounded by our enthusiastic brothers and sisters and their loved ones. It is truly inspirational to see generations of union members marching in unity and reminding those lining the parade route how strong our ties are and how interwoven into the fabric of the community we have become and are determined to remain.

Brian Jacoppo, P.S.

### Positive Outlook for 2023 and Beyond

L.U. 309 (i,lctt,mo,mt,o,rts,spa&u), COLLINSVILLE, IL — We are privileged to report our continued positive outlook for 2023 and beyond. The inside and systems work remain strong. The Boeing MQ-25 Stingray production facility and the Ameren Transmission Operations Control Center are headed into their final stages of completion, while the Air Mobility Command and Joint Operations Mission Planning Center at Scott Air Force Base is manning up. Large projects including a new Touchette hospital, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Health Sciences building and Illinois State Police district headquarters are expected to break ground in the fall.

The outside branch saw a slowdown due to a lag in engineering, but it's set to pick up in the second and third quarters and get us back to full employment.

Following the retirement of Tim Evans, the executive board has appointed Brother Chris Hankins as business manager. Chris has been an effective organizer and assistant business agent, and we wish him the best in his new post.

Plans are being made for a night at the Grizzlies this summer and a possible party at Fairmount Park. Stay tuned.

Carlos S. Perez, R.S.

#### **Presents for All**

L.U. 317 (i,o,rts,t,u&lctt), HUNTINGTON, WV — We were once again able to host the annual toy drive here at our local, ensuring that many children across our community had a present to unwrap for Christmas. Despite the unseasonably warm weather, the Christmas spirit prevailed with a wonderful turnout of members and volunteers from our community coming together for a wonderful cause. We



*Local 317 hosted its annual toy drive over the Christmas holiday season, joined by local and community volunteers and special guests.* 

would like to thank everyone who came out and volunteered to help for such a humbling cause.

Local 317 members included Business Manager Shane Wolfe and his wife; Glenna; President Clay Mitchell; Vice President Lance Moore; and journeymen wiremen Chad Brammell, Mike Runyon, Gary Murray and Josh Bills along with his wife and son, Bretney and Dawson. There were also several volunteers from our community: Jason Davidson of Hatzel & Buehler, TCR Country radio station and Big Brothers Big Sisters in Huntington. Mr. and Mrs. Claus even found time in their busy schedule to stop by and say hello. Once again, thank you all!

Josh Bills, Bus. Rep.

### Local 343's Dan Goodew Retires

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — Dan Goodew began his electrical career as an apprentice working in Winona, Minn., for Bauer Electric. He attended apprenticeship class in La Crosse, Wis. Prior to 1979, the Winona area was represented by the neighboring Wisconsin local. The jurisdiction that would become Local 343 was represented by Local 949. Local 343 was chartered April 1, 1979.

Dan's father, Ray, now retired, was an IBEW journeyman who also taught apprenticeship night school. By chance or by fate, Dan was asked to substitute for Ray while he recovered from knee surgery. Substitute teaching would transition to full-time instructing for Dan, who has been an apprenticeship instructor for 22 years. He has set the career paths for literally thousands of apprentices to become knowledgeable IBEW wiremen. Apprenticeship training has evolved from night classes in rented rooms spread across the jurisdiction to full-time day schools at training centers in Mankato and Rochester.

Congratulations, Dan! We wish you a happy retirement. Your turkey fan mounts will leave with

Our Local 357 EWMC members in Feb. 2023. you. The exercise machine in your office will now be a coat/hat rack for another instructor. What will become of the wooden, green-painted, wheeled podium? Hand-me-downs with some history usually stick around.

Tom Small, P.S.

### Local 357 EWMC Busy Serving Membership

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — In January, our local's Electrical Workers Minority Caucus members attended the 33rd annual EWMC National Leadership Conference in Denver, Colo. The conference theme was "Healing and Building Through Solidarity." This was the perfect opportunity to learn more about each person's role in leadership, how to foster solidarity and to take leadership training classes.

The EWMC also participated in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. parade in January. The parade celebrates the life and legacy of the civil rights leader, who would have turned 94 this year. This year's parade theme was "Living the Dream — It Starts With Me."

Both the conference and the parade themes accurately describe the values embodied by our Local 357 EWMC members.

EWMC is highly involved with our membership, participating in projects such as Habitat for Humanity, Bowling for Brotherhood, Brother Gary Pitts Golf Tournament, dinner for our stewards before every general meeting, Day of Service, backpack donations for local schools and the recognition of the first minority apprentices of our local.

At every event and every volunteer activity, our EWMC members display leadership and solidarity. They show up, they come together and they make us stronger.

Julie-Ann Peeples, P.S.

### **Remembering a Lost Brother**

L.U. 379 (i,o,rtb&lctt), CHARLOTTE, NC — It is with deep sadness that we remember Brother Edgar Brown. Brother Edgar was a forty-year member of the IBEW who passed just short of retirement. He spent many years traveling all across the country working mostly in the Seventh and Ninth Districts. In July of 2015, he started working for Local 379 as an organizer and became assistant business manager. Edgar believed strongly in more education for all IBEW members. He brought the Foreman Development Series into the Tenth District along with a commitment to the Code of Excellence.

Teaching and sharing his knowledge were just a couple of his favorite things about working at the hall. He believed in organizing everyone to give individuals and their families better opportunities by working for the IBEW. Edgar believed that if we trained our workforce and supervision, we could improve our market share in the Carolinas, the district and the IBEW. He knew that with a properly trained workforce and supervision, we could secure more work for our members and future members.

Local 379 will carry on the legacy of teaching with the FDS series, Code of Excellence, IBEW Strong and many other classes. The IBEW and Local 379 were always at the center of Edgar's focus. Brother Brown will be sorely missed.

Doug McDaniel, R.S.



Brother Edgar Brown was a 40-year member of Local 379.

### Local 481 Welcomes New Members

L.U. 481 (ees,em,i,mt,rts,s&spa), INDIANAPOLIS, IN — Our local swore in more than 90 members at our March union meeting. These new members represent many different classifications of the IBEW, including inside apprentices, telecom (VDV) apprentices, construction electricians, test techs and signal techs.

What an amazing thing to witness, especially when these new brothers and sisters recited the same oath that we took. It truly was a powerful moment to hear them all in unison confirming their dedication and promise to uphold the purpose of the IBEW. Congratulations to all the new members, and make sure you take pride in the IBEW just as those who took that oath before you did and help us grow!





#### Local 481 apprentices reciting the oath of the IBEW.

At the same March meeting, members received years-of-service pins ranging from five to 35 years. What a room full of Local 481 members we had that night! It was a packed house, one that we would love to see at every meeting.

Stay safe out there, everyone, and remember: The IBEW is only as strong as its members, so take pride and participate in your union!

Blake Andrews, Treas.

#### **Local 611 Strong Work Picture**

L.U. 611 (catv,es,govt,i,lctt,o,spa,t&u), ALBUQUER-QUE, NM — At the time of this writing, the work picture still looks great. We are averaging 10 to 15 calls a day that are not getting filled for Albuquer-que, Los Alamos, N.M., and surrounding areas. Triad is now paying \$10 per hour incentive for straight time and \$15 per hour incentive for overtime for all productive hours worked. Triad is in need of several journeymen; if you know of anyone interested in being an IBEW member please have them call the hall at 505-343-0611.

This year is an election year for our local. We have more than 2,500 members in our local, and I encourage everyone to please send in your ballots. For every election we mail out self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and yet we get back fewer than a third of the ballots. Please take the time to fill out the ballot and drop it in the mail.

On behalf of the local, I would like to send condolences to the friends and families of Bill Belvin and Levi Esquibel.

Don't forget your union meetings on the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

Darrell J. Blair, P.S.

#### **Play Ball!**

L.U. 613 (em,i,o,rts&spa), ATLANTA, GA — For the first time in four decades, our local has a softball team. This was another concerted effort on the part of Business Manager Kenny Mullins and President Kevin Swanson to build solidarity in the local. The team is managed by James White, and he is assisted by Taylor Fraker, Seth Ricketson and Victor Fremont.

The team is eager and excited to get the season started. While currently playing in a local league, they are actively trying to create interest across the Fifth District to get a district-wide league or tournament. Local 613 is constantly looking for new paths to fellowship that instill a sense of IBEW

HAVE YOU MOVED? Notify us of an address change ww.ibew.org/ChangeMyAddress or call 202-728-6263 brotherhood and sisterhood. As the season progresses, we hope to build a team that not only competes on the local level but will have a good showing in the fall at the IBEW Softball Tournament on Long Island, N.Y.

Ron Nyberg, P.S.

Local 613 Business Manager Kenny Mullins leads the softball team in batting practice.

#### Work Updates From Local 349

L.U. 649 (i,lctt,o,rts,spa&u), ALTON, IL — We have some work updates to report from our local:

- Contract negotiations are completed with Global Brass, and a four-year agreement is in
- place through Nov. 2027.
  The construction project continues for the Alton Lock and Dam 26. The Army Corps of Engineers'
- project is to replace upstream lift gates.
  Warehouse projects continue. Amazon's warehouse is being rebuilt after sustaining
- major damage from the tornado last year. Buildings 5A and 5B are proceeding and will be used by future tenants.
- Maintenance and new work started for Phillips 66 with spring turnaround.
- New inside apprenticeship applications are complete, and twenty apprentices will be referred to contractors.
- Newly appointed Local 649 Organizer Ryan Mouser has completed Organizer Boot Camp. Congratulations are in order. Thank you, Brother Mouser.
- Handbills have been distributed at Argosy Casino Alton. The casino hired Carpenters' Local 57 contractor Reinhold Electric. Local 57 continues to undercut IBEW workers, soiling area wages and benefits faithfully negotiated.
- The new Holiday Inn Alton is going badly with all trades. No replies from Intercontinental Hotels to rectify and reset to ensure a well-executed project.

Congratulations to Local 649's newly retired members: Brent Hartley (from Olin Winchester), Perry Lorts (journeyman wireman), Steve Twitchell (from Ameren) and Jeff Woelfel (journeyman wireman). Retirement awaits, brothers and sisters!

Thanks to Alan Rubinstein. Without his input, the Local 649 news highlighted in this column would not be possible.

Let there be strength in unity.

Terry Wilhite, P.S.

### Inside Wireman Contract Signed

L.U. 659 (c,catv,em,i,lctt,o,st,t&u), MEDFORD, OR — Our inside wireman group just signed a one-year agreement with a total increase of \$3.68. Of this sum, \$3 goes to wages, which was decided by a member allocation vote; 34 cents to the Crater Lake Training Center; 25 cents to Health and Welfare; and 9 cents to NEBF.

Along with these increases there were a total of 12 language changes within the agreement. Three of the changes were language clean up; the other nine items were additions to the CBA that membership brought to the table.

James Davidson, A.B.M.

Local 1347 welcomes Lake Forest Financial Advisors.



L.U. 1347 (ees,em,u&ptc), CINCINNATI, OH — Our local got voluntary recognition, led by lead organizer Don Scott Smith, with Lake Forest Financial Advisors. This pro-union company realizes the true value of the union, dealing with current members and providing services from a professional group who has gone union. Please welcome this new company, and next time you need advice reach out to Lake Forest Financial Advisors at **www.lffadvisors.com.** 

Business Manager Andrew Kirk brought a vote to send a team to the International Lineman's Rodeo. The vote passed, and the payoff was big. IBEW 1347 senior team #602 Davey Barricklow, Matt Dugan, T.J. Lewis and Chris Simpson won their division. All the locals stood tall and took top spots in their division. Team #602 would like to thank their other sponsors for helping to make it happen: Badger Daylighting, Blackout Tees, Midwest Utilities Sales, Lambert's Cable Splicing, Linemen University and Tallman Equipment.

Andrew Kirk, B.M.



### Local 725 Sponsors 2023 Buddy Walk

L.U. 725 (i,rts&spa), TERRE HAUTE, IN — Since 1995, the Buddy Walk, a one-mile walk held on April 29 in Terre Haute at Indiana State University's Memorial Stadium, has been the premier advocacy event for Down syndrome in the United States. Local 725 was proud to be the title sponsor for this community event.

The Buddy Walk is the most widely recognized public awareness and fundraising program for the Down syndrome community. All contributions raised during the Buddy Walk assist in continuing the mission of enhancing the lives of individuals with Down syndrome through programming, resources and support.

Local member Randy Russel and his wife, Dixie, have participated in the Buddy Walk for 14 years and this was Dixie's seventh year helping to organize the event.

Asked about the most rewarding part of her participation, Dixie replied, "Down Syndrome Indiana is passionate about helping families with a loved one with Down syndrome, from infancy all the way through adulthood. I love connecting with families along their journey. Sometimes parents need someone who has walked a similar journey to just listen or help them find resources, and I love being that person for our local families!"

Dickson Hunley, P.S.

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To learn more about the Buddy Walk or send a donation, visit www.tinyurl.com/buddywalk725 or scan the QR code.

### Local 1413 President Retires After 35 Years

L.U. 1413 (u), TOLEDO, OH — President Brad Goetz presented his notice of retirement, effective March 24, to the Executive Board at March's meeting. Our membership could never express the amount of respect and gratitude we have for the dedication and sacrifice that he continually showed at the helm of our local union. We thank him for his leadership, mentorship and friendship. His tireless efforts over the years leave us more prepared for success in our fight for the best wages, benefits and working conditions for our members and all working people.

We pledge today to never stop striving to fulfill our commitment to our brothers and sisters, just as he did, so that the next generation of Local 1413 can build a better, stronger union that they can be proud of.

We thank Brother Goetz for his 35 years of service and wish him the very best in his welldeserved retirement.

Brent McClain, R.S.



Local 1413's former President/Business Manager Brad Goetz has retired after 35 years.

#### LOCAL LINES

### Leadership Changes at Local 1547

L.U. 1547 (c,em,i,o,t,u,lctt&ptc), ANCHORAGE, AK — Assistant Business Manager Doug Tansy was recently appointed business manager of our local. He replaces Marcie Obremski, who was named an international representative with the Ninth District. Sister Obremski replaces former Business Manager and International Rep. Dave Reaves, who was appointed as the Ninth District International Vice President.

Brother Tansy is originally from the native village of Cantwell in the Ahtna Region and a member of the Udzisyu (Caribou) clan. He grew up in Copper Center and Fairbanks. A graduate of the Kornfeind Training Center, he holds a state of Alaska electri-



From left, Business Manager Doug Tansy, International Representative Marcie Obremski and International Vice President Dave Reaves of Local 1547.

cal administrators license for unlimited commercial wiring. Doug serves as a trustee of the Alaska Electrical Defined Benefit Pension Plan, Electrical Health and Welfare Plan, Electrical Legal Plan and the Electrical Apprenticeship Training Trust.

Obremski's jurisdiction includes locals in Oregon, Washington and Alaska. Sister Obremski is a 30-year member of Local 1547. She started as a dispatcher at Matanuska Telephone Association in 1990. She completed her telecommunications apprenticeship in 2003 and worked as journeywoman network technician at MTA until 2009. She served as chief shop steward at MTA for 3 years before coming to our Local 1547 staff as a business representative in 2011. In 2017, she was appointed assistant business manager and in 2021, she was appointed business manager to fulfill a two-year term.

Dave Reaves was initiated in 1997 when he began in the lineman apprentice-

ship program. As a journeyman he worked in construction and at utilities throughout Alaska while serving on the local apprenticeship training trust. In 2010, he took a staff position as business representative until 2015 when he became the assistant business manager in Anchorage. He served as business manager from July 2017 until April 2021, when he was appointed an international representative.

Melinda Taylor, Comm. Dir.

Lewis Tree workers waited in the cold to vote in a National Labor Relations Board election early one morning in January; they won their election by a 10 - 2 vote.



### Tree Workers Organize to Join Local 1837

L.U. 1837 (rtb,u&ptc), MANCHESTER, ME — Lewis Tree Service workers in New Hampshire voted in a National Labor Relations Board election to be represented by our local. These workers perform utility line-clearance tree trimming on Eversource N.H. property, including crew team leaders, crew leaders, tree trimmers, trimmer trainees and groundspersons. They work alongside and in tandem with IBEW-represented lineworkers from New Hampshire's largest electric utility.

"These workers love their jobs, but they could

see that unionized Lewis Tree workers in other states had more paid holidays, reliable pay raises and other benefits that come with having a union contract," said Local 1837 organizer Matt Beck. "IBEW 1837 Business Manager Tony Sapienza, IBEW Lead Organizer Steve Smith and I started meeting with them last summer, and we're pleased to be able to welcome them into the union and look forward to negotiating their first contract."

According to the Lewis Tree Service website, the company has over 4,000 team members spanning 26 states across the country from Maine to Florida and from Texas to Wisconsin.

Matthew Beck, Bus. Rep.

### **GROUNDED** IN HISTORY

### Inflation and the 'Age-Old Attack' on Labor

When President Joe Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act in August 2022, much attention was given to the new legislation's pro-labor policies and union protections. This was for good reason. Whenever inflation fears are raised, anti-labor forces will rush to place blame on the wages unions secure for their members.

In their view, punishing the worker through job and wage cuts is how to bring down prices. The IBEW sees it differently. The IRA, as then-International President Lonnie R. Stephenson stated, "pairs clean energy investments with labor standards that promote family-sustaining union jobs." Investing in our future with good-paying, union-protected jobs is an essential part of economic stabilization, not oppressive wage cuts.

And yet, nearly a century ago as the U.S. struggled to combat a worldwide economic depression, the same arguments were made by antiunion forces. And just like today, the IBEW was there to strike them down.

On Oct. 24, 1929, the U.S. stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression. After the U.S. government took steps to ensure that credit lines were available, it turned next to restoring consumers' purchasing power. Unions pushed for large-scale public work programs to get more money into people's pockets, while banks and corporate interests pushed for job and wage cuts in the name of "reducing inflation."

Albert Wiggin, president of the Rockefeller Chase National Bank, was quoted in the April 1932 issue of The Electrical Worker saying, "American business has proved its good will in dealing with labor and may reasonably ask labor to accept a moderate reduction of wages designed to reduce cost and increase both employment and the buying power of labor." Economics professor John Commons issued a blunt response in the same article: "The banking fraternity of New York City does not want to stop unemployment; they want it to continue until labor will take a cut. They will do all in their power to force this end, so that American industry can compete with cheap European labor."

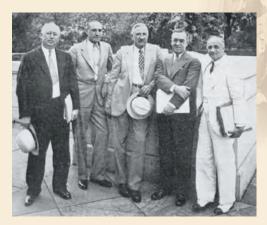
This was the debate heard throughout the early 1930s as politicians in Washington and bankers in New York tried to find a way out of the Depression. Speaking on behalf of the union, IBEW International President Howell Broach published blistering editorials month after month in The Electrical Worker.

"The aim of these anti-union lawyers is the same as it was in 1921, in 1907, in 1902 — to destroy unionism," he wrote in April 1932. "No matter what course the engineered attacks upon our local unions take, none can succeed when members remember the union's needs, its benefits, and its social and industrial importance."

Sure enough, there were many investments in construction that gave Americans a sense of optimism in these dark times. Buildings pushed higher into the skies as IBEW Local 3 in New York City finished wiring the Chrysler and Empire State buildings, each the tallest building in the world when completed in the early 1930s. Construction of the world's longest span, the Golden Gate Bridge in California, was about to begin with Local 551 in Santa Rosa.

These engineering marvels became symbols of IBEW members' skill and determination. And they served as proof, as Broach stated in another editorial, "that the Electrical Workers' Union has refused to roll over and play dead."

One of the most successful of these efforts was the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act,



*IBEW executive officers wait outside the U.S. Capitol in August 1933 to attend an NIRA hearing on the codes for electrical manufacturing. IBEW President Daniel Tracy is second from left, and Secretary Gustave Bugniazet is third from left.* 

signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. Similar to the IRA, this sweeping legislation was created not only to invigorate the economy but to ensure that union members were protected.

As described in the August 1933 Electrical Worker, the NIRA "set up labor-code language establishing the maximum hours per week and per day each employee should work; the minimum rates of wages per hour; the right to collective bargaining between employer and employees." To help ensure that these new pro-union policies were followed, the National Labor Board was established in August 1933 to implement the collective bargaining provisions of the act.

Imbued with a new sense of optimism, legislators overseeing the NIRA pushed for a wide range of public work programs. These efforts laid the groundwork for the Rural Electrification Act. A construction boom was unleashed, followed by a massive wave of union organizing. In 1934, the IBEW saw a significant increase in membership. It was clear that the NIRA was finally addressing what unions had realized all along: Wage and job cuts had prolonged the Depression.

IBEW Secretary Gustave Bugniazet said in his December 1933 editorial: "For years, industrialists have looked with envy upon the building trades and deplored the supposed high wages paid. They have advocated drawing them down to the level of the unskilled. Certain employers will use the NIRA to do this very thing."

Bugniazet was right. In 1935, the Supreme Court struck down many provisions of the NIRA. And although the union protections emerged unscathed, the NLB eventually catered to anti-labor forces and permitted company unions, effectively gutting the act. It was as Broach warned in a 1932 editorial: "The price of progress is to incur the enmity of powerful anti-union leagues. ... Anti-union lawyers will go on earning their dirty money by attacking wage earners, but they won't succeed."

And they didn't. Fed up with corporate anti-labor practices, Sen. Robert Wagner of New York authored one of the most important pieces of labor legislation, the National Labor Relations Act. The law made clear that the explicit policy of the U.S. government is to respect and encourage collective bargaining, to eliminate unfair labor practices, and to allow workers to organize for their rights. On July 5, 1935, the NLRA was signed into law. It superseded the NIRA and established a new federal labor policy that remains today.

All these years later, the Inflation Reduction Act makes it clear again that a strong economy demands strong union protections.

Visit **nbew-ibewmuseum.org** for more on how to support the IBEW's preservation of its history. Have an idea for this feature? Send it to **Curtis\_Bateman@ibew.org**.

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### WHO WE ARE

## After Coming to U.S., Local 26 Member Lives Her Dreams Through IBEW

BEW membership is a powerful tool for improving one's life. Claudia Achury's story is proof.

A native of Bolivia, Achury left her homeland nine years ago to be close to her mother, who had left the country many years earlier and was living near Washington, D.C.

Sadly, the reunion was a brief one. Her mother was diagnosed with cancer and died about one year after her arrival.

But she didn't return to Bolivia, even though she knew little English and had earned an engineering degree at a college there.

Instead, Achury stayed in suburban Washington and worked various jobs before being accepted into Local 26's apprenticeship program.

Now, nine years after her arrival, she's a project manager for Mona Electric, a Local 26 signatory contractor. Along the way, she met her husband, Diego, and lives with him and their 4-year-old son, Santiago, in Centreville, Va. She's now an American citizen.

Achury makes clear that her path wasn't easy.

"It's hard work," Achury said. "Nothing is going to be free. I'm not going to say, 'If I can do it, everyone can do it.' I'm not going to lie."

There were some awkward moments. Achury remembers showing up at her apprenticeship interview in a dress and high heels. She didn't have the proper equipment when she showed up for her first day on a jobsite as an apprentice.

Yet, at every step, she felt supported by her leaders at Local 26 and mentors on the job. Those who have watched or helped her along the way say they didn't need to do much. Her intelligence, curiosity and work ethic quickly showed through.

"She works well with others," said Mona Vice President Phil Riddle, who promoted her to project manager. "She's a problem solver. There's always an answer and a can-do attitude."

Local 26 Business Manager Joe Dabbs said Achury has "consistently risen to the top with every opportunity that's come across her plate."

He added: "We're really proud of her. She sets the bar very high for women in the industry. We don't expect anything less from our female members."

Achury was raised by her grandparents. She credits her grandfather, who worked as a carpenter, for her drive. "When I was small, he always told me, 'Claudia, if you clean bathrooms, be the best one at cleaning bathrooms," she said. "I always tried to follow what he said. I grew up in that environment. They always pushed me to do better. They were very strict, but they loved me."

She went on to earn the engineering degree at a Bolivian university, but the thought of leaving for the United States



Washington, D.C., Local 26 member Claudia Achury reviews conduit layout for upcoming tasks while working as a project manager for Mona Electric.

was always in the back of her mind.

So, at 28, she had saved enough money and moved to the Washington area. She enjoyed the time with her mother, but that came to an abrupt end. Most American engineering com-

panies and employers refused to recognize her degree from Bolivia. She wanted to stay in this country — even though the cold weather took some getting used to — and got a job working the cosmetics counter at a department store.

"I was the happiest person in the world," she said with a laugh. "I couldn't believe they were paying me \$8 an hour."

On the other hand, she quickly learned that \$8 per hour didn't go as far in the D.C. suburbs as it did in Bolivia. Achury also said she had difficulty answering some customer questions because she knew little English.

Yet, her persistence paid off. She took English courses and became fluent. She considered attending college but was turned off by the cost.

"I had never had a debt in my life," she said. "This was the first time I ever owed money."

She continued to work the cosmetics counter and took on extra jobs, including one as a bank teller near Inova Hospital in Fairfax, Va., where a major construction project was ongoing. Some of the workers cashed paper checks at the bank. Achury realized they were making good money. She talked to one customer who happened to be a supervisor on the project. He told her about Local 26's apprenticeship program and suggested that she apply.

Achury said she thought she did well on the entrance exam. She felt comfortable interacting with classmates and co-workers on the jobsite. Her first employer was in charge of a project at Joint Base Andrews, southeast of Washington. Still, that doesn't mean it

was easy. "I wanted to quit for a year,"

she said. "I would call my boyfriend and tell him, 'Today is my last day.'"

But she persisted because she knew that the apprenticeship was the only way she could be successful, she added. "After three or four months, I started to feel like I could do it. I was doing well. Everyone liked me, and they were willing to teach me."

Riddle, who was an IBEW member before moving to management, said Mona annually identifies 15 to 20 fifth-year apprentices who company officials think would be good employees once they become journeymen. Achury was on their list.

The apprentices also are asked what company they would like to work for. Achury had spent part of her apprenticeship working for Mona and enjoyed it.

She joined the company, at first working in the field under senior superintendent Jerry Watson, before being promoted to project manager earlier this year.

"She's got a lot of energy, and she's very hardworking," Riddle said. "She's ambitious. She's always on time. We have some plans for her."

Now 37, Achury doesn't see herself as a fast riser in the electrical industry. She doesn't even see herself as a role model for new Americans interested in a career in the trades or for women in the trades.

Instead, she is merely taking advantage of an opportunity presented to her.

"I came as a dreamer, like everyone else. I became a hard worker. Of course, I still have dreams, but they are dreams that I now can work toward in my future."



*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.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS	Fourth District William W. Riley	Third District Dennis C. Affinati	THE ELECTRICAL WORKER
Kenneth W. Cooper International President	Fifth District Donald B. Finn	Fourth District Gina P. Cooper	Editor Kenneth W. Cooper
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International Secretary-Treasurer	Seventh District Leroy J. Chincio	Sixth District Michael Clemmons	Alex Hogan Curtis D. Bateman
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Second District Myles J. Calvey	Second District	Tenth District Brent E. Hall	Janelle Hartman Joe Conway
Third District Daniel L. Shirey	Michael P. Monahan	Eleventh District Mark D. Hager	Emily Welsh In memory of John Sellman





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: Letters to the Editor, The Electrical Worker, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

Or send by email to: media@ibew.org

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# THE BERY'S 2023 PHOTO CONTEST

The IBEW Photo Contest has been The Electrical Worker's way to ride shotgun with brothers and sisters for a quarter of a century. Your pictures bring us closer together and are a showcase for the critical role members play in the life and work of North America.

The hundreds of submissions we receive every year are a priceless contribution to our story: the story of working people that is too often ignored or, worse, hidden. But just because something is priceless doesn't mean a value can't be put on it.

New bigger prizes!

**Voting is open to anyone**, and winners will continue to feature prominently in The Electrical Worker. All submissions are sent to the IBEW archives.

There are more than 40 major trade classifications in the IBEW, and often dozens and dozens of jobs are housed in each. **We want to hear from every one.** 

There are hundreds of thousands of members more every day — from the Arctic to the tropics and everywhere in between. **Show us your world.** 

At the moment, the IBEW is riding the beginning of a wave that will grow for years, what **International President Kenneth W. Cooper called "the golden age of golden ages."**  In just a few years, if we grab this moment with both hands and put our backs into it, we will be bigger than we have ever been.

There will never be a better moment than now to document our story for the ages. Take pictures in your offices and on your commutes. Take pictures of the factories that are coming back home. We can show what rebuilding our cities after COVID-19 looks like.

The data centers, power generation and storage we all desperately need are built by our hands, and we should be in the picture and behind the lens.

We can't wait to see them.

### STARTING IN 2023

### Top Prize: \$1,000

Prizes for second (\$750) and third (\$500) place are also going up.

\$200 honorable mention award for <u>EACH BRANCH</u> of the IBEW.

See official rules and submission instructions at **IBEW.org/photocontest**.



Entries MUST be submitted electronically by Nov. 1 via the Photo Contest link on *IBEW.org*. Please contact the Media Department at *media@IBEW.org* or 202-728-6102 with additional questions.