

THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1893

CONSTRUCTION • UTILITIES • TELECOMMUNICATIONS • MANUFACTURING • GOVERNMENT • BROADCASTING • RAILROAD

Printed in the USA

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Vol. 18 | No. 3 | March 2024

IBEW News

IBEW Supports New Term for NRC Chair
Nuclear Jobs a Priority **3**

Historic First Contract
Oregon Legislative Staff Are Union Trailblazers **6**

'Water From a Fire Hose'
Local Grows With EV Plant **7**

Md. Data Center Drive
Local 24 Flexes Power **8**

In This Issue

Editorials **2**

MyIBEW Story **2**

North of 49° **9**

Circuits **10**

Politics & Jobs **11**

Grounded in History **12**

Local Lines **13**

Retirees **16**

In Memoriam **18**

IEC Minutes **19**

Who We Are **20**



A More Perfect Union

Reflections on 50 Years of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus

For 50 years, the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus has been, in the words of President Emeritus Robbie Sparks, the conscience of the IBEW.

Since its inception, the EWMC has been organizing and pushing for a more inclusive union, one that, in accordance with the IBEW Constitution, seeks to represent all workers in the electrical industry.

It was formed from a direct action that threatened an informational picket outside the 30th International Convention in 1974. International Treasurer Harry Van Arsdale Jr. spoke with the concerned members, leading to International President Charles Pillard meeting with a representative group of them, avoiding the picket and sparking the beginning of the EWMC.

"When I look at the history and the work of the EWMC, I see a group of members living the principles of this union," International President Kenneth W. Cooper said.

A major focus of the EWMC is training members to be informed leaders and activists, whether through its annual leadership conference or its signature Breakthrough Leadership Training Institute.

'CONSCIENCE OF THE IBEW'

"The EWMC showcases the many talented members across the country that may not otherwise ever be seen or heard or hold local offices, but have been the backbone of determination and leadership for decades within our union," said Rennie Blye, an international representative in the Civic and Community Engagement Department. "The EWMC has always served as a pioneer and a safe space of belonging while helping labor recognize the value of all labor."

The focus on developing talent was a response to an all-too-common refrain from leaders in many industries, not just the IBEW, that there weren't enough minority members to promote. What the EWMC showed, decade after decade, is that leaders, especially in unions, can come from anywhere and are built, not found.

"Organizations need to be able to think

Top, EWMC conference attendees cheer at a packed plenary session; top right, International President Edwin D. Hill celebrates with EWMC President Robbie Sparks in 2008; bottom right, founding EWMC members and others, 1978; bottom left, EWMC members at the 2024 conference.

outside the box, and that only happens with diversity," EWMC President Keith Edwards said. "Diversity in attendance and structure brings about new thoughts and ideas."

It also sends a message to other underrepresented members that leadership is possible for them, too.

"I know how good it feels for me when I see someone like me leading," said EWMC Vice President Grace Smith, who's also a member of Tampa, Fla., Local 824. "It makes a difference because it shows that this institution is really invested in me and my future."

EWMC continued on page 4

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1032
LONG PRARIE, ILL

FROM THE OFFICERS

It's Our Time



Kenneth W. Cooper
International President

Try as they might, even skeptics can't deny that we're in the midst of extraordinary economic growth in the United States. The job market is sizzling, the economy is bursting at the seams, and the labor movement is growing.

Last year, 261,000 private-sector workers joined a union, more than double the surge we saw in 2022. And the vast majority of new members are in their 20s and 30s. After decades of decline, our movement is young, diverse and vibrant.

The 2023 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics even shows an uptick in some of the fiercest right-to-work states. Florida added 67,000 unionized workers. Texas added 58,000.

These and other remarkable numbers for 2023 have been pouring in from economists and analysts of every stripe: nonpartisan, liberal-leaning and conservative.

By every measure, America's economy is stronger than ever, surpassing every other nation in post-pandemic recovery. After 1.6 million jobs were created in 2023, 353,000 were added in January 2024, double the forecast. The U.S. has had two full years with unemployment below 4%.

All the while, inflation continues to decline, with economists predicting that it will drop even further in 2024. There's still a ways to go, of course, especially with the sticker shock we're all still experiencing at the grocery store.

There's even more to feel good about right now, but our work is not finished. The challenges are many. Here are a few:

- We won a historic vote to end the so-called right-to-work law in Michigan last year, but these misleading anti-union laws persist in two dozen states. Wherever these laws are allowed to stay on the books, they constrain the efforts of all unions to organize and operate.
- In Georgia, a bill is in play to withhold state incentives from new businesses that let workers organize by card check instead of requiring a secret-ballot election.
- While private-sector unions are growing, the Supreme Court's 2018 Janus ruling is chipping away at membership among public workers.

But think about this: We're still in the infancy of President Biden's historic job-creating laws — the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the American Rescue Plan Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act.

Together, they are driving trillions of dollars in private investment in manufacturing and construction, with millions more new, good jobs projected over the next decade. And don't forget that they also contain protections the IBEW insisted on, including prevailing wage, project labor agreements and the hiring of registered apprentices on projects receiving federal funds.

The IBEW was in the room when these laws were drafted. We played a hand in creating these conditions that are so ripe for growing the union. There is no better time than now to accelerate organizing at every local as we push to reach 1 million members in five years.

I want to thank every one of you for the work you do, and will do, to help us reach this critical goal. ■

Leading the EV Charge

President Joe Biden signed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law in 2021, launching a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure. This law will not only modernize our transportation and energy system but also create millions of family-sustaining, union jobs.

One of the law's top priorities was the creation of a national network of electric vehicle charging stations.

At appearances across the country, and even in front of Congress during a State of the Union address, Biden made it clear that he wanted IBEW members to be the ones to build the half a million charging stations called for by the IJA.

It was a lofty goal that some critics said would never be reached.

Like any new technology, the EV rollout has seen some bumps in the road.

But the aim of making the United States a global leader in EV technology took one step closer to becoming a reality earlier this year when the Biden-Harris administration announced that it was releasing an additional \$623 million in federal funding for the installation of charging stations.

As you can read in this issue, these funds, in addition to the \$7 billion already invested through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, mean high demand for IBEW journeymen and apprentices from coast to coast.

And the administration doubled down on its commitment to partnering with the IBEW when the Department of Transportation recommended that our Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program act as the national training standard for all EV installers.

Despite what the critics say, federal investment in EV technology has meant work for our members, and a flood of new jobs is projected in the coming years. So, it is vital that we enroll more members in EVITP training.

The IBEW is leading the transition to a modern transportation system, and that is because we have the best electrical training program in all of North America.

Every local and contractor must ensure that their members know about the opportunities offered through our EVITP program. You can learn more at EVITP.org.

From the earliest days of the electrical industry, the IBEW has been at the forefront of every energy revolution, making new emerging technologies a reality, and EVs are no different.

The opportunity is here. Let's go and seize it. ■



Paul A. Noble
International Secretary-Treasurer

My IBEW STORY

Jonathan "J.J." Darrow, construction electrician
Atlanta Local 613



“For about 25 years, I worked in the transportation industry. I started out as a teenager just out of school loading trucks and worked my way up. I had various positions routing freight from the Atlanta area, which kept me very busy. Toward the end, I was a freight broker working all hours of the day and night for a set salary. I had reached a ceiling in this position and didn't see much opportunity for financial or personal improvement or growth.

This, of course, was a nonunion office position that rarely got more than 3% increases based on company performance and budgets. There was no sense of a finish line, little job satisfaction, absolutely no bargaining power. It felt like a trap of sorts, a dead end.

I had been aware of the IBEW ever since I was in high school. In fact, I had a couple of friends there who had graduated and joined the IBEW to pursue electrical careers. I considered it, but for whatever reason thought it wasn't for me at the time. In hindsight, I know this was a huge missed opportunity. Luckily, one of my friends from childhood, Josh Keane, helped me get started and is now my brother at Local 613. With that support, I knew there could be a different sort of life for me.

Once I reached my wit's end with the mistreatments of nonunion work, I came to the midlife realization (potentially, a midlife crisis) that we're only here once and for a short time, so we should do everything we can to make the best of this life. I decided at 45 years old to do what I should've done at 18. I spoke with one of the larger contractors in Atlanta and was hired into the construction wireman/construction electrician program and joined a few months later. This was one of the best decisions I've ever made.

Now that I'm here, the day-and-night difference between now and my nonunion days continues to amaze me. I've got benefits, support and overall brotherhood. I had a few health issues that were absolutely devastating, and my care came not only from insurance but also from my local, which offered a short-term benefit.

I never experienced anything remotely close to it nonunion. My wife and kids have noticed a difference in the way I carry myself and how proud I am to be an IBEW brother. This is where I'll stay until retirement. I'm so thankful for the IBEW and all of the good things that come from being a member.”

Every member in every branch has a story to tell about how the IBEW has improved their life both on and off the job. Tell us yours today for a chance to be featured here.

ibew.org/MyIBEWStory

THE METER

261,000

The number of U.S. private-sector workers who joined unions in 2023, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For more about the rising tide of unionism, see "It's Our Time" on this page and "More Than a Feeling: 2023 Data Affirms Thriving U.S. Economy, Union Growth" on page 11.

With NRC at Crossroad, IBEW Pushes for Chair's Renomination

The IBEW is urging the renomination and Senate confirmation of Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Christopher Hanson following the departure of another commissioner who was a friend of working families and communities that depend on the industry.

Jeff Baran, an advocate for safety and the protection of employees' rights, left the commission after his tenure ended in June 2023. This left the five-seat commission with four members including Hanson, whose term is up in June.

Baran worked closely with all the nuclear industry's stakeholders during his nine years on the commission, including organized labor. He regularly met with IBEW members during visits to nuclear facilities and other events. The commission is charged by law to regulate the use of radioactive materials to protect public health and safety and the environment.

"I want to thank Jeff Baran for his work in keeping the nuclear industry safe and for supporting our members, especially in fighting back against attempts to change access authorization," Utility Director Donnie Colston said. "He was respectful to all the industry's stakeholders, including the IBEW. He leaves quite a legacy."

The IBEW has ample reason to be interested in the commission's makeup. It has more than 10,000 members employed at 65 nuclear reactors in the United States and one in Canada. About 5,000 more construction members work in jobs supported by the nuclear industry. Colston and International President Kenneth W. Cooper meet with Hanson on a quarterly basis, and IBEW representatives regularly speak with all the commission's members and their staffs.

"Chairman Hanson is doing a good job in keeping nuclear facilities safe," Colston said. "He's worked to see that the NRC has a professional staff, which ensures that inspections are performed by highly qualified inspectors. That makes it safer for our members at work and helps save jobs because facilities are more likely to stay open. We are optimistic that will continue for years to come."

Protecting Nuclear Workers' Rights

Access authorization is a key concern of the unionized nuclear workforce. New employees undergo an extensive background and security check by plant operators when hired and every five years afterward. Once certified, they can enter a nuclear facility unsupervised. That access can only be revoked under special circumstances.

Some companies and nuclear operators pushed to do away with an



"These small, modular facilities can be ramped up and ramped down, just like a peaking unit. They're going to create a lot of jobs for IBEW members using clean energy."

— Utility Director Donnie Colston

employee's right to appeal those decisions and deny access after decisions to a third-party arbitrator, even though the just-cause clause is a key part of collective bargaining agreements between management and the IBEW and other unions. In essence, those employees would have nowhere to turn if they were being kept from working.

The federal courts ruled against the companies, and the NRC did as well by a vote of 3-1 in 2019, protecting the collective bargaining rights of union employees. Baran wrote the NRC's decision for the Federal Register. He was the only Democratic member of the commission at the time due to a vacancy that had not been filled.

"Companies are often touting their relationship with labor," said Utility International Representative Matthew Warren, who specializes in nuclear issues. "But all too often, they are attacking federal agencies that support labor."

"Without that ability to go to arbitration, there would be no checks and balances on what the industry could do," Warren added. "They could get rid of people they just don't like, including for being active in their union."

Nuclear is a key element in the ongoing transition to green energy because it is carbon-free, safe and can be accessed at any time. It continues to evolve to the benefit of IBEW members. TerraPower and PacifiCorp have applied to the NRC for a permit to construct a Sodium reactor plant on the site of a former coal-fired power plant in Wyoming, the No. 1 coal producing state in the nation.

Colston said the project will provide work to about 2,000 construction members. Once finished, the facility will employ about 320 members. Sodium reactors are smaller and run on different

fuel than advanced reactors. Many industry experts believe they will be an effective supplement to carbon-free sources like wind and solar, which haven't yet proven to be as reliable.

"It doubles our members at that plant from when it was a coal facility," Colston said. "These small, modular facilities can be ramped up and ramped down, just like a peaking unit. They're going to create a lot of jobs for IBEW members using clean energy."

Keeping Plants Open

Warren said Hanson has taken a leading role in developing common-sense regulations to help save nuclear plants at risk of closure. That is vitally important because it can take years, perhaps even decades, to close a facility after it has been decommissioned.

The commission has kept open facilities in California, Illinois and Florida where the IBEW represents workers. Warren said Hanson was particularly helpful in keeping open the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, which includes hundreds of employees represented by Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245.

PG&E, the plant's owner, announced plans in 2016 to close its two reactors by 2025. Two years later, it withdrew an earlier application to the commission to extend its license.

But the company reversed course in 2022 at the urging of Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration, which said closure would make it difficult for the state to reach its carbon-free goals and threaten grid stability. Independent researchers and scientists maintained that it would cost the state more to close the facility than to keep it open until 2035, and closure could lead to a decrease in emission reductions.

The NRC agreed — at Hanson's urging — to reconsider a request for a new license that previously had been made in 2009. That process is ongoing, but the plant will be open well beyond 2025.

"Without that, those workers would be out of a job," Warren said. "Chairman Hanson protected our members' jobs with common-sense guidelines that benefited the entire industry."

The Chairman's Track Record

Like Baran, Hanson also has been willing to meet with IBEW members. Toledo, Ohio, Local 245 saw that firsthand last summer, when they met with Hanson and Ohio Rep. Marcy Kaptur at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station.

"He showed interest in the well-being of our workforce there," Business Manager Shane Bauman said. "We talked about safety, reliability and morale."

Energy Harbor took over ownership of the plant after parent company First Energy emerged from bankruptcy in 2020. It took Local 245 more than a year to negotiate its first successor contract with Energy Harbor, which is now in the process of being sold to Texas-based Vistra Corp.

"Despite the many challenges during the last few years, our members there have maintained a safety conscious attitude and been nothing short of professional," Bauman said. "I give them a lot of credit. But [Hanson] recognized we had

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Christopher Hanson, second from right, at last year's LAMPAC conference. He is joined, from left, by International Secretary Treasurer Paul Noble, then-Edison Electric Institute President Thomas Kuhn, International President Kenneth W. Cooper, American Electric Power President and CEO Julie Sloat, and former EEI Chairman Warren Baxter.

some legitimate safety issues. He listened and asked some good questions."

"We took a good feeling from it," Bauman added. "It was a very positive meeting."

The NRC is supposed to include five members serving staggered five-year terms, nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. No more than three can come from the same political party. A prolonged fight over Hanson's renomination could leave it with just three members, especially if the Senate is slow to act on Baran's replacement.

Warren said the facts don't back up the industry's attacks on the NRC.

"The commission is there to support, not promote, the industry," Warren said. "They regulate. They're a technical agency. The industry has its own struggles. It is facing a tremendous amount of challenges in terms of capital investment."



NRC Chairman Christopher Hanson speaking at last year's LAMPAC Conference. LAMPAC is a joint venture between the IBEW and EEI to advance joint objectives between the union and energy companies.

In the end, what's important for the IBEW and all stakeholders is a sense of continuity and stability on the commission, no matter what happens in the 2024 elections, Warren said. That's another reason for any openings to be filled during the next few months.

"Having a sense of consistency and knowing who you're working with is so important," he said. ■

A More Perfect Union:

Reflections on 50 Years of the Electrical Workers Minority Caucus



▼ Continued from page 1

As the Biden administration continues to invest hundreds of billions of dollars into infrastructure and manufacturing, creating tens of thousands of jobs, the IBEW needs to grow to be equal to this historic moment. Cooper set a goal of 1 million active members in five years.

To fuel part of this growth, the IBEW can look to the EWMC for trained leaders who are primed to bring in the next generation. Locals can let their caucus chapters guide them on where to organize and which communities to go into, and then send those members out to do the recruiting.

“EWMC chapters are a great tool for locals to tap into. Someone of the same race or gender can often have an easier conversation,” said Wendell Yee, a New York Local 3 member and adviser to the EWMC board. “People are more open when it’s a familiar face.”

RENEW/NextGen, the IBEW’s initiative to get younger members involved in the union and train them to be leaders, originated with the EWMC. Sparks in particular saw the need for a way to elevate



Top, members attend a plenary session. Above, founding member and International Representative Mary Whipps O'Brien at an early EWMC conference.

the voices of younger members and ensure that they were being heard.

“If we don’t listen to our young people, we’re going to be lost. They’re the next generation,” said Edwards, who’s also a retired international representative and business manager of Portland, Ore., Local 48. “There are new ways to approach things that only they’re aware of. They think differently. We have to honor that.”

Leadership training ties into another tenet of the caucus: mentoring. It’s a way to help with retention by letting members know they’re valued. It’s also crucial for fostering the next generation and passing along institutional knowledge.

“None of us are going to be here forever. We’re all just placeholders. Our job is to prepare people to take our place,” Edwards said. “It’s not fair to the

membership to hoard that knowledge. That’s a huge, critical piece, and one that holds back organized labor. It shouldn’t be about you. It should be about the membership.”

It used to be that institutional knowledge was passed down through the family, or a small group of people. Now, there are more and more first-generation members who may not know all the ins and outs or the trade jargon. Mentoring is a way to teach those rules.

“If you don’t mentor, it’s baptism by fire for the next person,” said EWMC at-large member Sylvester Taylor.

Legacy of Inclusion

As an autonomous organization, the EWMC cannot submit resolutions to the IBEW International Convention. Nevertheless, it has gotten a number of its agenda items passed through locals introducing them. It’s how RENEW/NextGen started, as well as IBEW Strong, the union-wide initiative to create more diversity, equity and inclusion in the IBEW, particularly within leadership.

The EWMC has also gotten resolutions and amendments passed to make the constitution gender neutral; to add racism, sexism and fascism to the list of what the IBEW opposes; to make discrimination, bullying and harassment chargeable



International President Kenneth W. Cooper, left, speaks with EWMC President Keith Edwards after delivering a speech at the 2024 EWMC conference.

offenses; and to create a Department of Human Services, which is now the Civic and Community Engagement Department.

“It’s been a lot of small chess moves,” said Sparks, a retired business manager of Atlanta Local 2127. “This is a great union because of real hard effort.”

That the IBEW does a Day of Service at its conventions is also a product of the EWMC. Days of service have long been a component of EWMC conferences, which are always held during the week before the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. They are a nod to the EWMC’s civil rights roots, but more than that, they are a way to get into underserved communities and give back, all the while dispelling negative myths about unions.

“As King said, anyone can be great because anyone can serve,” Edwards said. “It’s an investment we make now that will sow benefits down the road. That’s the best PR.”

For anyone who’s curious about the EWMC, there may be no better way to learn than by attending conferences. Open to all members, they’re frequently credited with fostering a particularly inviting environment.

“It’s a love conference,” Sparks said. “We are family. It lets you know you’ve got brothers and sisters who will check on you constantly. You will never go to a conference and not have someone to talk to.”

That sense of love, as well as the social justice drive, is what attracted EWMC immediate past President Victor Uno, who grew up in an activist household.

“When I found the EWMC and met Robbie, she gave me a big embrace and I felt like I’d come home,” said the former

international representative and business manager of Dublin, Calif., Local 595. “I felt like I belonged. That’s the EWMC.”

The conferences, through their sessions and increasing numbers of attendees, also offer a lot of opportunities for education.

“I learn something new every time I attend an EWMC conference,” said Nashville, Tenn., Local 429 President Kim Sansom, who serves as an at-large member on the EWMC board. “I’m able to network with business managers, presidents and rank-and-file members so I can better understand and continue to learn. That’s mentoring.”

Part of what the EWMC has been educating members on is the need to destigmatize mental health challenges and provide better resources to help members. A conference session on the subject in 2023 went two hours over its scheduled time because so many attendees wanted to share their experiences. A similar session at the annual conference in January was expanded to allow for more participation, and still was filled to capacity.

“People are hurting,” said Royetta Sanford, the first Black woman to hold the position of director at the International Office when she took the helm of the newly formed Human Services Department. “They bared their souls and shared their anguish. Some even cried. It was unbelievable.”

Sanford and Edwards both point to insurance plans, and awareness about what they offer, as a way for unions to help. In particular, plans should provide access to therapists who represent the membership wherever possible.



NECA Vice President Lt. Gen. Ronald Bailey and Bruce G. Fulton at the 2024 EWMC conference.

From left: EWMC Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Sherilyn Wright, Executive Assistant to the International President, with EWMC President Emeritus Robbie Sparks and Education Director Amanda Pacheco.



International Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble addresses the 2024 EWMC conference.



EWMC conferences are known for their days of service as well as providing a loving atmosphere where members of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging.



Above, EWMC immediate past President Victor Uno, left, with EWMC conference attendees Jean Simonson and Long Island, New York, Local 1049 member Baron Lyn.

“We can’t have people taking their lives because we dropped the ball,” Edwards said, referring to the high rates of suicide in the construction industry. “That’s not what a union is about.”

‘A Beloved Community’

Part of the EWMC’s push for more inclusive leadership includes championing its members and their successes, said Taylor, who’s also the director of diversity, equity and inclusion for St. Louis Local 1.

“The EWMC makes sure the International Office sees its members doing well. It helps them get to higher levels,” Taylor said. “We shine a spotlight on their work, both in the community and in the IBEW.”

For Uno, who grew up in the 1960s, the EWMC is a way to honor the legacy of Dr. King, whom Uno describes as not just a peacemaker but a fighter for radical change.

“It’s about more than just wages and benefits,” Uno said. “King had a view of a beloved community, of the American promise for everyone, and he was viewed as a threat to a lot of people in power. It’s very meaningful that we always meet on MLK Jr. weekend. There are things there you won’t find at a progress meeting.”

Early on, the EWMC was seen by some as adversarial, even militant. But there may be no IBEW members more committed to the values of the union than those in the EWMC. For a lot of them, they’ve had to endure discrimination, on and off the job, but instead of leaving or trying to tear down the union, they’ve chosen to stay and help it better live up to its values.

“We want a carrot instead of a stick. We don’t want to be punitive,” Edwards said. “If you’re found guilty of something, that’s an opportunity for enlightenment on how to treat your brothers and sisters better. That’s always been the goal.”

In most cases, once someone gets to know the EWMC or attends a conference, they quickly see what it’s all about: educating and empowering all members regardless of identity or background. In short, there’s nothing to be afraid of — and a lot to get invested in.

“People are always astonished when they see what the EWMC is,” said Sanford, who also served as a business representative with Los Angeles Local 18 and on the EWMC executive committee. “There were negative connotations at first, but then they saw how we were educating members and that there was a place for them, too. Most people walk away impressed.”

Through days of service and initiatives to adopt schools, along with get-out-the-vote efforts and other forms of community activism, the EWMC is organizing in ways big and small.

“The EWMC is getting out in the community, and our members are telling their story of how the IBEW has changed their lives,” Civic and Community Engagement Director Jennifer Gray said. “Through preparing future members for apprenticeships and volunteering in underrepresented communities, the EWMC is helping the IBEW meet the goal of 1 million members.”

The first EWMC conference in 1991 had fewer than 50 members in

attendance. This year, there were over 800, from a multitude of nationalities and backgrounds. That kind of growth and diversity is not something every conference or progress meeting can claim.

For Senior Executive Assistant to the International President Sherilyn Wright, who attended her first conference in 1997, the EWMC opened her eyes to a different side of the union.

“The EWMC has shown so many that they do belong. It’s such an important piece of the IBEW,” said Wright, who this year received the EWMC’s Lifetime Achievement Award, along with Sanford. “It was quite an honor to be recognized by a group that does such amazing work.”

After 50 years of growth, there are 44 chapters in the U.S. and Canada, and that number is sure to grow in the next 50 years because what the EWMC offers is timeless and lies at the heart of unionism: the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to reach your highest potential.

“It’s simple. It’s what everybody wants, to belong, to see yourself and others like you have the opportunity to advance and be part of a great organization,” Sanford said. “It’s no more than anyone else would want.”

For some, the best place for the EWMC to be in 50 years is as a footnote in the IBEW’s history because there won’t be a need for it anymore. There will be more women, people of color and LGBTQ+ members occupying the highest levels of the union. The concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion will be as commonplace

as any other aspect of running of a successful large organization.

It’s entirely possible, Taylor said. There’s just more work to do along the way.

“We have some housekeeping to do, but we can get there,” Taylor said. “We’re nowhere near where we should be, but we also don’t look anything like we used to.” ■



EWMC Mission Statement

- Promote equity, equal opportunity and employment for minorities and underrepresented* workers at all levels of the IBEW structure.
- Foster leadership development and empower minorities and underrepresented workers to become active participants and leaders in the IBEW.
- Provide assistance to and address discrimination complaints of minorities and underrepresented workers in the IBEW.
- Promote, support and assist the organizing of minority and underrepresented workers in the IBEW.
- Encourage minority and underrepresented workers to be greater activists in community and political affairs.
- Be actively involved in human, civil and women’s rights organizations both within and outside of organized labor.

* African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, people with disabilities and women

Trailblazing Aides in Oregon Legislature Ratify Historic First Contract

Legislative staffers in Oregon did the unprecedented when they organized an IBEW bargaining unit in 2021, the first — and still only — union of its kind at any state capitol. Now they've made history again by ratifying a first contract.

It took nearly two years once talks started, but the Seattle Local 89 members emerged with an agreement that gives them new clout in a workplace where opinions, egos and power plays run rampant.

While lawmakers in both parties resisted the union during the organizing drive, tensions eased at the table. Members of the IBEW's bipartisan bargaining team said the dialogue was amiable overall, despite the drawn-out process.

"I think everyone was looking for solutions," said Claire Prihoda, a longtime aide who took part in negotiations. "We all knew that this was a challenging workplace."

The biggest hurdle for both sides was the blank slate in front of them.

"There is so much to this group that's unique and never been done before," Local 89 organizer Justin Roberts said, describing a complicated mix of job durations, classifications and office structure among the state's 60 House members and 30 senators.

Some staffers are full-time and year-round, some part-time, some temporary and employed only when the Legislature is in session in Salem — up to 160 days in odd-numbered years and just 35 days in between, he explained. Some aides work for multiple lawmakers; some are their boss's spouse or child or other relation.

"We had to figure out, are we looking at 90 different bargaining units or is this one bargaining unit with 90 managers?" Roberts said.

The contract affirmed the Legislature itself as the employer with lawmakers effectively first-level managers, still having leeway to run their offices as they see fit, but with more rights and protections for their employees.

"I feel really good about it," Prihoda said. "It's a partisan staff, and that's not an easy group to build solidarity around. We're often at odds in our jobs. But Democrat or Republican, we're all dealing with the same issues at work."

Specific gains include a 6.5% raise, \$1,500 lump sum, a grievance procedure, clarity on overtime eligibility and travel costs, and seats on the Capitol's safety and wellness committee.

"What we heard from aides was, 'We're working in this environment that brings a lot of emotion and a lot of controversy and we upset people, we make people mad — unintentionally — and we're concerned for our safety,'" Roberts said.

The Legislature on its own stepped up security in the building during the pandemic, taking care of some of the issues aides were raising. Going forward, the unit will have a say in such decisions.

Roberts said the biggest sticking point at the table involved lawmakers wanting to exclude high-level aides as confidential employees. "We went round and round and round and round," he said, explaining that the state Employment Relations Board had ruled that all legislative aides — classified as LA 1, 2, 3 or 4 — are eligible for the bargaining unit.

Ultimately, the union agreed that a lawmaker could designate, in writing, one LA-4 employee as exempt. "It was a big deal for us because the LA-4s are the most consistent and longest-tenured aides, and they are critical to the bargaining unit," Roberts said. "But without that piece of it, we wouldn't have an agreement."



"Whereas, the Oregon Legislative Assembly and IBEW Local 89 mutually desire to establish a constructive, cooperative, and respectful relationship; to establish an equitable and respectful procedure for the resolution of differences; and to address the needs of the people of Oregon and serve the constituents in each of our state House and Senate districts."

— Preamble to first-ever contract negotiated for legislative staff at a state capitol

Legislative staffs by nature are transient, full of young people cutting their political teeth for several years and moving on. Even seasoned aides come and go: Roberts said the size of the unit can range from 90 aides in off months to 180 or more when the Legislature is in session.

Local 89 Business Manager Richard Murray said the local is committed to the "hard work of building the unit" despite the turnover. "There's a lot of pride in being the first union ever to negotiate a contract for legislative aides," he said. "It's quite

an accomplishment, but we're not done."

His eclectic local is experienced in helping smaller shops succeed, representing such units as funeral directors, workers who manufacture micro-layers of gold, and a news outlet focusing on homelessness and social justice. "If there's a group of workers out there that needs help, that needs a voice, we're here to help them," Murray said.

Over time, Roberts envisions a robust unit with stewards throughout the Capitol and has creative ideas to spur growth. For instance, posters

with QR codes on union bulletin boards, something new staffers might see before the unit even has their names.

At times he has fielded calls from legislative workers around the country who want a union. Organizing drives have been launched in a handful of states, including Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire and Washington, but lawmakers have stood in their way.

Given that, Roberts noted the irony of what the Oregon unit achieved. "It's very interesting to negotiate a contract with a group that can take away your right to negotiate a contract," he said.

The agreement has a short life, expiring with the 89th Legislature at the end of the year. The bargaining team, which includes four members split between the parties and chambers — two from the House and two from the Senate — could be back at the table by June.

Roberts is the first to say the 2023 agreement isn't perfect. "Far from it," he said. "But we felt it was the best deal we could get two years into the process, and something is better than nothing."

The contract's preamble alone is important, he stressed, stating a mutual desire for a "constructive, cooperative, and respectful relationship."

With that in mind and a fresh round of talks coming up, Prihoda is hopeful for genuine change in the Capitol's culture — evolving into a workplace where lawmakers are more sensitive to the demands they make of employees and more aware of their responsibilities to them.

She pointed to legislators' varying and ambiguous approaches to compensation for overtime and travel, citing occasions when aides spend hours driving to far-flung districts to assist with town hall. Some were assured extra pay and reimbursement; others weren't.

Now, with rules spelled out in a union contract, Prihoda said, the unit intends to hold legislators accountable.

"It's much more out in the open now, what rights and responsibilities we have in our workplace," she said. "We're able to lean on each other and reinforce that we can advocate for ourselves and each other."

She sees the contract as a win for all involved — a rarity in a Statehouse.

"We believe that having professional staff that has stability and growth and can sort of breathe easier will be better at supporting members, regardless of party, and will build a Legislature that can provide consistent, professional services for all of Oregon," Prihoda said. ■



Inside the Oregon Capitol rotunda, a victory photo from the aides' organizing win in 2021. The Local 89 unit, still the only one of its kind nationwide, ratified a first contract in 2023 that covers a staff of 90 to 180 workers or more, depending on whether the Legislature is in session.



Ford Motor Co.'s Blue Oval City, a \$6 billion, six-square-mile electric vehicle and battery manufacturing campus in western Tennessee — part of which is shown in this artist's rendering — is said to be the biggest project in the history of the company and of Memphis, Tenn., Local 474.

'Like Drinking Water From a Fire Hose' Massive Ford EV Complex Draws Hundreds to Memphis Local

Ford Motor Co.'s Blue Oval City project in western Tennessee is one of the biggest expansions of U.S. automaking in decades. It's also turning into a golden opportunity for Memphis Local 474 to welcome hundreds of new men and women into the IBEW.

"We've recruited 700 new members since January 2023, and we still have open calls every day," said Local 474 Business Manager Noel Sherman. "It's been like drinking water from a fire hose."

Blue Oval City, which broke ground in 2022, is consistently described in superlatives. Ford calls the \$6 billion, six-square-mile electric vehicle and battery manufacturing campus its largest-ever undertaking. It's been labeled the biggest commercial construction project in Tennessee history. And it's said to be the largest project to land in Local 474's jurisdiction since the IBEW approved its charter in 1906.

Ford estimates that 6,000 workers, including hundreds of IBEW members, will be required to get the 13-building campus fully up and running by the end of 2025. The centerpiece of this carbon-neutral project — built on a former cotton field in Stanton, about an hour's drive northeast of Memphis — will be the Tennessee Electric Vehicle Center. There, Ford will begin producing the F-150 Lightning, the company's first all-electric pickup truck, as well as the batteries that will power it.

There also will be an electric substation and rows of solar panels on site, as well as pre-assembly and painting shops, concrete plants, and water towers.

One big bonus with all this Blue Oval City work is that it's providing the IBEW and other unions a solid foothold in Tennessee, where so-called right-to-work has been state law since 1947 and 70% of voters in 2022 approved adding the law's language to the state constitution.

"It's just an awesome opportunity for us to gain more market share," Sherman said. "We had been sitting at 25% to 30%."

Blue Oval City also represents a victory in Tennessee for the United Auto Workers, which is in the midst of its third try in 10 years to organize workers at the Volkswagen automaking plant in Chattanooga. Last fall, the UAW achieved significant pay and benefit gains for its members who work for Ford, General Motors and Stellantis following a six-week strike against the Big Three automakers. The union's pact with Ford includes a strategy for allowing Blue Oval City's workers to join the UAW and be covered under its master agreement with the company.

Also noteworthy is the fact that Blue Oval City is being built with a project labor agreement under the National Maintenance Agreements. Local 474 officials meet regularly with representatives from other unions working there, as well as Ford and Walbridge, the site's general contractor.

"Our partnerships with contractors are like we've never seen before because the need is so great," Sherman said. "It's a great place to be in."

Meanwhile, recruiting efforts for new IBEW members never stop, he said. Everyone at Local 474 understands that Blue Oval City is an opportunity to show Ford — and others — how the union and its signatory contractors are more than capable of meeting the automaker's needs while offering near-immediate employment to a highly trained workforce, with wages and benefits better than those advertised by nonunion contractors. Deal-sweeteners include the Memphis area's vibrant cultural scene, attractions, and reasonable cost of living.

The drastic growth in Local 474's membership — in 2020, the figure hovered around 1,500 — is also



Credit: BlueOval SK

Ford estimates that hundreds of IBEW members will be needed to get its 13-building campus fully up and running by the end of 2025, including this massive plant where batteries will be manufactured for Ford's all-electric F-150 Lightning pickup truck.

helping to boost interest in its state-of-the-art JATC.

"We had our largest first-year apprenticeship class this past year," Sherman said. With a similar influx of candidates expected for 2024, "we're looking at acquiring more space and maybe doing some things a little differently."

Although plenty of Local 474's members are working a standard 40-hour schedule there, "lots of contractors are running 10 hours a day, seven days a week," Sherman said.

There's no end in sight for Blue Oval City after principal construction is finished. Scores of IBEW members will be needed to stick around to handle the maintenance work at the massive facility. And in the coming years, Ford is planning to produce other electric vehicles there, as well as their batteries.

There should be plenty of other job opportunities for workers who

move to greater Memphis, with thousands of potential Ford-related supplier jobs in parts manufacturing and other logistics needs.

"The area's gonna change, a lot," Sherman said, adding that future developments are also in the early planning stages for more Stanton-area housing, hotels and restaurants.

"This is just a very exciting time for the IBEW in western Tennessee," said Tenth District International Vice President Brent Hall, whose jurisdiction includes the state. "The Blue Oval City project can only help our whole union grow by allowing us to offer lots of opportunities for new and experienced members.

"It's giving the Local 474 and Tenth District a chance to share with the rest of the union what this area has to offer," Hall added.

Sherman agreed. "We've got this opportunity, and we're going to do our very best." ■

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

IBEW sisters who attended the Tradeswomen Build Nations conference talk about the power of sisterhood in the trades. Check out the video at [YouTube.com/@theIBEW](https://www.youtube.com/@theIBEW).

Vimeo

The First District recently hosted an Industry Night to build relationships with partners and contractors across Canada. Watch the video at [Vimeo.com/IBEW](https://www.vimeo.com/IBEW).

HourPower

Local 26 members are working on



The Stacks, a huge residential and retail project financed by the NEBF's real estate arm. IBEWHourPower.com for more.

ElectricTV

Iowa State University's



student NECA chapter provides soon-to-be graduates real world experience as they prepare for careers in the industry. See the at ElectricTV.net.

Baltimore Local Works on Clearing the Way for More Data Center Jobs in Maryland

Data center construction and maintenance jobs have become mainstays for thousands of IBEW members across North America over the last several years. In Maryland, Baltimore Local 24 Business Manager Michael McHale is working hard to keep bringing as much of that work as possible into his state.

“Every morning, thousands of Maryland residents — many of them IBEW members — travel into Virginia to work in that state’s thriving data center industry,” McHale said. “Needless to say, these men and women would rather be working closer to home in our state.”

Data centers have become a necessity in an era when instant online access to software, documents and media files is critical. Technology companies keep investing in data center growth and redundancy because program access lags or downtime could send their customers to competitors.

“Our highly trained electrical workers are the best qualified to install and maintain the power lines and protection systems data centers need to stay on 24/7, as well as the numerous racks of servers and routers that go inside,” said Fourth District International Vice President Gina Cooper, whose jurisdiction includes Maryland. “This kind of work is a perfect fit for the IBEW.” (Read more about the union’s data center successes in the November 2021 Electrical Worker.)

The Maryland General Assembly has also recognized that data centers could bring thousands of construction and maintenance jobs to the state. In 2020, the body approved a package of employment incentives and tax exemptions to help encourage data center construction and expansion.

“We’re all about giving Local 24 members reasons to work closer to home for comparable pay, a better quality of life and more family time,” he said. “Construction and utility locals across Maryland will benefit from these incentives, too.”

McHale’s 2,250-member local covers IBEW members in Maryland from the Appalachian Trail to the Atlantic Ocean. In Frederick County, the business manager serves on a data center workgroup that’s collaborating with state officials to set guidelines for development and prepare the area for the potentially thousands of jobs that would come with it.

One spot in the county that’s been identified by Maryland’s Office of Smart Growth as ideal for repurposing as a data center is the 2,100-acre site of the former Alcoa EastAlco Works aluminum processing plant.

“In 1970, our members helped build and



Baltimore Local 24’s leaders, pictured with IBEW members at a recently built data center in Hanover, Md., are working hard to ensure that more of the local’s members will be able to find future long-term construction jobs in Maryland.

maintain that plant,” noted McHale, adding that he worked there himself in the 1990s as it was beginning to downsize. “Part of my job was to get stuff off the site,” he said. It was shuttered completely in 2010.

Quantum Loophole, which builds data centers for lease to tech companies, bought the EastAlco site in 2021 — but soon encountered a construction concern stemming from the state’s rules for diesel-fueled emergency backup generators.

“In Maryland, any generator that can produce over 2 megawatts needs a certificate of public convenience and necessity from the state’s Public Service Commission or CPCN exemption,” McHale explained, even when the generators would have no connection to the power grid.

One of Quantum Loophole’s clients wanted to install 168 generators, which if combined would have been capable of producing about 504 MW of power. When the PSC balked at the plan, agreeing instead to allow just 70 MW of potential generation, the client threatened to walk away from the project.

To help remove such potential roadblocks in future situations, a measure quickly proposed by Maryland Gov. Wes Moore — and still moving through the General Assembly as this story went to press — aims to make it easier for data centers, as well as hospitals and hotels, to install modern backup generators.

“If the bill makes it through, data center jobs will really take off,” McHale said. The Maryland Tech Council estimated that data center construction and maintenance at the EastAlco site alone could generate 3,000 construction jobs a year through 2037 — at least 500 of which would be filled by IBEW members, he said — along with

nearly 1,700 permanent jobs handling maintenance, upgrades and other advancements.

Getting that and similar worker-friendly legislation passed is why solidifying Local 24’s relationships with elected officials at all levels remains a priority, McHale said.

“For too many years, the IBEW let other people decide our fate,” he said. “Now we have a seat at the table. ... We’re working hard to get the Local 24 name out there,” McHale said, noting that his local is on three of Maryland’s five central labor councils. “We’re using every tool in our toolbox.” ■

Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed)

Did you work construction on a Department of Energy (DOE) site?

You may be eligible for a free medical screening exam to test for health conditions that may be work related.

“The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program’s concerns and diligence are appreciated for the future well-being of our members and retirees.”

Dennis Stoltz
IBEW Local 68 (Rocky Flats)
Former Business Manager

“This program saved my life. If it hadn’t been in place and I hadn’t taken the initiative to participate, I wouldn’t be here today. My advice to any worker is: Don’t Wait.”

Guy Sands
IBEW Local 575
Former Portsmouth GDP Worker
BTMed Participant

Photo Courtesy of DOE.

TO ENROLL, CALL 1-800-866-9663 OR VISIT www.btmed.org.

BTMed is part of the Department of Energy’s Former Worker Program and is administered by CPWR - The Center for Construction Research and Training, the health and safety research center of North America’s Building Trades Unions, with support from state and local Building and Construction Trades Councils. Funding from the Department of Energy (DE-FC01-06EH06004).



Cumberland, Md., Local 307 Business Manager Rodney Rice, left, and Baltimore Local 24 Business Manager Michael McHale, right, regularly discuss job prospects for IBEW members with elected officials at all levels of government, such as Rep. David Trone of Maryland, center.

NORTH OF 49° | AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

Ontario IBEW Uses Provincial Funding to Improve Training, Recruitment

The Ontario provincial government announced plans to invest nearly \$63 million in skilled trades training, much of which is expected to be directed to the IBEW's local union training centers in the province.

The announcement was made during an event at Toronto Local 353 on Dec. 11. The local has launched a project to prepare 48 young people from historically underrepresented groups in the Toronto area for careers in the electrical industry.

The free program includes a four-month boot camp to train them in essential skills and safety, followed up by a 10-week job placement with a signatory contractor.

First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk credited the IBEW Construction Council of Ontario for having the vision and courage to work with the party in power and find mutually beneficial areas. The Progressive Conservatives have controlled the provincial government since 2018.

In Ontario, one of those areas of common interest is building a construction workforce to meet growing infrastructure demands.

"We need more young people to know university isn't the only path to success in life," said David Piccini, Ontario's minister of labour, immigration, training and skills development.

Shewchuk pledged that the IBEW will do everything it can to prepare young people for opportunities in the electrical industry.

"When faced with the challenge of losing the value of their members' trade licenses, coupled with a new Progressive Conservative government taking over that was historically anti-labour, the IBEW's leadership in Ontario could have given up," he said.

"Instead, they decided to think outside the box and worked to establish a relationship with a nontraditional ally."

The provincial government said in a news release that the additional funding will allow about 18,000 additional young people to explore a career in the trades. There is a construction boom in Ontario, where additional skilled construction workers are needed to build out hospitals, transit systems and 1.5 million homes by 2031.

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program will receive about \$21.1 million, and the IBEW hopes to partner with the high schools. The program gives high school students who have finished grade 10 increased exposure through cooperative education courses.

The IBEW construction locals in Ontario have received \$43.8 million in funding since 2020. The money has

helped the IBEW and other unionized trades improve their training and recruitment programs, but the IBEW in Ontario is calling on the provincial government to better enforce the restricted trade license and maintain its value.

The previous Liberal-led government declassified the electrical trade license to a skill set and competency model instead of viewing it as part of a restricted trade scope, where the emphasis of a license is skills and safety for the public as well as the tradesperson.

After much political lobbying, the Conservatives introduced legislation that reestablished the restricted status of the electrical license in Ontario, but IBEW leaders in the province say it hasn't been enforced adequately.

James Barry, executive secretary/treasurer of the council, believes that the work to build relationships with the Progressive Conservatives is paying off, including the rapport he has estab-



Construction Council of Ontario Executive Secretary Treasurer James Barry, second from right in front row, joins Ontario Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development David Piccini, along with outside business managers and other IBEW officials from throughout the province. Piccini is in a suit to the left of Barry.

lished with Minister Piccini.

"Protecting our trade license is paramount in all sectors," he said. "When the unorganized electrical journeypersons and apprentices see the leader of the IBEW Construction Council

of Ontario having a strong voice for the trade and their livelihood, it makes them think about the advantages of joining our great union."

"We will continue to urge the government to better enforce the trade

license on behalf of our members," Shewchuk said. "We applaud the financial commitment they have provided to our locals to allow us to continue finding new ways to work together to strengthen our training and recruitment programs." ■

Le financement de l'Ontario aide la FIOE à donner des formations

Le gouvernement provincial ontarien a annoncé l'intention d'investir environ 63 millions de dollars dans la formation des métiers spécialisés, dont une grande partie devrait être accordée dans les centres de formation des sections locales de la FIOE dans la province.

La section locale 353 à Toronto en a fait l'annonce lors d'un événement le 11 décembre. Le local a lancé un projet qui vise à préparer 48 jeunes appartenant à des groupes historiquement sous-représentés dans la région de Toronto à faire carrière dans l'industrie électrique.

Le programme gratuit comprend une formation de quatre mois fondée sur les compétences fondamentales et la sécurité. Par la suite, un programme de placement de dix semaines est offert avec un entrepreneur signataire.

Le vice-président international du premier district, Russ Shewchuk, a félicité le Conseil de la construction de l'Ontario et les sections locales d'avoir su voir plus loin, d'avoir le courage de travailler avec le parti au pouvoir et de trouver des domaines d'intérêts mutuellement bénéfiques. Les progressistes-conservateurs gouvernent la province depuis 2018.

L'un de ces domaines en Ontario est la création d'une main-d'œuvre dans le secteur de la construction pour répondre aux demandes croissantes en

matière d'infrastructure.

« Nous avons besoin de faire comprendre à plus de jeunes que la voie universitaire n'est pas le seul moyen vers la réussite dans la vie », déclare David Piccini, le ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences de l'Ontario.

Shewchuk a promis que la FIOE fera tout en son pouvoir pour préparer les jeunes aux possibilités offertes dans l'industrie électrique.

« Lorsqu'ils se trouvaient confrontés à perdre la valeur du certificat de qualification de leur membre, en plus du nouveau gouvernement progressiste-conservateur, qui est depuis toujours antisyndical, le leadership de la FIOE en Ontario aurait pu baisser les bras », s'exprime-t-il.

« Ils ont plutôt décidé de sortir des sentiers battus et ont fait l'effort d'établir un lien avec un allié non traditionnel », ajoute Shewchuk.

Le gouvernement provincial a annoncé lors d'un communiqué que le financement supplémentaire permettra à environ 18 000 jeunes de plus d'envisager une carrière dans les métiers spécialisés. La construction connaît un boom en Ontario, où un besoin de main-d'œuvre spécialisée supplémentaire dans le secteur de la construction est requis pour construire des hôpitaux, des réseaux de transport en commun et

1,5 million de maisons d'ici 2031.

Le Programme d'apprentissage pour les jeunes de l'Ontario recevra environ 21,1 millions de dollars et la FIOE espère collaborer avec les écoles secondaires. Ce programme donne la chance au corps étudiant, qui a terminé son secondaire 4, d'explorer les métiers spécialisés grâce à des cours d'éducation coopérative.

Les sections locales du secteur de la construction de la FIOE en Ontario ont reçu 43,8 millions de dollars en financement depuis 2020. Ce montant, en grande partie, provenait du gouvernement provincial, bien que le gouvernement fédéral a accordé 9,5 millions de dollars dans le cadre du Programme pour la formation et l'innovation en milieu syndical.

Cet argent a aidé la FIOE et d'autres métiers syndiqués à améliorer leurs programmes de formation et de recrutement. Cependant, la FIOE en Ontario demande au gouvernement provincial de mieux faire appliquer le certificat de qualification et de conserver sa valeur.

Le gouvernement précédent dirigé par le Parti libéral a déclassifié le certificat de qualification d'électricien en échange d'un modèle fondé sur les acquis au lieu de le considérer comme un métier encadré, d'où l'objectif premier du certificat insiste sur la

compétence et la sécurité pour le public ainsi que pour la personne de métier.

Après de nombreuses pressions politiques, les conservateurs ont adopté une mesure législative qui rétablit le statut encadré du certificat en électricité en Ontario, mais les leaders de la FIOE dans la province disent qu'il n'a pas été appliqué de manière adéquate.

« Nous allons continuer d'insister fortement auprès du gouvernement provincial pour mieux faire respecter le certificat au nom de nos membres dans le public », s'exprime Shewchuk. « Entre-temps, nous allons trouver des moyens pour travailler ensemble dans le but d'améliorer nos programmes de formation. »

James Barry, le secrétaire exécutif/trésorier du Conseil, fait part qu'établir des relations avec le gouvernement progressiste-conservateur a commencé à porter fruit; il a tissé des liens avec Piccini.

« Protéger nos certificats de qualification dans tous les secteurs est d'une importance suprême », dit-il. « Lorsque des compagnons et des apprentis non syndiqués constatent que les leaders du Conseil de la construction de la FIOE sont d'ardents défenseurs des métiers et de leur moyen de subsistance, ça les pousse à penser aux avantages d'adhérer à notre grand syndicat. » ■

CIRCUITS

Detroit Local Powers First EV Charging Road in North America

A stretch of road in downtown Detroit can now wirelessly charge electric vehicles — a first in North America — and it's thanks in part to members of Detroit Local 58.

"This project speaks to our skill set and grasp of the groundbreaking technology," said Local 58 Business Representative Byron Osbern. "When our customer needed this done, they knew to call on us."

The road, about a mile from Local 58's hall, uses rubber-coated copper inductive-charging coils buried under the asphalt that transfer power to a receiver pad attached to a car's underbelly, much like how a phone can be charged wirelessly. The charging, which does not affect pedestrians or wildlife, can power an electric car whether it's parked (called static charging) or moving (dynamic charging).

The road itself, about a quarter-mile long, looks like any other road and can be used by other cars.

Local 58 members provided field supervision and new electrical service to power the equipment, which came from startup company Electreon. They worked on installation of the distribution equipment, cable installation and termination, as well as the coils below the road and the charging-system cables.

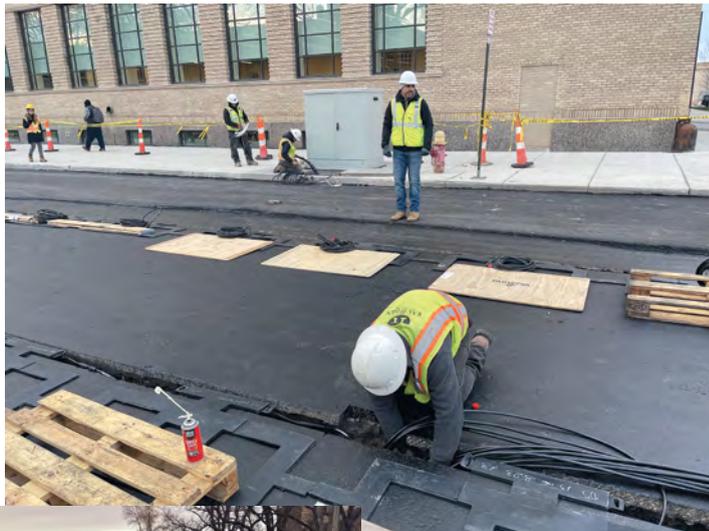
It was a project that took a lot of coordination and planning, said Rauhorn Electric Project Manager Chris Korte. The conduit runs needed to be exact for the small-coil trenches and pre-cut charging cables that run from the road coils to the management system. The final day, which began at 4 a.m., was unique as it entailed installing 180 coils and pulling and terminating all the charging cables before any of the road work could start.

"It all needed to be done that day," Korte said. "System layout was critical."

The project took about two months and finished at the end of November. As often happens in the upper Midwest, the schedule was affected by inclement weather, but the crews completed everything on time.

"The IBEW played a pivotal role, from building the electrical infrastructure to meeting project timelines and providing all the heavy lifting on the final day," Korte said.

The stretch of road, a part of 14th Street in the Motor City's Corktown neighborhood, will be used to test the new technology in real-world conditions. Using a Ford E-Transit electric commercial van provided by Ford Motor Co. and equipped with the Electreon receiver, staff will test the efficiency and operations of the vehicle



Members of Detroit Local 58 successfully installed the first EV charging road in North America, paving the way for the next era in electric vehicle infrastructure. "The buzz around Detroit has been the renaissance of the Motor City as an electric vehicle hub, and this is one more piece of it," Local 58 Business Representative Byron Osbern said.

and study potential long-term public transportation opportunities.

The Michigan Department of Transportation is seeking bids to rebuild part of another road, U.S. 12, or Michigan Avenue, which will also have inductive charging installed. Osbern said Local 58 is a front-runner for that project, as well.

"The buzz around Detroit has been the renaissance of the Motor City as an electric vehicle hub, and this is one more piece of it," Osbern said. "It's been cool to watch us evolve."

Wireless charging, which is also being tested by Electreon in Europe, Israel and China, could be a boon for the EV car market by combating the "range anxiety" that some drivers experience on long trips if they're not near a charging station. It's also promising for public transit and commercial transportation like delivery vans and long-haul trucks. A vehicle that can charge on the go can use a smaller and cheaper battery without losing time at a charging station.

While this type of technology is new, IBEW members working on such an innovation is not. The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program, which has trained thousands of members in EV charging, is the preferred training program of the Biden administration, which has invested billions of dollars in EV infrastructure.

"IBEW Local 58 has shown our innovation and proven our forward thinking by cornering the market on EVITP-trained workers since the mid-2000s. Now it's our turn to show off the skill, ability and knowledge we possess," Business Manager Paul VanOss said. "When Detroit needs to electrify, our members are standing at the ready with tools and talent." ■

Smoke Detector Blitz: Local 98 Partners With Firefighters to Save Lives

More than 150 families in a Philadelphia suburb found out what the IBEW stands for when they opened their doors to find teams of electricians and firefighters ready and eager to make sure every home had working smoke detectors.

As they've done for years on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, apprentice and journeyman volunteers from Philadelphia Local 98 joined the Norristown, Pa., Fire Department for a smoke-detector blitz Jan. 15, fanning out in an assigned neighborhood to check devices and install new ones wherever needed.

"It's a great way for us to be out in our communities, helping people and showing them what the IBEW is all about," said Jason Cary, a Local 98 business agent who led the union's team of volunteers, all sporting IBEW shirts.

Cary said nearly everyone welcomed volunteers into their homes,

where they chatted with excited children about fire safety and with curious teenagers and young adults about becoming an IBEW apprentice.

"It's putting a good face on the union but also expanding our reach," said Local 98 Political Director Tom Lepera, who coordinates the local's end of the project. "Almost every time I've done this, I get asked about the IBEW and 'How do I apply?'"

Dedicated to a local 12-year-old boy who died in a house fire in 2016, the MLK Day blitz draws a variety of volunteers, who this year included students and unionized teachers. Norristown Fire Chief Tom O'Donnell is outwardly grateful to all of them.

But he said the department's bonds with the IBEW are especially strong, praising Local 98's invaluable help with the blitz and beyond — installing emergency lighting at a community center, for instance, and what he described as spectacular work overhauling subpar lighting at Montgomery County's memorial to fallen firefighters.

"It's longstanding, going back to when it was Local 380, before they were part of Local 98," O'Donnell said, referring to a 2015 merger. "They're unsung heroes. They're not doing it for notoriety. They work behind the scenes, using their skill set to make things better than they found them."

Those skills can come in handy during the blitz, he said, with electricians able to troubleshoot any wiring issues that interfere with replacing or installing alarms.

Local 98's contributions extend to providing supplies and many of the detectors — the double-duty variety, their ear-piercing shrieks alerting to not only smoke but also carbon monoxide.

"They show up with smoke detectors and step ladders and other equipment, and they even buy lunch," O'Donnell said. "Their generosity and other donations from the community make the blitz possible."

The project focuses on low-income neighborhoods in Norristown, a suburb 20 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Studies show that households below the poverty line are most likely to have only one smoke detector. And it may or may not be working, a problem across income levels.

"At a minimum, we make sure there is at least one smoke alarm on every single level of a home," O'Donnell said.

An estimated 20% of American

homes have broken detectors or units disabled by residents, often when smoke from the oven or stove triggers the alarm.

The consequences can be deadly: The National Fire Protection Association reports that three out of every five deaths in house fires are due to the absence of working smoke detectors, an average of 1,450 fatalities annually.

Local 98 Business Manager Mark Lynch said the Philadelphia area has had its share of such tragedies, inspiring IBEW volunteers not only in Norristown but also to accompany Philadelphia firefighters on similar missions.

"We get involved in all sorts of activities — food pantries, cleaning up parks, you name it," Lynch said. "But the opportunity to help our local fire departments get working smoke detectors in every home means we could be saving someone's life," he said.

"They show up with smoke detectors and step ladders and other equipment. ... Their generosity and other donations from the community make the blitz possible."

— Norristown, Pa., Fire Chief Tom O'Donnell on Local 98

Lynch and Lepera said going door to door in a struggling neighborhood also gives volunteers, especially apprentices, perspective.

"You realize how important your union is to you, how fortunate you are to be part of the IBEW and what is has provided for you and family," said Lepera, a lifelong Norristown resident and president of its Municipal Council.

Along the way, volunteers didn't hesitate to talk about their good fortune with anyone showing interest in the IBEW.

"They are very impressed when they ask about how much money we make and our benefits," Cary said. "But they're also impressed by the IBEW's inclusivity and how we help people in the area."

"I tell them that if they were to join the union, they'd have the opportunity to come out and help the community with us." ■



Local 98 volunteers helped firefighters in a Philadelphia suburb install smoke detectors on MLK Day.

POLITICS & JOBS

IBEW Training Is Key as Federal EV Charger Push Intensifies

In January, the Biden administration announced an additional \$623 million in federal funding to build electric vehicle charging stations across the country. This was on top of the more than \$7 billion invested as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which was signed into law in 2021.

It also served as a reminder for IBEW members to receive the proper training so they are ready for these projects.

“Thousands, if not millions, of these charging stations are going to be installed to meet demand,” Construction and Maintenance Director Matt Paules said. “We need to do that work.” Indeed, White House Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi mentioned the Brotherhood during a call with reporters alongside Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

“When those chargers go into the ground, we’ve got the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers — good paying union jobs being spurred in communities from coast to coast — to do the work.”

Members got an inside track at building the emerging EV network when the Transportation Department recommended in 2022 that the Brotherhood’s Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program serve as the preferred national training standard. The program had been in existence for nearly 10 years and was developed by the IBEW in conjunction with its signatory contractors and other industry partners.

In some areas of the country, the demands of those signatory contractors will put even more emphasis on IBEW members performing the work.

Jacksonville, Fla., Local 177 Business Manager Alan Jones noted that Miller Electric, which is based in Jacksonville but is a leading signatory in much of the country, wants to have a major role in electric vehicles and the charging stations.

Miller also provides about 75-80%



San Diego Local 569 member Nicholas Vidaurri, left, installs electric vehicle charging stations at Kaiser Clairemont Mesa San Diego Medical Center. Vidaurri was trained in the EVITP program and is employed by Imperial Electric.



Right: Local 569 member Jesus Medina at work building a zero-emissions bus charging station in Chula Vista, Calif.

of Local 177’s work, Jones said. It’s obviously an important relationship and another reason to ensure that enough members take part in the training.

Jones said he urges all Local 177 members to do just that.

“Miller Electric is going after this,” he said. “They’ve done their research. They’re not going to throw money after nothing.”

“I see all the potential,” Jones added. “The IBEW is ahead of something instead of chasing it. Sometimes, it seems like when new technology is out, we’re chasing it. I want to see our guys doing this work instead of the unrepresented electrical worker.”

In California, one of the leading states in the transition to electric vehicles, San Diego Local 569 members trained in the EVITP program are installing chargers at several stations, including the Chula Vista Metropolitan Transit Service Facility and Kaiser Permanente San Diego Medical Center.

Boston Local 103 landed about \$95 million in EV-related work in 2023, ranging from local and state governments to car dealerships to private homes, Business Manager Lou Antonellis said.

“That’s a decent amount of work, and it runs the whole gamut of projects,” said Antonellis, who expects that work to continue to grow.

Rod Zink, director of business development for White Electrical, an Atlanta-based signatory, said the company’s work on charging stations has increased steadily since it signed up as a partner at EVITP.org in 2021. Recently, White has begun taking on larger installation projects instead of ones that required just one or two charging stations.

Zink, whose company has operations in six southern states, said the demand will only continue. Being part of the EVITP program has made White more visible in the industry, he said.

“It’s the source of many opportunities,” said Zink, who said he signed up for the program at the suggestion of Terry Reynolds, a Fifth District international representative for business development. “I’ve had many people call me and say, ‘We found your contact information off this site.’”

Those new partners also have helped White make inroads into other forms of clean energy, particularly solar.

“The EV business is obviously going to continue growing,” he said. “The great thing we’ve found is that the consultants or contractors we’ve met who are involved in this are pretty loyal. If they have that work, we win the work.”

Members can sign up for the training at their local’s Joint Apprentice Training Center or Electrical Training Alliance centers. Training also is available online. Members, contractors and other industry partners also can go to EVITP.org.

There are about 165,000 EV chargers in the U.S., Zaidi told reporters in January. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act calls for 500,000 to be built by 2030.

EV sales in the U.S. have quadrupled to 1 million per year since Biden took office in 2021, the administration said.

“We’re at a moment now where the electric vehicle revolution isn’t coming,” Buttigieg said. “It’s very much here.”

While progress has been made, it’s a revolution that IBEW leadership encourages members to play a huge part in, especially as new work rolls in.

“We want to do that work, and we should be doing that work,” Paules said. “As the industry grows and our

signatory contractors continue to bid on it, we have to have a trained workforce ready to do so.” ■

More Than a Feeling: 2023 Data Affirms Thriving U.S. Economy, Union Growth

The numbers tell the story: Nearly 200,000 new union members in 2023. Contract victories with double-digit raises for nearly 1 million workers. Soaring support for unions, with favorable feedback from 70% of poll respondents overall and a whopping 88% of young people.

America’s unions have more momentum than they’ve had in decades, spurred by a booming economy; millions of new jobs; and a pro-union, pro-growth White House whose policies are making it all possible.

“In my IBEW career, there has never been so much progress on so many fronts so swiftly,” International President Kenneth W. Cooper said.

“The Biden administration’s strategies are paying off beyond our wildest dreams — and our dreams were already pretty big,” he said. “Infrastructure, technology, manufacturing,

growing the economy, creating good union jobs, expanding workers’ rights — President Joe Biden is succeeding at all of that and more.”

Data released in late January affirm those achievements. The economy grew by 3.1% in 2023, shocking many economists who’d predicted a downturn after 1.9% growth was recorded in 2022.

The chief economist at Moody’s Analytics, which advises businesses and investors, had nothing but praise for the 2023 numbers in an interview with *The Washington Post*.

“It’s just a perfect report: strong growth and low inflation,” Mark Zandi said. “Everything contributed to growth: consumers, businesses, government, housing, trade, inventories. All of the economic wheels were moving in the same direction.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. Labor Department reported that 191,000 people joined unions in 2023, for a net gain after attrition of 139,000 members. Growth was especially strong among young workers and people of color, with representation for Black workers up 13.1%

Most media coverage, however, struck a negative tone, leaving out vital context and spinning the fresh data to suggest that unionization is on the decline.

“Unions are growing, full stop,” Cooper said.

The fallacy involves union density. As a percentage of the total workforce, unionized workers are down by a tiny fraction — a result of the exploding job market, not a sign of decline.

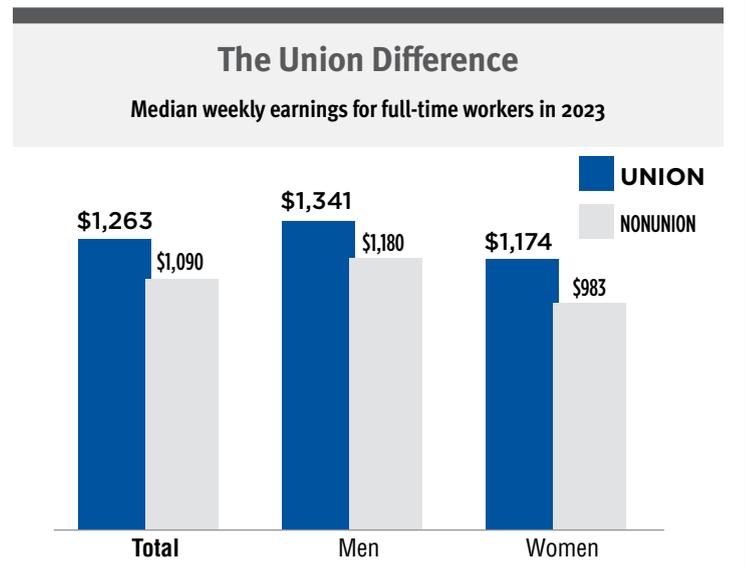
“We’re talking about 7.5 million new jobs in the past two years, a pace faster than the labor movement’s been able to keep up with,” Cooper said, stressing that the IBEW and fellow unions are working as fast as they can to close the gap.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, an IBEW sister out of Portland, Ore., Local 125, echoed that commitment.

POLITICS & JOBS *continued on page 12*



From left, Eric Parker, Jesus Medina and Casey Cox were part of a crew of San Diego Local 569 members that built a zero-emissions bus charging station.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor - Bureau of Labor Statistics

More good numbers from 2023: Data on median earnings show 15.9% higher pay, or \$173 more a week, for union versus nonunion workers.

POLITICS & JOBS *continued*

“Organizing is happening at a rate not seen in generations, and new federal investments by the Biden administration in emerging sectors of the economy are creating more opportunities for workers to attain good union jobs,” Shuler said.

She also applauded the historic 2023 strikes by health care workers, autoworkers, screenwriters and actors, and scores of smaller walkouts that also led to substantial gains. “Some 900,000 union members secured double-digit wage increases in their new contracts,” she said. “That’s the power of solidarity.”

Even without contract battles, unionized workers are pocketing more money than those without representation, as wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics confirmed again in 2023. On the union side, wages were 15.9% higher than at nonunion workplaces. That translated to median weekly earnings of \$1,263 versus \$1,090 for nonunion workers.

Americans are paying attention, with polls showing that 60 million workers would join a union if given the opportunity. Roughly seven out of 10 people polled say they support unions, with approval among young people flirting with 90%.

Positive data and polls aren’t the only measurement of labor’s new clout. From Day One of the Biden administration, policies, executive orders, legislation and pro-worker appointments to key positions have made a night-and-day difference.

“The administration is consulting us and listening to us — particularly the IBEW, but also labor at large — more than any past White House, even the friendliest ones,” said Austin Keyser, assistant to the international president for government affairs.

“In less than two years, we met every original goal we set in our policy playbook when President Biden took office,” he said. “It’s not just that he pushed through the \$1 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other record funding packages. He and our allies in Congress insisted that unprecedented labor standards were attached to those bills — project labor agreements, prevailing wage, apprentice ratios and other language directly affecting IBEW members’ rights, wages and safety.”

Whether those victories and the rest survive into 2025 and beyond lies with the 2024 elections, results that Keyser and Cooper said will either accelerate progress for workers or slam on the brakes.

“With our voice and our votes for President Biden and a pro-worker Congress, our gains will multiply and become part of the fabric of America, empowering working people for decades to come,” Cooper said. “We can’t let this moment slip away. To put it mildly, the alternative is grim.” ■

GROUNDNED IN HISTORY

From the 1st Transmission Line to the 500,000th Charging Station

Since its inception at the dawn of the power industry, IBEW has constantly reinvented itself to be at the forefront of technology. The members are the most highly skilled workers in their field because of continuous training in the latest advancements in power distribution. And when it comes to alternative and renewable sources of energy, the IBEW has been witness to their evolution every step of the way.

Here are just a few examples of IBEW members bringing new technologies to life:

Long-Distance Transmission

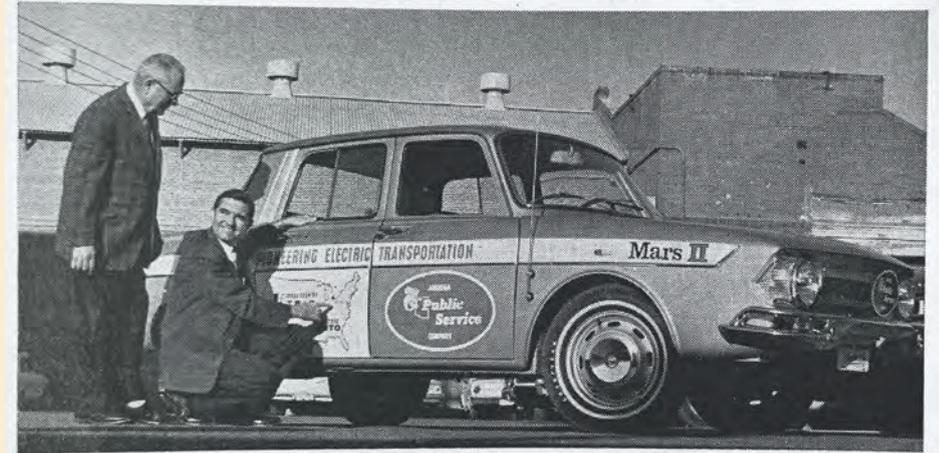
In 1933, President Roosevelt created the National Power Policy Committee, which was tasked with researching the logistics of a national electrical grid system. One of the committee’s first proposals was to construct a long-distance transmission line that would connect the Hoover Dam near Las Vegas to Los Angeles, a distance of 270 miles.

A project of this scope had never been attempted, and various experts were brought in to consult on its design. Statisticians analyzed data on population growth and electrical demand. Material experts from Stanford University fabricated conductors and insulation capable of carrying 275,000 volts. Electrical engineers designed switching stations that could swap out these high-voltage lines when faulted.

But when ground broke in 1934, it was members of Los Angeles Local 18 that had the honor of installing the country’s first long-distance, high-wire transmission tower, taking the first step toward a national grid.

Nuclear Power

In 1954, ground broke on the world’s first full-scale civilian-use nuclear power station in Shippingport, Pa. For three years, the construction and installation of this revolutionary power plant was performed by members of Beaver, Pa., Local 712. The reactor reached criticality in December 1957 and began sending 60,000 kilo-



Herb Pettet, business manager of Local 387, Phoenix, Ariz., and Ken Hood, employee relations manager of APS, inspect the Mars II electric auto which APS drove across country.

The MARS II electric car arrives in Phoenix in 1967 after a 2,226-mile trek from Detroit. The experimental EV consumed just \$27.17 worth of power on the journey, or a little over 1 cent per mile.

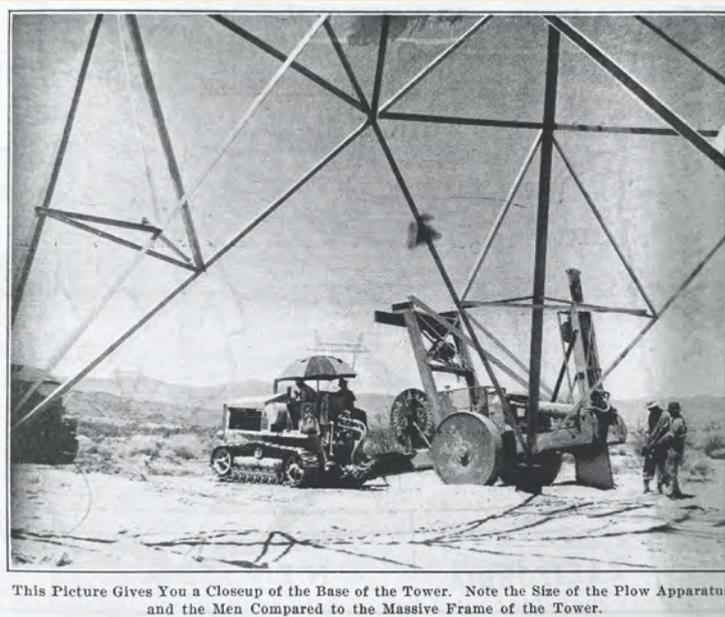
watts of electricity to the Pittsburgh area.

On May 26, 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the power station and, by remote control from the White House, opened the main throttle valve sending power to Allegheny and Beaver counties. Transmission was overseen by Pittsburgh Local 142 members at the Duquesne Light Co.

Wind Power

In 1979, the U.S. Department of Energy began partnering with industry groups to develop utility-scale wind turbines. As part of this effort, two models were tested outside Medicine Bow, Wyo., in 1981. One was built by Boeing that could produce 2 megawatts, while the other could produce 4 MW and was built by Hamilton Standard.

Members of Casper, Wyo., Local 322 were responsible for constructing the first turbine tower and installing the blades. Another facet of the experiment was to see which design was better suited for a future 100-MW wind farm, a concept that was years away at the time but is commonplace for IBEW members today.



This Picture Gives You a Closeup of the Base of the Tower. Note the Size of the Plow Apparatus and the Men Compared to the Massive Frame of the Tower.

Members of Los Angeles Local 18 install a first-of-its-kind long-distance transmission tower to bring power from the Hoover Dam in 1934.

Solar Power

In 1981, the Department of Energy completed a pilot project for solar thermal energy called SolarOne in the Mojave Desert. Having demonstrated the viability of this alternative energy source, the IBEW was called in to build the first utility-scale solar farm in Hesperia, Calif., called Arco Solar. Construction began in 1982 with members of San Luis Obispo Local 639. The farm was completed in 1984 and became the first commercial solar power farm in the U.S.

Electric Vehicles

In 1967, Electric Fuel Propulsion Inc. of Detroit unveiled an electric vehicle that was far ahead of its time — the MARS II. The Arizona Public Service Co. purchased one of the cars and put it to the test with the first ever cross-country EV trip.

The MARS II left Detroit that September and crossed nine states, making 36 recharging stops on the 2,226-mile journey to Arizona. It consumed 1,074 kilowatt-hours, which, based on the residential rate of 2.53 cents per kWh at the time, equated to \$27.17 for the trip, or about 1 cent per mile.

A month after departing, it crossed the finish line in Phoenix, where it was greeted by members of Local 387 who were brought in to inspect the car and test some of its revolutionary electronics. The car was powered by 20 6-volt lead-cobalt batteries and had a maximum speed of 60 mph and a range of 70 to 120 miles per charge. Similar to EVs of today, the MARS II was capable of fast charging, reaching 80% of battery capacity in 30 minutes and 100% in 90 minutes.

The economic and environmental benefits of electric cars were clear. Unfortunately, the lack of a reliable network of charging stations was a major stumbling block that prevented their adoption. Thankfully, with the passage of President Joe Biden’s Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the IBEW is changing that.

Using the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program developed by NECA and the IBEW, our members have been tasked with installing a national network of 500,000 charging stations by 2030. Once again, because of our extensive training and expertise, the members of the IBEW remain at the forefront of technology. ■

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.

LOCAL LINES

Rebuilding Together

L.U. 1 (as,c,ees,ei,em,es,et,fm,i,mt,rts,s,se,spa,st,ws&ptc), ST. LOUIS, MO — Spring is upon us, and hopefully you find yourself gainfully employed. Our local RENEW chapter is busy with its upcoming annual trivia night fundraiser. Funds raised go to our local relief committee. This is always a huge success. If you were unable to get a table for the trivia, come support the cause and enjoy fellowship at its finest. Hopefully, you have been making good on that New Year’s resolution to engage with a nonunion electrician and have an open and positive discussion on the upside to union membership versus open-shop life.

Rebuilding together is just around the corner. We will need all the help we can get and look forward to seeing you there.

Enjoy the spring equinox.

Kyle Hunter, P.S.

St. Baldrick’s Team Loses Hair, Raises Money for Childhood Cancer Research

L.U. 3 (catv,em,govt,i,lctt,mo,o,t,u&ptc), NEW YORK, NY — Since 2013, the team known as the Local 3 Legends — named after their union and the location of their annual fundraiser, Legends NYC in midtown Manhattan — has recruited union members, apprentices, business representatives and retirees to raise money and awareness in a unique way: by shaving their heads bald.

Event organizer and Local 3 member Sean Glennon said, “Realizing that Local 3 members live throughout a large part of the New York metro area, we figured, ‘Why not use our network to help more?’”

Since 2005, the St. Baldrick’s Foundation has funded \$340 million in childhood cancer research grants, second only to the U.S. federal government. Participants, lovingly referred to as “shavees,” get their heads shaved during live and virtual events hosted worldwide and year-round.

Local 3 Legends’ annual fundraiser usually attracts 20 to 40 shavees. Over the years, it has moved from a Friday or Saturday afternoon in April or May to September, which is Childhood

Cancer Awareness Month.

On Sept. 23, Local 3 Legends hosted 25 shavees at their fundraiser, plus a few Local 3 members who participated remotely. Together, they raised over \$190,000 and achieved their overall goal of \$1 million in 10 years. St. Baldrick’s released its annual report in January, and Local 3’s fundraiser was the 12th highest grossing event of 2023, with several Local 3 members showing in the top participants’ list.

“Being a part of such a big local union, we knew we could reach out far and wide as members and show the public that we are their neighbors and we care,” Glennon said. “It’s important the public sees the good things we as Local 3 members do, and what could be more important than saving children’s lives?”

Daniel Hinton, Comm. Dir.

Local 15 Negotiates NRG Contract Extension

L.U. 15 (u), DOWNERS GROVE, IL — On Nov. 8, President Chris Riser and Vice President Ben Busser were able to negotiate a contract extension with NRG Energy. Local 15 represents the craft employees at four NRG-owned generating stations. During a unit meeting with many members from the Powerton Generating Station, Busser and Chief Steward Heath Messman discussed the upcoming contract negotiations. Busser took input from these members prior to engaging the company in contract discussions. The existing CBA would have expired March 31. Now the contract has been extended four years, to March 31, 2028.

The generating stations in this contract are Waukegan, Will County, Joliet and Powerton. Waukegan, Will County and Joliet stations recently closed, but each location has caretaker positions negotiated by Local 15, so some members remain at each of those retired generating stations. Powerton Station remains operational and has the bulk of NRG employees under this contract. Local 15 leadership thanks the hard-working members at these generating stations for their support during the negotiations.

John Richards, Bus. Rep.



Local 41 apprentices and food drive volunteers Joe Liberatore (second year), Ryan Robida (residential), Steven Torrey (third year), Matt Panaro (fourth year) and William Boechel (first year).

Local 17’s 2023 Highlights

L.U. 17 (catv,em,lctt,o&u), DETROIT, MI — Our local and its members are celebrating a very successful 2023.

With the surprise Democratic trifecta (control of the governorship, state Senate and state House) for the first time in 40 years, the Michigan labor movement won sweeping legislative changes that help working families, including repeal of “right-to-work” laws, restoration of prevailing wage laws and elimination of the state tax on pension benefits. With our allies, we will press for other worker-friendly changes throughout the 2024 legislative session.

At the bargaining table, we achieved the following results for some of our key contracts:

- 6-17-LCTT (more than 1,100 members): 4 years, 6.0% average annual wage increase.
- 6-17-A (more than 700 members): 4 years, 4.55% average annual wage increase, no takeaways.

The additional \$1.5 million investment in our Local 17 training center is coming to fruition. This investment in facilities, equipment and instructors (bringing the total to \$2.5 million) will allow us to fulfill our vision of creating a world-class training facility for current members and future generations of IBEW workers.

We look forward to an even better 2024!

James Shaw, B.M.

Local 41 Apprentices Excel at Food Drive

L.U. 41 (em,es,govt,i,se&spa), BUFFALO, NY — Fourth-year apprentice Derrick Prezyna came to our local with the idea to have an apprentice food drive competition. To make it fun, we decided that the apprentice class that donated the most non-perishable food would have dinner provided during class.

The first couple of weeks started slowly, as a few cans trickled in daily. It appeared that only the second-year class was after the free meal, bringing in about 30 items per class. Then one day, while grabbing a couple of cans from each classroom, I walked into the first-year room to find 260 items.

This was the first domino to fall in what turned out to be a fierce and fun competition. As we updated progress charts daily, the contest really started to heat up. During the last two days of the competition, more than 2,300 items were collected.

Over the course of a month, our 145 apprentices brought in almost 4,000 items, more than 3,000 pounds of food. Due to the volume of donations, we were able to make contributions to three local food pantries. I would like to thank all our apprentices, as this was truly an amazing showing of generosity that will help many families in our community.

Matthew M. Gaiser, A.B.M.

Local 47 Looks Forward to 2024

L.U. 47 (lctt,mo,o,u&uow), DIAMOND BAR, CA — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Business Manager/Financial Secretary Colin Lavin looks forward to the changes coming as we continue to grow the IBEW’s jurisdiction and cause and defend ourselves against any opposition that threatens our Brotherhood, including external threats. Some other trades are moving in on laws so they will benefit and steal our way of life. Make no mistake, we have a fight on our hands. The future has plenty of work for all the trades to share. Some, however, want to take our work. Get ready for tomorrow, and be prepared for change that will happen when least expected. Plan your job and work your plan. Please stay safe and work safe so our families can see us when we come home.

Our business updates are:

- Southern California Edison arbitration regarding the termination of Ridgcrest Construction



Local 3 Legends shavees before their heads were shaved at the annual fundraiser on Sept. 23, 2023.

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/media-center/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.

Trade Classifications

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

Efforts are made to make this list as inclusive as possible, but the various job categories of IBEW members are too numerous to comprehensively list all.

LOCAL LINES

Maintenance Accountant Teri Paradise was settled prior to arbitration for \$220,000.

- SCE production specialist bargaining continues.
- Los Angeles Angels baseball maintenance agreement negotiations continue.

Local 47's Steward and Safety Conference will be held June 8.

We're sad to report the deaths of Aaron Boucher and Andrew Crist. Our condolences and prayers are with their loved ones.

Work safe and buy union!

Mitch Smith, P.S.

Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association's Collection System Operator of the Year Award. Schroeder is a longtime Local 77 member, shop steward and negotiating committee member.

Schroeder has been working for the city for more than 24 years and was chosen out of 3,409 certified collection operators in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The PNCWA's award is given for outstanding job performance and accomplishments of an experimental or developmental nature. Congratulations on this achievement, Jason!

Rex Habner, B.M./F.S.



Retirees gathered for fun at Local 313's Christmas party.



Local 71 President Walter Gribble III presents a 60-year service pin to his grandfather, Ernie McGee.

Local 71 Member Celebrates 60 Years of Service

L.U. 71 (lctt,o&rtb), COLUMBUS, OH — Happy New Year, brothers and sisters! With another year behind us, President Walter Gribble III was able to present his grandfather, Ernie McGee, with his 60-year service pin. Walter said, "I've always tried my best to convey to the newbies coming in as to the struggles and strife past generations went through for us to enjoy what we have today, and how it's our duty to try and do better to ensure a bright future for those who will come after us."

On behalf of Local 71, congratulations, Ernie!

Matt Bruggeman, Bus. Rep.



Local 77's Jason Schroeder at a recent contract negotiation bargaining session.

Local 77 Member Honored With PNCWA Award

L.U. 77 (lctt,mt,o,t&u), SEATTLE, WA — City of Centralia Wastewater Collection System technician and local member Jason Schroeder won the 2023

Local 131 Sees Steady Work, Increases Organizing

L.U. 131 (i,rtb,rts,se&spa), KALAMAZOO, MI — The work outlook remains steady in Kalamazoo, and several projects should be starting this summer. The Gun Lake Casino project is continuing into the summer. The project has the first six floors enclosed, and the rest is open. The aquadome is a shell with lots of underground work. We appreciate the warmer days of spring.

The Retirees' Christmas party was a lot of fun, with 50 members and their spouses attending. The Kalamazoo Jan. 31 annual party (1-31 Day) was also lots of fun at One Well Brewing.

Organizer Ryan Lewis has successfully organized 25 highly qualified nonunion journeymen and apprentices. Membership development is the only way we can have enough members to successfully fill all the requirements in the next year.

Negotiations are continuing, and committee members Jon Current, Leroy Crabtree, Tim Haydon, Terry Clark and I are working hard to get the best contract to serve the membership. The committee is creative in their problem-solving methods during the negotiating process.

Morris A. Applebey, B.M.



Local 131 retirees enjoying their Christmas luncheon.

Local 177 Throws Children's and Retirees' Christmas Parties

L.U. 177 (bo,ees,i,mo,o,pet&govt), JACKSONVILLE, FL — Thanks to President Ross Mullis and the many volunteers who made our children's and retirees' Christmas parties successful. It could not have been pulled off without the efforts of our brothers and sisters and other volunteers. All the kids left with smiles on their faces, and it was great to visit with our retired brothers and hear them swapping stories of the past.

Although we haven't been able to work travelers very much, work in Jacksonville has been fairly good, and we look toward a good 2024 in our area. There are several projects on the horizon that should keep our brothers and sisters working throughout the year. By the time this prints, we are hoping projects such as the new airport concourse, a new hospital in St. Johns County and the new stadium for the Jacksonville Jaguars will be awarded.

I would like to urge everyone who hasn't been certified in the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) to please do so. We are

starting to see some of this work come to fruition, and we need brothers and sisters certified to fulfill the need.

Alan Jones, B.M./F.S.



Local 177's children's Christmas party was successful thanks to many volunteers, such as Raymond Easter (the Grinch), Carlos Nunez (Santa) and Office Manager Lisa Gibbons.

Holidays at the Local 269 Hall

L.U. 269 (i&o), TRENTON, NJ — Once again this year, the union hall was the epicenter of holiday-related activities. Festivities began with an armada of vehicles with Santas in tow canvassing neighborhoods throughout our jurisdiction, spreading cheer and goodwill on both sides of the Delaware River.

Next came the annual members' Christmas party, where food and spirits were provided in abundance and all our brothers and sisters who attended had their fill. Old friends and new acquaintances alike gathered in solidarity to celebrate the season.

The following week, Santa and Mrs. Claus took up residence in the main hall and listened attentively to the Christmas wishes of members' children who came to visit. Every child left with a toy and a smile.



Santa and Mrs. Claus made an appearance at the Local 269 hall.

Thanks to everyone who donated their time and energy to help make the holidays a joyous time for all. And a special thanks to retiring Treasurer Sean Cullen. For many a year, due to his special connections at the North Pole, we are proud to be able to say that Santa himself was at our hall this year. I hope we'll be saying that for many more years.

Brian Jacoppo, P.S.

Greetings From Wilmington

L.U. 313 (i&spa), WILMINGTON, DE — Greetings from our local, powering the state of Delaware and Cecil County, Md.

Our RENEW committee held an "ugly" Christmas sweater party after our annual family Christmas party. RENEW received multiple appreciated donations of hundreds of toys from fellow members and contractors. The RENEW committee gave the proceeds to the kids at A.I. DuPont Children's Hospital, north of Wilmington.

Our local also held our December Christmas retirees' meeting, where we had more than 75 retired members stop by.

Some of our local's building trades delegates and alternates attended a banquet for our future candidate for governor of the state of Delaware, Bethany Hall-Long, a fellow union member. We appreciate the members who were able to help support our local and the Delaware Building Trades.

David Rholetter, P.S.



Local 317 member Anthony Savage and Business Manager Shane Wolfe with Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear at the grand opening of Sandy's Racing and Gaming Casino in Ashland, Ky.

Grand Opening for Local 317

L.U. 317 (i,o,rts,t,u&lctt), HUNTINGTON, WV — Local 317 member Anthony Savage and Business Manager Shane Wolfe are pictured with Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear at the grand opening of Sandy's Racing and Gaming Casino in Ashland, Ky. Local 317 members worked on this project for three shifts over several months to ensure that the opening deadline was met. Brother Savage spent countless hours helping with Gov. Beshear's reelection campaign, which he won by a great majority. Thank you, Brother Savage, for all of your help!

Shane Wolfe, B.M.

Get your **ELECTRICAL WORKER** delivered each month *via email*. It's convenient & helps cut down on paper waste. Go to ibew.org/gogreen and sign up today!



Scan with a QR reader

Local 343 Milestones, Memories and Celebrations

L.U. 343 (i,spa&st), LE SUEUR, MN — It was 45 years ago, on April 1, 1979, that our local was formed. The International Office granted the power to 25 electricians to create a local union of the IBEW. Those members are listed on the charter that established Local 343 in Le Sueur, Minn. At that time, the jurisdiction was larger and Le Sueur was a central point on the map. Almost all of the charter members are deceased. Brother Richard Schnepf is listed on the charter; he passed away in 2023.

We remember the following members that we lost this past year: Maurice Brown, Kevin Chirhart, Louis Downing, Nicholas Eide, Douglas Haines, Bryn Hecimovich, Bruce Johnson, Charles Johnson, Eric Johnson, Mark Landherr, Robert Pollreis Jr., Scott Rennie, Richard Schnepf and Robert Wilson.

Compared to many, Local 343 is young. But still, each year we have a new graduating class of apprentices who become JWs and begin their careers, and we have the class of retirees who “finally made it.” Join your brothers and sisters at the annual awards banquet on April 13 in Winona, Minn., to celebrate 45 years of building Local 343. Spend it where you earn it: Buy Made In USA.

Tom Small, P.S.

Children’s Christmas Party at Local 349

L.U. 349 (em,es,i,mps,rtb,rts,spa,u&ptc), MIAMI, FL — As 2023 was ending, we had our annual children’s Christmas party, where members and children alike had a great time. There were lots of cotton candy, hot dogs and popcorn. Santa came and spoke to all the children, and he asked them what they wanted him to bring them. After Santa gave out gifts to the kids, he headed back to the North Pole. President Brian Rappaport thanked Santa for visiting all the kids and raffled off bikes to those of all ages while the members received either a turkey or a ham. Everyone enjoyed the party and company, with members and retirees talking about all the good old days.

We also had our annual Friends of Labor luncheon, and it was a great time. Thank you to all our contractors and politicians who have stood by our side this year!

Help make Local 349 strong, and attend the union meetings!

Brian Rappaport, Pres.

22nd Annual Gary Pitts Golf Classic

L.U. 357 (c,i,mt&se), LAS VEGAS, NV — On Oct. 21, 2023, our local held the 22nd annual Gary Pitts Golf Classic tournament to benefit the Brotherhood Welfare Fund. It was a beautiful day at The Club at Sunrise to come together with our fellow brothers and sisters to have fun and participate in this event.

Gary Pitts became a journeyman wireman in 1987. For the last 13 years of his career, Gary was a

business agent for Local 357. He started and coordinated the Local 357 annual charity golf tournament in 2001. Gary retired in 2011 and passed away in 2013. Through his efforts and hard work, the golf tournament continues today.

Julie-Ann Peeples, P.S.

Local 499 Gives Back to Community

L.U. 499 (u), DES MOINES, IA — At the time of this writing, members Mike Maher and Randy Sheard are preparing to deliver Christmas baskets to families in need. One family lost their house to a fire a week before Christmas. A group of members from Council Bluffs, Iowa, organize this event annually and raise the money themselves throughout the year. This year, the group was able to donate 12 baskets. We thank our Council Bluffs members for their dedication and support in giving back to their local community!

Sarah Faber, Bus. Rep.

Local 601 Is Stronger Together

L.U. 601 (i&rtb), CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, IL — Our local would like to thank all the members that came out for our annual holiday parties. We’re heading into 2024 with the momentum the labor movement has built recently. Stay union strong together!

Luther Baker, P.S.



Local 601’s holiday party at the Streator satellite office.

Local 617 Celebrates Solidarity

L.U. 617 (c,i,mo&st), SAN MATEO, CA — I would like to thank the membership, officers, staff and their families for volunteering, attending and getting involved in our local’s events. Reflecting on 2023, we are grateful for the festivities and celebrations that strengthened camaraderie off the job site and exemplified the power of community and brotherhood/sisterhood.

Our year of events included:

- Pin party awards banquet
- Offshore fishing charter
- EWMC poker night
- Mother’s Day craft fair
- Day at the Range clay shooting
- Disc golf meetup
- Veterans and EWMC days of service



Local 1245 advisory council member Michael Patterson testifies before the Oakland City Council in support of the safe-work-zone ordinance, flanked by fellow 1245 organizing stewards who stood with him to show support.

- Fourth of July parade
- 49th annual summer picnic
- Halloween haunted hall
- Harvest fall festival
- Retirees’ Club luncheon
- Annual children’s holiday party and train display

Thank you to all of the members and families who gave back to the less fortunate. Coats, socks, toys and canned goods were collected at the union hall, and the bins were overflowing with generous donations.

We are honored to continue to support local organizations including the San Mateo County Central Labor Council, San Mateo County Building Trades, the ALS Association Golden West Chapter, Hillsdale High School’s Empowerment Through Action, San Mateo County Sheriff’s Activities League, San Mateo Police Activities League, Wreaths Across America, and the Tanforan Memorial and Exhibit honoring interned Japanese Americans.

Stay tuned for much more in 2024.

Scott Wein, B.M./F.S.

Local 1245 End-of-Year Highlights

L.U. 1245 (catv,em,govt,lctt,o,t&u), VACAVILLE, CA — With the surge in theft and armed assaults across the city of Oakland, our local’s members working for the city and utility are being subjected to an alarming number of violent incidents. Local 1245 has taken a stand to protect the safety of these hard-working individuals.

Together with our allies, Local 1245 helped draft a safe-work-zone ordinance, which would enable Oakland police to clear civilians in work areas and allow city employees and essential workers (including local members at PG&E and contractors) to perform essential work free from violence and harassment.

“Over the last couple of years, our members working in the city of Oakland have endured

numerous harrowing encounters including shootings, stabbings and robberies,” said Local 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Al Fortier. “The SWZ ordinance is a good first step in addressing violence against essential workers in Oakland who are targeted by criminals because of the tools, equipment and other valuables that they have in their vehicles.”

On Dec. 5, dozens of Local 1245 members packed the Oakland City Council chambers to express support for safe work zones. After three hours of testimony, the Oakland City Council voted unanimously in favor of the ordinance.

“It was a hopeful experience to be able to speak in front of the Oakland City Council regarding the importance of safe work zones, and it was encouraging to receive a unanimous vote of approval in response,” said Local 1245 member Chris Feyling, a PG&E maintenance and construction coordinator who worked out of the Oakland service center for more than seven years. “IBEW 1245 consistently fights for the needs of its members, and as a member, I am proud to stand alongside them!”

Rebecca Band, Comm. Dir.

Local 1347 Celebrates 80 Years

L.U. 1347 (ees,em,u&ptc), CINCINNATI, OH — 2023 was a great time for our local, and we met or exceeded all our goals for the year. One of those goals was increasing membership participation in community volunteering events such as our annual teddy bear giveaway to Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, the breakfast with Santa, Matthew 25 Ministries’ volunteer day and the Cincinnati St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

We also set a goal of 80% or higher of our members completing PAL — Politics, Activism, Livelihood — training, which we exceeded. We have been involved in some local organizing efforts and also showed support for other locals in their efforts. We capped off the year by celebrating 80 years of serving our members.

Local 1347 would like to acknowledge and thank our officers and staff for the hard work and efforts put forth for our 2023 achievements. All of this was accomplished while keeping the lights on for our communities. Now, on to 2024 and setting the bar even higher.

Andrew Kirk, B.M.



Local 357 members head out to the 22nd annual charity golf tournament benefiting the Brotherhood Welfare Fund.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

Notify us of an address change

www.ibew.org/ChangeMyAddress

or call 202-728-6263

LOCAL LINES



Local 1547 graduates of the Tom Cashen Training Center: from left, Wyatt Hamilton, David Schneider, Tanner Pollack, Garon Bishop, Kole Wheeler, Steven Gauna, Glenn Conwell and Casey Herman-Hoskins.

Tom Cashen Training Center Graduates

L.U. 1547 (c,em,i,o,t,u,lctt&ptc), ANCHORAGE, AK — Our local congratulates third-year Tom Cashen Training Center line graduates pictured in the accompanying photo (left).

Melinda Taylor, Comm. Dir.

Local 1579 Teaches and Involves

L.U. 1579 (i&o), AUGUSTA, GA — Hello, brothers and sisters. Hopefully, everyone is starting to see warmer weather and going on spring outings like golf, softball and fishing. Spring also brings out more of our two-wheeled friends, so with that in

mind, please keep your mind fresh and your eyes on the road and off the cellphone while driving.

The work situation in Augusta has been maintained since my last article, but as the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility moves out of demolition and into construction, we will see a rise in employment on the project. Our prime contractors at the Savannah River site are holding their own and picking up projects here and there, and our in-town shops are doing the same.

We're still offering plenty of continued education classes for our journeyman wiremen, such as Fiber Optic, CPR, OSHA 10 and 30, EPRI, and EVITP. We want all of our JWs to get involved. The classes are free, but the knowledge is priceless. Feel free to contact the hall for more information.

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.

Mike Greene, Pres.

RETIREEES

Join Local 1 Retirees' Club for March Meeting

RETIREEES' CLUB OF L.U. 1, ST. LOUIS, MO — March marks the first Retirees' Club meeting for the year, and the officers would like to extend a warm welcome and invitation to our retired brothers and sisters to attend our meeting March 20 at 10 a.m. We invite special guests to come and speak at our meetings on topics concerning the interests of Local 1. We wish all of our brothers and sisters the best and look forward to seeing you.

Jim Schario, P.S.

Local 3 South Jersey Retirees' 25th Anniversary

RETIREEES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER — Happy New Year to all! This year, the South Jersey chapter of the Retirees' Club celebrates its 25th anniversary. Members of the club worked again with the Marine Corps from Red Bank, N.J., and with Toys for Tots, led by Lou Cohen. Lou and his crew worked from Nov. 27 to Dec. 22.

A holiday luncheon was held at Ruocco's Restaurant in Manalapan, N.J., on Dec. 8. (See photo, bottom left.) The main holiday party was held Dec. 20 at the Local 400 hall. I would like to thank all our members for a great 2023.

Nancy Savarese, P.S.

Local 3 Retirees' Club Holiday Spirit

RETIREEES' CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER — On Dec. 12, the Westchester/Putnam chapter held its annual holiday party. This festive event was hosted at a



From left, Local 3 Business Agent Richard McSpedon, award recipient Albert Micka, Retirees' Club Chairman Steve DiDonato and Business Agent Louis Sanchez.

local Italian restaurant in Tuckahoe, N.Y. Many members showed their holiday spirit by wearing their "ugliest" Christmas sweater to the luncheon. The annual party had a great turnout from our retirees and their spouses. Also in attendance were several Local 3 representatives who were happy to be a part of this annual celebration.

It was a sunny and joyous day, filled with an abundance of great food, drinks, laughter and musical entertainment from our newly elected chairman, Steve DiDonato. Our chapter also acknowledged several of its members who celebrated their 80th birthdays in 2023. Each member was given a "Golden Certificate" commemorating this milestone.

All club event proceeds are donated to the Fisher House Foundation, a charity that builds homes for visiting families of wounded veterans while they are being treated in the hospital.

We would like to thank all our officers and members for their dedication and participation in making our club a success. We wish all our fellow

brothers and sisters a healthy, prosperous and happy new year!

Frank Balbo, Comm. Dir.

Happy New Year From Local 35 Retirees' Club

RETIREEES' CLUB OF L.U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — Greetings, and Happy New Year to all. The Retirees' Club had their Christmas meeting catered by The Butchery. Twenty retirees attended, and it was great to see everyone. Thank you to Business Manager Michael Nealy and Business Representative John Bowen for attending. A huge thanks goes to Local 35 members for providing this year's luncheon.

Retirees are now meeting at the Knights of Columbus, 171 Pascone Place, Newington, Conn. We hope new retirees will join our meetings at noon on the second Wednesday of each month. Lunch is provided. The next meeting will be March 13.

Congratulations to all members who retired in 2023. We wish them a wonderful retirement!

We would like to honor the retirees who passed in 2023: Eugene Gallo, James Kelly, David Porter, Henry John Rugar, Alcious Watson and Craig Woodhouse.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2024!

Kenneth White, P.S.

Local 53 Past and Future Retiree Events

RETIREEES' CLUB OF L.U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — Happy New Year, brothers and sisters. I hope this article finds all of you in good health.

I have a few things to report on.

Local 53 will have its annual crappie tournament April 27. We hope you can attend and enjoy the day. There will be good food and drink. It will be a great day to visit and talk about the good times of our younger years and the future as well.

We held our Retirees' Club dinner Oct. 27, and we had a good turnout, with good food, great visitation and a drawing for gift cards. All of us appreciate this dinner. Thank you to Local 53.

Local 53 held its annual Christmas party Dec. 15 at Stoney Creek Hotel. There was good turnout, food and entertainment, and everyone enjoyed

themselves. Thanks again to Local 53.

On a sadder note, we lost a good friend and brother, Joe Garrett. He will be missed by all who knew him and worked for him or with him. He passed away in his sleep at home Nov. 21. May the good Lord take him home to rest in peace.

Duane Pearce, P.S.

Join Together, Continue the Work

RETIREEES' CLUB OF L.U. 58, DETROIT, MI — In December we held our annual Christmas party at the local union hall. We had more than 130 attendees, and our numbers are growing as COVID-19 goes further into our past. We had a great time, with a visit from Santa and photos, a catered lunch, 50/50 drawings, and lots of reminiscing with new and old friends. Our board does lots of planning and work to make this annual gathering a success, and we appreciate all those who step up and help with cleanup when the party winds down. Thanks to all who attended, and best wishes for a prosperous, successful and healthy 2024.

November 2024 brings us an important election. We all need to keep our eyes on the prize. Let's not let the distractions from criminal formerly elected officials take our attention away from what is at stake here. Decide now to deny those folks any oxygen to feed their flames of falsehoods and continued disbelief in the letter of the law. To quote Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has." We must join together and continue the work.

Pat Nuznov, P.S.

Don't Miss Out on All the Fun

RETIREEES' CLUB OF L.U. 105, HAMILTON, ON — At the time of this writing, I am happy to note that our Retirees' Club has been able to enjoy and schedule these events:

- Euchre, every Monday afternoon
- Grand River cruise (Sept. 14, 2023)
- Lunch at the Mandarin (Sept. 28, 2023)
- Oktoberfest, hosted by our Kitchener local (Oct. 12, 2023)
- Fish fry (Oct. 19, 2023)
- Cairn Croft Niagara Falls (Nov. 7-10, 2023)
- Toronto Christmas party, hosted by our Toronto local (Nov. 26, 2023)



Members of Local 3 Retirees' Club/South Jersey Chapter at their holiday party luncheon.



George Gower, president of the Local 105 Retirees' Club, and James Bonnell, Local 105 business manager.

- Lunch and "Fiddler on the Roof," St. Jacob's (Dec. 7, 2023)
- Local 105 Christmas dinner and dance, Michelangelo's, Hamilton (Dec. 10, 2023)
- Breakfast at St. Naum Church (Jan. 24)
- Valentine's dance at Michelangelo's (Feb. 11)
- Lunch at the Mandarin, Burlington (March 14)
- Performing Arts Sanderson Centre, Brantford (March 27)
- Cairn Croft Best Western Niagara Falls (April 16-19)
- May dance, Michelangelo's (May 5)
- Grand River Raceway (June)
- Barbecue, union hall (June 21)

For those Local 105 retirees who have not yet joined the Retirees' Club, jump on board! Look at all the fun you're missing out on!

Please remember that all the events we enjoy are all made possible by our amazing, hard-working local members and executive board, past and present. Our heartfelt thanks goes to all of you!

Eden McLean, P.S.



Unless you were flying overhead, you wouldn't see this amazing, beautiful angle of the Local 134 union hall in Chicago.

Local 134 Retirees Help Homeless Veterans

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — We hope everyone had a great start to the new year. Last year ended with another fun holiday party with prizes and a delicious luncheon.

At our October 2023 meeting, guest speaker Jim Valleyfield spoke about the needs of homeless soldiers. Our Retirees' Club donated money for T-shirts, underwear and other needed essentials. In what is becoming a yearly event, in December, the Local 134 Motorcycle Club escorted 3 truckloads of items for homeless veterans to the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center.

In November, guest speaker Candice Mares represented the Midwest Coalition of Labor and informed us that members and families of Local 134 are eligible to take advantage of benefits such as free roadside assistance, financial planning, discount programs, cost savings for legal services, tax preparation and many more. It was good to learn that we have these benefits available to us.

A story from our Chicago Labor History: On Aug. 31, 1933, Local 134 electrical workers employed by the city of Chicago went on strike. At

8 p.m., they turned off more than 90,000 streetlights and all of the traffic lights in the Chicago Loop. They also raised 38 of the city's 55 drawbridges and left them up. The population in Chicago in 1933 was 3,376,400, so imagine what this did to our city back then.

The Illinois Labor History Society has invited us to a motor coach tour that will take place in early May. Guided by members of the Illinois Labor History Society, we will be touring various sites of importance to Chicago's labor history. This tour should be interesting and educational.

Thank you to all the Local 134 administrative staff, President Tim Fitzgibbons and Business Manager/Financial Secretary Don Finn for their support.

Sue Kleczka, P.S.

If It Looks Unsafe, It Might Be

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 136, BIRMINGHAM, AL — The retiree members of Local 136 had some very good meetings in 2023. Thanks to Retirees' Club President Frank Perryman for making sure we had business to take care of all year. Our meetings are the first Wednesday of every month.

We have bricks left for our local's Wall of Fame. Contact Frank if you want a brick.

We award service pins to Retirees' Club members, usually at 50 years or more of membership. Former Fifth District International Vice President Dan Waters received a 70-year pin, and several others were present to receive their pins. We always serve fried Alabama catfish on that day, and NASCAR Hall of Fame inductee Red Farmer showed up for the good catfish. If you have retired, come on down.

We always have good eats: fried catfish (two times this year), soup and salad, turkey and dressing, deli sandwiches, and good Alabama barbecue.

Some of the retiree sisters help us make lunch. Thanks to them for all the help and outstanding desserts.

We have a moment of silence at meetings for our deceased brothers and sisters. We want to thank our local union officers, Business Manager Bill Blackmon, President Ross Roberson and the executive board for their support.

In closing, we have had some retirees get hurt in their yards, on their roofs, cutting trees, doing side jobs, on lawnmowers and in their cars. Remember this: If it looks unsafe, it might be!

Bill Roberson, P.S.

Local 257 Retirees' Holiday Giving

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 257, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The retirees attended the annual Christmas party hosted by Local 257 on Dec. 12. Seventy-four members and guests were treated to a family-style luncheon. A raffle was held for scratch-offs and a pointsettia. Donations are collected annually for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. Retirees collected \$1,000 this year to support St. Jude's mission of saving children and finding cures.

Condolences are sent to the family of Herman Grothoff, who passed Nov. 7 at the age of 87. After serving in the Korean War, Herman joined the IBEW in 1964. He was proud to talk about the many office buildings, airports and government buildings — including the state capital — that he helped wire.



Local 257's Retirees' Club Christmas party was hosted by the local Dec. 12.

Condolences are sent to the family of Margie Rackers, the wife of Harold Rackers, who preceded her in death. Harold and her son, Dale, were both members of Local 257. Margie was a mother of seven and a certified home health aide and served in various church organizations.

Condolences are sent to the family of Jeff Ballew, who passed on Dec. 3, 2023, at the age of 61. Jeff was a member of the IBEW for 40 years and served as an assistant business agent before retiring in 2022.

The retirees of Local 257 wish all a blessed and healthy 2024.

Connie Hamacher, P.S.



Local 349 mourns the loss of Brother Stanley "Whitey" Nelson.

In Loving Memory of Brother Stanley 'Whitey' Nelson

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 349, MIAMI, FL — It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Stanley "Whitey" Nelson, a dedicated member of Local 349. Stanley's commitment to the IBEW started in 1965. After more than three decades of service, he was an integral part of the IBEW community as a member and officer of the Retirees' Club for 24 years. His enduring dedication and camaraderie will be remembered, and our thoughts are with his family and fellow union members during this difficult time.

During the holiday season, we toured the historic Deering Estate, which was decorated in a whimsical theme of "Alice in Wonderland." Our annual Christmas lunch was held at the 94th Aero Squadron and was filled with the joy of the holidays as we exchanged stories of holidays past and embraced the spirit of togetherness. Thank you to Marilyn Steele for arranging our adventures, as we look forward to 2024.

Brenda Auer, P.S.

First, We Eat

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 654, CHESTER, PA — Several of our retired brothers and sisters meet every other Wednesday morning at a local establishment for breakfast. These breakfast dates feature significant stories from the past and present, but mostly from the past. It gets very loud with laughter and excitement until the food arrives, when it quiets down considerably.

Brother Bill Shaw has been organizing these breakfast get-togethers for decades. Brother Bill Martin sends out biweekly breakfast reminder emails to our retirees. He also distributes coffee mugs inscribed with the slogan "First We Eat — IBEW 654 Retirees Breakfast." Brother Russ Fox shows up extra early and helps the waitresses put the tables together. He also coordinated a banner and T-shirts with our breakfast slogan on them. Hats off to both Bills and to Russ for their brotherly efforts.

On Dec. 13, the officers and members of Local 654 put on a fantastic Christmas luncheon for our retired brothers and sisters in our union hall's grand ballroom. The festivities and camaraderie filled us all with holiday spirit. There is nothing more fulfilling than sharing a meal and re-igniting friendships with brothers and sisters that you worked with side by side for decades.

Bill Faulkner, Bus. Rep.

Happy, Healthy 2024

RETIREES' CLUB OF L.U. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — 2023 was a slow year for trying to rebuild attendance at our Retirees' Club meetings, especially after COVID-19 shut us down for two years. We are hoping this year will bring more members back to our meetings to see old friends and reminisce.

We had a pin ceremony at our November 2023 meeting and want to congratulate everyone receiving pins, both those who were present and those who were not able to make it. Thank you all for your many years of service.

With sadness, we must announce that we have had one member pass since our last article. We send our condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Brother Rex L. Rawlins. We miss him greeting everyone at the door and his great stories.

We would like to invite any retired or unemployed brothers and sisters and their spouses in the area to come and join us. Our meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the Local 756 union hall in Port Orange, Fla.

Diane Gibbs, P.S.



Local 756 members gathered to receive their service pins: from left, Gerald E. Masters (55 years), Loomis R. ("Buddy") Hart (45 years), Wallace E. Blanchard (25 years), Retirees' Club President John Barrington, Thomas W. Arbogast (50 years), Wayne A. Reed (45 years), Richard C. Francis (60 years), Donnie R. "Brand New" Cumbus (60 years), Edward H. Davis (65 years) and Arthur E. Giles (65 years).

August 2023 International Executive Council Meeting

Minutes and Report of The International Executive Council's Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the International Executive Council was called to order at 1:00 pm, by Chairman Erikson, on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, in Chicago, Illinois. Other members of the council in attendance were Shirey, Finn, Cunningham, Chincio, and Griffiths. Council members Calvey, Calabro and Riley attended via audio/video conference call.

International President Cooper

International President Kenneth W. Cooper met with the members of the International Executive Council to discuss a variety of matters affecting all branches of the Brotherhood.

International Secretary-Treasurer Noble

International Secretary-Treasurer Paul A. Noble presented financial reports covering the IBEW Pension Fund and the Investment Portfolio of the Brotherhood both in Canada and in the United States.

Legal Defense

Payments for legal defense, made from the General Fund, were examined, and approved in accordance with the requirements of Article X, Section 1, of the IBEW Constitution.

Financial Reports

The International Secretary-Treasurer's Reports for the various funds of the Brotherhood were presented to the members of the International Executive Council, examined, approved, and filed.

Appeals Filed with The International Executive Council

The International Executive Council conducted a thorough review of the facts pertaining to an appeal from Local Union 353-member Perry Speranza, and it is the decision of the IEC to deny Brother Speranza's appeal.

The International Executive Council conducted a thorough review of the facts pertaining to an appeal from Local Union 81-member Charles M. Gondell, and it is the decision of the IEC to deny Brother Gondell's appeal.

The International Executive Council conducted a thorough review of the facts pertaining to an appeal from Local Union 106-member Steven R. Stoeltzing, and it is the decision of the IEC to deny Brother Stoeltzing's appeal.

Article XX and XXI Cases

There were no new Article XX or XXI cases during the second quarter of 2019.

Trusteeship

There are two local union under trusteeship, Local Union 2330, St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and Local Union 1501, Baltimore, Maryland. The IEC authorized a six-month extension to both trusteeships for Local Union 2330 and Local Union 1501.

IBEW Consolidated Balance Sheet ending June 30, 2023

Reviewed and Filed

IBEW Pension Benefit Fund Consolidated Balance Sheet ending June 30, 2023

Reviewed and Filed

Retirement of International Representatives

Bruce McNamara, International Representative, First District Effective — August 1, 2023

David Jones, International Representative, Ninth District Effective — August 1, 2023

Jeffery Carter, International Representative, Sixth District Effective — August 1, 2023

Raymond Kasmark, Director, Business Development Department Effective — September 1, 2023

Organizer

Thomas Murphy, State Organizing Coordinator, Membership Development Department Effective — June 1, 2023

This regularly scheduled meeting was adjourned, on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. The next regular meeting of the International Executive Council is scheduled for Tuesday, December 19, 2023.

For the International Executive Council

Myles J. Calvey, Secretary August 2023

The IEC acted on numerous applications under the IBEW pension fund. For a complete listing, consult www.ibew.org, clicking on the International Executive Council link on the "About Us" page. ■



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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		THE ELECTRICAL WORKER	
Kenneth W. Cooper International President	Fourth District William W. Riley	Third District Dennis C. Affinati	Editor Kenneth W. Cooper
Paul A. Noble International Secretary-Treasurer	Fifth District Donald B. Finn	Fourth District Gina P. Cooper	Matt Spence
INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	Sixth District Mark H. Cunningham	Fifth District Brian K. Thompson	Tim Lawson
Chairman Christopher Erikson	Seventh District Erin J. Chincio	Sixth District Michael Clemmons	Alex Hogan
First District Joseph P. Calabro	Eighth District Tom N. Griffiths	Seventh District Christian J. Wagner	Curtis D. Bateman
Second District Myles J. Calvey	INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS	Eighth District Jerry Bellah	Erin Sutherland
Third District Daniel L. Shirey	First District Russell N. Shewchuk	Ninth District David E. Reaves Jr.	Asifa Haniff
	Second District Michael P. Monahan	Tenth District Brent E. Hall	Ben Temchine
		Eleventh District Mark D. Hager	Sean Bartel
			Colin Kelly
			Rix Oakland
			Colleen Crinion
			Michael Pointer
			Janelle Hartman
			Joe Conway
			Emily Welsh
			Mike Palm
			Javier Pierrend

HOW TO REACH US



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

Send letters to:

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

Or send by email to: media@ibew.org

©2024 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The Electrical Worker (print)
ISSN 2332-113X

The Electrical Worker (online)
ISSN 2332-1148

All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. on Union-made paper.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Electrical Worker*, 900 Seventh Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

The Electrical Worker will not be held responsible for views expressed by correspondents.

Paid advertising is not accepted.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40011756.
Canada Post: Return undeliverables to P.O. Box 122
Niagara Falls ON
L2E 6S8.

HELP ELECT PRO-WORKER CANDIDATES

The IBEW Political Action Committee supports political action and candidates who will strengthen and protect workers' rights. It also serves as a resource for member organizing during pivotal elections.

Contribute at least \$75 and receive this limited-edition challenge coin celebrating the Biden administration's PROMISES MADE, PROMISES KEPT to working people and the IBEW!

Support the IBEW PAC

www.ibew.org/ibewpac/contribute.org

Contributions can be made only by IBEW members who are U.S. citizens.



WHO WE ARE

New York Apprentices Pen 'Wire Women' Children's Book

A requirement of the New York Local 3 apprenticeship is that everyone get at least an associate's degree in labor studies. It dates to the days of legendary Business Manager Harry Van Arsdale Jr., who believed that all members should have critical thinking skills as well as electrical. A recent product of that decades-old mandate is the children's book "Wire Women Lighting It Up: What It's Like to Be a Female Union Electrician."

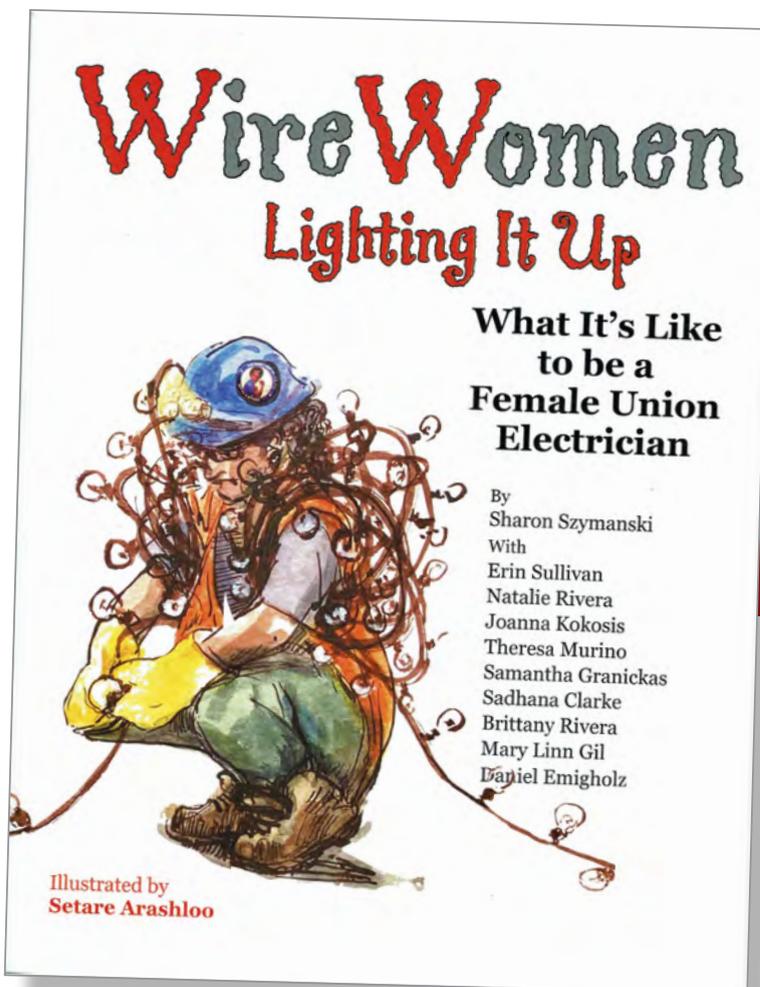
Co-written by eight apprentices — seven women and one man — with one journeywoman serving as an adviser, the book came out of Professor Sharon Szymanski's class "Women, the Economy and the Trades." A question that always comes up, Szymanski said, is, "Why aren't there more women in the trades?" For one cohort, the answer was that young girls don't know that being a union electrician is an option — and a good one.

"We need to show young girls that if they can see it, they can be it," said Local 3 journeywoman Erin Sullivan, who consulted on the project. "This book is a way to do that."

With that as a catalyst, Szymanski developed a course specifically to write a children's book. The students researched children's books about work, and to get ideas about messaging and style, they read articles and watched videos about women in unions. They even heard from New York firefighter Brenda Berkman, who was the subject of her own children's book about her struggle to become a firefighter in the late 1970s. What they discovered is that there aren't many books about tradeswomen, much less union tradeswomen.

"We wanted to fill a void," said Szymanski, who shares author credit with her students. "Young girls don't hear about this."

Accompanied by watercolor-style illustrations, "Wire Women" takes the reader on a tour of what it's like to be an electrician, from "pulling wire



with the strength of an elephant" to climbing ladders "with the agility of a mountain lion scaling a peak."

And since this is a book about New York City wirewomen, there are passages on lighting up the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center, powering the subway and lighting the giant ball that drops every New Year's Eve in Times Square. It also includes

for seeing their work, and the book shows that," Szymanski said.

Now they have one more thing to be proud of: being published authors.

"It was a really fun project," fourth-year apprentice Natalie Rivera said. "It was cool to see our words come to life alongside the illustrations."

For fifth-year apprentice Mary Lin Gil, the book is an example of the potential in so many wirewomen and other Local 3 members.

"To see that I am part of something like this makes me proud, and it makes my family proud," Gil said. "My son is my biggest inspiration and my biggest fan, and he loves the book."

It's not just Gil's son, either. The reception to the book, which was written for all ages, has been positive, said publisher Tim Sheard.

"People who see the book love the book," Sheard said. "We produced a beautiful product that adults like as much as children."

As a book born out of a labor studies class and published by Hard Ball Press, a union publishing house, "Wire Women" doesn't shy away from the importance of being a union member. Or as the book states, "Wirewomen are superheroes, and our union is our superpower."

Being a union member is "how women do better," Sullivan said. "There are more positives with a union, and the book makes that connection clear. It's good for parents to see, too."

Part of the goal of showing young girls that they, too, can be electricians was to show how varied the work is, and how many paths a person can take with their journey worker's license.

How to Buy the Book

You can purchase a copy of "Wire Women" through Hard Ball Press via this QR code or at www.hardballpress.com/childrens-books.html



Unions, schools and social justice organizations can also get a discount of 20% to 40% on orders of 10 copies or more using this QR code or at www.hardballpress.com/wirewomen-order-form.html



fun facts, like the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree weighing roughly 11 tons and using over 50,000 lights that could stretch out over five miles.

"My students have a lot of passion for their trade and

"People have a limited idea of what electricians do in general," Rivera told labor publication Work-Bites in an interview for the book. "I did, too. But now, even my daughter knows more about tools at 5 than I did when I first came into the union."

"Wire Women" also shares how many journeywomen didn't start out as electricians. Some were teachers or graphic artists. Others were store clerks or worked in an office. But they all wanted something more, and they found it as union tradeswomen.

"It just goes to show you that our membership loves this trade and what they do," Local 3 Business Manager Chris Erikson said. "That they were able to so easily share it with others exemplifies that."

While Local 3 has a long and proud history of inclusion, Erikson noted that eye-opening books like "Wire Women" could have drawn more women to the electrical field much earlier.

"We are proud of the pioneers and of these apprentices who put their hearts on their sleeves to share their fulfillment and what motivates them with others in the hopes of increasing the number of women in our industry," said Erikson, who also chairs the International Executive Council.

"Wire Women" has inspired other projects. Sheard said he would like to do a book on all tradeswomen. Szymanski said she's working on a labor calendar that will include different artistic works from some of her students. Rivera completed her bachelor's degree in December and said she's looking forward to having more time to pursue her passions. It's part of the message that she hopes readers will get from the book.

"Try new things. You never know what you may be good at or what will spark a passion," Rivera said.

If the book has one overarching message, it's that being a union electrician isn't just a good way to pay the bills; it's also an incredibly fulfilling career — and one girls can aspire to.

"Being an electrician has made me more confident as a woman and as a mom," Gil said. "I'm helping to light up New York City. Women are a power that cannot be underestimated, and that's what the class, and the book, exemplified." ■



Motivated by a question posed in class at Empire State College, New York Local 3 apprentices collaborated with professor Sharon Szymanski (back row, third from left) on a children's book to show young girls what it's like to be a union electrician.