

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

Vol. 3 | Issue 4 | Fall 2019

Leading the Way on Quality

New York City Local 3 journeyman wireman John Murphy faced a competitive acceptance process when he applied for adventurous electrical work at Antarctica's McMurdo research station. But the contractor immediately recognized that Murphy's IBEW membership set him apart from other applicants and moved his name to the top of the pile.

"It definitely gives you a leg up," Murphy said. "It tells them that you meet a certain criterion. That streamlined it for me."

More than anything else, it's the quality of our work—embodied in the Code of Excellence—that gives employers the assurance that IBEW workers will get the job done the right way, the first time.

"It makes sense that 'quality' is the final piece of the Code's SPARQ acronym," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "Because when you add up all the other components—safety, professionalism, accountability and relationships—quality is the logical result."

When the Minnesota Twins wanted to build a new baseball stadium in Minneapolis a few years ago, former president Jerry Bell insisted on having union electricians work on what eventually became Target Field. "You get the best quality that way," Bell said. "You have people who are experienced. The craftsmanship in this ballpark is second to none in the major leagues."



IBEW quality comes from our first-class training and mentoring, not just during our apprenticeships but throughout our careers. It's affirmation of the hard work we've put in, and a guarantee that employers and customers get what they pay for.

You see our commitment to quality in the experienced instructors combining top-notch classroom education with hands-on guidance at our

"Training programs affiliated with the labor movement have a combined budget of over \$1.5 billion and are the second-largest providers of workplace training in the United States, after the U.S. military."

—Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO executive secretary and member of Portland, Ore., IBEW Local 125

NECA-IBEW training centers across North America. You see it through our investment in the National Utility Industry Training Fund, or when our telecommunications members take advantage of the latest NACTEL courses. And you witness it every day on the job, when experienced members take the time to share their skills with the next generation.

We understand that sharing our knowledge solidifies our well-earned reputation for quality, which helps us grow our market share as we gain and retain customers.

"Our customers and contractors have come to expect quality work from IBEW members, and it's easy to understand why," Stephenson said. "Our Code of Excellence is what makes all the difference."



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email theSPARQ@ibew.org



Commitment to Quality Boosts Your Career and Your Local

Long before quality was an element of SPARQ, it allowed Ken Davenport to go from part-time video library employee to production manager in two years at a small television station in Ottawa, Ill.

He later became a valued member of Chicago Local 1220, now working as a freelance video engineer for corporate clients and conducting classes voluntarily for fellow

members on how to operate the latest in video technology.

“Ken ensures all our members get the best training—and he does it not for himself, but because he knows it is good for the IBEW,” Business Manager John Rizzo said.

“To me quality means, at a minimum, you are exceeding the client’s expectations,” said Davenport (pictured center), now a Local 1220 member for 14 years. “You should give them more than what they’re expecting.”

Passing along his knowledge ensures Local 1220 provides the best broadcast workers possible.

“We want to make sure we have enough members to be competitive for the limited number of positions in the industry,” Davenport said. “Sharing knowledge and growing will always be a strength of our local.”

Davenport said his classes don’t just focus on how to operate a machine. “It’s also an opportunity to learn best practices on a show site,” he said. “Learning how to talk to clients, learning how to talk to crew members. It’s an absolute team effort and there is no position more important than the other.”



SPARQ GOES LOCAL



NTI attendees take part in hands-on training.



Participants attend the 2019 NTI Graduation Ceremony.



NTI graduates stand proudly in front of Hill Auditorium at the University of Michigan.

Quality begins with training, and the National Training Institute (NTI) is key to making sure that IBEW apprenticeship instructors are the best. This year marked the electrical training ALLIANCE’s 30th NTI, which included more than 2,100 participants.