

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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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

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."

"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



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



Quality a Source of Pride at Trayer

At Trayer Switchgear near San Francisco, IBEW members treat the products they make as if their own families will use them.

In fact, linemen nationwide depend on the quality of Trayer's complex components, including the other sisters and brothers at Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245.

"Our switchgear goes all over the world, but at the same time it is used by our local linemen and by most of the utilities across the country where IBEW members work," steward Arnaldo Lizarraga said. "We make sure it is safe for them, and for the public."

From assembly to finishing touches, he said members take pride in producing "the Rolls-Royce of switches."

"When you open it, it doesn't have to be an eyesore—the way the wires look, the way everything is connected," he said. "We want it to look good outside so customers won't have any doubt about the quality inside."

Lizarraga notes that he emphasizes the IBEW's history and values with new employees as the foundation for "what we do here for security and quality and safety."

Trayer in turn treats the union with respect, operating with transparency and open lines of communication,

Local 1245 Business Representative Cruz Serna said. Workers in the nearly 30-member unit earn good wages and benefits, including a top-of-the-line medical plan, and increasingly have opportunities for cross-training and promotions.

Still, something was missing, as Serna shared recently with the new CEO. "I told him the employees are doing a great job. They're working their butts off and work all the overtime that's offered. Once in a while they'd like a high-five."

The CEO took it to heart, visiting the assembly line to give workers the credit they deserve. For Local 1245 members at Trayer, quality has come full circle.



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.