

## Construction Organizing Program Posts Major Gains

During the 1990's, the construction organizing program initiated by President Barry enjoyed successes that exceeded even the most optimistic predictions. Although the program uses many methods, salting remains a major ingredient.

Salting is the ability of a senior member to work for a non-signatory employer. A component of this is organizing the workers at that site. Salting has been a major irritant to the nonunion contractors who—some for the first time—have been forced to adhere to labor laws. The U.S. Supreme Court in a unanimous decision in 1995 upheld the use of salting as an organizing tactic, but nonunion contractor organizations have repeatedly sought national legislation to ban the practice.

IBEW's Construction Organizing Director Ron Burke reports that, from 1990 through 1999, the program has organized more than 130,000 new IBEW members. In addition, over 3,000 new electrical contractors have signed agreements with IBEW locals.

Some of the new contractors signed to IBEW collective bargaining agreements have done so following NLRB elections. Most of the signings, however, have resulted from voluntary recognition by formerly nonunion contractors. A principal reason given by our new signatory contractors for voluntary

recognition of IBEW local unions is their witnessing the skills and ability of IBEW members who have worked as salts on their jobs. They observed a far higher degree of skill and productivity on the part of our members than they had seen with their own, nonunion workers.

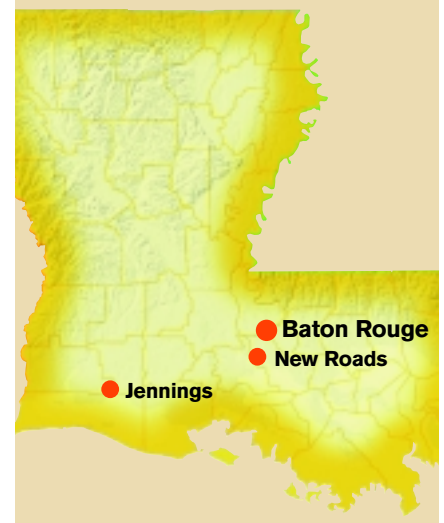
Although the number of new signatory contractors is a significant measure of the success of our construction organizing campaign, it is not the only measure. Even where targeted contractors have not been signed, the fact that the construction organizing program has brought many thousands of formerly nonunion construction workers into IBEW membership, generally through salting and stripping (convincing nonunion workers to join the union and leave their nonunion employers), is a major success.

Referring to these tangible measures of success, President Barry said, "All of our International and local union organizers have every reason to be proud of their success in the last decade. Now the challenge for all of us is to keep that momentum going."



Nineteen employees at Pointe Coupee Electric Co-op in New Roads, Louisiana, voted on May 12, 2000, for representation by Local 2286, Beaumont, Texas. New Roads is located 25 miles southwest of Baton Rouge. The 19 linemen and right-of-way workers voted 100 percent in favor of the IBEW. "We began contract negotiations in June, and they seem to be going well," reported Business Manager George Crawford.

Local 2286 organized the outside linemen at Jeff Davis Electric Co-op in Jennings, Louisiana, about three years ago. Business Manager Crawford said it took the local three years to reach an agreement for card check recognition for the front office workers at the Jeff Davis Co-op. The agreement adds a total of 12 new members to the existing unit of 19 outside workers. "On July 14 this year, 100 percent of the front office workers signed authorization cards for Local 2286 representation," Crawford said.



# Sears Technicians in Vancouver Gain a Voice

After a 2-1/2 year struggle, IBEW Local 213 has organized the Sears Canada Inc. appliance technicians in Vancouver, British Columbia. *The Journal* first reported on this drive last year [See Organizing Wire story, "Vancouver Local to Sears: Smarten Up," *IBEW Journal*, October 1999.]

The struggle began in October 1997. "Through all the adversity, the technicians showed an absolute, unwavering commitment to becoming IBEW members and staying strong," said Local 213 Business Manager Charlie Peck. Finally, in early March this year, victory was won and some 80 Sears technicians and helpers gained a voice at work.

Sears management's attempt to manipulate unit determination snarled the process. Sears sought to include all the workers in the Parts Department as well as the Office Staff, which the union argued was not the appropriate bargaining unit. Sears obviously was trying to water down the technical group, and used its considerable resources to fight the organizing drive. Two certification applications were thwarted by unfavourable decisions issued by the British Columbia Labor Board.

The Volunteer Organizing Committee subsequently decided to go for an all out push to sign cards in all three departments at the Sears location. This effort

would require renewed vigor and considerable presence.

To accomplish the goal, Local 213 asked for the help of sister Vancouver Local 258. John McGraw, Local 258 business manager, offered his local's full support—and a major blitz was underway. Michelle Laurie, Local 258 assistant business manager, and David Thompson, Local 213 assistant business manager, spearheaded the campaign. The locals leafleted the Sears location and made personal contact with the workers.

In the meantime, Assistant Business Manager Ron Dickson, Local 213's legal representative, maintained a strong defense at the Labor Board. At a hearing in early March this year, his legal arguments finally brought certification for the appliance technicians at Sears in Vancouver. The card check drive for the other departments is continuing.

Business Manger Peck praised the efforts of both the organizers and the employees of Sears who have laid the groundwork in an industry that, up to



**Working together to organize appliance technicians at Sears Canada Inc. in Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 213 and Local 258 assistant business managers gather to distribute leaflets at the site. Pictured (left to right): Ron Dickson, Local 213; Greg Fanning, Local 258; Al Oliver, Local 213; Sue Longva, Local 258; Jim Greenwell, Local 258; Al Beeson, Local 258; Dave Thompson, Local 213; and Henry Pritchard, Local 213.**

this time, is largely unorganized. "In order to insure our future, we must continue to reach out to new groups," he added. "At this time we are in negotiations with Sears to conclude a collective agreement."

"This success is a true display of what can be accomplished when local unions pool their resources," said Local 258 Business Manager McGraw. "Working together we can overcome many obstacles in bringing into the IBEW the unorganized. Organizing requires a great deal of effort and energy. By working together, the two locals proved that a joint effort has more effect than an individual one." ■

# A Triumph for Mississippi Workers

Fifth District International Vice President Melvin W. Horton reported that 295 employees working for Howard Industries, Inc. in Laurel, Mississippi, voted June 8, 2000, to be represented by Local 2198, Mendenhall, Mississippi. The vote of 162-108 came after the company committed numerous unfair labor practices. The Howard Industries employees manufacture ballasts for the lighting industry.

Local 2198 President/Business Manger John Graves, temporary organizer for the Fifth District, congratulated the employees for remaining focused on their goals. ■

**Local 2198, Mendenhall, Mississippi, won an organizing drive to represent some 295 workers at Howard Industries, Inc. Pictured, from left to right, are: (seated, front row) Volunteer Organizing Committee members Mary Ann Martin, Jennifer Douglas and Julia Barnett; (standing, back row) Fifth District International Representative James J. Anderson, Local 2198 President/Business Manager John W. Graves (temporary organizer, 5th District), and International Representative Rickie D. Tira.**



*(Organizing Wire continued on next page)*

## Landmark Chicago Museum Organized

Chicago workers at the world-famous Museum of Science and Industry gained a union voice at work when they voted last spring for IBEW Local 134. Workers at the museum had remained nonunion for over 70 years, and in past decades other labor unions had attempted to organize the employees, but had failed even to reach an NLRB election.

Designated as a Chicago landmark in 1995, the museum was originally built as the Palace of Fine Arts for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. It is the largest science museum in a single building in the Western Hemisphere, visited by over 2 million people each year.

Local 134 began its organizing drive at the museum in 1998. On March 6, 2000, after many meetings of the Local 134 Organizing Committee and when 65 percent of the employees had signed authorization cards, the local filed for a representation election. As the ballots were counted on April 19, 2000, a new chapter in the history of the museum and Local 134 was writ-

*(Continued on inside back cover)*

**Chicago IBEW Local 134 member Tom McCormick (left) and retired member Carl Bush rally the employees at the Museum of Science and Technology as they arrive at 5:30 a.m. on the day of the NLRB election.**



## California Local Scores Series of Victories

IBEW Local 1245, Walnut Creek, California, has scored a string of organizing successes this year. Trees Inc. employees in Pacific Gas and Electric Company's San Joaquin Division in central California voted on May 11 by 27-4 for representation by Local 1245. The NLRB election brought the local significantly closer to its goal to represent all line clearance tree trimmers working in its jurisdiction. The organizing drive received invaluable assistance from Local 1245 members employed by other tree trimming contractors. Volunteer organizers Bill Elliott and Angel Trujillio, of Asplundh Tree Expert Company, and Bill Fregoso, of Provco EPA, made house calls to employees of Trees Inc. during the final days of the campaign.

The three-year effort to organize Trees Inc. encountered several obstacles, including the large geographic area covered by the contractor and the high rate of employee turnover. But Trees Inc.'s service territory began to shrink, while at the same time employee interest in the union began to grow.

"A lot of employees there requested meetings with us and made it clear they wanted to be represented by Local 1245," said Business Representative Junior Ornelas, who spearheaded the organizing drive. "We ran into some company resistance, but these employees wanted a union and they stuck together."

Business Manager Jack McNally praised Trees Inc. employees on their decision to vote for the union. "It takes a lot of courage for non-union tree trimmers to organize in the face of employer opposition," McNally said. "I know many of these employees were threatened with demotion or



**Rank-and-file members of Local 1245 assisted in the organizing drive at Trees Inc. by making home visits to employees during the campaign. From top, volunteer organizers Bill Elliott, Asplundh Tree; Bill Fregoso, Povoco EPA; and Angel Trujillio, Asplundh Tree.**

job loss if the union prevailed in this election, but they held firm in demanding their right to be represented."

The Trees Inc. election is the latest in a series of recent organizing successes by Local 1245. In January, employees of the Northern California Power Agency (NCPA) voted 53-1 for representation by Local 1245. NCPA, which employs electricians, mechanics, instrument and control technicians and other classifications, is a consortium of municipalities with interests in hydro facilities, steam units and gas-fired turbines.

Shortly after this vote, a second group of NCPA employees—system dispatchers, system schedulers and system "preschedulers"—voted 7-3 for representation.

In February, employees in the Line Department at Turlock Irrigation District voted 40-0 for representation by Local 1245. *[Information submitted by Local 1245 Communications Director Eric Wolfe.]*



# DISPATCHES

Some 225 telemarketers at **Telespectrum Worldwide Inc.** in Cheektowaga, New York, gained a voice on the job when they voted for IBEW Local 2213, Washington Mills, New York. Telespectrum handles sales calls for Bell Atlantic Corp.

News photographers and editors at **Fox Television Station of Philadelphia** voted 18-9 on March 16, 2000, for representation by then-Local 1241 (which amalgamated into Philadelphia Local 98 on July 1). The new Fox unit includes a total of 30 employees. Local 1241 already represented some 35 broadcast engineers at the station, and the engineers were instrumental in helping to organize the photographers and editors.

Twenty-four workers employed by **Tippah Electric Power Association (TEPA)** voted last spring for representation by IBEW Local 852, Corinth and Tupelo, Mississippi. Organizer Lanny Horn said the outside utility workers (linemen, apprentice linemen, meter readers and right-of-way tree trimmers) voted 19-5 for IBEW representation.

"This will be the first union contract at Tippah Electric," said Business Manager Jackie B. Smith. TEPA, headquartered in Ripley, Mississippi, provides electric power for Tippah County residences and businesses.

Twelve employees of **Synthetic Material, Inc. (SynMat)** in Cumberland City, Tennessee, gained IBEW Local 429 (Nashville) representation in an election held June 2, 2000. These employees manufacture synthetic gypsum for wall-board.

# T R A N S I T I O N S

**W**ith deepest regret the IBEW announces the death of retired Seventh District International Executive Council member Thomas J. Sweeney on August 12, 2000.

Brother Sweeney was elected a member of the Seventh District International Executive Council on September 15, 1986, and reelected to that post at the 1991 IBEW Convention. He retired on October 18, 1996, after more than 43 years of active, dedicated service to the Brotherhood.

Initiated into Local 595, Oakland, California, on December 12, 1952, he served his local as business manager-

## DECEASED



**Thomas J. Sweeney**

financial secretary and was a member of the Executive Board and Examining Board. He served on numerous committees within his local.

His long and distinguished labor career included service as president of the Alameda County Building Trades Council. He was a delegate to all IBEW Conventions from 1982 to 1996, and to all California State Federation and State Building Construction Trades Conventions since 1958.

The Brotherhood extends sincere sympathy to his wife, Ann, family and friends.

**W**ith great sadness, the IBEW announces the death of Fourth District International Representative Steven L. Stump on August 9, 2000. Age 56, he died as the result of a boating accident.

Brother Stump, construction organizing coordinator for the Fourth District, was appointed as an International Representative on February 1, 1987, and served in that capacity with great dedication to the Brotherhood.

A 35-year IBEW member, he was

## DECEASED



**Steven Lee Stump**

initiated into Local 1340, Newport News, Virginia, on September 15, 1967. He served Local 1340 as business manager-financial secretary, president and treasurer.

Born in Roanoke, Virginia, on September 17, 1943, he served in the U.S. Army 101st Airborne Division and was a decorated Vietnam War Veteran.

The IBEW extends deepest condolences to his wife, Nancy, family and friends.

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ten. The museum work force of 46 employees had finally gained a union voice at work.

“We are proud and happy with our organizing team and the results of this election,” said Business Manager Michael Fitzgerald. “One can only admire the great courage displayed by our new members throughout the campaign.” Local 134 organizers for the drive were Richard Murphy, Robert Parrilli and Richard Sipple.

Museum employees represent over 17 different classifications of workers. This “wall-to-wall” campaign included: electricians, carpenters, HVAC technicians, locksmiths, painters, plumbers, dispatchers, telecommunications workers, stationary engineers, stage crew, machinists, dock workers, exhibit technicians, exhibit designers, electronic technicians and stockroom handlers. “This multi-faceted work force will be a welcomed addition to Local 134’s 76-member wall-to-wall bargaining unit at Loyola Medical Center, organized in 1995,” said Business Manager Fitzgerald. 