

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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## Green Energy Supporters Call for Transmission Grid Overhaul

**T**he flat wind-swept plains of the Dakotas are rich enough in wind power to meet half of our nation's energy needs, while the sunny deserts of Nevada could yield enough solar energy to power much of the Western United States.

But without thousands of miles of new high-voltage power lines than can bring it to the areas where it is needed the most—the cities and suburbs—the United States' rich supplies of renewable energy, found mainly in rural and remote parts of the country, will remain untapped.

"Modernizing the transmission grid is the major challenge we face to greening our economy," said International President Edwin D. Hill.

"The quicker we can build a network to get renewable energy to where it's going to be used, the faster we can meet our goals in reducing carbon emissions," said Construction Department International Representative Jack Heyer, who helps monitor the green energy sector for the IBEW.

The problem, says Utility Department Director Jim Hunter, is that our current electrical grid system, which in many cases dates back before the 1950s, is not designed to handle large loads over long distances. "It's like the connection between the D.C. grid and the Baltimore one is a one-way dirt road," he said. "If we want to get wind power from Montana to Chicago, we're going to need to replace it with a six-lane highway."

The grid's limitations are already creat-



Without thousands of miles of new transmission lines, the United States won't reach its renewable energy goals, say green power advocates.

ing power backlogs that are restricting the growth of renewable energy. In California more than 30,000 megawatts of solar energy are unable to connect to the grid, while more than 40,000 megawatts of wind power goes to waste in the Great Lakes region each year, according to a new joint report from the American Wind Energy Association and the Solar Energy Industries Association. "The massive deployment of renewable generation envisioned by President Obama cannot occur without a renewed investment in our country's transmission infrastructure."

President Obama's stimulus package includes more than \$10 billion in funding for

new transmission projects across the United States, but the money won't have much impact without guaranteeing utility companies will have the proper authority to build new lines.

The main obstacle is the fragmented number of state and local authorities which can prevent the siting and construction of new power lines across the state boundaries.

According to a recent report issued by the Center for American Progress, a Washington D.C., think tank, building a single transmission line can involve separate proceedings in multiple jurisdictions, adding years of delay before construction can even begin.

To streamline the approval process, in March Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) introduced legislation giving federal regulators greater power to approve the routes of transmission lines. "We cannot let 231 state regulators hold up progress," Reid told the Wall Street Journal.

Reid's Clean Renewable Energy and Economic Development Act would give the federal government the authority to approve interstate siting if local delays threaten the construction of new transmission lines that will connect renewable energy producing regions with the rest of the country. Reid's legislation will likely become incorporated into a larger energy bill that is expected to be introduced by Senate Democrats this spring.

In addition to more miles of transmission lines, clean-energy supporters are pushing for investment in smart grid technology.

A "smart grid" is an assortment of advanced computer technologies that help make the grid more productive and cost efficient. This includes advanced sensors which allow utilities to automatically shift power

**GREEN ENERGY** continued on page 2

## Green Energy

*continued from page 1*

loads during times of high demand and smart meters that give consumers daily updates on their power usage, allowing them to set their energy levels to decrease or increase depending on the fluctuation of energy prices.

Smart grid technology also allows small green-energy producers, such as rooftop solar panels and plug-in electric cars, to sell their excess power back to the grid.

"It's like an Internet for utilities," said National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee Executive Director Mike Callanan.

More than \$4 million of the stimulus money is slated to encourage utilities to work on smart grids.

Rebuilding a new transmission infrastructure will mean jobs – lots of them. Laying new lines would require tens of thousands of new linemen; wiring a smart grid is expected to create 75,000 jobs in one year alone, according to an alliance of smart grid advocates. If those new jobs are good-paying, union ones, they can go a long way in leading our nation to economic recovery, Hunter said.

But with the shortage of skilled utility workers already reaching crisis level, invest-



Credit: Center for American Progress

ment in a revamped grid system will necessitate increased support by federal and state governments for job training and recruitment.

Despite the political challenges and high price tag of a 21st century grid, supporters say that the investment is long overdue and well worth the money – for the economy and the environment.

"The benefits of this kind of investment by our generation will far exceed the costs," said American Wind Energy Association CEO Denise Bode. ■

## Construction Branch Sees Growth, But Market Slump Today's Reality

For the first time since data of its kind has been collected, IBEW members working in construction have seen their industry density increase while their share of market wages also improved, a recent analysis shows.

In a report released by the National Labor Management Cooperative Committee in February, the most current statistics on union density in the construction branch show that the number of IBEW members rose by more than 10,000 in 2007 – a 1-percent rise in the total number of employees in the industry. At the same time, total industry wages leapt from \$31.2 billion to \$33.7 billion between 2006 and 2007. During that period, IBEW members commanded an increasing share of the industry wages, from 35 to 36 percent of the total wage share.

This means that the IBEW is organizing more members who are garnering a rising amount of wages in the construction sector.

"When you're talking about billions of dollars, a 1 percent increase is very substantial," said Buddy Satterfield, Special Assistant to IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill for Membership Development. Satterfield credits the uptick to locals that are using creative tools to keep competitive and break into previously impenetrable markets.

While that 2007 data are encouraging, they don't mask the economic problems facing many members today. The construction industry has taken severe hits in the economic downturn, and many IBEW members are out of work.

"But though the pie has shrunk for now, the research shows that we've gotten a bigger slice overall," Satterfield said. "This will put us in a better position when the electrical construction markets improve."

That's what Atlanta Local 613 Business Manager Gene O'Kelley is waiting for. "I've got 320 members on the bench, and I'm telling people how important it is to tighten their family budgets while we weather this crisis," O'Kelley said.

He cited frozen credit as one of the greatest challenges his membership faces. Once that credit starts to thaw, he anticipates numerous projects that have been put on hold will get rolling and put members back to work. "Like any industry, construction has peaks and valleys. We're in a valley right now, but I see us climbing out of it by year's end."

For O'Kelley, who represents members in a right-to-work state, employing some fresh tactics has helped break into the construction markets in the area. Adjusting journeyman-to-apprentice ratios has allowed the local to stay competitive by decreasing the overall cost of man-hours while keeping wages for members high. This pulls more jobs to the union side and allows for the growth seen in the 2007 data.

Despite the present dismal forecast, IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill said that the statistics signify a trend that could look even better for the union in the upcoming years.

"Given the extraordinary economic challenges facing our industry, it's imperative that we continue to organize not only workers and employers, but the actual work," Hill said. "The fact that our members performed an increasing share of the total electrical work in 2007 means more job opportunities for IBEW electricians down the line." ■

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#### IBEWHourPower.com is your online source for IBEW news and information.

Right now on IBEWHourPower.com, hear from new Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis during her visit to IBEW Local 349 in Miami. Solis wanted to check out the IBEW to see the future of America's work force – and there to greet her was President Ed Hill.

#### ElectricTV.net is an online TV show for you, the building owners and contractors.

We talk to a well-known electrical contractor about what owners can do to save money and time by bringing their mechanical systems online. We then expand the topic, and bring it full circle by exposing the need for a new, updated electrical "smart grid."



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FIGHT  
FOR THE LIVING.**

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# After Base Electrocutions, IBEW Members Help Improve Safety in Mideast

**B**oston Local 103 journeyman wireman Kevin Brashears was fearful of becoming another statistic: one more hardworking family man victimized by the economic free fall. But after a year of either sitting on the bench or scraping by with stop-and-go work – and facing foreclosure on his mortgage – Brashears hit pay dirt in an unlikely place.

In March, Brashears shipped out to Iraq to work for nonunion military contractor KBR. He stands to make more than \$120,000 for his 12-month commitment. At the same time, he looks forward to the chance to improve safety for the troops stationed at KBR-run facilities, which have been plagued by shoddy electrical wiring, leading to many troop deaths.

“I’m trying to do right by my family and at the same time help serve my country,” Brashears said.

Mired in scandal and facing critical heat from U.S. investigators, KBR – the notorious anti-union company that won Iraq contracts in a no-bid process under the Bush administration – is now attempting an about-face. Greater government scrutiny and heightened exposure are forcing the contractor to recruit a skilled work force, as opposed to outsourcing work to Iraqi locals or unskilled third-country nationals. The result: KBR representatives are signing up licensed elec-

tricians in the U.S. at a rapid clip, many of whom are out-of-work IBEW members.

“For some members who are unemployed right now, working for KBR in Iraq looks like a pretty good deal,” said Boston Local 103 Business Manager Mike Monahan. He cited the high pay and numerous stalled local construction projects as reasons more than 25 of the local’s members are slated to head out to Iraq. “So far, the relationship between KBR and our local has been good, and those members who signed up are happy to have the work.”

But even as IBEW members travel to Iraq to fix the problems, the company continues to pay the price for its past failures.

Following 18 troop deaths at U.S. bases – many of which are run by KBR – Army investigators in January recommended the manner of death for Staff Sgt. Ryan Maseth be changed from “accidental” to “negligent homicide.” Maseth was electrocuted in January 2008 while taking a shower at his Baghdad base.

The Defense Contract Management Agency has documented 231 shock incidents from September 2006 through July of last year – seven months after Maseth’s death. The agency said in its 45-page report that KBR “failed to meet the basic requirements to identify life-threatening conditions on tanks, water pumps, electrical outlets and electrical panels.”



Savannah, Ga., Local 508 journeyman wireman Henry Blount, right, helped wire U.S. bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Army is considering charging two unnamed KBR supervisors and the company at large with criminal liability. No charges have been filed yet.

IBEW members who have worked for the contractor in Iraq have helped shine a light on the myriad problems at KBR-run facilities. Portland, Ore., Local 48 member Debbie Crawford worked in Baghdad’s Green Zone from 2004 to 2006. She testified before a Senate Democratic Policy Committee hearing last year about the poor management and shoddy quality of work she saw being performed by unlicensed, barely-trained employees working alongside licensed IBEW electricians. Maseth’s mother, Cheryl Harris, also testified (see “IBEW Urges Electrical Safety at U.S. Bases,” October 2008, *The Electrical Worker*).

“Some of us who went to Iraq were so stunned that we couldn’t in good conscience move forward without trying to right some wrongs we saw on the worksites,” Crawford said. “I feel strongly that it was our testimonies that got the ball rolling on investigating KBR’s actions abroad.”

Since then, Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) and Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) have pressed the Pentagon and the Army to conduct assessments of KBR-run facilities. “We must not only ensure that full accountability is served in this case, but that the Pentagon is also doing all that it can to prevent the future electrocutions of American personnel in both Iraq and Afghanistan,” Casey said.

Crawford warned members considering whether to sign up. “People need to go over there fully informed, and know what to expect – that they’re frequently on their

own,” Crawford said. Appearing on MSNBC’s “The Rachel Maddow Show” March 9, Crawford told 2 million viewers about water systems yielding high voltage rates that shocked many troops and civilians and how her foreman was not even an electrician.

“Things may not be perfect, but they are turning around,” says Savannah, Ga., Local 508 journeyman wireman Henry Blount. He worked for KBR in the Green Zone from 2004 to 2006 then served as an electrical auditor for Versar International Assistance Projects – a Colorado-based company – in Iraq. His recent duties included eliminating hazards in base infrastructures.

Blount was reassigned to Afghanistan last month. He says that while challenges are considerable, he appreciates the opportunity to help instruct Iraqi and Afghan electricians as they strive to make a better life for themselves.

“The IBEW brothers and sisters over here all support the troops, and we all support a safe work environment,” Blount said. “I feel confident I’m helping make the situation better each time I step on the job site.”

For Brashears, going to Iraq allows him to put the Code of Excellence to work in a changing and challenging environment.

“The fact that KBR turned to the IBEW when they needed more licensed electricians shows what a safety-conscious, efficient and professional work force our union has,” Brashears said. “I’m deeply saddened by the troop deaths and accidents, and I hope some military families will rest easier knowing that their loved ones are in the very capable hands of the IBEW.” ■

## Local 103 Compliance Efforts Snag Nonunion Lawbreakers

**W**ith 1,300 members on the bench, Boston Local 103 is stepping up efforts to keep nonunion contractors from undercutting the wages and benefits that are the products of years of struggle. The local's compliance of prevailing wage laws is winning big results.

"We vigorously enforce all the laws on the books," says Business Manager Mike Monahan. "Our key tool is reaching out to nonunion workers and making them aware of what they are entitled to."

In February, open shop electrical contractor George Wattendorf was fined \$30,000 and forced to pay \$151,000 to six former employees who were improperly paid on a number of public works projects, including a Lynn police station.

In April, a complaint against Signet Electronics Systems, a nonunion control system and fire alarm-installation business resulted in \$1,700 in fines and back wages of nearly \$4,000.

Wattendorf pleaded guilty in Suffolk Superior Court to charges that included failing to keep accurate payroll records, and failing to pay his employees prevailing wages and overtime in after being indicted by a grand jury last year. He and his company are constrained from contracting or working on public projects for one year.

Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley initiated an investigation in 2007

after a complaint from a Wattendorf employee. Bill Lewis, one of the nonunion workers who has since entered Local 103's apprentice program, was called by the attorney general's office to corroborate reports of improper pay.

Wattendorf asked Lewis not to cooperate, but he consulted a cousin who is an attorney, decided to answer questions and later testified before the grand jury.

"Leaving the nonunion contractor behind and joining Local 103 was a move I should have made years ago," says Lewis, a graduate of Norwich University who has worked in the electrical trade for eight years. "I get regular pay raises now without having to go in an office and tell the boss how much I deserve more money because of the favors I have done for him," says Lewis.

Local 103's compliance efforts have been honed through years of experience. First, the union monitors all nonunion contractors who work on jobs covered by state and national prevailing wage laws. Then, the local submits a Freedom of Information Act request for payroll records from those projects, assembling the information in a database.

The local sends out letters jointly addressed to all of the nonunion workers and their spouses. The letters congratulates them on being hired to work on prevailing wage jobs. Local 103 reminds recipients that union and nonunion electri-

cians successfully supported the prevailing wage law after it was threatened by Ballot Question 2, which was introduced by nonunion employers in 1988 to eliminate the protective legislation.

Then, Local 103 reports on the hourly wage rate that was declared by their employer and asks workers to notify the local

union or a lawyer—whose services are paid for by the union—if the wages reported don't match the wages received.

"Our method has worked," says Monahan. "We get right on the case if workers have been cheated; we win their respect and we protect the standards that we have fought so hard to win." ■

## IBEW Workers Help Pioneer Industry Safety, Earn Elite OSHA Status

**C**olorado's Sturgeon Electric and Tennessee's L.E. Myers Co. — which employ hundreds of IBEW members in seven states — netted industry firsts when the Department of Labor awarded the companies OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program Star Status for exemplary safety on the job.

Sturgeon and L.E. Myers are the only electrical companies of their kind to be granted such status since OSHA widened its VPP scope several years ago to include mobile work forces such as construction contractors. Awards used to be given only to companies operating factories, manufacturing and power plants with fixed work forces.

"It feels great to be leading the way in safety," Denver Local 68 Business Manager Dennis Whalen said. "With VPP status, workers, customers and the company all know that we have a system in place that is top of the line. Our members who worked for it know it didn't come easily and that it's not taken lightly."

The oldest and largest electrical contractor in Colorado, Sturgeon already boasted a solid reputation for safety on their inside and outside construction projects. After a lengthy application process, an OSHA evaluation team examined many of Sturgeon's job sites and crews last April. Members of the team conducted more than 60 interviews with employees, managers, supervisors, support personnel and executives at various sites. They pored over safety records, inspected shops and vehicles, and examined how safeguards are implemented. After passing scrutiny, Sturgeon received its VPP award last August.

Chattanooga's L.E. Meyers Co. — which employs IBEW members at 11 locals working for the Tennessee Valley Authority —

had already been ahead of the curve in safety for years.

Company leaders in 2001 sought to create a "safety culture" for their high voltage line work that included trainings in pole climbing, single person rescue techniques and other aspects of the trade.

"We always want our members to know that they are protected to the best of the company's ability on the job site," said Local 175 Business Manager Barry Key, who represents dozens of members at L.E. Meyers. "Now we have the papers to prove it." L.E. Meyers was awarded VPP status last summer.

IBEW leaders say that such status not only reflects strict commitment to safety, but helps keep members gainfully employed by keeping contractors competitive in bidding processes.

"This award is a powerful tool that we can use to open doors for the locals," said Jim Tomaseski, IBEW Safety & Health Department Director. "VPP status shows that our safety programs are dynamic and that our workers are taking great leaps in maintaining safety on employers' property. When customers recognize that, they feel more inclined to hire union for their projects."

Both companies are subsidiaries of the MYR Group, headquartered in Rolling Meadows, Ill. Sturgeon employs Colorado members of Pueblo Local 12; Denver Local 68; Denver Local 111; Colorado Springs Local 113; and Grand Junction Local 969. L.E. Meyers employs members of New Orleans, Local 130; Chattanooga, Tenn., Local 175; Oak Ridge, Tenn., Local 270; Nashville, Tenn., Local 429; Memphis, Tenn., Local 474; Sheffield, Ala., Local 558; Knoxville, Tenn., Local 760; Paducah, Ky., Local 816; Corinth and Tupelo, Miss., Local 852; Kingsport, Tenn., Local 934; and Martin, Tenn., Local 1925. ■

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## North of 49°

# Code of Excellence Makes its Debut in Toronto

The IBEW's Code of Excellence has won new believers among members of Toronto, Ontario, Local 353. The local's first two projects done under the Code of Excellence seal have allowed members to witness firsthand how the code can improve professionalism on the job and regain market share in the construction industry.

There are few things Torontonians are more loyal to than their home town professional hockey team, the Maple Leafs. So when Local 353 found out it would be working on the team's new training facility, it was big news for members.

Working on a project that involves the Leafs means the local was ready to go the extra mile to live up to the high standards set by the Code. "It said to everyone that we are serious about our professionalism," said Local 353 Business Representative Steven Martin. While the local got the project before adopting the Code, members thought it would help in bidding for future jobs, allowing contractors see what the Code can do for professionalism and efficiency.

The new 260,000-square-foot Lakeshore Lions Arena, which will consist of three regulation training rinks and an Olympic size ice pad, is expected to open in time for training

season in September. The facility will also house the Hockey Hall of Fame, the oldest and largest archive devoted to the sport in the world. At the height of construction, it will employ more than 50 inside wiremen.

For Business Representative Cameron Commandant, the greatest strength of the Code is the increased communications opened up between employees and contractors. The local has scheduled monthly breakfast meetings with the contractors about progress and problems with the job, while increasing the number of unscheduled discussions held on site. "I think both sides feel like the other is listening and understands their concerns," Commandant said. "Once you start the conversation, it takes on a life of its own."

The Code of Excellence is also in use at another major project for Local 353, the GTA Youth Center, a juvenile detention and rehabilitation facility which is expected to be completed by summer. The general contractor, Bird Construction, is normally a nonunion company, but the Code proved to be such a strong selling point that the IBEW got the work. Currently 70 electricians are on the job. "That's 70 jobs that we wouldn't have had without adopting the Code of Excellence," said Local 353 President Barry Stevens.



More than 100 Toronto, Ontario, Local 353 members went to work on the local's first two projects done under the Code of Excellence seal this winter.

The local is in discussions with contractors about making the code an integral part of all future agreements. "It's a great tool for our contractors to market themselves because it puts the standards we live up to

every day into writing," Martin said.

"Our members already work at these standards," said Local 353 Business Manager Joe Fashion. "Why not promote the skills they already possess?" ■

## Au nord du 49° parallèle

# Notre Code d'excellence fait ses débuts à Toronto

Le Code d'excellence de la FIOE compte maintenant de nouveaux adeptes parmi les membres de la section locale 353 de Toronto, en Ontario. Les deux premiers projets réalisés sous le seau du Code d'excellence par la section locale 353, ont permis aux membres d'apprendre de première main comment ce Code peut contribuer à améliorer le professionnalisme au travail et à recouvrer notre part du marché dans l'industrie de la construction.

Parmi les choses qui leur tiennent le plus à cœur, les Torontois sont avant tout fidèles à l'équipe de hockey professionnelle de leur ville, les Maple Leafs. D'où l'importance de cette nouvelle pour les membres de la S.L. 353, lorsque les dirigeants de la S.L. leur ont annoncé qu'ils travailleraient aux nouvelles installations servant à l'entraînement des joueurs de leur équipe.

Travailler sur un tel projet impliquant les Leafs signifie que la section locale est prête à faire des efforts supplémentaires afin

de respecter les normes élevées établies par le Code. «Cela démontre que nous sommes sérieux à propos de notre professionnalisme» dit Steven Martin, représentant d'affaires de la section locale 353. Bien que ce projet ait été obtenu par la S.L. avant que le Code ne soit adopté, les membres étaient convaincus qu'en appliquant le Code, ils pourraient en retirer des bénéfices lors de la postulation pour de futurs emplois, en permettant aux entrepreneurs de constater que l'application du Code pouvait améliorer le professionnalisme et le rendement.

L'ouverture du nouvel Aréna Lakeshore Lions, d'une superficie de 260,000 pieds carrés, qui sera constitué de trois patinoires de dimension réglementaire pour l'entraînement et d'une patinoire de dimension olympique, est prévue pour la prochaine saison d'entraînement en septembre. L'établissement abritera également le Temple de la renommée du hockey, où sont conservées les plus vieilles et les plus grandes archives mondi-

ales consacrées au sport. L'embauche de plus de 50 compagnons électriciens est prévue au plus fort de la construction.

Selon le confrère Cameron Commandant, représentant d'affaires, la plus grande force du Code réside sur le développement des communications plus ouvertes entre les employés et les entrepreneurs. La section locale a prévu des déjeuners-causerie mensuels avec les entrepreneurs afin de discuter des progrès et des problèmes au travail, tout en augmentant le nombre d'entretiens imprévus sur les lieux de travail.

"Je crois que les deux parties ont le sentiment que l'autre est à l'écoute et comprend ses préoccupations; il suffit d'entamer la conversation", dit-il.

Le Code d'excellence est également appliqué sur un autre gros chantier de la S.L. 353, au Centre des jeunes du grand Toronto, un établissement de détention juvénile et de réhabilitation dont les travaux devraient être terminés avant l'été. L'adoption du Code s'est

avérée tellement "bon vendeur" que l'entrepreneur général Construction Bird, qui n'engageait que des travailleurs non-syndiqués, a choisi d'embaucher des membres de la FIOE. Quelque 70 électriciens travaillent présentement sur ce chantier. "C'est grâce à l'adoption du Code d'excellence que nous avons pu obtenir ces 70 emplois" déclare Barry Stevens, Président de la S.L. 353.

Des discussions sont en cours entre la section locale et les entrepreneurs afin que l'adoption du Code devienne partie intégrante de toutes les prochaines conventions collectives. "Cela représente un outil promotionnel important pour nos entrepreneurs car la promesse de l'application continue des normes est rédigée sur papier" ajoute le représentant Steven Martin.

"Nos membres appliquent déjà ces normes au travail, alors pourquoi ne pas promouvoir les qualifications qu'ils ont acquises?" conclut Joe Fashion, gérant d'affaires de la S.L. 353. ■

## Organizing Wire

### Nebraska Local Welcomes New Municipal Members



Pat Gericke

Pat Gericke didn't want to give up her membership in Grand Island, Neb., Local 1597's municipal bargaining unit when she promoted from secretary to administrative assistant to the city's utility director. The city, the birthplace of legendary actor Henry Fonda, considered her a "confidential" employee, excluded from the bargaining unit. But it was common knowledge that every time Local 1597 negotiated a raise, a member of the city council would suggest a lower increase for unorganized staffers like Gericke, a 20-year employee.

"We had no guarantees on wages or personal days and we were tired of being singled out," says Gericke. "We needed a union." In February, after three previous failed attempts to organize, Gericke and other workers in Grand Island, including 911 operators, custodians and building attendants, voted 36 to 6 for union representation.

"This organizing campaign was a classic example of everyone working together," says Membership Development Department Lead Organizer Ron Hug, who worked with Local 1597 Business Manager Mike Semm and his staff to support a strong volunteer organizing committee.

Gericke credits house visits to build union consciousness and solidarity among 24 Grand Island workers who signed cards "on the spot" when they were first presented as key to the union vote. The new bargaining unit comprises 58 workers.

Hug is optimistic that first contract negotiations will go smoothly. There could be a high cost to both parties if they become contentious. Public employee organizing and bargaining in Nebraska is governed by the state's Commission on Industrial Relations. If the parties reach an impasse, either side can request a survey of comparable municipal wages and benefits that can run up to \$100,000 as experts are brought in to structure a benefits package.

C.J. King, Region 3 Membership Development Coordinator, says that organizing success at Grand Island underscores the importance of winning even stronger public employee bargaining rights. The cost of CIR surveys already helps push parties to settle first contracts, making the turf more favorable to organizing than in other states.

Gericke is hopeful that, with Grand Island's population growing, a new census

will boost the bargaining unit's case for enhanced wages and benefits with the city being compared to others of similar size and tax revenues.

Since the municipal workers' organizing victory, members of the road maintenance crew in nearby Howard County have contacted Local 1597 expressing interest in organizing.

Attorney Dalton Tietjen, who filed the petition for Local 1597's representation election, says that because of IBEW's reputation, "the word is spreading in Nebraska that unions aren't made of people with horns coming out of their heads." Unions look out for the best interests of both sides, says Tietjen. "It's not in their interest to make unreasonable demands and break the bank."

Local 1597's bargaining unit at Grand Island was first organized in the utility department in 1976. Three years ago, workers in the city's wastewater treatment plant voted to join the local.

### Texas Nuclear Plant Workers Join IBEW

A majority of radiation protection technicians at the South Texas Nuclear power plant in Wadsworth voted to be represented by Houston Local 66 in January, joining more than 300 other plant operators and electricians already covered by a union contract.

"They were looking for some basic respect and a say on the job," said Local 66 Organizer Mike Mosteit.

The more than 30 technicians, who monitor radiation levels at the plant, were frustrated about forced overtime and unscheduled shift changes.

They had discussed their problems with their co-workers in Local 66, who set up a meeting for the technicians with IBEW organizers last summer. "It was clear that we had majority support from the beginning," Mosteit said.

The workers petitioned the National Labor Relations Board for an election in early September, but the hearing was delayed due to Hurricane Ike, which devastated the Gulf Coast of Texas.

The workers hit another obstacle when plant management argued before the NLRB that the technicians weren't covered by the National Labor Relations Act because the cities of Austin and San Antonio own a majority share in the company. "They tried to claim they were public workers," Mosteit said.

The board rejected the company's claim, setting the stage for the January election.

The technicians will be integrated into the existing bargaining unit at South Texas.

Assisting with the campaign were Membership Development Lead Organizer



Workers at the South Texas Nuclear power plant celebrate their recent organizing victory. Houston Local 66 members Mary Popek, left, Mark Griffin and Kim Danielski, senior radiation technician and lead member of the volunteer organizing committee.

Kitty Prouse, Membership Development Regional Coordinator Tim Bowden and Seventh District International Vice President Jonathan Gardner.

Local 66 Business Manager Gregory Lucero is hopeful that the victory will inspire

other workers at the plant to check out the IBEW. More than 100 employees at the Wadsworth facility are still nonunion.

"It's going to open the door for other groups," said Lucero, who is also a member of the International Executive Council. ■

## Transitions

### Retired

#### Nathan C. Edgar



Tenth District International Representative Nathan C. Edgar retired March 1 following more than four decades of service to the IBEW.

Born in Memphis, Tenn., Edgar moved to Jonesboro, Ark., to attend Arkansas State University, where he was initiated into Jonesboro Local 1516 in 1963.

As a journeyman inside wireman he served as recording secretary and was elected business manager in 1978. As business manager he represented members in both the construction and manufacturing branches, helping to coordinate internal organizing campaigns at local manufacturing plants that netted more than 500 members. Local 1516's construction membership also grew under his leadership.

He served as secretary-treasurer of the state Electrical Workers Association and secretary of the Central Arkansas Labor Council. Brother Edgar was appointed by then-Gov. Bill Clinton to a newly formed state apprenticeship steering committee in 1989 and was shortly thereafter elected its chairman.

"Organized labor hadn't had a voice in job training issues in Arkansas before so it was a big step," he said.

Edgar was appointed International Representative for the then-Twelfth District in 1993, which was soon after renumbered the Tenth. He served as the district organizing coordinator, helping to bring construction membership to more than 10,000.

In addition to his wife, Lea, his family includes five children and six grandchildren. Two of his sons, Jeremy and Jim, followed him into the trade and are active members of Local 1516. He said he looks forward to getting off the road and spending some time at home. He also enjoys hunting.

He is actively involved with the Lafe Baptist Church, where he volunteers as a Sunday school teacher, and is also a member of the Jonesboro Masonic Lodge.

The staff, members and officers of the IBEW thank Brother Edgar for his service and wish him a long and enjoyable retirement. ■

# Circuits

## Illinois Local Pickets Open Shop Site

Gurnee Mills Mall near Waukegan, Ill., was built in 1990 by union labor. Now undergoing renovation and expansion, retail chains like Victoria's Secret and Nieman Marcus have turned to an open shop electrical contractor.

That doesn't sit well with members of Waukegan Local 150. Three hundred electricians and apprentices out of the 1,100-member local are out of work.

More than 100 local building trades members—including many unemployed members of Local 150—picketed Gurnee Mills in late February, protesting against open shop contractor B&D Electric Co. Local 150 has 80 percent market share in commercial construction within its jurisdiction.

"We live in Lake County, we work in Lake County, we pay taxes here, our kids go to school here and we shop here," Local 150 Business Manager Don Carlson told the Chicago Sun-Times.

In a letter to Neiman Marcus Group's vice president, Carlson said, "It is your right to pay sub-standard wages to build, but it will be my mission to convince anyone who will listen not to patronize your business."

## President Overturns Bush Ban on Federal PLAs

Construction workers across the United States won an important victory February 6 when President Barack Obama issued an executive order that overturns a ban on project labor agreements on federally funded-projects put in place eight years ago by his predecessor, George W. Bush.

"Your action will now enable federal agencies to improve the efficiency, productivity and fairness of their construction projects, while also eliminating costly labor-related delays," wrote Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO, President Mark Ayers in a letter to President Obama.

PLAs, which set work rules and wage rates through a collective bargaining agreement between contractors and the building trades before construction begins, had been in use for nearly 70 years on federal projects before Bush's 2001 order.

The building trades, many contractors and state and local leaders argue that PLAs are the most efficient and cost-effective way to complete large construction jobs. "It allows contractors to do serious long range planning," said Denver, Local 68 Business Manager Dennis Whalen. "It gives each side input into the project; it's just a better and more productive way to get the work done."

Bush's decision made it difficult for locals and signatory contractors to market themselves to state and local governments for large projects. "After 2001, we would hear about city leaders who liked what a PLA could offer them in terms of time, money and security for their job but turned it down because they didn't want to lose out on federal money," said Construction and Maintenance Department International Representative Kirk Groenendaal.

By setting fair wage scales and creating conflict resolution mechanisms, PLAs provide stability and structure to future federal construction projects, a vital necessity with potentially billions of dollars of government-sponsored construction coming down the road as part of Obama's economic stimulus plan.

The executive order also holds open the possibility for the expanded use of PLAs on federal jobs. It calls on the Office of Management and Budget to make a recommendation in six months on whether increased usage of PLAs would "promote the economical, efficient and timely completion of such projects."

The president's action comes on top of three pro-worker executive orders he issued in late January:

- Reversing a Bush decision requiring federal contractors to post notices telling workers they can limit their financial support for their union.
- Preventing companies under federal contract from using government funds for anti-union activity.
- Giving any worker employed by a federal contractor first-bid rights on their job if another company takes over the contract.

"Anyone who doesn't think elections matter should take a look at what Obama has managed to do for working families in only his first few weeks," said International President Edwin D. Hill. "These decisions go a long way to reversing the war on unions carried out by the Bush administration."

## Florida Members' SeaWorld Project Creates a Splash, Wins Award

Members of Orlando, Fla., Local 606 helped earn their company an Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. 2008 Excellence in Construction Award for completion of SeaWorld's \$9 million dollar Aquatica water park.

More than 85 electricians working at ERMCO of Florida contributed 129,000 man-hours to the 60-acre project, which included installing infrastructure for the park's telecommunications, electrical distribution and safety systems. Stop-and-go sensors at the park's waterslides provide added caution for the thousands of daily visitors, and a lifeguard intercom system ensures safety is a top priority.

Workers installed more than 200 miles of wiring and nearly 70 miles of conduit on the project, which was completed in March 2008. Aquatica opened to the public the following month.

To create the thrills and excitement that the park's slides, aquariums, tubes and wave pools offer visitors, workers encountered many special challenges along the way. To minimize any potential exposure, miles of conduit had to be run underground. Orlando's high water table also posed a problem, as workers encountered water intrusion while performing excavation and trenching prior to installing wiring.

In addition to receiving the award, members said that the satisfaction of a job well done yielded novel results.

"Having both worked on Aquatica and gone to the park as a visitor, it's pretty satisfying to see the end product of such a massive project," Local 606 general foreman John Kennedy said. "I was proud to take my daughter there last summer and be able to say, 'I helped build this.'"

ERMCO was the only union contractor nominated for the statewide award in the company's particular category.

## USA Announces Truck Giveaway

Imagine climbing inside the cab of your brand-new 2009 Chevy Silverado and heading off with your buddies on your next hunting or fishing adventure. Thanks to a new partnership between the Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) and Chevrolet, that will be the future for one lucky USA member.

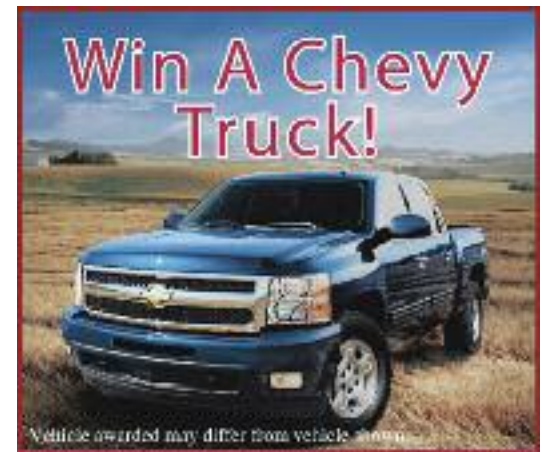
This giveaway is the latest in a series of promotions from the USA, a hunting and fishing club for union members and their families. To be eligible to win the truck, a union member must be a member of the USA, which they can join at [www.UnionSportsmen.org](http://www.UnionSportsmen.org) or 877-872-2211.

A long-standing advocate for conservation, Chevrolet recently added the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) and the USA to its list of partners. Chevrolet Assistant Regional Marketing Manager Kevin Messmer said, "Our partner groups represent the folks who need a truck for their lifestyle. It's how they live, how they work and how they play."

"Our interest is providing products that fit the needs of people involved in the outdoors," said Tom Gilbert, Chevrolet regional marketing manager. "We continue to work on technologies to improve fuel economy and increase mileage, while still providing the power outdoor enthusiasts need."

Perhaps no group appreciates an American-made vehicle with the capability and superior fuel economy more than union sportsmen and women.

"We're honored that Chevrolet recognizes the importance of the TRCP's mission and its union-dedicated hunting and fishing club," said Fred Myers, USA Executive Director. "We're proud to call Chevy the official truck of the USA." ■



## Get Connected

If you would like to receive your Electrical Worker via e-mail instead of in your mailbox, contact us at [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org). Give us your name, IBEW local union number, card number and e-mail address and we will send you the link to access *The Electrical Worker* electronically.

# Local Lines

## Facilitate Future Growth

L.U. 8 (as,em,i,mar,mt,rts,s&spa), TOLEDO, OH—With the arrival of sure signs of spring, flowers in bloom and birds singing, we hope that the jobs begin to blossom, too. As the Obama administration soon completes its first 100 days in office, we anticipate future growth. With the interest of the environment in mind, along with less dependence on foreign oil, we look forward to utilizing solar and wind technologies to our advantage. We win twice – jobs and a better environment!

To help facilitate that growth, you may want to invest your time in the JATC's journeyman classes. New technology courses were added to the roster – the solar voltaic class and the instrumentation class. We anticipate needing more people with this knowledge, as job opportunities of this type hopefully are on the horizon in our jurisdiction. Please keep an eye out for class schedules.

Normally at this time of year I would ask you to mark your calendars for the summer picnic, but this year is different. It was decided that we will combine the picnic and the Labor Day activities this year. So the summer/Labor Day picnic will take place on Labor Day. There will be more information in the coming months.

*Ben "Red" Tackett, P.S.  
Jim Kozlowski, B.M.*

## Tribute to Service

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN—During the December 2008 holidays, the membership was actively involved with Ritzzy's Fantasy of Lights. This worthwhile cause has funded more than 60,000 hours of rehabilitation therapy for tri-state residents who otherwise could not afford it. Everyone present on the set-up day was inspired by the courage of 8-year-old Owen George, whose Christmas wish was to be able to walk, without canes, to his mom and dad.

Many thanks to committee members Terry Bennett, William Diehl, James Jones, Lee Stock, Bus. Mgr. Paul Green and Pres. Gary Stute for their hard work toward a fair and equitable contract that will provide for the needs of this union well into the future.

On Feb. 27, John D. Brenner passed from this world. We greatly appreciated and benefited from John's hard work and dedication to Local 16 as a staff member and throughout his many years of service. His determination and strength of character were well-known among the membership and will be missed. His strong belief in unionism and the IBEW was powerful. John helped to make better members and a better local. We are honored to claim him as a personal friend, a dedicated employee and an outstanding member. He will be greatly missed.

*Donald P. Beavin, P.S.*

## May 4 Golf Outing Planned

L.U. 26 (ees,em,es,govt,i&mt), WASHINGTON, DC—It's springtime in Washington, D.C., and that means cherry blossoms and final preparations for our golf outing. Butch Ramos is coordinating the event again this year and, hopefully, you sent in your registration if you are planning to join us on May 4.

The Local 26 Scholarship Committee is reviewing the many scholarship applications and will make a decision on this year's two recipients very soon. The winners will be announced in our quarterly magazine, In Charge, as well as in an upcoming Local Lines article. Thanks to the many outstanding applicants!

Reminder: This year's annual picnic will be held Sat., Aug. 29, at Camp Letts. (This is a change from our normal first Saturday in August.)

The following brothers passed away since our last article: Albert Bauserman, Francis Cook, Virgil A. Beamer, John E. Failes, Wade H. Sheriff Jr., John C. Shymansky Jr., John Henry Pendleton and Ronald J. Abe.

Best wishes to the following new retirees: William J. Boyle Jr., Roland L. Bernier, Edwin Ferrari, William L. Koennel, Stephen T. McNally, Bart J. Myers, Joseph M. Poore, George E. Riesett Sr. and Stephen L. Taylor.

*Charles E. Graham, B.M.*

## February Forum

L.U. 38 (i), CLEVELAND, OH—Local 38 officers and the Cleveland Building Trades held a meeting Feb. 9 with our U.S. congressmen, senators' representatives, and staff from Gov. Ted Strickland's office. Several area developers were invited and participated in the forum.

The objective was to provide information to Congress and exchange ideas on how funds provided by the economic stimulus bill should be distributed. We made it clear that infrastructure spending is necessary. The meeting was very productive.

We presented our plan for our "shovel-ready" construction projects, and the developers urged Congress to get the banks that received bailout money to provide construction loans. Some of these projects that are shovel-ready include: the Wolstein Group's \$522 million East Bank Flats project, K&D Group's Ameritrust Tower renovation, the Corral Group's Solon project, and the Ferchill Group's VA hospital project.

Lake Erie Electric was awarded the new Cleveland State University Student Center project. Doan/Pyramid Electric was awarded the new Cancer Center at University Hospital's main campus.



Local 38 Executive Board member Ross Conforto (center) receives a plaque at his retirement party held Feb. 27. Bro. Conforto is a 37-year member and served as an officer of the local and as shop and job steward. Also shown are Bro. Conforto's cousin, Bro. Joe Ozello, (left) and son, Bro. Vince Conforto (right).

Thank you to Pres. Obama for correcting a huge injustice to American workers when he reversed the Bush II executive order banning project labor agreements on federal projects.

If you are traveling or working under portability, remember to register at the hall for the ERTS program to insure that your benefits will be transferred back to your home local.

*Dennis Meaney, A.B.M.*

## Never a Better Time to Be Union

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,mt,rtb,rts&st), SEATTLE, WA—We have the political luxury to now expect a change in the way we invest our money as a nation, not only on the federal level but at the state level as well. Here in the great northwest we have fought the good fight and renewed opportunity for thousands as a result of our political activism. Union candidates have encountered significant success and each of you who voted deserves a "Right On." This is only half the battle; we must now deliver on our promise that investing in us is the right thing to do. Our way promotes and lifts all working citizens to a standard becoming of our national heritage. Let's not degrade our victories by not finishing the race; let's show them that we are ready and able to deliver on our promises. We will not fail. American workers are the greatest people in the world and we have proven it over and over. Congratulations, you all should be very proud.

New Year's Eve was ushered in by 200 union folks down at the union hall, and the Super Bowl party was also well-attended. I encourage participation and especially enjoy tales of remarkable courage and brotherhood, where harmony and opportunity produce champions like Local 46 member and IBEW Int. Rep. Laura Robinson. We are all very proud to call her our own.

*Kevin Quinlan, P.S.*



IBEW Int. Rep. Laura Robinson, a member of Seattle Local 46, receives congratulations on her first day as a new I.O. Broadcasting & Recording Department representative. Press Secretary Kevin Quinlan (right) extends support from the Seattle faithful.

## Labor: 'Part of the Solution'

L.U. 48 (c,em,i,rtb,rts&st), PORTLAND, OR—I had the treasured opportunity to join 2 million new friends at President Obama's inauguration. I was inspired as Obama took the oath of office. That moment confirmed the American dream – "anything you dream can be accomplished with hard work." Now I know the opportunity to achieve that dream has become a reality for all Americans.

## Trade Classifications

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

The crowd was overwhelmed with the awareness that history was being made. The collective kindness was reminiscent of a huge labor celebration. This respectful crowd was enjoying the historic celebration, while sharing an awareness of the huge challenges ahead.

Along with the joy of that celebration, I also have a deep sense of responsibility to help Pres. Obama make that dream a reality for all working families. After the perfect storm of deregulation, unprecedented greed and a lack of respect for hard working Americans, we have witnessed a turnaround. Pres. Obama recently said, "I do not view the labor movement as part of the problem. To me, it's part of the solution." Vice Pres. Biden joined in to welcome labor leaders back to the White House.

Our hard work to elect the Obama/Biden ticket was an excellent beginning. Now let's work harder than ever to make the dream a reality for all working Americans.

*Donna Hammond, P.S.*

## Charity Rockfish Tournament

L.U. 50 (u), RICHMOND, VA—The 5th Annual IBEW Local 50 Charity Rockfish Tournament held Nov. 14-15, 2008, was a huge success. Over \$5,000 was raised for the United Way of South Hampton Roads. (See photo below.) Event organizers, Bros. Bill Peoples, Raymond Cassidy and Bus. Rep. Doug Williams, collected entry fees, sold T-shirts and tickets to the weigh-in cookout, and conducted a raffle to raise funds. Anglers from across the Tidewater area participated in the tournament to help raise awareness for their local United Way. Plenty of food, fun and great fishing were the order of the day. Local 50 E-Board member Hector Arroyo, who caught the biggest fish, won the tournament.

Bus. Mgr./Pres. Jack Wells was there to judge the tournament and enjoy the activities. Virginia Natural Gas Vice Pres. Robert Duvall also attended to support the day's events. Big thanks to each of them for their support of the tournament. Local 150 also thanks Bros. Peoples, Cassidy and Williams for all their hard work. Thanks also to all the tournament anglers and to all IBEW members who supported the event.

Many thanks to Nancy Cobb of Cobb's Marina in Norfolk, VA, where this event is held every year. The support of people like Nancy and her staff make this event possible. We look forward to the 2009 tournament!

*Mike Barclay, R.S.*

## Fitzhenry Memorial Fundraiser

L.U. 58 (em,i,rtb&spa), DETROIT, MI—At the December membership meeting, IBEW service pins were given to 124 members with 25 to 35 years of membership. Congratulations to all!

Speaking of membership meetings, I encourage everyone to come down to the meetings –



Shown are some of the Local 58 members who received service pins at the December 2008 membership meeting.

held every third Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. As a Local 58 member you have the opportunity, every month, to tell our local union officers your opinions and ask them questions.

The election of officers is coming up soon, and union meetings are a great way to find out what's going on, introduce yourself to the candidates, find out where they stand on the issues, and join discussions about where our organization is headed.

The Benevolent Fund held its sixth annual Ken Fitzhenry Memorial Fundraiser on Super Bowl Sunday. As usual, it was a great event – lots of good food and plenty of refreshments, big screen TVs around the hall, and door prizes. Huge thanks to the Benevolent Fund committee members, who worked so hard on this enjoyable event!

*Michael Curran, P.S.*

## Politics & Jobs

L.U. 68 (i), DENVER, CO—With over 500 inside wiremen on Inside Metro Book One as of this writing, we here at Local 68 welcome passage of the economic stimulus package. Of course the best stimulus package we could have here would be jobs for all our members.

We may sometimes forget that political issues affect us. A case in point: When bidding, the success of our contractors frequently depends on a level playing field. Local 68's retired Bro. John Soper is also a Colorado state representative for House District 34, and Bro. John has introduced legislation that would help level the playing field. House Bill 09-1208 concerns the payment of prevailing compensation for workers on public works. The federal version of such a law has been on the books since 1931 and is known as the Davis-Bacon Act. Laws of this nature are intended to protect a local economy, and sometimes our public officials need to be educated and reminded that a fully employed local work force will provide a strong, stable and viable economy. Indeed if it is good for the local workers, it will be good for the local businesses.

We extend deepest sympathy to the families of our lost brothers: Kenneth F. Hathaway, Vernon L. Elling, Timothy S. McCall, William D. Bobby and John Imerzel.

*Ed Knox, Pres.*

## Dedicated IBEW Service

L.U. 76 (c,i,rt&st), TACOMA, WA—Congratulations and thank you to Sister Tracy Preazeau for her dedicated IBEW service. Tracy is the local's recording secretary and was hired in 2004 as Local 76 political coordinator. As political coordinator, her duties included increasing voter registration and educating members on the issues and candidates.

Subsequently, Tracy began working in the local union office as membership development director. She took the lead in community service projects, organized local union functions, acted as retirees liaison, organized many shops and new members into the IBEW, and since 2005 helped increase our residential market threefold. In July 2005 Tracy was appointed to the Washington Electrical Board to help represent the IBEW.

In 2008 she was hired by the Washington State Association of Electrical Workers as political coordinator for IBEW locals. In that post, Tracy helped train registrars to strengthen existing programs, increase voter registration and campaign contributions, and participate in the AFL-CIO "Labor 2008" campaign.

With all her hard work and the success of the 2008 Washington state political campaign, Tracy was hired as executive director of the Certified Electrical Workers of Washington by the inside construction locals. Tracy will advance our political interests and opportunities at the state level. Again, congratulations and thank you, Tracy, for your dedication to the IBEW.

*Mac McClellan, P.S.*

## Jobs on the Horizon

L.U. 80 (i&o), NORFOLK, VA—At this writing, work has remained slow through the winter months, with few calls for manpower. Several jobs are on the horizon in our jurisdiction, which should greatly increase our employment. Hopefully, with our labor friendly president and Congress, work across the country will continue to grow.

We thank Jimmy Vaughn, Louis Ricks, Kenny Bunting and Bus. Mgr. Matt Yonka for their hard work on negotiating a fair contract. All the hours spent working truly paid off.

We recently awarded service pins for members with 20 to 65 years of service. We again thank all of these members for their longtime dedication. A special thank-you to Edward Miller and Robert Walls for 60 years of service to the IBEW and to Herman Smith for 65 years of service.

*Dennis Floyd, P.S.*

## Appointments

L.U. 102 (c,catv,i,it,o&t), PATERSON, NJ—Bus. Mgr. Lou Baram recently appointed Bernard Corrigan as president of our local. Bernie will fill the vacancy created by retiring Pres. Alan Schell. Bernie is well-known in our local, as he was our recording secretary and referral agent. He has been

an active member of Local 102 for over 20 years. Bernie serves as a trustee on our health and welfare committee and as an officer of the JATC. Bernie's leadership and support in other areas, including our bowling team and the golf outing, say a lot about his dedication to our local. Tom Kelly will fill the vacated position of recording secretary.

Robert McBride was appointed as our local's political liaison. Bob is well-known in our local, as he is Executive Board chairman and has served on many committees; and he's a good bowler. Bob did a spectacular job during the recent presidential election season. He organized political events, labor walks and telephone banks, and helped win in a crucial swing state. We at Local 102 wish our newly appointed officers the best in their new positions.

*Ed Fredericks, P.S.*

## 'A Union Card'

L.U. 124 (ees,em,i,mar,rt,se&spa), KANSAS CITY, MO—I carry a union card because it associates me with millions of others with lifestyles and everyday issues like my own. My card guarantees me a decent wage, working conditions and time to enjoy my family. It lets me share knowledge with fellow craftsmen; gives me social contacts I enjoy; and promotes solidarity through honest work and fair bargaining. It means sharing when times are tough. It stands for mutual advancement and progress.

We can start the cycle to bring back goods and services made in America. Tell greedy corporations, manufacturers and Wall Street: "Enough is enough." Let us as American union members turn this economy around. American labor needs to harness its mighty potential of buying power. Look at the label; look for the union "bug," the symbol of craftsmanship that will guarantee your future prosperity and that of a nation.

We remember deceased members: Albert E. Abel, Steven P. Boyer, Larry L. Bott, Roy V. Jackson, Robert I. Jewett, Roy G. Schaaf, Russel F. Stuart and Francis M. Tarry.

Congratulations to newly retired members: Robert L. Bricker, Fred Cascone, Thomas Koehly, Richard Lohe, Glenn D. Mallott, Joseph W. Mallot Jr., Frank C. Mascaro, Ed Myska Jr., Kenneth D. Newhouse, Alfred Olson, Arthur Salmon, Vincent J. VanCamp Jr., William E. Walker Jr. and Gary Wilkie.

*Frank D. Mathews Jr., P.S.*

## 2009 'UCAN' Graduates

L.U. 146 (ei,i&rts), DECATUR, IL—Recently, five members of Local 146 completed Union Community Activist Network classes. UCAN is an eight-week course designed to educate working men and women on the values of giving back and improving workplace conditions and the community. Topics included basic worker rights, labor history and local service agencies. Congratulations to the 2009 UCAN graduates: Susan Varvel, Mary Sapp, Ron Cummings, Joe Paradee and Rich Underwood.

We congratulate Fred Clausen and Jim Daughtery Jr. on their recent retirements and thank them for their many years of service.

Our condolences to the families of our recently deceased members: 66-year member Paul Berroyer, 44-year member Alva Stafford, and 41-year member Larry Gregory. We extend condolences to their families.

Happy Easter and here's hoping that spring brings a much brighter work picture.

*Rich Underwood, P.S.*



Local 50 Bus. Rep. Doug Williams (right) and Bro. Raymond Cassidy (left) stand outside the United Way of South Hampton Roads regional office in front of Doug's new Virginia Natural Gas line truck with "Labor Lady" Desi Nichols (center). They hand delivered results of the successful fundraiser.

## 95th Anniversary Celebration

L.U. 150 (es,i,rts&spa), WAUKEGAN, IL—Please don't forget that April 29, 2009, is the 95th anniversary of Local 150. A celebration and pin party will be held from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the new Lake County Fairgrounds. Please join us to remember this important date and receive your service pins. The 95th anniversary commemorative pins will also be given out to all who attend. This event is for members only.

There has been much discussion regarding possible upcoming changes to our health and welfare coverage. Remember that it should not be approached as to how this will affect each of us *individually*, but rather as how will this affect us as a *brotherhood*. We, collectively, are a group of people who are supposed to assist each other in times of sickness and distress and elevate the social conditions of our members, their families and dependents in the interest of a higher standard of citizenship (according to our IBEW Constitution). Let's remember that during the discussion.

As 2008 drew to a close and the New Year started, we lost several retired members. Bros. Robert Dusek, Bill Jenko, Dick Cerk and Dan Murtagh passed away. They were all fine union members and will be sorely missed.

See you on April 29.

*Wendy J. Cordts, P.S.*

## 'Code of Excellence Works'

L.U. 164 (c,em,i,o&t), JERSEY CITY, NJ—Local 164 held our annual dinner dance in honor of retired members in December 2008 at the Sheraton Crossroads in Mahwah, NJ. Six hundred participants enjoyed the festivities, featuring great food, entertainment and holiday cheer. This first-class event receives high praise from all who attend. Congratulations to all retirees and thanks for their hard work and commitment to Local 164.

The work picture, while slow, holds promise.

Two large projects in our jurisdiction are Xanadu and the new Giants/Jets football stadium, both located in East Rutherford, NJ, in the heart of the Meadowlands. Xanadu is a 2.5 million square foot entertainment destination. Each of its three floors is one-half mile long. The job is estimated at \$2.26 billion.

The new Giants/Jets football stadium, directly across Route 120 from Xanadu, is a Code of Excellence job and is valued at \$1.6 billion. All 164 members who report to the job site receive Code of Excellence training from on-site COE officer Ray Manfred. The job is running very smoothly and is ahead of schedule – proving that the Code of Excellence works and should be followed on all projects!

*John M. DeBouter, Pres.*



Attending the Local 164 annual dinner dance in honor of retired members are, from left: Bus. Mgr. Richard K. Dressel; 55-year members William C. Lambert, Donald P. White, William G. Malthaler; 50-year member Robert Connelly; and Pres. John M. DeBouter.

Proud members of Salem, OR, Local 280 at the Albany Wastewater Treatment Plant take time out for a group photo. From left are: Larry Decew, Chris Bate, Mark Esary, Steve Babcock, Steve Allnutt, Rich Lofton, Greg Michaels, Jeremy Bate, Tyler Davidson, John Payne, Mark Stewart, Tom Baumann and Curtis Crane.



## Partnering for Gain

L.U. 180 (c,i&st), VALLEJO, CA—The increasing severity of the economic downturn seems to have many running for cover, which, in our industry, carries the risk of curbing joint dialogue precisely when it's needed most. Credit markets have tightened, and businesses and municipalities have found it increasingly difficult to finance spending. Consequently, numerous projects in our area have either been cancelled or indefinitely postponed.

Operating under the old adage that "this, too, shall pass," we initiated a dinner/partnering meeting with our signatory contractors, during which we re-examined our Vision and Mission statements, took stock of our local situation, what is within our control, and what we can do together to best position ourselves to be the premier choice for electrical work when the market rebounds. As is typical, certain individuals advocated wage cuts as the linchpin to fix what ails us. Others, whose minds are more centered on mutual gain, began to focus on creative ideas toward entering emerging markets associated with California's mandate to curb carbon emissions and increase energy efficiency; putting more muscle behind our training; strengthening relationships with current and prospective customers; and aggressively advertizing the fact that we consistently deliver projects that both meet and exceed customer expectations.

*Kevin Coleman, B.A.*

## Local Welcomes Gary Prince

L.U. 280 (c,ees,em,es,i,mo,mt,rts&st), SALEM, OR—At this writing, spring is just around the corner. Hopefully some work that has been rumored to start will begin manning up, such as the \$80 million Sanyo project in Salem and the \$200 million Knight Arena in Eugene. There has been no report yet on the hospital projects to date.

Local 280 welcomes Gary Prince to the Executive Board, as current member Mike Davis is retiring. Gary brings a lot of energy to the board and has taken an active role. All of us wish Bro. Davis a good retirement and thank him for his outstanding service to his local!

The Executive Board encourages discussing

the Health and Welfare "Flex-plan" that Local 48 has. This will be taking place at our union meetings, so please make sure to attend and have your voice heard. The CIR decision puts \$1.50 an hour on the check and 50 cents to H&W for 2009 and again for 2010. We need to vote as a local to take part in the plan and if we do, how much.

With sadness, we mourn the passing of retired Bros. Manny Downey and Jessie Alvarado. They will be missed.

*Jerry Fletcher, Pres.*

## Local Union Officers

L.U. 294 (ees,em,i,rts,spa&u), HIBBING, MN—Proudly serving the officer positions in Local 294 are: Bus. Mgr./Fin. Sec. Greg Topel, Pres. Carey Young, Vice Pres. Don Gustafson, Rec. Sec. Barbara Staudohar; Executive Board members Dave Baier, Duane Lorenz, Matt Lavoie, Dan Murden; and Examining Board members Tony Folstad, Brian Lovejoy and Joe Mann. We thank these brothers and sisters for their dedication to Local 294.

The work picture in northern Minnesota remains slow as of this writing, with some of our larger projects still under the permafrost. Remember to buy "Made in USA"!

*Dan Aho, P.S.*

## Senior Members Honored

L.U. 306 (i), AKRON, OH—Service Awards were presented to 36 brothers at our December 2008 meeting. Receiving awards were: for 60 years of service – Richard Donley, James Ess, Donald Kromer and John Webb; for 55 years – George Abraham, Richard Knepp and David Westland received 55 Year Awards; and for 50 years – Harry Bryner, George Cooley, Kenneth Dias, Jack Dutton, Leonard Eddy, Richard Glatz, Daniel Gourley, Ross Hammel, David Haught, Donald Heffner, Charles House, Rodney Hubbard, Thomas Kempel, Robert Martz, Robert McMullen, Patrick McShane, Russell Pease Jr., Eugene Puglia, Alfred Sander, Jerry Seals, Charles Stoltz, George Unbower and Joseph Vatovec. Presented 25-year service watches were: Dennis Allen, Randal Ealy,

Bernard Junior, Todd Michl, James Scott and Richard Stewart.

With great sadness, I must report that the very next day after celebrating the achievements of those mentioned above, Bro. Danny Dretar, who topped out last year, was killed in an auto accident at age 28. The silence around the hall was deafening. We send our condolences to Danny's family.

We also mourn the loss of friend and retired Bro. Dale McGough and extend condolences to his family.

We handle lightning every day and are aware of its hazards. We may sometimes dismiss other life hazards as minor compared to our trade, but let's be careful out there.

*Bob Sallaz, P.S.*

## Milestone Safety Record

L.U. 320 (catv,t&u), POUGHKEEPSIE, NY—As of Jan. 1, 2009, the members of Local 320 working at Central Hudson Gas & Electric set a record of 16 consecutive months with no lost-time injuries. This significant accomplishment includes the entire calendar year of 2008. (*See photo below.*)

This was no small feat, considering that a devastating ice storm hit the area in December 2008 that was estimated to have left millions of homes in New York and New England without power. The crews continued to work safely while battling broken poles, fallen trees and miles of downed wire.

Bus. Mgr./Pres. Frank Maher commended the members for their continued commitment to working safely. The IBEW has always been a proponent of ensuring safety in the workplace and this achievement exemplifies how one of the core beliefs of the union is as important today as it was over 100 years ago.

The milestone was recorded for Central Hudson's corporate history with group photographs in front of each of their five headquarters. Shown in the photo below is the group from the Main Office in Poughkeepsie, NY.

*Diane Imperiale, P.S.*

## Inauguration Celebration

L.U. 332 (c,ees,i&st), SAN JOSE, CA—We all could not attend the January presidential inauguration festivity in Washington, D.C., but we still partied like Washington D.C. IBEW Local 332 opened its meeting hall so that local volunteers and IBEW Local 332 members could have a celebration. And what a party they put on! This party even made the news on two of the local TV stations. (*See photo on next page.*)

*Gerald Pfeiffer, Pres.*



IBEW Local 320 members employed by Central Hudson Gas & Electric set a milestone safety record. Pictured here is the group at the Central Hudson Main Office in Poughkeepsie, NY.



The San Jose, CA, Local 332 union hall was the site for a big celebration of the presidential inauguration. Shown with a cutout figure of Pres. Obama are, standing, from left: Rec. Sec. Alan Wieteska, Bus. Mgr. Bob Tragni, retiree and former assistant business manager Jay James, Vice Pres. Kevin Kavanaugh, and Exec. Board member Mark Cosentino. Seated at front is Asst. Bus. Mgr. Sal Ventura.

## New Attitudes!

L.U. 340 (em,i,rts&spa), SACRAMENTO, CA—We have a new president in Washington, DC, thanks to all of you who voted for change! The administration of Pres. Barack Obama promises change even in the midst of this poor economy, but the president stresses that change requires the cooperation and hard work of many.

We are feeling the results of this poor economy. Work in Sacramento, at the time of this writing, has slowed down as it has elsewhere. But despite current conditions, I remain optimistic. This is mainly because members who now have more time on their hands are volunteering their services with the local, participating in City Council meetings, attending continuing education classes, etc.

In the last few months alone, 83 Local 340 members completed a Construction Organizing Membership Education Training class. After taking the COMET class, members understand that organizing is not a one- or two-person project. We are all organizers for the IBEW and the way we represent our local does make a difference when we are working alongside non-represented workers. COMET-trained members now have the tools and knowledge to help our union grow.

We mourn the passing of retired Bros. Thomas R. Broff, Steven Forsyth, Harry G. Morris, Clarence Noring, Carmelo "Chito" Sanchez; and active member Bro. Mauri Hopkins. Rest in peace, brothers.

*A.C. Steelman, B.M.*

## Bus. Agent Kindred Retires

L.U. 364 (catv,ees,em,es,i,mt,rts&spa), ROCKFORD, IL—A business agent and organizer for 20 years and a 35-year member, Bro. Tom Kindred retired in March, ending a very productive career.

Bro. Kindred was first elected to the Executive Board in 1986, and then as president in 1989. He served in that capacity for a year before he was appointed business agent and organizer by then-business manager Bro. Mike Fenger. Bro. Kindred served the Brotherhood as assistant business manager for former business manager Tom Eschen for three years, then as an agent and organizer again under current Bus. Mgr. Darrin Golden.

Those who were asked to tell us about Bro. Kindred described him as a very special and caring individual, who would go to the ends of the earth to help a brother or sister in need. Many thankful members attended both his final union meeting in February, and his retirement celebration in March to help celebrate his long, noble

and selfless accomplishments working to improve the lives of the brothers, sisters and families of Local 364.

Bro. Kindred has touched the lives of thousands of IBEW members and positively influenced a good majority of them. We all wish him a happy retirement and will truly miss him!

*Ray Pendzinski, P.S.*

## Village Pavilion Restoration

L.U. 388 (em,i,rts&spa), STEVENS POINT, WI—IBEW Local 388 Bus. Mgr. Dave Northup presented a \$5,000 check to Village of Rothschild Pres. Neal Torney for new stage lighting and other electrical restoration of the Rothschild Pavilion. The donation is made possible through the IBEW Local 388 and NECA Labor-Management Cooperation Committee Fund.

Also in attendance for the presentation were: NECA Chapter Pres. Bob Van Ert, owner of affiliated contractor Van Ert Electric; Pat Palecek and Paul Palecek, owners of affiliated contractor K&M Electric; Local 388 master electrician John Klosinski, employee of K&M Electric; Local 388 journeyman electrician Larry Wendorf, employee of Van Ert Electric; and Jeff Campo, Rothschild Pavilion Restoration Committee chairman.

Bro. John Klosinski has taken the lead, along with help from numerous other Local 388 volunteers, in upgrading the pavilion's electrical system while maintaining its original character and nostalgic aura. This effort would not be possible without the help of the affiliate electrical



IBEW Local 388 Bus. Mgr. David Northup (fifth from left) presents check to Village of Rothschild Pres. Neal Torney (third from right). Shown from left are: Jeff Campo, Rothschild Pavilion Restoration Committee chairman; Pat Palecek and Paul Palecek, K&M Electric owners; NECA Chapter Pres. Bob Van Ert, owner of Van Ert Electric; Northup; Torney; Local 388 master electrician John Klosinski; and Local 388 journeyman electrician Larry Wendorf.

contractors who allow electrician volunteers the use of company trucks, tools and donated materials for the electrical portion of the Rothschild Pavilion Restoration Project.

*Guy LePage, B.R.*

## COMET & Training Classes

L.U. 424 (as,ees,em,es,i,mo,o,ptc,rtb,rts,spa&u), EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA—Obviously the world-wide recession has slowed employment in all sectors considerably. In Alberta, where so much of our work pivots around the petrochemical industry, the effects are compounded by the relatively "low" price for oil.

The union and its members have been through slow periods before. This one won't be as "soul crunching" as the five-year National Energy Program recession in the mid 1980s. IBEW people will weather this one better than our nonunion counterparts because of employer contributed RRSPs and medical/dental benefits that usually continue for several months after layoffs.

With work slowed, many members have some forced "downtime." Now is a good time to talk with an organizer about finding work, and to book for a three-hour COMET course, presented monthly in Edmonton and Calgary. COMET explains why we must organize and how it is done, resulting in more choices of employers. Local 424 Pres. Jim Watson has directed that job steward courses be presented regularly to those willing to assume a steward's responsibilities, as well as Code of Excellence courses, recommended for all members.

Also, our new training center offers many trade-related upgrading courses, usually three hours an evening twice a week, from 21 to 32 hours total, depending upon the course; they are free to members with benefits coverage. Information and phone numbers are available at Web site [www.ibew424.net](http://www.ibew424.net).

*Dave Anderson, P.S.*

## Union Brothers Remembered

L.U. 488 (i&mt), BRIDGEPORT, CT—On Dec. 23, 2008, Local 488 lost a longtime officer, member and friend in John DePeano. Initiated in 1959, he held the office of president for 21 years and served on numerous boards and committees. A quite, soft-spoken gentleman, his actions were loud and went far for the membership he served. John will be sadly missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

In this fast-paced world of "me first," Local 488 was shown the true meaning of brotherhood and caring with the recent passing of retired member Frank Beran. Bro. Beran was thankful for the opportunities he had to achieve a career with the IBEW; and as a result of his generous action, our Education Fund was privileged to receive a bequest from Frank's estate to be used in the training of our members. Our thanks to Frank for his generosity.

Congratulations to Michael D'Amico on his recent appointment as International Representative with the IBEW's Education Department. We will miss Michael's dedication to our JATC, but know we are in good hands with the appointment of Thomas J. Sportini as JATC director. Our best wishes to both Mike and Tom in their new positions.

*Anthony M. Soter, P.S.*

## Improving Market Share

L.U. 508 (i,it&o), SAVANNAH, GA—In an effort to improve the market share of Local 508, we are working to implement a new and improved Residential Program. IBEW International Lead Organizers Robert Sample and Dave Cornelius are teaching us the particulars of a program that is a success in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Savannah is still growing and building around every corner, and the nonunion sector is capitalizing on a market untouched by a union contractor in nearly 50 years. Seventy percent of the total electrical market encompasses this segment of our industry and we are resolved to recapture our fair share with the help of our signatory contractors and our IBEW members.

TWIC is the new federally mandated ID for anyone who requires unescorted access to secure areas of the port system. Issued by the Transportation Security Administration, TWIC is a "Smart Card" embedded with fingerprint information that links the card to the person. It's good for five years. The process takes four weeks from start to finish. Applicants must provide biographical information, sign a disclosure form, provide a complete set of fingerprints, sit for a digital photograph, provide the necessary identity verification documents, and pay an enrollment fee of \$132.50.

*Judith U. Sheahan, P.S.*

## Work Has Slowed

L.U. 530 (i,o&rtb), SARNIA, ONTARIO, CANADA—As with all of Ontario, work here in Sarnia has slowed dramatically. We have had plant closures and cutbacks, jobs stalled, put on hold and/or pushed back.

Our hospital project is rolling along and we are hoping to receive more calls for it as the building is closed in. Some other institutional work is being talked about and hopefully Local 530 will be there, as we have many members seeking employment.

*Al Byers, P.S.*

## Hope for Jobs Stimulus

L.U. 538 (i), DANVILLE, IL—The local celebrated Christmas 2008 with a roller skating party for the families. The children enjoyed meeting Santa, having their photo taken with him and receiving a gift. The annual Christmas party held after the December meeting was a success. Thanks to Mike Noel for bringing the karaoke; it was very entertaining.

With regret, I report the passing of Donald Lee Fowler. Don was a union contractor, who most recently installed water tower lighting. He was



Local 538 three-generation family members pass the torch. From left are: Scott Price, second-year apprentice inside wireman; Gene Price, retired inside wireman; and Mark Price, fifth-year apprentice inside wireman.

still climbing the 150-foot structures late into his 70s. Don devoted his time to his family and to helping others. Our condolences go to his wife, Lela, sons Gene and Brad and daughter Sherry.

The work situation continues to decline. We currently have journeymen and apprentices laid off, with a bleak work outlook. At press time, we continue our optimism for the stimulus package, with hopes for creation of new jobs for our members and other hard-working Americans.

*Kathie Porter, Training Dir.*

## OSHA Classes

L.U. 540 (i), CANTON, OH—Today's economic climate in our country is affecting Canton, OH. Here in Local 540 work is slow. We thank other locals that have employed our members.

We held our children's Christmas party last December and it was again a success. Some 150 children along with their parents and siblings enjoyed the morning party. Thank you to all who volunteered.

Membership Development Coordinator Mike McElfresh, along with Political Registrar Mark Kindel, were busy this past presidential election. They organized IBEW members and families for help with "get out the vote" walks and phone banks.

The JATC was busy in 2008. Eighty Local 540 members received their OSHA cards as a result of two 30-hour OSHA classes and a 10-hour OSHA class. We held a 30-hour OSHA class with 30 participants in February, and are expecting a full OSHA class in September.

Remember to work safely out there.

*Jerry Bennett, P.S.*

## Service Pin Presentation

L.U. 558 (catv,em,i,mt,o,rtb,rts,spa&u), SHEFFIELD, AL—Local 558 held a service pin presentation during the Dec. 8, 2008, regular union meeting. Members present and receiving service pins were: for 25 years of service – Robert Robert E. Smith, Wade Strait; for 30 years – Michael D. Campbell, Edward R. Carpenter, Gary R. Dickerson, Larry L. Gray, William T. Hines Jr., Kenneth J. Hines, Larry G. Lewis, Ralph P. Mayes, William M. McKay; for 35 years – Charles W. Nance Sr.; 40 years – John T. Ashley, Johnny D. Bailey, James W. Davis Jr., Michael Stevenson; and for 45 years – Robert R. Ashley. Congratulations and thanks to these members for their service in the IBEW.



As of this writing, work in our local has slowed with a number of our members seeking employment.

*Steve Crunk, Pres.*

## Holiday Party & Service Pins

L.U. 584 (ees,em,es,i,rts,spa&u), TULSA, OK—On Dec. 13, 2008, the spirit of the holiday season was in the air, as over 200 Local 584 members and their families gathered for our annual Christmas party and service-pin ceremony. (See photo above.) Activities included a catered barbecue dinner, with desserts and side dishes provided by members' spouses; children's games; door prizes; and a presentation of service pins to retired members. The grand-prize giveaway among the door prizes was a week's vacation to Florida, complete with airfare, courtesy of Bus. Mgr. Mike Burton.

Retired members in attendance receiving service pins included Bruce Gass and Zeke Secrist, each with 65 years of service; Don Shaull, 60 years; Robert Anderson, 55 years; Jess Dinsmore, Bobby Wiles and Arlyn Fleming, each with 40 years of service. Each child in attendance received a gift, a bag of candy, and a big hug from our own Santa (Jack Tiger). Local 584 members wish everyone a good year ahead.

*Johnny Patterson, A.B.M.*

## Solar Project Installed

L.U. 640 (em.govt,i,mo,mt,rts,spa&u), PHOENIX, AZ—IBEW Local 640 members working with G&S Electric recently installed a solar photovoltaic system on the roof of one of our most prestigious universities. Two units were installed

Local 584 retired members receive IBEW service pin awards at the December 2008 holiday party. From left, front row, are: Bobby Wiles, Arlyn Fleming, Bruce Gass and Zeke Secrist; back row, Jess Dinsmore, Robert Anderson and Don Shaull.

on each roof, for a total of four units. The 150 KW solar installation has 735 solar panels and two different tracking systems.

Local 640 members who worked on the solar project include: Rong Zeng, Mike Hathaway, George Islas, Robert Gardunio, Shawn McMahon, Madara Winters, Sean Foulk, Greg Christ, Manfred Fails and Jeff Weissinger.

*Frank Cissne, B.R.*



IBEW Local 640 members pause for group photo at site of G&S Electric solar project. From left are: Rong Zeng, Mike Hathaway, George Islas, Robert Gardunio, Shawn McMahon, Madara Winters and Sean Foulk. Standing at back is Greg Christ. Not pictured: Manfred Fails, Jeff Weissinger.

## Tribute to A Brother

L.U. 654 (i), CHESTER, PA—The Christmas party last year was a big success as usual. Santa handed out gifts to all the children, and the members enjoyed an afternoon with their families at the hall. Christmas 2008 was extra special because of what we were able to do for an organization that provides disadvantaged children with toys over the holidays. Through fundraisers and contribu-

tions, we raised over \$6,000 to ensure that many children, who otherwise would not have gotten a present, received Christmas gifts. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this possible.

On a much sadder note, I regret to report the sudden passing of Bro. Jeff Richardson. A great friend and mentor to me and many others, Jeff always took the time to teach the trade to our apprentices. His contributions to the local as both a committee member and journeyman will long be remembered. Our sympathies and prayers are with his family.

*Jim Russell, V.P./P.S.*

## 'Leveling the Playing Field'

L.U. 684 (c,i,rts&st), MODESTO, CA—Work in the jurisdiction remains slow. Many contractors are still on work share, such as Mann Electric & Collins. Con J. Franke should be beginning inside work on the Oakdale hospital project and Hamilton-Dillon's Gallo project is off to a slow start.

Stimulus public works projects and a labor friendly administration should improve the picture as summer approaches. Northern California Electrical Construction Industry (NCECI) compliance efforts are paying off and leveling the playing field in public works in our area.

Congratulations to Mann Electric owner Danny Mann and members Jeff Dunn, Brian McClain and Allen Avalos on installing a new scoreboard at Turlock High School in service to the community. This is the third scoreboard project our local and contractors have done this past year. The scoreboards were purchased out of the Labor Management Cooperative Trust fund.

A preview of continuing education classes is available at Web site [www.cujatc684.org](http://www.cujatc684.org) under member resources. Please make note of some schedule changes.

*Torrey Newton, P.S.*

## Celebrating IBEW Service

L.U. 688 (em,i,t&u), MANSFIELD, OH—We celebrated our brothers' service at our December 2008 meeting. Among those honored were: for 25 years of service – Alan Freeman and Mark Welty; for 30 years – Floyd Davis, Terry Hildebrand, Gary McKenna, Timothy Miller, D. M. Patterson, Al Smith and Paul Smith; 35 years – Bruce McCue, Steven Noble and Richard Ringle; 40 years – Bob Crumm, Jack Haburn, Jim Herrick, Paul Knackstedt, Malvern Partin and Gregory Willis; 50 years – Bob Trout; 55 years – Arthur Boyce, John Janes and Harold Ebersole; and for 60 years – the energetic Toby Kelly, who jumped up on stage for his certificate. Thank you all for your service and commitment to our industry.

Jim Herrick donated his time to provide much-needed repair of water damage at our union hall.

Local 688 wishes our brothers John Kline and Dan Schertzer well on their retirement.

We are saddened to report the loss of our brother Dick Jensen on January 1. We send our condolences to Dick's family and friends.

*Dan Lloyd, P.S.*

## Winter Ice Storm Work

L.U. 700 (em,i,o&spa), FT. SMITH, AR—We send out a big thank-you to all the IBEW linemen who worked around the clock helping to restore



Local 558 service pins are awarded at December 2008 union meeting.

power to all the unfortunate folks (including many IBEW brothers and sisters) in Northwest Arkansas after a big winter ice storm. Overall, more than 167,000 homes and businesses lost power for several weeks.

IBEW Local 700 will host the Tenth District Progress Meeting in Fort Smith, AR, in June. This will be the first time we have hosted such an event, and we are very excited especially since we just remodeled our union hall and can't wait to show it off.

Congratulations to the journeymen and apprentices who completed the Electrical Project Supervision Level 1 course sponsored by NECA. Special thanks to Burl Carter and Russell Thomas for teaching the course.

With great sadness we report the death of Bro. Cliff Perkins, who passed away Jan. 22, 2009.

*Debbie Carter, P.S.*

## Service Pins Awarded

L.U. 712 (c&i), BEAVER, PA—Congratulations to all members who recently received IBEW service award pins. (See photo below.)

Receiving 50-year service pins were: David H. Bender, Stanley D. Boden, George R. Bowser, Ronald E. Ehrhart, Harold T. Freed, Michael E. Hojdila, Charles A. Honaker, James H. Kolback, Benjamin W. Kossack, Monteford R. Powers, Louis Roscetti Jr., Fred N. Stark, Richard L. Umstead; 55-year pins – Richard W. Bender, Paul Gilbo, Edward G. Reese, Harley J. Rust Jr; and 60-year pins – Richard J. Halicek, Gerald F. Kelch, Wallace R. McCracken, Americo Montini, Albert C. Thompson, Robert V. Todd and Merle E. Vogus

The JATC is currently providing journeyman classes in: First Aid/CPR, OSHA 10 and 30 hour safety, NFPA 70E, Introductory Fire Alarm, Leviton Training, and Asbestos Worker Refresher Training. The apprentices are just completing some additional training in conduit bending, introductory welding, and high voltage cable splicing.

See you at the meeting!

*Larry Nelson, P.S.*

## 'We Are Back in Our Hall'

L.U. 716 (em,i,lect,rts&spa), HOUSTON, TX—I am happy to report that after many months of repairs due to damages sustained from Hurricane Ike, we are now back in our hall!

Our thoughts and prayers continue for the members, their families and other local unions that have also suffered from "Hurricane Ike" storm damage. Thanks to all our members for their patience and to Local 66 for the use of their hall.



Local 712 service award recipients, from left: Stanley D. Boden, Charles A. Honaker, David H. Bender, George R. Bowser, Richard W. Bender, Richard J. Halicek and Ronald E. Ehrhart.



In attendance for the presentation of a \$150,000 training grant to IBEW Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804 were, from left: IBEW Local 804 Asst. Bus. Agent Bob Morris; U.A. Local 527 Bus. Agent John German; MPP John Molloy (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities); IBEW Local 804 Pres./JATC Chair Corina Hicks; Local 804 PAC members Richard Hertner and Richard Kingsley; Mike Gemmel, Local 804 JATC; Jennifer Pigozzo, Local 804 PAC; Paul Reitzel, Local 804 JATC; and Dianne Roy, Local 804 PAC.

The work situation in Houston slowed a bit during the winter months; however, we expect work to pick up through the spring and summer of 2009.

Our organizing efforts, along with our Continuing Education and Code of Excellence classes, continue to provide positive results. The "Hands on Evaluation Test" that is administered to every applicant is proving to be a valuable tool in determining their level of experience.

This is a time for labor organizations to celebrate all their hard work, with Pres. Obama declaring, "I don't see organized labor as part of the problem – to me it is part of the solution." Pres. Obama also says, "You cannot have a strong middle class without a strong labor union." This makes all our organizing efforts worthwhile. We have waited a long time to hear these words.

*John E. Easton Jr., B.M./F.S.*

## The Time is Right

L.U. 756 (es&i), DAYTONA BEACH, FL—The south end of our jurisdiction, which includes Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and Kennedy Space Center, is planning for some major changes. The retirement of the space shuttle fleet and the newfound interest in future commercial space missions should provide a boon for the industry and related interests.

Investment in the space industry was minimal during the Bush administration. That fact,

coupled with the almost nonexistent enforcement of prevailing wages under the Davis-Bacon Act during the Bush years, has almost shut out legitimate contractors from being awarded projects.

The Building Trades of Central Florida were just recently assured by the Department of Labor that all labor laws, including Davis-Bacon, will be enforced. Interesting what a change of administration can mean for working families. That should make it clear where the Obama administration's priorities are. This of course will not guarantee that future projects will go to fair contractors, but it should at least level the playing field. This may be the best opportunity for the labor movement that working Americans have had in many years. Let's all do our part.

*Daniel Hunt, P.S.*

## TVA Bull Run Project

L.U. 760 (i,lect,o,rts,spa&u), KNOXVILLE, TN—Congratulations and thank you to all the brothers and sisters who helped complete the recent TVA Bull Run project. Two thumbs up to job stewards Bro. Larry Cole (DN Electric) and Bro. Jack Spears (Gubmk Constructors) for their commitment to excellence. This success shows the pride and professionalism of our IBEW members, while again proving that we are the right choice.

Local 760 recently welcomed our new dispatcher to the local. Asst. Bus. Mgr./Dispatcher Mark "Pee Wee" Long brings many years of experience as a construction steward to the dispatcher's office. Mark's positive attitude and dedicated work ethic will benefit us all. Welcome, Mark.

*George A. Bove, B.M./F.S.*

## \$150,000 Training Grant

L.U. 804 (i&o), KITCHENER, ONTARIO, CANADA—Members of Local 804's JATC and Political Action Committee, along with Local MPP John Molloy (Minister of Training, Colleges, and Universities), were among those in attendance at a recent gathering for the presentation of a \$150,000 grant awarded to Local 804 to upgrade training offered by the local. (See photo above.)

The grant was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. The award presentation took place at the United Association of Plumbers, Steamfitters and Welders union hall.

The Local 804 Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee will use the grant money to upgrade our training centre and purchase equipment, including green energy technology, for a test lab to improve our training programs.

*Glen Hicks, P.S.*

## Three Contracts Ratified

L.U. 816 (i,o,spa,t&u), PADUCAH, KY—Local 816 recently negotiated and ratified contracts at three utility companies. West Kentucky Rural Telephone signed a five-year agreement. Hickman Fulton Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation signed a six-year agreement. West Kentucky RECC signed a three-year agreement.

As of press time, we are negotiating our Inside Agreement. Thanks to everyone on all the negotiating committees. Our picnic is June 20 at Venture River Water Park. The Spring Golf Tournament is May 9 at Drake Creek Golf Course. The annual DAD'S Day Building and Trades Golf Tournament is June 13 at Paxton Park.

Remember, Continuing Education Units (CEU) classes are offered every other month starting at 8 a.m. at the union hall, for renewal of the Kentucky state electrical license.

On Jan. 27, a disastrous ice storm hit western Kentucky. Our thanks go out to the thousands of utility workers who came to restore our power. Approximately three weeks later, power was virtually restored to everyone.

*Greg Hobgood, B.M.*

## Awards Presented

L.U. 890 (i), JANESVILLE, WI—IBEW service pins were handed out at the annual Local 890 holiday party last year. Among those honored were 55-year member Harold Tolley, shown in the accompanying photo with Local 890 Bus. Mgr. Leo "Pancho" Sokolik, and 50-year member Charles North. Bro. Tolley was initiated into the IBEW in 1953 and retired in 1989. Harold is currently enjoying retirement in Janesville.

Bro. North was initiated into the union in 1958 and retired in 2001. Charlie worked many years for W.J. Allen and is now enjoying his retirement in Stoughton, WI.

*Jason Heidenreich, A.B.M./Org.*



Local 890 Bus. Mgr. Leo F. Sokolik (left) presents service award to 55-year member Harold Tolley.

## Economy Hits Hard

L.U. 894 (i&o), OSHAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA—Spring hopefully has arrived here in Oshawa, as we have had a long winter. Economic woes have hit us hard here in the motor city. General Motors, always counted on in the past to keep many of our brothers and sisters working, has been quiet with only a handful of our members on site.

Our members, even though many are in very tough financial straits, continue their charitable contributions to our community. Raye West, our vice president, deserves a huge round of applause for his dedication to the annual toy and food drive. Over the many years Raye has worked with the toy drive and has delivered hundreds and hundreds of toys to needy children. Thanks, Raye.

Our Web site [www.ibew894.org](http://www.ibew894.org), created and maintained by our office administrator Tammy Gould, is a great place to keep up to date on current and past events, courses available, benefits, organizing and Local 894 news. Work safe, come out to the general meetings and show your pride, the pride we all share in the IBEW.

*Darrell Scott, R.S.*

## Holiday Lighting Contest

L.U. 988 (u), SIDNEY, MT—The Sidney Herald newspaper, in cooperation with IBEW Local 988, held its second annual holiday lighting contest with cash prizes provided by the local union of \$100 and \$50. The Sidney Herald is located in Sidney, MT.

The public nominates a home by calling, faxing, or e-mailing the newspaper. The list of nominated homes then appears in the paper so people can drive by and enjoy the decorated homes and then vote for their favorite display. The home with the most votes receives \$50 for the People's Choice award. In addition, the Sidney Kiwanis Club selects the top winner, who receives \$100.

Montana-Dakota Utilities and Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric (REA) joined the promotion by supplying holiday safety tips throughout the contest to help residents remember that safety should always come first.

*Randy Berndt, F.S.*



IBEW Local 988 representative Terry Hockenbary (left) awards top prize for holiday lighting contest to Roger Marker (second from left); and Local 988 Pres. Larry Anderson (right) presents People's Choice Award to Richard and Luella Buxbaum.

## Union Membership Is Strength

L.U. 1116 (em,lectt&u), TUCSON, AZ—In a "right-to-work" state like Arizona, some of our co-workers are "hitchhikers" who enjoy the benefits negotiated by the union without supporting it. We need to convince them that union membership gives us strength.

The last four months of 2008 proved just that! Our local welcomed new members: Kenneth Adams, Joseah Tsethlikai, Larry Walker, Diana Baker, Nick Vicino, Patrick Reynolds, Travis Puklaveta, Jacob Chustz, Thomas Cox, David Erickson, Jace Hicks, Thomas Putman, Orlando Romero, Jonathan Shelton, Kyle Swesey, William Van Story, Gene Zawacky, Andrea Mitchell, William Townsend, David Hunt, Chuck Amstutz, William Harris, John Cantrell, Timothy S. Eagar, Jonnie Breaux, Marissa DeLaTorre, Jon Hartnett, Michael Norris, Samantha Patton, Tanya Snyder, Juan Prieto-Quintana, Donna Milstead, Richard Caldwell, Alma Skousen and Marylou Murphy.

Our 2009 goal is to organize those who aren't part of our union family. We are over 700 strong but organizing those nonmembers will add to our membership's strength in the years to come.

Bro. Jesse Ramirez, Southwest Energy Solutions meter reader, has expressed his appreciation to the membership for their support and donations made during his recent hardship and loss of his son.

*R. Cavaletto, P.S.*

## IBEW Marathoner on Big Island

L.U. 1186 (as,catv,ees,govt,i,mar,o,rts&spa), HONOLULU, HI—Rob Van Geen was a computer systems administrator for nearly 25 years, but quit to start in the IBEW Hawaii Local 1186 apprenticeship program in 2006.

As if that wasn't enough to have on his plate, Bro. Van Geen is a serious marathon athlete; has paddled for Kawaihae Canoe Club since 2000; and began training for competitive swimming, cycling and running in 2005.

Van Geen has qualified and participated in the Ironman World Championship every year since 2006 and competed in the Ultraman World Championship in 2007, which consists of a 6.2 mile



IBEW Honolulu, HI, Local 1186 apprentice Rob Van Geen is a world-class endurance athlete and marathon runner.

swim, a 261.4 mile bike race and a 52.4 mile run. His weekly training averages swimming for 7 miles, biking for 100 miles, and running for 20 miles.

Bro. Van Geen most recently competed in the Hawaiian Ultra Running Team (HURT) 100-mile endurance run held Jan. 17-18 on Oahu. The grueling trail race features 25,000 feet of climbs and 25,000 feet of descents, with a 36-hour contest cutoff.

*Donn K. dela Cruz, B.R.*

## Suppliers Support Training

L.U. 1220 (rtb), CHICAGO, IL—Another year, another utility class, another thanks to Joseph Electronics, WTTW, and the whole Fletcher family of Chicago.

Local 1220 could not conduct utility classes without the help of these organizations. But an organization is only as good as its members, and Stan Glapa, Fletcher rental manager; John Cleary, vice president/operations, Joseph Electronics; and Ron Yergovich, vice president, operations/productions at WTTW help make their organizations successful.

The class was held Jan. 26 in Studio D at WTTW with Rich Lanza as instructor and Andrea Randall as assistant. "We had some calls during the year about our utilities, so I thought it best to call everyone together for a refresher course," said Local 1220 Bus. Mgr. Madeleine Monaco. "We have this work because we do the best job. If we don't provide consistent quality, we can lose it."

"This training emphasizes the cooperative effort of union members," Monaco added. "They help each other complete their tasks." In the class, newcomers were assisted by experienced Local 1220 members.

It is through such cooperative effort that Local 1220 provides the quality broadcast demands.

Our thanks to all who pitched in to get the job done. Within 24 hours, the rental equipment was returned in good order. "We want producers to look forward to coming to Chicago because they know everything runs smoothly," Lanza said.

*Jim Sterne, B.R./P.S.*

## Officers Sworn In

L.U. 1600 (catv&u), BETHLEHEM, PA—IBEW Local 1600 held its election of officers in November 2008 and conducted swearing-in ceremonies Dec. 1, 2008.

Sworn in to office were: Pres./Fin. Sec. Lester S. Ettl, Vice Pres. Frank E. Graboski, Rec. Sec. K. Cas Riepensell, and Treas. Joseph C. Reilly. Executive Board members sworn in were: Ronald J. Zemlansky – Unit 1, Michael J. Mannix – Unit 2, John Paul III – Unit 3, John Clausius – Unit 4, Alfred J. Onushak – Unit 5, John DeSanto, Jr. – Unit 6, Richard J. Sopko – Unit 7, and Darleen Lefever – Unit 8.

Local 1600 represents members from PPL Electric Utilities, Ephrata Borough, Comcast and Sunbury LLC, totaling approximately 3,800 workers.

*Mary Ann Anthony, P.S.*



Local 1600 officers, from left: Pres./Fin. Sec. Lester S. Ettl, Vice Pres. Frank E. Graboski, Rec. Sec. K. Cas Riepensell and Treas. Joseph C. Reilly. At right is IBEW Third District Int. Rep. Paul J. Simon.

# Electrical Worker, Web Carry on IBEW Communications Tradition

Cost savings, environmental concerns and the need for rapid reporting of information in a fast-paced world are issues that affect every communications outlet from the mainstream media to organizations of all stripes. The IBEW's leadership grappled with these topics and developed a plan of action that balances these concerns with the union's obligation to keep members informed.

Since 2007, the IBEW has had two official publications, this newspaper and the IBEW Journal, a quarterly magazine that was the latest incarnation of the Brotherhood's line of print vehicles that started in 1893. As reported in the Winter 2009 issue of the Journal, the IBEW will no longer publish its magazine. The mantle of serving as the IBEW's official flagship publication will now be taken up by The Electrical Worker and shared by the IBEW's Web site.

"We know that this is a big change, and that the Journal had become a tradition among the members," said International President Edwin D. Hill. "Times change, and so do the needs of the IBEW in confronting the challenges of the 21st century. In this era, the officers felt that the quarterly magazine consumed resources that could best be devoted elsewhere, while also committing the Brotherhood to an enhanced newspaper and greater use of Internet technology." Hill noted that the officers were also conscious of the savings in paper and ink that elimination of the Journal would make possible, both in terms of cost and the impact on the environment.

The Electrical Worker was the name of the IBEW's original publication in 1893. In starting the newspaper, the name was resurrected to hark back to days when the union played a strong role in the social and cultural

lives of members as well as job site representation. The masthead of the current newspaper recalls the original artwork from 1893.

With this issue, The Electrical Worker expands to 20 pages in order to carry some of the features that were covered in the Journal, including longer articles of interest to the membership. Later this year, the newspaper will have an upgraded design. As a monthly, The Electrical Worker represents a continued strong commitment by the IBEW to print communications at a time when many unions have cut their publications to six or four times a year, or eliminated them entirely.

For two years, IBEW members have also had the option of not receiving a paper edition of the publication, choosing instead to receive a monthly e-mail with a link to the publication online. The officers encourage members to take advantage of this option as another way to conserve financial and environmental resources. Currently, those who have an online subscription receive a link to a PDF file of the publication on the Web site. Soon, the IBEW will unveil a version of The Electrical Worker with the same content as the print edition, but designed specifically for the Web. Members can activate the online only option by clicking on the special link on

the front page of [www.ibew.org](http://www.ibew.org).

The IBEW's communications program also features a stronger commitment to Web-based communications. The IBEW's Web site unveiled a totally redesigned site that features new stories about the activities of the Brotherhood on an almost daily basis and regular video news content. The site also continues to serve as a repository for information about the IBEW. A number of stories and video clips produced by the Media Department have been featured on news and discussion blogs in the broader Internet community.

"It's a new world out there, and the IBEW must keep pace," President Hill said. "In this economy, we must use our resources wisely while doing all we can to keep our membership informed and active. At a time when union membership requires a stronger commitment on the part of every man and woman in the IBEW, we will use the technology at our disposal to spread the word. Our program will be constantly evolving." ■

Got a comment? Send it to [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org) or write to us at:

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## Online Program Trains Telecom Workers

Twelve years ago, telecommunications unions and employers came together to create online education programs to prepare workers for a technical career in the field. As a founding member of the National Coalition for Telecommunications Education and Learning (NACTEL), the IBEW continues to see a steady stream of members taking advantage of the wide range of technical education certificates and degrees available through NACTEL. Not only does it offer marketable skills in a growing field, it also comes with the bona fides of academia, the degree from Pace, an accredited university.

NACTEL has consistently seen women represent approximately 40 percent of the students enrolled in the program since the beginning. At the same time, women represented only up to 15 percent of the students in a typical training program offered by a telecom company. Why?

Laura Townsend was working full time

as a customer account specialist at AT&T in Dyer, Ind. She knew she wanted to move ahead in her career and thought about going back to school. But with a demanding job and two children, attending a traditional program would mean time off work, child care and commuting to a college campus – none of which she could afford. She needed a program that would fit her schedule.

When she learned about NACTEL's program, she decided to give it a try. Laura, who is pursuing a bachelor of science in telecommunications, is part of an online "classroom" with 18 other students and an instructor. She has assignments that are due each week, but Laura is able to create a schedule that fits her family and work responsibilities. She never has to set foot on a campus; her computer is her "campus."

Stories like Laura's have become commonplace among NACTEL students.

**TELECOM WORKERS** continued on page 20

# Minnesota Locals Harness Grassroots Action on Renewable Energy

Spotlight  
on Safety

*This is the first article in a series on how the IBEW is working within our states, communities and in the federal political arena to expand the market and the benefits of renewable energy technologies.*

**D**arryl Thayer, a member of Minneapolis Local 292, hardly received a visionary's welcome when he addressed the Minnesota legislature in 1968 about the need to develop solar energy and wean the state from fossil fuel-based sources. Worse yet, says Thayer, many of his fellow workers "thought I was nuts."

How climates have changed. Forty-one years later, the legislature has a green energy task force. And Thayer, a 53-year member who teaches solar classes at Local 292's JATC, is a hero to young members like Ray Zeran, one of 600 members on the bench who are looking to benefit from billions of dollars of state funds and federal stimulus money focused on renewable energy projects.

In February, Zeran, who topped out of his apprenticeship last July, joined 150 IBEW members from across Minnesota for a lobbying day in St. Paul, where renewable energy was a main focus. "I participated because I realized early on in my electrical career that just showing up at work every day is not enough—there are too many factors going against us as union workers," says Zeran, who needs one more installation to become certified as a solar specialist by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners.

Local 292's training center, featuring one of the nation's best solar labs and its own solar array, has a waiting list for students. But the local isn't taking an exclusive approach to training. Training Director Jim Nimlos has worked with his counterpart, Andy Toft, LeSueur, Minn., Local 343, to develop a student exchange between LeSueur's wind turbine training and 292's solar curriculum.

While Minnesota may appear to be an improbable generator of sun power, Nimlos says that the 45th parallel is primed for harnessing solar energy. Residing on a latitude similar to Germany's, where solar power is well-developed, Minnesota's lower temperatures keep panels operating at maximum efficiency. And the state's clear skies make it competitive with Jacksonville, Fla., San Francisco and Houston.

IBEW participates in the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar America Cities project, which targets 25 metropolitan areas for sun power development. Thayer—who earned a B.A. in physics over 13 years working as a journeyman wireman and has nearly completed his master's in engineering—has written curriculum for the project. Fully half of all Minnesota solar installers who have achieved National Association of Certified Energy Practitioners



Minneapolis Local 292's JATC has a waiting list for members to train in solar installation. Veteran member Darryl Thayer, kneeling, instructs Bradley Kanis, left, Claude Clavette. Instructor Kelley Benyo stands at right.

qualifications are Local 292 members.

Wind power has been expanding rapidly in the southwest quadrant of Minnesota. Local 343, in the southeast, is aiming to be the labor supply of choice on wind projects. The local is completing climbing and rescue procedures on turbines in conjunction with an NJATC wind power curriculum and building a 60-foot climbing tower for practicing high-voltage safety. Toft, who sets a priority on making signatory contractors more competitive in wind projects, expects to see 1,700 towers erected over the next few years.

The IBEW Minnesota State Council's efforts to promote new training and encourage grassroots political activism to set high standards for renewable energy workers are returning results that could reach far into the future.

The state has some of the strongest environmental and energy laws in the nation—including a mandate that one-quarter of Minnesota's electricity come from renewables by 2025.

Bill Heaney, IBEW Minnesota State Council's legislative and political director, sees a two-pronged approach to the Brotherhood's political efforts—maximizing renewable energy jobs and standards under state laws and ensuring that the federal stimulus money is not used to supplant existing spending, but to create new, preferably prevailing wage-regulated employment.

The two goals are not mutually exclusive, says Heaney. IBEW is supporting state legislation to include more money to cover the labor costs of relocating existing power lines to make way for new highway and rail projects that will be financed by the federal stimulus. Some state bills supported by environmentalists hold promise for significant manpower demand for electricians.

State Sen. Ellen Anderson (D-St. Paul)

said that investing in the new non-fossil fuel technologies will result in 70,000 new or retained jobs. Minnesota will receive \$9 billion in tax cuts and new federal aid through the \$787 billion stimulus bill.

In a state that mandates the licensing of electricians, IBEW is challenging the perception that solar and wind energy require entirely new careers. Local 292 Business Representative Dan McConnell meets with community college educators who are setting up renewable energy training. "I ask them what will happen to students who are only trained in renewable energy installations if the bubble bursts in any specific sector," says McConnell.

McConnell proposes to educators and legislators that the demand for solar workers be filled by journeymen and apprentice electricians who receive supplementary training in how to properly design and angle panels and calculate their efficiency. "Solar panels are live when they come out of the box," says McConnell. Safety should not be taken for granted. And better-trained workers, he says, "are far more recession-proof than workers trained exclusively on renewable installations."

In spite of the positive internal conditions—progressive union locals and contractors, supportive politicians and even the blessings of nature—the development of renewable energy in Minnesota faces a hurdle that seems as daunting as the nation's energy policy. The obstacle is cost. Minnesota's electric bills are low relative to costs in California and on the East Coast, challenging the supporters of renewable energy to win more public support to change the state's energy mix.

*In the next article in our series, we will explore this challenge and the wider public policy considerations and technology required to change the nation's energy mix. ■*

## Fighting for the Living: Unions Press for Workplace Safety

More than three decades ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality, winning protections that have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Nonetheless, the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths remains enormous. In 2007, more than 4 million workers were injured and 5,488 workers were killed due to job hazards. Another 50,000 died due to occupational disease.

After eight years of neglect and inaction by the Bush administration, the challenges are great. Major hazards remain unaddressed and many workers lack basic protections and rights. But now we have the opportunity to strengthen job safety protections and to make sure that workers' voices are heard.

On April 28, we observe Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job and to renew the fight for safe workplaces.

In 2009, we must fight for:

- **Full OSHA coverage for all workers.** More than 8.8 million state and local public employees, flight attendants and other worker have no protection under the OSHA law.
- **Stronger criminal and civil penalties for violations.** The average penalty for a serious violation of the OSHA law is woefully low, only \$960. The median penalty in enforcement cases involving a worker's death was only \$3,675.
- **New workplace safety and health standards.** In 38 years, OSHA has set standards for only 29 toxic substances; for many hazards standards are out of date or non-existent. There is a huge backlog of standards that need to be issued including rules on silica, beryllium, cranes and derricks, diacetyl and combustible dust.
- **Protections against ergonomic hazards.** Musculoskeletal disorders remain the biggest job safety problem, responsible for 30 percent of all workplace injuries and costing billions of dollars each year.
- **Complete and accurate reporting of workplace injuries and illnesses.** Even though the toll of workplace injuries is high, recent studies have found that those reports may miss as many as two out of three workplace injuries. Increasingly workers are being discouraged from reporting job injuries, often facing discipline or termination when they are injured. ■





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.

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**FROM THE OFFICERS****Fight Fear with Facts**

**Edwin D. Hill**, International President  
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Millions of Americans are growing angrier by the day as bonuses are being paid to financial sector executives who are soaking up government bailouts—even after they nearly brought down our entire economic system.

But the stench of their audacity wafts even wider. Some big banks—like Citibank and Bank of America, which survive only upon the largesse of taxes paid by hard-working Americans, are putting another thumb in our collective eye by using our money to spread lies about the Employee Free Choice Act and our unions.

We say enough to the spectacle of the same greedy executives who refuse to give up bonuses even as their companies fail—because they say they are “covered by con-

tracts”—standing in the way of a bill that would make it easier for hard-working Americans to join unions and win their own collective bargaining agreements.

The IBEW has a critical role to play in this national debate. That's why we have circulated a DVD to all locals in the Brotherhood with ammunition to overcome the hypocritical rhetoric and talk some common sense to millions of working Americans, and through them, to members of Congress who will vote on the bill.

Within every local of our union are men and women who have the ability to eloquently counter the misinformation about the Employee Free Choice Act through personal visits with their legislators, talk radio, letters to the newspaper, the Internet or face-to-face with co-workers and members of our communities. This effort is the next step in the growing grassroots political mobilization that helped to elect the Obama-Biden ticket last November, a movement to restore fairness to American workers.

Fairness, after all, is what our labor movement is about. There is no better time for this fight and there is no better group of bad guys than the corporate leaders and their supporters who helped get our nation into this mess.

The last issue of *The Electrical Worker* discussed several of the myths about the Employee Free Choice Act that are spread by employers, like the charge that majority sign-up would be “undemocratic” by denying workers the right to decide whether they want union representation through a secret ballot election. The employers are now shifting to other arguments, and we need to respond.

“You see what power is—holding someone else's fear in your hand and showing it to them,” says novelist Amy Tan. And that's just what the powerful opponents of the Employee Free Choice Act are attempting to do.

A group called the Alliance to Save Main Street Jobs has funded a study to scare workers who already are unemployed or facing possible job losses by claiming that increasing union density will result in higher unemployment. The study predicts that every three percentage points gained in union membership through majority sign-up and mandatory arbitration will increase the unemployment rate by 1 percentage point and decrease job creation by 1.5 million jobs.

Larry Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute, says the study amounts to “crackpot economics.” Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic Policy and Research, says that—if the study were true—Canada, where the unionization rate is 20 percentage points higher than in the U.S., would have a higher unemployment rate. Yet Canada's unemployment rate is lower.

If the fear tactics leveled at average Americans don't sink in, our adversaries are already zeroing in on members of Congress who are said to be on the fence concerning the Employee Free Choice Act. The Coalition for a Democratic Workplace—comprising more than 500 anti-union organizations and associations—is running ads telling Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), Mark Pryor (D-Ark.), Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) and Michael Bennett (D-Colo.) that it's time to line up with big business and leave the working folks behind on Employee Free Choice.

Will working Americans and our political representatives embrace our dreams for a fairer nation, or will we turn away and surrender to fear spread by those who benefit from injustice and economic privilege? This is the defining question of the early 21st century for labor. Don't sit on the sidelines at this historic moment. ■

**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:**

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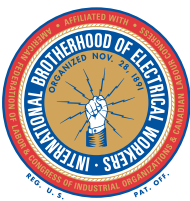
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## Letters to the Editor

### Can a Good Trade Unionist Support a Toyota?

Dear President Hill,

Last year, Kansas City, Mo., Local 124 welcomed, marketed around and showcased Alli Owens and the ElectrifyingCareers.com racecar. At that time, her manufacturer sponsor was Chevrolet and the car was modeled after the Monte Carlo.

In looking at some recent press releases and pictures from her Web site, her car and uniform now boast the Toyota logo, and the car is now labeled a Camry.

While I understand the global market of auto manufacturing as well as Toyota's efforts to produce some models in the U.S., I still find the sponsorship questionable at best. Kansas City is home to two car plants—GM and Ford—that provide a great deal of employment opportunities for IBEW and other building trades members. I'm afraid of the message that this sponsorship may be sending to our members, especially when those plants are struggling these days, economically speaking. I feel our sponsorship in this case is in misplaced.

Please don't misunderstand my intent here — I realize we have bigger fish to fry in these challenging times. But as a local BA, this will no doubt surface as a question for me to answer from our members, especially if Alli and her new Camry show up in our parking lot looking for support.

Fraternally,

Bryant Z. "BZ" Parscale  
Business Representative  
Kansas City, Mo., Local 124

Dear Brother Parscale,

First, thank you for your thoughtful letter and well-reasoned questioning of this action. This was not an easy decision, but I believe there are valid reasons behind it.

We agreed to sponsor Alli Owens a while back when her car of choice was the Chevy that you see in so many pictures. Ali has been a very strong advocate of the IBEW/NECA relationship and has been available to visit schools and other locations where our potential members are to tell the story of the IBEW/NECA partnership.

As I am sure you are aware, her racing team provides the car she drives. Last year she called to tell us that the owner of her team was switching to Toyota for this season. I personally found that to be offensive — and being from a strong union background, the "Buy American, Buy Union" ideal has always been my preference. In the future, it will continue to be so.

However, in my position, this decision was not based on a personal preference, but rather on what is beneficial for the membership of the IBEW, which I am sure that you understand.

I am very much aware of the plight of the Big Three auto makers and the issues of our brothers and sisters in the United Auto Workers. We have worked closely with the companies on the Code of Excellence for the auto industry to make our members more responsive to their needs, and I will continue to do all that I can to make sure that they survive.

With all of that being said, the decision was not whether to sponsor the car, but whether to continue to sponsor the driver, who has done a good job on our behalf.

We based our decision on the fact that Toyota has supported the building trades—and more particularly, the IBEW—on all of their new construction throughout the United States and Canada, providing more than 9.8 million man hours for IBEW members. When you equate this with dollars and cents, it comes out to be a substantial amount of money in wages and benefits to our brothers and sisters.

I believe the decision to continue our sponsorship of Alli Owens was, while difficult, the right course. I hope that our members understand that we still live by the old adage of working with those who work with us.

Thank you for voicing your concern. Like you, I would prefer that Alli still drove a Chevy. It is clear that we may need some fresh dialogue moving forward regarding what it means to be faithful trade unionists and how we can progress as a movement.

Yours in Brotherhood,

Ed Hill  
International President  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

## Who We Are

If you have a story to tell about your IBEW experience, please send it to [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org).

### Nevada Member Blazes Trail in Line Work

History is replete with firsthand accounts of notable individuals hailing from small towns whose lives were changed by a fortuitous visit from the outside. For Shannon Skinner, president of 1,800-member Las Vegas Local 396, one of a small contingent of women who have made careers as utility linemen, her horizon opened up during high school in Burns, Ore., when utility construction crews arrived in town to construct a 500-kilovolt transmission line.

"Watching the towers go up sparked my interest," says Skinner, who marveled at the men who spent their lives in the outdoors, climbing and constructing and keeping danger at arm's length. She rushed to get summer work sweeping floors in the contractor's mechanical shop and running parts out to the line crews.

"Lineman work was in my heart," says Skinner, whose stepfather and three uncles were in the trade. Skinner attended college, then trained in welding and traveled to California. She got a ticket from Vacaville Local 1245 and spent the 1980s traveling across the West as a groundsman on transmission and distribution projects before applying for the lineman apprenticeship, topping out in 1991.

Today, Skinner is a respected foreman for NV Energy (formerly Nevada Power) and a high-voltage ambassador for the utility trade. From appearing on TV public service announcements teaching electrical safety to youngsters, to demonstrating her skills in climbing and handling dangers at job fairs, to chairing unit meetings and volunteering hours of time to her local—Skinner is living the life she dreamed of back in high school.

International Representative Gina Cooper, IBEW Telecommunications Department, first met Skinner when she was a teen. "Shannon makes people focus on brotherhood and working together. She isn't shy about standing up to guys when they are doing the wrong thing, first as a steward, now as a foreman," says Cooper.

"The best part about being a lineman is the trailblazing effect—you're right there even before a city is built," says Skinner. It's a metaphor for her place in the trade. "For a woman lineman, every day is a test," says Skinner, who was mentored by shop stewards and was immediately appointed steward after completing her apprenticeship. Her crew has



Las Vegas Local 396 President Shannon Skinner, left, gives a student a ride in a bucket during a career day.

been filmed for National Geographic and Discovery Channel specials.

Since being elected president last year, her best day was chairing a construction line meeting where Skinner delivered the union oath to one young member and gave a journeyman his 55-year pin. "I'll never forget that feeling of excitement that came when I topped out and it's an honor to spread that to others," says Skinner, who sat on the Cal-Nevada Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee and currently is on NV Energy's committee.

Skinner is frustrated by those who fail to see the benefits of reaching out to young people. She laughs as she recalls bumping into a youngster whose school she had visited. "There's the power lady," said the youth, who remembered Skinner and a co-worker climbing a pole that they had set up on a trailer and grilling hot dogs with their "hot sticks," used in the trade to safely handle high-voltage lines.

Business Manager Charles W. Randall says Skinner's voluntary participation in food drives and political fund-raising efforts along with her strong support of other units inspires others to serve.

Skinner spends time away from work four-wheeling or riding her Harley in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. A self-professed adrenaline junkie, she recently bungee-jumped off a 350-foot bridge.

Skinner's willingness to take on new challenges is recognized at NV Energy, where she and her crew of five are often assigned special projects. Steve Hitchcock, an NV manager who recruited Skinner to work for the company says, "We can give her any kind of job and she can handle it." ■

## Telecom Workers

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"I chose the online NACTEL program at Pace University because of the flexibility it offered me," Laura said. "I have two young children and need the ability to do schoolwork when they are napping or asleep at night."

Students also report these advantages of online learning:

1. Instructor-led. "I can ask questions 24/7 and know that I'll receive a quick response."
2. Getting to know other students. "It's hard to believe, but I really do get to 'speak' a lot with the students in my class – I get to know them, and they are often the ones to help me when I'm stuck."

3. Ways to practice. "NACTEL online courses offer so many ways to learn – reading, listening, video, practice quizzes, even labs that I do in my kitchen! If I'm having a hard time with something, I can go back to practice as often as I need to."

4. Everyone is equal. "Because we're online, no one knows or cares if I'm a woman, and there is no such thing as getting lost in the 'back of the classroom.'"

5. Technical skills. "I do not have a technical background, but the NACTEL program prepares me to compete for the highest paying technical jobs."

The industry and labor "stamp of approval" was the final reason that Laura chose the NACTEL program. "The Pace/NACTEL program was sponsored by the IBEW and AT&T, so I knew it was a good program."

Local 21 member Luwanda Owens, a telecommunications specialist at AT&T, notes that men and women frequently have different experiences in the telecommunications workplace. "It is harder for women to

get into technical fields. I would like to see more women in these positions, and this online education program will help women get into my field."

NACTEL, ([www.nactel.org/ibew](http://www.nactel.org/ibew)), was founded 1997 by the IBEW, Communications Workers of America, AT&T, EMBARQ, Frontier, Qwest, and Verizon. Through the program, students can pursue certificates, associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees in these areas:

- Telecommunications, which provides an understanding of telecommunications concepts including solid state devices, and circuit switched networking, including DSL, built on copper landlines.
- Networking Technology, which provides an understanding of the packet switched networking including operating systems, networking technologies, fiber optics, cabling, and hardware maintenance.

- Wireless Networking, which provides an understanding of the most current wireless networking technologies including operating systems, data transmission systems, wireless LANs, wireless network security, and technical communications.
- Video Technology, which provides an understanding of the concepts and applications of digital television including home and smart technologies, home wiring, "triple play" product offerings, and other emerging technologies.
- Emerging Telecom Technology, at the bachelor's level, which provides theoretical, practical, and analytical experience in the newest technologies to prepare for the telecom business of today and tomorrow.

For more information, visit [www.nactel.org/ibew](http://www.nactel.org/ibew).



## IBEW FOUNDERS' SCHOLARSHIP

### AWARDED ONLY TO IBEW MEMBERS

The IBEW Founders' Scholarships honor the dedicated wiremen and linemen who, on November 28, 1891, organized the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Each year the officers of the IBEW are pleased to offer its working members scholarships on a competitive basis. It is hoped that the awards will not only contribute to the personal development of our members but also steward the electrical industry that our founders envisioned.

This award is for \$200 per semester credit hour at any accredited college or university toward an associate's, bachelor's or postgraduate degree in an approved field. The maximum distribution is \$24,000 over a period not to exceed eight years.

### RULES FOR ENTRY

#### Eligibility Checklist

Founders' Scholarship competition is an adult program, to be used solely by IBEW members. It is NOT for the children of members.

1. Applicants must have been in continuous good standing and have paid dues without an Honorary Withdrawal for the **four** years preceding May 1 of the scholarship year, or be charter members of a local union.
2. Each applicant must be recommended in writing by the local union business manager. If there is no office of business manager, then the recommendation must come from the local union president, system council chairman or general chairman.
3. At least two additional letters of recommendation must be sent by individuals who are familiar with the applicant's achievements and abilities.
4. Copies of all academic transcripts from high school, college, apprenticeship or other educational and developmental programs must be submitted.
5. A complete personal resumé is required. The resumé should outline education and work history, any special honors or awards, military service, plus involvement in union, local, civic, community and religious affairs.
6. Applicants are required to submit a 250-500 word essay. The title and topic must be: "How the Founders' Scholarships will benefit the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the electrical industry." The essay must be typewritten and double-spaced.
7. Applicants must submit a test score from the SAT I or the ACT. **NO OTHER TESTING SERVICES ARE ACCEPTABLE.** Archived scores or new test registration may be obtained by contacting: SAT (609) 771-7600, [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), SAT Program, P.O. Box 6201, Princeton, NJ 08541-6201; or ACT Records (319) 337-1313, [www.act.org](http://www.act.org), ACT Records, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, IA 52243-0168. To send scores directly to the IBEW Founders' Scholarship, the code numbers are 0485 for SAT and 0697 for ACT. It is strongly suggested that any new test taken should be the SAT I.
8. Materials need not be sent at the same time but must be postmarked prior to May 1 of the scholarship year.

#### Selection of Winners

Awards will be based on academic achievement and potential, character, leadership, social awareness and career goals.

The independent Founders' Scholarship Selection Committee will be composed of academic, professional and community representatives. They will examine the complete record of each scholarship applicant to choose the winners. All applicants will be notified, and the scholarship winners will be featured in the Electrical Worker.

#### Responsibility of Each Founders' Scholar

Scholarship winners must begin their studies in their next term or, at the latest, in January of the following year. Each term's earned grades must be sent to the Founders' Scholarship Administrator, together with a Founders' Scholarship Progress Sheet. After the first calendar year in the program, and by each August 1 thereafter, the annual Founders' Scholar paper is due. It must be at least 1,000 words on a labor-related topic, covering any aspect affecting the current labor movement or labor history. Scholarships are not transferable and are forfeited if the student withdraws or fails to meet the requirements for graduation from the college. If a serious life situation arises to prevent continuation of studies, the scholarship winner may request that the scholarship be held in abeyance for a maximum of one academic year.

#### Free Act of the IBEW

The creation of this scholarship program is a free act of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The IBEW retains its right to alter, suspend, cancel or halt the IBEW Founders' Scholarship Program at any time and without giving any reason, provided that scholarship winners already in college under the program will continue to receive the stipends until graduation or the receipt of \$24,000 for undergraduate study under their IBEW Founders' Scholarships—whichever comes first.

#### APPLICATION (IBEW Founders' Scholarship Awarded Only to IBEW Members)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home telephone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print or type)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal \_\_\_\_\_

SS/SIN # \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Member of local # \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Initiated into IBEW \_\_\_\_\_  
(On IBEW Journal Address Label or Dues Receipt) (Month/Year)

Most recent employer \_\_\_\_\_

Job classification \_\_\_\_\_ Work telephone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to study for a \_\_\_\_\_ degree in \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Field of study must contribute to the development and improvement of the electrical industry as determined by the Founders' Scholarship Administrator.)

List your first and second choices for college:  
 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Did you complete high school or the GED? Yes  No   
(Send transcripts or other evidence to the Scholarship Committee.)

Did you have the opportunity to take apprenticeship or skill improvement training? Yes  No   
(Send transcripts or your courses to the Scholarship Committee.)

Do you have any education certificates or professional licenses? Yes  No   
(Send evidence to the Scholarship Committee.)

Have you taken any college courses? Yes  No   
(Send transcripts of all college courses to the Scholarship Committee.)

Name used on class records \_\_\_\_\_

When did you take the SAT I or the ACT? (Month/Year) \_\_\_\_\_  
(To submit new test scores, it is strongly suggested that you take the SAT I. We will use your highest score; therefore, it is in your best interest to retake the test.)

My signature is evidence that I understand and agree to all the rules governing the scholarship as listed on the back of this application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Mail application materials postmarked prior to **May 1** to:  
**IBEW FOUNDERS' SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**  
 900 Seventh Street, NW  
 WASHINGTON, DC 20001

Form 172  
 Revised 02/09