

SITE ORGANIZED

Lockheed Martin Aerostat

Local 66, Houston, Texas, organized 17 workers employed by Lockheed Martin Support and Training Services at the Eagle Pass, Texas, Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS) site. Eight of the 10 TARS sites have now been organized. The other organized sites are located in: Matagorda, Texas; Yuma, Arizona; Fort Huachuca, Arizona; Deming, New Mexico; Morgan City, Louisiana; Horseshoe Beach, Florida; and Cudjoe Keys, Florida. The Eagle Pass members ratified their first contract in August 1998.

Local 66 has also signed new members employed by the city of Fredericksburg, Texas, and looks forward to a productive labor-management relationship with the city. (Submitted by Michael N. Mosteit, organizer/business representative, Local 66, Houston, Texas.)

Debra and Goliath

It all started in December 1996 when Local 212 in Cincinnati, Ohio, contacted American Electrical Services Inc. (AESI) about becoming a union contractor. After a two-year organizing campaign involving salting, stripping and filing Unfair Labor Practice charges, Local 212 and the owners of American Electrical finally sealed the deal, and its 15 employees became members of Local 212.

One of American Electrical's employees, Debra Coates, was at the time a second-year Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) apprentice. Local 212 had asked Debra and other newly organized American Electrical employees to finish out that year of their apprenticeship with the nonunion ABC. Shortly after becoming a union member, Debra wore a Local 212 Organizing Committee shirt while attending the ABC's conduit bending school at



the nonunion Garfield Electric shop in Cincinnati. She was confronted by an official of the Garfield Group and told she would have to change her shirt or she would be fired.

Debra refused and told the official, "You can't fire me. I quit your company six months ago, and now I'm a union electrician." The official stomped away as Debra received the cheers of the rest of the ABC class.

The next day, while visiting several jobsites in the area, I heard the story over and over as told by the ABC apprentices. It was a great experience not only for the ABC apprentices, but also for newly organized apprentice Debra Coates. (Submitted by Matthew D. Kolbinsky, organizer, Local 212, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

Persistence Pays at Design Craft Inc.

Local 1922, Westbury, Long Island, New York, worked for two years to gain representation rights for the 35 employees of Design Craft Inc. of Jamaica, New York, a company that manufactures custom furniture and wall units. After a six-month campaign in 1997, the local was defeated in a NLRB election by a very close margin. Local officials vowed they would return and win.

In early 1998, Business Manager Patrick McCabe directed business agents to initiate a new campaign. The employer then forced his employees to sign cards with another union in an attempt to shut out the IBEW. Local 1922 filed charges against the employer and the other union and battled over the next seven months so the employees could choose their representative. In November 1998 an election was

finally held, and Local 1922 received over two-thirds of the votes cast. Business Agent Stephen G. Sombrotto thanks the members at Design Craft for their support and vital role in the victory. (Submitted by Marcia Salomon, press secretary, Local 1922, Westbury, Long Island, New York.)



Instrumental in the Local 1922, Westbury, Long Island, New York, organizing victory at Design Craft Inc., were, from left; Business Manager Patrick McCabe; Organizing Committee members Bryan Paige, Suresh Ramgolin and Durgadath Ramdass; and Business Agent Stephen G. Sombrotto.

CHEMICAL TECHNICIANS AT TEXAS UTILITIES

Thirty chemical technicians at the Texas Utilities nuclear plant in Glen Rose, Texas, voted on February 11, 1999, to be represented by Local 2337, Fairfield, Texas. These 30 employees join 154 other IBEW members at the nuclear plant who are covered by an IBEW collective bargaining agreement.



DISPATCHES

Local 702, West Frankfort, Illinois, gained eight new members in a representation election held February 19, 1999, at Hamilton County Telephone Cooperative in Dahlgren, Illinois. These new members work in clerical, sales and dispatcher positions. They join eight other Local 702 members who are employed in the plant department at the telephone co-op.

A group of 105 clerical employees at New England Electric Systems Company voted by an 81 percent margin for representation by newly chartered IBEW Local 1345, Westborough, Massachusetts. Providing assistance in

this organizing effort were Second District International Vice President Frank J. Carroll and his staff, along with Business Manager Richard Raymond of Local 486, Worcester, Massachusetts, and Business Manager Tom Lynch of Local 99, Providence, Rhode Island.

In a recent organizing success, Local 269, Trenton, NJ, signed Dayton Electric Inc. as a new contractor, bringing in eight new local union members. Organizer Thomas Bates reported that this victory followed a year-long effort to sign the contractor.

Forty-four employees at the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site fossil fuel plant located in New Ellenton, South Carolina, voted on March 23, 1999, for representation by Local 772 out of Columbia. These new IBEW members employed by Prime South/SCANA (which leases the plant from the government) work in the following classifications: control room operator, assistant control room operator, chemistry technician, and electrical and mechanical maintenance worker. Local 772 currently represents workers on the property of South Carolina Electric & Gas, a subsidiary of parent company SCANA.

Organized VOICES

Ken Bunney Local 124, Kansas City, Missouri

I reside in Louisburg, Kansas, and have been employed in the electrical field for the last 18 years. It has come to my attention that the right of American workers to organize has become an issue of debate. I feel it is my right as a newly organized member of the IBEW to express my position on this matter.

My first contact with a union member occurred in September 1994. I was employed by an open shop electrical contractor. I was content with working conditions and my rate of pay. After several insightful discussions with union members, it became clear to me that what the union had to offer was the very

thing I had tried to pursue throughout my electrical career, but to no avail. The pride of union values extends from the excellence of craftsmanship to camaraderie, workers' rights and benefits, and community service.

After careful consideration, I [determined] that the union would be the best choice for myself and my family. I chose to become a part of IBEW Local 124 and was sworn in as a member on September 13, 1995. Throughout my career as an electrician, I [had previously] experienced many unjust working conditions, wages and lack of benefits—also a total disregard for individual rights. I feel my decision to enter the union was the correct choice to make. My only regret is that I wasn't informed much earlier in my career about the benefits of being a union member.

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