

# IBEW Brings LEGOLAND California to Life

**T**he first LEGOLAND theme park in the United States opened its doors to an eager public on March 20 in Carlsbad, California—and all the electrical work for the project was done union by IBEW members.

The skilled electricians of San Diego Local 569 were on the construction team that built the famous Denmark company's first U.S. park. They banded together with NECA contractors and LEGOLAND personnel to construct the immense 128-acre facility designed for children and their families.

"LEGOLAND was a great opportunity for IBEW," said Local 569 Assistant Business Manager Joe Heisler. "This project was definitely an interesting and high-profile job that IBEW is proud to have been a part of. It put a lot of people to work for over a year." The park, which features amusement rides, games, activities and entertainment, has generated widespread favorable publicity. It will provide an economic boost to Southern California by attracting tourists from around the world.

Local 569 electricians, employed by NECA contractor Morrow-Meadows Corp., spent 18 months wiring the project. The job peaked out at 139 workers and accumulated a total of 180,000 work-hours. The Morrow-Meadows IBEW electrical crew worked on a tight

schedule to install all of the electrical wiring at the park, including the lighting control, voice and data connections, and outdoor lighting on the LEGOLAND rides and other attractions. The price of the light fixture package was \$3 million, and the lighting, dimming and control package totaled \$3.5 million.

The California park is the third in a series of LEGOLAND parks. The first one opened in 1968 in Billund, Denmark, and the second in Windsor, Great Britain, in 1996. The interactive park in California incorporates more than 30 million LEGO® bricks in its design. The bricks were used to create 5,000 LEGO models that connect the ten different areas of the park—and IBEW electricians installed wiring and lighting for every one of these sections.

"LEGOLAND was a challenging project, not only because of the many rides and other features," said Morrow-Meadows project director Tom Taylor, "but

**Below, Local 569 electricians Randy Loring (left) and Mike McComas install electrical controls for the LEGOLAND project.**



[with this] Design-Assist contract, we had added responsibilities. We collaborated with the design team to prioritize the engineering disciplines and stay ahead of a very compressed time schedule. It was imperative to communicate and to perform as a team in order to complete the project quickly, accurately and safely."

Another challenge was logistical. Since the LEGO Group is based in Denmark, much of the equipment and material for the park was shipped from



**Local 569, San Diego, California, electricians employed by NECA contractor Morrow-Meadows Corp. gather at the LEGOLAND jobsite.**

overseas. “One task was the coordination between the European and American vendors,” commented Taylor. “This coordination required accurate information from both sides. Also, we had to convert European standards to American (centimeters to inches, for example). Even the wiring methods in Denmark are different. The project took a lot of teamwork, careful thought and planning.”

Installing lighting, wiring, and voice and data at a park with multiple regions posed another communications challenge. Chuck Moran, also a Morrow-

Meadows project director, said each area is unique, but “the various sections were under construction at the same time, so it was similar to having ten separate electrical projects going on all at once. IBEW electricians worked hard to keep the lines of communication open at all times to complete this difficult task.”

The Local 569 electricians began with technical drawings from the electrical engineer, incorporated the ideas of a very creative owner and lighting consultant, and installed a system that satisfied everyone involved, including, Moran

says, “the wonderfully creative people at LEGOLAND [who] look at the world through the eyes of little kids.”

“IBEW electricians met these various challenges head-on through communication, cooperation and teamwork,” said Local 569 Business Manager Allen Shur. “Many people put a lot of effort into keeping the project running smoothly. Lou Ferraro, Local 569 steward, was instrumental in facilitating the coordination of [the work]. LEGOLAND is a highly visible IBEW project that the contractors and electricians can be extremely proud of.”