

# THE ELECTRICAL WORKER

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## THE IBEW'S 2025 PHOTO CONTEST

Deadline: Oct. 31 • Details on pg. 6



*When dark money campaigns started killing off union jobs in Ohio, the IBEW found a powerful ally in the fight for a clean energy future in the Natural Resources Defense Council. The IBEW's solar market share in the state has gone from less than 10% to about 90%.*

## MENTAL HEALTH IN FOCUS

### Letters to the Editor, page 3

campaign has been killing hundreds of solar projects, threatening the hard-fought progress of the past few years not just in Ohio but across the country. Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia and even California have had dozens of projects stalled, hindered or outright blocked in the last few years.

In county after county, money from who-knows-where flows in and props up a local-sounding group. They whip concerns into a fear that becomes anger. Residents influenced by the campaigns testify in public meetings against solar and wind farms. Projects that promised jobs and public funds for schools and roads wither and die.

*"In Richland County [Ohio], where I live,*

*there are no proposals for solar projects, but 11 out of the 18 townships banned solar projects,"* McPeek said. "Until a few years ago, these solar projects were godsend. No one else is coming here with a \$350 million project."

Median household income in Richland County is \$57,000, according to the U.S. Census — compared with more than \$80,000 nationally — and almost one in five children live under the poverty line. The Richland County seat, Mansfield, home to International President Kenneth W. Cooper, was an industrial town a few generations back, so it has been shocking to McPeek how aggressively some residents have trashed projects that would provide hundreds of high-wage, career-building rural jobs.

*"It's crazy," he said.*

**SOLAR ALLIANCE** *continued on page 4*

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## FROM THE OFFICERS

# The Great Betrayal



**Kenneth W. Cooper**  
International President

**W**hen Donald Trump took the oath of office the first time eight years ago, I had serious concerns that he would turn out to be just another Republican president with handouts for the rich and the back of his hand for the rest, but I was willing to see if he kept his promises to working families.

I was willing to give him a chance because that's all that working men and women needed, what the members of the IBEW needed. A chance.

I saw enough in his first term to make up my mind that there were better options for the IBEW.

But nothing, I mean nothing, in his first term — nothing in my more than 60 years as an American citizen — comes close to the budget bill he just signed as a betrayal of everything I believe government should be for.

Not only will this bill kill hundreds of thousands of jobs that would have been IBEW jobs, but it will rip the rug from under a generation of would-be apprentices and billions of dollars of our wages will evaporate.

This isn't just about the elimination of union-friendly tax incentives for clean electric generation jobs.

This is the wholesale abandonment of a project to electrify our economy that would have made us the competitive marvel of the world with the kind of blue-collar careers we haven't seen in generations.

Now it's in tatters.

And why? What is it all for?

They'll say they made overtime tax-free. But it isn't true.

You still pay payroll taxes on overtime, and the maximum deduction is \$12,500, getting smaller the more you make. But who's working overtime when they're sitting on the bench?

And it excludes rail workers. And it ends in 2028, after the next presidential election.

You know what doesn't have a \$12,500 maximum? The deduction they left in to alleviate the struggle of owning and operating a private jet.

And you know what doesn't expire? The \$960 billion tax cut for the wealthiest. Their tax cut is forever.

Wages will fall, and tariffs will drive prices up. The average family's energy bill will go up significantly over the next half-decade, and more than 300 rural hospitals will shutter.

This so-called One Big Beautiful Bill is the greatest transfer of wealth from working people to the rich in our nation's history.

So many of our members wanted to believe that Donald Trump was different. An elite who would betray his own in favor of us for once.

This is the great betrayal.

Trump and the Republicans betrayed you and me. The billionaires and their families? They'll be fine. ■

# The Invisible Injury

I can't tell you how much relief and gratitude I've heard from people since The Electrical Worker's June cover story on the mental health crisis in the utility and construction trades.

"The Invisible Injury: Breaking the Stigma Around Mental Health" reported on the startling rates of suicide and fatal drug overdoses in our industries. But it also addressed healing, resources and what locals are doing to recognize and help struggling members.

Those efforts are expanding all the time, and it's critical that our conversation does, too. While talking about mental health isn't easy, it's the only way we break the stigma.

I'm proud to see the strides locals are making. Earlier this year, St. Louis Local 1 dedicated a Saturday morning to a series of mental health workshops to help people going through difficult times, raise awareness and train members to be able to help each other.

In Atlanta, Local 613 is offering free sessions with professional counselors on designated Saturdays. And in May, Portland, Ore., Local 48 drew almost 80 union members to hear stories of struggle and recovery from fellow trades workers and an NFL player.

Darren Waller, who overcame drug addiction early in his football career, drew parallels between his profession and ours: "As tough and as reliable as we need to be, and know that our performance is required day in and day out, there's something in us that wants to hide any level of pain that we feel and continue to show up," he said.

But we can't hide anymore. And we can't let our brothers and sisters hide. We have a sacred responsibility to each other to banish those fears for good. As vital as awareness training is, no one needs to teach us how to be kind. How to listen and not judge.

If your buddy seems distracted or just doesn't seem like himself, ask him how he's doing. Just showing you care can make a big difference. For an inspiring example, see "A Success Story" in the letters on page 3.

The IBEW's Family Medical Care Plan has long included mental health care, and we're making our programs and benefits even stronger. One new tool is Talkspace, a telemedicine service for those who aren't ready to seek help in person. Find it at [www.talkspace.com](http://www.talkspace.com).

Make no mistake: Mental health is as important to our well-being as physical health. And it's as much of a workplace safety issue as PPE and other protections.

Tackling it means talking about it, whether it's worker to worker, in trainings, through an Employee Assistance Program counselor or on the web. Together, we can change lives. ■

## My IBEW STORY

**Dalton Thompson**, apprentice wireman  
Lansing, Mich., Local 665



"I did electrical work before I joined the Army. It was commercial industrial nonunion work, and I did that for three years or so at two companies. When I joined the military in 2019, I left the electrical thing alone until I got discharged, but I've always been passionate about it."

So when I was in the military, I was looking for a way to get benefits again once I got out. My father-in-law works for the city of Lansing, and he works side by side with IBEW guys. He's the one who said, 'Hey, you should look at this.'

I was an infantryman, so there's not a lot of specific technical skills that pertain to electrical work in that role. But the skills of timeliness and discipline help because in today's workforce, it's hard to get people to show up on time. I was instilled with those traits, and that made me stand out.

Helmets to Hardhats was a really nice resource because they would help me figure things out anytime I had a question about my GI Bill or anything like that. And the Transition Assistance Program was great, too — they told us specifically what we could do on the outside that paid well but also gave good benefits. (For more information on resources for veterans, see 'New Appointee Has Veterans' Backs' in the June issue of The Electrical Worker. The article's subject, Mike Smith, is the IBEW's first international representative solely focused on veterans affairs, and he can be reached at 202-728-6096 or [Mike\\_Smith@ibew.org](mailto:Mike_Smith@ibew.org).)

The compensation for work as an IBEW member is amazing, and you can't find it anywhere else. As apprentices, we get paid as we're learning the trade, and the benefits are tremendous. Just in terms of pensions, we get multiple pensions, plus annuity and 401(k). You know, that really sets you up for life.

In the next two years, I plan to have my journeyman card. I look forward to always having work, especially because in the union you can go anywhere and work anywhere — you'll never be out of work, even if you have to travel for it. That's a nice thing to have in your back pocket. And I like doing the work — I love seeing things in progress.

So I'm excited for the next 10 to 15 years doing this work where I am and who I'm with. ■

**Every member in every branch has a story to tell about how the IBEW has improved their life both on and off the job. Tell us yours today for a chance to be featured here.**

**[ibew.org/MyIBEWStory](http://ibew.org/MyIBEWStory)**



**Paul A. Noble**  
International Secretary-Treasurer

**THE METER**

**700**

The average number of full-time union jobs for at least two years on a 350-megawatt solar farm project, according to Fourth District International Representative Aaron Brown.

*See the cover story, "Solar Alliance: A Strategic Partnership Wins Work and Fights a Common Enemy," for more information.*

# “LETTERS TO THE EDITOR”

The June Electrical Worker's cover story, "The Invisible Injury: Breaking the Stigma Around Mental Health," sparked an outpouring of reactions from readers. These letters, edited for length, are a small sample of members' responses to the article. Scan this QR code to see the original article, as well as another IBEW member's personal story.



## A Success Story

I was glad to see the important story in June's Electrical Worker about mental health in the construction trades. It hit home. In recent years at Local 77, we've tragically had a number of suicides and drug overdoses among our membership across Washington state.

As we work hard to change that through trainings and tools for helping members in crisis, I wanted to share a success story.

As a union rep, I've always told my members to give me a call anytime; my phone is always on. One Sunday around noon, an apprentice called. He began to cry and said that he had messed up. I asked what happened. As he was talking, I could tell he was drunk. Suddenly, he stopped with his story and said that he was going to end everything.

I asked what he meant by that, and he replied that he was going to end himself. I said: "Whoa, man. Hang on. There is no need to do that. I am here. Let's just talk and work through this. That's what I am here for." He said it was no use and he'd made up his mind.

I asked to come over so we could talk in person. He said no. I rephrased the question and asked him for his address. On the way there, I realized he might have a weapon. I called someone I knew from labor relations at the utility and asked if he'd come with me.

When the young man opened his door, we could see a broken window, beer and whiskey bottles everywhere, and holes in the walls. He told us he'd had a bad weekend and gotten in some legal trouble. But after sitting with him and talking for a while, we finally convinced him to get some help. We drove all over the city that afternoon and evening looking for a rehab facility that he was comfortable with.

He eventually returned to his apprenticeship, though it ultimately didn't work out for him. But something else did. About two years later, we had some workers at our Spokane hall doing HVAC maintenance. One of them looked very familiar. He walked up and said, "Mike, do you remember me?" I was shocked to realize it was the same man.

I congratulated him on looking so good and asked how he was doing. "Great!" he said. He was loving his new trade. The same person who'd been quiet, timid and gravely depressed was now positive and upbeat. He was a whole new person.

It was one of the coolest things I'd ever witnessed. It's proof that with caring and intervention and not taking "no" for an answer, we can save lives.

*Mike Brown  
Assistant Business Manager  
Seattle Local 77*

## Renewed Hope

Being in recovery for 36+ years, this gives me a renewed hope that it has all been worth it. Those of us who are in the trades, whether you are union or not, cannot ignore this article. We have to embrace it and make it part of that three-legged stool that becomes the foundation of life: mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

Those of us who are lucky enough have been able to weather the storm and found the tools to keep our heads above water are fortunate to be here. There are plenty of people in our business that still need to be guided to a pathway of a healthy life.

*Keith Rizzo Prendergast  
Boston Local 103, via Facebook*

## Broken Health Care System

Your article piqued my interest. There are a lot of good points, but I'd like to address working through the pain of an injury. In my own experience with chronic back pain, trying to get help is not that simple. And it affects your mental health, too.

First you start down the rabbit hole of seeing your doctor, getting X-rays and, when your injury doesn't show up, starting physical therapy. You do this one to three times a week for however long, meaning you have to leave early or take days off, only to find PT doesn't help.

Then you might get a CT scan, which also showed nothing in my case, then get referred to a specialist who might not be able to see you for months. Then a referral to a pain specialist and more waiting for an injection that only gives you short-term relief. After all that, you might get sent back to the orthopedist for an MRI.

By this time, you have missed weeks of work and still have no long-term relief. For me, it took nearly two years before I finally had surgery. The pain is still not completely gone but is now manageable.

The depression and anxiety were bad for those two years. I was going to sleep praying for death. It was taking a toll on my marriage. All because our health care system was making me jump through so many hoops to get help.

Short-term disability doesn't make it any easier. Could you live on \$575 a week when your normal income is \$2,000-\$3,000 a week? Luckily, my wife makes good money, but for a lot of people that's not the case. If you're still working and have to leave early one or more days a week, you might just find yourself on a one-man layoff.

In my opinion, all these hurdles are why some people get addicted to painkillers or other drugs. We need help for our injuries without having to waste years of our lives.

Get us help for injuries faster without having to waste years of our lives. I'm in a better place now, but going through this I have to admit I was in a very dark place being at the mercy of our health care system.

*Bob Demien  
Orlando, Fla., Local 222*

## Speak Up and Ask for Help

I just wanted to say thank you for putting out in the June Electrical Worker the article about mental health, especially in the trades. This is a huge issue that needs to be addressed.

I have personally had a really tough go for the past couple of years, and in May I decided to step away from my work as a Local 98 organizer to get myself help and get better. It has not been easy, but I am very fortunate that my wife and I have put ourselves in a position to be able to take the time off.

I know there are brothers and sisters who may not be in the same position. This tends to make people not speak up or ask for help. There is a stigma that as construction workers we keep everything bottled up and just deal with our problems.

I hope that when I'm able and ready to return to work I can help others. We unfortunately lose too many people to these situations, mental health and drug-related.

Again, thanks to you and your staff for addressing this very important matter. This one really hits home for me and my family.

*Pete Addalli  
Philadelphia Local 98*



## Suicide Prevention in Construction

### 5 Things You Should Know

**1**  
BE AWARE

#### Everyone can help prevent loss by suicide.

Mental health and suicide can be difficult to talk about – especially with work colleagues – but your actions can make a difference. When you work closely with others, you may sense when something is wrong.

**2**  
PAY ATTENTION

#### Know the warning signs of suicide.

There is no single cause for suicide but there are warning signs. Changes in behavior, mood, social media posts, or even what they say may signal someone is at risk. Take these signs seriously. It could save a life.

**3**  
REACH OUT

#### Ask "Are you okay?"

If you are concerned about a coworker, talk with them privately, be compassionate, and listen without judgment. Encourage them to reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Member Assistance Program (MAP), the human resources (HR) department, or a mental health professional.

**4**  
TAKE ACTION

#### If someone is in crisis, stay with them and get help.

If you believe a coworker is at immediate risk of suicide, stay with them until you can get further help. Contact emergency services or the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**.

**5**  
LEARN MORE

#### Suicide prevention resources are available.

- Call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
- Visit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention website ([www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)) and the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention website ([www.preventconstructionsuicide.com](http://www.preventconstructionsuicide.com)) to learn more about suicide risk factors, warning signs, and what you can do to help prevent suicide.
- Visit OSHA's website ([www.osha.gov/preventing-suicides](http://www.osha.gov/preventing-suicides)).

Source: OSHA

**Continued from page 1**

# Solar Alliance A Strategic Partnership Wins Work and Fights a Common Enemy

## Dark Money, Loud Message

Grid-scale solar projects are almost uniquely good for union workers. Ohio law gives solar projects a special tax status if they have at least 70% in-state workers.

Another huge boost for union workers had been the Inflation Reduction Act, which provides federal tax benefits when developers follow Davis-Bacon prevailing wage laws and use registered apprentices. But the worker protections in the IRA have been gravely weakened by the passage of President Donald Trump's budget bill (See editorial on page 2 for more details.)

"On average, for every megawatt of solar in a project, there are two full-time union jobs for at least two years. A 350-megawatt project is 700 jobs," said Fourth District International Representative Aaron Brown, whose duties cover renewable energy and government affairs in the district. "Even better, these aren't jobs where our members who live out in the country have to drive hours into the city or leave home for weeks and months at a time. This is years of work where you are home for dinner every night."

Grid-scale has also been a valuable organizing tool. Local 688 has close to 300 members and is at full employment. Stripping nonunion workers is much simpler when there are available jobs that don't require a journeyman certification but pay journeyman wages. It's an enormous, and rare, opportunity for the people looking for work in these rural communities.

"We're stripping nonunion apprentices and sending them right to work because there are no CE/CWs on these jobs," McPeek said. "We pulled in three recently who just finished their nonunion apprenticeship, classified them internally as CE/CWs until we could get them tested and sorted, and still sent them out on journeyman wages. They have since tested in as journeymen and are working on other projects."

But over the last half-decade, McPeek started to see something he didn't understand at first. Opposition to wind and solar projects rocketed up out seemingly nowhere. And somehow, opponents always had the money to get the word out. Mailers. Pamphlets. Spam text alerts. Yard signs. In Knox County, a Pro Publica investigation found that solar opponents even bought the county's only newspaper, the Mount Vernon News.

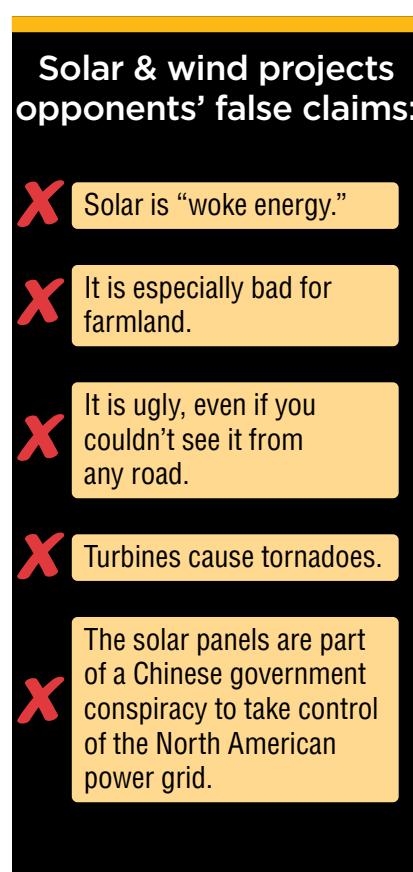
All the messages were the same, too:

*Solar was "woke energy."  
It was especially bad for farmland.  
It was ugly, even if you couldn't see it from any road.*

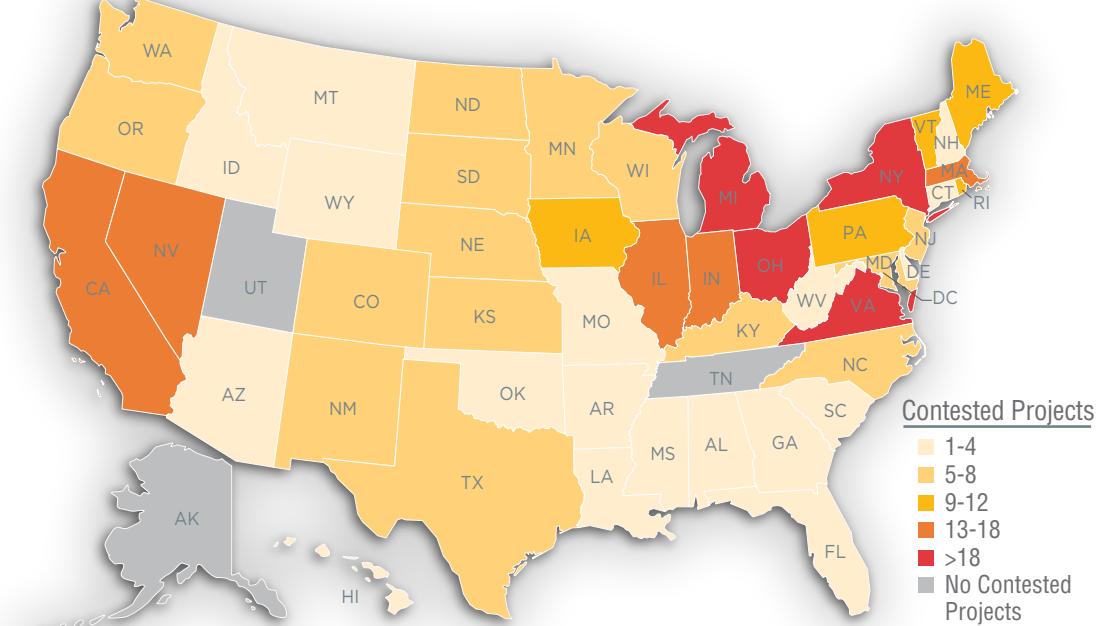
And lack of beauty was all of a sudden a good enough reason to tell people what they could and couldn't build on their own land.

*Turbines caused tornadoes.*

*The solar panels were part of a Chinese government conspiracy to take con-*



## Total Contested Projects per State



*A well-funded opposition is killing off hundreds of solar and wind construction jobs across the country by denying permits or passing bans preventing landowners from leasing their own land.*

Source: Sabin Center for Climate Change Law



*The alliance between the IBEW and the Natural Resources Defense Council, known as Powering Your Community, fights for landowners' rights, for union jobs, and for a clean energy future.*

*trol of the North American power grid.*

"We're not even installing solar panels from China!" McPeek said, adding that there are panel factories near Columbus and Toledo.

## Plotting to Kill an Industry

These arguments were not coming from a handful of powerless busybodies.

"Projects were dying," Brown said.

The tipping point came in 2021, when the Ohio governor signed S.B. 52, empowering counties to stop solar and wind development. Counties couldn't stop chemical plants, feed lots, strip mines or

fireworks factories, just grid-scale solar over 50 MW and wind over 5 MW.

"It's all so weird and un-American," Brown said.

Concerted, well-funded and eerily similar campaigns popped up like dandelions.

"They all started as local campaigns but always founded by someone wealthy. And they always had a huge amount of money to spend," he said.

The funding was too big to be local and the message too consistent to really be about local concerns. Because it wasn't.

For example, in Knox County, opposition to the Fraser solar project went by the name Knox Smart Development. In September of 2024, founder Jared Yost

testified before the Ohio Power Siting Board, which must approve all grid-scale solar projects. Yost denied that his organization had taken any money from "individuals or entities having any interest or providing any goods or services to the fossil fuel industry."

But under oath, Yost admitted that two of his largest funders were Tom Rastin and his wife, Karen Buchwald Wright, who own one of the nation's largest methane compressor companies.

"Rastin sees the economics of his industry failing. He's not interested in changing his products — he is stuck in the 1950s. He wants to get us stuck in the loop with him," said Dan Mogerman, spokesman for the Natural Resources Defense Council.



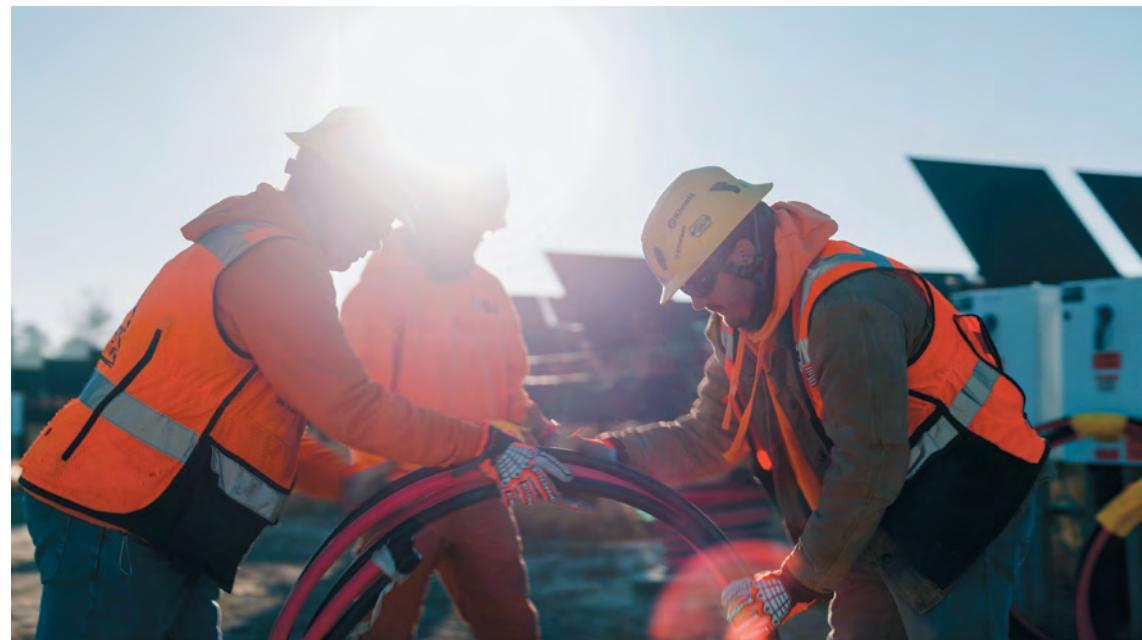
Anti-clean-energy groups have been remarkably successful. More than a quarter of Ohio counties — nearly all of them rural counties with space and proposals for large-scale solar — have instituted near-total bans.

"This law only allows you to stop solar and wind. You don't want a munitions factory next door? Too bad. You want to build a feed lot? Go right ahead. You want to tear up your fields and build apartments as far as the eye can see? Be our guest. But if you want to keep your farm and lease the land to a solar company, well there the government puts in its boot," Brown said.

It was all upside down.

## Building an Alliance

And just as unusual was who kept showing up to fight for the union-built projects. From the statehouse to the Power Siting Board to county zoning commission meetings to township meetings, standing on the same side as the IBEW was an



*All communities have legitimate concerns about how they change. Powering Your Community guarantees that local voices in favor of responsible, union projects aren't drowned out by outside big-money interests.*

**"I learned that I have a partner I can trust to get the job done. If I put my neck on the line for the union, they will deliver. .... We need a commitment to use union labor or we will not engage."**

— Dan Sawmiller, the Ohio director of energy policy for the NRDC



unexpected ally: Dan Sawmiller, the Ohio director of energy policy for the NRDC, a global environmental advocacy and policy organization.

"It started organically. When we first started talking, there was small-scale opposition to specific projects, but they weren't major hurdles yet. All of a sudden, we had tiki torches and pitchforks at every meeting," Sawmiller said.

After S.B. 52 passed, Fourth District International Representative Steve Crum and Sawmiller started talking. They quickly brought in Jon Rosenberger, director of business development, who brought in Gina Cooper, then the Fourth District international vice president.

"As we built the relationship, we realized this is unique. Dan can get into rooms we can't, and we can get into rooms where they can't," Rosenberger said. "We complement each other."

Solar development is a complicated, fast-evolving industry. Few developers have deep connections to unions or to the communities where they planned to build. They had project plans, money and

leased land, but the opposition was strangling their projects.

The IBEW could get members who live in every county to argue for development, but Rosenberger said it was nearly impossible to find the people in the industry who could or would make a commitment to use union labor.

The NRDC, on the other hand, knew exactly who in the industry was making the decisions, and it brought policy chops and campaign expertise that helped determine where and when to intervene. But it is a global operation, and town-by-town organizing is not where it excels.

Developers were nervous about unions. The IBEW was uninterested in putting time or members' dues and effort to get a project approved without written agreements.

The bridge was built on Zoom calls and in informal meetings.

"It's a virtuous cycle. We are not just getting more of the work, but we are making sure there is more work overall," Rosenberger said. "Before, we reached out to developers, and they would call us

back when they got around to it if at all. Now they call us with an agreement already signed."

It hasn't been seamless. In the early days of the partnership, when things were more informal, a solar developer went with nonunion workers on the Hillcrest project after the IBEW had intervened, Sawmiller said.

The developer wouldn't budge, but when the contractor ran into trouble, Sawmiller made it clear to the developer how he saw it: They had to get the IBEW on site.

The developer did hire a union contractor, and the members did what they do. The problems were fixed. The project was back on schedule. Budget targets were met.

"I learned that I have a partner I can trust to get the job done. If I put my neck on the line for the union, they will deliver. I can take this risk," Sawmiller said. "Now it is ironclad. We need a commitment to use union labor or we will not engage."

The partnership was formalized in 2024, when Cooper and NRDC President and CEO Manish Bapna signed a memorandum of understanding creating Powering Your Community, or PYC, a collaboration to get more clean energy generation built in Ohio and have all of it built union.

"We were already doing the work. We just put a name to it," Mogerman said.

And the results for IBEW members are there to see. With market share approaching 100%, solar developers are starting to compete in the wider pool of union electrical workers. For the first time, Columbus Local 683 negotiated a per diem on a solar job, \$100 a day.

"It provides work for our rural members who always had to drive into the city, and because of the size of the projects, we can recruit people who would normally only be a CE or a CW and start their career," said Business Manager Pat Hook. "I think between 75 and 100 of our apprentices started out on a solar project."

*In return for an agreement to use union labor, PYC will train IBEW members to advocate for clean energy projects in Ohio and soon Pennsylvania and Virginia.*

PYC clarified roles and goals and allowed the group greater access to philanthropic support. The PYC will fund and run trainings for members to speak more effectively at public meetings and hearings. It will become a statewide hub to coordinate the strengths of each of the partners as they fight for union jobs.

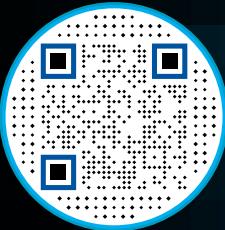
It also sets a template for expansion, to Virginia in the Fourth District and Pennsylvania in the Third District.

"We used to fight on opposite sides of projects," Rosenberger said. "With renewables, we are learning just the same as them. But the more common ground we found, the more common ground we found we could make. There is more to this relationship." ■

# THE IBEW'S 2025 PHOTO CONTEST

The IBEW Photo Contest has been The Electrical Worker's way to ride shotgun with brothers and sisters for a quarter of a century. Your pictures bring us closer together and are a showcase for the critical role members play in the life and work of North America.

The hundreds of submissions we receive every year are a priceless contribution to our story: the story of working people that is too often ignored or, worse, hidden. But just because something is priceless doesn't mean a value can't be put on it.



See official rules and submission instructions at [IBEW.org/  
photocontest](http://IBEW.org/photocontest).

Entries **MUST** be submitted electronically by Oct. 31 via the Photo Contest link on [IBEW.org](http://IBEW.org). Please contact the Media Department at [media@IBEW.org](mailto:media@IBEW.org) or 202-728-6102 with additional questions.



**Top Prize: \$1,000**

**Second Place: \$750**

**Third Place: \$500**

A **\$200 Honorable Mention** will also be awarded for EACH BRANCH of the IBEW:

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| ► Broadcasting         | ► Manufacturing      |
| ► Inside Construction  | ► Railroad           |
| ► Outside Construction | ► Telecommunications |
| ► Government           | ► Utility            |







The new law increases penalties for harassment and assault of utility workers. Pictured are members of Houston Local 66.

## New Texas Law Protects Utility Workers From Harassment, Assault

**L**ineworkers are used to working under dangerous conditions, from downed power lines to high-voltage electricity. What they shouldn't experience on the job is harassment and physical assault. A new law in Texas aims to correct this problem.

"Our members went through hell following Hurricane Beryl — enduring threats and even assault — all while trying to get the power back on for folks," Houston Local 66 Business Manager Ed Allen said. "This is about safety. Our repair crews work tirelessly during natural disasters, and this bill will keep them a bit more protected."

The law, which had bipartisan support, increases the penalties for both harassment and assault. Beginning Sept. 1, when it goes into effect, assaulting a utility worker will be punishable as a third-degree felony, which carries with it a maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. The penalty for harassment will increase from a Class B misdemeanor to a Class A, which could get someone a one-year jail sentence and a \$4,000 fine.

Texas is not known for being worker-friendly, making the relative ease of getting the bill passed an anomaly. But the way many lineworkers were treated in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl served as a wake-up call for many legislators, particularly those from hard-hit Houston.

It took more than 10 days last summer, when Beryl hit, to get all the power restored, which resulted in a lot of angry customers. Unfortunately, the only people from the utility company who most saw were lineworkers, who bore the brunt of people's frustration.

Workers endured verbal harassment, guns pulled on them and even being shot at with pellet guns. One staging area that had about 2,000 crews

had to be relocated because of all the abuse.

"They lost roughly three days of work because of that," said Local 66 Business Representative Donny Mayo, who testified in support of the bill.

Some out-of-state crews were ready to head back home because of the animosity and danger, Texas AFL-CIO President Rick Levy said.

"Beryl put everything in really stark terms," Levy said. "People were frustrated, and rightfully so, but they took it out on the workers."

Levy credits Local 66 for getting the bill over the finish line.

"This bill would not have passed without the IBEW," he said. "They saw what their members needed, and they painted a clear picture of that need in a way that everyone in the Legislature could understand."

Mayo noted that the bill was made more palatable to the Legislature by including all utility workers under the new protections, from call center representatives to gas workers to lineworkers.

"The route that [bill author Sen. Carol] Alvarado took, to include all utilities, meant that it wasn't just a bill for union members," Mayo said. "Otherwise, we would have had the door slammed on us."

Representatives of CenterPoint Energy testified alongside Mayo and others in support of the bill, which passed the Senate in April and the House in May. No one testified against it when it was in the Senate's Criminal Justice Committee, exemplifying the broad backing the legislation had. Gov. Greg Abbott signed it into law June 20.

"It was a very easy win for us to get," Mayo said. "I can't thank Senator Alvarado and Representative Sam Harless enough."

Texas joins roughly 20 other states in enacting legislation to protect lineworkers. ■



## Master Traffic Control Pact a Win for All Sides in Vancouver

**A**fter two decades of steady growth, the traffic control unit at Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 258 was thriving — so much so that the union in recent years was juggling more than 20 contracts for largely identical work.

"It was a lot to administer," Business Manager Cody Gatzke said. "We were always in bargaining."

But in 2023, Gatzke and his staff achieved a goal the local first set in the early 2000s: negotiating a master traffic control agreement.

**[Local 258] brought leadership together, challenged the status quo, and executed a plan that not only streamlines their efforts but also strengthens their market position.**

*—First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk*

The pact covers 17 employers and about half of the local's 600 traffic control workers. The others work for the largest signatory, Universal Group, which has a stand-alone contract. But even it is streamlined, linking what used to be four



regional agreements.

Benefiting workers and employers alike, the master agreement bodes well as the parties begin renewal talks this month, Gatzke said. The current pact expires Dec. 31.

"Consolidation has levelled the playing field among signatory employers in terms of wages and working conditions," he said. "We were able to get significant raises, improvements in health and welfare benefits, premium pay. An experienced lane closure technician in our union can now make about \$37 an hour."

Traffic control workers are dispatched to everything from utility projects and roadwork to crashes, storm debris and downed power lines, in addition to concerts, ballgames and other events where thousands of vehicles converge.

Their jobs are thankless and risky, safeguarding work areas with orange cones as vehicles speed past and wielding the "Stop" and "Slow" signs that often anger drivers. It's not uncommon for workers to jump from one job to another in search of a better deal, many of them lured by a competing employer.

**NORTH OF 49° continued on page 9**



*After years of Vancouver, British Columbia, Local 258 negotiating more than 20 traffic control contracts, a master agreement now covers 17 employers and about half of the local's 600-member traffic sector. Workers, like those seen above protecting a utility crew and passersby, now enjoy equal pay and benefits.*

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But Gatzke and others say the master agreement is helping stabilize the industry, cutting down on poaching and ending animosity among workers over disparate pay and benefits.

"Finally, everyone is equal," said April Wolsynuk, a Local 258 shop steward with 16 years in traffic control. "There's none of that 'I'm better than you' mindset anymore. No one company is better than the other. We're all doing the same work, and we all just want to go home safe at the end of the day."

Local 258's first traffic control members — barely 10 workers — came from a smaller local that amalgamated in 1990. But local leaders saw opportunity, setting their sights on traffic contractors working for BC Hydro.

In 2002, as the unit continued to grow, Business Manager Doug McKay floated the idea of a master agreement. But early attempts failed.

Twenty years later, when Gatzke took over for McKay, he found a decade-old draft of a master proposal. He and Assistant Business Manager Dayna Gill, who'd been a traffic control worker herself, were determined to make it happen.

They capitalized on the local's master line agreement for outside contractors, going back to the 1980s. One of the line companies had a traffic division, and several traffic-only employers were familiar with the success of the outside contract, which covers 40 signatories.

"Those owners helped bring the concept of master traffic to fruition," Gatzke said. "They helped us wrangle other employers and get their buy-in."

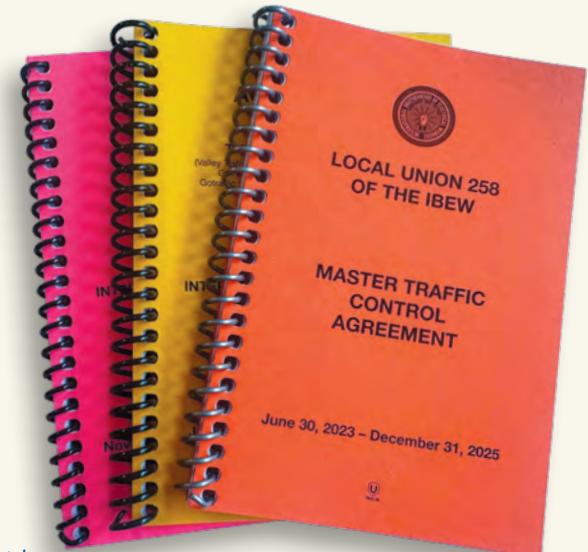
Although some IBEW utilities and outside contractors include traffic control positions, it is rare — so far — for Canadian or U.S. locals to represent the industry's independent employers.

Gill, who moved to the First District staff Aug. 1, intends to change that. Now an international representative, she is eager to help other Canadian locals organize traffic control units.

"It's really exciting," she said. "It's something I've always done, but now I'll be able to do it on a larger scale. Traffic control is a great career, and it's also a great way for IBEW locals to grow."

First District International Vice President Russ Shewchuk couldn't agree more.

"I have challenged our locals across Canada to think outside the box when it comes to organizing and growing our membership," Shewchuk said. "Local 258 has done exactly that. They brought leadership together, challenged the status quo, and executed a plan that not only streamlines their efforts but also strengthens their market position. This is the kind of bold action that moves our union forward and allows us to reach more members in an impactful way." ■



*Local 258 Business Manager Cody Gatzke said the master agreement "has levelled the playing field among signatory employers — significant raises, improvements in health and welfare benefits, premium pay. An experienced lane closure technician in our union can now make about \$37 an hour."*

### Share your IBEW news!

IBEW Canada is seeking impactful stories from local unions and members. Please contact Shaina Hardie at [Shaina\\_Hardie@ibew.org](mailto:Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org).

## AU NORD DU 49° PARALLÈLE

# Le pacte-cadre sur la signalisation routière est une victoire pour toutes les parties à Vancouver

**A**près deux décennies de croissance constante, l'unité de la signalisation routière de la section locale 258 à Vancouver en Colombie-Britannique était en plein essor, à tel point que le syndicat au cours des dernières années jonglait avec plus de 20 conventions collectives pour un travail en grande partie identique.

« C'était beaucoup à gérer », déclare le gérant d'affaires Cody Gatzke. « Nous étions constamment en négociation. »

Mais en 2023, M. Gatzke et son personnel ont atteint un objectif que le local s'est fixé au début des années 2000 : négocier une convention collective cadre pour le secteur de la signalisation routière.

Le pacte couvre 17 chefs d'entreprises et environ la moitié des 600 signaleuses routières et des signaleurs routiers du local. Les autres travaillent pour le plus grand employeur, Universal Group, qui dispose d'une convention collective indépendante; cet accord même est simplifié, car il relie ce qui était auparavant 4 conventions collectives régionales.

Bénéficiant autant la main-d'œuvre que les employeurs, cette convention collective cadre est de bon augure, car ce mois-ci, les parties ont commencé à discuter de son renouvellement. Le pacte en vigueur expire le 31 décembre.

« La consolidation a uniformisé les règles du jeu parmi les employeurs signataires en matière de salaire et de conditions de travail », dit-il. « Nous serons capables d'obtenir des augmentations salariales considérables, d'améliorer les avantages pour la santé et le bien-être et d'améliorer les salaires majorés. Un technicien expérimenté de la signalisation routière dans notre syndicat peut maintenant gagner 37 \$/heure. »

Ces travailleurs sont envoyés à travailler sur

« [Le local 258] a réuni le leadership, a remis en question le statu quo et a exécuté un plan qui a simplifié leur effort, mais a aussi renforcé leur représentativité. »

*— Le vice-président international du Premier District, Russ Shewchuk*

tous les fronts, comme : des projets de services publics, des travaux routiers ou d'accidents, des débris causés par des tempêtes et des lignes électriques endommagées, en plus des spectacles, des jeux de balles et d'autres événements où de milliers de véhicules convergent.

Leur travail est ingrat et risqué : ils protègent les zones de travail à l'aide des cônes orange alors que les véhicules passent à toute vitesse et brandissent les signaux « arrêt » et « ralentir » qui suscitent souvent la colère chez les automobilistes. Il est fréquent pour un travailleur de passer d'un emploi à un autre à la recherche de meilleures conditions, plusieurs d'entre elles et eux se font attirer par des employeurs en concurrence.

Cependant, M. Gatzke et d'autres disent que la convention collective cadre aide à stabiliser l'industrie, à réduire le débauchage et à mettre fin à l'animosité entre la main-d'œuvre en raison de la disparité des salaires et des avantages sociaux.

« Finalement, tout le monde est égal », exprime April Wolsynuk, une déléguée syndicale du local 258 qui possède 16 ans d'expérience dans la signalisation routière. « Il n'y a plus cette mentalité "je suis meilleur que toi". Aucune entreprise n'est meilleure qu'une autre. Nous effectuons tous le même travail et nous ne voulons que retourner à la maison en toute sécurité. »

Les premiers membres de ce secteur, à peine 10 membres, du local 258 proviennent d'un plus petit local qui s'est amalgamé en 1990. Les leaders du local ont donc saisi l'occasion et ont jeté leur dévolu sur les entrepreneurs de la signalisation routière qui travaillaient pour BC Hydro.

En 2002, alors que l'unité comptait de plus en plus de membres, le gérant d'affaires Doug McKay a lancé l'idée d'une convention collective cadre, mais les tentatives hâtives ont échoué.

20 ans plus tard, quand M. Gatzke a pris la relève de M. McKay, il a trouvé une ébauche d'une convention collective cadre vieille de 10 ans. Lui et l'assistante gérante d'affaires Dayna Gill, étant elle-même signaleuse routière, étaient déterminés à la concrétiser.

Ils se sont inspirés de la convention collective cadre des employeurs de monteurs de lignes qui date des années 80. Une des entreprises de lignes comptait une division de signalisation routière et plusieurs employeurs de signalisation routière uniquement connaissaient bien le succès de la convention collective des monteurs de lignes qui couvraient 40 signataires.

« Ces propriétaires ont contribué à concrétiser le concept d'une convention collective cadre », formule M. Gatzke. « Ils ont aidé à convaincre d'autres employeurs et à obtenir leur participation. »

Bien que le poste de signaleur routier soit compris dans quelques entreprises de services publics et de lignes, jusqu'à présent, c'est plus tôt rare pour les sections locales canadiennes et américaines de représenter les employeurs indépendants de cette industrie.

Mme Gill, qui fera partie du personnel du Premier District à compter du 1er août est maintenant organisatrice syndicale principale à l'internationale pour l'Ouest canadien, a l'intention de changer la donne; elle a hâte d'aider les sections locales canadiennes à syndiquer les unités de signalisation routière.

« C'est vraiment captivant », dit-elle. « C'est une chose que j'ai toujours faite ici, mais maintenant je peux le faire sur une plus grande échelle. Ce métier est une excellente carrière et c'est aussi une bonne façon de faire augmenter le nombre des membres des sections locales de la FIOE. »

Le vice-président international du Premier District, Russ Shewchuk, est tout à fait d'accord.

« J'ai mis au défi toutes les sections locales du Canada à faire preuve d'originalité lorsque le temps est venu de syndiquer et d'augmenter le nombre des membres », prononce M. Shewchuk. « Le local 258 a tout compris. Il a réuni le leadership, a remis en question le statu quo et a exécuté un plan qui a simplifié leur effort, mais a aussi renforcé leur représentativité. Cette action audacieuse fait avancer notre syndicat et permet d'atteindre plus de membres d'une manière importante. » ■

### Racontez-nous vos nouvelles FIOE!

La FIOE cherche des histoires marquantes des sections locales et des membres. Veuillez communiquer avec Shaina Hardie à [Shaina\\_Hardie@ibew.org](mailto:Shaina_Hardie@ibew.org).

# CIRCUITS

## IBEW Apprentices Take Home Medals at Skills Canada Competition

Apprentices Tyler Green and Zack Russell represented their provinces and their locals with top-notch skills and professionalism at this year's Skills Canada National Competition.

Green, an apprentice with Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804, won the silver medal in electrical installation. Halifax, Nova Scotia, Local 625 apprentice Russell took home the bronze in the same category.

"It's tough to medal at the nationals. It means a lot to have someone from our local win one," said Local 625 instructor John Harding, who sits on the Skills Canada national committee and the provincial one for Nova Scotia. The organization exists to encourage young people to go into the building trades. "It shows that we have some of the best training in Canada."

**"We prepare them better than the colleges do."**

—Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804  
Training Director Peter Caesar

The Skills Canada National Competition comprises more than 40 skill areas that over 500 students and apprentices from all over Canada compete in. Competitors first have to win their provincial or territorial contests before competing at the national event, which was held in Regina, Saskatchewan, in May.

In the electrical installation category, competition lasts 12 hours over two days on a tight schedule — which is part of the challenge.

"There's a good amount of stress around timing," Green said. "There's a lot to do with just enough time to do it, so it's very rewarding to finish the competition and be able to look at your



*In the above photo, Tyler Green, left, an apprentice with Local 804, won silver in electrical installation at the Skills Canada National Competition. Local 625 apprentice Zack Russell, right, won bronze. At right is Green mid-competition.*

completed work and say you were able to finish in time."

The apprentices and students competing in the category need to be well versed in a number of areas, including the general Canadian code, motor controls, programmable logic controller wiring and programming, reading blueprints and spec sheets, and residential wiring.

"It's a good mix of everything," said Local 804 Training Director Peter Caesar. "And you need to be accurate."

Green and Russell both credit the IBEW with preparing them for such a competitive endeavor.

"There was an emphasis on safe working practices and neat, clean work, which I feel the IBEW strives for more than the nonunion companies I worked for previously," said Russell, who's in his fourth year of the apprenticeship.

That two of the three medalists were IBEW apprentices proves that the union's training is among the best in the country, Harding and Caesar said.

"We prepare them better than the colleges do," Caesar said. "It shows that what we're doing is working and that taking the time to do proper training is paying off."

The IBEW presence extends beyond the workmanship of Green and Russell. Members from Hamilton Local 105, Toronto Local 353 and Local 804 set up the competition in Ontario. They also have a booth with the Construction Council of Ontario where they can talk with the thousands of competitors, visitors, industry leaders and others who attend the event.

Local 625 hosts some of the provincial competitions, and Harding creates and plans the electrical project that participants compete in. It's a job that



takes the better part of a year to pull off, he said, and speaks to how massive the event is.

"The national competition takes up the size of three hockey rinks, not including the outdoor components," said Harding, who's been involved with the competition for almost 20 years. "There are opening and closing ceremonies. It's quite a production."

Both Green and Russell recommend competing in Skills Canada.

"It was a remarkable experience," Green said. "If anyone has a chance to go and compete, they should."

Added Russell: "I'm very happy about competing in Skills Canada. They put a great emphasis on striving for great work and safe work. I feel like they're helping push the trades in the right direction." ■

at different points in their career: an apprentice, a journeywoman and a retired member. The panel was moderated by Women's Committee founding member and event chair Debbie Erbach.

PowerForward DuPage Executive Director Karyn Charvat said the idea for the event came from their Trade Apprenticeship Expo, which started in 2018. PowerForward DuPage is the Labor Management Cooperation Committee for Local 701 and the Northeastern Illinois chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association.

"Our annual Trade Apprenticeship Expo targets high school students and introduces them to all union building trades, so the rationale behind this exciting new event was to specifically highlight the electrical contracting industry and target women within DuPage County and introduce them to an alternate path to a viable, achievable

and successful career, with or without a college degree," said Charvat.

Erbach said they thought it would be great to reach out directly to women since they're not always presented with the option of pursuing a career in the trades.

"Not everyone is destined for college and the trades offer great opportunities," said Erbach, who is a safety supervisor at Continental Electrical Construction Company.

The event, held in late March, included opening remarks from DuPage County Board Chair Deb Conroy, Clemons and Local 701 Business Manager Anthony Giunti.

"When women see what it's about and that they can pull cable and bend pipe too, you can see it click for them," Giunti said. "It's a great thing to witness."

Members of the Women's Committee were also on hand to answer questions and lead the tour.

"There were a lot of questions about the apprenticeship and the different career paths available," Charvat said.

Local 701's Women's Committee received its charter in 2019 and has hosted a number of events, including some that are open to the full membership. The events include a clothing drive for local charities, volunteering at a Special Olympics picnic and an animal adoption



*Members of Lisle, Ill., Local 701's Women's Committee welcome attendees to its Women's Expo in March.*



*Russell said of Skills Canada, "I feel like they're helping push the trades in the right direction."*



The Women's Expo, hosted Local 701's Women's Committee, showed interested women the skills they need to have on a jobsite and for a good career.

event, and making Valentine's Day cards for the Ronald McDonald House.

"Our Women's Committee puts its heart and soul into everything they do," Giunti said. "And it's great to see a bunch of burly electricians covered in glitter and glue from making Valentine's Day cards."

Erbach said it's crucial to have leadership on board for events like the expo.

## "Our Women's Committee puts its heart and soul into everything they do."

*—Local 701 Business Manager Anthony Giunti*

"Without buy-in from our leadership, we have nothing," she said. "We're an extremely small group within our local, accounting for just 1.5% of the membership. Having support from Business Manager Giunti and Vice President Clemmons makes a big difference."

Giunti said that while electrical work is currently male-dominated, it doesn't have to stay that way.

"There's so much good talent out there," Giunti said. "It's important to let everyone know that there's a spot for them."

Charvat, Erbach and Giunti said they plan to host another expo next spring.

"The expo was a success because of the positive energy and enthusiasm of everyone involved," Charvat said. "We're already working on carrying that forward and making next year's expo even better." ■

## D.C. Local Partners With Nonprofit to Introduce Teens to Trades

For Roberto Gomez, the construction trades are more than just a paycheck. They're a ticket to the middle class.

"The trades showed me an alternative path to a great living, one that doesn't rely solely on the traditional college route, which in many ways is becoming obsolete," said Gomez, who founded Cornerstone Craftsman, a nonprofit that works with at-risk teens and introduces them to the skilled trades. "They helped me avoid dead-end jobs that would have kept me stuck at the bottom of the working class and living close to the poverty line."

Gomez started the organization in 2021 and about a year later met Washington, D.C., Local 26 Political

Coordinator Don Slaiman. They quickly bonded over a shared mission to help the communities where they work and investing in the next generation of tradespeople.

"Roberto comes from a life that's similar to the kids he works with. He can empathize with them," Slaiman said. "And he's completely invested. He always puts them first."

Gomez started with five teenagers and more passion than funding. Today, he has close to 40 students and a waiting list. He's also learned how to fundraise.

"Roberto is good at fundraising because donors can see that he's the real deal," Slaiman said.

Cornerstone Craftsman, based in Alexandria, Va., works with middle and high school students and stays in touch with them after they've finished school.

Part of what makes the program successful is Gomez's commitment and

willingness to help his students in whatever way they need. If that's a ride to school, Gomez takes them. He's helped some get their driver's license.

And when he found out that some kids weren't coming to school because they couldn't wash their clothes at home, he installed a washer and dryer at the training facility.

"It's caring about the individual so they trust you," Gomez said.

Cornerstone Craftsman's pre-apprenticeship introduces students to trades including carpentry, plumbing and electrical, as well as Occupational Safety and Health Administration training. Gomez also teaches them soft skills like how to interview and the importance of showing up on time.

"I'm impressed by how eager and coachable the students are," said Local 26 Business Agent Cordelia Evans, who's worked with some of the kids at career fairs. "It's great to see young people open to learning from experienced tradespeople and excited about giving back to their communities."

In addition to career fairs, Local 26 has worked with Cornerstone Craftsman by hosting facility tours where students can interact with apprentices, ask questions and get a realistic view of what life is like in the trade.

"I want to make the trades attractive," Gomez said. "For the students and the parents, because we need them on board too."

While most of the youth Gomez works with are under 18, Local 26 is there as soon as they graduate. One student is interviewing for an apprenticeship.

"I want these youth to earn money in ways they've never seen before in their households and to live a quality of life that truly reflects an equitable lifestyle," Gomez said. "My hope is that they see the trades as a path to stability, success and to a brighter future for themselves and their communities."

Local 26 has also exercised its political clout to help Cornerstone

Craftsman. Slaiman said the local is negotiating a project labor agreement for work at City Hall and working on language that would include the older Cornerstone Craftsman youth. Slaiman also introduced Gomez to other building trades so they can talk about offering direct entry into their apprenticeships.

**"The IBEW has shown up countless times to support us."**

*—Roberto Gomez, Cornerstone Craftsman founder*

"The IBEW has shown up countless times to support us," Gomez said.

Slaiman noted that Gomez understands that unionized work is crucial to a good career in the trades.

"Roberto sees that the best chance for success is a union apprenticeship," Slaiman said. "That's the gold standard for where the kids should end up."

Cornerstone Craftsman and Local 26 also share a commitment to lifting up their communities and providing a path to the middle class.

"We have a golden chance to give these often overlooked communities access to high-paying, in-demand jobs," Gomez said. "When people transition from just getting by to truly living, we see a decline in crime and violence, the emergence of strong economic activity, an increase in taxpaying citizens and overall improvements in community well-being."

Cornerstone Craftsman is able to reach the next generation of tradespeople at an earlier point than an IBEW apprenticeship, Slaiman said.

"It's a great feeder program," he said. "It allows us to extend further into the community and get rid of any obstacles. This is how we get these kids to the middle class." ■



Cornerstone Craftsman is an Alexandria, Va.-based nonprofit founded by Roberto Gomez, at right in the photo to the left, that introduces at-risk teenagers to the skilled trades.



# ORGANIZING WIRE

REACHING OUT

## N.Y. Local Targets Racetrack Workers for Membership

**H**undreds of men and women care for the thoroughbred horses that run at New York's Belmont Park and Saratoga racetracks. Organizers at New York Local 1430, whose members service those tracks' communications systems, are trying to bring them into the IBEW.

"We always have seen the backstretch workers, and that has been our common thread, that they should be taken care of the way that they're supposed to," said Local 1430 organizer Gilberto "Tito" Mendoza.

Over the last two years, Mendoza and his team have been collecting card-check signatures from backstretch workers at both racetracks.

"We need to guarantee that these workers receive their rightful wages so they no longer have to rely on local food drives, have better living conditions without bedbugs and rats, receive healthcare services, and are treated with dignity and respect," Mendoza told Albany's WGRB-TV.

There are between 110 and 124 active stables at Belmont and Saratoga combined, depending on the time of year. Each employs up to 50 workers in several job classifications.

"Grooms are the ones that do, in my eyes, the hardest job," Mendoza said. "They have to do everything: bedding, feeding, watching, cleaning, helping with shoes and medicine."

There are also the walkers who escort horses and jockeys to the track, along with exercise riders and outriders.



Backstretch workers often move from state to state while working at different tracks, but Local 1430 officials say that is not an impediment to providing IBEW representation.



New York Local 1430 organizer Gilberto "Tito" Mendoza speaks during a rally at Saratoga racetrack in upstate New York. Mendoza and others are working to organize backstretch workers at Saratoga and Belmont Park.

"They're like the security guards of the track," Mendoza said of the outriders. "If a horse gets loose, they go chase it and stop it."

Backstretch work is often dangerous, especially considering that a racehorse can weigh as much as 1,400 pounds. "These people constantly put their lives in jeopardy," he said.

They're the backbone of the racing industry, said Third District Lead

Organizer Joe Mastrogiovanni.

"They work tirelessly behind the scenes under difficult conditions and in harm's way," he said. "People don't realize how dangerous that position is, with the uncertainty of the horses and the amount of chemicals that they have to work with. It's amazing."

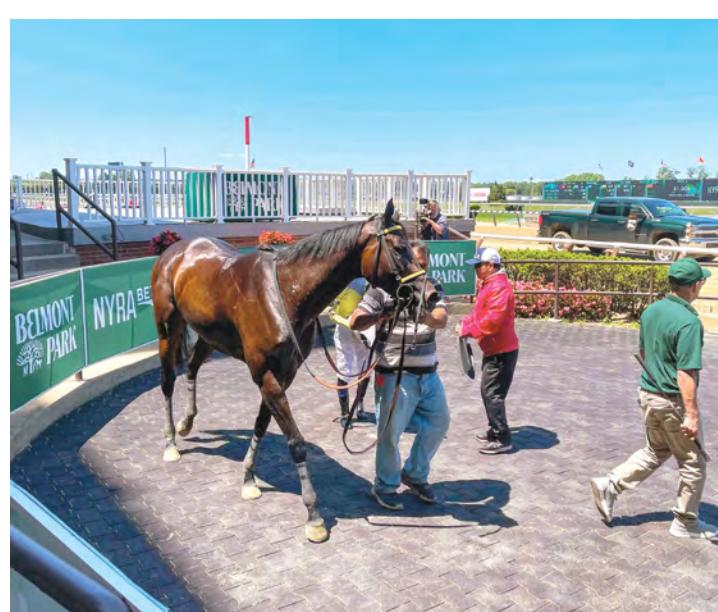
The union petitioning process for the workers is handled by the state's Public Employment Relations Board. "That isn't a bad thing, because under New York law, it means we can try to get them IBEW recognition with a majority of signatures instead of an election," said Steve Rockafellow, a Third District international representative and membership development coordinator.

Local 1430 has been filing petitions with PERB a few at a time, rather than bombarding the agency's staff with them, and then waits to hear whether PERB agrees that the majority threshold on each one has been reached.

"They don't all make it through, though. It can be a slow process," said Business Manager Jordan El-Hag. "We could put in 10 and maybe only five get back as certified, and the other five are delayed for various reasons."

Questions about trainers' business addresses can complicate the certification process. Another challenge is that it's common for backstretch workers to move from track to track, trainer to trainer, and even state to state in search of work. Mendoza and his team sort out the issues and then prepare the petitions for resubmission.

"The first year was the learning curve, but now we know how to play the game," said Mendoza, who acknowledged that previous organizing efforts by another local have helped shape some of Local 1430's strategies.



A groom leads a thoroughbred horse around the paddock at Belmont Park. Grooms are part of the proposed bargaining unit for backstretch workers at Belmont and Saratoga.

"Tito is a hard-working go-getter and organizer," Rockafellow said. "He really communicates with these potential new IBEW members to get them on board."

Mastrogiovanni added that the local's dedication to the backstretch workers has been "off the charts."

"It's essential that their work, their loyalty and their commitment be recognized and protected through strong union representation," he said. "The Local 1430 guys work tirelessly to ensure their well-being."

Mendoza thanked Mastrogiovanni, Rockafellow and Third District International Representative Gil Heim for their support, along with his Local 1430 team members Leah Graygor and Wester Febres.

"Wester and I are the ones at the racetracks day after day, going back and forth with information, and meeting people," he said. "Leah is the brains, getting

everything ready and making sure the information is ready for submission."

As this paper was being prepared, PERB had certified 37 petitions from stables at both racetracks, covering almost 500 backstretch workers, and more were in the queue for the agency's consideration.

"We're still getting signatures in every day or so," said El-Hag. "Sometimes we get whole sheets. Sometimes we get two or three. It's like a roller coaster."

At the same time, Local 1430's leaders have been strategizing approaches for first-contract negotiations, and they have been setting their sights on organizing hundreds more backstretch workers at other racetracks.

"We want to be in a good spot in Belmont and Saratoga and have a template ready, before we go to Aqueduct — or out of state," Mendoza said. ■

## BREAKTHROUGH

**IBEW Scores Another Xfinity Unionization Win in Massachusetts**

Xfinity workers in Massachusetts celebrated another organizing win after a decisive majority of network maintenance technicians in Yarmouth voted in May to unionize with the IBEW and Middleboro Local 2322.

"Our workers there got wind of some changes coming that would not be good for them and called us up," said Local 2322 Business Manager Eric Hetrick.

Organizing workers at Comcast, Xfinity's parent company and the largest cable and home internet provider in the U.S., remains a key goal of the IBEW and its Telecommunications Department. So far, only a handful of the company's units nationwide enjoy IBEW representation — and up to now, just one Xfinity garage in Massachusetts.

Hetrick knows firsthand how anti-union Comcast and Xfinity can be: It took 11 years of hard work, but in 2021, he and his team successfully negotiated first contract covering more than 50 Xfinity technicians in Fairhaven.

For most of the nearly two dozen technicians at the Yarmouth garage, the motivation to organize came from little things adding up over time.

"It's been like a slow burn," Hetrick said. "Then one day, you wake up and you realize what they're trying to do, that things aren't as good as they used to be."

The Yarmouth garage's service area covers the entire Cape Cod peninsula plus the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Job security, said Second District International Representative Steve Smith, was perhaps the biggest concern for the technicians, considering Xfinity's increasing reliance on sending work to contractors, whom it calls "business partners."

"The techs really like the work that they do, but if you don't have a job to go to on Monday, that's a pretty big problem," said Smith, who services Local 2322. "If Xfinity decided they wanted to shut down the garage and ship everybody off someplace a hundred miles away, that could be a real hardship."

Xfinity's managers also were signaling their intent to assign the technicians, who primarily perform outside cabling and pole work, to go into residences and perform installations and service work without a corresponding increase in pay or benefits.

"They just felt undervalued and disrespected," said Hetrick, who also noted that the technicians' nighttime on-call pay rates had not risen in nearly a decade.

Managers seemed inclined to rethink some of their plans, though, once they realized how the Yarmouth technicians' interest in signing union-interest cards was gaining momentum, he said.

"Everybody in the garage saw how solidarity worked and wanted to stay

the course," Hetrick said. "They did the work and kept together."

Contract negotiations between Local 2322 and Xfinity were just getting underway as this Electrical Worker was being prepared.

Going into the talks, "the existing group [in Fairhaven] is an advantage for us," Hetrick said, noting that that group's first agreement contained lay-off prevention among its many gains. "That contract is one of our biggest benefits."

The IBEW's negotiators, though, were bracing for a long fight to gain a first collective bargaining agreement because Xfinity is preparing to appeal the organizing vote.

"The good news is that Eric was a negotiator for that first Fairhaven contract, too. He's well aware of what to expect," Smith said. "I'm sure he's not

thinking we'll have an easy time of it, because we won't. But that's OK because he's up for that battle."

Telecommunications Director Robert Prunn said that allowing unionizing efforts to drag on, and hoping that workers lose interest in it, may seem part of Comcast's playbook, but the IBEW does not back away from a chance to make workers' lives better.

"They might be one of the biggest union busters in America," said Prunn, whose department represents more than 50,000 workers in wired and wireless broadband, broadcast and communications systems in the U.S. and Canada. "But the next organizing win or contract win could be the one that inspires another workplace to sign up for representation from us — and that makes our fight worth it." ■



Middleboro, Mass., Local 2322 successfully organized a group of Xfinity employees, giving the IBEW a second win in the state over the notoriously anti-union Comcast.

## GROUNDED IN HISTORY

### Henry Miller, Remembered by Those Who Knew Him

On July 11, 1896, Henry Miller, the IBEW's founder and first president, succumbed to injuries he sustained the night before while on the job. He was called out to repair a downed line, but on reaching the top of the pole, he came into contact with a live wire and was thrown to the ground by 2,200 volts.

The inherent dangers to electrical work and the high rate of fatalities in the craft were the primary reasons he founded the IBEW in the first place.

He was buried in Glenwood Cemetery in Washington, where he remains today.

Word quickly spread, and letters of remembrance began flooding the office of Grand Secretary-Treasurer James T. Kelly. The first of these were published 129 years ago in the August 1896 issue of *The Electrical Worker*. Presented here are excerpts of a few, written by some of those who knew him best.

#### Edward Hart and L. Williams, Funeral Committee of St. Louis Local 1:

"Henry Miller, a charter member of Local Union No. 1, devoted his whole energy to the cause of organizing his fellow-craftsmen without compensation, and, though often in need, cold and hungry, never despaired about the future of the organization he so nobly sacrificed his time, health, and personal comfort to build up, and who, through all his hardships as well as triumphs, was as proud of Union No. 1 as a father is of his first child."



#### James T. Kelly, grand secretary-treasurer:

"No man could have done more for our union in its first years than he did. ... He was generous, unselfish, and devoted himself to the task of organizing the electrical workers with an energy that brooked no failure. Had there been more Henry Millers in our organization our progress would be greater in proportion to the number."

#### James H. Maloney, grand president:

"In his rugged breast a manly, generous heart beat time to the best interest of his craft and his fellow man. His memory will be an incentive to others to add dignity to their calling, their chosen profession, by using their best endeavors and brightest attainments towards increasing the prestige of the NBEW."

#### Daniel Ellsworth, member of Detroit Local 17 and a close friend of Miller:

"We well remember when he came to Detroit to organize us. He rode on the bumpers of a freight train to get here and had no funds for organizing. When we took up a collection for him at the close of the meeting, we fairly had to force him to take it. 'No, boys,' he said, 'you will need all the money you can get together for your union. I will get along some way.' I tell you, brothers, he was a hero in the cause, and as I think of him, I am reminded of a verse of Longfellow: 'In the world's broad field of battle/In the bivouac of life/Be not like dumb, driven cattle!/be a hero in the strife!'"

#### Henry Hatt, member of Local 26 and Miller's roommate in Washington:

"I saw Henry Miller wire an iron smokestack, built by the Cramps of Philadelphia, 240 feet high, working on the outer edge on a narrow scaffolding. The sway of the iron by the wind was nearly three feet. Nearly every stormy night last winter he would have to go out on the circuit, as it was put up in trees, and had defective insulation. ... He could do as much work in one day as two ordinary men and read novels half the night. In other words, he could do as much work in fun as some people do in earnest. ... Peace be to his ashes."

Today, Miller's history is preserved at the IBEW Museum at the International Office in Washington, as well as the Henry Miller Museum in St. Louis, where he hosted the first Convention. But his legacy spreads far beyond those walls. It lives on in every member of the IBEW. ■

Visit [nbew-ibewmuseum.org](http://nbew-ibewmuseum.org) for more on how to support the IBEW's preservation of its history. Have an idea for this feature? Send it to [Curtis\\_Bateman@ibew.org](mailto:Curtis_Bateman@ibew.org).

# TRANSITIONS

## DECEASED Jim Brimer



Retired International Representative Jim Brimer, a leader in the Nevada labor movement who was known for fighting hard

for IBEW members, died at his home in Las Vegas on May 24. He was 80.

He's remembered as someone who seldom backed down from a fight — or acknowledged that he might be wrong — but still made friends in every facet of telecommunications.

"He was extremely knowledgeable in the telephone industry, and people warmed up to him," said Larry Liles, another retired international representative who remained close to Brimer until his death. "He was easy to like, and he was gregarious."

**"If he believed in something, he was not afraid to take it to the mat and see what he could do with it."**

*— Las Vegas Local 396 Business Manager Jesse Newman*

Brother Brimer was born in Wichita, Kan., but later moved to Florida when his father — who was employed by Douglas Aircraft — was transferred to Cape Canaveral, where he was in charge of altitude chamber testing for the Delta rocket program. The younger Brimer graduated from high school there and later served in the U.S. Marine Corps, including during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

After that, he worked for Hughes Aircraft in Newport Beach, Calif., before moving to Las Vegas, where he was hired as a cable splicer by telecommunications giant Centel in 1977 and became a member of Las Vegas Local 396.

He had found his professional home. Brimer immediately got involved in the local and served in several roles, including as a steward, before being appointed assistant business manager in 1983 and elected business manager in 1987.

"I don't have a memory of coming to visit him that didn't involve at least one story of workers getting screwed over at work," his daughter Phoebe said. "It really riled him up when people were not getting a fair shake."

Current Local 396 Business Manager Jesse Newman said Brimer is fondly remembered for leading his

members in a strike against Nevada Power, the state's largest utility company. Newman's father was a Local 396 member at the time.

"Jim was a guy who was fearless, to say the least," the younger Newman said. "He wasn't afraid to take on those big companies when necessary and take his members out on the picket line.

"If he believed in something, he was not afraid to take it to the mat and see what he could do with it," Newman added.

Brimer moved to the Washington, D.C., area in 1990, when he was named an international representative in the Telephone Department, now part of the Telecommunications Department. He later served in the Research Department before retiring in 2006.

Liles said Brimer had a strong, outgoing personality and a booming voice that could be intimidating to some.

"The truth of it was that he was a damn teddy bear," Liles said. "He was a really nice guy. But he wasn't going to pull any punches if he thought you were wrong."

Brother Brimer returned to Las Vegas following retirement, although those close to him said he refused to stop working. His jobs included leading tours of the city for Pink Jeep Tours, test-driving cars for Roush Performance and even driving a street sweeper at night.

Phoebe Brimer said her father was proud that he sometimes ruffled feathers — both in management and among fellow IBEW members — and didn't always fall in line.

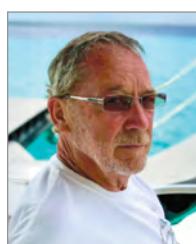
"He was so dedicated to being right that he often wasn't able to admit when he wasn't," she said. "But it worked to his benefit at the IBEW. He fought tenaciously for the people he represented, sometimes to his own personal detriment."

Added Liles: "He had integrity, and he was solid. If you wanted someone to cover your backside, you couldn't ask for a better guy."

In addition to Phoebe, Brimer is survived by another daughter, Sandy; two stepsons, Michael and Kyle; and three granddaughters and one great-grandson.

The officers and staff extend their condolences to Brother Brimer's family and loved ones during this difficult time. ■

## DECEASED Vair Clendenning



Retired First District International Representative Vair Clendenning, who was as passionate about protecting IBEW members' rights as he was about seeing the world, died May 20. He was 80.

Clendenning completed a four-year apprenticeship with an IBEW

signatory contractor in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1960, and then spent the next several years continent-hopping with his family while working as a journeyman wireman and foreman to support it.

"In the first few years we were married, with three young children in tow, we moved to Algeria for a two-year contract," said Donna Clendenning, Vair's wife of 57 years. "Then we lived in England for a year and then moved to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) for another year."

So it went for the Clendenning clan until 1975, when the family settled in Alberta and Vair was initiated into Edmonton Local 424. He quickly got active with his local, serving on its examining and executive boards while focusing on bringing members into the IBEW and ensuring that they received the training they needed.

Clendenning also served as Local 424's vice president before he was appointed as an assistant business manager in 1979 and business manager two years later.

It was a rough time for Alberta's economy: Unionized construction jobs in the province vanished by the hundreds throughout the 1980s as the oil industry there collapsed and major construction projects stopped.

Retired First District International Representative Charles McKenzie, who was then the business manager of Kitchener, Ontario, Local 804, got to know Clendenning around this time.

"Vair was very dedicated and always there to help people," McKenzie said. "He believed that everybody deserved a second chance and that you shouldn't throw them out the first time they did something wrong."

Local 424's members appreciated Clendenning's approach and voted to keep him as their business manager in the next three elections.

"He was strong-minded and had his own viewpoints," McKenzie added. "But if I sat down with him and could get into the opposite sides of an issue, sometimes he could convince me to go his way, and sometimes I could convince him to go my way."

While serving as business manager, Clendenning also represented the IBEW on the boards of the Alberta Federation of Labor, the Northern Alberta Building Trades Council and the Union Centre Credit Union. He also sat on the board of appeals commission for Alberta's Workers' Compensation Board, and he served the Building Trades of Alberta on its board and as its spokesman.

Because of Clendenning's BTA work, the New Democratic Party in Alberta encouraged him to run in the 1986 election to unseat the province's minister of labor. With support from building trades members, the NDP won almost 30% of the vote and 16 seats in Alberta's Legislative Assembly. Clendenning, though, fell 71 votes short of winning his election.

In 1992, Clendenning began serving the BTA as coordinator for organizing and special projects, delivering

dozens of courses on union recruitment and salting while also developing training for construction supervisors and for business representatives in the BTA's member unions.

International President J.J. Barry appointed Clendenning as an international representative for the First District in 1997 to service locals in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and northwestern Ontario. Clendenning's duties included working with the union's Education Department, where he helped develop courses on subjects ranging from conducting hearings to handling disagreements, training programs for international representatives, and a popular "boot camp" for new business managers.

**"He was just a stand-up guy. If he gave you his word, it meant something."**

*— Retired First District International Representative Charles McKenzie*

That same year, Clendenning earned a certificate in adult and continuing education from the University of Alberta. In 2005, he earned a bachelor's degree in labor education from the National Labor College outside Washington, D.C., and he later became a certified human resources professional.

In 2007, Clendenning retired and moved with Donna to British Columbia, spending time with their children Tim, Bobbi-Sue and Cory, as well as their nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

"He was just a stand-up guy," said McKenzie, who retired two years later and moved close enough to have lunch visits with Clendenning. "If he gave you his word, it meant something."

The Clendenning's also resumed their world travels, taking full advantage of the benefits Vair earned from his many years of IBEW membership.

"We had the travel bug," Donna said. "We got into cruising all over the world. We drove across the U.S. and Canada a couple of times, and we hiked, rafted and went scuba diving in the South Pacific, one of our favorite places."

Vair also was a prolific writer, documenting the couple's travel stories for numerous publications and penning letters to editors of their local newspapers. He also wrote a book about how to get by on a cruise ship vacation for \$100 a day.

"He was a top labor leader, always there for workers," Donna said, "and he was very kind and thoughtful."

The officers and staff of the IBEW send our sincerest condolences to Clendenning's family. ■



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# LOCAL LINES

## Tri-Trade, Terry Bennett, PBR, Annual Picnic

L.U. 16 (i), EVANSVILLE, IN — Our local recently signed the National Tri-Trade Solar Agreement with the Laborers' International Union of North America and the International Union of Operating Engineers. This agreement will allow electricians to perform more of the highly skilled work on various solar projects.

One of these jobs had previously been under a national maintenance agreement, which had more than 100 carpenters installing the racks, rails and glass panels. Now the workforce for these solar fields will total as many as 300 electrical workers.

The membership would like to thank retired Brother Terry S. Bennett for the beautiful hand-crafted plaque he created to commemorate the hall's 125th anniversary. Terry has served Local 16 in numerous ways throughout his life and continues to be a shining example of a union brother.

On May 24, Local 16 was a sponsor of the Professional Bull Riders rodeo. Proceeds from this exciting event are used to help offset the cost of new shoes for area schoolchildren.

This year's Local 16 family picnic is scheduled for Sun., Sept. 21. All members are encouraged to come out and enjoy a great day of brotherhood, food, drawings, games, children's activities and friendship.

*Donald P. Beavin, P.S.*



Terry Bennett crafted a plaque for Local 16's 125th anniversary.

## The Power of Partnership

L.U. 24 (es,i&spa), BALTIMORE, MD — Greetings from Charm City! We are happy to report that our re-energized Labor Management Cooperation Committee, the Power Partnership, is bearing fruit and helping move our local forward. The



*Local 24's re-energized LMCC, the Power Partnership, is helping move the local forward.*

relationships we build, along with the opportunities we create with the next generation of electrical workers, are key to a prosperous future.

Working together, the IBEW and NECA have expanded our reach in ways that resonate throughout the communities we serve. Our most recent efforts feature three new recruitment videos focused on apprentices, journeymen and contractors. The video series highlights the pride and professionalism that define a career in the organized electrical industry.

We are also cultivating new business opportunities through events like our third annual electrical industry night. This event was held at the Baltimore Museum of Industry on the Inner Harbor. The evening brought together labor and community leaders, customers, and contractors for a night of networking. Events like this lay the foundation for future projects and showcase the value of working with the IBEW and our signatory employers.

The Power Partnership is delivering results for Local 24 members by attracting top talent and reminding customers what skilled union labor can help them achieve. As our membership and influence grow, our mission remains the same: to increase our market share and maintain our reputation as the safest, most skilled workforce in the industry.

*Michael J. McHale, B.M.*

## New Officers and a Retirement Congratulations

L.U. 26 (ees,em,es,govt,i&mt), WASHINGTON, DC — On July 11, Business Manager Joseph F. "Joe" Dabbs retired following the swearing in of all newly

elected officers. Brother Dabbs was initiated into membership on March 1, 1983, and we wish him a happy and healthy retirement. Congratulations to all of the newly elected officers.

The four winners of this year's Local 26 scholarship are:

- Aubrey Dalbello, who will be attending Loyola University Maryland in pursuit of a psychology degree.
- Grace Figueroa, attending York College in Pennsylvania in pursuit of a degree in exercise science.
- Russ Stone, attending West Virginia University in pursuit of a mechanical engineering degree.
- Olivia Guy, attending the University of Virginia at Wise and studying natural resources and the environment.

Best wishes to the following retirees: Jack Asbury, Robert Barsell, Charles Blankenship, Michael Burch, Jorge Chavez, David Clark, Verna Codrington, Daniel Foster, Steven Howard, Dennis Judd, Timothy McElwain, Harry Morgan, Greta Nicholson, Janie Oliver, Harry Papagjika, Rhett Roe, Kenneth Roman, Scott Sample, Bert Samples, Steve Stasiowski, Grover Tall, Robert Vass, Thomas Villemi, Robert Wasylkiwskyj and Michael Young.

The following members have passed away since our last article: John Green Jr., Geoffrey Hamilton, Michael Loan, Charles McClay Jr., Phillip McDonald, John Slagle, Stephen Whitman and Rudolph Worch III.

*Joseph F. Dabbs, B.M.*

## Trade Classifications

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

*Efforts are made to make this list as inclusive as possible, but the various job categories of IBEW members are too numerous to comprehensively list all.*

## Growth and Change

L.U. 34 (em,i,mt,rts&spa), PEORIA, IL — If you're not changing, you're not growing. Our local is experiencing a multitude of changes this year, resulting in great growth. It's an election year for Local 34, and we have some new and continuing officers to congratulate. We appreciate their time dedicated to the growth and future of Local 34.

Our membership nearly unanimously approved a much-needed building upgrade for our unit office in Quincy. The upgrade will provide a larger space for the JATC, which will share the building with the unit office, and the location provides greater visibility in the community.

On June 17, we were honored to host the Thomas Jefferson Education Foundation Scholarship banquet at the Local 34 union hall. This foundation has a rich history of providing scholarships to students with special educational and medical needs. It is an honor to host and donate to such a great cause supporting local students and families.

Some upcoming fun local union events include our 25th annual Local 34 trap shoot for members and travelers in the jurisdiction Sept. 13. We will also host a night out at the ballgame with friends and family at the local minor league baseball stadium cheering on our Peoria Chiefs.

Have a great summer and stay safe, brothers and sisters!

*Zach Helms, P.S.*

## Juneteenth: A Day of Reflection

L.U. 40 (em,i&mps), HOLLYWOOD, CA — While July 4 is recognized as Independence Day, it wasn't until June 19, 1865, that all men were truly free. Nearly a century after the Declaration of Independence, and over two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Union troops arrived in Texas to enforce the freedom of enslaved people. This day, known as Juneteenth, marked the true end of slavery in the United States.

We're proud to say that, following last year's historic contract negotiations, Juneteenth is an official holiday in our local for the first time. This means members will now receive additional holiday pay and be able to observe the day as a paid holiday.

While members will be able to use this day as they please, Juneteenth is a day to reflect on the unfinished work of justice and the need to stand up for the rights of all workers and communities. This holiday calls on us to reflect on our roles as citizens, to stay politically engaged and to exercise our right to vote. We must be aware of what is happening in our communities and stand up for those without a voice.

## Submitting Local Lines Articles

Local Lines are printed monthly on an alternating even/odd local number schedule. They can be submitted by designated press secretaries or union officers via our online form. For deadlines and questions, please visit [ibew.org/media-center/submitting-local-lines](http://ibew.org/media-center/submitting-local-lines) or email [locallines@ibew.org](mailto:locallines@ibew.org).

We make every effort to assist local unions in publishing useful and relevant local union news; however, all final content decisions are made by our editorial team. Please adhere to a 200-word limit. If you have an idea for an Electrical Worker story, please contact the Media Department at (202) 728-6219 or [media@ibew.org](mailto:media@ibew.org).

## LOCAL LINES

In recognition of this, we are especially proud to have partnered with our SoCal Electrical Workers Minority Caucus chapter for the Local 40 annual golf tournament the weekend before Juneteenth. The tournament raised funds to support the chapter's causes, such as food drives, VFW hall renovations and community improvement efforts. This tournament was a huge success, with more golfers and sponsors than ever before!

*Stephan Davis, B.M./F.S.*

## When the Picket Line Holds, So Do Your Benefits

L.U. 46 (as,c,cs,em,es,et,i,mar,mo,mt,rtb,rts&st), SEATTLE, WA — On May 19, Gov. Bob Ferguson signed Senate Bill 5041 into law, positioning Washington alongside New York and New Jersey in extending unemployment insurance benefits to workers engaged in strikes or employer-initiated lockouts.

Effective Jan. 1, 2026, the law permits eligible workers to receive up to six weeks of unemployment benefits, beginning after a two-week disqualification period and a one-week waiting period. This applies regardless of union affiliation, as long as the labor dispute is not deemed illegal.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Washington State Labor Council and unions across the state, Senate Bill 5041 ensures that employers will no longer be able to weaponize financial insecurity during lawful labor disputes.

While some opponents raised concerns about costs to the unemployment insurance trust fund, labor sees this measure as a crucial safeguard for worker dignity. Annual reporting requirements and a sunset clause in 2035 offer transparency and long-term oversight.

This is a milestone not just for the IBEW, but for all workers in Washington state. It strengthens collective bargaining and may inspire similar protections nationwide.

*Seamus Anglin, P.S.,  
on behalf of member Colin Lynch*



From left, Local 46 President Warren Shill, Business Representative Trina Chapa, Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson, foreperson Gina Bowman, Business Manager/Financial Secretary Sean Bagsby and President April Sims of the Washington State Labor Council.

## Local 68 Hall Remodel and New Officers

L.U. 68 (i), DENVER, CO — Greetings, brothers and sisters. Our local is in the beginning stages of a complete remodel of the interior of our hall. The demo process uncovered a few issues that needed to be fixed. Completion is expected in October.

The work picture is picking up in the jurisdiction, with a few large projects expected to kick off soon. Be sure to check the job recorder for the latest information.

Local 68's annual picnic is scheduled for Aug. 16 at the Westminster Elks from 11 to 3. Hopefully you are able to attend and enjoy some brotherhood, good food, and maybe a beer or two.

As I write this, we are in the process of

electing new officers to lead Local 68 for the next three years. I would like to thank the brothers and sisters who stepped forward and are willing to take on a leadership role.

My advice to all of the new officers is: Know your agreement, know your bylaws, and know the Constitution. As leaders, the membership will come to you with questions, so be prepared. Don't take your responsibility as a leader lightly.

Finally, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as your president for the last nine years. The time has come for me to retire. I am going to miss my brothers and sisters, but I am tired. The IBEW has provided a great life for me, and retirement is going to be awesome!

*Morgan J. Buchanan, Pres.*

## A Day of Learning, Unity and Appreciation

L.U. 108 (ees,em,es,lct,mar,mt,rtb,rts,s,spa,t&u), TAMPA, FL — On April 26, our local proudly hosted a stewards training session, bringing together dedicated members committed to strengthening our union.

The event was a resounding success, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of our members and the invaluable guidance provided by International Representatives Ed Mobsby and Rebecca Axford from the Education Department.

Local 108 extends its deepest gratitude to all who attended for taking the time to engage, learn and build a stronger foundation for our union. Your commitment does not go unnoticed, and your dedication continues to move our local forward.

The feedback we received from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. Many members expressed appreciation for the comprehensive training, engaging discussions and opportunities to gain valuable insights that will help them as stewards. The session reinforced our collective mission and strengthened the bond within our local community.

Of course, no gathering is complete without a great meal! Business Manager Chris Parsels ensured that everyone was well fed with a mouthwatering spread of barbecue brisket, baked beans and coleslaw, a true feast that added to the camaraderie of the day.

Thank you once again to all who participated. Your presence and enthusiasm made this event truly special. We look forward to continuing this momentum and working together to build an even stronger future for Local 108.

*Chris Parsels, B.M.*



Local 108 hosted a stewards training session with engaged participation by its members.

## NABTU Opportunity Pipeline Forum

L.U. 124 (ees,em,i,mar,rtb,sts,spa,t&ptc), KANSAS CITY, MO — Brothers and sisters, our local was happy to host the 14th stop of the North American Building Trades Unions Opportunity Pipeline Forum on May 29. NABTU President Sean McGarvey was in attendance, along with several international representatives from other trade crafts.

U.S. Reps. Sharice Davids and Emanuel Cleaver, Overland Park Mayor Curt Skoog, Johnson County Chairman Mike Kelly, and numerous other elected officials spoke at the event to emphasize the importance of union apprenticeships. Several apprentices who had gone through NABTU's pre-apprenticeship classes gave moving speeches on how these programs change lives and set families on a better trajectory for generations.

*Wade Kiefer, Bus. Rep.*



*Thank you to the members of Local 130!*

## Local 130 Celebrates 125 Years of Strength and Solidarity

L.U. 130 (i&ptc), NEW ORLEANS, LA — This year marks the 125th anniversary of our local, a special occasion for the members and leadership. Since its founding June 11, 1900, Local 130 has stood as a pillar of strength, skill and solidarity in the New Orleans area and beyond.

For over a century, our members have always been at the heart of everything we do. From job sites to community service events, we show what it means to be union proud. Our members have taken part in building the New Orleans skyline; modernizing water systems; and setting industry standards for safety, quality and innovation. Throughout wars, economic downturns and times of great change, we've stood strong in advocating for workers' rights, fair wages and safe working conditions.

This 125th anniversary is more than a celebration of our past — it's a commitment to our future. Local 130 continues to invest in top-tier training, apprenticeship programs and the latest technologies. We're not just preparing the next generation of skilled tradespeople, but we're also shaping leaders, educators and advocates who will carry our values forward for the next 125 years.

To all our brothers and sisters past and present, thank you. Your dedication and resilience have built a legacy we can all be proud of. Here's to 125 years of unity, pride and progress, and here's to many more.

*Happy 125th anniversary, Local 130!*

*Butch Naquin, R.S.*

## Local 134 CFL Delegate Scholarship Fund Golf Outing

L.U. 134 (catv,em,govt,i,mt,rtb,sts,spa&t), CHICAGO, IL — The 8th annual Chicago Federation of Labor golf outing was held June 12 at Silver Lakes Country Club, and the sold-out event was a huge success.

Since its inception, Local 134's CFL Delegate Scholarship Fund has raised more than \$700,000 and awarded more than 300 scholarships to the dependents of our hardworking members. Our success wouldn't be possible without the generous donations of the CFL delegate stipend, as well as the golfers, sponsors, gift donors and volunteers.

We extend a special thank you to the chairman of this event, Brother Marty Dwyer, for his continued dedication to this fundraising effort. We would also like to thank and recognize all of the Local 134 members, contractors, vendors and staff who constantly step up for a worthy cause and contribute when it matters most.

Everyone who attended enjoyed a great day of golf and the opportunity to connect with old and new friends. We look forward to seeing everyone at the August union meeting where we will recognize and award scholarship recipients who exceeded expectations in academic achievement and potential, personal achievement, and community involvement.

*Donald Finn, B.M./F.S.*



From left, Local 134 members Jose Diaz, Omar Sandoval, Alex Andrade and Marco Calderone support the CFL Delegate Scholarship Golf Outing at Silver Lakes.

## Introductions, Wage Increase, Strong Work Outlook

L.U. 150 (es,i,rtb&spa), WAUKEGAN, IL — Our local welcomes the new first-year apprenticeship class: Congratulations on your acceptance! The first training assignments for our new brothers and sisters started June 1. Please introduce yourselves when you meet them on jobsites, invite them to the union meetings, and guide them to work safely and be active members of the IBEW.

The VDV apprentices are David Cano, Nicholas Macella, Scott Taylor and Nancy Vazquez. Inside apprentices are Jack Abernathy, Joshua Barndsen, Jonathan Beltran, Patrick Carpenter, Hayden Christiansen, Bret Christophersen, Mario Cowo, Logan Cupp, Chase Grasso, Carson Hacker, Emmet Kerr, Daniel Maldonado, Michael May, Reid McNeill, Danny Nick, Thomas Perkins, Scott Policht, Andy Pompilus, Joshua Rautanen, Daniel Ruiz, Aaron Tanner, Jacob Tomassetti, Bode Trams and Sebastian Uribe. Congratulations on your accomplishment, and we wish you all a safe and prosperous career with the IBEW and Local 150!

Congratulations also go to our recently graduated fifth-year class of 2025! The VDV graduates are Kelsey Anderson and Armand Nailor. Inside graduates are Marcus Ames, James Antonacci,

Dario Carrillo, Brennen Freiberger, Brett Gardinier, Wade Gaunky, Tresten Gold, Aaron Hietikko, Nicholas Kutis, Michael Morales, Tyler Nichols, Russel Oddo, Edgar Ross, Mike Salgado, Matthew Stanisz, Gary Wagley III, Zachary Whitman and Kirk Wozny. We wish you all the best in your future careers with the IBEW and Local 150.

Local 150 received a three-year contract for the inside agreement with the following terms: \$4.90 increase for 2025 (total package equals \$104.37), a \$5 increase for 2026 and a \$5.15 increase for 2027 with no language or working-condition changes. We would like to thank the Negotiating Committee's John Bonnot, Joe Catella, Pat Garrity and Steve Smart for their time, effort and commitment to securing this historic contract for the members of Local 150. Thank you!

Save the following dates! Aug. 9 is the family picnic, Aug. 16-17 is the IBEW softball invitational, Aug. 16 is the golf outing, Sept. 1 is the Labor Day parade, and Sept. 7 is the car show. Call the hall to volunteer or participate. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Work outlook is strong for Local 150 for the rest of 2025 and beyond. At the time of this writing, we have open calls, and we will need help in the foreseeable future.

Work and travel safely, brothers and sisters, and look out for one another!

Aaron M. Rendon, R.S./P.S.

## Local 164 Fighting To Knock Out Breast Cancer

L.U. 164 (c,em,i,o&t), JERSEY CITY, NJ — On April 11, our local was proud to host the New Jersey Golden Gloves, a charity event to benefit Project Grandma, Local 164's breast cancer charity. It was a great event with many exciting and competitive bouts.

The main honoree for the evening was one of our own, the toughest fighter we know, Sister Maryann Dunleavy. The event also honored two boxing legends in attendance, Larry Holmes and Gerry Cooney. A great time was had by all.

Business Manager Dan Gumble, President Tom Sullivan and the officers of Local 164 want to thank all in attendance, as well as Park Ridge Mayor and committee Chair Keith Misciagna, Victor Docherty, Matt Benevento, those on the Golden Gloves Committee, or those who just lent a hand. All volunteered numerous hours to prepare and staff the event. We also thank the New Jersey Golden Gloves for their participation in our cause.

This event was held to knock out breast cancer, but Local 164 wishes continued strength to those fighting to win their own cancer battle and those working to knock out cancer in all forms.

Warren M. Becker, P.S.



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## Local 236 Hosts Annual Chuck Naylor Golf Event

L.U. 236 (catv,ees,govt,i,mo,rtb&t), ALBANY, NY — Our local is geared up to host the fourth annual Chuck Naylor golf outing at Western Turnpike Golf Course on Aug. 9. The outing is named in honor of the tragic loss of Chuck, who was both a proud military veteran who served in Afghanistan and a proud Local 236 member.

Every year, a local veterans organization is chosen as the beneficiary to receive the proceeds of the event. The Team Albany Adaptive Sports program was chosen this year. Last year, we raised \$42,000 for the Veterans Miracle Center, and we hope that every year can be better than the last. We couldn't do it without the participation of our members and sponsors alike, so a huge thank you to everyone who has been involved over the years!

Thanks to everyone who has been a part of Local 236 as we strive to make it a better place for electricians every day.

Mike Martell, A.B.M.



From left, Stacey Lauren of the Veterans Miracle Center, Local 236 Business Manager Michael Mastropietro, Veterans Miracle Center volunteer and U.S. Army Veteran Jacob Dobbs, President Paul Nylin, and Daniel Dudley.

## Veterans Committee Raises Funds for Food Bank

L.U. 258 (ees,em,lctt,o&u), VANCOUVER, BC — Our local's Veterans Committee made a big impact at this year's BC Hydro hockey tournament, raising \$5,000 for the Veterans Food Bank. The fundraiser drew strong support from participants and spectators alike, showcasing Local 258's ongoing commitment to supporting veterans in our community.

Adding extra excitement to the event, Brother Mike Wick and Brother Rob Munro each took home a \$500 WestJet travel voucher as part of the fundraising drawings. Their wins capped off two days filled with community spirit, friendly competition and generosity.

The Veterans Committee expressed its deep appreciation for everyone who contributed to the cause, emphasizing how important it is to support those who have served. The funds raised will help ensure that veterans in need have access to essential food and resources throughout the year.

Cody Gatzke, B.M./F.S.



Brother Mike Wick, left, receives a \$500 WestJet voucher from former Business Manager Gerry Bramhill.

## Local 300's Small-Town Hero

L.U. 300 (govt,i,u,mo&lctt), MONTPELIER, VT — While on his way home from a late-night trouble call, Nick LeBlanc, a lineworker with the Morrisville Water and Light Department, caught sight of a vehicle that had crashed into the side of a barn and set it afire.

When Nick reached the incident, he noticed the driver was trapped in the vehicle and calling for help. With the vehicle teetering over the edge of a steep drop into the barn's basement and the driver unable to escape



Nick LeBlanc, Local 300 brother, Morrisville Water and Light Department lineman, and local hero.

on his own due to his injuries, Nick smashed the rear window with a rock and jumped into the back of the vehicle. Nick was able to pull the driver from the vehicle and remove the driver from the burning structure with assistance from another passerby.

Thanks to Nick's heroics, the driver was transported to the UVM Medical Center for severe lower-body injuries and survived. However, the 169-year-old barn was completely engulfed by flames approximately 15 minutes after Nick removed the driver. The historic barn dated to the mid-1800s and was a tourist attraction.

Now, the location is a memory of the heroic actions taken by an IBEW member on his way home from work. "The stars were aligned that night," Nick said.

If not for Nick's quick reaction and desire to help, the driver would not have survived. Nick's actions and humble nature are a great credit to himself and his family.

On behalf of Local 300's members, I express my most sincere gratitude.

Jeffrey Wimette, B.M./F.S.

## Local 302 Activities

L.U. 302 (i,rts&spa), MARTINEZ, CA — On the last day of May, our local had its annual golf tournament. Last year, we played in the pouring rain. This year, it was over 100 degrees. Everyone had a very good day despite the hot weather. We would like to congratulate the winning team of Miguel Garcia, Nick Gutridge, Pat Heck and Garrett McCullough, who showed that the heat could not slow them down.

This June, we celebrated the graduation of our inside apprentices: Brandon Coston, Joseph Haros, Hector Hernandez, Michael King, Conor Lakin, Robert Longacre, Ivan Rogers, Joshua Rush and Josh Vazquez. Local 305 congratulates our new JIWs and their families.

We would also like to welcome five new sound and communication apprentices to the local: Asael Saustegui Camacho, Demetri Culver, Vincent Estrada, Korey Lombard and Daniel Tepia. We wish them all the best with their future careers.

Tom Hansen, B.M./F.S.

## Local 340 Elections

L.U. 340 (i,rts&spa), SACRAMENTO, CA — Our local entered election season in May, and the results are in. I have been afforded the privilege of serving as our local's business manager again for the next three years.

I would like to thank all those involved in this year's elections, including members who voted and our tellers. A special thank you goes to Election Judge Jon Thompson for his time and commitment to ensure a smooth process. It has been a pleasure serving as business manager these past nine years, and I look forward to continuing the progress we have made thus far.

The members have trusted me, and their votes confirmed that trust. Oftentimes, this position entails more than it appears. For those who don't know, there are multiple people behind me who help get our local shifting in the right direction. It is not a one-person job, and I am grateful for the officers and staff who support me and our members behind the scenes in getting the work done.

I would also like to congratulate all others who won in this year's election, including our long-standing President Mark Steelman and our returning Vice President Mitchell Newman IV. It will be a pleasure to work alongside these brothers and all other officers for the next three years.

Bob Ward, B.M./F.S.

## Local 494 Acquires Antique Dynamo for Museum

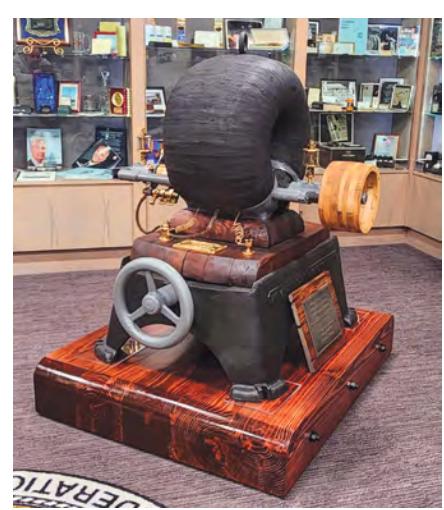
L.U. 494 (em,i,mt,rts,spa,t&govt), MILWAUKEE, WI — The idea of having a museum in Milwaukee for our local originated from the International Office in Washington, D.C. In 2016, Local 494 opened its museum to the members and the public.

The newest focal point of the museum is a Mather dynamo, a historical treasure. Donated by Terminal-Andrae and installed last fall, this dynamo was built in the late 1900s and used by Layton Packing Co. The dynamo is a steam-powered DC generator mainly used to power incandescent lighting. After it was decommissioned in the 1920s, it stood in front of the Terminal-Andrae shop until it was donated to Local 494.

The dynamo was revived through the efforts of Dietz Motor Co. (union motor shop). Their expertise made it possible for this historic piece to be in working order once again. It's worth noting that there is only one other dynamo in existence, in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich.

Special thanks to Business Representative Don Oldani for his instrumental role in making the museum a reality. His dedication and support have been invaluable. We invite everyone to visit the museum and experience the rich history it has to offer.

Robert "Bob" Weber, Bus. Rep.



Local 494's museum displays the Mather Dynamo.

## LOCAL LINES



Members of Local 540 on the site of Bitdeer Crypto Mine in Massillon, Ohio.

## Crypto Mine for Local 540

L.U. 540 (i), CANTON, OH — The Bitdeer Crypto Mine in Massillon, Ohio, kicked off last winter and has a targeted completion date of Dec. 31. The project will keep about 65 brothers and sisters busy over its four phases.

The project is shared by two IBEW contractors. Between them, it is scoped to have 100,000 man-hours, 150,000 feet of conduit, 10,000 feet of cable tray, 623,000 feet of wire and cable, 6,300 feet of trenching, and more than 200 gallons of PVC glue.

Hopefully, this trend in construction of large-scale crypto mining and data centers bodes well for the prospect of an upgrade to the national electrical grid. We are going to need it, and the members of the IBEW will get it done.

*Logan Hammer, P.S.*

## Congratulations to Local 654's Class of 2025

L.U. 654 (i), CHESTER, PA — Our local extends a huge congratulations to this year's graduating apprenticeship class. This class started in the fall of 2020 during a period of transition in education styles.

Alongside this group's standard education, they received OSHA 30 training, CPR training, mental health and first-aid education, and various other safety courses.

At Local 654, we are very proud of their hard work, and we wish them a safe and healthy career in the IBEW!

*Chris Schieler, P.S.*

## Local 702's Spring Activities

L.U. 702 (as,c,catv,cs,em,es,et,govt,i,it,lctt,mo,mt,o,p,pet,ptc,rtb,rts,se,spa,st,t,u,uow&ws), WEST FRANKFORT, IL — Greetings, brothers and sisters. In April, we held our fourth annual sporting clay shoot at the Sparta World Shooting Complex. We had 30 teams with 120 shooters who came out and enjoyed the day.



Local 654's 2025 apprenticeship class, from left: Shane VanHorn, Dave Mazzoli, Mike Zelinski, Dan Laird, Garry Baker, Chris Conlin, Dave Wright, Rocky Albano, Mike Conlon, Toby Cosella and Tom Wade. (Not pictured, Mike Blakely and instructor Denis Crow.)

760 for 100 years of hard work and dedication."

A special thank you to Brother Brett Schuler and his volunteers for putting on an extraordinary fish fry every year! We always look forward to the next year's event and welcome everyone in the IBEW to join us next year and in years to come.

To the members of Local 760, thank you for your service to our local, and here's to another 100 years.

*Glenn S. Clevenger II, R.S.*



Local 760 recently celebrated its 100th anniversary.

## Local 2228 Member Honored with TechNova Lifetime Member Award

L.U. 2228 (c,govt,ptc&u), OTTAWA, ONTARIO — Our local member Sean Piercy has been awarded the TechNova Lifetime Member Award for his exceptional and sustained contributions to Canada's technology profession.

TechNova, the regulatory body and

professional association for technicians and technologists in Nova Scotia, is responsible for administering the Applied Science Technology Act of the province. The Lifetime Member Award is TechNova's highest honor, recognizing individuals who have made a lasting impact on the advancement of applied science and technology.

Brother Piercy was nominated for the award in recognition of his extensive volunteer service with TechNova, the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists, the Canadian Technology Accreditation Board, and Technology Accreditation Canada.

He began his involvement with TechNova as a student and earned his certified engineering technologist designation in 1996. Since joining the TechNova Council in 2006, he has served as councilor, vice president and member of the certification board.

Following the 2023 transition of accreditation programs from CTAB to TAC, Brother Piercy joined TAC's board of directors and served as a program auditor, reviewing technology programs across the country. He became a member of Local 2228 in January 2024 upon beginning his current role as a technical instructor at the Naval Fleet School Atlantic in Halifax.

The officers and members of Local 2228 proudly congratulate Brother Piercy on this well-deserved honor and thank him for his decades of dedication to advancing technology education and standards in Canada.

*Paul Cameron, B.M./F.S.*



Members and their families represent Local 702 at the Herrin Festa Parade.

## Local 760 Celebrates 100 Years

L.U. 760 (i,lcctt,o,rtt,spa&u), KNOXVILLE, TN — On May 3, our local held its fifth annual fish fry. This year, we welcomed more than 350 members, retirees, family members, and brothers and sisters from other locals.

Not only was this our fifth year for the fish fry, but it was also a major celebration: Local 760 celebrated its 100th anniversary this year! Business Agent/Financial Secretary Tim Oaks said: "I would like to extend a special thank you to the officers and staff that keep our union functioning. And most of all, thank you to the brothers and sisters of Local

# IBEW MERCHANDISE



**BROADCASTING CHALLENGE COIN \$8.50**  
1.5" challenge coin spotlighting IBEW Broadcasting Professionals.

**RENEW - NEXTGEN T-SHIRT \$18.00**  
100% cotton blood orange unisex t-shirt. Features RENEW and NextGen logos on the sleeves and IBEW logo on full back.

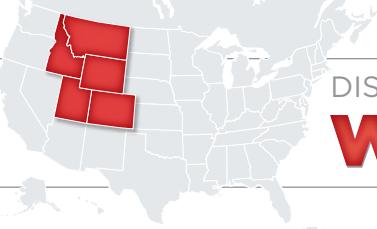
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## In Memoriam

Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death	Local	Surname	Date of Death
1	Bennett, N. G.	4/18/25	103	Newton, E. J.	9/1/24	481	Abbott, R. L.	7/26/24
1	Current, D. G.	5/17/25	103	Rosenburg, A. S.	3/23/25	481	Hotopp, A. J.	5/16/25
1	Falk, R. L.	4/29/25	103	Shields, W. M.	9/14/24	481	McGinley, B. J.	5/3/25
1	Hindrichs, W. E.	2/4/25	105	Haynes, R. W.	12/24/24	488	Carroll, P. J.	4/29/25
1	Manson, J. J.	5/7/25	109	Skovronski, R. J.	3/26/25	505	Harrison, B. M.	5/2/25
1	O'Brien, T. P.	3/29/25	110	Engstrom, L. C.	1/31/25	540	Critchfield, W. G.	5/7/25
1	Oates, J. G.	4/27/25	111	Hoffman, R. L.	5/10/25	551	Clark, T. O.	4/27/25
3	Aagotnes, G. J.	5/20/25	113	Poole, C. J.	5/15/25	551	McLean, M. C.	4/11/25
3	Culhane, D. W.	4/8/25	113	Wipprecht, P. S.	4/24/25	558	Fuller, H. J.	3/13/25
3	Ercolino, J.	5/9/25	115	Maracle, H.	5/17/25	577	Cook, D. A.	4/25/25
3	Fields, G. J.	4/30/25	117	Lutz, E. R.	4/22/25	583	Huttanus, F. L.	12/15/21
3	Flynn, A. H.	4/26/25	124	Stewart, L. F.	3/4/25	595	Wylie, T. R.	3/11/24
3	Graham, S. I.	4/3/25	125	Anderson, R. R.	4/4/25	596	Snyder, B. J.	5/2/25
3	Maietta, R. A.	4/2/25	125	Hester, J. A.	5/12/25	613	Newton, N.	12/1/24
3	McCrory, E. M.	4/14/25	125	Mestas, T. E.	4/17/25	625	MacGillivray, H. J.	3/7/22
3	Murphy, J. C.	5/26/25	129	Jordan, S. L.	6/16/24	625	MacLean, G. L.	5/8/25
3	Persaud, P.	6/24/24	130	Gallo, L. P.	4/1/25	640	Castro, I. A.	4/27/25
3	Ramirez, R. A.	4/26/23	130	Schenck, R. A.	5/8/25	640	Nordyke, J. E.	3/3/25
3	Roettger, P.	12/25/24	130	Taylor, R. C.	3/1/25	640	Nunez, C. A.	5/14/24
3	Rosenberg, K. A.	5/2/25	130	Thibodeaux, R. P.	5/4/25	659	Eek, D. A.	5/9/25
3	Schlag, J. R.	2/18/25	130	Trahan, R. P.	3/29/25	659	Jones, J. E.	2/18/25
3	Schwer, D. B.	3/19/25	134	Behnke, R. J.	2/23/25	659	Noble, K. A.	5/23/25
3	Stokes, R. C.	11/19/24	134	Boyle, T. J.	5/27/25	681	Gilley, T. J.	4/27/25
5	Weitzenberg, I.	2/26/25	134	Carl森, J. A.	5/4/25	683	Fitzpatrick, W. C.	3/7/25
5	Earley, J. R.	3/30/25	134	Daniels, D. G.	5/23/25	692	Burley, G. G.	4/17/25
5	Sell, R. R.	4/11/25	134	Glorch, R. L.	5/6/25	697	Rodriguez, O. C.	5/7/25
6	Elbing, J. C.	4/6/25	134	McInerney, T. J.	4/22/25	700	Sapp, W. A.	1/21/25
6	Guthrie, J. M.	10/27/22	134	Murphy, J. B.	5/4/25	701	Bristow, J. R.	3/22/25
7	Macdonald, H. F.	5/6/25	134	Nicolai, T. R.	5/12/25	702	Jenkins, J. D.	9/21/24
11	Amato, J. P.	5/5/25	134	Spike, R. E.	3/8/25	714	Krebs, V.	5/2/25
11	Christ, D. C.	5/13/25	134	Steel, R. L.	4/11/25	716	Patterson, G. L.	4/16/25
11	Cooley, D. R.	4/19/25	143	Eppley, T. W.	5/1/25	721	Goins, J. C.	2/24/24
11	Gomez, D. T.	11/18/24	143	Long, Z. J.	5/3/25	725	Duncan, S. D.	4/19/25
11	Morales, R. M.	4/21/25	146	Fair, R. E.	5/9/25	728	Flynn, J. P.	1/19/25
11	Neske, H. G.	4/25/25	150	Kreis, M. M.	2/4/25	728	Yanes, D. L.	1/1/25
11	Picker, L. A.	5/1/25	175	Bell, D. L.	4/25/25	743	Allen, A. J.	2/20/25
11	Walker, R.	12/15/24	191	Boag, C. A.	5/18/25	760	Merryman, R. L.	3/26/25
11	Wilker, M. M.	5/5/25	194	Brewster, T. H.	4/20/25	773	Blanchard, R. W.	5/10/25
14	Selby, M. B.	4/23/25	213	Kirilenko, M. J.	4/8/25	776	Lane, W. D.	4/1/25
16	Rickard, J. A.	4/24/24	213	Lee, A.	4/11/25	776	Perry, P. H.	5/22/25
17	Boudreault, G.	4/17/25	220	Griffin, B. G.	2/11/25	804	Levesque, M.	3/27/25
17	Martin, M. E.	1/29/25	223	Peterson, S. R.	3/29/25	804	Rourke, C. B.	3/2/25
17	Tomlan, V. P.	4/30/25	226	Spicer, V. D.	4/1/25	812	Gray, W. C.	4/16/25
20	Allen, R. T.	3/8/25	236	Ruggiero, J.	4/14/25	816	Jones, G. D.	4/27/25
22	Brumback, R. E.	5/5/25	242	Haverkamp, J.	5/27/25	855	Scarberry, T. M.	5/14/25
22	Vanecek, R. E.	4/12/25	245	Grisier, M. J.	5/2/25	861	Lambright, L. L.	5/21/25
24	Schuman, E. P.	8/2/24	258	Haffner, H. E.	4/4/25	873	Hiatt, D. D.	4/10/25
24	Spiegel, G. R.	3/11/25	258	Hunter, R. K.	5/26/25	910	Arnesen, C.	5/22/25
24	Stickler, D. J.	4/22/25	258	Soroka, W. M.	1/15/24	952	Mendoza, K. S.	1/26/25
25	Chadbourne, J.	4/23/25	258	Tresierra, W.	12/13/22	993	Eamor, S.	5/14/25
26	Hord, E. R.	5/4/25	269	Johnson, C. C.	4/19/25	993	Levasseur, R. J.	5/7/25
26	Semler, R. C.	2/15/24	270	Lawson, F. H.	5/14/25	995	Williams, R.	10/24/24
34	Waggoner, D. A.	4/12/25	291	Crawford, R. P.	5/8/25	1003	Giraud, F. W.	3/21/25
38	Davis, J. W.	4/22/25	291	Ray, D. O.	1/2/25	1116	Pennington, R. L.	4/1/25
38	Mazzola, S. J.	5/9/25	292	Hanan, P. C.	4/30/25	1186	Matsubara, C. T.	2/13/25
38	Sanders, R. A.	5/27/25	302	Johnson, S. R.	4/22/25	1186	Nakashima, B. T.	12/6/24
40	Knutson, G. A.	12/12/23	302	Lawhorn, K. J.	5/9/25	1253	Leighton, S. A.	7/4/24
42	Morse, D. P.	4/10/25	302	Sievers, A. J.	9/2/24	1426	Kringen, L. W.	11/26/24
44	Czywczynski, S. A.	4/17/25	303	Wiegand, G. E.	8/19/24	1531	Lee, K. G.	1/27/25
46	Cho, E. E.	5/21/24	305	Reader, S. E.	4/3/25	1547	Wasch, B.	4/15/25
47	Quintero, D.	1/31/25	313	Corradin, J. P.	5/15/25	1701	Cline, S. L.	1/7/25
48	Gorman, T. P.	4/24/25	332	Wieczorek, M.	1/10/25	1701	Hunter, R. E.	3/3/25
48	King, L. R.	5/8/25	343	Fulfs, J. D.	5/8/25	1703	Miller, W. F.	3/21/25
48	Neve, D. R.	5/6/25	343	Marti, G. R.	5/17/25	1837	Bofinger, D. G.	2/14/25
48	Steadman, J.	1/6/25	343	Witt, S. R.	5/7/25	1852	Murray, D. P.	3/12/25
51	Schowalter, M. W.	4/21/25	353	Loehart, M.	1/4/25	1852	Penny, J. E.	5/16/25
53	Hull, M. K.	4/17/25	353	Selby, W. J.	3/31/25	2166	Hicks, R. G.	5/28/25
57	Reese, A. W.	2/16/25	354	Wickersham, L.	5/5/25	I.O. (12)	Brown, D. R.	4/9/25
57	Ruiz, R. M.	3/15/25	357	Lamb, A. E.	5/17/24	I.O. (134)	Francis, D. H.	4/25/25
58	Hardt, A. W.	5/21/25	357	Miller, W. S.	12/12/22	I.O. (134)	Jacob, J. M.	5/2/25
58	Hendricks, M.	5/2/25	357	Shenk, Z. D.	3/29/25	I.O. (134)	Mazzaia, A. W.	5/11/25
58	Liimatta, J. E.	5/6/25	363	Castleberry, R. E.	3/5/25	I.O. (134)	Mitronis, H.	5/22/25
58	Schrot, J. F.	3/20/25	369	Carroll, R. G.	9/7/24	I.O. (266)	Rhubottom, R. J.	5/3/25
58	Slais, R. J.	3/19/25	369	Carty, J. W.	5/4/25	I.O. (321)	Scheri, A. R.	4/30/25
66	Smith, J. M.	3/2/25	369	Daugherty, J. W.	4/15/25	I.O. (508)	Black, W. K.	4/5/25
68	Bailey, W. A.	4/19/25	369	Downing, L. P.	4/23/25	I.O. (553)	Autry, E. D.	12/13/24
68	Griffin, G. A.	1/9/25	369	Tipton, M. H.	5/13/25	I.O. (568)	Grenier, I. E.	4/21/25
68	Mize, R. W.	1/24/25	375	Gino, P.	8/13/24	Pens. (I.O.)	Bishop, W. D.	2/23/25
71	Duncan, H. N.	5/16/25	396	James, W. R.	5/15/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Borchardt, W. L.	3/19/25
76	Garnett, D. F.	3/21/25	400	Stevens, R. M.	4/29/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Buttress, J.	3/18/25
82	Godsey, A. J.	5/9/25	401	Aiazzi, G. L.	5/4/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Callaham, C. E.	12/13/24
86	Colombo, E. J.	4/11/25	424	Clendenning, V. H.	5/20/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Clapper, R. W.	2/23/25
95	Lowe, W. L.	2/10/25	424	Fenton, C. W.	2/10/25	Pens. (I.O.)	Cook, E. E.	5/



DISTRICT 8: CO, ID, MT, UT, WY

## WHO WE ARE

# With Booming Growth and Solidarity, Local 354 Shows Utah ‘Who We Are’

**F**or people living in and around Salt Lake City, even Utahns in smaller urban areas, it'd be hard to miss the energy force that is Local 354.

Its ranks have swelled in recent years, including a 20% jump in just 12 months that led the local to sweep the Eighth District's annual organizing awards this spring.

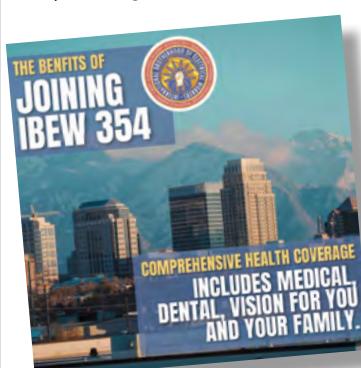
Through creativity and tenacity, the now 3,200-strong union has grown by nearly 900 members — apprentices and journeymen alike — since Business Manager Steve Woodman took the helm in 2019.

The same vigor has yielded other big wins, notably a landmark inside contract with paid holidays, an extremely rare feat in the building trades.

“It’s contagious, the effects of growth. You get on a roll,” Woodman said. “We’ve capitalized on that in lots of ways: better services to our membership, a bigger staff that keeps achieving more, remodeling our hall, more social events. Our members love those.”

The local’s pursuits are bolstered by a keen sense of marketing — radio interviews, digital ads, an updated website and app, abundant social media posts, YouTube videos, and other methods of shining a spotlight on what Local 354 has to offer.

“We’re showing Utah who we are,” Woodman said. “Growing isn’t just about numbers. We’re stronger and more active and more visible, and we keep building on that.”



One of the many digital ads that are contributing to Local 354's rapid growth and raising its profile in Salt Lake City and throughout Utah.

From top to bottom, the local buzzes with high spirits and solidarity. Its ambassadors are everywhere, as Jessi Webster described after the union’s annual “Boondocks Day” in May, hours of family fun at an indoor amusement park.

The general foreman at a massive data center building site, Webster said about half of her 120-member crew are journey-level recruits. For many of them, the Boondocks outing was the



Utah Gov. Spencer Cox looks over the shoulder of telecom apprentice Chet Vanauksdal while visiting Local 354's training center in May along with U.S. Deputy Labor Secretary Keith Sonderling, at right. Also pictured: Business Manager Steve Woodman, back left, and President Codey Lindsay.

first time they'd mingled with other local wiremen and telecom members.

“Some had been nonunion for years and finally took a chance on the IBEW,” she said. “They said they felt welcomed by everyone there, that they never had anything like that from previous employers.”

That’s the human side of Local 354’s progress. There’s also the pragmatic side, where phrases like “web optimization” have entered the staff’s lexicon.

Organizer Todd Baugh said the local website is on its way to being a “one-stop shop” for electricians, future electricians, contractors and anyone looking for electrical help. A marketing company is helping maximize the site’s visitors.

“We took the approach of, ‘If you search online for an electrician or a job or apprenticeship, what do you find?’” Baugh said. “We hopped on there and realized that our presence was almost nowhere to be seen.”

Now when people enter key words in search engines, Local 354 pops up high in the results. “I think digital marketing has been one of biggest and most innovative factors in our growth,” he said.

There’s also been a ripple effect from the exuberant local-wide fight that led, against all odds in the trades, to a new contract with seven paid holidays.

For more than a year, members donned red “Paid Holidays for All” shirts at worksites every Wednesday, and at rallies and other events. Building trades allies soon were wearing the same IBEW-branded tees. The pressure was relentless. Last November, signatory contractors agreed to the milestone terms.

“That campaign really pumped people up, and it carried over into our organizing drives,” Woodman said.

Along the way, Local 354’s training program hit a high of 800 apprentices; about 750 are enrolled currently. Training Director Brian Vermouth said staff sends yearly letters to every high school guidance counselor in the state, hosts open houses at its state-of-the art facilities and helps retain members through a mentorship program.

He’s pleased to see how quickly apprentices embrace the brotherhood and turn out with enthusiasm for local activities, such as gathering signatures for a 2026 statewide referendum to restore collective bargaining for public employees.

“Even though it didn’t affect them directly, they weren’t going to sit down and let politicians take away public workers’ rights,” Vermouth said. “They understood that an injury to one is an injury to all.”

The local also has had success bringing on board journey-level electricians, responding with gusto to a directive from International President Kenneth W. Cooper.

Signing up experienced wiremen is one of Cooper’s top priorities in order to meet the industry’s record-high demand and protect the IBEW’s market share against nonunion competitors. Under the program, qualified new members can enter the union as journeymen based on their cumulative hours in the trade.

Work had become so plentiful in Utah that for nearly two years, until recently, Local 354 offered a \$2,000 signing bonus — \$500 in the first 30 days and another \$1,500 after three months. There were also \$500 referral



Above: Local 354's campaign paid off when signatory contractors agreed to seven paid holidays.



Left: The local had tables at 2024's county and state political conventions for both parties. Pictured: member Logan Howard, left, and President Codey Lindsay in Salt Lake County.

bonuses for members.

Baugh said the bonuses were a “little icing on top” of the IBEW’s strongest selling points: enviable wages, health care and pensions.

Another popular program through Pro-Union Consulting offers week-long classes for members who want to open their own businesses. “We’re building contractors from within our own membership,” Woodman said. “We’ve started approximately 25 new shops across the Eighth District.”

The local also held more job fairs during the bonus period, drawing potential recruits through digital ads and videos — produced by an IBEW-represented company in Colorado — and, most powerfully, by personal contact.

Using lists of licensed journeyman wiremen in Utah, local and district staff paired with member volunteers for door-knocking blitzes leading up to each job fair.

William Royce, now a full-time organizer, was an apprentice when he volunteered to canvas. “It was so fun,” he said. “I didn’t have a single bad experience.”

Still, there were skeptics at the doors. “They’d say: ‘What do you want? What are you selling?’” Royce said. “But once they started listening, you could see they were realizing that they could have a better life by joining the union.”

Member Logan Howard is another

evangelist for Local 354. The chair of Pride at Work in Utah and vice chair of his county’s Democratic committee, he said there’s rarely a weekend when he’s not out in the community advocating for his union and the labor movement overall.

“I can spend an entire event talking to people about the IBEW, because I love the IBEW,” Howard said. “Even if it’s not the right fit for them, I tell them about the union difference: ‘Here’s why unions are great.’”

Other Local 354 groups and projects convey the same message, from veterans to a new motorcycle club to a holiday gift program in partnership with a radio station that engages the Salt Lake City area. Not to mention younger members raising funds, collecting food and clothing, planting trees and doing other good works through their RENEW chapter.

In an international union so large and giving, the activities themselves aren’t unique. But they’re part of a winning strategy, a holistic approach to growth that has IBEW leaders cheering.

“I couldn’t be prouder, not only of what Local 354 has accomplished, but how they’ve gone about it. It’s inspiring,” Eighth District International Vice President Jerry Bellah said. “This is a local firing on all cylinders, and everyone — members and their families, the communities they serve, and the IBEW as a whole — is reaping the rewards.” ■