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News briefs

Bush's handling of Social Security is now supported by 29% of Americans. 69% disapprove, according to CNN/Gallup/USA Today poll.

The job-destroying Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) passed the House of Representatives 217-215 after President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and other members of the administration went to lobby members personally. The *Washington Post* reported that "the last minute negotiations for Republican votes resembled the wheeling and dealing on a car lot."

The nation's oldest known cloth factory, Tallassee Mills in Alabama, is closing after 161 years, the latest casualty of a free trade policy that continues to decimate America's manufacturing base.

Department of Homeland Security rules slated to take effect Aug. 15 were blocked by US District Judge Rosemary Collyer who said, "The regulations fail in their obligation to ensure collective bargaining rights to DHS employees."

METER READERS COME TO GRIPS WITH AMI

Replaced

Automation — Using self-operating equipment, electronic devices, etc. to replace human beings

Meter Readers, Senior Meter Readers and Meter Techs have begun a series of meetings at Weakley Hall to discuss job security issues in the wake of Pacific Gas and Electric's decision to pursue automated meter reading.

If the company's plan wins approval from the California Public Utilities Commission, approximately 9 million gas and electric meters will have to be replaced or retrofitted.

The challenge to the union is two-fold: securing retrofit and installation work for union workers, and finding jobs for every Meter Reader displaced by the proposed automated system (known as Advanced Metering Infrastructure, or AMI).

Three union committees have been established to address these concerns:

The Impact Committee is studying possible measures to reduce the impact on current Meter Readers if their positions are eliminated.

The Retrofit Committee will evaluate how much retrofit work can be performed by employees at PG&E's Fremont meter shop.

The Contracting Committee is looking at the role that contractors might



Meter Tech Renee Cederquist, left, and Meter Reader Colleen Dempsey

play in the massive AMI project.

Of the company's 4 million gas meters, most can be upgraded by a fairly simple adjustment to the index of the meter. But PG&E's 5 million electric meters will be a considerably larger challenge. PG&E wants to complete the job in five years, which appears to make the use of contract employees inevitable.

"We are in negotiations with PG&E about what portion of the work is going to be done by PG&E bargaining unit employees and what portion by contractors," said Local 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell, who is heading up the Contracting Committee. "Looking at the contractor work, we're discussing what classification will perform the work and what the wage will be."

Retrofit Committee

Jorge Velasco, a Meter Shopperson at PG&E's Fremont Meter Shop, believes the

company ought to utilize the "trained professionals" already on the payroll.

"I know we're not a big enough shop to do all the work, but at least we should get some of the work," said Velasco, who began as a Hiring Hall employee in 1996 and became a regular employee in 2000. "Why contract out something when we can use our own?"

Employees at the Meter Shop, who also do quality assurance on all meters whether they are being refurbished in their shop or obtained from vendors, are understandably concerned about their future. Velasco can remember a time in the 1990s when the Meter Shop had over two dozen employees. Now there are just eight.

"That's why there's so much talk about us getting at least a percentage of the work—to keep our small group going," said Velasco.

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Senior Meter Readers Robert Banaga and Daniel Tsang, and Gas Service Rep. Lou Mennel.



Business Rep. Landis Marttila (left), Meter Shopperson Jorge Velasco (middle) and Business Rep. Dave Crawford.



Meter Reader Robert Murphy, left, and Business Rep. Arlene Edwards.

PG&E intransigent on pension hikes

(Editor's note: As Utility Reporter goes to press, PG&E and Local 1245 reached agreement on medical premium relief for retirees. Details available at www.ibew1245.com.)

PG&E came to the bargaining table with Local 1245 on Aug. 24 with nothing to offer. Responding to a union proposal for pension hikes for current retirees, the company said it had no interest in increasing its pension obligations at a time when its pension

fund was underfunded.

Company negotiators also rejected any increase for employees on Long-Term Disability.

As for the union proposal that automatic cost-of-living adjustments be incorporated into both the pension and the LTD plans, the company did not respond favorably to that idea either.

The talks are being held in accordance with provisions of the last round of general negotiations when both par-

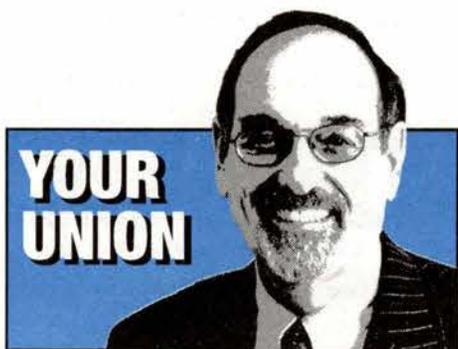
ties pledged to return to the table to bargain in good faith for general wage increases for 2006 and 2007—the last two years in the current 5-year contract—and pension hikes for current retirees.

Neither the union nor the company has yet addressed the issue of general wage increases. That topic is expected to come to the table in September.

PG&E maintains that similar utilities have not been offering increases to retirees.

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YOUR UNION



Perry Zimmerman
BUSINESS MANAGER

We will be heard

In the next six months, contracts covering 75% of our members will be up for re-negotiation.

Collective bargaining is the union's greatest strength. It enables us to achieve for the membership as a whole what individual employees would be unable to achieve on their own. Put simply: a company can almost always afford to ignore one person, but it cannot afford to ignore the entire workforce when we speak with a single voice.

Collective bargaining is not just our greatest strength—it is also our greatest challenge. It is when we sit down with employers and tell them what we deserve and what we expect.

Why should employers listen to what we say at the bargaining table? Because collective bargaining, undertaken in good faith, works. There was a time when employees, denied a collective bargaining voice, wreaked havoc upon our nation's industrial system because they had no other outlet for expressing their views and seeking their fair share.

Both employer and employee benefit when the views and expectations of workers can be dealt with rationally. That's why good faith bargaining is so important.

It is important for our employers to understand this, and also to understand that employees' demands for recognition and compensation are a reasonable response to what's going on in the economy, both nationally and here in Local 1245's jurisdiction.

Consumer prices in the US rose faster than workers' wages in July, according to the most recent statistics from the Labor Department. Consumer prices were 3.2% higher in July than they were a year earlier.

One economist noted in the Washington Post that the CPI's increase over the past year represented "a significant dent in real disposable incomes and a threat to consumer spending."

In California and Nevada, the cost of housing has soared to unbelievable levels. And the rapidly rising cost of fuel squeezes those who face long commutes because they had to move to cheaper housing markets to purchase a home.

But at the same time, our industry has gained stability following the energy crisis. While everyone hopes conditions will improve further, our employers already have the wherewithal to take care of the workers who made it possible for them to prosper.

This is not the time for our employers to try to squeeze pennies from our members. Employers, of course, want to use "good business sense," and they should. Right now, investing in their skilled workforce is about the smartest business move a utility can make.

We will make these and other arguments at the bargaining table in coming months. With the united voice made possible by collective bargaining, we intend to make ourselves heard.

New Clerical Unit in Stockton

Unit 2509, Stockton Clerical, was recently established and now meets on the second Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. Meeting location is Eddie's Pizza, West Lane at East Hammer Lane, in Stockton. Unit Chair is Amber Hughs. Unit Recorder is Tina Jones.

Arlene Edwards,
Business Representative

CALENDAR

- September 5:** "Celebrate Labor" Day
- September 10:** Outside Construction Financial Planning Seminar
Vacaville, CA
- Sept. 14:** First meeting of the Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter Local 1245 Retirees Club,
Vacaville, CA
- September 16:** Deadline for Registering for Local 1245 Golf Tournament
- Sept. 24:** Local 1245 Golf Tournament, Vacaville
- Oct. 10-Nov. 1:** Window to request an Absentee Ballot Application for Nov. 8 Election
- Oct. 22:** Retirement Planning Seminar for Public Sector Members, Vacaville, CA
- October 24:** Deadline to Register to Vote in Nov. 8 Election
- October 28:** Service Awards
Petaluma, CA
- Oct. 29:** Service Awards, Stockton, CA
- Nov. 8:** California Special Election
VOTE!

APPOINTMENTS

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA POWER AGENCY

Bargaining Committee
Hershel Allen
Paul House
Mike Ropp

Dispatch Bargaining Committee
Jana Linkiewicz
Baltazar Ramirez

MIRANT
Bargaining Committee
Kevin Bellflower
Barry Mitchell
Jason Todd

CITY OF SANTA CLARA

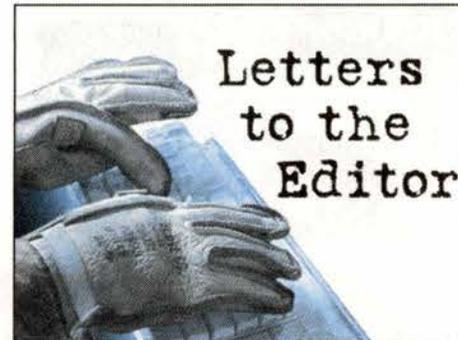
Bargaining Committee
Bob Burkle
Richard Hill
Dan Ryker

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

2005 Inter-Union Gas Conference
Dennis Thompson
Lou Mennel
Bob Quinn
Jim Findley
Tom Dalzell
Jim McCauley
John Felts
Keith Hopps

IBEW-NECA Employee Benefits Conference
David Crawford

Coalition of Labor Union Women 13th Biennial Convention
Katharine Reeves
Gloria Flores



The Forgotten Few

To the Editor:

I have been an employee of PG&E for the last 35+ years and have worked long and hard for a company that I can honestly say I always gave 110% to. Unfortunately for me, this all ended in 1994, when my body, broken down from years and years of hard manual labor, could no longer be of service to the only employer I've ever known. I am now one of the PG&E disabled veterans on Long Term Disability.

I was one of the fortunate, if you can call it that, employees who qualified for Social Security Disability to supplement my LTD benefit, although I'm not sure luck had anything to do with it. I had to hire an attorney and to the tune of \$4,000+, I was eventually awarded my Social Security Disability. Now I live from Social Security Disability check to PG&E LTD check and have the balancing of my funds down to a science. You see SSDI comes on the 3rd of the month and LTD comes on the 23rd. I earn just enough to cover the bare necessities—forget about any of the luxuries of life.

The main reason for writing is to ask the union and company to seriously negotiate a pay increase for those employees on LTD status. I've been on LTD since 1994 and since then I believe I have received only one 2% increase from PG&E. I've also received several pay increases from the Social Security Administration, which don't amount to much more than a cup of coffee at Starbucks.

In the past, the union has furiously negotiated pay increases for retirees and active employees, but it appears that the employees on LTD seem to be the forgotten few. We worked hard and our bodies paid the price. All we are asking for is our fair share of the pie and what we are entitled to, as the employees that literally gave our all for the company we loved.

Also, I want the active employees that are still fortunate enough to be working and able to support their families to consider what those of us on LTD are going through and not just vote yes on a contract based on the "What's in it for me?" mentality. Remember, it could take only one accident and you could end up in my shoes.

Although my working days are clearly behind me, I've always been proud to
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work for PG&E. I hope that the union and the company can come to an equitable agreement regarding pay increases for my sake and the sake of all LTD employees.

I truly pray that no employee ever has to go through what I've had to endure physically, emotionally and financially. When negotiations begin, please remember this letter and my name.

Doug Wolff, San Francisco

The rising cost of retiree medical premiums

Many PG&E employees that have retired within the last five years are paying escalating amounts of \$100 to \$500 on their medical premiums, and for many retirees their medical premiums are now higher than their pension checks. This problem continues to grow to the point of becoming unmanageable.

The RPOA account has helped tremendously. Unfortunately for many retirees, this account will be depleted within one-and-a-half years. Many retirees are using only half of their prescribed medications to reduce medical costs.

What were IBEW staff members, negotiating committee and bargaining unit members thinking back in 1992, to allow the company in the year 2000 to put a cap on what it pays toward retiree medical benefits?

Currently the retirement fund has assets over \$7 billion. In 2004, 17 senior vice presidents were given \$84.5 million to split for retention purposes.

At the present time, PG&E management's mind-set seems to be: There is not a need to help retirees with a cost-of-living adjustment or a medical premium cap. Or they're using the excuse that the California Public Utilities Commission will not approve benefits bargained for retirees.

Thousands of PG&E bargaining unit members, retirees and lower management employees question the fact that millions of dollars were given to vice presidents for retention when in fact they should have been discharged from office for mismanaging the company.

Currently a majority of employees—management and bargaining unit members—want to know if the stockholders are aware of the many costly decisions that management has made in recent years.

A typical example is the millions of dollars that have been written off or put aside by PG&E management for not fielding, executing or completing broken locks in a timely manner. As a result, thousands of customers have been obtaining gas and electric service without being on PG&E billing accounts.

Currently the broken lock numbers are decreasing; the number of broken

locks is 35,000 through July 2005 compared to 77,000 in December 2003. The practice of completing broken locks that are 6 to 10 months old has been happening for the past 10 years. That's revenue the company hasn't been receiving, and some of it comes during periods of high gas and electric usage. I am quite sure that the CPUC would think very unfavorably of PG&E management if they were aware of this loss of revenue.

Whenever a rate case is up for review, or whenever another utility is trying a hostile takeover of PG&E territory, PG&E management seeks the help of retirees to write letters of protest and to help demonstrate at various meetings and hearings. But what does PG&E offer retirees in return for their loyalty and assistance?

I would hope that during the next negotiations for the retirees that PG&E management will take a strong look at the rising costs of medical premiums, and provide well-deserved cost of living adjustments for our retired and soon-to-be-retired PG&E employees.

Ed Lenoir, Sacramento

Limitation on System Operator raise is wrong

Editor's note: This letter concerning the recent System Operator Letter Agreement at PG&E was sent to Business Manager Perry Zimmerman by a Journeyman System Operator, whose name has been withheld at his request.

Mr. Zimmerman,

I just wanted to add my name to the list of System Operators who are not getting the raise we were told about for the last couple of years. Granted, I wasn't made any promises, but every so often we would get updates on the progress of negotiations and the proposals made and for some time now we were told that the classification of "Journeyman Operator" was in line to receive a 6% increase in two increments of 3% each.

I was recently off work for several weeks due to a medical situation so I didn't find out that I am not getting the raise until today. I was wondering where the "30 months" came from as a qualifier for the raise. I realize that the old apprenticeship program was 30 months long and I know that you have to have 30 months time on the job to receive a state certificate, but if 30 months was picked because of that then I believe it was applied incorrectly. The 30 months should be from date of hire, not from the date that an operator passes his or her last WPT. I also believe that any certified System Operator who holds that title the day the contract is passed ought to receive the raises regardless of their time on the job. If a 30-month require-

ment is going to be enacted it should be applied only to operators hired after the contract goes into effect.

It seems to me placing any limitation on the raise is just plain wrong. The company may think it has saved money by denying a very small group of employees the raise they deserve, but all they accomplished is to make the newest operators rethink their careers. The newest operators are badly needed due to the inevitable attrition that will occur over the next several years. Many employees, and specifically System Operators, will be leaving due to retirement. Pushing the newest operators out the door to work for other companies that pay a fair wage seems to me a poor management decision. PG&E is one of the largest utility companies in the US and has a world renowned training program. Many other utilities hire PG&E employees because of the reputation of this company. PG&E pays a lot of money to train its employees and many of them consider leaving because of unfair treatment. I can't think of anything more unfair than to one day pay two operators the same rate because they do the same job and the next day pay one of them more. Did my value as an employee somehow diminish overnight? The company must think so.

I realize that contract negotiations are complex, with each side giving and taking, but it seems to me when a group of employees has been deprived of fair pay for as long as the System Operators of PG&E have been, then I would think that the company could be convinced to simply do the right thing and make appropriate adjustments.

Another issue with this contract involves retroactive pay. Typically, when a contract is negotiated retroactive pay is given out since there is often a lag time between the end of a contract and the negotiation of a new one. I see that the System Operators of PG&E also received no retro pay. Of course, I would receive no retro pay anyway since I am apparently not qualified to receive the raise in the first place, however, the operators getting the raise also deserved retro pay as well.

When I hear the company giving lip service to the idea that its employees are its greatest asset and about how they strive to make PG&E a great place to work, I must admit I find it harder and harder to believe when I see the truth of their actions. There is a rising tide of resentment in ECCO because of this decision. Those of us on the short end of the stick are told that the company cares about us, only to be shown that they care more about saving a few pennies than they do about our well being. Too bad, since I believe the company will ultimately pay for this decision in the form of excessive overtime pay and the cost of hiring and training new operators to fill the vacancies left by those who moved on to other opportunities and better treatment.

Employees deserve respect for work they've performed

I hope that PG&E negotiators remember the basic business triangle, for a successful company. Which is: 1) if management takes care of labor, 2) labor will take care of customers, and 3) customers will take care of management.

We all know how extremely dangerous our jobs are, and how skilled we are to perform our daily job duties. Unfortunately, we do at times have fatalities and severe injuries due to the extreme danger, and vast amount of various tasks.

If you think about it, most police departments and fire departments probably don't have the same fatality record and severe injury record as we do. This is not because of sloppy safe-work practices, it's because of the work we are exposed to every day. Most policemen don't get a gun pointed at them everyday, and most firemen don't go to dangerous fire situations everyday. Yet everyday we do work with 500 thousand volts and voltages all the way down to various DC voltages, any of which can kill you. As well as explosive natural gas, high pressure, and even a large building or house that may be ready to explode because of a gas leak, not to mention gas related carbon dioxide. Also high pressure steam in some locations. We also work with heavy weight rigging for various job duties.

Yet police departments and fire departments get a much greater pension at the time of retirement. Most of our retired employees' bodies are worn out because of the sacrifice made for PG&E and our customers. Many of our retirees are struggling financially just to make ends meet. I would think this would be an embarrassment to PG&E.

Remember that it's not our fault that PG&E lacked in hiring in most departments that needed workers to come up to journeyman level. Many of us are ready for retirement or very near retirement. I hope that PG&E does the right thing in negotiations, giving us the respect and honor we deserve.

John French, Hanford, Ca.

Local 1245 website wins national award

Local 1245's website won second place in competition sponsored by the International Labor Communications Association.

The award, presented in July in connection with the ILCA's 50th anniversary convention in Chicago, recognized the content of Local 1245's website as second best among all local unions nationwide.

Local 1245's website, which was redesigned in November 2004, is available on the internet at www.ibew1245.com and is also available on PG&E's intranet.



On Backing

By Stoney Burk

Driving forward is one thing, but backing up is a totally different situation requiring special care.

When you drive forward and know you will be backing your vehicle up, plan ahead. Pull forward and get your vehicle as straight as possible to make backing easier. Be sure your mirrors are

clean and adjusted properly. Have a spotter assist you if possible. Back your vehicle slowly while checking both mirrors to see how you are progressing.

Don't over-steer when backing trailers. Sometimes it only takes a small movement of the steering wheel to accomplish the movement you need. Over-steering may cause you to lose control.

Be aware of any overhead obstacles you could strike, especially if you're driving a van or other tall vehicle. Compensate if you have something protruding out the side or over the back end of your vehicle. And, of course, be sure the path behind you is clear.

Safe, successful backing requires patience. Don't be in a hurry.

Practice your backing skills when the opportunity arises and conditions are safe. Make yourself an expert no matter which direction you're going.

Labor board approves ban on workers socializing off-the-job

Employers can forbid their workers from going to lunch together, attending each other's weddings, or socializing in any way outside of work—and there's nothing in federal labor laws to prevent it.

In a recent ruling, the National Labor Relations Board refused to strike down a company's rule that prohibits employees from getting together away from work. Labor leaders believe such rules are sometimes used to block employees from organizing a union.

The case that prompted the NLRB decision was a complaint by Daniel Higgins, a security dispatcher employed by Guardsmark LLC, a New York-based company that contracts with a San Francisco hotel. Higgins was told he was being switched to a less favorable shift after complaints about his performance.

Higgins claimed his shift was changed because he discussed his working conditions with other employees.

Rather than accept night work, he quit the job and filed the NLRB complaint.

In a split decision, the NLRB ruled in June that Guardsmark's regulation prohibiting conversations among employees at work violated the National Labor Relations Act, the 70-year-old law that guarantees workers the right to unionize. But they said Guardsmark's blanket policy that banned fraternizing away from work did not violate any of the act's protections because employees would not reasonably see it as a restriction to union activity.

It is unlikely that a company in California could get away with such a ban, however, because state law in California offers more protection than federal law.

The guaranteed right to privacy is at the top of California's constitution, Article I, Section I. Some 30 other states have that kind of protection, but there's no such explicit guarantee in the U.S. Bill of Rights, federal labor laws or the labor board.

Grievance committee tackles Local Office closure case

Local 1245's grievance challenging PG&E's decision to close local offices was presented to the Local Investigating Committee on Aug. 25, a prelude to bringing the case to arbitration later this year.

The Business Manager's grievance will attempt to establish that the company's proposed action is in violation of the collective bargaining agreement. At the Aug. 25 meeting, the company reaffirmed that the number of local offices targeted for closure is 84, and that some 370 bargaining unit members could be affected—somewhat higher than earlier estimates.

Many additional employees could eventually be impacted if local office personnel choose to exercise displacement rights under Title 19 of the Clerical Labor Agreement. The major locations to which displaced employees could make a bid are the call centers in Sacramento, Fresno and San Jose and the Credit and Records Center in Stockton.

Of the 84 local offices targeted for closure, 50 are owned by PG&E while the remainder are leased, the committee determined.

Filed in July, the Business Manager's grievance alleges that PG&E is using

contractor pay stations while eliminating PG&E positions.

PG&E plans to ask the California Public Utilities Commission for permission to close the local offices by the summer of 2007. The company's application is due to be filed in December, with a decision one year later.

Representing the union at the LIC were Assistant Business Managers Sam Tamimi and Dorothy Fortier.

PG&E Pension Hikes...from page 1

"This company is doing well. Their stock is up, they've resumed paying dividends, they're a leader in the industry," said Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. "They should be able to offer something to the people who made it possible, many of whom are struggling just to get by."

The company and union planned to meet again at Weakley Hall on Aug. 31 to further discuss the pension and LTD issues.

For the latest information on bargaining, please regularly visit the union website at www.ibew1245.com or, on the PG&E Intranet, go to PG&E@work, select "My Stuff, then select "IBEW".

PG&E Open Enrollment

The Open Enrollment period for your union-negotiated health benefits at PG&E is October 28 through November 10. Open Enrollment for retirees is October 10-21. This is your annual opportunity to choose the options that best meet your individual needs.

Key changes to the benefits include:

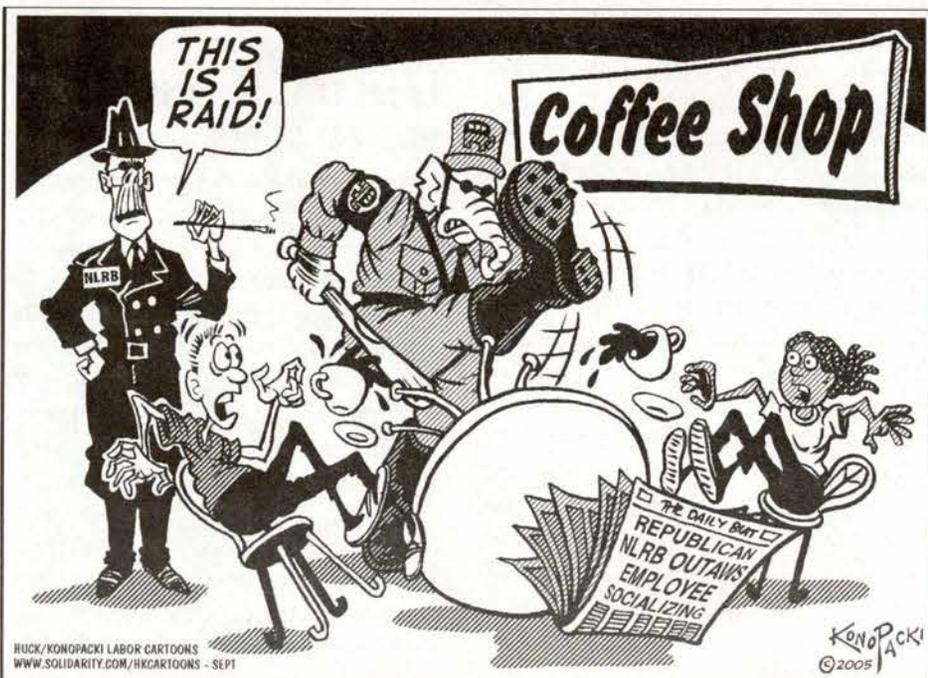
Blue Cross of California will be the new administrator for the company's self-funded medical plans, currently administered by UnitedHealthcare. Detailed information on this change will be included in the Open Enrollment package that will be mailed in late October. You can also visit Blue Cross' custom Web site for PG&E employees at www.bluecrossca.com/clients/pge, or call Blue Cross' toll-free number at 1-800-964-0530 to check the list of member physicians.

PG&E's internal domestic partnership registry ceased on Aug. 1. If you had previously registered a domestic partnership with PG&E and you want to

continue receiving benefits for your enrolled dependents, you will need to register with a governmental entity that recognizes domestic partnerships. For a list of current entities with domestic partner registry, visit the HR intranet at <http://www.hr/Benefits/DomesticPartner/DPPage.htm>, or contact the HR Service Center. There may be legal obligations associated with registering with a governmental entity. If you do register with a governmental entity, you must inform the HR Service Center of your registration before the end of the year so that any benefits you may want to provide to your domestic partnership dependents may properly take effect.

If your mailing address has changed since last year's Open Enrollment, you should update it either on the PG&E Intranet or by calling the HR Service Center at 1-800-788-2363 or internally at 8-223-2363.

If you plan to be on vacation during the OE period, call the HR Service Center to make alternate arrangements.



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www.unionplus.org/autobuying

1-877-800-2924

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PG&E negotiations, AMI are hot topics at Ad Council

Mark Taylor, representing Diablo Canyon, asked about hiring at an Antioch plant that PG&E is acquiring from Mirant in settlement of claims over the energy crisis of 2000-2001.



Advisory Council member John Harper, representing the Shasta area, discusses an IBEW national agreement that could impact wages for work done on PG&E's Automated Metering Infrastructure. Listening in background is Local 1245 Retirees Club member Tom Young of Reno.

Leroy Foster represents PG&E East Bay.



Grover Day, representing the Stockton area, inquires if the union will accept member proposals for upcoming PG&E negotiations. Listening are Jim Findley, left, and Larry Rodriguez, right.

Lou Mennel, Sacramento-area representative, asked about drug testing requirements for work performed on PG&E's proposed AMI.



Mike Saner represents PG&E General Construction.

Upcoming bargaining with Pacific Gas and Electric was a hot topic of discussion at the Local 1245 Advisory Council meeting last month.

Bargaining will determine wages for the last two years of the current contract, which expires at the end of 2007. Pension benefits for current retirees will also be on the table, but the company has recently turned cool to the idea of making any improvements at this time.

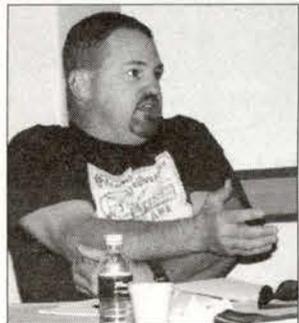
In response to a question from council member Grover Day, Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell said the union had not solicited wage proposals from members, but would consider any proposals received.

"Don't just give us numbers, give us good arguments to use at the table," Dalzell urged.

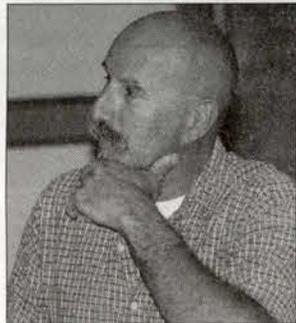
Other issues discussed at the council meeting, held Aug. 13 in Reno, included:

- PG&E's plan to use contractors to build its proposed Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI)
- The secession of three major unions from the AFL-CIO in July.
- The impact of the PG&E Letter Agreement that was intended to open up line positions outside the Bay Area.
- The secession of three unions from the AFL-CIO in July.
- The grievance filed over the proposed closure of all 84 PG&E local offices.
- Grievances filed over the application of the recent System Operator Letter Agreement.
- The recent success in negotiating a first contract for newly-organized employees at a co-generation plant in Burney, Ca.

The Council's next meeting will be Nov. 5 at union headquarters in Vacaville.



Todd Wooten, representing Colgate Division, reported seeing little impact from recent Letter Agreement designed to open up PG&E line positions outside the Bay Area.



Mark Castro, serving as an alternate for Art Torres, represented SMUD at the Reno meeting.



Recording Secretary Chris Habecker and President Mike Davis listen to council members discuss PG&E bargaining.

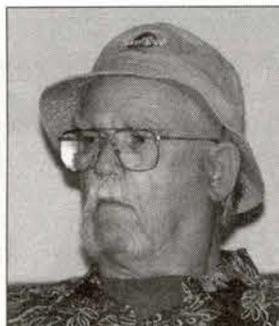


Left: "Don't just give us numbers. Give us arguments" -Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell

Below: "I don't think (the AFL-CIO breakup) is a good thing for labor. I think the debate should have been kept inside the house of labor." -Business Manager Perry Zimmerman



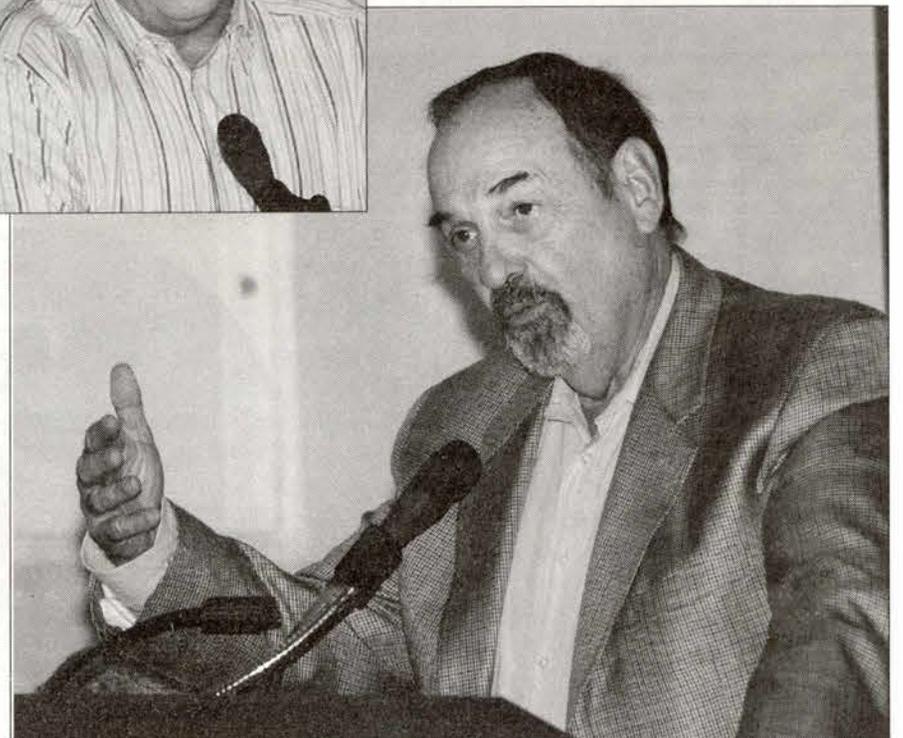
Tom Cornell, Nevada's representative on the Advisory Council.



Micky Harrington, retired Local 1245 business representative.



San Francisco Representative Bob Quinn discusses Plato.





Sierra Pacific™

Sierra crews clear path for soundwall

Soundwalls are great for containing highway noise. But when you want to put a soundwall along a highway that's been around for a long time, what do you do with the stuff that's already accumulated there—like power poles, for example? In Fernley, Nev., you turn to Sierra Pacific Power linemen represented by IBEW Local 1245. Under a white-hot August sun, Foreman Jim Seevers and his crew topped the existing power pole and augered holes for the new pole and its anchor. Once the phone company removes its services from the old pole, Sierra crews will return to pull the pole and install a new one about three feet further back from Highway 50 to make way for the soundwall. Local 1245 members working the job with Seevers were Linemen Reto Gross, Bob Helton and Alan Roberts. PAR Lineman and IBEW member Gary Orman also worked the job.

Photos: Eric Wolfe

Lineman Alan Roberts operates the boom.

Linemen Bob Helton (in bucket) and Reto Gross (on pole) remove service from the old pole so that it can be "topped" and eventually taken down.



Make Way!



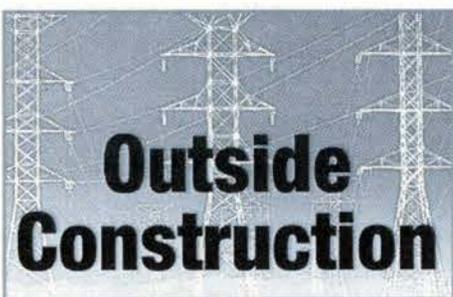
Foreman Jim Seevers disconnects the yacht braid, releasing the stub.



Lineman Bob Helton clears the auger that is drilling a hole for the new pole.



Linemen Reto Gross (left) and Bob Helton install the screw anchor.



Outside Report

During the past month we had 56 calls for Journeyman Lineman; 6 for Equipment Specialist; 23 for Groundman; 5 for Cable Splicers; 38 for U.G. Tech; and 5 for Apprentice. Total calls: 133



Dave Crawford

The books, as of Aug. 10:

Journey Lineman, Book 1: 6
 Journey Lineman, Book 2: 1
 Lineman, Book 3: 1
 Lineman, Book 4: 15
 Equipment Specialist, Book 1: 2
 Equipment Specialist, Book 2: 4
 Equipment Specialist, Book 3: 1
 Groundman, Book 1: 9

Groundman, Book 2: 4
 Groundman, Book 3: 19
 Groundman, Book 4: 78
 Cable Splicer, Book 1: 0
 Cable Splicer, Book 2: 0
 Cable Splicer, Book 3: 1

Total crews working on Outside Agreement: 118
 U.G. Agreement: 40 crews
 Pole and Test Agreement: 40 crews
 Teledata Agreement: 14 crews
 Total crews working: 212

Currently we have 263 apprentices: 6 are traveling, 45 are working out of Local 1245; 207 are working out of Local 47; 2 are working out of Local 396 and 13 are laid off due to various reasons. 27 apprentices have passed their test and are Journeymen.

PG&E is putting out more pole packages and developer packages and Livermore Transmission U.G. Project is starting up. However, they are having a rough start on the 230KV Underground Project.

Larry Thompson is assisting with Business Rep. duties for two months. Interviews for the permanent position of Outside Rep for Local 1245 will be this month.

Don't forget the Golf Tournament on Sept. 24!

Dave Crawford, Business Rep.

Port of Oakland pact preserves benefits

Members of IBEW Local 1245 preserved benefits and increased wages in a new agreement with the Port of Oakland.

The 39-month agreement, retroactive to Oct. 2, 2003, increased wages by 4% effective July 1, 2004, 3% effective July 1, 2005 and 1.5% effective July 1, 2006.

One of the biggest accomplishments in the bargaining was the preservation of health care and retirement benefits in an era when such benefits have been under heavy attack in the public sector.

"There's no change in health care premiums, we didn't lose anything," said Business Rep. Lynne Morel, who led the negotiations for Local 1245.

The union also preserved retirement benefits, a PERS plan that provides a

"2.7% at 55" retirement formula.

The parties agreed to continue to meet and confer to revise and improve provisions of the contract pertaining to performance evaluation, Morel said.

The agreement was negotiated a year-and-a-half after the expiration of the old agreement, Morel said, because the Port was also involved in negotiations with SEIU at the time.

Serving on the committee with Morel were Dave Cuthbertson, Larry Ross and Dave Nemcik.



Lynne Morel

Big wage boost at Paradise ID

General wage increases of 3% annually for five years were negotiated at Paradise Irrigation District in a contract ratified unanimously in late June, Business Rep. Kit Stice reported.

Employees will also be eligible for a step increase of 4% each year through the entire range, with a possibility of accelerated increases.

The District's retirement contribution will be reduced from 10.5% to 9%, but the pact provides the opportunity for a one-to-one matching of additional employee retirement contributions up to a maximum of 3%, which could put the District's total contribution at 12%. Under the terms of the agreement, the District will also provide for an additional 401K plan to enhance opportuni-

ties to plan for retirement.

The pact provides for a 100% employer payment of the basic medical plan; employees will have the opportunity to select a more expensive plan, although they will be required to contribute toward the premium.

The agreement also specifies conditions for eligibility for health benefits upon retirement.

Serving on the committee for the union, in addition to Stice, were Keith O'Brien, Laura Capra and William Taylor.



Kit Stice

RETIREE ISSUES LOOM LARGE

Union committee prepares for Sierra Pacific bargaining

The Local 1245 Bargaining Committee at Sierra Pacific Power met for three weeks in July and August to prepare for upcoming negotiations with the company.

The union received 210 proposals from members on a wide range of issues, according to Business Rep. Randy Osborn. Melding the various proposals into an overall package was a challenge, Osborn said.

"There might be 20 different angles on one issue. We had to build spread sheets and categorize the proposals by titles and merge them together," said Osborn, who said that it seemed, at times, "like a never-ending process."

Among the major issues the union expects to encounter in negotiations are retirement and post retirement medical benefits. Many work rule issues could also find their way onto the table, Osborn predicted.

The recent enactment of a national prescription drug benefit for Medicare recipients could also be a topic at the table. Many companies that provide medical benefits for retirees will be eligible for a refund from the government under the new law, and Sierra Pacific Power is expected to be among those companies.

Rita Weisshaar studies proposals

Wayne Paterson, standing, Jerry McAllister, left, and Mike Grimm

Mike Grimm and his laptop

First-time committee member Samson Wilson

Veteran negotiator Gino Aramini

Reto Gross, left, and Business Rep. Randy Osborn

Dale Huntsman helps organize the proposals

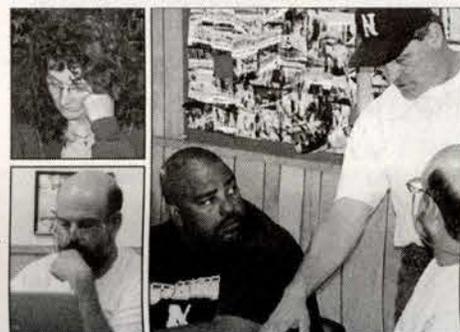
Aaron Dorman deep in thought
 Tom Cornell

"We will propose that it all go to the retirees," said Osborn. The company will probably have a different perspective on the issue, he acknowledged.

Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, Senior Assistant Business Manager Tom Dalzell and Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer all came to Reno in July to meet with the committee.

No meetings have yet been scheduled with the company. The current agreement expires Dec. 31.

Serving with Osborn on the union bargaining committee are Gino Aramini, Gary Bailey, Tom Cornell, Aaron Dorman, Mike Grimm, Reto Gross, Dale Huntsman, Jerry McAllister, Wayne Paterson, Rita Weisshaar and Samson Wilson.



Line Clearance-Tree Trimmers

Davey pension contribution forms

There is currently an opportunity for Local 1245 members employed by Davey Tree to contribute to their own pensions. Originally the deadline for members to fill out the individual contribution form was July 15, 2005. Due to a lot of requests, that deadline has been extended to the end of the year. Davey Tree members who have served their probation (6 months or more of service) and want to contribute to their pensions should fill out an individual contribution form. To get the form, call Ray Thomas at (800) 247-2762 and leave your name, address and phone number.

Formularios de contribución para la pensión de Davey

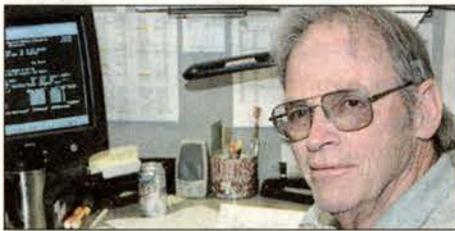
Existe actualmente una oportunidad para que los miembros del Local 1245 empleados por Davey Tree puedan contribuir a sus propias pensiones. Originalmente, la fecha límite para que los miembros pudieran llenar el formulario individual de contribución fue el 15 de julio de 2005. Debido a muchas peticiones, esa fecha ha sido extendida hasta el fin de año. Los miembros de Davey Tree que han servido sus términos de probación (6 meses o más de servicio), y desean contribuir a sus pensiones, deberán llenar un formulario individual de contribución. Para obtener el formulario, llame a Ray Thomas al teléfono (800) 247-2762 y deje su nombre, dirección y número de teléfono.



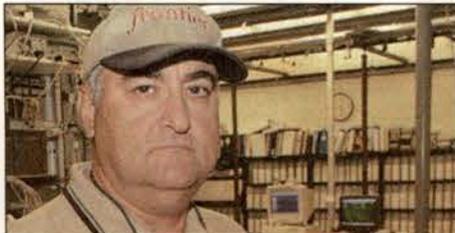
Maria Naputi, Cutwriting, Elk Grove



David Vipond, Cutwriting, is a member of the Local 1245 Safety Committee.



Jim Harbaugh, Cutwriting, Elk Grove



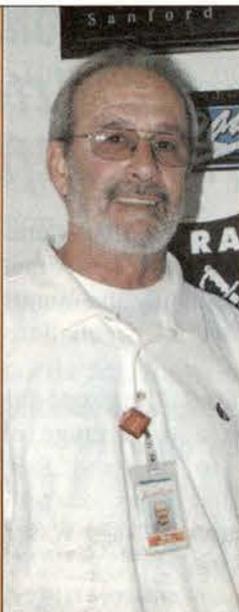
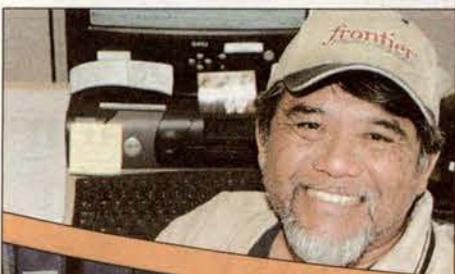
Terry Lewis, Transmission Technician, Elk Grove



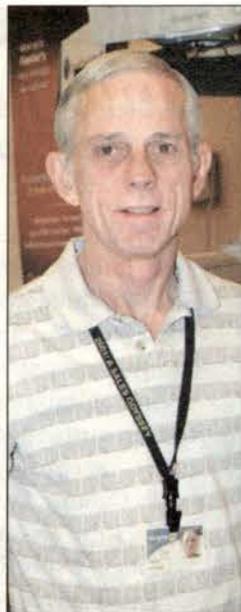
Patrick Samulewski, Transmission Tech, Elk Grove



Ruben Disuanco (above) and Joe Carrasco (below), Transmission Technicians, Elk Grove



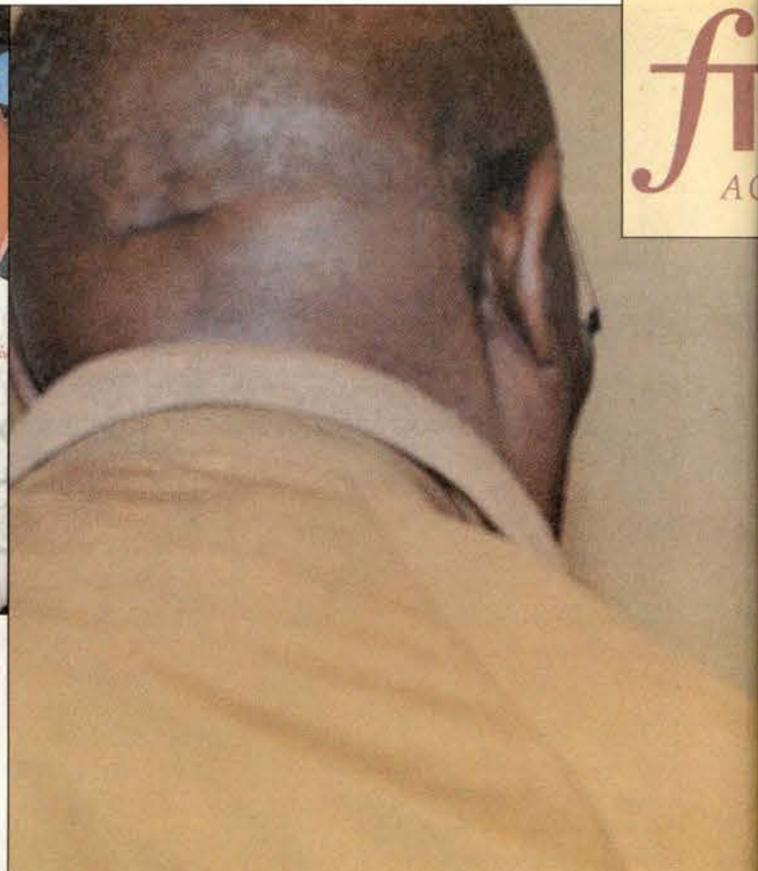
As a PG&E Lineman in 1964, Bill Phillips worked on the Oakland Coliseum, and remains a Raiders nut, oops, we mean fan. He came to Citizen Utilities in 1979 as a Lineman and became an Operations Supervisor in Elk Grove after many years in the IBEW.



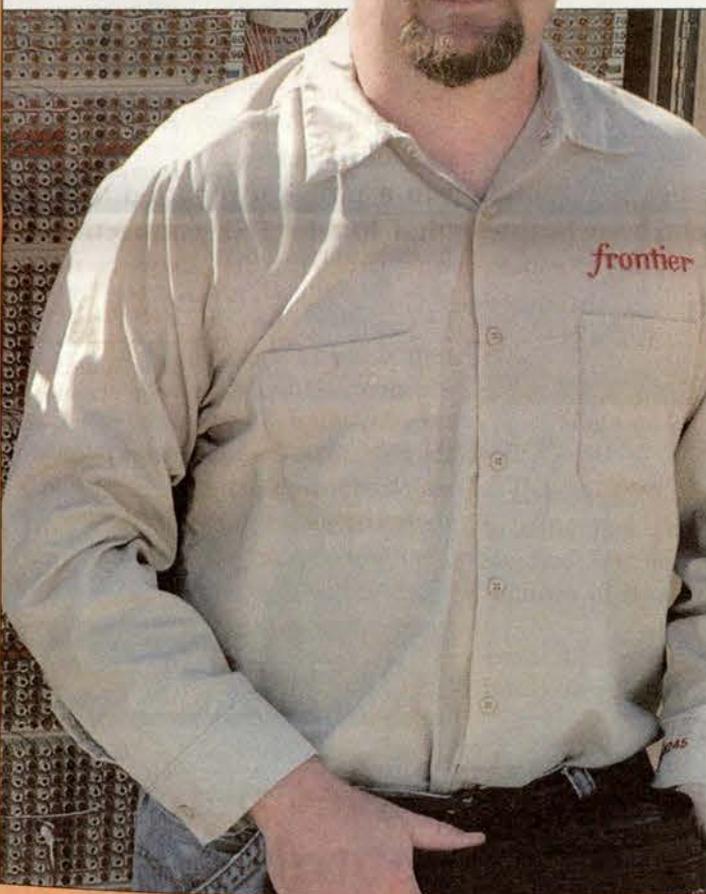
Bill Wake, Customer Service Representative, Elk Grove



Joseph Christ, Splicer, Elk Grove



below: Data Communications Technician Tom Greer investigates a business customer's DSL outage in Elk Grove.



The People

Frontier likes to proclaim its efficient, friendly, problem-solving service—where “the customer always comes first.”

It's easy to serve up a slogan. What's harder is to deliver the goods.

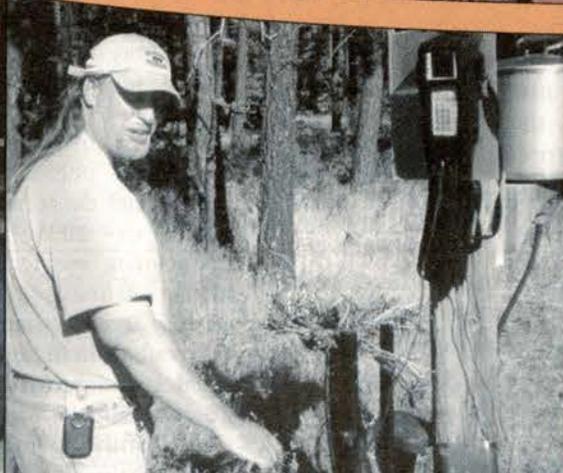
At Frontier, the people who make it possible are the members of IBEW Local 1245 who are serious about customers and their problems. One place where those problems are likely to show up is the Frontier greeter's office in Elk Grove, Ca., just south of Sacramento.

Anytime you deal with walk-in traffic, “you're going to have some strange requests,” says Customer Service Rep. Terry Camp. The walk-in traffic includes customers wanting to make payments, and new customers wanting to order service. Occasionally it includes someone who wants to know why their service has been disconnected, raising the challenge of providing friendly, problem-solving service to a whole new level.

But most often, people walk in to ask about a bill they don't understand, according to Customer Service Rep. Bill Wake.



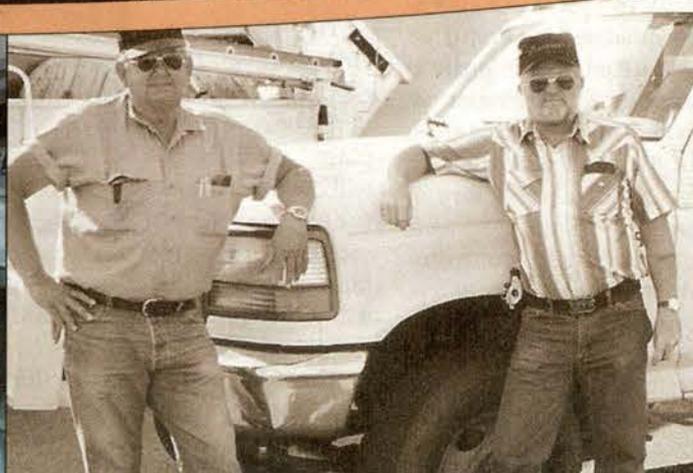
Mary Unterreiner is a Clerk in Burney and serves as Recorder for Unit 4015.



Maintenance Splicer Mark Wilson shown here working in 2002 on communications lines at a repeater in Burney.



Kathryn Stephens is a Clerk in Susanville.



Wayne Perry and Richard Withrow at work in Susanville in a 2003 photo.



Union Steward Marianne Philipenko works as a clerk in Susanville.

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Make it Possible

Terry Camp accepts payment from a customer at the Frontier Greeter's Office in Elk Grove.

Stories by Eric Wolfe
Photos by Eric Wolfe and Ray Thomas

"They come in angry and upset. You spend a little time with them and they go away happy," says Wake.

Local 1245 has represented employees at Frontier since the long-ago days when the company was known as Citizens Utilities. Then, as now, the company provides phone service in rural areas and small towns. But there's a lot more to it these days because people's concept of telecommunications has changed.

Think the internet. Think DSL. Think about how that service gets to your home.

You probably don't think about it very much—until something goes wrong. Around that time you start looking for somebody like Tom Greer.

When responding to a service problem, Greer, a Data Communications Tech, knows just where to start.

"This box is the first point of entry," says Greer, studying a bank of switches in a roadside box that controls data flows for customers in the area. "You got to make sure it works there."

Greer is responding to a problem reported overnight by a business that lost its DSL connection. Checking the box is the first step in isolating the source of the problem. Greer doesn't need to be told that a solution is needed fast. He knows how quickly and completely people come to rely on high-speed internet communication.

"It's the best way to communicate if not in person," he says.

Data Communications Techs like Greer work out of the plant service center in Elk Grove. That's also

continued on next page



Sarah Hughes, Dispatcher, Elk Grove



Salvador Robledo, Dispatcher, Elk Grove



Sheila Lawton, a Plant Service Clerk in Elk Grove, has served on the Local 1245 Bargaining Committee at Frontier.



Leslie Walker Jr., Assignor, Elk Grove

Below: Denise Sanders, Assignor, Elk Grove



Local 1245 Chief Shop Steward John Shepphird, [unclear], Susanville, and Steward Bruce Gilbert, Palo Cedro, are both Transmission Technicians.

Members of Local 1245 in Ferndale, photographed in 2003, are, from left: Bill Bryan, Transmission Technician; the late Art McDaniel, former Central Office Technician and Local 1245 Advisory Council representative; Raul Arce, Data Communications Technician; and Mark Dekens, Maintenance Splicer.

Members of Local 1245 in Palo Cedro, photographed in 2003, are, front row, from left: Karen Carter; Dan Miller; Brian Coleman, and John White. Back row, from left: Dave Albrecht, and Kevin Fitzgerald.

The People Make it Possible *continued from previous page.*

where you'll find Dispatchers like Sarah Hughes.

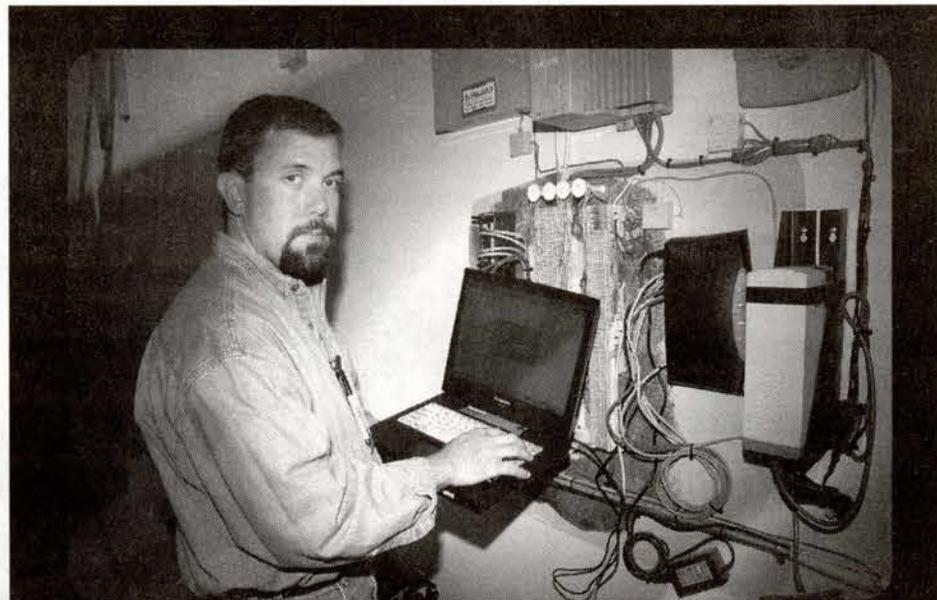
"We make sure the techs get all their work," says Hughes. Dispatchers also perform follow-up when necessary to make sure the work is completed, she explains. "We're the middlemen between the tech and the customer."

Working nearby are the Line Assignors who program the phones.

"We tell the tech what 'cable pairs' to use to bring the dial tone to the house," says Assignor Denise Sanders. "They might need a 25-pair or a 50-pair—the larger the cable the higher the capacity."

Then there's cutwriting, located in another Frontier office on West Stockton Boulevard. Think of it as directing traffic to avoid congestion.

"We take what the access engineers and transmission engineers do in the field and we build records for them in the computer database," explains Maria Naputi. "We write up cutsheets—sheets that instruct people in the field what cable counts need to be moved," that is, re-routed to a different location. "Sometimes we need to provide relief on some trunk lines."



Neither rain, nor sleet, nor

SCREAMS in the NIGHT...

A scream slices through the still air

inside the old pear-packing plant in Hood, Ca.

Then a shriek, followed by another scream, and a plea for mercy. Then silence.

David Cabral enters the building. But he's not there to rescue wayward teenagers from some demented slasher. He's there to hook up the phones.

There hasn't been a pear packed at this plant in years. The old weather-beaten brick building looks abandoned and forlorn, the perfect spot for psychos seeking new uses for the kitchen knife.

And a great spot for making *movies* about psychos seeking new uses for the kitchen knife.

When a movie production company set up shop here last spring, its needs were a little different from the old packing plant. Movie people need high-speed internet access. They need telephone lines. They need internal 4-digit dialing systems.

They need Cabral, a Data Communications Technician for Frontier and a member of IBEW Local 1245.

Along with fellow union members Daniel Bennett, Dean Brown and Conrad Padilla, Cabral pulls the wire inside the offices, puts in the networking for the DSL, installs the key system for 4-digit dialing, and puts jacks wherever they are needed.

The job requires a lot of crawling and drilling because, as Cabral notes, "everything comes up from under the floor."

Meanwhile, the moviemakers are checking up on the competition. "They keep critiquing other movies," says Cabral.

After a while the celluloid shrieking and screaming becomes a routine part of the work environment.

Figuring these Local 1245 members have become experts in slasher movies, the Hollywood Reporter—I mean, the Utility Reporter—can't resist asking this question:

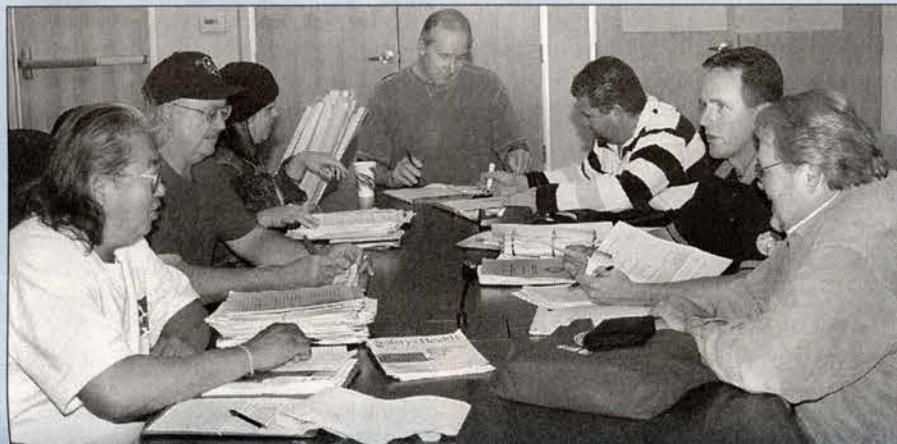
"Does anyone die?"

Cabral eyes widen. "They all die."

As long as the slashers stay on the screen and away from the bargaining table, the union technicians have nothing to worry about.

PHOTO: Data Communications Technician Dave Cabral at work on a major installation job for a movie production company in Hood, Ca.

Hard road at the bargaining table



Meeting at Weakley Hall last November during contentious contract talks with Frontier were members of the Local 1245 Bargaining Committee, clockwise from left: Eric Tanaka, Monte "Toot" Nelson, Sheila Lawton, Larry Martin, Tom Greer, Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas and Business Rep. Jack Osburn.

There's rarely been anything simple about bargaining with Frontier.

The most recent labor agreement was ratified more than a year after the previous one expired, and only after members rejected two company offers and voted in favor of authorizing a strike.

Local 1245 has tried, with only limited success, to coordinate bargaining with more than a dozen other IBEW locals around the country who have agreements with Frontier.

"We've been successful in resisting some of the company's most negative contract proposals in recent years, but other locals haven't necessarily been as successful," said Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas recently. "While our membership at Frontier is strong, maintaining solidarity among all the IBEW locals is a constant challenge."

There are few union responsibilities

more challenging, more frustrating, and more engaging than serving on the Local 1245 bargaining committee at Frontier, and the union has been fortunate in having very dedicated and able members shoulder this responsibility. Serving on the union bargaining committee during recent negotiations have been Thomas Greer, Sheila Lawton, Monte "Toot" Nelson, Denise Sanders, John Shepphird, Eric Tanaka and Larry Martin, along with Thomas and Business Rep. Jack Osburn.

"You have to give these members a lot of credit," says Thomas. "Along with our stewards at all of Frontier's locations, they have stood firm in the face of some very harsh attacks on our compensation package. Their steadfastness gives me hope for the future in our dealings with this employer."

Movie Tickets for Less

Want to spend a night out at the movies but don't want to pay those high ticket prices? You can see the movie and afford popcorn if you purchase your tickets through the **Union Plus Entertainment Discount**.

(This Union Plus program is provided by American Education Services, a union shop with 1,000 union workers.)

Call today to place your ticket order.

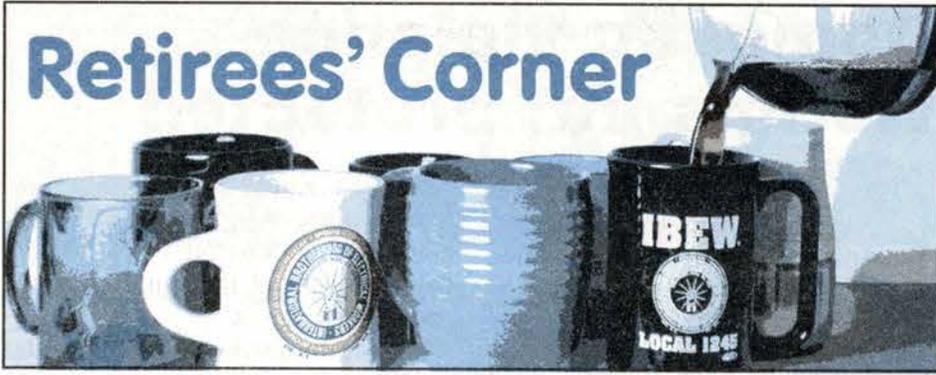
Use member ID: 7 4 4 3 8 7 6 9



1.800.565.3712

www.unionplus.org/movies

Retirees' Corner



Confusing Medicare RX plan fails to ignite much interest

The Medicare prescription drug benefit passed by Congress in 2003 goes into full effect on Jan. 1, but few seniors understand the complex plan and have largely ignored it.

Under the new law, Medicare beneficiaries may choose a Medicare Part C plan (Medicare managed care that will include a prescription benefit and will be called Medicare Advantage) or a Medicare Part D plan (a stand-alone prescription drug benefit).

The new law will bring prescription options so confusing that even those who stand to benefit from the law—seniors without prescription insurance and those who might be eligible for the low-income assistance—are likely to miss out on the benefit.

On the other hand, many seniors on limited incomes will not be eligible for the prescription subsidies because they have too many cash assets. Many may be unable to afford the premiums, co-pays, and/or deductibles required by the prescription plans.

The problem for these seniors will only be compounded if more traditional forms of assistance, such as drug company assistance programs and discount cards, are phased out. Another threat to seniors is that coverage furnished by their former employers could be curtailed.

A further problem is that seniors who choose to participate will be "locked

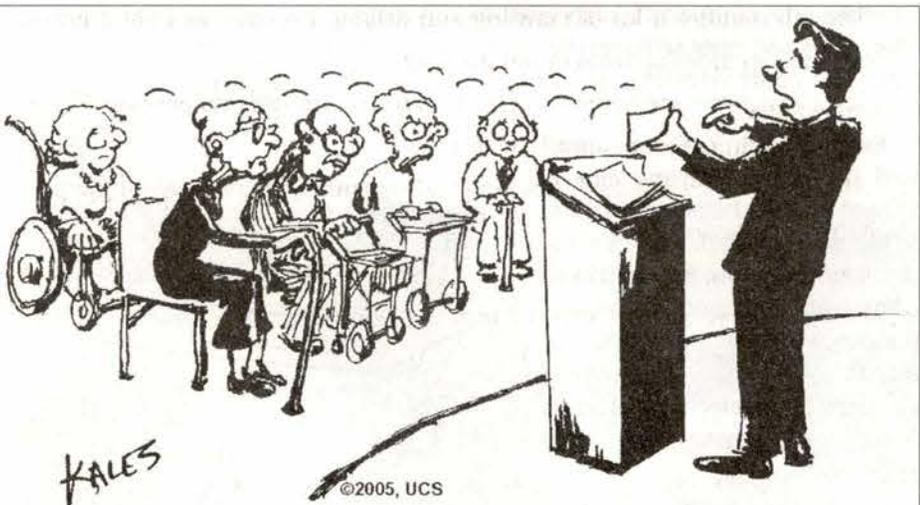
into" a prescription plan for a year, making it more difficult for them to obtain needed medicines not covered by their particular plans.

Here's what to expect in coming months:

In September, Medigap (supplemental) insurance companies and employer-sponsored prescription drug plans will send notices to policyholders who have drug coverage, explaining whether their current benefit is "as good/credible or better than" the basic Medicare drug benefit.

In early October, all Medicare beneficiaries will receive "Medicare & You 2006" handbooks detailing their options for purchasing stand-alone prescription drug plans or managed care plans that include the drug benefit. Comparative information about Medicare drug plans will be available at www.medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE. Marketing of private plans will begin and some companies may be "cold calling" seniors.

From Nov. 15, 2005 to May 15, 2006, beneficiaries can enroll in prescription drug plans. Medicare beneficiaries with full Medicaid benefits will be "auto-enrolled" in plans by Jan. 1, and all others must pick a plan from the various options if they want to enroll. Those with Medicare Savings Plans will be auto-enrolled in a prescription drug plan if they have not selected one by June 2006.



"And with this medicare option, your prescription drug is covered whenever you get four matches on this scratch card."

UtilityReporter

Vacaville hosts first meeting

The new Vacaville/Sacramento chapter of the Retirees Club will hold its initial meetings on Sept. 14 and Oct. 12 at Weakley Hall, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville. Members from Sacramento, Marysville, Stockton, Chico, Roseville and surrounding areas are encouraged to attend. For more information, contact Business Rep. Darryl Norris at 916-688-3637 (drn8@ibew1245.com) or Ken Rawles at 707-546-3427 (redmtman@yahoo.com).

Fresno, Reno, and Santa Rosa

Retirees are also exploring the formation of new Retiree Club chapters in

Fresno, Reno, and Santa Rosa. For Fresno info, call Mike Grill at 559-292-2031. For Reno info, call Randy Osborn at 775-834-6838. For Santa Rosa info, call Joe Osterlund at 415-238-2898.

Current meeting locations

East Bay Chapter: 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA.

San Jose Chapter: 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose, CA.

Vacaville Chapter: 2nd Wednesday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA.



PG&E in the 1930s Linemen and Troublemen working for Pacific Gas & Electric Co. in Tracy, Ca. in the 1930s. Courtesy of William Peitz

Congratulations newly-retired members

The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in a Retiree Club chapter in your area. If you don't have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Vida Anderson,
25 years
San Jose, CA

Michael Armstrong,
23 years
Ormond Beach, FL

Darlene Bacchetto,
33 years
San Mateo, CA

George Barlesi,
26 years
San Mateo, CA

Robert Bassett,
17 years
Paradise, CA

Felix Camacho Jr.,
32 years
Nipomo, CA

Kathleen Campana,
19 years
San Carlos, CA

Richard Ceballos,
24 years
San Francisco, CA

Charles Chrisco,
33 years
Arroyo Grande, CA

Charles Conner,
7 years
El Cerrito, CA

Charles Gary,
34 years
Oakland, CA

Sandra Hall,
18 years
Sacramento, CA

Timothy Hennessy,
38 years
Antioch, CA

James Johnson,
29 years
Oakdale, CA

Kenneth Kinsman,
14 years
Fairfield, CA

Gerald Lingo,
14 years
Salinas, CA

Michael Mello,
12 years
Atascadero, CA

Margaret Mitchell,
1 year
Elk Grove, CA

Gary O'Connor,
37 years
Chico, CA

Elizabeth Padero,
10 years
Hayward, CA

Abraham Payawal,
30 years
Sacramento, CA

Larry Pearson,
32 years
Yuba City, CA

Richard Peters,
37 years
Concord, CA

James Reyes,
34 years
Carson City, NV

Michael Siegfried,
27 years
Fremont, CA

Armando Solorio,
30 years
Gilroy, CA

Alan Thompson,
23 years
Benicia, CA

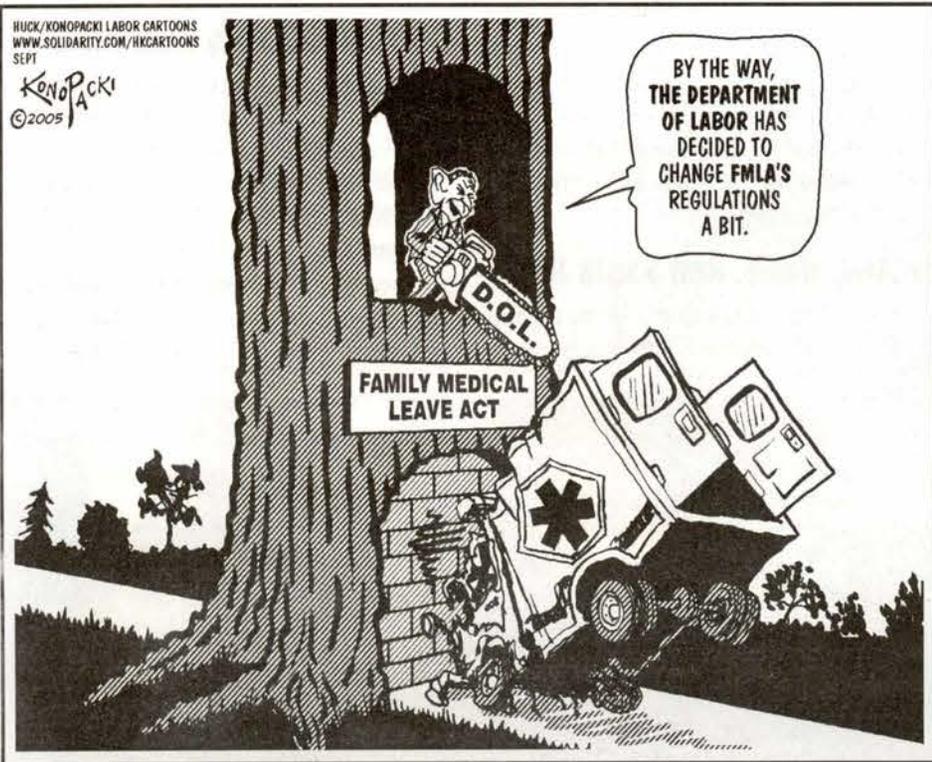
Dalisay Torres,
1 year
Pittsburg, CA

Jess Vasquez,
31 years
Salinas, CA

David Vitorelo,
36 years
Novato, CA

John White Jr.,
11 years
Hayward, CA

WORKING Women



Family Leave under attack

The Bush administration's Department of Labor plans to issue new regulations revising the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and big business groups are urging drastic roll-backs of the leave law.

Since the law was enacted in 1993, more than 50 million workers have used the unpaid leave it provides to take care of newborn or newly adopted children, seriously ill family members or themselves.

"It was a godsend," Patti Phillips of

Atlanta told a Senate roundtable discussion during the summer. Phillips used small portions of the allowed 12 weeks of leave to take her 12-year-old daughter, who was battling bone cancer, to chemotherapy sessions.

"In the last two months of her life, I was able to be there 24-7," Phillips said.

The law currently covers only about 40% of the private-sector workforce. But witnesses from business groups during the roundtable discussion said the law should be narrowed.

Court sides with manager who resisted discrimination

The California Supreme Court has sided with a former San Francisco cosmetics sales manager who says she was ordered by her boss to fire a female salesclerk and to "get me somebody hot" to replace her.

Elysa Yanowitz can take her lawsuit to a jury, the Court ruled Aug. 11 in a case that sets new standards for retaliation claims.

In a 4-2 ruling, the court said Yanowitz's allegations, if true, would show that her employer illegally retaliated against her for opposing sex discrimination by a general manager at L'Oreal, the giant cosmetics firm.

Yanowitz, an 18-year employee, was a L'Oreal's regional sales manager when she tangled with general manager Jack Wiswall during a 1997 tour of a San Jose department store. Yanowitz claimed that Wiswall told her that a dark-skinned salesclerk was "not

good-looking enough," and directed her to fire the woman and "get me somebody hot."

In subsequent visits, Wiswall kept asking her why the woman had not been fired, Yanowitz said. At one point, when he passed by a young, attractive blond woman, Wiswall told Yanowitz, "Get me one that looks like that." Yanowitz ultimately refused to fire the salesclerk after learning that the woman was one of the top sellers of fragrances in the region.

Yanowitz claimed she became a target of relentless criticism and harassment. She left the company on stress-related disability in July 1998 and sued in 1999.

"I hope that this case gives other managers the courage to do what is right for those who report to them," Yanowitz said in a statement issued by her lawyer.

Domestic violence victims not protected

California's criminal justice system is failing to enforce California's domestic violence laws, according to a task force appointed by Attorney General Bill Lockyer.

The task force, which included leaders in law enforcement, the courts, and victim advocacy groups, found that:

- California's courts are not issuing restraining orders, even when required under law.
- Many restraining orders that do get issued are never served.
- There is often lax enforcement of restraining orders, especially firearm prohibitions.
- Community-based victim advocates are not used by all prosecuting offices to assist domestic violence victims.
- Attendance at court-ordered programs for batterers is not tracked and many never complete the program.
- A serious lack of coordination plagues criminal justice agencies' approach to domestic violence.

"The laws already on the books should be holding batterers accountable for their violent behavior, but the criminal justice system often fails to enforce them," Lockyer said. "System fatigue is not an excuse for domestic abuse. We are going to shift a culture of complacency into a culture of compliance."

Legislative solutions to some of these problems have been proposed. AB 1288 would authorize arraignment courts to prohibit domestic violence defendants from possessing firearms. That bill would also allow local law enforcement to advise a domestic violence victim whether the batterer possesses a firearm, according to a Department of Justice's (DOJ) database.

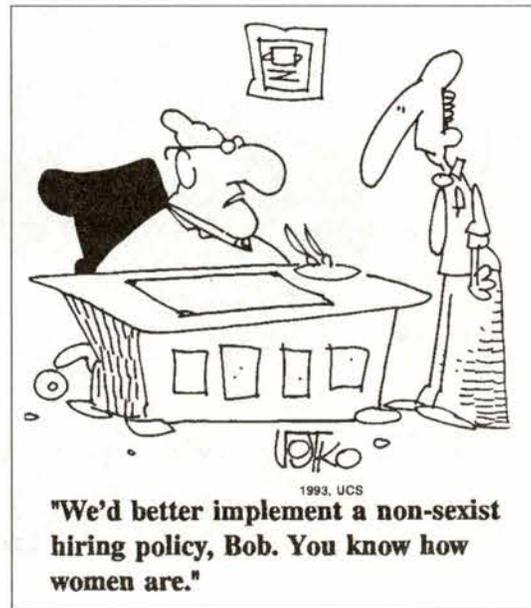
SB 720 would help ensure that family court restraining orders are entered into Department of Justice's database so that the proof does not rest with victims.

Among the task force's recommendations:

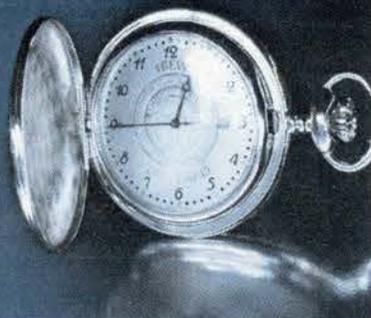
- Enforce the laws that already exist. Court officials should issue more restraining orders and get them into the system. Batterers must surrender their guns and if they do not, law enforcement must confiscate the weapons.
- Locate criminal justice and victim service agencies together, as has happened at San Diego's Family Justice Center.
- Consistently impose sanctions on batterers who fail to attend classes designed to control and change their behavior.
- Improve computer database systems so that restraining orders get into the system, and so that attendance at required batterer intervention classes are carefully tracked.

"We have seen far too many domestic violence cases result in tragedy after they entered the criminal justice system," stated Chief Susan Manheimer of the San Mateo Police Department and a task force member.

Domestic violence statistics collected by the Department of Justice show California local law enforcement agencies received 186,439 domestic violence-related calls for assistance in 2004. During that same year, there were 169 murders committed as a result of domestic violence and 46,353 adults and juveniles were arrested for spousal abuse.

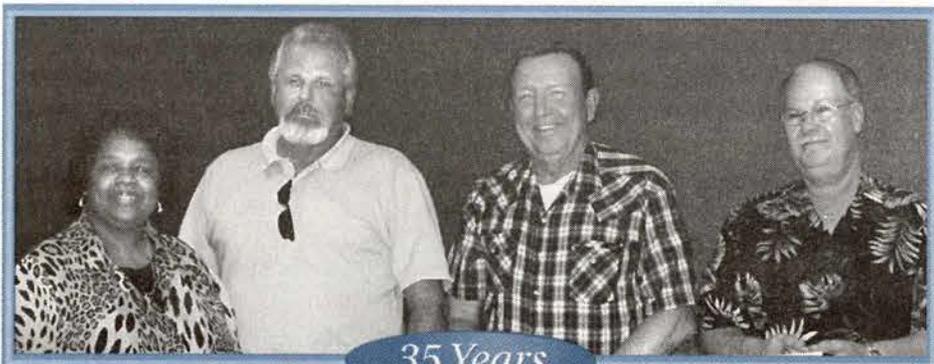


SERVICE AWARDS

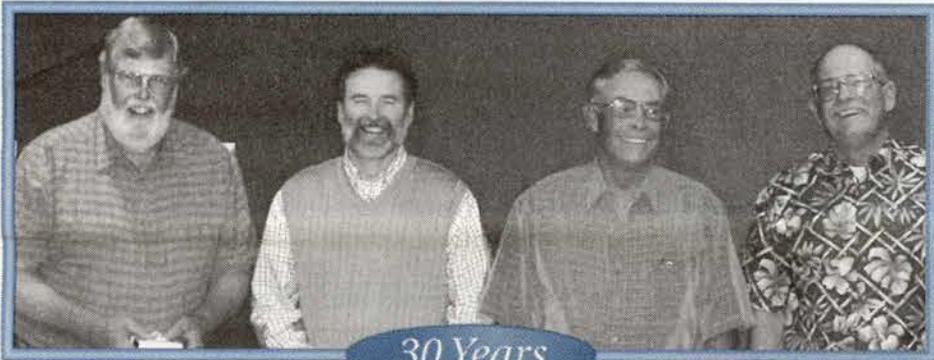


Merced, CA

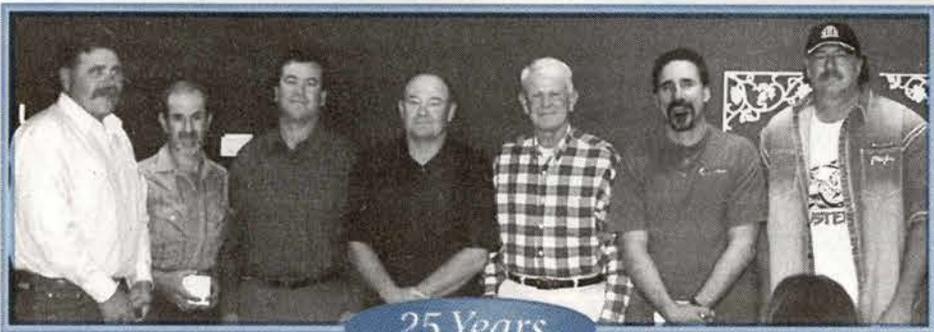
APRIL 15, 2005



35 Years



30 Years



25 Years

THE HONOREES

35 Years

Arredondo, Samuel
Badorine, Larry
Cooksey, Louise
Hoffman, Ronald
Joyner, James
Lane, Rodger
Sorensen, John
Stagno, Gary

Jansen, Alan
Mayo, Daniel
Pool, John
Powers, Gary
Silva, David
Vargas, Albert

25 Years

Auble, Randy
Baiz, Merry
Cederlof, Brian
Griego, Frank

Harvit, Steve
McDonough, Michael
Nevarez, Armando
Ochoa, Greg
Park, Richard
Robison II, Guy
Sorensen, Robert
Wagoner, Steve
Wylie, Kevin
Young, Jeffrey

Replaced...from page 1

The Retrofit Committee was scheduled to meet Aug. 16, but the meeting was postponed at the company's request. Representing union members on the committee, in addition to Velasco, are Meter Tech Renee Cederquist and Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier.

Impact Committee

Meter Shop employees aren't the only ones with job security concerns. Not by a long shot. If PG&E gains approval from the California Public Utilities Commission for its transition to AMI, the 641 Meter Readers with "regular employee" status are likely to see their jobs disappear over the next five years.

In an effort to not compound the displacement problem, PG&E and Local 1245 have already agreed that any future meter reading vacancies should be filled with temporary workers obtained from the Local 1245 Hiring Hall. There are already 191 Hiring Hall Meter Readers, constituting 23% of the Meter Reading workforce.

At an Aug. 10 meeting with the company, the union's Impact Committee put forward proposals for expanding the existing severance benefit, instituting a Voluntary Retirement Incentive (VRI), and creating a moving allowance for employees displaced by AMI. The committee also proposed additional testing opportunities for displaced employees seeking new jobs within the company.

"They pretty much said 'no' to everything," said Impact Committee member Colleen Dempsey. No VRI. No enhanced severance. No additional testing opportunities. PG&E did indicate interest in offering displaced employees a moving allowance, but proposed an amount 30% below what the union committee suggested.

Serving on the Impact Committee, along with Dempsey, are Meter Reader Robert Murphy, and Senior Meter Readers Daniel Tsang and Robert Banaga.

Customer Service

A big question lurking in the background of PG&E's initiative is the impact on customers.

Like PG&E's local office employees (whose jobs are also on the chopping block as PG&E moves ahead with plans to close all 84 of its local offices), Meter Readers are in high-visibility positions. The Meter Reader is the employee that customers see walking through the yard or up the driveway every month.

Dempsey, a 22-year Meter Reader based in Oakhurst, believes the transition to AMI will leave a host of angry customers in its wake.

"It will just be a revolving door of Hiring Hall people coming through. They'll be given a cursory 2-week training and told, 'Here, this is your route—go!' ... The customer base is going to be hugely impacted."

Dempsey predicts an increase in over-reads and under-reads.

"Not everybody is a teacher. Just because you do the job doesn't mean you can teach or train someone else how to do it," she said.

Even so, the company will have to find some way to keep as much expertise in the field as possible to minimize the impact on service. The union proposed a financial incentive to keep at least some experienced Meter Readers in these endangered jobs during the transition.

The company rejected that proposal, too.

"It's going to be real emotional and real hard throughout the AMI (conversion) process," said Dempsey. "The company says it will take four years, but I think it will take longer than that. It will not be a happy time for anybody—not good for customers, and not good for the working environment for meter readers."

Rocky Road

This is not PG&E's first stab at automated meter reading.

With much fanfare, the company launched a drive in the mid-1990s to automate meter reading, referred to at the time as AMR. Then, as now, the company encouraged Meter Readers to give up their "regular employee" status and become temporary employees dispatched through the union Hiring Hall.

Over half of the Meter Reading workforce was converted to temporary status before the AMR plan was abandoned. That experience has created skeptics about AMI.

Velasco, the Meter Shopper in Fremont, is one of them.

"We feel it will be just like the other project—AMR. Any type of automated meter reading has never worked in the past," said Velasco.

This view is not shared by Tsang, the Senior Meter Reader.

"I think it will work," said Tsang. In fact, Tsang thinks it is "inevitable."

But like other union members who have long experience in the field, he sees a rocky road ahead.

"I don't think it will be a smooth transition. Maybe in remote areas. But here in Oakland or San Francisco, they will have an access problem," Tsang predicted. "It's not as easy as they think it's going to be. There will be a lot of hassles switching over meters in the city."

Pilot Program

Next month, the CPUC is expected to rule on a proposal by PG&E to launch an AMI pilot program. The company proposes to install 5,000 gas and 5,000 electric meters in Vacaville, a project that will take about six weeks.

If the pilot is successful, PG&E will be looking for CPUC approval to change out all 9 million of PG&E's meters. Meanwhile, PG&E meter readers will be looking for something else: new jobs.

SERVICE AWARDS



San Francisco, CA

APRIL 29, 2005



Dean Moresco, middle, receives his 40-year award from Business Reps. Hunter Stern, left, and Landis Marttila.



25 Years



35 Years



30 Years



THE HONOREES

60 Years

James E. Moran

40 Years

Dean Moresco

35 Years

Joe Bacchetto
Helen Barlas
George Bizon
David Chan
Robert Donofrio
Thomas Dudley
Sandra Flood
Jesus Garcia

Martin Gilson
Romy Gotera
Jerry Hahn
Ron Hensic
Sharon Jeong
David Johnson
Yu Lap Kyou
John Lopes
E.C. Mahdi

Jose Moguel
Charles Moyer
Bruce Muller
Romeo Reyes
Raymond Villa
Edward Williams
Ronald Wilshusen
Michael Woodward

30 Years

Eleanor Alafriz
Robert Bell
Ulrich Boeschow
Editha C Cabanban
Albert Carrillo
Myron Dong
Cisto Flores
Cesar Galang
Joseph Gordon
Dennis Goulding
Shirley Henry
Ervin Hil
Robert Hom
Yan Lai Kuen-Wong
Steven Lee
Henry Leung

30 Years
continued

Renee MacDonald
Enrique McAllister
Gene McCandless
Kathleen Narruhn
Rosalie Nevarez
Mary Nieve
John Petrovitz
Michael Pon
David Rehn
Lydia Sapiandante
Gloria Scherpf
Robert Stanton
Denyu Tom
William Traver
Jose Viray

Grace Castillo
Russell Chin
Donald Clark
Dennis Cronin
Jim Davis
Frank De Carlo
Phil De La Calzada
Teresita De La Cruz
Generoso De La Cruz
Danny Durant
William Ekberg
Michelle Evans
Edward Fifer
Ana Fong
Antonio Garcia
Gary Gordon
Denise Guaraglia
Robert Hagberg
Donna Hersom
Monica Huey
Josephine Isaac
Paul Jaber
Helen Lau
Alan Lee
Dennis Lee
Raymond Lee
Scott Leur
Norman Mac Kenzie
John Mahoney
Dominador Marucut
Gary Maschio
William Medina

James Mott
John Moura
Scott Neirby
Anita Ng
Robert Olague
Kevin Ong
Daniel Pena
Andrew Peterson
James Polen
Vivian Price
Reginald Pryor
David Rabello
Liwayway Ramil
Gino Rinaldi
Delena Roan-
Montgomery
Paul Santo
L. Kim Saunders
David Schappert
Anacleto Silva
Clifford Smethurst
Mark Stefani
Ron Stuhler
Linnie Tom
Joseph Torrigino
James Trapani
John Vernatter
Melvin Washington
David Wilbrand
Joseph Yee
Catherine Zugar

25 Years

Bobby Adams
Norverto Agcaoili
Rich Arago
Marvin Araquistain
William Arnold
Paul Arruabarrena
Stephen Barnes
Angelina Barrientos
Richard Berrett
Antonio Buendia
Robert Carder
Michael Carr

PG&E Community Campaign

Members of IBEW Local 1245 at Pacific Gas & Electric will have an opportunity this fall to support charitable organizations and schools by pledging financial support to the PG&E Corporation Campaign for the Community.

"The employee giving program has always been a large part of the company's effort to support local communities," said Dan Quigley, director of charitable contributions. "Through the campaign, employees can easily pledge contributions to their chosen nonprofits and we will ensure that it gets to them."

The 2006 employee campaign begins Sept. 19 and ends Oct. 28.

Local 1245 members and other employees will receive a campaign packet, and may pledge online at

www.easygive.com/pge or fill out the pledge form that comes in the packet. Donations can be deducted from paychecks or submitted as a one-time gift. PG&E Corporation will pay all processing costs associated with the campaign, so that 100% of the dollars donated will reach the chosen nonprofits and schools.

For more information about PG&E's 2006 Campaign for the Community, call 1-888-973-4438, e-mail questions to pge@easygive.com or visit the campaign web site through the company's intranet at <http://pgeatwork/Community/Campaign>.



Electronic bidding moves to the fore

Electronic bidding has replaced all other formats when it comes to bidding jobs at Pacific Gas & Electric.

In the bidding process, employees can express interest in bargaining unit positions by submitting transfers to entry level positions and pre-bids to above entry level positions. Until recently, employees were able to submit transfers and pre-bids through a variety of methods including the electronic bidding system via the Intranet, by telephone through Bid Express, and by submitting a Job Vacancy Application Scan Form to the Centralized Job Bidding Team (CJBT).

But now, by agreement between PG&E, IBEW and ESC, the only bidding method available to employees is the electronic bidding system. The change was made for a variety of reasons:

- The bidding method used in the vast majority of bid submissions (98%) was the electronic bidding system.
- The Bid Express (telephone) system had become obsolete.
- The scan forms were an ineffective bidding method as the forms often

became damaged in the mail. In order to access electronic bidding, employees will need their social security and benefit pin numbers to enter on the "About You" page at the following link: <http://www.hr/AboutYou/Login.asp>. Employees may call the Benefits Service Center at 223-2363 or (800) 788-2363 to obtain their pin numbers.

Employees who do not log in to the system enough to obtain a LAN ID can use the Intranet access of a co-worker to submit transfers or prebids, so long as the co-worker's confidential password is not shared and the employee is being supervised during use of the electronic bidding system. According to the "Information Protection Awareness: User Handbook" located at http://www/ISTS_IP/docs/Handbooks/draft%20handbook%20body%20rev%200%2004.pdf, all actions taken under a specific LAN ID are the responsibility of the LAN ID owner.

Employees should submit their own transfers and prebids; clerks and/or supervisors should not submit transfers and prebids for employees.

JOIN US!

**Perry Zimmerman's
19th Annual IBEW Local 1245
Golf Tournament**

Where: Green Tee Golf Course, Vacaville, CA
When: Saturday, Sept. 24, 2005
Time: 8:00 a.m. Shotgun Start
Entry Fee: \$80.00 (Includes Cart, Green Fee & BBQ)
Entry Deadline: Sept. 12, 2005 - Limited Tee Spaces

Prepare for the Contest!

LONGEST DRIVE **CLOSEST TO THE HOLE** **WINE HOLE** **BIRDIE ON HOLE # 6**

BBQ, RAFFLES and AWARDS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING!

IT'S GOLF TIME! On Saturday, Sept. 24, 2005, Local 1245 will hold its 19th Annual Golf Tournament. The cost is just \$80.00, which includes Golf Cart, Green Fees, and BBQ after the tournament. It will be a shotgun start at 8:00 a.m. Registration will begin promptly at 6:30 a.m. If you don't have a 4-Some, we will assign you or your group to a 4-Some.

HEY! DON'T MISS OUT! GET YOUR NAME & MONEY IN NOW!
Make checks payable to IBEW Local 1245 and mail to:
Local 1245 Golf Tournament, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696, Attn: Gail Varner

1. Name _____
Address _____

2. Name _____
Address _____

3. Name _____
Address _____

4. Name _____
Address _____

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS SEPT. 16th !!!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL:
Chairman, John Mendoza [Cell Phone] [209] 329-3449
Co-Chairman, Art Freitas [Cell Phone] [831] 421-1339

'YES' ON PROPOSITION 80

- Reliable Electric Power
- Viable Electric Utilities
- Stable Utility Workforce
- Sensible Regulation
- A Responsible Market

*The Electric Consumer Protection Initiative:
No More Enrons!*

'NO' ON PROPOSITION 75

- Silences Working People
- Discriminates Against Public Employees
- Allows Business Groups to Dominate Political Process
- Real Purpose Is To Undermine Unions

Paycheck Protection: The only paycheck they want to protect is the CEO's!

**Register by Oct. 24.
Vote on November 8.**

**To request a voter registration card, call toll-free
(800) 345-8683**



HARD AT IT

Hard at work on the sunny day in May when the Utility Reporter paid a visit to crews working on Blue Oaks Boulevard were:

- Michael Moore, Utility Worker
- Terry Kelley, Working Foreman B
- Matt Moore, Fieldman
- Ken Sheredy, Tapping Truck Foreman
- Benny Kumpanao, Tapping Truck Welder
- Lyn Hudgens, Backhoe Operator

PHOTOS: Eric Wolfe

Swinging the valve over on top of the T.D. Williams 16-inch fitting.



Working Foreman Ken Sheredy spins the valve to bring the pilot bit inside the valve.

Making It Better

Head north out of Roseville on Highway 80 and you'll soon find yourself in Rocklin.

And you won't be alone.

Located just 20 miles northeast of Sacramento in Placer County, Rocklin's population has swelled to over 50,000 in recent years—helping the county achieve a growth rate of 17.6% from 2000–2004.

The railroad was once the heart of Rocklin, but the city is taking on a 21st century look, with new commercial development blossoming along Blue Oaks Boulevard. And that's exactly where you would find PG&E General Construction Gas crews working in recent months, upgrading gas feeds to the area.

"The job is to upgrade and produce more volume for growth," says Rudy Duenas, a PG&E welder and member of IBEW Local 1245. The work performed at this site will ultimately increase the volume of gas all the way to the City of Auburn.

The crew replaced a 12-inch line with one measuring 16 inches.

"Everything was good," says Duenas. "We just made it better."



Local 1245 members tighten the tapping unit onto the body of the 16-inch fitting.