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News briefs

McDonald's is the target of a plucky New Zealand union named "Unite", which is signing up workers and taking the hamburger giant to court. Earlier, Unite conducted the first-ever strike at coffee mega-corporation Starbucks.

"North Carolina is blessed and fortunate we didn't go down that road." —State Senator David Hoyle remarking on that state's refusal to jump on the electric deregulation band wagon.

Greatest Failure: Rep. Tom Feeney (R-FL) said in The Washington Post last month, "If the vote were held today on the Medicare prescription drug benefit, as many as 120 Republicans would vote against it. It was probably our greatest failure in my adult lifetime."

Finding Hoffa: "We were sold a myth called competition. We will find Jimmy Hoffa in Maryland before we find competition." Maryland legislator Patrick McDonough, speaking about competitive markets under deregulation in Maryland, where Baltimore Gas & Electric has announced a 72% rate hike.

PG&E's Hunters Point power plant was approved for closure by the California Public Utilities Commission on March 15. A month earlier Local 1245 entered into a Letter Agreement with PG&E on a plant closure process with respect to mitigating the impact on employees.

Electric Deregulation "will be a bone in people's throats permanently," said Public Service Commissioner Tom Schneider of Montana, where electric rates have risen 30% in the past three years.

Utility Reporter

IBEW LOCAL 1245 • AFL-CIO

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Volume 55 No.3 • April 2006

UNITY IS STRENGTH

For up-to-the-minute news, see our website: www.ibew1245.com



Responding to new realities at PG&E

Why we engage in "Transformation"

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager

PG&E initiated its Business Transformation process in large part because of its belief that radical change was necessary to position the company favorably in the new world of the electric and gas utility industry, in which mergers and acquisitions are likely to concentrate control of the industry in the hands of fewer and fewer corporations. They point to recent acquisitions of Constellation (Baltimore Gas and Electric) by Florida Power and Light and of Keyspan (Brooklyn Gas) by National Grid as evidence of the accelerating pace of

utility acquisitions.

Whether we agree with the company's analysis or not, and whether we like it not, it is here. In fact, we agree in large part with their analysis of the business world in which utilities operate and we agree with the general notion that things could be done better than they are today. Several "benchmarked" companies were held up as examples of excellence, including Hydro One in Canada, National Grid in Boston, and Florida Power and Light.

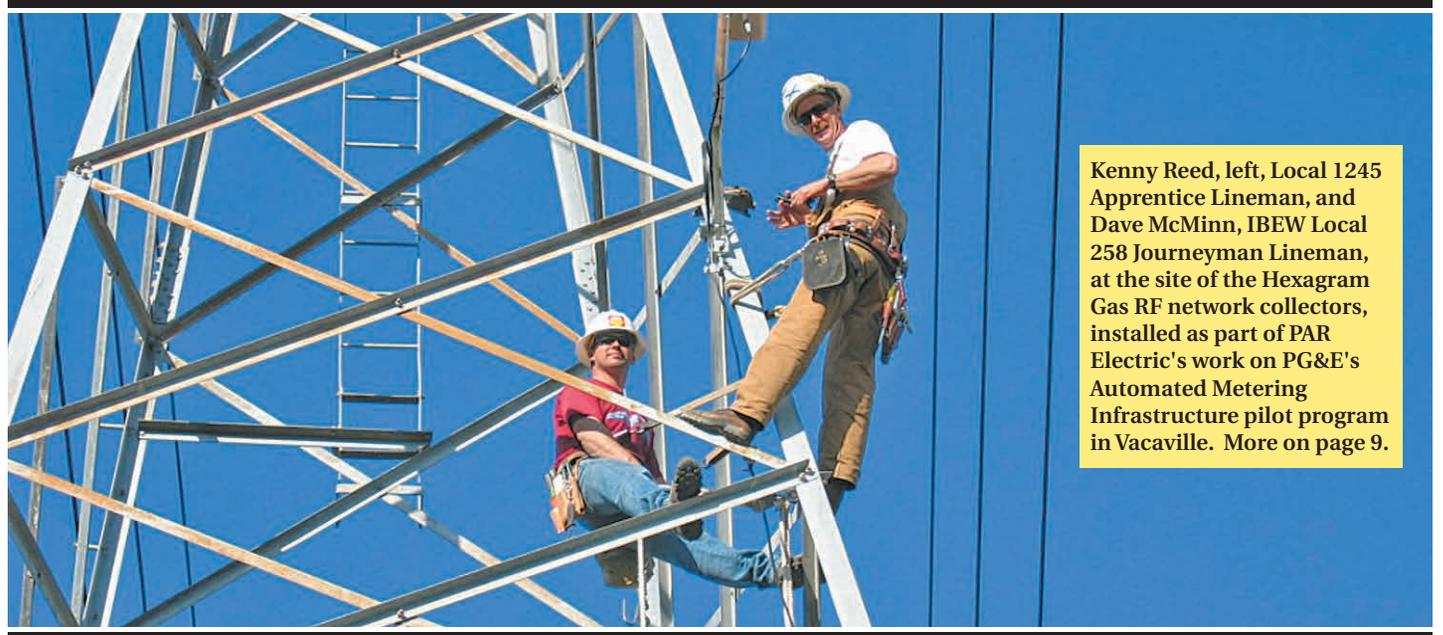
To the extent that Florida Power and Light is held up as a model of the utility of the future we dissent because we don't like the barebones approach to

customer service and infrastructure that we see at FP&L. Site visits have been held at Hydro One, and we intend to visit National Grid this spring to study their consolidated design processes.

Business Transformation Before Employee Engagement

For more than a year, PG&E worked on its Business Transformation plans without input from either its unions or its unionized workforce. Instead, hundreds of consultants from Accenture were brought on to advise the

continued on page 2



Kenny Reed, left, Local 1245 Apprentice Lineman, and Dave McMinn, IBEW Local 258 Journeyman Lineman, at the site of the Hexagram Gas RF network collectors, installed as part of PAR Electric's work on PG&E's Automated Metering Infrastructure pilot program in Vacaville. More on page 9.

Concern over out-sourcing at Sierra Pacific Power

Standing room only at the March unit meeting in Reno

Local 1245 members at Sierra Pacific Power are turning out in record numbers at unit meetings this spring as the union enters its sixth month of contract negotiations with the Reno-based utility.

There was standing room only at the Reno unit meeting in March as members sought more information on company proposals. Among the top concerns: language in proposals put forward by the company that would allow outsourcing of members' jobs. Another big concern are company proposals for huge medical cost-shifting to employees and retirees.

Recently-released executive compen-

sation figures show a 29% increase in compensation for the top five executives of the company.

Members can find out the latest

information on negotiations by attending their unit meetings. The unit meeting schedule can be accessed on-line at www.ibew1245.com/unitmeetings.html.



Members of the Reno Unit at Sierra Pacific Power pack the house at the March unit meeting to discuss company proposals for takeaways.

Why We Engage, continued from page 1
 company on how to improve its operations. The Accenture recommendations were based on Accenture's "play book":

1. Upgrade and improve technology;
2. Centralize work;
3. Standardize work;
4. Consolidate work;
5. Outsource work (including offshore contractors).

Again, whether we agree with the first four principles or not is not especially relevant; they are clearly management rights. We do have contract language in both the Clerical and Physical agreements that limit the company's ability to outsource work, and so this principle is one where we have an opinion and voice.

Employee Engagement

Late in 2005, management asked Local 1245 to identify bargaining unit members who would be willing to participate in the Business Transformation process. While we were aware of the political dangers of asking union members to participate (the perception that they were joining in management decisions that might adversely affect other union members), we felt for two reasons that engagement was a good idea for our members.

First, we believed that by giving our members a voice, limited as it might be, at the management table, we might be able to have an impact, however slight, on management decisions.

Second, we believed that the more we knew about management's thinking and plans, the better off we would be in any negotiations over implementation of the transformation initiatives.

Further, we believe that our members are smart enough to know that we are not participating in transformation as a business partner with PG&E, but that we are simply fulfilling our historic approach of labor-management cooperation.

When our members joined the Business Transformation process, they found that many initiatives were nearly completed, without bargaining unit input. They found that the contractually permitted management principles (standardization, consolidation, cen-

tralization, and improved technology) all could result in the loss of hundreds of bargaining unit jobs. If the technology claims hold up, the company will simply be able to do more work, more quickly, and with fewer people. Lastly, they found that Accenture was a fierce advocate for outsourcing work that it considered "non-core" and that Accenture considered most work "non-core."

For approximately two months, our members worked on recommendations to management, some joint and some separate. Ultimately management made and will make Business Transformation decisions. We saw several decisions evolve considerably during the employee engagement process. For example, the company's plans for materials moved from complete outsourcing, to a new warehouse in Tracy with no other warehouses, to the current plan that keeps all three warehouses embracing new technology and systems.

A second example of the effect of our members in the engagement process is with the RMC's. Accenture had advocated one or a maximum of two RMC's, but the company ultimately decided on seven after considerable pressure from our members and ESC members.

The Transformation Negotiations

In February, the company presented Local 1245 with approximately 25 proposals to implement Business Transformation initiatives. Copies of all the company proposals may be found on our website (see box).

Rather than tackle all the proposals at once, we grouped them by subject and agreed to start with three basic subjects: RMC's and dispatching, emergency response, and materials. Dorothy Fortier is leading the RMC negotiations, Sam Glero is leading the dispatching negotiations, Howard Stiefer is leading the emergency response negotiations, and Larry Pierce is leading the Materials negotiations. Rank and file members are part of every committee.

Progress is mixed for the three com-

mittees. The company's materials department proposal is the least controversial, and the basic terms of a letter agreement were agreed upon at the first meeting of that committee.

The emergency response negotiations have focused on the company's desire to reduce the average outage duration. Local 1245's counter-proposal may be found on our website.

The most difficult negotiations have been over staffing of the RMC's. The company and union proposals and counter-proposals, once again, may be found on our website.

As negotiations progress, we will be posting further status reports on the IBEW Local 1245 websites on the Internet and on PG&E's Intranet.

Support for ESC's Ben Hudnall

IBEW Local 1245 sends its support and deepest sympathy to union activist and leader Ben Hudnall, who has been diagnosed with a serious illness.

As a long-time business manager for the Engineers and Scientists of California, IFPTE Local 20, Hudnall has stood alongside Local 1245 in various campaigns to improve the lives and working conditions of employees at Pacific Gas & Electric. Most recently, Hudnall and ESC have worked closely with Local 1245 in efforts to protect the jobs of union members during PG&E's transformation process.

Our thoughts are with our friend and ally, Ben Hudnall, as he faces this new challenge.

Correction

A photo of the alternate representative for General Construction at the February meeting of the Local 1245 Advisory Council was misidentified on Page 5 of the March issue of Utility Reporter. The person in the photo representing GC was Brian Kapaun. Our sincere apologies.

APPOINTMENTS

DAVEY TREE (SANTA CLARA)

Bargaining Committee
Marco Hernandez

SIERRA PACIFIC POWER

Bargaining Subcommittee
John Mauldin
Bill Robinson
Dave Baker
Jeff Hanson

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC

T-Line Apprentice Committee
Ken McClure
Braxton Mosley

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

Nevada State AFL-CIO Friends of Working Families Event

Dave Scott
Mike Davis
John Mendoza
Pat Waite
Dennis Romeo
Mike Grimm

CALENDAR

April 8: Tree Trimmer Stewards
Conference, Vacaville

April 8: Stewards Conference, Reno,
NV

April 8: Service Awards, Reno, NV

April 13: Retirees Club, Dublin, CA

April 21: Service Awards,
Bakersfield, CA

April 22: Stewards Conference,
Bakersfield, CA

May 2: Retirees Club, Santa Rosa,
CA

May 3: Retirees Club, Merced, CA
(tentative)

May 4: Retirees Club, San Jose, CA

May 6-7: Advisory Council, Vacaville,
CA

May 10: Retirees Club, Vacaville, CA

May 11: Retirees Club, Dublin, CA

May 13: Service Awards,
Salinas/Monterey, CA

May 13: Morro Bay/Moss Landing
Stewards Conference

May 13: Service Awards, Fresno, CA

May 13: Stewards Conference,
Fresno, CA

See Proposals On-Line

Local 1245 members can go on-line to view these Transformation-related documents:

- All Transformation proposals made by PG&E.
- Local 1245's counter-proposal of March 13 regarding RMCs.
- PG&E's counter-proposal of March 17 regarding RMCs.
- Local 1245' proposal concerning Emergency Response.

On PG&E's Intranet, go to <http://pgeatwork/>, select "My Stuff", then select "IBEW".

On the Internet, go to www.ibew1245.com.



Utility Reporter

April 2006
Volume 55 No. 3
Circulation: 23,100



**Business Manager &
Executive Editor**
Perry Zimmerman

**Communications Director
& Managing Editor**
Eric Wolfe

President
Mike Davis

Executive Board
Art Freitas
Chris Habecker
Dave Scott

Anna Bayless-Martinez
Kathy F. Tindall
John Mendoza

Treasurer
Cecelia De La Torre

Published monthly at 30
Orange Tree Circle,
Vacaville, CA 95687. Official
publication of Local Union
1245, International
Brotherhood of Electrical
Workers, AFL-CIO, P.O. Box
2547, Vacaville, CA 95696.

Periodical postage paid at
Vacaville and at additional
mailing offices. USPS
No. 654640, ISSN No.
0190-4965.

POSTMASTER: Please
send Form 3579, Change of
Address, and all
correspondence to Utility
Reporter, P.O. Box 2547,
Vacaville, CA 95696.

Single copies \$1.
Subscription by
arrangement. Have you
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Journeyman raise

To the Editor:

Thank you for the fine job that is done by you and your staff of the Utility Reporter. As a Local 1245 member, the publication is vital to me and many others as a reliable source of information.

With that said, I would like to ask that a correction be made to the article titled "Journeyman wage bump" that appeared on page 2 of the Jan/Feb 2006 issue. The article states that "Local 1245 has negotiated a 1% wage increase for all bargaining unit members working in journey-level classifications at Pacific Gas & Electric."

This, in fact, is not the case. The union did not negotiate the 1% raise for journey level workers in the Building Services lines of progression. It is interesting that the job descriptions for these classifications specifically states that they are "employees who are Journeyman."

It would be appreciated if the Utility Reporter could report on any progress related to resolving this issue. At the very least a correction related to the earlier article should be forthcoming.

William Ross
Templeton, CA

Editor replies: Brother Ross is correct. Building Services includes classifications described as journey-level. We asked for their inclusion in the 1% wage increase. The company declined on the basis that these classifications do not go through an apprenticeship.

Respect retirees

Editor's note: The following letter to PG&E President Tom King by Richard Perez was forwarded to the Utility Reporter by the author.

Mr. King:

I was employed by PG&E in 1969 and retired in 2004. My reason for writing this letter is to express my concern regarding the erosion of pension dollars and escalating medical expenses. I have been retired for two years and already I have had an increase in my medical plan premium. It worries me that I will have to pay more for medical care costs in the future which, in effect, will reduce the amount of pension dollars which would ordinarily be used to cover ongoing living expenses. You can understand how this situation is troubling for myself as well as for my fellow retirees who find themselves in a similar situation.

For many of us who worked in the Gas Service Department, we incurred injuries while on the job due to the physical demands of work we performed. These injuries follow us into our retirement years and compromise our health. Therefore, affordable medical coverage becomes critical.

As do most retirees, I look back on my years of employment with PG&E with a sense of pride and satisfaction on having performed my job to the best of my ability. It is this level of commitment and dedication to PG&E and its customers that has driven the success that PG&E experiences today. As employees,

we strived to deliver a level of quality of service which helped create an optimal level of customer satisfaction. This has translated into a public image of PG&E as a company which is not only dependable, but responsive to the needs of the community.

As an employee who worked directly with both residential and commercial customers, I made it my duty to treat each customer with the utmost respect and courtesy while providing the expertise required to solve the customers respective problems. Is it then too much to ask that PG&E treat its retirees with the same level of respect and courtesy? PG&E needs to reward retirees for their years of loyalty and commitment to the company and its customers. Retirees should be compensated with optimal retirement and benefit packages.

It is upsetting when we retirees learn that PG&E executives receive millions of dollars in retirement packages while retirees like ourselves are not given adequate pension benefit plans. This does not demonstrate good faith or fair play. What will it require to receive adequate retirement compensation? I hope our letters will collectively make a difference when the time comes for future contract negotiations. We will look for positive outcomes.

Richard Perez, Member
Local 1245 Retirees Club
Sacramento, CA

Thanks for the support

Editor's note: The following letter was submitted for publication by Outside Construction member Aaron Ebo, who was injured on the job in January.

Union Brothers and Sisters,

I wanted to take the time to write to

fill you in on my condition and to say "thank you" for all the calls and support.

To all of you who took the time to get collections started, I thank you. To all of you who made donations I cannot thank you enough. Your kindness is overwhelming. My family and I are truly grateful to all of you.

If you have not received a thank you, I apologize. I have tried to get the word out, but with guys moving from job to job it's difficult. So let me say again to all of you, "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" And to all the Northern School apprentices, I want to send out an extra thanks for your weekly contributions. It all helps and is appreciated.

As far as health and healing, it's going slow. A lot of pain and aches. Lots of medicine and doctor visits. The doctors say I'll be out for about six months or so. That means a June/July timeframe to return to work. They keep telling me I'm lucky to be alive. So I guess I shouldn't complain.

Again thank you for all you have done and for all the offers of assistance and support. I'll try to keep everyone updated with my progress.

Aaron Ebo
Sacramento, CA

Stockton Clerical unit changes

Unit 2509, Stockton Clerical, will meet at Round Table Pizza effective immediately. The address of Round Table Pizza is 8110 Holman Rd. Stew #1, in Stockton. The new Unit Chair is Kevin Krummes. The new Vice-Chair is Candy Wood. Meeting dates remain the second Thursday of each month and the meeting time remains 4 p.m.

Arlene Edwards, Business Rep.

Look what's on the IBEW 1245 website.

Internet: www.ibew1245.com

At PG&E: Go to "My Stuff," select "IBEW"

Frequent news updates

News archive

Coming events

The screenshot shows the IBEW Local 1245 website interface. At the top, there's a navigation menu with 'Contact Us', 'Ask Your Rep', 'Advisory Council', 'Officers and Executive Board', and 'Signatory Employees'. Below the header, there's a 'Current News' section with several articles, including 'Big Changes Ahead Zimmerman tells Advisory Council' and 'Member Letter: Retirees grateful for help, but need more'. A 'Calendar' section lists upcoming events like 'Retirees Club, San Jose CA' and 'Stewards Conference, Petaluma, CA'. A 'Library' section lists various documents like 'IBEW 1245 History' and 'Workers Compensation'. A 'Union Shopper' section features a 'Make college a reality' campaign. A 'Key contacts' box points to the 'Contact Us' link. A 'Photos galore!' box points to a photo gallery. A 'New member information' box points to the 'New Members' section. A 'Union library' box points to the 'Library' section. A 'Benefits for you' box points to the 'Benefits' section. A 'Union shopper' box points to the 'Union Shopper' section. A 'More benefits' box points to the 'Benefits' section.

Key contacts

Photos galore!

New member information

Union library

Benefits for you

Union shopper

More benefits

Retirees' Corner



Focus on medical costs, pensions

Retiree Club members urge fellow retirees to get involved

As Local 1245 retirees continue to organize in greater numbers, they have a message for retirees still sitting at home: it's time to get involved.

A schedule of Retiree Club meetings appears on this page. At the North Bay Chapter meeting in Santa Rosa, retirees proposed sending a letter to invite fellow retirees living in the area to attend the next Chapter meeting.

Their letter, mailed March 20, begins like this:

"Are you disenchanted with escalating medical costs and the declining value of your PG&E pension income? Many of us are, and now we've banded together to do something about it."

The letter, by Chapter Recording Sec-

retary Ken Rawles, notes that the Retirement Premium Offset Accounts negotiated by the union are beginning to run out of money. "In some cases, monthly premium costs for retirees will soon exceed their entire monthly pension. The time has come for us to do something about this unacceptable situation," the letter says.

Stirrings in Merced

A similar letter from retiree Gordon Borges urges members in Merced County to attend the kick-off meeting of the Retiree Club's newest chapter on April 5 in Merced.

Noting that his own pension has increased very little over the past two decades, Borges said that thousands of

retirees "who gave the company decades of loyal service, have endured a similar hardship."

The solution, Borges says in his letter, is to organize.

"First and foremost, let's remember that our Local Union 1245 is the only way we have to influence future pension and health benefits at PG&E. But the union's ability to negotiate better benefits for retirees depends on the willingness of retirees to stand up and make some noise," says Borges. "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

(The April 5 meeting to launch the

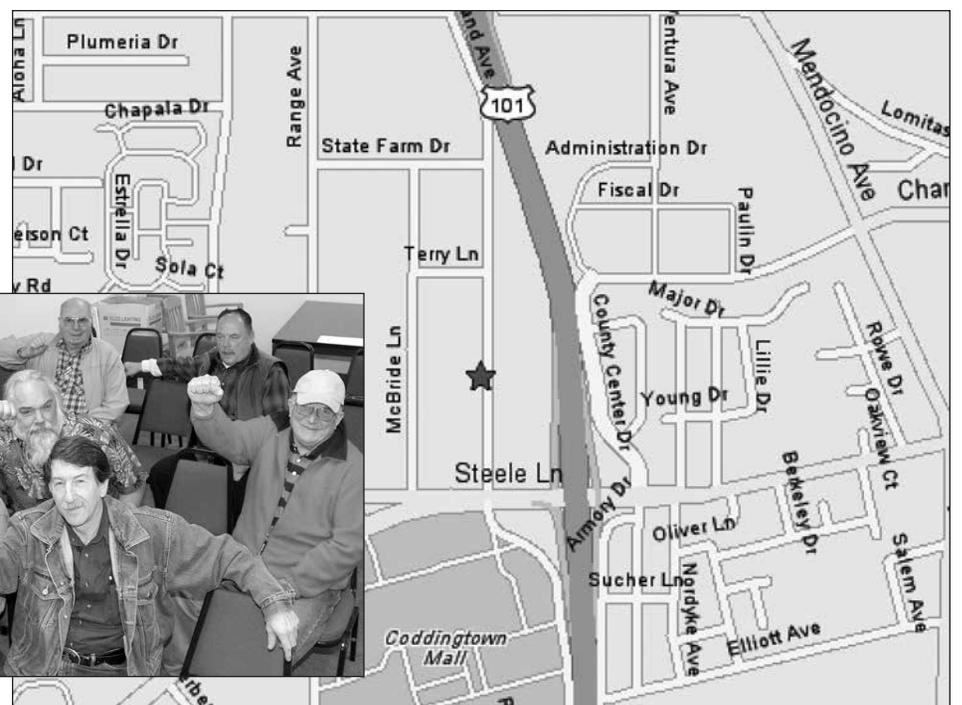
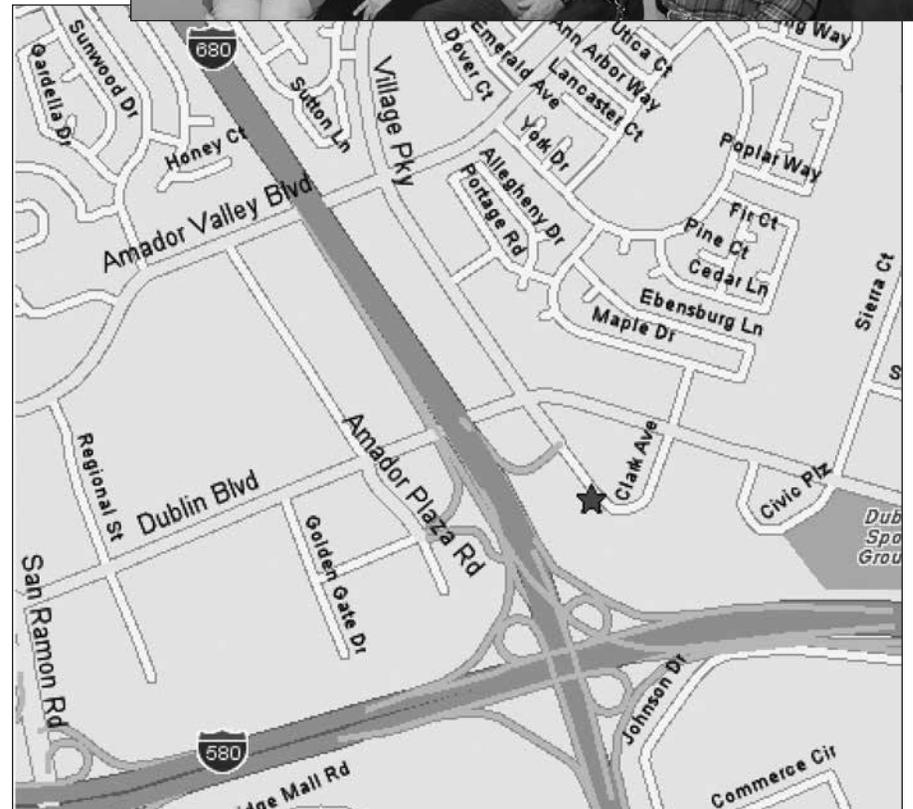
Merced Chapter is to be held at Carrows Restaurant, 720 Motel Drive. The location and dates of subsequent meetings will be announced shortly. Watch the Utility Reporter or go to www.ibew1245.com for further developments.)

Discontent in North Bay

Pension benefits were also on the minds of retirees meeting in Santa Rosa, where a chapter was organized in December.

While the cost of living continues to rise, notes Mike Fontana, a Cloverdale *continued on next page*

East Bay Chapter



Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter



North Bay Chapter

Retiree Club, continued from page 4

retiree attending the Santa Rosa meeting, pensions do not. "In the 1970s, 80s and 90s, we never kept up," he says.

The North Bay Chapter is the most recent to haul itself into action. After two initial organizing meetings, the chapter elected officers in February: Larry Mead, president; Dave Santori, vice president; and Ken Rawles, recording secretary.

East Bay, Vacaville, San Jose Lay Plans

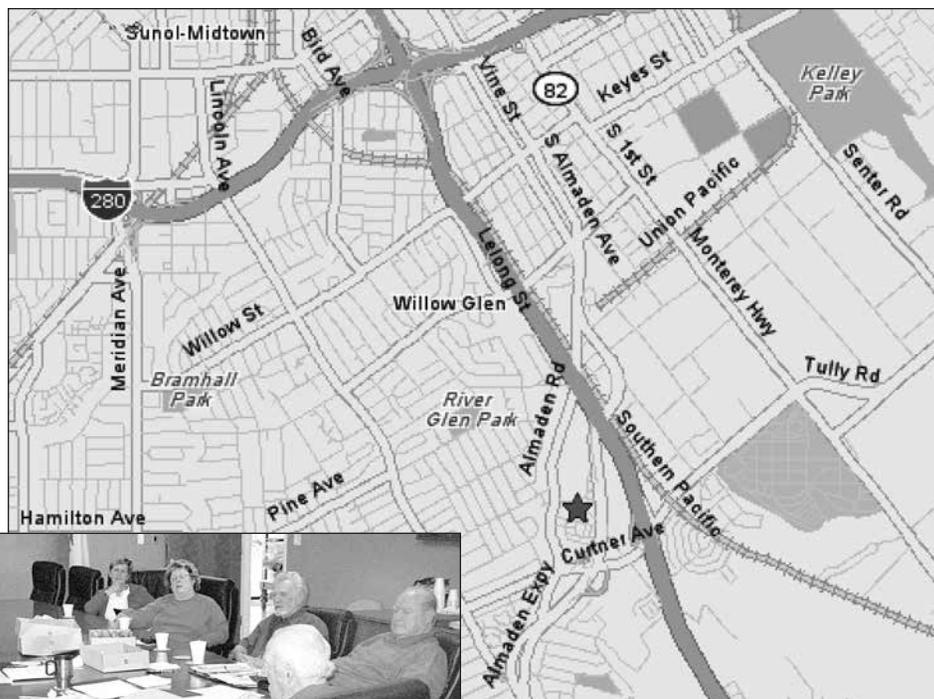
In the East Bay, the Club's oldest chapter discussed how to make the voices of retirees heard at the corporate level of PG&E. Among the options discussed: making an appearance at the annual shareholders meeting, which is being held this year on April 19 in San Ramon.

The Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter also focused on mobilization, putting out a call for a special meeting to be held April 5, a week earlier than the normal meeting date. Two activists from the San Jose chapter, Jack Hill and Watie Anthney, attended the Vacaville meeting to help coordinate strategy.

A schedule of Retiree Club meetings appears on this page. Remember,



San Jose Chapter



Retiree Club Meeting Schedule

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/Sacramento Chapter: 2nd Wednesday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA. (Special meeting: April 5, 10 a.m.)

Santa Rosa Chapter: 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 551, 2525 Cleveland Ave., Suite B, Santa Rosa.

Merced Chapter meeting information will be available on-line at www.ibew1245.com and in the next Utility Reporter.

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 the East Bay, San Jose, Sacramento/Vacaville, or Santa Rosa. If you don't have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Anthony Argumedo 22 years Woodland, CA	John Donker 35 years Woodland, CA	Landers Ligon 39 years Brentwood, CA	Felix Rosario 29 years Las Cruces, NM
Alfred Bailey 35 years Dunnigan, CA	Dennis Duffy 27 years Jacksonville, OR	Gilbert Llacuna 33 years Martinez, CA	Ruben Sala 32 years Petaluma, CA
Helen Bankston 15 years San Luis Obispo, CA	Kenneth Evans 22 years Fresno, CA	John Loades Jr 29 years Modesto, CA	Agueda Sarmiento 32 years Daly City, CA
Eugene Bartucco 30 years Fair Oaks, CA	Stephen Fain 33 years Pacifica, CA	Jeffrey Ludvigson 14 years Quincy, CA	Bobby Sledge 35 years Sonora, CA
Reginald Bezerra 32 years Grover Beach, CA	Irene Garcia 14 years Paso Robles, CA	Linda Mastro 9 years Fresno, CA	Norbert Stanke 39 years San Jose, CA
Roger Bolstad 21 years Paradise, CA	Gary Griffith 25 years Burney, CA	Gary Mikaelson 35 years Sacramento, CA	Ronald Tomasini 38 years Salinas, CA
Keith Burkhardt 27 years Honoka'a, HI	James Guiles 32 years Woodland, CA	Philip Moulder 32 years Marysville, CA	Wilfred Valtakis 33 years Vacaville, CA
John Burnett 25 years Big Bend, CA	Terry Hansen 40 years Forest Ranch, CA	Daniel Muir 37 years Oakley, CA	Larry Vander Bruggen 20 years Brownsville, CA
Wayne Capps 40 years San Jose, CA	Arthur Haskins 18 years Fresno, CA	Bruce Muller 36 years Santa Rosa, CA	Wayne Wells 35 years Wilseyville, CA
John Cardinale Jr 32 years Sacramento, CA	George Hawkins 35 years Petaluma, CA	Daniel Nielsen 37 years Eureka, CA	Michael Wilbur 30 years Auburn, CA
Andrew Casazza 36 years Hollister, CA	James Hayes 32 years Oroville, CA	Minerva O'Hagan 29 years Merced, CA	Guy Williams 35 years Fresno, CA
Daniel Cervantes 32 years Sacramento, CA	Raymond Hicks 39 years Elk Grove, CA	Robert Paxton 29 years Eureka, CA	Charles Wimborough 38 years Livermore, CA
Marvin Clark 41 years Meadow Vista, CA	Thomas Hughes 34 years Sun City West, AZ	Craig Phillips 33 years Ben Lomond, CA	Marilyn Wright 25 years Windsor, CA
Carolyn Condren 2 years Pioneer, CA	Brian Kerchenko 39 years Guerneville, CA	Dennis E Plattner 20 years Citrus Heights, CA	
Lyle Davis 40 years Newman, CA	George Laner 26 years Auburn, CA	Ronnie Red 31 years Fresno, CA	
Roger Delgado 32 years Rodeo, CA	Arthur Lawson 35 years Oakley, CA	Duane Ricks 39 years Salinas, CA	
Thomas Deyoung 31 years Paradise, CA	Robert Layne 40 years Shasta Lake, CA	Georgia Rios 26 years West Wendover, NV	

Extend Medicare drug help

California officials are being urged by advocacy groups to provide a permanent safety net for senior and disabled Californians who have trouble with Medicare's new drug plan.

Low-income and chronically ill people still have trouble getting needed medications through the plan, according to the labor-backed California Alliance for Retired Americans and Congress of California Seniors, who are among the two dozen or so groups pressing for action.

The groups want Medi-Cal to provide ongoing coverage of last resort for new enrollees who run into problems and to cover the co-payments that beneficiaries now pay under the new federal drug coverage, according to the Sacramento Bee.

Nearly 1 million Californians were automatically switched from Medi-Cal to Medicare's new drug plan on Jan. 1. An estimated 180,000 of those people have depended on Medi-Cal's emergency provision of prescription drugs. That emergency coverage was scheduled to expire March 17.

So far, Medi-Cal has filled 567,682 prescriptions at a cost of \$38 million, which state officials have asked to be

all former members of IBEW Local 1245 are eligible to join the club, and spouses are welcome to participate in meetings.

Isn't it time you got involved? For more information, attend the next Retiree Club chapter meeting in your area. If you'd like to help start a chapter closer to your home, please contact Local 1245 Office Manager Tonya Alston-Maxwell at 707-452-2718.

paid back by Medicare.

At the end of March, the drug plans will end transition coverage, which allowed people to get automatic refills of drugs they had previously taken even if those drugs weren't covered by their new plan.

Advocates worry that unless permanent backup is provided, there will be a repeat of the problems in January that left people without lifesaving drugs. Every month, 10,000 people enroll or switch plans and may run into the same problems, they said.

People who used to get drugs from Medi-Cal are worse off under Medicare, according to advocates for seniors. They were forced into private drug plans that cover only approved drugs, may require prior authorization or step therapy to get some drugs they used to take, may limit quantities and may charge them co-payments of \$1 to \$5 per prescription that they didn't pay under Medi-Cal.

Democrats have pushed for an extension of the May 15 deadline for all Medicare beneficiaries to sign up for the voluntary coverage or face lifelong penalties. President Bush opposes an extension.

Congratulations Retirees!
We want you to stay connected
to IBEW 1245.



Equipment Operator Jeff Fridrich prepares the way for additional sod and a new ADA-compatible entrance to the SFWP headquarters.

IBEW members give headquarters a new look

Local Talent

Stories and photos by Eric Wolfe

Besides tending to water treatment and distribution services for South Feather Water and Power, members of IBEW Local 1245 are putting a new roof over the agency's head.

Formerly known as the Oroville-Wyandotte Irrigation District, South Feather Water & Power adopted its new name in 2003 to better reflect the agency's purpose and service area. Now it's getting a new look to go along with its new name.

And what a look. The interior is a comfortable marriage of curves and light that is bound to soothe even the most curmudgeonly customer, while the rock-faced exterior calls to mind the stream beds of the northern Sierra Nevada where the South Feather River originates.

For talent, the agency had to look no farther than its own employee ranks: Utility Worker William Eddie Paul, Laborer Tyler Fuller, Equipment Operator Jeff Fridrich, and Carpenter Bob Cherry, shown here from left to right.



Beginning with the pouring of the slab in February 2005, these four IBEW members have done the lion's share of the construction: framing, plumbing, roofing, electrical, all the underground, and irrigation—everything but the asphalt, stucco, cabinets and tape and texture.

On Feb. 22, 2006, one day before the Utility Reporter visited, they were treated to breakfast by an appreciative management.

"Management did the cooking and the employees just ate," noted Fridrich.

Then it was back to work. They laid down sod, busted up some more pavement, and began work on bringing the entrance into compliance with the Americans with

Disabilities Act.

Paul says he's looking forward to getting back into the field after the remodeling job is finished. But it might not be as soon as the crew would like.

The other wing of the agency's headquarters is still waiting to be remodeled. And the agency has a pretty good idea where it can find experienced hands to get the job done just right.



The new structure and landscaping will be a lasting testimony to the skills and hard work of the crew.



An interior you can be proud to show your customers.

Sly Creek Power House

They got power, too

The purpose of renaming the Oroville-Wyandotte Irrigation District was to have the District's name reflect its primary function as a domestic water retailer and a hydropower generator.

It's still incorporated as an irrigation district and provides irrigation services, but they wanted you to know: they got power, too.

The power in South Feather Water and Power can be found at the Sly Creek Power House, which harnesses the South Feather River to generate up to 13 megawatts of electricity. The bucolic setting outside the power house is deceptive on the sunny day that Utility Reporter paid a visit. Inside, IBEW members were in a high-energy state, busily drawing up testing procedures for implementation during an upcoming annual shutdown. Members were also preparing procedures for auto-testing, which is performed while the unit is operating.

In addition to Sly Creek, SFW&P generates power at the Forbestown, Woodleaf, and Kelly Ridge Power Houses, for a

total of about 120 megawatts.

So, just in case you didn't know, SFW&P has power, too—generated by virtue of the skills and experience of IBEW members.

Roving Operator Guy Mastelotto verifies an auto test.



Electrical Machinist Apprentice Dorinda Matney, left, and Electrician Marty Costa set up testing procedures.





**SOUTH FEATHER
WATER & POWER**



Electrical Machinist Norm Williams takes a breath of fresh air outside the power house, as the scenic South Feather River meanders by.

Training on the TIG weld

Repairing the Turbine

Here's the fact about turbines: in the process of spinning so that you can enjoy electricity, they get beat up.

The water that passes through their blades is a powerful force, and the pressure it exerts may not always be evenly distributed. The result is cavitation, small rough patches or cavities that can ultimately degrade performance.

Repairing cavitation on a Francis turbine is the subject of a February training session on TIG welding conducted by PG&E Senior Engineer Tech Paul Rodrigues at the South Feather Water & Power Forbestown headquarters.

continued on following page

Paul Rodrigues, left, discusses the TIG weld with Henry Reeson, right, and Hydro Electrical Machinist Jerry Littleton.

UtilityReporter



Water Treatment and Distribution Unit

Regulating the flow

Regulating the flow of water in the irrigation ditches is key to providing good service to the customers of South Feather Water & Power, which include commercial olive groves, vineyards, orange groves, pastureland and a few hundred residences.

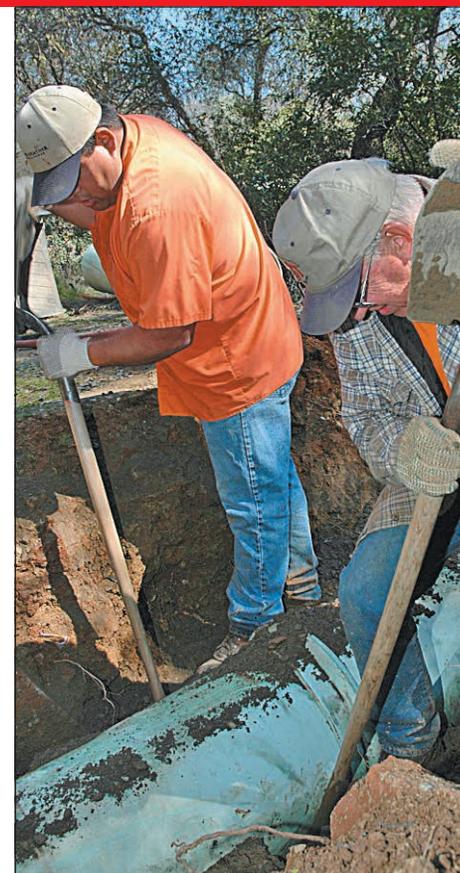
Getting it right is important. Too little water, you don't have a crop. Too much water, you could flood nearby homes.

"We're putting a new pipe in this spill. A spill is when you get too much water in a ditch and you get rid of it," explains Maintenance Tech Tom Veurink.

He points out a pipe running at right angles to the irrigation ditch. The pipe is used to divert excess water to a drainage that eventually finds its way to the Feather River. The problem is, the pipe is too high. Water can't be spilled through it unless the ditch is running very full.

Veurink and fellow Local 1245 member

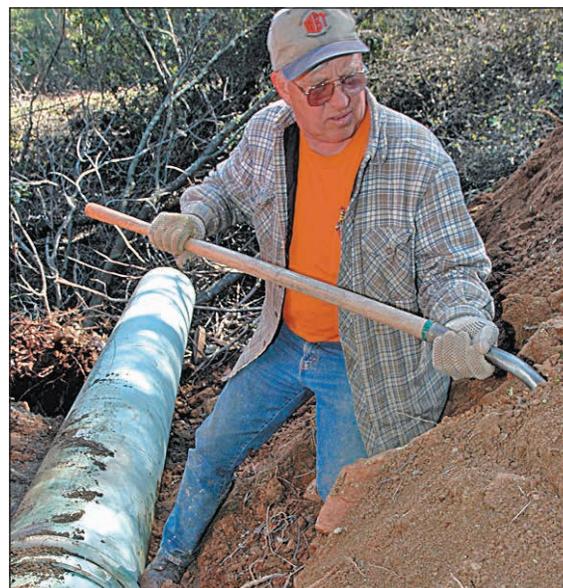
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ABOVE: Shovels come in handy to gain some leverage.

LEFT: Regulating the height of the spill means close familiarity with dirt and its properties.

BELOW: Maintenance Tech Tom Veurink, left, and Ditch Tender Zenaido Martinez.



Regulating the flow

continued from previous page

Zenaido Martinez, a Ditch Tender, will lower the spill, which in this case means putting in a new pipe.

It's not the sort of work you want to do if you're fussy about your clothes. Think water plus dirt and you'll quickly understand the need for good footwear.

On the other hand, when the sun is bright, the sky is blue and birds are calling from a canopy of early-budding trees, you might wonder why anyone would ever want to work inside.

"Spills," like the one shown in the upper left part of this photograph, provide a way to lower the water level in the ditch by routing the water to a drainage.



Ron Reynolds remembers

Unions don't just happen. They get organized. Former Local 1245 Business Rep. Charles "Ron" Reynolds recently shared these thoughts about organizing South Feather Water and Power back when it was still known as Oroville-Wyandotte Irrigation District.

The organizing started before I was hired on July 6, 1965. The primary field Rep until then was Hank Lucas.

(Former Assistant Business Manager) Mert Walters helped me start the bargaining by providing a draft MOU. He also attended one or two bargaining sessions in order to introduce me.

The bargaining went on for a couple of years before it was completed with the first agreement. We only started to make progress on the negotiations after I took a Board member to lunch at the Prospectors Village and forewarned him that we were finished being patient and the hardball game would begin.

We then appeared before the full Board in a public session with all of the employees, the Board's lawyers, the management staff and the news media. It was all tape recorded.

We achieved major benefits that night. The Board just could not tell the employees "No" in a face to face public meeting. I sat in the front row and in the middle with all our members behind me. I did the talking and the members followed my lead with appropriate support and gestures as needed. The meeting lasted for about four hours. It was the largest settlement I had ever received.

Winning agency shop

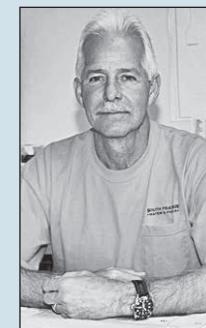
South Feather Water & Power became an agency shop last fall after employees decided everyone ought to be paying their fair share toward union representation.

"Guys who'd been in the union a long time thought it ought to be a union shop," says Maintenance Foreman Rick McCullough, who is a union steward and member of the bargaining committee. "It's not right for some people to ride on our shoestrings—not paying for what we've got here."

McCullough says you only have to look around and see the wages and benefits elsewhere in the area to appreciate what the union has accomplished.

Last fall, McCullough and others decided to take action. "We were talking to a lot of people. We circulated a petition for people to show their support and a mediator conducted an election."

For a union that has represented employees here since the mid 1960s, it was an important milestone. Congratulations to those who made it possible.



Rick McCullough, steward and bargaining committee member, helped organize agency shop campaign



PG&E Senior Engineer Tech Paul Rodrigues, left demonstrates welding technique to SFW&P Electric Machinist Henry Reeson.

Repairing the Turbine

continued from previous page

In TIG welding, also known as Gas Tungsten Arc Welding, an arc is formed between a non-consumable tungsten electrode and the metal being welded. Gas is fed through the torch to shield the electrode and molten weld pool. If filler wire is used, it is added to the weld pool separately, according to www.welding-engineer.com. The process is used

when high quality, precision welding is required.

After the cavities are "welded up," Rodrigues explains, they are ground back down to restore the proper contour of the blade.

"We have some new welders coming up and we want to make sure we're all on the same page on how to weld on stainless steel," says SFW&P Hydro Maintenance Foreman John Davis. "You can crack it real easy."



LEFT: Business Rep. Jack Osburn, left, confers with Hydro Maintenance Foreman John Davis.



BELOW: Mechanic/Equipment Operator Kurt Golz services the engine on a fork lift.

Outside Construction

As I have reported in the past months the Labor Construction Trades are in very interesting times. Everyone is fighting for work and jurisdiction, even raiding other union contractors. It's like the Civil War era. The Labor Construction Trades are trying to put our heads in the sand but we aren't going to stand for it! Brothers and Sisters, we are the best of the best and we have shown that since 1891.



Dave Crawford

THE NUMBERS

In the construction market we are starting to see some of our utilities work picking up.

Since last month's report, we've had 50 calls for Journeyman Lineman; 3 calls for Equipment Specialist; 34 calls for Groundman; 3 calls for Cable Splicers; 1 call for UG Techs; and 8 calls for Apprentices, for a total of 99 calls.

The books, as of March 8:
 Journey Lineman, Book 1: 8
 Journey Lineman, Book 2: 1
 Lineman, Book 3: 0
 Lineman, Book 4: 17
 Equipment Specialist, Book 1: 2
 Equipment Specialist, Book 2: 5
 Equipment Specialist, Book 3: 2
 Groundman, Book 1: 2
 Groundman, Book 2: 6
 Groundman, Book 3: 9
 Groundman, Book 4: 89
 Cable Splicer, Book 1: 1
 Cable Splicer, Book 2: 0
 Cable Splicer, Book 3: 0

Total crews working on:
 Outside Agreement: 67
 U.G. Agreement: 10 crews
 Pole and Test Agreement: 10 crews
 Teledata Agreement: 10 crews
 Total crews working: 97

Currently we have 308 apprentices: 3 are traveling working in our jurisdic-

tion, 45 are working out of Local 1245; 227 are working out of Local 47; 22 are working out of Local 396 and 14 are laid off due to various reasons. We graduated a total of 6 apprentices to Journeyman Lineman so far in 2006. We have indentured 29 apprentices into the program so far this year.

Sierra Pacific is putting out small projects. PAR has been working on the Tracy to Silver Lake 120 KV, Phase 1 Transmission Line Project. Sturgeon has picked up 20 miles of 120 KV line from Winnemucca, Nev. toward Battle Mountain.

PG&E is putting out small packages. Also the 230 KV Underground Project in San Francisco is on target to do a soak test later this month.

SMUD is putting out small projects.

San Francisco Light Rail: Railway Electric is starting a 2-year project on the light rail.

NEGOTIATIONS

- We are negotiating with San Francisco NECA on the Light Rail Agreement, which is coming along very well and we should have an agreement to ratify.

- We are in negotiations with Canus Corp.
- We are in negotiations with NECA and Henkels and McCoy on the Teledata Agreement. However, with NECA Teledata we are still open at this time and we are getting closer to a table settlement with Henkels & McCoy on the Teledata Agreement.
- We have sent opening letters to Western Line Contractors NECA on the Outside Line Agreement, and to Henkels & McCoy on the Outside Line Construction Agreement.
- We have re-opened the Republic Electric Agreement for Street Light and Signal Light Maintenance Agreement.

OTHER NEWS

The next Joint Safety meeting is May 25.

First Aid & CPR is the third Saturday of every month in Sacramento.

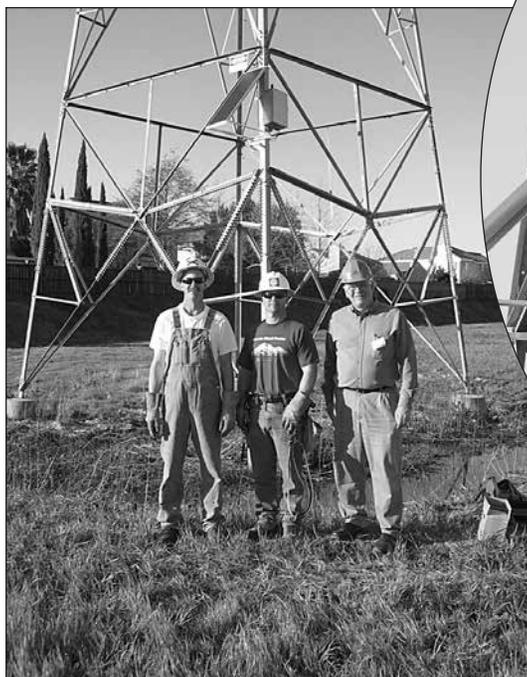
Please see Brother Ebo's letter of appreciation on Page 3 in this issue of the Utility Reporter.

David Crawford, Senior Outside Line Business Representative

Outside Construction - PAR Electric AMI Pilot Project

IBEW crews from PAR Electric have been helping Pacific Gas & Electric build the utility's Automated Metering Infrastructure pilot project in Vacaville. PG&E hopes that the automated metering technology, by allowing hourly remote meter reads, will enable the utility to track energy usage more closely, as well as help pinpoint outages more quickly. The CPUC approved the Vacaville pilot program, which PG&E eventually wants to deploy systemwide.

Shown here with a DCU and its associated solar panel located on a lattice tower in Vacaville are, from left, Dave McMinn, Journeyman Lineman from IBEW Local 258; Kenny Reed, Apprentice Lineman from IBEW Local 1245; and Jack Ednie, Journeyman Wireman from IBEW Local 5.



Dave McMinn, Journeyman Lineman from IBEW Local 258, is shown here with the Hexagram Gas RF network collectors.



Work in the Vacaville substation installing DCSI electric powerline communications equipment.



More inspectors needed

California's workplace-safety watchdog agency should get another \$9 million in next year's budget so it can hire 100 more inspectors, the California Association of Professional Scientists (CAPS) proposed last month.

The union's proposal comes one month after the state auditor found the Occupational Safety and Health Administration failed to properly monitor and act upon injury reports and safety complaints on the \$1.7 billion replacement of the Bay Bridge's eastern span.

CAPS statewide representative Chris Voight acknowledged that additional inspectors would be "a significant cost item," but told the Tri Valley Herald that "worker safety is pretty important in the grand scheme of things."

Voight noted the already short-staffed Cal-OSHA will find itself even further pressed if the governor and the Legislature eventually succeed in hammering out an infrastructure bond plan leading to "massive new construction" all over the state.

February's audit found Cal-OSHA "did not align with state law" regarding Bay Bridge worker complaints of potentially hazardous conditions and did not adequately probe three of six worker complaints. It also said Cal-OSHA did not discover potential underreporting of injuries on the project, adding the agency lacks procedures to ensure reasonable accuracy of the contractor's annual injury reports.

Cal-OSHA officials, reacting in January to an early draft of the audit, had contended they do not have enough staff and money to handle monitoring such reports' accuracy. But that is not a

duty the agency should ignore, State Auditor Elaine Howle concluded: If money is a problem, Cal-OSHA should ask for more.

CAPS's proposal would add about 10.3% to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed \$87.5 million Cal-OSHA allocation for 2006-07. It would hike the agency's number of authorized workplace inspector positions from 200 — of which only 170 are currently filled — to 300, giving Cal-OSHA the same inspector-to-worker ratio that the federal OSHA has nationwide, according to the union.

Each of the current 170 inspectors is responsible for more than 100,000 workers and 6,800 work sites, the union noted. Neighboring states such as Oregon and Washington have an inspector-to-worker ratio about one-

quarter of California's, according to the Tri Valley Herald report.

Local 1245 Safety Committee

Current members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee are Keith Hopp, Pacific Gas & Electric; Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; David Vipond, Citizens Communications; Kurt Celli, Modesto Irrigation District; Art Torres, Sacramento Municipal Utility District; Bob Burkle, City of Santa Clara; James Gorman, Davey Tree; and Assistant Business Manager Howard Stiefer.



Recognize a stroke, save a life

Editor's note: The following e-mail has been widely circulated on the Internet. Doctors generally agree that early detection of a stroke can save lives.

One neurologist has said that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed and getting to the patient within 3 hours, which is tough.

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are

difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness can spell disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can often recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

1. Ask the individual to *smile*.
2. Ask him or her to *raise both arms*.
3. Ask the person to *speak a simple sentence* (coherently, such as "It is sunny out today.")

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting. Widespread use of this test could result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and reduce or prevent brain damage.

Line Clearance Tree Trimmers

Tree trimmer bargaining

Local 1245 is in ongoing negotiations with Davey Tree Surgery Co. over its Line Clearance contact with the City of Santa Clara. The current agreement expires April 1, 2006.

The union and company committees met for bargaining on March 1, and were scheduled to meet again on March 29. The results of that meeting were not available at Utility Reporter press time.

Conducting negotiations for the union are Senior Business Representative Ray Thomas, along with Business Representative Junior Ornelas and employee representative Marcos Hernandez.

Local 1245 is also in negotiations with Family Tree Service, Inc. To date, the union and company have met only once—on March 14. As of this first meeting, the company had neglected to

forward requested bargaining information to the union. Subsequently, the union has received a majority of the requested information and is preparing to formulate comprehensive proposals.

Conducting the negotiations with Family Tree Service are Senior Business Representative Thomas, assisted by Shop Steward Carl Lamers.

Discusiones con los podadores de árboles

El Local 1245 está actualmente participando en negociaciones con Davey Tree Surgery Co. acerca de su contrato para la limpieza de líneas con la Ciudad de Santa Clara. El presente convenio expira el 1° de abril de este año 2006.

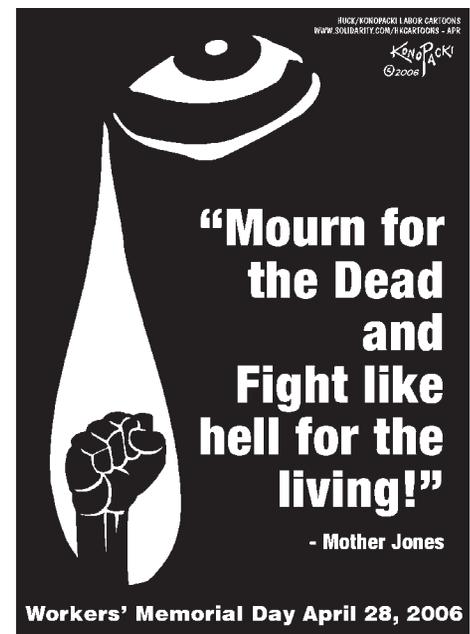
Los comités del Sindicato y de la Compañía se reunieron para negociar el 1° de marzo y acordaron volverse a

reunir el 29 de marzo. Los resultados de esa reunión no eran conocidos al cierre de la edición de Utility Reporter.

Las negociaciones por el Sindicato están a cargo del Representante Principal de Negocios Ray Thomas, junto con el Representante de Negocios Junior Ornelas y el representante de los empleados Marcos Hernández.

El Local 1245 está también en negociaciones con Family Tree Service, Inc. Hasta ahora, el Sindicato y la Compañía sólo se han reunido una vez, el 14 de marzo. Hasta la fecha de esa primera reunión, la Compañía había fallado en enviar la información solicitada por el Sindicato para llevar a cabo las negociaciones. Desde entonces, el Sindicato ha recibido la mayoría de la información solicitada y se está preparando para formular proposiciones concretas.

A cargo de las negociaciones con Family Tree Service está el Representante Principal de Negocios Ray Thomas, asistido por el Delegado Sindical Carl Lamers.



SERVICE AWARDS

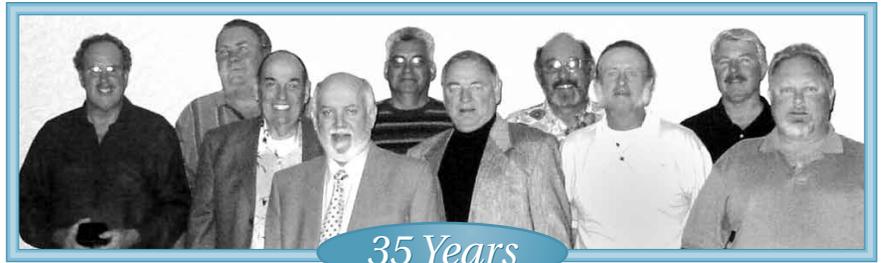


Sacramento, CA

February 11, 2006



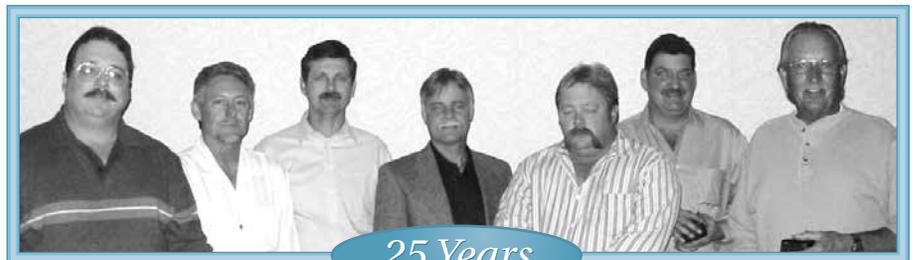
Robert E. Kneppel, center, accepts 50-year award from Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, left, and Business Rep. Darryl Norris



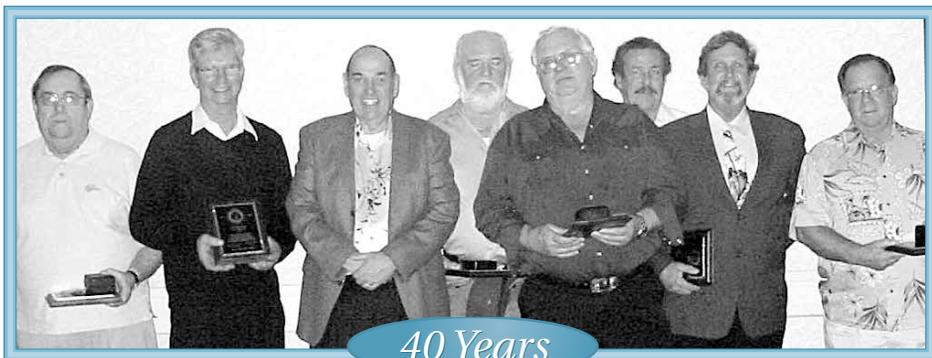
35 Years



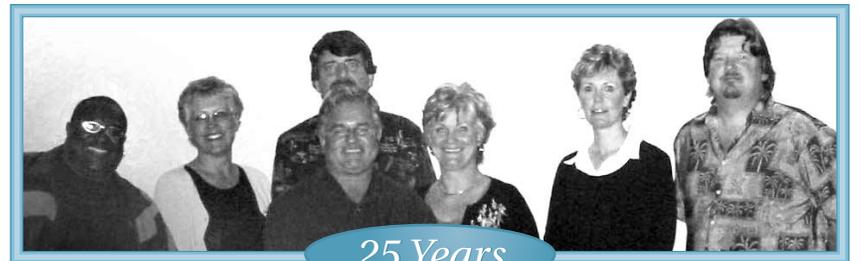
30 Years



25 Years



40 Years



25 Years

THE HONOREES

65 Years

Merlino Bauldie

60 Years

Gerald Bayless
Arthur Beckman
William H. Hardin
Herbert H. Leach
William S. Sherman

55 Years

Kenneth Barnes
Ted Bartl
Richard Burton
Donald Kimball
John L. Ward Jr

50 Years

Edward H. Ahlf
John J. Flores
James D. Fraser
Henry L. Hardigan
Loretta Jackson
Robert E. Kneppel

Lawrence Sanderson

40 Years

Richard Beck
D. L. Bristol
George Cannon
D.J. (Dennis) Farrell
Ralph Gerolamy
James Goforth
George Mcnamara
Grady Prince, Jr.
William Raffety
Larry Say

35 Years

Paul Alcalá
Charles Baglin, Jr.
Jerry Bothello
Steven Cole
Clifford Finch
Javier Garcia
Thomas Garcia
Earl Geiger
Daniel Gomes
Alan Hines
Armando Lozoya
Chuck Lynch

Stephen Maas
F Machi
Jack Maslov
Claude McCrory
Jose Ortiz
Larry Packard
Kenneth Parker
Mark Robertson
Ed Shelton
Richard Signor
Salim Tamimi
Richard Uno
Alvan Watson
Alvin Wolf
Charles Vaughn
David Youngr

30 Years

Steven Anderson
William Arroyo
Lester Bailey
Susan Boatman
John Bowden
Richard Bula
Carlos Castanon
Lloyd Chavez
Thomas Devries
Diana Dominguez

Richard Dyer
James Edwards
Bernie Elkins, Jr.
Daniel Flores
Walter Fortner
Wanda Hollowell
Kathleen Hughes
Marsha Kelly
Robert Kidwell
Aaron Kim
James Macias
Daniel Ohland
John Rippey, III
Edwin (Jed) Russell
Steven Stewart
Marjorie Tennison
Julie Valtakis
Dale Wong

25 Years

Mark Antonelli
David Bakkie
Ron Bauer
Pat Beach
Peter Beck
Kurt Becker
Katherine Bevan
Anthony Borrero

Danny Boschee
Debra Briasco
Thomas Brown
Geoffrey Buchholz
Pier Butler
David Campbell
Michael Canepa
Karen Cardwell
Donald Clifton
Robert Connow
Suzanne Cresci
Larry Dearman
Ima Sue Dillard
Mark Engel
Robert Flatland
Anna Gerardo
Dee Green
Robert Harrison
Regina James
Theresa Jean
Karen Jones
Louis Kemp
Harold Koutnik
David Lee
John Littlewood
Raymond Lucero
John Luna

Catherine MacDonald
Joseph Macdula
Cathy McCain
Linda McFarland
Mark McKee
Linda Melanson
Mark Montiero
Frank Nielsen
Conrad Padilla
Paul Paluch
David Perry
Charles Pulver
Pamela Ramirez
Ron Ramsey
Richard Rossiter
David Ruxton
Eugene R. Sargent
Merrill Sexton
Roger Snyder
Debbie Stone
Don Trujillo
Edward Tuomala
Donna Uyeda
Mathew Whaley
Donnell Williams
Jeff Williams
Larry Young

BALANCING ACT



Chris Metcalf, left, discusses training and promotion issues with Local 1245 Business Rep. Sam Glero.

Power System Operators Keep Supply & Demand in Synch

Story & Photos by Eric Wolfe

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE generators are generating electricity. And you're using it. But who makes sure that what they generate matches what you use?

Welcome to the world of the Power System Operator. At the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, PSOs are the people responsible for assuring that the supply of electricity matches the demand or "load." Not enough generation and you have outages. Too much generation and you risk equipment failure and outages. Electric reliability is one of the great balancing acts of modern society.

The balance must be maintained within an entire control area. While PG&E and some other utilities belong to a control area managed by the Independent System Operator, SMUD belongs to a separate control area that includes the Western Area Power

Administration and the Modesto Irrigation District. As the control area operator, SMUD PSOs are responsible for reliability for this control area, in coordination with operators at these other two agencies.

Unlike the ISO, which uses a quasi market to set prices, PSOs at SMUD move power using an economic dispatch plan, essentially a price structure that is set ahead of time to show which generators are the most economical. In addition to utilizing SMUD's own power resources, the PSOs can access the California-Oregon Transmission Project to import power from the north.

When the Utility Reporter visited the PSOs at their operations center in Sacramento, PSO I Michael Flynt was pre-approving energy purchases for the

Michael Flynt, PSO I, preapproves energy purchases for next two days.



next 48-hour period. "I review energy purchases and check the path it's going to come through to get to here and (check) that their totals add up to what they say they're going to add up to," says Flynt, a 15-year member of Local 1245.

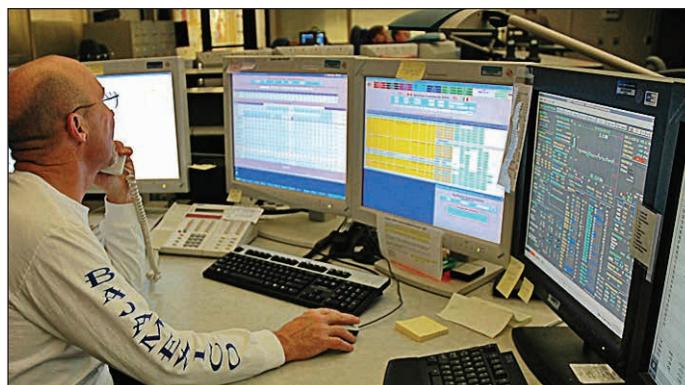
The stakes in managing the power supply are a little higher than, say, managing the blueberry supply. If the totals on the produce truck fall short of what is promised, you might have to skip the berries on your yogurt the next morning. But if the proper amount of power fails to arrive, you may not be

having any breakfast at all. If PSOs were not around to deploy operating reserves of power when plants shut down for scheduled maintenance, or when demand spikes on an unusually hot day, or when plants shut down unexpectedly or when transmission problems occur, the world would be significantly darker.

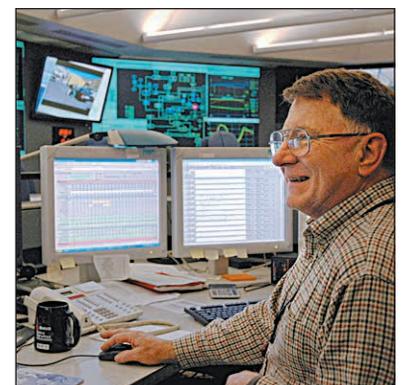
Don't get the idea that PSOs look forward to emergencies. "We always hope that nothing happens," is the way Flynt puts it. But when something does happen, it's the PSOs who find a way to restore the balance.



PSO I Don McElhiney, right, and Senior PSO Michael Buckingham, middle, preschedule energy for the next day. In background is PSO II Michael Daly.



Chris Metcalf, a PSO II, may do voltage control, perform switching, or run generation as needed.



PSO II Michael Daly keeps watch on a bank of monitors.