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News briefs

Sit-In.

That's what Chicago workers at Republic Windows did when the company gave three days notice that the plant would be closed and that they wouldn't receive severance and vacation pay. The six-day sit-in attracted support from local and national political leaders and forced Bank of America to renew the company's credit so it could pay up. About 300 workers each received about \$6,000.

Worst in 70 years: The number of jobs in the nation increased by about 2% during Bush's tenure, the worst performance over any eight-year span since data collection began seven decades ago.

Reunification:

On Jan. 7, the presidents of 12 of the nation's largest labor unions called for reuniting the American labor movement, which split apart three and a half years ago when seven unions left the AFL-CIO. and formed a rival federation.

Get answers to your union questions at: www.ibew1245.com

Public sector stewards look ahead

Declining economy leaves little time to celebrate recent gains

Public sector members of Local 1245 made impressive gains in recent bargaining with city, regional and federal employers, but the rapid deterioration of the economy could pose serious challenges in the future.

"One of the things we did this year was negotiate longer contracts," said Business Manager Tom Dalzell, speaking to a gathering of public sector shop stewards meeting at Weakley Hall in Vacaville on Nov. 15. In harder times, he explained, the union prefers longer contracts to lock in gains and avoid exposure to take-aways for as long as possible.

One area of concern is the beating the stock market has delivered to the California Public Employee Retirement System (Cal-PERS). In late October, Cal-PERS was managing \$188.8 billion, down 21% from the end of June.

At the same time, local governments

are experiencing significant budget crunches. The City of Vallejo made headlines when it filed for bankruptcy protection last May. While Local 1245 employers haven't yet encountered problems on that scale, many are facing budget squeezes. Financial problems recently caused one Local 1245 member to be laid off by the Port of Oakland and another by the City of Oakland.

Budgetary issues also contributed to Alameda Power & Telecom's recently-concluded sale of its telecom assets to Comcast, which will impact the jobs of seven Local 1245 members.

Besides layoffs, the declining economy could lead to a variety of challenges in the workplace: Reduced crew sizes. Changed work rules. "Doing more with less." Reclassifying jobs.

Members will be understandably up- *Continued on page 6*



From left: Jeremy Carlin, SMUD; and Patrick Pipis and Robert Skordas, USBR.

Mettalia wins IBEW Safety Poster contest

Robert Mettalia, a General Construction Painter "A" at PG&E, has been awarded first place in the Safety Poster contest sponsored by the International office of the IBEW.

It's been a good year for Brother Mettalia. Earlier in 2008 he won first place in the IBEW's contest for Best Photograph.

Mettalia's Safety Poster, which appears on the back page of this issue of Utility Reporter, features the message Stay on Track: Pay Attention to the Details. "I thought up the slogan first, then went and took the picture," Mettalia said.

An amateur photographer since high school, Mettalia used a Canon camera to take the picture that formed the basis of the poster, then used Photoshop software for the additional design work.

Mettalia is a 24-year member of Local 1245. He accepted his first-prize check from IBEW International Representative Art Murray at the Santa Cruz unit meeting in December.



Serving on the PG&E ballot committee were, from left: Austin Lea, Robert Vigil, Ken Amaral, Peggy Daniel (foreground), Christine Lay and Lou Mennel. Mennel served as judge. Photo by Leslie Asher

Members ratify PG&E agreement

Physical, Clerical, Benefits

In mail ballots counted on Dec. 12, 2008 at Weakley Hall in Vacaville, Local 1245 members in the Physical bargaining unit approved a new labor agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric. Members in the Clerical bargaining unit approved a companion Letter Agreement. Both units approved changes to the Benefits agreement.

The Physical agreement passed with 64% support among all valid ballots cast. The Clerical letter agreement passed

with nearly 90% support among all valid ballots cast. The Benefits agreement was approved by nearly 64% of the valid ballots cast by members in the Physical bargaining unit, and by just under 89% of the valid ballots cast by members in the Clerical bargaining unit.

The new provisions of the agreement can be seen on-line at www.ibew1245.com. The complete text of the new agreements will be posted on-line as soon as it is available.



Robert Mettalia, third from left, is honored (from left) by IBEW Rep. Art Murray, Local 1245 Vice President Art Freitas, (Mettalia), Business Manager Tom Dalzell, Santa Cruz Unit Recorder Gloria Flores and Chair Greg Bargas.

Arcing and Sparking



Tom Dalzell
BUSINESS MANAGER

Great challenges

The new year is sure to be a year of great challenges for our country and our union. The new administration in Washington is inheriting two costly wars, a troubled environment, and a global economic crisis caused by profound mistakes made in Washington.

In some way or another, these national and global issues affect every one of our members deeply, and I am sure that like me you will be watching developments in Washington with great interest.

Our union also faces many challenges in 2009. We have begun the process of attempting to negotiate improvements in retiree healthcare for our 7,000 retired members at PG&E, and it is a difficult and costly issue.

Later this year we will begin negotiations with Sierra Pacific, and judging from the recently concluded negotiations at their sister company in Las Vegas, we may be in for a difficult time.

Nearly all of our public sector employers are faced with large operating deficits because of the collapse of the stock market, the withering of tax revenues, and the fact that the state will not be supporting local governments at anywhere near historic levels.

We renegotiate almost all of our contractor agreements this year as well, both in construction and line clearance tree trimming, and when customers feel a pinch, so do contractors.

We will face these challenges as we have faced past challenges—with professional and skilled negotiators, the participation of our extremely dedicated and talented members on negotiating committees, and the support of our membership at large. Each day I am

grateful at the foresight of our members last summer in increasing our dues, giving your local the resources to navigate through these tough times. The stock market has not been kind to our reserves, but we have continued our cost-saving efforts and so have been able to keep the ink black even through costly negotiations.

One issue that is not affected by the economy and which remains of vital concern to us and our members is safety. We began 2008 with the tragic death on the job of Felipe Chavez, and we ended the year with a terrible disabling accident on a line crew in Fresno. In between, far too many of our members

left home in the morning and did not come home at night, killed on the job.

The explosion in Rancho Cordova that killed a PG&E customer on Christmas Eve is another stark reminder of the danger that our members face every day.

None of these accidents had to happen. As you go to work tomorrow, and the next day, and every day until you retire, I ask that you start with the thought that your first responsibility today is to work safely—and to make sure that your fellow workers are working safely.

Don't take shortcuts and don't tolerate shortcuts. Don't bend rules and don't tolerate the bending of rules. Don't take chances, and don't tolerate others taking chances. Think safe, work safe, be safe, and demand the same of your fellow workers.

Happy new year.

Haentjens gets new post

Local 1245 Business Representative Mike Haentjens has been appointed to the position of Assistant Business Manager, effective Jan. 5, 2009.



Mike Haentjens

Haentjens, 56, is a 30-year member of Local 1245. He became a union activist while working at PG&E's Diablo Canyon Power Plant and was hired as Local 1245 Business Representative in 1987. His assignment areas during 21 years on staff have included PG&E's Diablo Canyon Power Plant, PG&E General Construction (Southern Area), PG&E Coast Valley Division, Morro Bay Power Plant, Sonic TV/Charter TV in San Luis Obispo, and Arbor Tree, as well as relief assignments.

As Assistant Business Manager he will continue his southern-area General Construction assignment, and will assume overall responsibility for Diablo Canyon Power Plant, General Construction and Exhibit XVI.

Congratulations, Mike!

Sierra bargaining proposals

A new procedure has been put in place for members to submit bargaining proposals for upcoming negotiations with Sierra Pacific Power, now known as NV Energy.

The previous process frequently resulted in proposals that were not clear or understandable, or that conflicted with one another. We can help our bargaining committee be more effective by improving the process for submitting proposals.

The Local 1245 Executive Board has an established procedure for guiding unit officers and members in their consideration of negotiating proposals from members. We will follow these general principles in our upcoming bargaining at NV Energy.

A particular month or months will be designated for members to submit proposals at unit meetings.

The unit will determine, by majority vote, which proposals shall be submitted to the Negotiating Committee.

Only one motion on the same ques-

New pact at Mt. Wheeler

Members of Local 1245 at Mt. Wheeler Power unanimously ratified a new agreement that provides 4% per year over three years.



Pat Waite

The agreement also provides an additional Paid-Time-Off (PTO) day for all represented employees.

The employee share of medical premiums was increased from 6% to 7% effective 2009, to 8% in 2010, and to 9% in 2011.

Bargaining for the union were Christina Sawyer, Mike Venturino, Mitch McVicars and Business Rep. Pat Waite.

tion from each unit is valid.

Following this procedure should help alleviate some of the past problems faced by our Negotiating Committee in its deliberations. More information on upcoming bargaining at NV Energy will appear in the March-April issue of the Utility Reporter.

Established months for submitting proposals at unit meetings of NV Energy employees are as follows:

- Reno: April 2009
- Yerington: April 2009
- Winnemucca: April 2009
- Elko: April 2009
- Fallon: April 2009
- Kings Beach: April 2009
- Carson City: April 2009
- South Lake Tahoe: May 2009

CALENDAR

- Feb 3:** Retirees Club, Merced, CA
- Feb 3:** Retirees Club, Santa Rosa, CA
- Feb 5:** Retirees Club, San Jose, CA
- Feb 11:** Retirees Club, Vacaville, CA
- Feb 12:** Retirees Club, Dublin, CA
- Feb 20:** Service Awards, San Jose, CA
- Feb 28:** Outside Line Stewards Conference, Vacaville
- Feb 28:** Service Awards, Sacramento
- Mar 3:** Retirees Club, Merced, CA
- Mar 3:** Retirees Club, Santa Rosa, CA
- Mar 5:** Retirees Club, San Jose, CA
- Mar 11:** Retirees Club, Vacaville, CA
- Mar 12:** Retirees Club, Dublin, CA
- Mar 20:** Service Awards, Monterey, CA
- May 29:** Service Awards, Bakersfield, CA

APPOINTMENTS

CITY OF FERNLEY
Bargaining Committee
Kathryn Bennett
Donald Castro
Jay Freeman

TRUCKEE MEADOWS
WATER AUTHORITY
Bargaining Committee
Jackson Bergland
Travis Bunkowski
Franklin "Chip" Chadwick
Steven Enos
Jonathan Rouse



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Our Web Site can be viewed at www.IBEW1245.com.

Our phone number is (707) 452-2700.

Scholarship opportunity

Local 1245 offers competitive opportunities for college and trade school assistance for the children of its members.

The Al Sandoval Memorial College Scholarship is a competitive essay-writing contest. The application deadline is March 2, 2009. The rules and application form were published in the November-December 2008 issue of the Utility Reporter, and are also available on-line at www.ibew1245.com/Scholar_app09.pdf.

Trade and Vocational School Grants for the children of Local 1245 members are offered each year in a random drawing among all eligible applicants. The application deadline is April 6, 2009. The rules and application form were published in the November-December 2008 issue of the Utility Reporter, and are also available on-line at www.ibew1245.com/Trade_app09.pdf.

Mirant pact ratified

IBEW Local 1245 members at Mirant ratified a new agreement on Dec. 2. The vote was 72-27.

Highlights of the new agreement include:

- Five-year agreement
- Five-year 4% general wage increase each year
- Five-year Slight changes in medical and dental co-pays
- Five-year Significant increase in employer 401K contribution
- Five-year Severance agreement added to the contract
- Five-year Provides for retiree medical benefits

Serving on the union's bargaining committee were Greg Ho, Ted Wallace, Mike Cutshaw, Phil Kamp and Larry Jasmann, along with Business Rep. Joe Osterlund.



Joe Osterlund

lished in the November-December 2008 issue of the Utility Reporter, and are also available on-line at www.ibew1245.com/Trade_app09.pdf.

If you have eligible children, don't miss out on this opportunity to compete for financial assistance!

Members ratify Berkeley pact

Local 1245 members at the City of Berkeley ratified a new four-year agreement by an overwhelming margin in October.

The four-year agreement provides wage increases of 4.5% in the first year, 2.5% in each of the second and third years, and 3% in the fourth year.

The city will increase its contribution to Retiree Medical in the 2nd year by \$100, in the 3rd year by an additional \$50, and the 4th year by an additional \$25, for a total of \$175 increase.

Negotiating for the union were James Milstead, Bill Edwards, Rudy Wilson and Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer.



Dennis Seyfer

Sacramento Clerical Unit

Unit 3801, Sacramento Clerical, has a new meeting location: Round Table Pizza, 4680 Natomas, Ste. 170, in Sacramento. The unit also has a new chair: Kevin Krummes. As previously announced, the unit also has a new meeting day and time starting in January: the first Tuesday of every month, beginning at 4:30 pm.

Arlene Edwards, Business Representative



Members of Unit 1513, Santa Cruz, at their December 2008 meeting.

Chronical scorns Peevey's deregulation plan

Editor's note: The following editorial was published recently in the San Francisco Chronical.

California Public Utilities Commission President Michael Peevey wants to resurrect a "direct access" program that would allow consumers to "shop around" for the "best price" for electricity. Clearly Mr. Peevey has forgotten what happened from the last attempt to deregulate energy in California.

Maybe you remember. The rolling blackouts? The skyrocketing energy costs? The state in meltdown? Energy companies running off with outlandish sums of consumer and taxpayer money?

It was only eight years ago. And while there may still be a few businesses and free-market ideologues who insist energy deregulation and "free choice" can bring savings, liberty and cupcakes to the people of California, the people of California vehemently disagree.

The state's own personal experience with this mess should be enough dissuasion, but the statistics are clear too. Retail electricity prices in deregulated states have risen by as much as 56 percent more than in regulated states since 1999, according to Power in the Public

Interest, a consumer group. In a time of drastic recession, Peevey has more than just a bad idea—he's got a tin ear.

And his timing couldn't be worse. During the deregulation debacle of 2000-01, the state scrambled to keep the lights on by buying overpriced contracts on the open market. Today, the state is in fiscal emergency. It would be foolhardy for us to take expensive risks from which the state may not be able to save us.

Peevey has claimed that "direct access" is not deregulation. But experts say he's not telling Californians the truth. "This is not going to be helpful to California consumers at all. It's a total triumph of ideology over practicality," said former California PUC Commissioner Loretta Lynch.

"Direct access deepened the crisis in 2000. Enron and others had lured consumers away from the utilities, but then they dumped them after the cost of power got too high. That created even more of an artificial shortage on the market."

The California Legislature has signaled it intends to fight Peevey on this. It must. More now than ever, California can't afford an ideological experiment that's proved ruinous in the past.

The screenshot shows the IBEW Local 1245 website with the tagline "The people behind the power". It features a "Current News" section with articles such as "1245'S ALL-NEW UNION SHOPPER", "Sacramento Regional Transit agreement ratified", "The Vacaville Retiree Meeting", "PG&E Bargaining Committee", "Primary Election", "Napa Unit", "Card Check", "Retiree Club Members", "Longshoremen", "Paid Sick Days", and "Member Mobilization". There is also a "Utility Chief meets with IBEW members" article and a "PG&E Exempt Employees!" article. A "Signatory Employees" section lists A.J. Robertson, Troubleman, Pacific Gas & Electric. A "More Photos" link is also visible. A "Worksite photos" section lists various topics like "Unit Meetings", "Safety Matters", "Benefits", "Workers Compensation", "Agreements", "PG&E Letter Agreements", "PG&E Contract Index", "Local 1245 By-Laws", "Union Primer", "IBEW 1245 History", "Wage Comparisons", "Where We Work", "Ron Weakley, Founder", "Global Warming", and "Union Shopper".

Get the latest union news on-line!

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At PG&E: From pge@work, go to "My Stuff," select "IBEW"

Check out these features:

PG&E Letter Agreements

Union Primer

Wage Comparisons

Worksite photos

Livermore facility dedicated

PG&E and IBEW stress training and safety



Gas Crew Foreman Mike Scafani participates in Cathodic Protection exercise.

Pacific Gas & Electric formally dedicated its new gas maintenance operations training facility in Livermore on Dec. 3, assuring that its IBEW-represented gas employees will continue to be among the best-trained in the country.

The dedication was an opportunity for both management and the union to acknowledge the critical link between training and safety, and to reaffirm their commitment to both.

"There is no 'us and them' on issue of safety and training,"

said Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell, speaking at the dedication ceremony. "On every issue there is some overlap between company and union interests. On the issue of training there is unanimity of purpose."

Bob Howard, PG&E Vice President for Gas Transmission and Distribution, called the facility "state of the art" and

said it would be "the foundation for training for our gas system."

The facility provides realistic scenarios for trainees to confront and deal with typical issues that gas workers encounter in the field. Among these are Mark and Locate, Cathodic Protection, and Subsurface Grading. Following the opening ceremony, demonstrations were conducted in each of these three areas.

Conducting the Mark & Locate demonstration was Ron White, a Fieldman and 34-year IBEW member. Proper marking and locating of all PG&E equipment is essential to avoiding "dig-ins"—excavation that inadvertently encounters and damages underground structures.

"We're exposed out there if we don't find our infrastructure properly," said White, who demonstrated the use of the "Metro Tech" locator. "You always work with a map but you never assume the map reflects everything as is."

In the Cathodic Protection demonstration, Kevin Amato explained how an electric current induced into the ground protects gas pipes against corrosion. However, sometimes another utility's infrastructure—such as a water service—can

become part of the circuit by accident. These unintended contacts cause a reduction of current in the circuit, which reduces the protective value of the current for preventing corrosion in gas lines.

"We're looking for whatever is taking our current," explained Amato as he took pipe and soil readings.

Luis Faria, a Senior Instructor at San Ramon, showed off the master panel



Doing the honors at the ribbon-cutting ceremony are, from left: IBEW Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell, PG&E Vice President Bob Howard, PG&E Chief Operating Officer Jack Kennan, and PG&E Sr. Vice President Engineering and Operations Ed Salas.

that controls gas flow to various training center locations, enabling staff to create leaks for training purposes. Faria demonstrated the use of the Combustible Gas Indicator in detecting and grading leaks.

"You find the highest concentration, then probe out north, south, east and west every five feet until you zero out so you can grade the leak," he explained.

Repairs are scheduled based on a leak grading system that determines

the severity of the problem.

PG&E Chief Operating Officer Jack Keenan, speaking at the opening ceremony, said that the focus on training and safety "is the right thing to do."

"You need to have a process and train people in the process if you want safe results," he said.

PG&E plans to add more facilities for electric training, including three 110-foot towers and an underground vault for transmission training.



Luis Faria, a Senior Instructor at San Ramon, shows off the master panel that controls gas flow to various training center locations.

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Fieldman Ron White, left, demonstrates Mark and Locate procedures to PG&E Chief Operating Officer Jack Kennan, IBEW Business Manager Tom Dalzell, Gas Crew Foreman Mike Scafani, and PG&E Director of Labor Relations Steve Rayburn.



Union smoothes way for tree trimmer transition

Local 1245 is smoothing the way for line clearance tree trimmers to change employers as the Sacramento Municipal Utility District says farewell to Davey Tree Surgery and hello to Wright Tree Service, Inc.

Some 45 tree trimmers, most of them Local 1245 members, gathered in Rancho Cordova in December to complete pre-employment paperwork to go to work for Wright Tree. On hand to assist them was a union delegation consisting of Business Reps. Junior Ornelas and Carl Lamers, Line Clearance Tree Trimming Company Advisory Councilman Jose Torres, and Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas. The union delegation met earlier with Wright management to assure a smooth process.

The process has not always been so smooth in the past. Until fairly recently, a change of contractors has forced a painful choice on many union-represented tree trimmers: Remain with the outgoing contractor, even if it means working far from home, or seek a job with the new contractor and lose all the seniority benefits accumulated during their work with the outgoing contractor.

"Local 1245 has worked diligently in general negotiations over the years to enhance the conditions of employment for those employees who must change contractors when the former signatory Tree Company loses their contract and another steps in," said Senior Business Rep. Thomas.

"A majority of members facing this choice over the years have chosen to work for the new employer rather than to commute or move their families. That's why we do our best to make the transition as seamless as possible," said Thomas.

Under retention provisions negotiated by Local 1245, employees who are retained by the new signatory contractor are retained by their union seniority, as determined by their IBEW Local 1245 initiation date. In addition, an employee's accumulated Paid Time Off or vacations and holidays are calculated by their union seniority so that employees don't simply start over with respect to these benefits.

"We have also been successful in reducing the former 6-month probationary time frame to 3-months when an incumbent union member is retained by a new signatory contractor," Thomas noted.

Wright Tree is slated to assume the SMUD line clearance tree trimming contract on Jan. 5, 2009. Wright Tree has signed a letter of assent with Local 1245, assuring that Wright's work on the SMUD contract will be performed union.

The transition from one contractor to another at SMUD serves as a reminder to all line clearance tree trimmer and vegetation control employees to protect their seniority date in order to enhance their retention and benefits rights. Here are two important ways to protect those rights.

1. Sometimes current members are off work for an extended period of time—for a Leave of Absence, for example, or an industry injury. Don't let your union membership lapse! You can pay reduced "non-working dues" to maintain your membership, which allows you to keep your original initiation date. If you allow your membership to lapse, you'll lose your seniority advantage.
2. If you are a new employee and *not* a previous union member, be sure to join the union right away. It is to your advantage to start accumulating seniority as soon as you can.

El Local 1245 prepara el camino para la transición hacia un nuevo contratista en SMUD

El Local 1245 está preparando el camino para el cambio de empleador de los podadores de árboles para el despeje de líneas, ahora que el Distrito Municipal de Sacramento de Servicios Públicos (SMUD) se despide de Davey Tree Surgery y le da la bienvenida a Wright Tree Service, Inc.

Unos 45 podadores de árboles, la mayoría de ellos miembros del Local 1245, se reunieron el 10 de diciembre en Rancho Cordova para finalizar los trámites administrativos de preempleo para trabajar para Wright Tree. Para ayudarlos, estaba disponible en el sitio una delegación del sindicato formada por los Representantes de Negocios Junior Ornelas y Carl Lamers, el Concejal Consejero de Compañías de Poda de Árboles para Despeje de Líneas Jose Torres, y el Representante de Negocios Senior Ray Thomas. La delegación del sindicato se reunió previamente con la gerencia de Wright para garantizar que el proceso de transición se lleve a cabo sin problemas.

En otras oportunidades el proceso de transición ha enfrentado problemas. Hasta hace muy poco, un cambio de contratista forzaba a muchos podadores de árboles representados por el sindicato a tomar una difícil decisión: permanecer con el contratista que salía, aún si eso significaba trabajar lejos del hogar, o buscar trabajo con el nuevo contratista y perder todos los beneficios de antigüedad acumulados durante su



Members sign up with Wright. Helping with the sign-up (at left, in back) are Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas and Advisory Coouncilman, Jose Torres.

Los miembros firman con Wright. El Representante de Negocios Senior Ray Thomas y el miembro del Consejo Asesor Jose Torres, ayudan a la firma (a la izquierda, atrás).

empleo con el contratista saliente.

"El Local 1245 ha trabajado diligentemente en negociaciones generales a lo largo de los años para mejorar las condiciones de empleo de aquellos empleados que deben cambiar de contratista cuando la Compañía de Árboles firmante anterior pierde su contrato y la reemplaza otra compañía," dijo el Representante de Negocios Senior Thomas.

"Gran parte de los miembros que han tenido que tomar esta decisión a lo largo de los años, han escogido trabajar para el nuevo empleador en lugar de viajar o mudar a sus familias. Por esta razón hemos hecho todo lo posible para que la transición sea lo más exitosa posible," dijo Thomas.

Bajo las cláusulas de retención negociadas por el Local 1245, aquellos empleados que permanecen con el nuevo contratista firmante, retienen su antigüedad del sindicato, definida por la fecha de comienzo del empleado en el Local 1245 de la IBEW. Además, el Tiempo Libre con Pago o las vacaciones y días feriados se calculan en base a su antigüedad en el sindicato, de manera que los empleados no tienen que comenzar de nuevo en lo que se refiere a estos beneficios.

"También hemos tenido éxito en reducir el periodo de prueba anterior de 6 meses a 3 meses cuando un nuevo contratista firmante retiene a un miembro que pertenece al sindicato," comentó Thomas.

Está programado que Wright Tree asuma el contrato de poda de árboles para despeje de líneas de SMUD el 5 de enero de 2009. Wright Tree ha firmado una carta de aceptación con el Local 1245, asegurando que el trabajo de Wright en lo que se refiere al contrato con SMUD será ejecutado por el sindicato.

La transición de un contratista a otro en SMUD sirve como recordatorio para que todos los empleados de poda de árboles y control de vegetación para despeje de líneas protejan su fecha de antigüedad para mejorar sus derechos y

beneficios de retención. He aquí dos importantes maneras de proteger estos derechos.

1. A veces algunos miembros del sindicato dejan de trabajar por un periodo de tiempo extenso —por ejemplo por una Ausencia Justificada, o una lesión industrial. ¡No deje que su membresía en el sindicato llegue a su fecha de vencimiento! Usted puede pagar una "tarifa de no trabajo" reducida para mantener su membresía, lo cual le permite mantener su fecha original de comienzo. Si usted permite que su membresía llegue a su fecha de vencimiento, perderá sus ventajas de antigüedad.
2. Si usted es un nuevo empleado y previamente no era miembro del sindicato, asegúrese de unirse al sindicato inmediatamente. Comenzar a acumular antigüedad lo más pronto posible lo beneficia a usted.

New pact for Davey at Santa Clara

Local 1245 members ratified a new agreement with Davey Tree for work performed at the City of Santa Clara.

The two-year agreement, ratified in November, provides general wage increases of 1.7% for 2008, 4% for 2009 and 4.5% for 2010. Out of town subsistence pay has been increased from \$18 to \$30 per day.

The employer will provide ice for drinking water.

In addition, there will be 18 months of employer-paid health and welfare for employees off work due to industrial injury.

Bargaining for the union was Marcos Hernandez, along with Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas and Business Reps. Junior Ornelas and Carl Lamers.

More Tree Trimmers on page 13

set if any of these issues arise at their workplace, and they will expect the shop steward to do something about it. More than ever, it will be important for public sector stewards to be thoroughly familiar with the grievance procedures under the terms of the labor agreement (or Memorandum of Understanding).

Another potential pressure point in future negotiations is GASB 45, an accounting and financial reporting provision that requires government employers to measure and report the liabilities associated with post-employment benefits other than pensions. Examples of such benefits are post-retirement medical, pharmacy, dental, vision, life long-term disability and long-term care benefits.

GASB 45 was instigated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) in July 2004 because of the growing concern over the potential magnitude of government employer obligations for post-employment benefits. Local 1245 Business Rep. Pat Waite explained how GASB 45 has an increasing effect on employers as their employees age.

“As it becomes harder to find money to fund these benefits,” Waite said, “employers are going to be under pressure to reduce benefits to get liability down.”

In addition to their rights under their labor agreements, public sector union



Public sector stewards representing union members at 13 separate properties attended the Nov. 15 conference at Weakley Hall.

members have significant rights under various state and federal laws. Some of these rights were discussed on Nov. 15 in presentations by Local 1245 business representatives.

Business Rep. Sam Glero discussed the “Seven Tests” to determine if discipline is for just cause. Business Rep. Joe Osterlund reviewed stewards’ rights as established in various court decisions. Business Rep. Darryl Norris explained how “Skelly Rights,” established by California court decisions in the 1970s, provide due process protections to public employees in termination proceedings.

Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas discussed Family Leave rights under both state and federal laws.

Retired state mediator Shirley Camp-

bell offered her perspective on the state mediation process that is sometimes used to resolve disputes in the public sector. “The shop steward,” she said, “may be the key ingredient in getting a grievance resolved or going to arbitration successfully.”

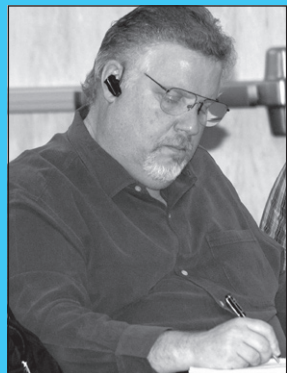
Campbell said that mediators have no actual authority—“they can’t make anybody agree to anything”—but they try to use their personal presence to build trust between the parties to the dispute.

She urged stewards, if they ever find themselves involved in a mediation, to give the mediator “a better understanding” of the employees’ position so that the mediator has the information he or she needs “when they go into the other room” to meet with management repre-

sentatives.

Among other topics covered by Business Manager Dalzell was the union’s recent successful effort to elect more local candidates sympathetic to the interests of working people. Although the union’s political contributions have upset some members in the past, Dalzell noted that the union’s success in the last election cycle means we will have allies in strategic places who can assist us on job security or other issues in the political domain.

Dalzell praised the work of Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer, who has overall responsibility for the union’s public sector activities. “Nobody has done this job better than Dennis,” Dalzell said.



Port of Oakland steward Mike Ringbom.



Modesto Irrigation District steward Diane Ermis.



City of Berkeley steward Jim Milstead



Merced Irrigation District steward Pete Stone.



City of Roseville steward Richard Thompson

Locking in wages

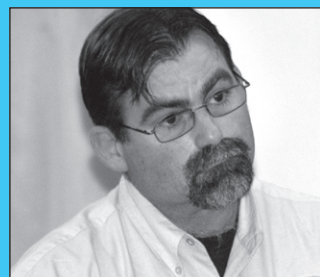
Despite economic pressures in the public sector, the union has had considerable recent success in wage negotiations in the public sector, locking in wage increases over longer terms. Among the recent wage provisions:

- United States Bureau of Reclamation: 16% over 4 years
- Bella Vista Water District: 23.5% over 5 years
- South Feather Water and Power: 12% over 4 years
- City of Yerington 12% over 3 years
- Tri-Dam Project: 16% over 4 years
- City of Berkeley: 12.5% over 4 years
- Turlock Irrigation District: 15.4% over 4 years

There was less progress at cash-strapped Sacramento Regional Transit, with wage gains of 2% and 1%, and there will be considerable challenges ahead as the union prepares to negotiate in the near future with Modesto Irrigation District, Silicon Valley Power (City of Santa Clara, City of Gridley, Truckee Donner PUC, and once again with Sacramento Regional Transit.



Port of Oakland steward Dave Cuthbertson.



Silicon Valley Power steward Dan Ryker



Modesto Irrigation District stewards Kurt Celli, left, and William Labarbera.



Shirley Campbell discusses the finer points of mediation.

Passing the torch

Long-time stewards sometimes wonder: "Who's going to take my place when I retire?"

It's an important question. Stewards are not paid for their work on behalf of the union, other than token reimbursement of expenses. But they take on the role because they believe in the union's mission of protecting the rights of members and promoting justice on the job.

Phil Alleman has been a steward for 16 of his 18 years at Bella Vista Water District and knows that someday he'll have to hang up his hat and let somebody else fight the good fight. He remembers how he just plunged into the work with very little preparation and he decided it would be a good idea to start preparing younger members now for a possible role as steward in the future. That's why he invited Fred Nostrand to come to Vacaville on Nov. 15 to get a closer look at what stewards do and why they do it.

"What drew us to this guy was he was always asking ques-

tions," says Alleman. Asking questions, of course, is one of the major tools a steward has in investigating jobsite problems, so Nostrand seems like a logical candidate for work on behalf of the union.

Nostrand said he has seen some "negativity" in his work environment, with people acting in ways that are counterproductive. "I'd like people to present their points in a positive way," he says.

Everyone has his or her own reason for first becoming a steward and they inevitably find a lot of other reasons once they've been in the role for a while: the chance to right a wrong, to play a leadership role, to prevent management abuses, to reduce conflict between members. The list goes on.

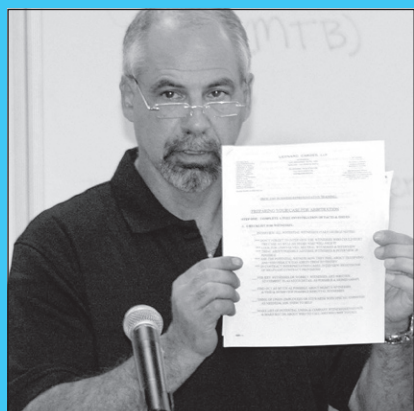
If you think you're ready for a more active role in the union, let a current steward or your business representative know about it. Next year you might find yourself in Vacaville for a day getting a free education (and lunch).



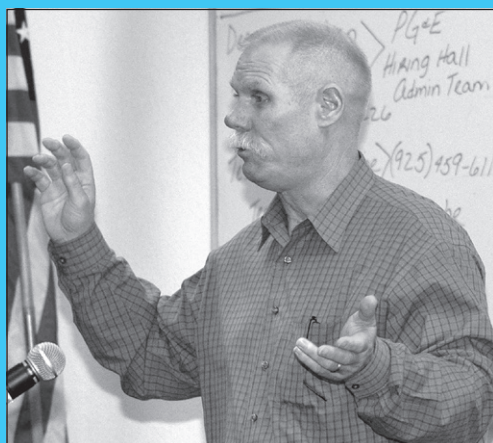
Business Rep. Pat Waite discusses how government's GASB 45 obligations for post-employment benefits could affect future bargaining.



City of Redding stewards, from left: Paul Snyder (Electric), Gary Moeckli and Chris Fleming (Maintenance).



Business Rep. Sam Glero explains the Seven Steps.



Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer.



Turlock Irrigation District stewards, from left, Aaron Baker, Ken Gross, and Rich Lane.



From left: Phil Alleman, Bella Vista Water District; Darrel Hughart, City of Redding/Electric; and Fred Nostrand, Bella Vista Water District.



Sacramento RT stewards, from left, Lauren Bartlett and Constance Bibbs.

Participating Stewards

November 15, 2008

Bella Vista Water District

Philip Alleman
Fred Nostrand

Turlock Irrigation District

Aaron Baker
Ken Gross
Richard Lane

Sacramento Regional Transit

Constance Bibbs
Lauren Bartlett

Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Jeremy Carlin

Modesto Irrigation District

Kurt Celli
Diane Ermis
William Labarbera

Port of Oakland

Dave Cuthbertson
Mike Ringbom

City of Redding/Maintenance

Chris Fleming
Gary Moeckli

City of Redding/Electric

Darrel Hughart
Paul Snyder

City of Berkeley

Jim Milstead

US Bureau of Reclamation

Patrick Pipis
Robert Skordas

Merced Irrigation District

Peter Stone

City of Roseville

Richard Thompson

Silicon Valley Power

Dan Ryker

Local 1245 Staff

Tom Dalzell
Phil Carter
Sam Glero
Mike Grill
Sheila Lawton
Carl Lamers
Darryl Norris
Joe Osterlund
Roy Runnings
Ray Thomas
Pat Waite
Debbie Mazzanti
Ron Cochran
Eric Wolfe

PG&E crews upgrade capacity in Santa Cruz

Nothing lasts forever. And that includes the underground cable that carries power to California homes and businesses.

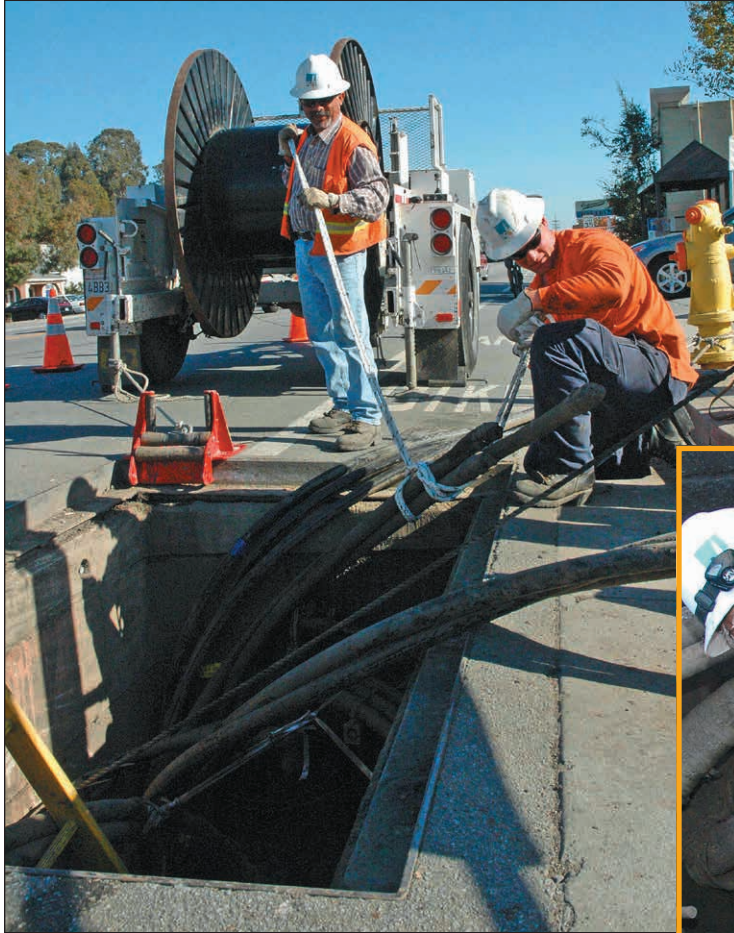
On a sunny day in December, about three miles down the coast from the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Local 1245 members worked under a crystal clear sky installing 4700 feet of 21kv underground cable. The project was necessary, according to Heavy Crew Foreman J.D. Sotelo, to replace old cable dating to the 1970s that was reaching the end of its reliable service.

“The project includes installing three underground switches, reworking three 21 KV primary risers and replacing two runs into Arana Substation—one to the north and one to the south,” explained Sotelo, as Lineman Skip Alcorn and Apprentice Lineman Ty Wyatt worked from a bucket nearby on one of the risers, assisted by Apprentice Lineman Daniel Silverstrom on the ground.

Cable Rep



The underground crew, from left: George Palacios, Jason Rangel, Mark Grimsley, Mike Farinsky Jr., and J.D. Sotelo.



Ray Acosta, left, and Scott Walker are ready for the cable pull.



Mike Farinsky, Jr. secures a Kellum grip on to a cable in order to pull in braided rope on Soquel Avenue in Santa Cruz. Working in the vault with him is J.D. Sotelo.



Replacing cable

Daniel Silverstrom assists from the ground.

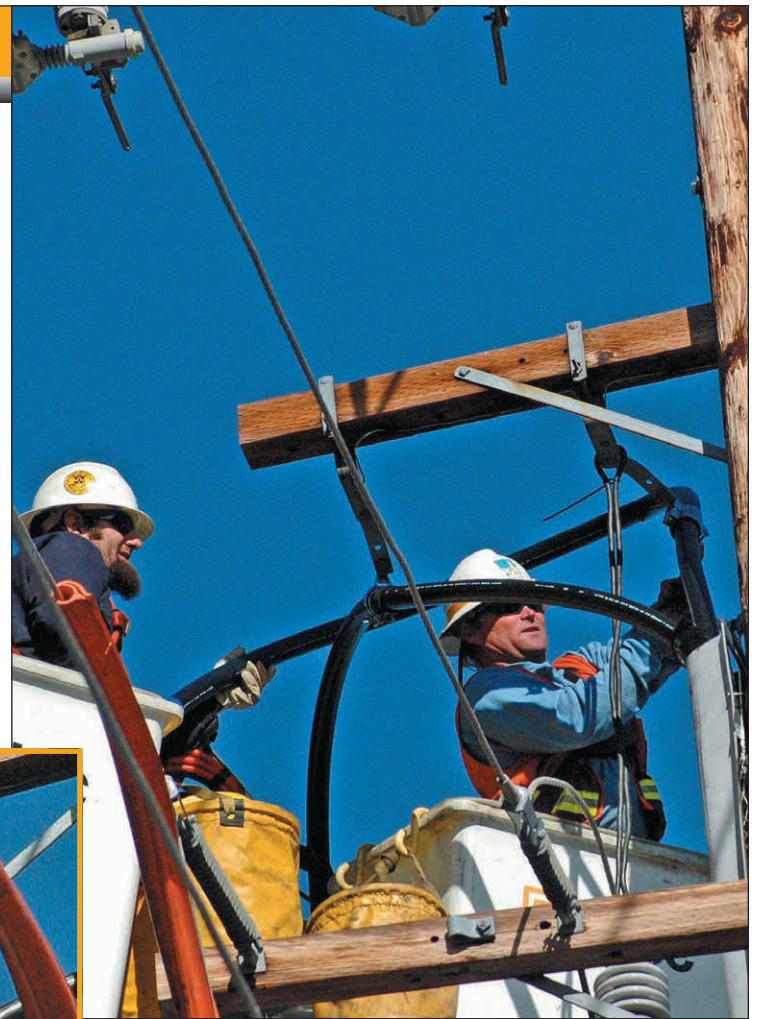
Placement

Photos by Eric Wolfe

Sotelo only paused a couple of minutes to explain the parameters of the project before returning to work in an underground vault near the intersection of Seventh and Soquel Avenues in Santa Cruz, where he was joined by Lineman Mike Farinsky, Jr. Working outside the vault were Apprentice Lineman Mark Grimsley and Utility Workers George Palacios and Jason Rangel. Waiting a short distance down the road to pull cable were Labor Foreman "C" Ray Acosta and Apprentice Lineman Scott Walker.

The crews, about midway through the month-long project, were in their third of an expected six clearances.

"It's a great project," said Sotelo, made easier by the availability of some GC equipment and apprentice linemen, who were receiving training in 600 amp underground splicing from the Division personnel.



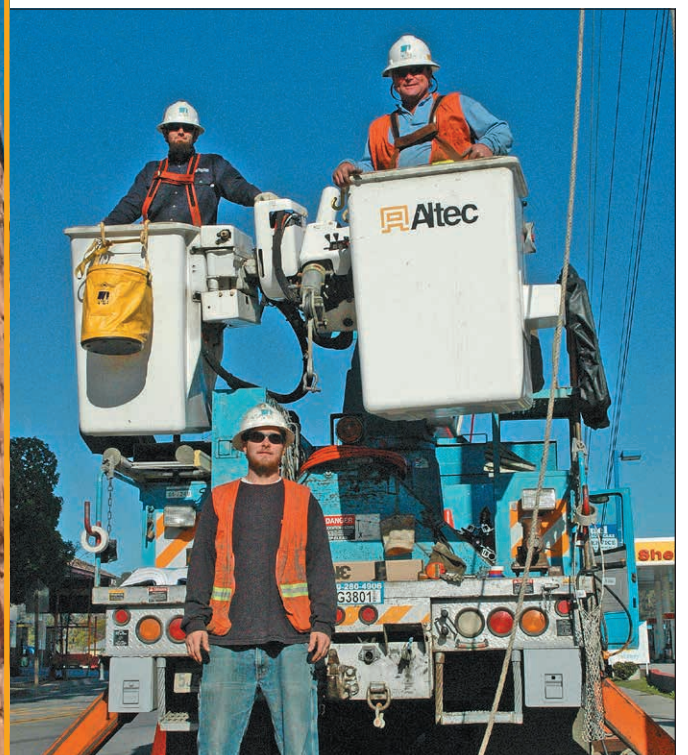
Reworking the riser from the bucket are Skip Alcorn and Ty Wyatt.



Skip Alcorn relocates a temporary protective grounding cable in order to land the new 1100 Al cable at top of riser pole.



Ty Wyatt installs a switch terminal that will connect to the newly-replaced underground system.



Working from the bucket on the riser, from left, are Ty Wyatt and Skip Alcorn, assisted by Daniel Silverstrom on the ground.

on Soquel Avenue in Santa Cruz.



Economic Stimulus: What Kind? How Much? (Hurry Up!)

By Eric Wolfe

Recently I mentioned to a friend that the economy would benefit more from government spending on unemployment insurance than from spending on infrastructure projects like bridges and public transit.

My friend looked at me like I had just recently arrived from the planet Neptune or perhaps someplace even farther out.

“So we should just pay people to remain unemployed? I don’t see how that gets us to where we need to go,” he said.

But here’s the strange thing. Research by Moody’s really does show that funneling money into unemployment insurance gives more “bang for the buck” than almost any other form of economic stimulus. Here’s why.

A decline in overall demand is the main cause of rising unemployment and the weak economy. An economic recovery package, to be effective, needs to put money in the hands of people who will spend it quickly.

People who are unemployed, unless they are independently wealthy, are going to spend whatever they get because they need to cover the basic necessities. Unemployment benefits have what economists call a high “multiplier effect”—the money goes right back into the economy’s revenue stream, creating profits and jobs.

Federal aid to state governments has a similar effect. Most states are now looking at cuts—in some cases huge cuts—in state programs that help families. If you give the states money to rescue some of these programs, much of it will be immediately plowed back into the economy, creating jobs.

Right about now somebody will be asking: “Did some wacky liberal (from Neptune) come up with this research and how much credibility does it have?”

Sure, this is the sort of policy position you’d expect to come from Barack Obama or some sort of “progressive” think tank. But it comes from Moody’s Economy.com, which is an entirely different animal. It is a leading independent provider of economic analysis, data, and forecasting and credit risk services. And it’s chief economist, Mark Zandi, is a former advisor to presidential candidate John McCain.

This is news from Earth, not Neptune.

So does that mean that unemploy-

ment insurance and aid to states are the only forms of stimulus we should try? Of course not. It just means they need to be a significant part of the mix. And the Moody’s analysis shows us what else should be in the mix: infrastructure spending. Which means investing in roads, bridges, mass transit, energy efficiency, schools and other institutions that make up the economy’s muscle. When your infrastructure is sound, your economy is going to be stronger, and for longer.

As I write this, President-elect Obama hasn’t yet said how much he wants to tilt his economic recovery package toward infrastructure spending, and how much toward tax cuts. The Moody’s research has something to say on this topic, too. Tax rebates and tax cuts are poor performers when it comes to creating economic stimulus. Investing the same amount of money in infrastructure is far more effective. The accompanying chart shows what we can expect from each of these suggested approaches to stimulating the economy.

Do these numbers matter to members of Local 1245? After all, we’ve already got jobs. Well, the answer is yes. An economic stimulus means a great deal to Local 1245 and its members. For members in the public sector, an effective stimulus package will tend to relieve some of the pressure that squeezes agency budgets and makes our bargaining more difficult. Some of our employers are seriously considering layoffs or have already started them because their economic situation is so precarious.

And we shouldn’t ever fool ourselves into thinking we live in some kind of protective bubble just because we are represented by a strong union and work in a vital sector of the economy. If the overall economy continues to tank, virtually all employers will feel the pain, and you can be sure they will be looking for ways to pass that pain on to us at the bargaining table.

A tanking economy is also poison for workers whose retirement savings are tied up in the stock market. And even members who have the more secure “defined-benefit” pensions could face pressure to make concessions in other

areas as their employers are forced to divert resources into pension plans to keep them adequately funded.

So how much stimulus is needed to zip us past these gloomy scenarios and get our country back on solid footing? Economists argue the point, of course. But with the nation facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression that began 80 years ago, we can’t afford to be timid.

As Obama’s choice to head the National Economic Council, Lawrence Summers recently said, “In this crisis, doing too little poses a greater threat than doing too much.”

Nobel-winning economist Paul Krugman has challenged Obama to think big, and to take the long view. Instead of just focusing on projects that will boost jobs over the next two years, Obama’s plan “should also include longer-term investment projects” since unemployment is likely to remain high well beyond the next two years.

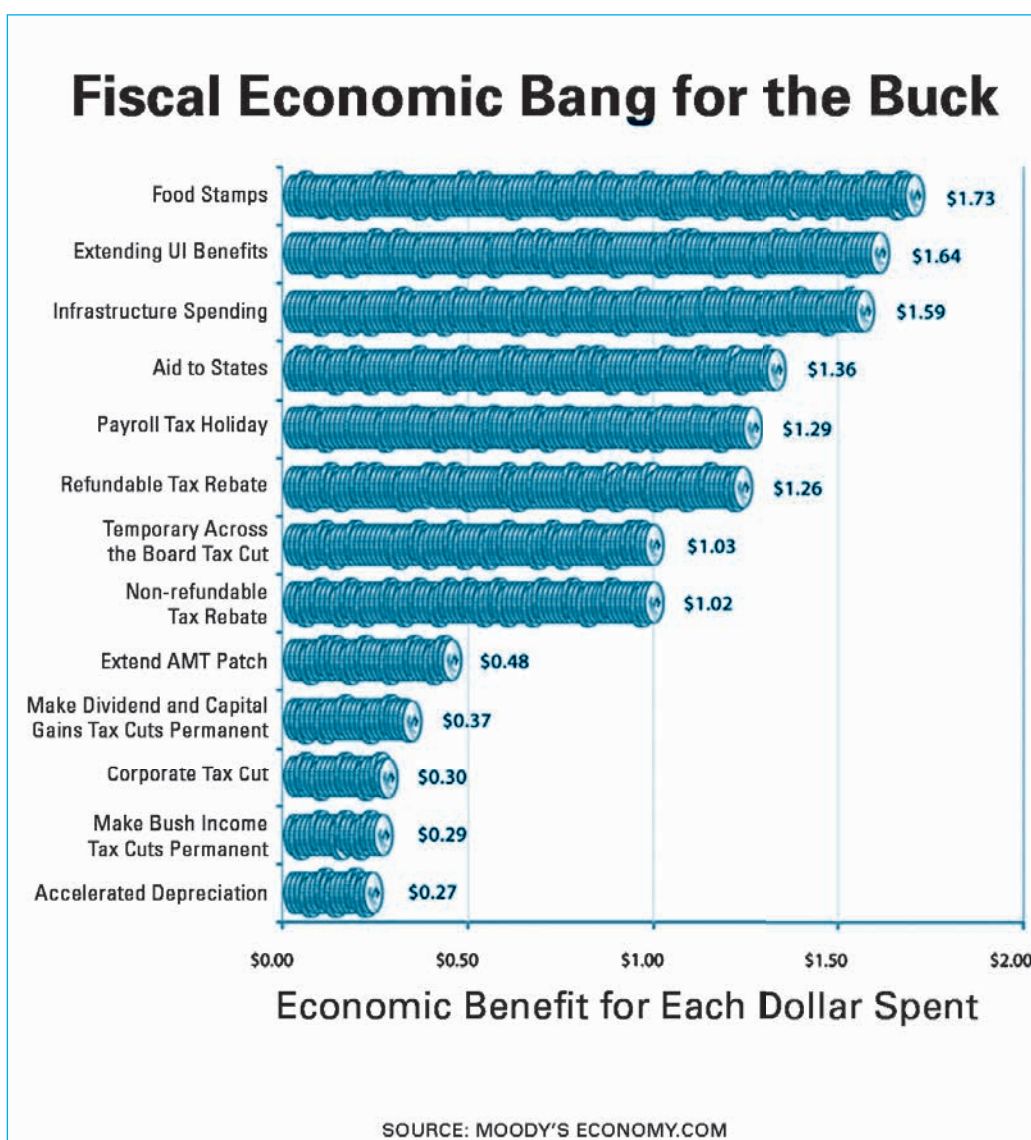
Bowing to Republican pressure to funnel more of the stimulus into tax cuts would deprive the economy of the boost it could get from investing that money in infrastructure instead. Tax cuts were tried by Bush, repeatedly, and we have precious little economic stimulus to show for it.

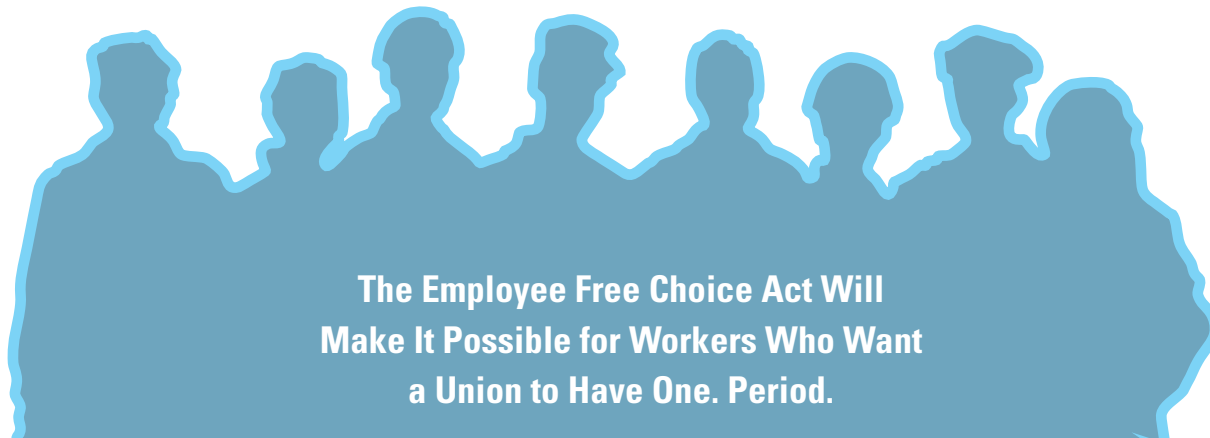
Did I mention we need to hurry up? As the recession deepens, states’ deficits are rising and could total \$350 billion to \$370 billion over the next 2½ years. That translates into huge budget cuts as well as tax and fee increases, and these things will reduce overall demand, which removes even more money from the economy.

When Japan responded to its economic crisis in the early 1990s with too little firepower and too little speed, that country’s economy sank into a deep recession from which they still haven’t fully recovered. America has a chance to avoid that fate, but only if we hurry up and give our economy the kind of jobs-producing stimulus it needs.

Over the next several weeks we will find out if the new president and the new Congress can act with the courage and the speed that is required.

Eric Wolfe is Communications Director for IBEW Local 1245.





The Employee Free Choice Act Will
Make It Possible for Workers Who Want
a Union to Have One. Period.

Employee Free Choice

More than ever, working people need a way to get ahead.

Our economy is in shambles. The wage gap between corporate executives and working people has never been wider. The decline in people's purchasing power makes it even harder to get the economy moving again. Across the nation, wages are dropping, health care costs are rising and pensions are disappearing. People no longer believe that our children will be better off than we are.

Unions are the best route to the middle class.

It takes money to improve living standards. The whole point of having a union is to empower employees to get a bigger share of the pie. Union members make 30% more than workers who don't have a union. That's about \$200 a week,

or \$10,000 a year for the average worker.

Union members are 50% more likely to have employer-provided health insurance, and the benefits and costs are better. And 67% of union members are covered by defined-benefit pension plans through their jobs, compared with only 15% of workers who don't have unions.

And communities with strong unions have higher living standards for everybody.

Sixty million people who don't have unions say they'd join one tomorrow, but too few will ever get the chance in our corporate-dominated system.

Companies routinely intimidate, harass, coerce and even fire people who try to form unions and current labor law is helpless to stop them. The penalties are so slight for breaking the law that corporations simply consider it a cost of doing business. The government found that companies violated the rights of 26,824 workers in 2006 alone (and those are just the documented cases). A quarter of companies even illegally fire workers for organizing-related activities.

Even when workers win their unions, many companies delay bargaining any way they can. According to a recent study by MIT, 44% of workers who form a new union never reach a first contract.

The Employee Free Choice Act is the change we need.

The Employee Free Choice Act would put the choice of whether to form a union back in workers' hands by giving them the option of using "Majority Sign-up," an alternative to the current company-dominated system. Large national companies with good profit margins and good labor relations, such as AT&T and Kaiser Permanente, have used Majority Sign-up successfully for years.

The Employee Free Choice Act guarantees that companies can't just drag their feet on a first contract. To guarantee workers can win a union contract, it provides for mediation or binding arbitration when it's needed.

The Employee Free Choice Act levels

the playing field by putting real penalties on companies that violate the law during organizing and contract campaigns.

The time to take a stand is *Now!*

We finally have a president who supports Employee Free Choice and says he will sign the bill if it reaches his desk. A new poll taken in December 2008 shows that an incredible 73% of Americans want Congress to pass this important legislation.

But the threat of a filibuster in the Senate could kill the Employee Free Choice Act when it comes to a vote during the first months of the Obama presidency. That's why it is critical to contact our representatives now. Let them know that the time has come for Employee Free Choice.



How you can help:

Action Squad. Go to the IBEW Local 1245 web page at www.ibew1245.com. Click the Action Squad logo and follow the instructions for identifying your representatives and sending them a message. It's quick and it's easy. And it's important.

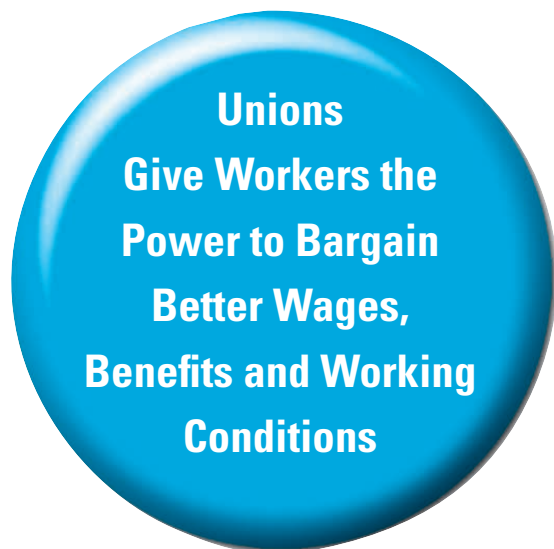
Call. Want to do more? Call your representatives. Tell them you support the Employee Free Choice Act. They'll get the point: phone calls carry more weight than e-mails.

California

Senator Barbara Boxer: (202) 224-3553
Senator Dianne Feinstein: (202) 224-3841

Nevada

Senator Harry Reid: (202) 224-3542
Senator John Ensign: (202) 224-6244



Retirees' Corner



Bargaining with PG&E to resume soon

Retirees sound alarm on health costs

Local 1245 retirees are sounding the alarm about the cost of health care as the union prepares to resume negotiations with Pacific Gas & Electric over health care benefits for active and retired employees.

At the January meeting of the East Bay Chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club in Dublin, members and spouses discussed their hopes for the upcoming negotiations with PG&E. Several advised current employees to pay close attention to the fate of retirees on this issue because they will face the same problem when they face retirement.

A sampling of the Retire Club members' comments appears here.



Basilio & Luane Mendoza

I retired 14 years ago. You figure 3% inflation (per year), that's 42% of my buying power gone. The price of commodities has gone up so high it's even worse. We have had no help for our pension. Fourteen years ago I retired with \$2051 a month. After taxes, I was bringing home \$1400 a month. But now I'm paying close to \$500 a month in medical... We shouldn't have to pay anything. You have all the CEOs getting these big bonuses. The companies should be proud of their retirees and show it.

Basilio Mendoza, initiated into IBEW 1957, retired 1995

We have the 'cadillac' of insurance companies. Basilio had surgery (in the 1990s). The other plans won't let him keep the two specialists he needs. Those two prevented him from having a permanent disability. I feel, with the high cost of insurance and the everyday cost of living going up, our paycheck is being raped.

Luane Mendoza, spouse

I want to see this medical for retirees come about. I'm raising two grandsons, and I can feel it in my pocket-book.

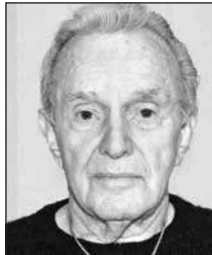
Ronald Meier, initiated into IBEW 1966, retired 1993



Ronald Meier

I'd like to see something done about medical—down the line that's going to increase. With all the other increases in living expenses it's making it tougher and tougher to manage. I have always been a union member—I believe in the union. Some people think they're going to get it anyway, but these companies don't give it to you out of the goodness of their heart... It's a shame some retirees don't want to take time to come to the retiree meetings and then they want to know, 'Hey, what's going on?' I think that's a shame.

Lawrence Souza, initiated into IBEW 1951, retired 1992



Lawrence Souza

The RPOA, we just ran through that. We're looking at \$500 a month. I didn't count on that. And our medicines are going up, too. If you get a raise the taxes eat into that, so relief on the medical is the thing that would help people the most.

Ken Gann, initiated into IBEW 1964, retired 1999 with Becky Gann, spouse



Ken & Becky Gann

I'm fairly new. I haven't been retired that long. I think some of the guys who retired years ago need a raise. I know a guy who retired in 1989—he really needs a raise. I don't know how he makes ends meet.

Doug Paulo, initiated into IBEW 1965, retired 2008



Doug Paulo

All of us are in the same boat—the medical continues to go up and we're paying all our retirement to the medical program. My pay is \$260 less than when I retired because of the medical. Those of us who had good jobs and worked hard, we always expected the medical... I know it's expensive, but the company should take care of retired employees to honor them for the work they put in.

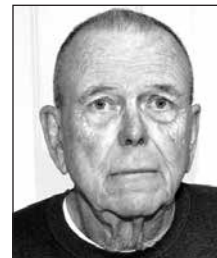
Don Johannsen, initiated into IBEW 1972, retired 2002



Don Johannsen

The main thing is to get the cost of medical premiums lowered. Some people are paying \$200/month for prescription drugs. The union should try to get what's good for everybody. PG&E should heed some of the letters they've been getting from us, pay attention to what the retirees are saying.

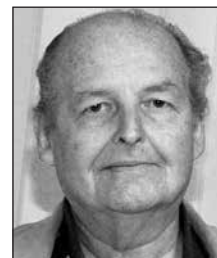
Mel Hambrick, initiated into IBEW 1962, retired 1993



Mel Hambrick

I'm a recent retiree, but I know it's going to cost me \$500 a month. If PG&E could find a way to pay toward the supplemental. I hear stories about people whose pension doesn't even cover medical. That's something these young people need to think about. Their time will come. It may cost you a little more (to help retirees now), but it will cost you \$500 a month when you get there yourself. That will start hurting after a while.

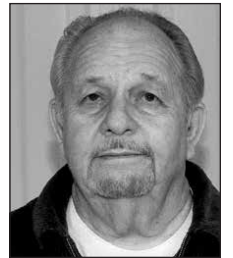
Jerry Waylett, initiated into IBEW 1982, retired 2007



Jerry Waylett

I'd like to see a continuation of the RPOA. Don't put a limit on it, but say, 'We'll pay 50% of the premium for the term of the contract so you don't have people running out of money (in their RPOA account) like you do now. RPOA is the best benefit we can get. I think it was a mistake to separate the benefits from the rest of the contract.'

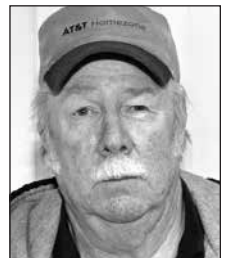
Gary Abrahamson, initiated into IBEW 1964, retired 1998



Gary Abrahamson

It's getting out of hand. My friends in the 'old farts' club say their main concern is the health care. I'm very fortunate I have a wife still working. I wish PG&E'd just say 'We're going to pay the retiree medical plan,' or extend the RPOA. When the company did that 50% RPOA, that was great.

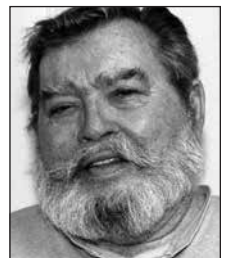
"Dirty Joe" Inderkum, initiated into IBEW 1976, retired 2001



Dirty Joe Inderkum

My concerns are my health and my wife's health. Health care is deteriorating my pension income, and the economy is deteriorating my investments to where it's affecting my standard of living. I'm very concerned that we get a break on the medical.

Mike Silva, initiated into IBEW 1961, retired 1993



Mike Silva

Bargaining begins

Local 1245 met with negotiators from PG&E on Jan. 7 to resume bargaining over health insurance issues. The parties plan to meet again on Jan. 26, Feb. 10 and 24.

The union and company have a mutual interest in both sides being fully informed on the complex issues involved in health care negotiations. Accordingly, these preliminary meetings are mostly educational in nature.

The union expects negotiations to begin in earnest in March.

BBQ promotes bond between members, retirees

By Bill Wallace

The City of Santa Clara Electric Department invited retirees to a Christmas BBQ held on Dec. 11. Those who attended enjoyed a wonderful meal of barbecued tri-tips, homemade chili and special side dishes. Especially enjoyable was the reunion with other retirees and active employees. It was a wonderful gesture and we would like to thank Division Manager Paul Foster (a former IBEW 1245 member) for extending this invitation and to the employees who did a great job putting together a delicious feast.



Bill Wallace

An event like this provides great opportunities to develop and maintain

a bond between retirees and active employees. It provides an opportunity for retirees to communicate to those still working the need to improve retirement health benefits while they are on "active duty".

As a retiree, avenues of participation for your consideration are: IBEW 1245 Retiree Club, RPEA (Public Employees Association) and CARA (California Alliance of Retired Americans).

While IBEW currently represents PG&E retirees in an ongoing effort to improve health benefits, the task for Local 1245 to represent retired public employees is more difficult. The IBEW 1245 Retiree Club is an important source of up-to-date information. As a member of the club you will be able to hobnob with other Local 1245 retirees, as well as receive the award winning 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 Dublin, San Jose, Vacaville, Santa Rosa, or Merced. If you don't have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Jose Abalos 19 years years S. San Francisco, CA	Lawrence De Silva 30 years El Cerrito, CA	Allen Lowry 38 years Antioch, CA	Richard Paredes 35 years Clovis, CA
Ignacio Adams 35 years Roseville, CA	Teresita Dela Cruz 28 years San Francisco, CA	Belinda Maestas 8 years Hemet, CA	Christine Reyes 32 years Windsor, CA
Jasmin Balleza 11 years Vallejo, CA	Pamela Dunham 24 years Robinson, TX	Magdalena Malins 35 years San Francisco, CA	Monica Riddle 32 years Wasco, CA
Donna Baslee 35 years Placerville, CA	Arthur Fahrner 45 years Petaluma, CA	Oscar Martinez 22 years Antioch, CA	Billie Rogers 24 years
Barbara Beeler 15 years Clarkston, WA	Jack Gentry 15 years Trinity Center, CA	Beverly McBee 35 years Fresno, CA	John Sack 43 years Novato, CA
Thomas Bumgarner 34 years Grass Valley, CA	Steve Granlees 44 years Lockford, CA	William McKenzie 25 years Vineburg, CA	Mark Sagaser 25 years McKittrick, CA
Mildred Cababaan 32 years San Francisco, CA	Lawrence Hood 29 years Modesto, CA	Trisha Meikle 21 years Antioch, CA	Lenard Sanchez 36 years San Jose, CA
Pamela Caballero 30 years Woodbridge, CA	Helen Hung 30 years Burlingame, CA	Robert Mitchell 20 years Lakeport, CA	Yolanda Sanchez 10 years Auburn, CA
Ernest Canfield 20 years Bakersfield, CA	William Hunter 18 years Morro Bay, CA	Lee Montague 36 years Bakersfield, CA	Terry Silva 26 years Myrtle Point, OR
Susan Constant 30 years Woodland, CA	William Jung 28 years Alameda, CA	Phillip Montiero 23 years Sacramento, CA	Donald Thomas 36 years Quincy, CA
Jeri Crum 25 years Red Bluff, CA	Ronald Kemper 22 years Arroyo Grande, CA	Sharal Moresco 34 years Stockton, CA	Kathleen Warwick-Duncan 36 years Auburn, CA
Edwina Cuellar 11 years Vallejo, CA	Lucy Lim 24 years Tucson, AZ	David Mullaney 17 years Fruitdale, SD	
Gary Dabney 30 years Sacramento, CA		Donna Olivas 4 years Stockton, CA	

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

Another option is RPEA, which represents your interests after you have retired from public service. RPEA will keep you apprised of pending Assembly and Senate bills that may affect your retirement benefits, as well as general senior issues. It is important that you join your local chapter of RPEA, so you can keep abreast of political events both of the agency you retired from and in California.

CARA is the politically active arm of retired union members. As a former IBEW 1245 member, your dues are already paid. All you have to do is get involved. CARA's main goals are to protect the benefits you now enjoy and make improvements wherever possible.

These goals are possible, if we work together to have one united voice. The greater our numbers, the greater are the possibilities. Remember, political clout is directly related to the size and noise level of a squeaky wheel.

If you would like more information on how you can become involved, contact Bill Wallace at: takineasyst@sbc-global.net

Bill Wallace, a retiree from the City of Santa Clara Electric Dept. and member of the Local 1245 Retiree Club, is a former member of the IBEW Local 1245 Advisory Council.

Santa Clara retiree medical improved

Recently a committee of the Mission City (City of Santa Clara) Chapter of the Retired Public Employees Association presented to the Santa Clara City Council a proposal to improve the retiree medical benefits.

The council agreed to this proposal, which ties pre-2003 retirees to the retirement benefits agreed to in the 2003 MOU. These increased benefits will take effect Jan. 1, 2009.

The committee headed by Larry Monette (retired firefighter) also included Jerry Marsaille (retired police), Dave Busse (retired firefighter), Joanne Hollender (retired HR), Karen Oeschgen (retired purchasing), Anton Morec (retired police) and Bill Wallace (retired electric-IBEW 1245).

The committee make-up represented retired members from most of the current city bargaining units. Each member brought their unique expertise to the committee and contributed to its eventual success.

Trees, from page 5

Unanimous vote at Windy Tree

Local 1245 line clearance tree trimmers voted unanimously to ratify a new one-year agreement with Windy Tree that raises wages 3%.

The company also agreed to a union proposal for an increase in subsistence pay to \$30 per day.

Company-provided medical insurance was a major factor in the agreement, according to Local 1245 Business Rep. Junior Ornelas.

"Our members understood the importance of securing medical coverage at the current levels. It's especially important when you have families involved," Ornelas said.

The company agreed to provide all regular full time employee health and welfare benefits through Blue Shield of California, though it retained the right to change health care provider as long as there is no significant loss of benefits to employees.

The company also agreed to provide all regular, full time employees with dental, vision, Life Insurance and Weekly Income benefits.

- In other provisions, the agreement:
- Increases non-emergency work notice to 48 hours.
 - Reduces probationary period for employees retained when there is a change of contractor
 - Enhances health and welfare coverage for employees who suffer industrial injuries
 - Provides compensation for time spent in CPA and First Aid training
 - Affirms company practice of providing sufficient ice throughout the year as needed

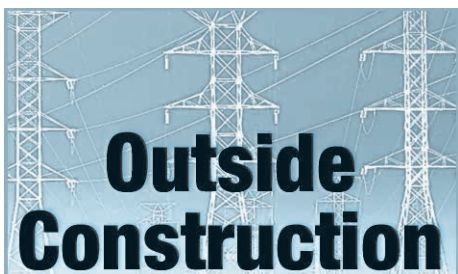
The vote was held Jan. 9 at the Oakdale Substation in the town of Oakdale, with crews working in the area of Jamestown and Oakdale at the time.

Trees Inc./ City of Lodi

Local 1245 line clearance tree trimmers working under the City of Lodi contract ratified an agreement negotiated with Trees, Inc. These tree trimmers will now be covered by the same Trees Inc. labor agreement in effect on PG&E properties through Jan. 3, 2010. The new arrangement was ratified by members on Nov. 10, 2008.



Working on City of Lodi properties for Trees Inc. are, from left, Salvador Ceja, CLA; Daniel Lopez, ACA; Martin Ceja, CLA; Chai Xiong, FMA; Paul Asuncion, CLA; and Jesse Lopez, FMA.



Organizer hired

Elizabeth McInnis is working full-time as a Construction Organizer/Compliance Officer, recently

working on projects in the Avenal, CA, area, Livermore Labs and with several construction contractors affiliated to Outside electrical work in some way. Eliza-



Elizabeth McInnis

beth recently attended the National Labor College for a weeklong new organizers training course in Silver Spring, MD.

Ralph Armstrong and Elizabeth McInnis both attended the IBEW Ninth District Fundamentals of Organizing, December 8-11th in Sacramento, CA.

We recently negotiated two new contracts with TTR. This was a top-down organizing effort. These contracts cover substation inspection, line inspection and relay testing types of work.

There have been several PLAs signed recently in lieu of term contracts. PLAs serve a short term purpose to help with the trenching, civil and concrete contractors that are sub-contracting as 2nd or 3rd tier contractor to our signatory line contractor. Pacific Coast Drilling, Underground Construction, RE McCollum and Reno Tahoe Construction have recently been signed to PLAs. We are working to sign up several others. We are expecting a large volume of organizing when the PLA between PG&E and IBEW Local 1245 is completed in 2009.

We also started a campaign for the utility workers from Livermore Labs. There are about a 170 trade workers working on the lab property. There are around 35 electrical workers between the high voltage and low voltage shops at the lab. However, we found out that Communications Workers of America had already begun a campaign to organize this group. We withdrew our filing with the National Labor Relations Board pending the outcome of the CWA campaign.

Injured Workers Fund

The Injured Worker Fund our Outside Line members voted on is doing well, especially with the increase in work our members have been experiencing the last couple of months. Each member contributes 5 cents for each hour they work. We started funding the plan in October 2007. We have made several payouts in 2008, as members needed them. We finished the year with over \$30,000 in reserve.

Shop Stewards Training/ Pin Dinner

Shop Steward training has been scheduled to start at 8:00 am on Feb. 28 at Ronald Weakley Hall in Vacaville and will last all day. The training will open with a performance by Ian Ruskin, who is known for his portrayal of heroes of labor, including Harry Bridges. We are currently updating an older version of the IBEW Shop Stewards Manual. The Pin Dinner will be held in Sacramento that evening for members that are due to receive their pins. There will also be Pin Dinners scheduled in Reno, Fresno, and Bakersfield for Outside Line members to attend.

NCCCO Crane Training

There is a NCCCO crane class scheduled for the week of March 2 at Ronald Weakley Hall in Vacaville. This class is limited to 30 Outside Line Construction members who have the operating of cranes in their job descriptions. In the state of California as well as 16 other states you are required by law to have this crane certification for operating Mobile cranes having a boom length of less than 25 feet or a maximum rated load capacity of less than 15,000 lbs, digger derricks excluded (California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5006.1. Mobile Crane and Tower Crane-Operator Qualifications and Certification.) This is on a first come first serve basis and is provided by the Cal-Nev JATC.

Contract Negotiations

We just completed re-negotiating the Eppler & Eppler, Inc. contract. There was a general wage increase for all classifications of 3.75% for each year. Health and welfare benefits remain the same. The term of this contract is three years. The contract was ratified with 100% "YES" vote.

We are scheduled to start negotiations with Canus Cooperation in January of 2009.

We are scheduled to start negotiations with MMRI in January of 2009.

The current Outside Line Agreement is set to expire on May 31 of this year. At our unit meetings we have been encouraging our members to submit their proposals to the unit chair for the last year now. Starting in February we are planning to go over those proposals and put together a negotiating committee with our sights set on a March time frame for negotiations with NECA. We are encouraging all our members to be a part of this process.

Subsistence Pay

Starting January 1, 2009, the daily subsistence pay of \$40 our Outside members receive goes up to \$50. This is a result of a CIR decision and subsequent Letter of Understanding.

Safety Book

January 12 & 13, Riverside, Ca. the Safety Book (red book) used by the Out-

side Construction group will be reviewed for accuracy of current rules and laws and changes will be made in a continual effort to keep this document up to date. Committee members assigned to this review consist of three union staff members from Locals 1245 & 47 and three safety officers from three different NECA contractors.

PG&E Construction Work Slowdown

On Dec. 19, 2008 the majority of our Outside Line contractors working on projects for PG&E were told to make their jobs safe and take off until January 5, 2009. There have been very few projects that were spared from this request and a large majority of our workforce has been home through the holidays. We have been told that PG&E plans to re-evaluate the current projects that have been awarded and prioritize these jobs based on need and funding. We are almost certain that some of these jobs will be pulled back from our contractors due to funding. We should know more about PG&E's plans by the end of January.

Apprentice News

We currently have 291 Outside Line apprentices in the Cal-Nev JATC program. We have 5 working out of the jurisdiction; 64 are working out of Local 1245; 188 are working out of Local 47; 6 apprentices are working out of Local 396; 33 are off work. Sixty-five apprentices have graduated to Journeyman Lineman. We have indentured 47 Outside Line apprentices year to date. We are planning to hold more interviews in the third week of January 2009.

The committee met on 12/9/08 and held 10 official subcommittee hearings and one un-official. The committee asked for four resignations. Reasons vary from no driver's licenses, absenteeism, not qualified after repeated attempts to tutor up to the step qualifications.

The Apprentice Linemen Graduation Dinner will be held in Ontario, CA on Jan. 24. All 2008 graduates will be invited to attend. Cal-Nev JATC sponsors this event.

The Trustee's met on Dec. 10, 2008 for

their quarterly meeting. Large losses were presented due to the state of the economy and stock market investment portfolio.

Traffic Signal: We have 30 traffic signal apprentices. Nine are working in Local 1245 and 20 are working in Local 47. We have indentured four this year.

Grievances

We have one written pending Grievance against Abbett Electric over pay issues. We have seven pending oral grievances with H&M over pay issues.

Compliance Issue

We are running compliance on four different projects at this time. We were made aware that one of our signatory contractors has completed one project and is in the middle of another, which is covered under the scope of our agreement. They have failed to report working fees or use the referral system for either. We are working with Jenny Marston in obtaining payroll documents for these projects.

Dispatch Summary for 2008

Lineman Referrals

Book 1: 398
Book 2: 392
Book 3: 15
Book 4: 93
Total: 898
Short calls: 161

Line Equipment Man Referrals

Book 1: 25
Book 2: 60
Book 3: 27
Book 4: 0
Total: 112
Short calls: 14

Groundman Referrals

Book 1: 112
Book 2: 32
Book 3: 11
Book 4: 65
Total: 220
Short calls: 44

Cable Splicer Referrals

Book 1: 4
Book 2: 3
Book 3: 9

continued on page 15

Pouring footers

Henkels & McCoy and RE McCollum use helicopters to transport and pour concrete footers for steel pole structures for the 230kv transmission line that will connect to the Shiloh II wind project southeast of Sacramento in Solano County. They are using helicopters in the no-access areas.

Photos by Ralph Armstrong





Safety Committee report

By Ralph Armstrong

The Local 1245 Safety and Health Committee met on Nov. 20 and Dec. 18, 2008 in Vacaville at the union hall. Topics discussed and action items assigned:



Ralph Armstrong

Manhole Rescue Requirements

This long-standing agenda item was presented to the committee in early 2007 but has also been addressed with PG&E in past years. It was presented to PG&E again in 2008 with supporting documentation that this committee feels requires rescue training for personnel working in manholes. On Dec. 18 during the joint IBEW/PG&E meeting this topic was covered again with no immediate resolution. It was agreed upon by both parties to sit down with Cal-OSHA for an official ruling on this subject. A date will be scheduled in the near future.

During the November meeting the discussion regarding manhole rescue moved to rescue of employees working inside transformers. This issue surfaced when a municipality contracted out some transformer repair work to an out-of-country company, which did not provide tools for rescue of the employee working inside of the transformer. This criterion will also be discussed with Cal-OSHA.

Organizer, from page 14

Book: 4 1

Total: 17

Short calls: 4

Apprentice Lineman Referrals

Step 1: 69

Step 2: 30

Step 3: 18

Step 4: 24

Step 5: 22

Step 6: 27

Step 7: 32

Total: 222

Short calls: 7

Street Light Maintenance

Worker Referrals

Total: 13

Information for this report provided by Ralph Armstrong, Elizabeth McInnis and Ron Cochran.

Utility Reporter

Painters Grounding

This was another agenda item that was put on hold during our previous meeting awaiting a response from PG&E. The topic involves the use of painters to ground de-energized equipment under the direction of one qualified electrical worker. We contend that the standard is clear that the Cal-OSHA requirement states that there needs to be two qualified electrical workers or one qualified electrical worker and one qualified electrical worker in-training. No resolution to this was reached at the Dec. 18 meeting with PG&E; however after the first of the year I will sit down with PG&E OSHA attorney, John Volke, to try to resolve this before bringing the issue to Cal-OSHA for clarification.

Near Miss Program

Guidelines and a description of this program have been established and we are posted on the IBEW Local Union 1245 web site under the Safety Matters tab. We will continue to monitor and post these as they become available in this section of our report. Please remember to sanitize these reports prior to submitting them so as to not provide names, companies and employers to the report. These reports are intended to share someone else's experience with a potential hazard in the workplace in an effort to prevent accidents elsewhere.

Two linemen were in a double bucket truck while a troubleman was clearing the line. When the dispatcher opened an inertia switch, the switch exploded, energizing phone line where the two linemen were located. There were no injuries and the crew pulled off the job until they were 100% certain that the job could be done safely. There have been several failures of these switches recently, which led this committee to question administrative controls by the company until the problem is corrected. The manufacturer of the switch has identified the problem and has started a retrofitting existing switches that are suppose to eliminate the failures. It is advised to stay clear of these switches and anything that could be energized in the event of a failure until all switching is complete.

Third party ran over a pad mount transformer. After the transformer was de-energized but before grounds were applied the supervisor on site ordered the tow truck driver to pull the vehicle off of the transformer. A warning to all

should be given that if it is not grounded it's not dead.

Accident Reporting

We have been given the go ahead to implement the new accident reporting program that will require each unit to document any accidents, deaths and sicknesses on a separate form to the Safety Committee. Roll out to the units is tentatively scheduled for the February/March time frame.

FR Clothing fitting issues

There have been some fitting issues of the new FR Clothing that PG&E employees are receiving. These fitting problems were brought up for discussion during the IBEW/PG&E Health and Safety meeting at which time I was directed to forward those issues to Marsha Elben with PG&E.

New Items

Over The Glasses Safety Glasses (OTG)

The committee reviewed members concerns regarding the requirement to wear OTG safety glasses while working in substations. The OTG safety glasses are designed to fit over prescription glasses. Concerns raised deal with ghost images in the OTG glasses, which this member feels could cause him to accidentally put a lead on the wrong contact when he is working behind a switchboard. This concern was also brought up at the December meeting with PG&E and discussions regarding a pilot program PG&E does not feel that OTG safety glasses are a problem and stated the use of face shields is always an option. PG&E safety mentioned that they were really happy with the pilot program and will brief upper management in January on this.

Tree Trimmers OSHA Requirements

Several questions regarding which standards Line-Clearance Tree work falls under. These standards were reviewed by the committee and are provided below.

California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 2950. Application.

California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 2951. Line Clearance Operations.

General Industry Safety Orders, Article 12. Tree Work, Maintenance or Removal

Safety Poster Winner

Robert Mettalia, a General Construction Painter "A" at PG&E, has won first place among all contestants in the US and Canada in the IBEW Safety Poster contest. See the story on page 1, and see his poster on Page 16.

Health Effects: Rotating Shifts

All health effects associated with rotating shifts has caused concerns with some of our members. These health effects are documented by Circadian Technologies, Inc. PG&E has had Circadian do a presentation before and are planning on having them come back out. We have asked that they put together a sub-committee to look into the possible health effects. PG&E was not opposed to this and has suggested getting three members to be part of this. PG&E has already planned on having Circadian come to their Blue Chip Safety meeting and recommended that this group attend.

Round Table Topics

There were several side topics discussed with no action required, including:

The Committee discussed recent accidents: 1) Lineman fell approximately 26 feet from a baker board while transferring from the pole to the board in a training exercise. 2) Lineman fell while descending a pole and fracturing his hip which required surgery. 3) Fatal vehicle accident as a result of poor visibility due to fog. 4) Electrical contact accident while crew was restoring power after a car vs. pole accident. 5) Gas Mechanic received burns to his hands, face, and forearm while tightening bolts on a large volume meter at rice dryer with a battery powered ratchet tool. The gas flashed over resulting in the burns to the employee. 6) A water system repairman sustained 5 broken ribs after he slipped and fell while descending a river bank. The employee was treated and released. Accident reports still pending an all of these accidents.

The Committee discussed and reviewed changes to the Safety Matters web page. A Safety articles section has been added to review safety articles that have been posted along with a Safety Articles Archive to view past articles.

Safety Committee meeting dates in 2009 are the 4th Thursday of each month with the exception of November and December meetings, which will take place on the 3rd Thursday.

Committee reviewed the information bulletin from the California Highway Patrol regarding the Hours of Service (HOS) Exemption for Utility Service Vehicle Drivers that went into effect on Sept. 12, 2008. The report can be viewed in the Safety Articles section of the Local 1245 website at www.ibew1245.com.

Next meeting will be on January 22, 2009 in Vacaville.

Safety Committee

Members of the IBEW Local 1245 Safety Committee are Al White, Pacific Gas & Electric; Bob Burkle, City of Santa Clara; Michael Gomes, Modesto Irrigation District; Art Torres, Sacramento Municipal Utility District; Sergio Munoz, Asplundh Tree; Tom Greer, Frontier; Darryl Rice, PG&E; and Business Rep. Ralph Armstrong.

Check out the safety information on our website at:
www.ibew1245.com/safety-section/safety.html



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