

Inside:



GC Gas: Copper Replacement 10

Dalzell: The \$200,000 complaint 2

Retiree Letter: Thanks 2

Missed Meal letters 3

PG&E Medical Primer 4

Stewards Conference 8

Advisory Council: Injuries Temper Spirits 13

Gas Stewards Meet on Safety 14

Outside Report: Crane Class 15

Retirees Elect Officers 17

Safety Matters: Confined Space 18

Corporate Pickpocket: Wal-Mart 20

News briefs

Bossnapping:

Terminated workers angry at their severance package detained the CEO of Sony France, Serge Foucher, on March 12. Foucher dropped by to say a last farewell, but workers detained him and blocked access to the plant with branches and tree trunks for 24 hours. A local union official explained the action by saying that Foucher "won't listen to us," adding that the atmosphere inside the plant was "good-natured." It was not known if Foucher felt the same way.

The Employee Free Choice Act, introduced in Congress on March 10, was immediately endorsed by a broad coalition of civil rights, religious, environmental and human rights groups. The Act will make it easier for workers to form unions and avoid retaliation for pro-union activities. Corporations, with Wal-Mart leading the charge, are fighting the bill tooth and nail.

AIG Rewarded its executives with some \$165 million in bonuses at taxpayer expense, prompting President Obama to declare he would "pursue every legal avenue to block these bonuses."

New Sheriff in Town: That would be Hilda Solis, who promised to champion workers rights as the new Secretary of Labor.

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

Utility Reporter

Volume 58 No.2 • March/April 2009

UNITY IS STRENGTH

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

ONE BAD DOG

You work hard. You make a decent wage. You're looking forward to a comfortable retirement.

Better look again. Escalating medical costs are taking a huge bite out of the pension checks that IBEW retirees receive from PG&E. In fact, retirees pick up the full cost of every increase because the amount PG&E pays has been capped since the year 2000.

Medical costs are one bad dog. That bad dog is getting bigger every year, and he's going to make it very difficult for you to retire in the kind of comfort you were hoping for. He might even make it difficult for you to retire at all.

IBEW and PG&E have chosen to confront this problem at the bargaining table. Talks are starting now. IBEW members will vote on any package that is negotiated. That's why the union has prepared this primer – so that you can learn the facts, and make an informed decision when the time comes.

That bad dog is getting badder. Turn to page 4 to find out just how bad he really is.



Time for proposals at NV-Energy

This is a reminder that proposals for upcoming bargaining with NV Energy (formerly Sierra Pacific) will be taken only in Unit Meetings listed below. Proposals must be seconded and carried by a majority vote of the members present to be forwarded to the Bargaining Committee.

You can find a link on the Local 1245 home page (www.ibew1245.com) to a blank proposal form which you can print out and use for submitting your proposal.

Please be prepared as these meetings may run long due to the business at hand.

MEETINGS

Reno April 1 @ 6 pm	Fallon April 14 @ 5:30 pm
Yerington April 7 @ 6 pm	North Lake Tahoe April 15 @ 5:30 pm
Winnemucca April 8 @ 7 pm	Carson City April 16 @ 5:30 pm
Elko April 9 @ 5:30 pm	South Lake Tahoe May 7 @ 5:30 pm

Arcing and Sparking



Tom Dalzell
BUSINESS MANAGER

The \$200,000 Complaint

I get dozens of e-mails a day from members. They are evenly divided between questions, criticism, and positive comments on someone in the union doing their job well or something that we have done.

I answer almost every e-mail, whatever its content or tone. I was so struck by a recent e-mail that I have chosen to answer it publicly.

The e-mail came from a Troubleman who has recently experienced PG&E's decision to place Troublemens in many headquarters onto 24-hour schedules. Slightly paraphrasing him, he asked me how he could remove himself "from this chicken (not salad) union that has no

backbone" to fight for him. Before I answer him, I will point out that this particular individual made slightly more than \$200,000 in 2008.

What PG&E is doing with Troublemens has been permitted by our contract for at least 40 years. When we agree to the terms of a contract, we don't pick and choose which agreements we will honor and which we will not honor. In return for what the employer agrees to do, we agree to do certain things and to allow the employer to do certain things under certain conditions. When we believe that the employer does not live up to their end of the agreement, we file grievances. On the other hand, when the employer is doing something that the contract allows them to do, we don't whine and say that our union has no backbone. To the contrary—standing up for what you have agreed to sometimes demands backbone and requires that we avoid the easy out of complaining about everything that we don't like.

If my correspondent is a student of labor history, he will know that there once was a union that explicitly rejected the notion of collective bargaining with employers, using the strike and, it is said, industrial sabotage each time an

earn extra money for his family. He would be happy to know that this latest increase included Surviving Spouses.

Many of us were "full time" wives and mothers. We did not have jobs that included retirement benefits. This was our career and we and our husbands thought his work benefits would take care of us later in life. For this he paid union dues and company insurance plans.

Some of the younger Union members do not realize how quickly times passes and how quickly most of us and our loved ones age. It is important that they look ahead to the benefits needed when they are no longer working.

Again, many thanks to the members of IBEW 1245.

Sincerely,
Audrey Meyers

issue arose that was not to their liking. That union was the Industrial Workers of the World, better known as the Wobblies. The Wobblies are an important part of labor history, but that's it—history. They were crushed by employers and their members gravitated towards more traditional trade unions in the CIO and AFL. The Wobblies make good legend, but are not a role model for successful 21st century labor relations.

I suspect that in his heart my correspondent is someone who believes that if there were no union at PG&E he would still make \$200,000 a year, have top-notch medical and fringe benefits, a pension plan that is on the top of the heap among investor-owned utilities, and a grievance procedure that is seen as a model for others on the west coast. I have a list of several non-union utilities in the mountain states and the southeastern U.S. If my correspondent would like to see that list and go talk to his non-union brothers and sisters and ask them how their wages, fringes, and working conditions compare to his, I'll happily send him the list.

I fully understand that Troublemens at PG&E who are being placed on 24-hour shifts are facing a difficult adjustment, and I don't mean to minimize the challenges that they are facing. And we are not simply sitting on the sidelines. Assistant Business Manager Bob Choate has been appointed to serve as our first point of contact on Troubleman schedule issues. Bob is a former T-man, knows the schedules well, and understands the problems that T-men are facing. And there is also the possibility of proposed changes to the contract language in three years when general negotiations resume.

Still, I think it is important to remind my correspondent—and all of our members—that when we make a deal, we stick with it. That is a keystone of labor relations and collective bargaining, and unions that ignore this principle do not last. No union is perfect, but working under a union contract is a far sight better than working non-union.



Got something to share with your fellow union members? Send signed letters to: Utility Reporter Letters, IBEW 1245, POB 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696. Please note that we cannot print personal attacks or letters dealing with union politics. Opinions expressed in "Letters" are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IBEW Local 1245.

Thanks for the raise

Dear Mr. Dalzell,

I want to thank you and the members of IBEW 1245 for passing the recent increase in the PG&E pension for Surviving Spouses [PG&E agreement ratified in December 2008]. My husband, Al Meyers, was a line crew foreman in Auburn and on Long Term Disability due to a job injury for almost one year when he died in January 1985 after 35 years with PG&E.

He worked in the hot summers in the Roseville and Auburn areas and in the snowy dangerous winters in the Donner Summit areas – never complaining. He loved his job and the people he worked with. He worked hard. For many years he had the most overtime hours of anyone else in the Auburn yard. He was always willing to help customers and to

Eureka unit change

Unit 3111, Eureka, has a new location: Babe's Pizza & Pasta, 4015 Walnut Dr. in Eureka. The meeting time is still 6 pm.

Roy Runnings, Business Rep.


CALENDAR

- April 2: Retirees Club, San Jose, CA
- April 2: Steward Mtg. on Medical, SLO, CA
- April 2: Steward Mtg. on Medical, DCP, CA
- April 7: Retirees Club, Merced, CA
- April 7: Retirees Club, Santa Rosa, CA
- April 8: Retirees Club, Vacaville, CA
- April 9: Retirees Club, Dublin, CA
- May 5: Retirees Club, Merced, CA
- May 5: Retirees Club, Santa Rosa, CA
- May 7: Retirees Club, San Jose, CA
- May 12: Retirees Club, Vacaville, CA
- May 14: Retirees Club, Dublin, CA
- May 16: Service Awards, San Luis Obispo, CA
- May 29: Service Awards, Bakersfield, CA
- May 30: Service Awards, Merced, CA
- June 6: Service Awards, Fresno, CA

APPOINTMENTS

CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS

- 2009 Heli-Expo
Joe Ferreira
- National LAMPAC
Tom Cornell
Mike Davis
Art Freitas
- California Joint Legislative Conference
Mike Davis
Art Freitas
- Nevada State Legislative Conference
Mike Grimm
Mike Davis
- IBEW Construction & Maintenance
Mike Cottrell
Mike Davis
- Ninth District Progress Meeting
Anna Bayless-Martinez
Mike Davis
Cecelia De La Torre
Chris Habecker
- IBEW Utility Conference
Tom Cornell
Mike Davis
Art Freitas
Mike Jacobson



Business Manager & Executive Editor
Tom Dalzell

Communications Director & Managing Editor
Eric Wolfe

President
Mike Davis

Executive Board
Art Freitas
Chris Habecker
Mike Jacobson
Anna Bayless-Martinez
Tom Cornell
Mike Cottrell


Treasurer
Cecelia De La Torre

Utility Reporter
March/April 2009
Volume 58 No. 2
Circulation: 22,200

Published bi-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 moved recently? Please send complete new address and your Social Security Number (by U.S. Mail) to: "Address Change" IBEW Local 1245 P.O. Box 2547 Vacaville, CA 95696.

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

Our phone number is (707) 452-2700.

PG&E "Group 3" missed-meal awards

Thousands of IBEW-represented employees at Pacific Gas & Electric Company will soon receive an offer of compensation for missed meals, under the terms of Letter Agreement 09-10 dated Feb. 20, 2009.

This is the third group of employees and former employees to receive offers of compensation in PG&E's on-going effort to ensure compliance with California state labor laws in the wake of recent court decisions. Two previous groups—which have come to be known as Group 1 and Group 2—have already been offered awards relating to missed meal payments. Group 1 and 2 employees were defined as employees scheduled to a continuous work schedule with an on-duty meal period.

Group 3 consists of current or former bargaining unit employees who worked through their lunch and missed a meal between June 1, 2004 and Aug. 31, 2007, but did not receive a missed meal payment. Group 3 employees represent those classifications that are scheduled to take an unpaid meal period. They will be paid the estimated average number of missed meals for their work group at their 2007 rate of pay, regardless of whether the missed meal occurred prior to 2007. The payment covers the average actual missed meals by classification and the number of work weeks actually worked by the employee over the designated time period.

To assist with the process of determining Group 3 awards, PG&E and IBEW contracted the services of Resolution Economics, a nationally known consulting firm that provides economic, statistical and financial analysis.

Resolution Economics developed a model for missed meal payments based on a statistical sampling of over one million daily time records throughout PG&E's service territory to determine the average number of missed meals per work week by classification. The classifications selected for analysis included some of the largest groups of

PG&E employees, such as Lineman, Electric Crew Foreman, Troublemaker, Gas Service Representative, and Working Foreman A, B & C.

Now that the model has been successfully developed, the process can begin for reviewing other classifications that would fall into Group 3. If Group 3 had been handled all at once, the development of the statistical model would have taken significantly longer and delayed the start of making offers to Group 3 members, according to union

Employees who wish to appeal must do so directly through the company, not through union representatives.

business representatives helping to identify classifications eligible for awards.

Acceptance of the offer is entirely voluntary on the part of affected employees. Employees may sign a release to receive the specified amount of money within 30 days, or they can act within 30 days to appeal the amount. **Employees who wish to appeal must do so directly through the company, not through union representatives.** If subsequent investigation indicates the proper amount is higher than the amount stated in the award letter, the employee will receive the higher amount. If the investigation indicates the proper amount is lower than the initial award, the employee will receive the lower amount. It should be noted that the investigation will take some time.

Background

Although IBEW Local 1245 has assisted PG&E in crafting a resolution to the missed-meal issue, the payments are not themselves a negotiated benefit. The payments are driven by the above-mentioned court decisions and the interpretations of state labor law as spelled out in those decisions.

In the wake of those decisions, PG&E moved pro-actively to acknowledge its responsibility for making appropriate payments and to work cooperatively with the union on a process for achieving this goal. A joint company-union committee was established to

straighten the matter out. It was understood that the task would be huge. But in reality it has turned out to be gargantuan, and at times the process has tested the patience of employees who are understandably looking forward to the extra compensation.



Union responds to Roseville budget

Local 1245 rejected a proposal by the City of Roseville that IBEW members give up their 5% general wage increase for 2009.

AC Transit agreement ratified

Members of IBEW Local 1245 at AC Transit ratified a 3-year agreement on Jan. 20 by a vote of 17-6.

The agreement provides wage hikes of 1.5% effective July 2007, 1.5% effective July 2008, 1.5% effective July 2009, with an additional wage increase of 3% for all classifications on July 1, 2009.

Also included was a increase in the Dental annual maximum limit from \$1,500 to \$3,000 and lifetime orthodontia benefit from \$2,000 to \$4,000.



Shelia Lawton

Vision frame allowance was increased from \$120 every two years to \$200.

The agreement provides a "pop-up" option for employees choosing a survivor benefit. The retiree's benefit level will increase if the "survivor" predeceases the retiree.

In another provision, the agreement combines the Communication Technician classification and Electronic Technician classification into a Sr. Electronic Technician classification, for which the District will provide all necessary training. An apprenticeship program has

Even so, the process has probably produced results more quickly than any other alternative approach.

IBEW Local 1245 members may wish to read Letter Agreements 07-37, 07-47 and 09-10 in their entirety for more detailed information about California law as it relates to meal periods, and the application of the law at PG&E. You can find them at www.ibew1245.com.

The wage increase in 2009 was the regularly scheduled increase for the third year of the current four-year agreement. Because the agreement is a legally-binding document, city management cannot unilaterally roll back what it previously agreed to.

The union also rejected a city proposal that union members pay 5% into the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) for the last two years of the agreement (2009 and 2010).

However, because the city—like many other municipalities—is suffering a financial crunch in the current recession, Local 1245 agreed to put a less drastic city proposal out for a vote. On Jan. 22 members at the city voted 65-50 to pay 5% into the PERS system for 2009 only, relieving the city of that burden.

The union rejected any suggestion that it would open the contract up to renegotiation before the term is up, but Business Rep. Pat Waite said the union would be willing to "discuss" the city's financial situation at the end of 2009.

been created for any new hires into the new classification.

Bargaining for the union were Ralph Ladd, Dale Brewer and Guy Greenwood, along with Business Rep. Sheila Lawton.

Lodi pact ratified

Local 1245 has negotiated a two-year extension of the current Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Lodi.

With the extension, the agreement now runs through 2013, Business Rep. Sam Glero reported.

The agreement was modified in the context of recent economic events that have taken a toll on many California municipalities.

Under the revised agreement, members will take the equivalent of seven days off without pay over the next 22 months.

Wages under the agreement will be in a range of 2% to 5.5% each year through 2013.

The agreement passed 19-2.



Sam Glero

Living Beyond Your Means?

Union Plus is here to assist you in finding a solution to your financial problems.

- Free Counseling
- Free Budget Plan
- Written Action Plan

For information call
1-877-833-1745

Or visit our website
UnionPlus.org/CreditCounseling



Fact #1:

Retirees pay a lot for medical premiums.

Looking forward to the “Golden Years” of retirement? Before you set the date, you should look around and see how things are working out for current PG&E retirees.

Medical costs are making it impossible for retirees to live their dreams. In fact, many retirees are having trouble just making ends meet.

The reason? Medical costs are eating up their pension check. Let's do the math.

Here is the **average monthly pension** for IBEW retirees at PG&E:

- Retired before 1994: \$ 1319
- Retired 1994-2000: 1533
- Retired after 2000: 2439

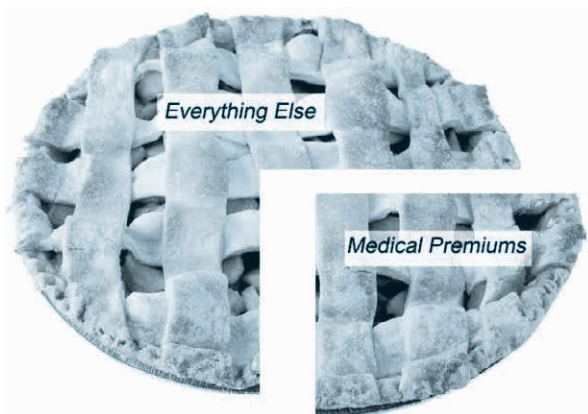
And here are the monthly payments that retirees are making for medical premiums in 2009 — and what percentage of the total premium this amount represents:

KAISER	AMOUNT	% OF PREMIUM
Retiree<65	\$ 203.80	44%
Retiree<65 + Spouse<65	426.95	44%
Retiree>65	200.23	70%
Retiree>65 + Spouse>65	400.46	70%

NAP/CAP	AMOUNT	% OF PREMIUM
Retiree<65	\$ 316.60	55%
Retiree<65 + Spouse<65	663.83	55%
Retiree>65	229.92	70%
Retiree>65 + Spouse>65	459.84	73%

When a retiree has to pay such a large chunk of their medical premium, what effect does this have on the retiree's pension check?

On average, a retiree with a “plus-spouse” policy pays 25% of their pension for medical premiums.



Fact #2:

The situation will get worse in the future.

Since the year 2000, there has been a cap on what PG&E has to pay toward retiree medical premiums. Here are the caps:

PG&E'S CAP FOR:	EMPLOYEE + SPOUSE	
Under age 65:	\$ 262.91	553.14
65 and older:	87.07	174.14

What does this cap mean for retirees? It means that retirees now pay **100% of all increases** in their medical premiums.

The union negotiated two Retirement Premium Offset Accounts (RPOAs) some years ago to partially offset the rapid growth in medical premiums. The first RPOA, in 2003, provided retirees and active employees with up to \$7500 to apply toward 50% of their premiums. The second RPOA, in 2007, provided retirees up to \$3300 to apply toward 25% of their premiums.

The RPOAs were a valuable cushion against rising medical costs. But the RPOAs were a temporary solution. Today, 46% of retirees have used up all of their RPOAs and must now shoulder the full burden of premium increases.

When retirees exhaust their RPOAs, the situation becomes grim. Here is a sample scenario. Let's say you are a retiree over 65 and your premium is \$600 per month.

- The company co-pay is \$87, leaving \$513 to be paid.
- RPOA picks up half (\$256) and you pick up half (\$256).
- When your RPOA runs out, you pay \$513 per month.

Premium	\$ 600.
Company pays	<u>- 87.</u>
You pay	\$ 513.

But the bad news is just beginning. . .

Inflation is going to make things even harder in the future.

According to national research commissioned by the Kaiser Foundation, inflation in America increased by 17% from 2001 to 2007. During that same period, wages increased 19%. Premiums for family medical coverage increased 78%.

Medical costs have been on a steady climb for a generation. A steep climb. The current economic slowdown is not likely to change that basic historical pattern. The chart below shows how the cap on company contributions will drive medical costs into the sky for PG&E retirees.

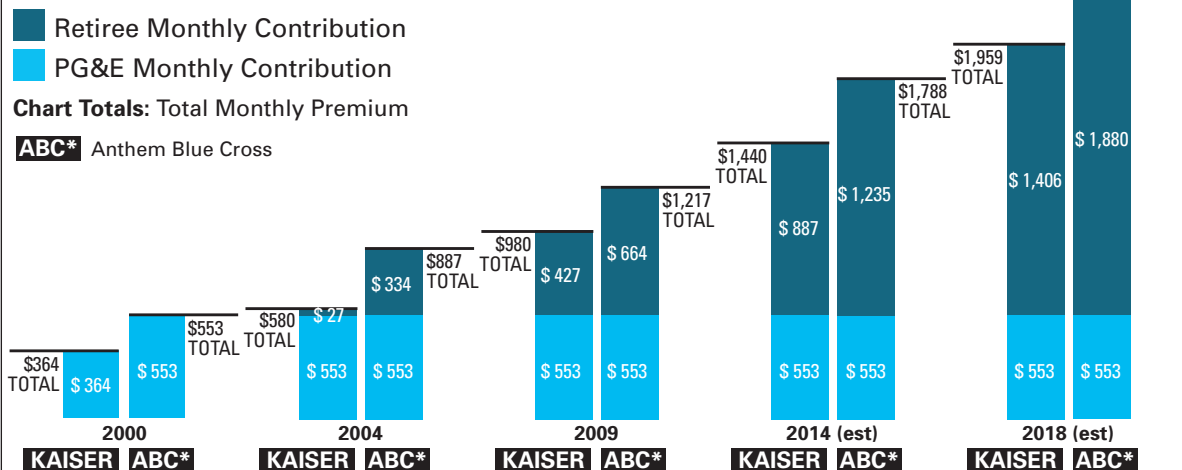
With PG&E's contribution capped at \$553, a retiree with spouse (under age 65) will pay **\$1,880 per month** for Anthem Blue Cross in 2018. That's just nine years from now . . . at a time when many thousands of PG&E employees will have recently retired or will be considering retirement.

With medical premiums so high, will we all have to work until we die?



Historical and Projected Retiree/PG&E Contributions to Medical Premiums, Under Current Benefits Agreement

RETIREE + SPOUSE (under age 65, with 25 years or more of service)





Tom Dalzell shares data on retiree medical costs with stewards in San Francisco.

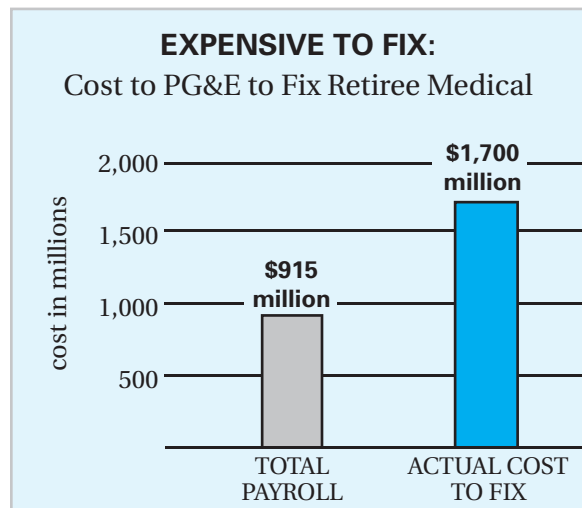
Fact #3:

The problem is very expensive to fix.

The rules governing medical plans require PG&E to fund future costs, not just next year's costs. In other words, PG&E has to start funding post-retirement medical benefits for each employee as soon as they are hired. The level of funding is based on assumptions about the cost of those benefits 30-35 years in the future.

If the cap is lifted, the extra liability for funding post-retirement medical would end up on PG&E's balance sheet. The immediate cost of covering that liability would be \$1.7 billion.

That amount is about twice the size of PG&E's entire payroll, as the chart below illustrates:



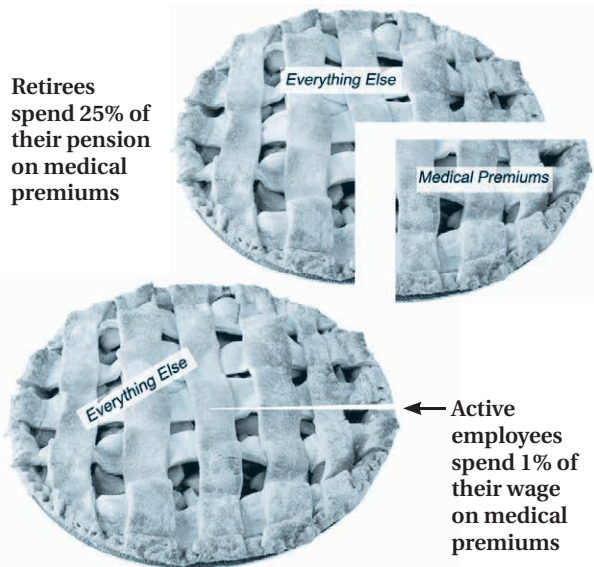
Fact #4:

Active employees have excellent medical.

The average monthly wage for IBEW workers at PG&E is: \$ 6,240.

The highest monthly contribution to medical premiums is: \$ 63.

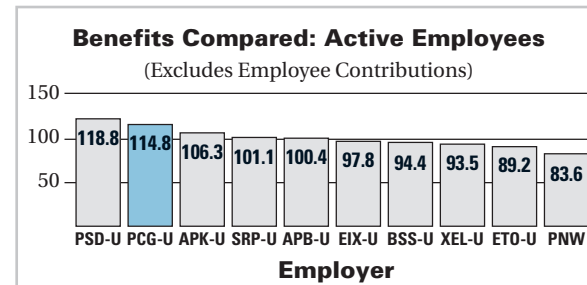
So how does that compare to what IBEW retirees spend on medical premiums?



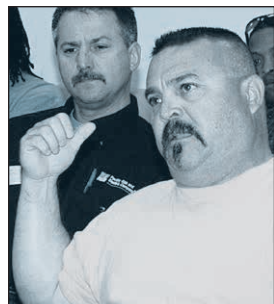
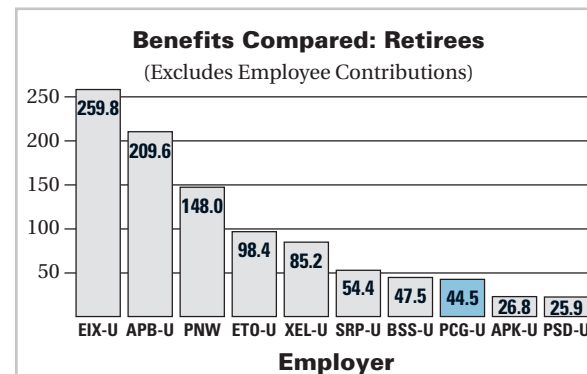
Does this mean that retiree medical benefits are out-of-whack compared to active employee medical benefits? There's no absolute rule, of course. But one way to gain perspective is to look at how PG&E benefits stack up against similar companies.

The chart below compares medical benefits for active employees at various West Coast utilities. PG&E, shown in blue, is second from top.

Looking at benefits for PG&E retirees, it is a very different picture. The chart below compares medical benefits for retired employees at those same West Coast utilities. PG&E, shown in blue, is third from the bottom.



(Note on symbols in these charts: Because the information on these charts is proprietary, the names of the utilities have been disguised. The "-U" in the symbol means the figures refer to the unionized workforce at that utility.)



(ABOVE) General Construction steward Lington Gordon in Oakland.

(ABOVE LEFT) Eamon O'Driscoll takes notes during the stewards meeting in San Francisco. Behind him is Donna Ambeau, a member of the union's Benefits Committee.

(LEFT) Jerry Baca raises a concern at the regional stewards meeting in Oakland.

Tom Dalzell lays out the problem facing future retirees during the regional stewards meeting in Oakland.

continued on following page

continued from page 5

Fact #5:

A multi-prong solution will be required.

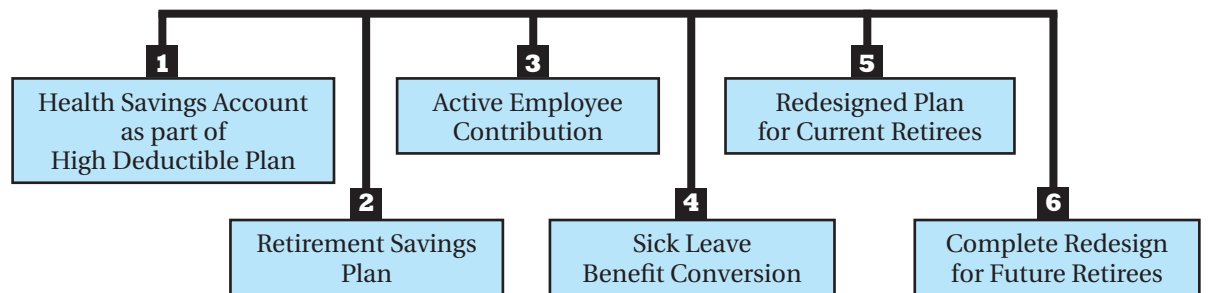
Retiree medical is a complex problem. The company and the union have discussed several strategies for reducing medical costs for both current and future retirees. Any viable solution will probably require many elements.

Negotiators for PG&E and IBEW have met at length with Towers-Perrin, a national consulting firm specializing in compensation issues. The purpose of these meetings has been to lay the groundwork for negotiations by gathering key facts, and learning how other large employers are dealing with the issue of health insurance.

Many people hope that national health care reform might fix some of our problems. But if we wait for Congress to come up with a solution we could be waiting forever. The problem of retiree medical benefits needs a solution now. The current bargaining between PG&E and IBEW is our best shot for making improvements for current and future retirees.

PG&E and IBEW will be looking at several options. The purpose of these negotiations is to see if we can create a solution by combining several of these options. The options shown below are for educational purposes only. Actual proposals will not go onto the bargaining table until negotiations formally begin, currently scheduled for March 23.

A MULTI-PRONG APPROACH



PRONG 1:

Health Savings Account as part of a High-Deductible Plan

One possible option is for PG&E to adopt a high deductible medical plan. The deductible would be higher than employees are currently used to. Just as an example for discussion, we'll say \$1500.

The obvious downside of such a plan is that you have to incur a lot of expense before your benefits kick in. But when a High-Deductible Plan is combined with a Health Savings Account, the upside starts becoming apparent.

Each year the employer places money into a Health Savings Account (HSA) for each employee. (The amount would be an important subject of bargaining in the upcoming negotiations. We will use \$750, as an example only.)

With an HSA, the employee chooses how to use the money. One choice would be to use money from your HSA to pay toward your deductible. This approach would bring down your immediate medical costs.

But you would have a second choice. You could pay the deductible out of your own funds, and preserve that \$750 in your Health Savings Account. This isn't "notional" money (money that goes away if you don't use it). It's real money that is banked for you, in your name. The advantages of such an account include:

- Employees can make contributions to their HSA. The HSA is "triply protected" from federal taxes: contributions are "pre-tax" dollars, the interest is tax-free,

and the money is tax-free when it comes out of the account.

- Your HSA is portable. It stays with you even if you change employers.
- The money can be used for deductibles and any other health expense except premiums. And it can be used for premiums when you are Medicare-eligible.
- It is self-directed. Each employee chooses how the money banked in their HSA is invested.

Younger employees with a lot of earning power still ahead of them might choose to work extra overtime to cover the deductible. This would allow them to bank the HSA money for the future. \$750 a year for 25 or 30 years, plus interest, adds up to a significant nest egg for medical expenses later in life.

Another advantage of such a plan is that preventative care is 100% paid. It doesn't cost you or your HSA a dime.

PRONG 2:

Improve PG&E's Retirement Savings Plan

Improvements to PG&E's Retirement Savings Plan is another possible piece of the solution.

Currently, PG&E contributes 75 cents in "matching money" for every \$1 a non-bargaining unit employee pays into his/her 401k plan. The match for IBEW members is just 50 cents on the dollar. And IBEW members must wait three years to qualify for the maximum match of 6%.

PG&E ranks low among West Coast utilities in its contribution to 401k plans. Increasing its contribution would make more money available to employees in retirement, which could be used to help defray medical expenses.

PRONG 3:

Active Employees Make Contribution

The total cost to PG&E to provide medical coverage of bargaining unit employees is \$196 million annually, and growing. Currently the company picks up 96.25% of this cost. Active IBEW employees contribute 3.75%.

Negotiations mean give and take. Each side has inter-

ests it wants to defend.

Union negotiators must be able to show our members that PG&E is stepping up to the plate and making a substantial contribution toward improving retiree medical benefits.

Company negotiators, likewise, have people they must answer to—customers, directors, regulators. The company must show it is making an effort to control costs.

Each 1 percent increase in active employee co-payments toward their medical premiums would save the company about \$2 million. An increase in active employee contributions—even a very modest one—makes it more likely the company will respond positively to our very large concerns about retiree medical.

PRONG 4:

Sick Leave Benefit Conversion

Typically, PG&E employees retire with sick leave remaining on the books.

It is a common practice in the public sector to convert that sick leave into a benefit that helps retirees with medical costs. For example:

IBEW Local 1245 members at the City of Lodi who retire with 10 years of service receive 50% of the dollar value of their sick leave to use for medical insurance premiums. For each additional year of service, 2-1/2% is added to that 50%.

In the past, PG&E has not been interested in discussing sick leave conversion. But two other utilities—So-Cal Gas and Southern California Edison—agreed to sick leave conversion plans in their most recent negotiations with their unions.

PG&E now acknowledges that this issue needs to be part of the discussion.

Sick leave benefit conversion could assist retirees with medical expenses in two ways:

1. Sick leave could be used to extend service at retirement, potentially increasing the size of an employee's pension and thus making more money available for paying medical expenses.
2. Sick leave hours could be converted into "notional" money that could be directly applied to medical insurance premiums, as in the City of Lodi example.

PRONG 5:

Redesigned Medical Plan for Current Retirees

The problems with retiree medical began when the company's contribution was capped. Retirees now pay 100% of any increase in their medical insurance premium. This is not sustainable—not for current retirees, not for future retirees.

Any solution will have to move some of the financial burden off the shoulders of retirees. One possibility is to adjust the company cap upward. Another possibility is to adjust the formula so that retirees pay a fixed percentage of the premium, requiring PG&E to share the burden of future premium increases.

PRONG 6:

Redesigned Retiree Medical Plan for Future Retirees

Retiree Medical isn't just a problem for retirees. Active employees, if they stick around long enough, are all going to be retirees. And if you don't want to work until you die, you have a big stake in getting this problem solved now.

A leading candidate for solving the Retiree Medical problem going forward is the Retirement Medical Savings Account (RMSA). The RMSA is a way for PG&E to start paying now for what you will need in the future when you retire. The RMSA is "notional" money — it is obligated to you, but is not literally in an account with your name on it. Here's how it works (specific figures used only as an example):

The company would pay into an RMSA \$5,000 per year for each employee beginning at age 45, and another \$5,000 per year for the employee's spouse. At age 55, the amount paid into the employee's RMSA would increase to \$6,250 annually; the spouse's amount would remain at \$5,000 annually.

Interest would be credited to these accounts at a rate of 5% annually.

Upon retirement, the account balances could be used to pay premiums for PG&E-sponsored retiree medical coverage. The maximum annual account drawdown would be 50% of the plan cost prior to age 65 and 33% at age 65 and later.

PG&E would fund an opening balance for employees age 45 and older. That opening balance would be equal to what would have been in the account if the RMSA had always been in place.

Fact #6:

For this to work, PG&E has to pay more.

We don't want our medical premium co-payments to go up unless we get something substantial in return. This means that any overall package must include an overall net gain for us—active employees and retired employees considered as a unit.

Some changes under consideration may not cost anything. Those are the kind we like best.

Some changes will require active employees to give up something, probably in the form of a higher co-payment on their medical premium. Obviously we will want to keep any increases as low as we possibly can.

Our goal in bargaining will be to help PG&E identify savings where possible. It is to everyone's benefit to keep the company financially sound. But the bottom line is this: PG&E will have to pitch in with some significant dollars to help fix medical benefits for current and future retirees.

Because nobody wants to have to work until they die.

Fact #7:

You get to vote before anything changes.

Any changes negotiated this spring with PG&E must be ratified by the IBEW membership before they can take effect. That means there is no change unless you agree to it by a majority vote.

It also means that your vote has real consequences. The problem of retiree medical will not go away on its own. The cost of medical coverage is doing real harm to our retired brothers and sisters today.

And those costs threaten the ability of active employees to realize their own dreams of a comfortable retirement.

We owe it to our retirees and to ourselves to study these issues closely, to make informed judgements, and to vote when we get the chance.

*It's your union. It's your future.
It's your decision.*



Diane Tatu, a Service Rep in Records in Stockton, left, discusses retirement issues with Local 1245 Treasurer Cecelia de la Torre following the Stockton stewards meeting.

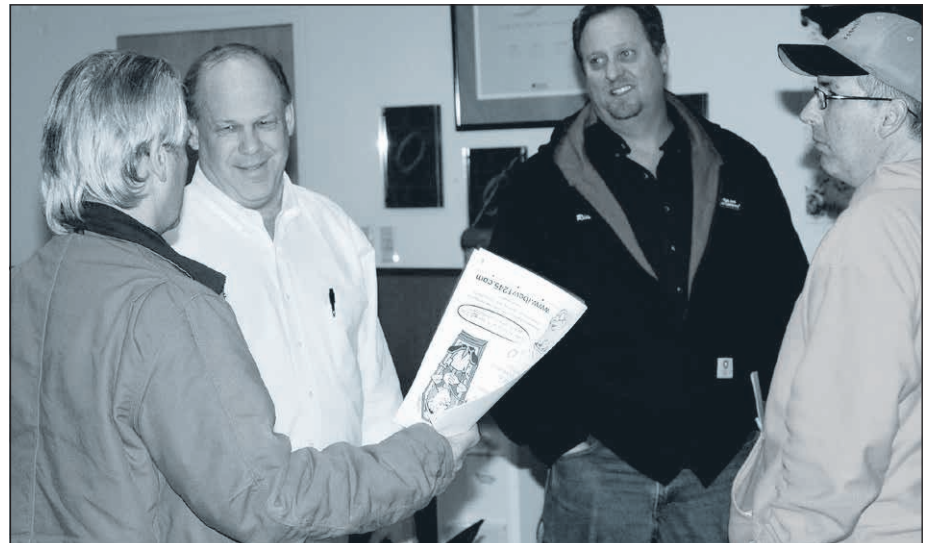


Al White joins the discussion over retirement medical in Oakland.



Chuck Korman engages in a discussion of retiree medical insurance during the stewards meeting in San Jose on March 11. Leading the meeting was Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier, right.

Tom Dalzell exchanging views with (from left) John Rasmussen, (Dalzell), Rick Helzer and Louie Pence after the Stockton meeting.



Workers' Safety. Workers' Rights.

Outside Line hands Johnny Walker, left, and George Smith.



Over 60 stewards sacrificed a Saturday to learn how to better defend workers' rights.



Troy Dennis is a steward with Wellington.



Gary Shiver is an Outside hand with Black and Veatch.

The economy has tanked, but there are worse places to be right now than working in the electric industry, Business Manager Tom Dalzell told a gathering of stewards at Weakley Hall on Feb.28.

"No job is depression proof, but working at a utility is a pretty safe place to be compared to the rest of the country," Dalzell said, noting that it takes "a lot of creativity to keep the wolf from the door."

The conference, geared especially toward members in Outside Construction, was designed to help stewards sharpen their skills in defending members' rights in the workplace. In addition to numerous Outside contractors, the conference attracted members from Mirant, NV Energy (Sierra Pacific), SMUD, Port of Oakland, Modesto Irrigation District, AC Transit, Turlock Irrigation District, and Silicon Valley Power (City of Santa Clara).

"Even the most conscientious business rep can only know a fraction of what goes on in workplace compared to the shop steward," said Dalzell. "Stewards are our eyes and ears in the workplace."

The stewards' role can take on even more importance in a depressed econ-

omy, when employers may be tempted to take contractual shortcuts in order to squeeze more work out of employees.

Executive Board member Mike Cottrell, an Outside hand himself, said stewards can inspire confidence by the way they conduct themselves in the workplace.

"Be professional in what you do, and expect others to treat you with respect. Stay frosty and cool, but be bold and get to the facts and figures that pertain to your contract," said Cottrell as he held up a labor agreement. "This is all you have as a steward. You don't have an ego, you don't have power over anybody."

In the current economy, Cottrell said, there are many people who have been stripped of their jobs by executives "with golden parachutes." But he said Local 1245 members were in a better position than most, and the reason was simple: "We have unity."

The conference began with a video about the life of famed arbitrator Sam Kagel, hosted by legendary longshoreman leader Harry Bridges. Well, Bridges is long dead of course, but actor Ian Ruskin brought him back to life to help introduce stewards to Kagel.

Occasionally taking a little nip from a flask as he spoke, Ruskin recounted Kagel's leadership role in the great general strike in San Francisco in 1934. Kagel went on to arbitrate more than 10,000 cases, including mediating a players' strike that shut down the National Football League in 1982. His practiced his craft well into his 90s and lived until 2007.

(Learn more about Harry Bridges and Sam Kagel at <http://www.theharrybridgesproject.org/Kagel.html>)

Effective Representation

The heart of the conference was a series of presentations on how stewards can make themselves effective in representing members' rights at the jobsite.

Business Rep. Darryl Norris discussed the importance of knowing your labor agreement and explained some of the key features common to most agreements.

Business Rep. Sam Glero reviewed the "seven tests" commonly used to determine if there is "just cause" for discipline. These seven tests are:

- Was employee adequately warned of the consequences of his/her misconduct?
- Was employer's rule or order reasonably related to safe and efficient operations?
- Did management investigate before administering the discipline?
- Was the investigation fair and objective?
- Did the investigation produce substantial evidence or proof of guilt?



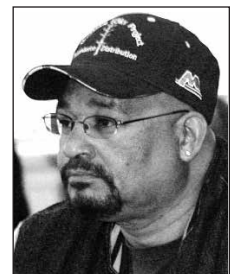
Outside Line steward Jerry Bowen explains the court case that established Skelly rights.



Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran was chief organizer of the conference.



Catherine Kats is a steward with Wellington.



James Hatten is an Outside Line hand.



From left, Coby White, Outside Construction, and Wellington stewards Nick Ferroir, Rick Ortiz and Ryan Dahms.



Darryl Norris says, "Know Your Contract".



Wellington stewards, from left, Antoine Andrews, William McKinney, and Luke LaMonica.



Business Reps Landis Marttila and Joe Osterlund both drew on experiences in the field to discuss the steward's roles and responsibilities.



Business Rep Sheila Lawton explains state and federal legislation concerning Family Leave.



Ricky Ricard asks Sheila Lawton if taking Family Leave can lead to reprisals.



Isaac Christopherson is a steward with Wellington.

Story and photos by Eric Wolfe

Workers' Unity.

- Were rules, orders, penalties applied evenhandedly and without discrimination?
- Was penalty reasonably related to the seriousness of the offense and the past record?

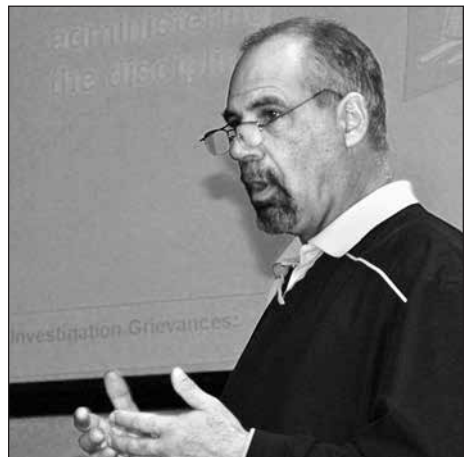
Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas explained an employee's right to representation by a shop steward, as laid out in the federal court's "Weingarten" decision.

Union staff members weren't the only ones contributing to the discussion of the legal basis for employee rights. Jerry Bowen, a steward in Outside Construction, explained the basis for some of the rights enjoyed by employees in the public sector.

"The case was Skelly versus the University of California in 1975," said Bowen. "Skelly claimed he had a property right in his job. If you have retirement program for example, [and you're



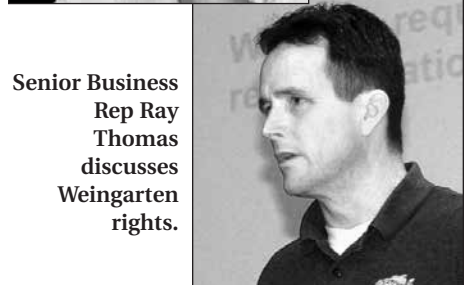
Port of Oakland steward Dave Cuthbertson.



Business Rep Sam Glero explains the Seven Tests.



Scott Barker is a steward from Sacramento Municipal Utility District.



Senior Business Rep Ray Thomas discusses Weingarten rights.



Actor Ian Ruskin, playing Longshore leader Harry Bridges, prepares to quaff a shot of Harry's favorite brew.

terminated] you're being deprived of property without due process."

The California Supreme Court's Skelly decision established as law many of the rights that protect employees in the public sector today.

Business Reps. Landis Marttila and Joe Osterlund offered real-life examples of strategies that stewards sometimes use to prevail in disputes with management.

Business Rep. Sheila Lawton's explanation of the rights employees have under state and federal family leave laws prompted several questions.

"What if you use Family Leave and they put it in your attendance record?" Mirant steward Ricky Ricard wanted to know.

"They shouldn't, and if they do you should challenge it," Lawton responded. "You can't be disciplined in any way for taking any of these potential leaves."

Staff attorney Jenny Marston stressed that it was important for stewards to act in an official capacity.

"Make sure it's clear to everyone in the conversation that you're acting as a steward. If you make that clear, immunity should apply."

By immunity she means that stewards are protected against reprisals from supervisors, such as "enforcing rules more strictly against you than others."

Outside Construction steward Marcos Carrasco asked Marston if stewards had the right to confidential conversations with members in the same way that attorneys don't have to divulge their conversations with their clients.

"It depends on the facts of the situation," said Marston. "If you have first-hand knowledge of an employee, for

example, stealing from the company, you may need to discuss it with your business rep for guidance."

"Step up and stop it"

Business Rep. Ralph Armstrong screened some dramatic film footage from the Vietnam War, whose relevance wasn't immediately evident until the film's narrator explained that even at the height of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s more Americans were dying on the job each year than dying in combat.

The war continued for several more years, but Congress took action on workplace hazards with the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 1970.

"OSHA is a friend of labor. It's regulations are written in blood," said Armstrong. "The rules are put in place for workers' safety."

Armstrong noted there can be pressure at the jobsite to get work done quickly, even at the expense of safety.

"When you're a steward and see that stuff on the job, you have to step up and stop it," Armstrong said. "If there's an unsafe condition or unsafe act you need to immediately notify a manager or safety officer. Next, notify your business rep."

Information sharing, he said, can help others identify and deal with similar unsafe condition existing at other worksites.



"OSHA is a friend of labor. It's regulations are written in blood."
– Business Rep Ralph Armstrong



Outside Line steward Marcos Carrasco asks about the confidentiality of steward-member conversations.



"Make sure it's clear to everyone ... you're acting as a steward," advises Local 1245 staff attorney Jenny Marston.

Reservation list for the conference

Aguirre, Phil, Sr.
Alfaro, Gerardo
Amaral, Aristeo
Andrews, Antoine
Archuleta, Louis
Bain, Myco
Barahona, Andres
Barker, Scott
Baylor, Jason
Bowen, Jerry
Cardoza, Brian
Cardwell, David
Carrasco, Marcos
Celli, Kurt
Christopherson, Isaac
Cicchini, Kevin
Cruz, Diego

Cuthbertson, Dave
Dahms, Ryan
Dennis, Troy
Dickson, Joe
Eberlin, Clint
Elmor, Aaron D.
Ferroir, Anthony
Fialho, Chris
Freiling, Jesse
Gallardo, Alfredo
Greenwood, Guy
Gross, Ken
Gumm, Dale
Hambleton, Daryl
Hatten, James E.
Hill, Rich
Ho, Greg

Hodges, Denver
Huerta, Jose
Kats, Catherine
Kelley, Casey
Kubiak, Brad
Lamonica, Luke
Loera, Julio
Lopez, Rigoberto P.
MacLauchlan,
"David" Robert
Magnoli, Betty
Mansell, Britton
Matthews Jr. Donald
McKinney, Bill
Miramontes, Orlando
Morrison, Bill
Ortiz, Rick

Parks, Rick
Patterson, Mike
Petersen, Stan
Ramos, Horacio
Ricard, Ricky
Ryker, Dan
Sanchez, Antony
Sanchez, Hipolito
Shriver, Gary
Smith, George
Sullivan, Shane
Svedise, David
Tibbertsma, P.
Trillo, Gerald
White, Coby
Yordy, Victor



Executive Board member Mike Cottrell advises, "Stay frosty and cool, but be bold and get to the facts and figures that pertain to your contract."



Tom Blum shows the flakey evidence of corrosion in the copper pipe.



Backhoe Operator Larry Lee digs down to the Service-T.

COPPER RE

Photos and Story by Eric Wolfe

Copper probably seemed like a good idea at the time. Decades back, PG&E installed copper pipe throughout its service territory to carry natural gas to your house from the gas main under your street.

But copper has fallen out of favor, and you don't have to be a metallurgist to understand why. Backhoe Operator Tom Blum lifts up and jiggles a copper pipe that has just been pulled out of the ground. The gray flakes spilling out of the pipe into his hand look almost like ash—visible evidence of the corrosive effect that natural gas has had on the copper. In time, those flakes can inhibit gas flow or interfere with the regulator.

Blum is working on Kirk Cardoza's General Construction gas crew along Creston Drive high up in the Berkeley hills on a rare sunny day in the middle of a very rainy February. Cardoza says his crew installs two services a day on average, replacing old pipes made out of copper with new ones made from plastic.

The job begins with a tailboard. Everyone needs to be on the same page about how they plan to do the job—and get it done safely.

"Safety is number one with PG&E," says Cardoza. "We tailboard every day. When we go to a second job during the



Ramon Moreno works on installing the gas meter in its new location—outside the electric box.



Joe Stringfellow stops the flow of gas to service and prepares for the welder.



Alan Colaso pulling.



Joe Stringfellow (in the hole) and Alan Colaso: pulling.

PLACEMENT

General Construction crews replace corrosion-prone copper with something more durable

day, we'll have a second tailboard to tell [the crew] what's going on there."

Although the procedures are fairly straight-forward, some jobs present unique problems. Cardoza describes the top three problems this way: terrain, terrain and terrain. But Creston Drive, as the name implies, is at the crest of the Berkeley Hills, running just east of Grizzly Peak Boulevard, and it provides a reasonably horizontal work space.

Utility Workers Alan Colaso and Toraine Wakefield take positions on either end of the job site to control traffic. Blum, operating the backhoe, breaks ground to get at the Service-T. Fieldperson Joe Stringfellow jumps into the hole and shovels out dirt that's a little harder to get at until the Service-T is exposed. When the time's right they put in a call for a welder.

Meanwhile, Street Fitter Ramon Moreno, with assistance from Utility Worker Edmund Singleton, is removing the gas meter from a cabinet it had been sharing with an electric meter. Moreno gives the meter a new location outside the cabinet. Cardoza explains why: the cabinet contains the main electric switch panel, a potential source of ignition.

"It's a safety factor so we take it out," he says.



Neil Fuller welds the fitting.

continued on page 12



Working on Creston Drive in Berkeley on the copper replacement job is the PG&E General Construction crew consisting of, back row from left: Larry Lee, Backhoe Operator; Tom Blum, Backhoe Operator. Front row, from left: Alan Colaso, Utility Worker; Toraine Wakefield, Utility Worker; Joe Stringfellow, Fieldperson; Edmund Singleton, Utility Worker; Kirk Cardoza, Working Foreman B; Ramon Moreno, Street Fitter.



Alan Colaso (left) and Toraine Wakefield keep the traffic moving safely around the job.



continued from previous page

When welder Neil Fuller arrives on the scene, Singleton stands by with a fire extinguisher—an understandable precaution when there's a welding torch operating near a gas line. Fuller dons his protective mask and the sparks begin to fly as he welds the fitting that enables a connection between steel and plastic.

There are a number of choices for running the new line to the house. If the copper is direct-buried, the crew can split the copper and just pull the plas-

tic in. Or they can pull the copper out. Or, if the terrain is really tricky, the crew can use directional drilling to drill a completely new path, leaving the copper alone.

After the new line is installed, the job starts moving to completion.

"You air test to make sure everything's working right, purge the air (from the line), gas it up and back fill it," says Cardoza, "and move on to another one."



Working Foreman Kirk Cardoza assists a resident through the construction area.



Joe Stringfellow signals the backhoe operator.



Tom Blum backfills the hole as the job wraps up.

Safety issues temper spirits at Advisory Council

Spirits were tempered at the quarterly meeting of the Local 1245 Advisory Council by news of a Dec. 14 accident in Fresno that cost a member both of his hands, and an explosion in Rancho Cordova on Dec. 24 that injured three customers, one fatally, and slightly injured two Local 1245 members.

Discussion of the Rancho Cordova explosion by the Council, which met Jan. 24 at Weakley Hall, was limited by the confidentiality surrounding the ongoing National Transportation Safety Board investigation. But Business Manager Tom Dalzell strongly reiterated the union's commitment to safety and training, as well as our desire to work cooperatively with PG&E to assure a work environment that is safe for customers, employees and the general public.

Dalzell noted that the union had convened a meeting on Jan. 21 at which several dozen rank-and-file gas employees offered their perspective on safety, staffing, and other issues to PG&E Senior Vice Presidents Geisha Williams, Ed Salas and Helen Burt. (See photos from this meeting on Page 14.)

Dalzell also reported on the resumption of negotiations with PG&E over health care benefits, an issue of keen

interest to retirees who have been hard-hit by rising premiums. (See "Retirees Sound Alarm" at www.ibew1245.com/newsarchive-docs/Retirees_Sound_Alarm_2-5-09.pdf)

Several changes in staffing were announced at the Advisory Council meeting.

Mark Taylor, who has resigned his seat on the Advisory Council, joins the Local 1245 staff on March 2 as Business Representative for Diablo Canyon Power Plant and the southern Coast Valley area.

Mike Saner, who served a period on the staff as a temporary business representative, returns to the staff on March 2, representing PG&E General Construction.

Elizabeth McInnis, as reported in the last Utility Reporter, has taken on organizing duties for Outside Construction and other areas.

Former Business Manager Perry Zimmerman and former Assistant Business Managers Frank Saxsenmeier and Larry Pierce have returned to staff on a temporary basis to help deal with a backlog of work in various areas.

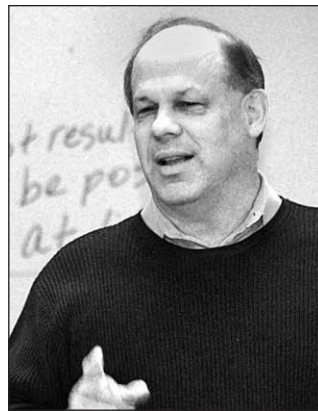
Advisory Council members reported on numerous developments in their areas:

Mike McKay reported that Unit 3012, US Bureau of Reclamation/Folsom CVC, made a \$300 contribution to disabled American veterans. Last year the unit donated \$200 to Operation Home Front to assist returning veterans.

Russ Blacker, representing PG&E General Construction, said GC members had been expressing some complaints about the recently ratified PG&E agreement. Dalzell responded that the 3.75% wage increase for 2009 looks pretty good given the current deflationary state of the US economy.

Dan Mayo, representing PG&E San Joaquin Division, said members in his

Business Manager Tom Dalzell stressed that everyone must rededicate themselves to safe work practices.



area were "fairly satisfied" with the new agreement. Mayo also reported on the accident that had claimed a members' hands, and asked about recent developments concerning Fire Retardant (FR) clothing.

Dennis Thompson, representing the San Jose area, said members were "energized" for upcoming negotiations with the City of Santa Clara. Like Mayo, he brought up FR clothing, asking "who will handle it" and what the OSHA requirements will be.

Lauren Bartlett, serving as an alternate representative for Sacramento Regional Transit, discussed members' concerns about the inadequate supply of coveralls at RT. She also noted that RT had placed a hiring freeze "on all non-essential positions," but said that RT is not projecting any IBEW layoffs in 2009. She added that several members are taking advantage of new retirement provisions in the labor agreement.

Will Durinick, representing San Francisco, said members in his area had concerns about FR clothing, and that the missed meals issue was something that members were anxious to see resolved.

Al Fortier noted that the City of Alameda, like many municipalities, was suffering from financial difficulties, and that the city was proposing a one-year extension of the agreement that expired at the end of 2008, but at the same time wanted to change the vacation accrual method.

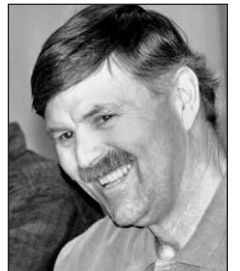
Chip Chadwick, representing members at various Nevada employers, said unemployment was hitting Nevada hard, with the rate rising above 8% in December.

Mike Jessen, representing the DeSabra Division of PG&E, offered an extensive look at the duties of an Electric Distribution System Compliance Inspector, including the problem of having to balance the supervisor's expectations for "productivity" with the employee's concern for being "thorough

Russ Blacker reported on concerns expressed by some PG&E General Construction members concerning the recently-ratified agreement with PG&E.



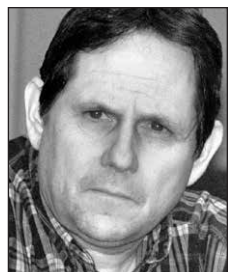
Mike McKay, Western Area Power Authority, reported on Unit 3012's \$300 contribution to disabled American veterans.



Lee Thomas represents PG&E Humboldt Division on the Advisory Council.



Chip Chadwick reported on the recent ratification of new agreements with Mt. Wheeler Power and Wells REC in Nevada.



Ken Amaral represents PG&E Drum Division, City of Roseville, and Plumas Sierra REC on the Advisory Council.



Will Durinick, representing San Francisco, said members in his area were anxious to see the Missed Meal issue resolved. (See page 3)

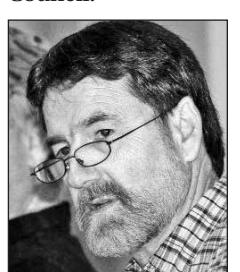


Lauren Bartlett said several members are taking advantage of new retirement provisions in the agreement with Sacramento Regional Transit.



Executive Board member Mike Cottrell

Marty Finnerty represents PG&E East Bay Division on the Advisory Council.



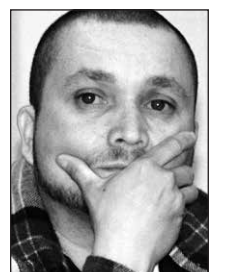
Dan Mayo, representing PG&E San Joaquin Division, reported on the tragic accident that claimed a members' hands.



Stu Neblett represents PG&E Shasta Division and several public sector properties.



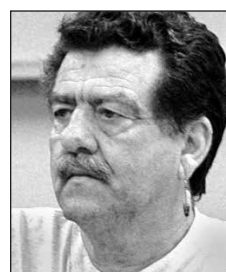
Dennis Thompson reported that members are "energized" about upcoming negotiations with the City of Santa Clara (Silicon Valley Power).



Jose Torres reported on issues currently affecting Tree Trimmers.



Norma Ricker speaks up at Advisory Council as Al Fortier, left, and Peggy Daniel, right, look on.



Vice President Art Freitas



Executive Board member Anna Bayless-Martinez



Recording Secretary Chris Habecker



President Mike Davis



Executive Board member Mike Jacobson



Treasurer Cecelia De La Torre



Gas Crew Foreman Tony Araya tackles the issues at gas meeting.

PG&E and Union examine gas challenges

Pacific Gas & Electric is facing unprecedented challenges in the gas side of its business.

On Jan. 21, PG&E Senior Vice Presidents Ed Salas, Geisha Williams, and Helen Burt met with IBEW Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell and approximately 30 IBEW members at Weakley Hall in Vacaville to review the current challenges and the company's plans to meet those challenges.



Al Estes, Richmond

Local 1245's total support of PG&E in addressing and resolving challenges in the gas field.

"We will work closely with PG&E on both short-term fixes and long-term solutions. There is no 'us' and 'them' on this issue—we're all in it together," Dalzell said.

A smaller steering committee will be meeting with management in the near future to review the company's plans for all

gas issues. This committee will report back to the larger group.



Randy Lassus, Concord



Ed Gamba, Vallejo



Mike Jameson, Merced



Darryl Rice, Richmond



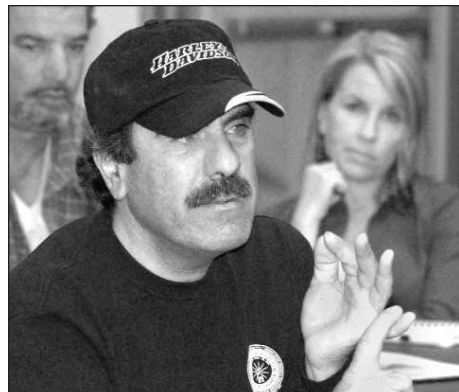
Jerry Baca, Antioch



Brad Schuback, San Carlos



Mike Newsom, Stockton



Ron Fort, Stockton



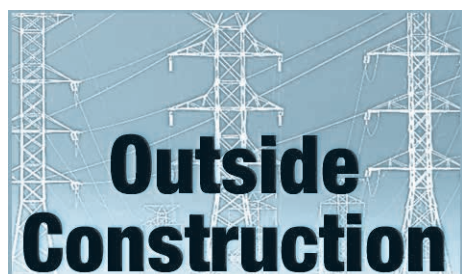
Dan Worley, Modesto



Tony Fortune, Modesto



From left: Tom Dalzell, Local 1245 Business Manager; Geisha Williams, PG&E Senior Vice President Energy Delivery; Jim Findley, M&C Mechanic; Helen Burt, Senior Vice President Customer Care; Ed Salas, Senior Vice President, Engineering & Operations; Steve Segale, Gas Crew Foreman; Mike Scafani, Gas Crew Foreman, Welding.



Crane operator class

By Ron Cochran

An NCCCO crane class was held the week of March 2 at the Ronald Weakley Hall in Vacaville. This class



Ron Cochran

was 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.) The class was provided by the Cal-NeV JATC.

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 18 months. We have made several payouts in 2008, as members needed them. We have over \$36,000 in reserve. There are plans to increase the death benefit from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This benefit is paid to the family immediately for help with financial needs until the other benefits from the IBEW, Lineco, PBF, NEBF and NEAP are processed.

Shop Stewards Training

Shop Steward training was held Feb. 28 at the Ronald Weakley Hall in Vacaville. See a full report on Page 8.

Pin Dinner

The Pin Dinners held in Sacramento on Feb. 28 included some members from Outside Construction. There will also be Pin Dinners scheduled in Reno, Fresno, and Bakersfield for Outside Construction members to attend.

Pre-Retirement Seminar

The local hosted a pre-retirement seminar on March 14 at the Ronald Weakley Hall in Vacaville. We covered several topics, so retiring members can make the best decisions when the time comes. We had guest speakers from NEBF/NEAP/NEFP and Lineco to explain benefits and answer questions.

We also had a Power Point presentation from the International Office to show for information regarding their Pension Benefit Fund. The PBF is a pension fund that is funded through “A” members dues.

Contract Negotiations

We just completed re-negotiating three different Canus, Inc. contracts. There was a general wage increase for all classifications of 3.75% in each contract for each year with In-lieu-of benefits and subsistence increases. The term of this contract is three years. Two contracts were ratified with a 100% “YES” votes from the returned ballots. The third contract was ratified with a 95% “YES” vote from the returned ballots.

Agreements with MMRI were ratified in a mail ballot counted on March 6.

We have stand-alone agreements with several contractors that need to be renegotiated later this year. Our largest contract is the Western Line NECA agreement for Outside Line group. We have been talking informally with NECA and get the feeling that this year's negotiations will go well. Let's knock on wood for luck.

The current Outside Line Agreement is set to expire on May 31 of this year. For the past year at our unit meetings we have been encouraging our members to submit their proposals to the unit chair. We have our sights set on a March time frame for negotiations with NECA. We are encouraging all our members to be a part of this effort.

Safety Book

The Safety Book (red book) used by the Outside Construction group will be reviewed for accuracy of current rules and laws and changes will be made in a continuing 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. We think this update will be completed on or by March 17.

Work Picture

PG&E has announced there will be no pole replacement work to speak of done by OSL contractors in 2009. The

substation work is holding steady and growing in some cases. The T-line work will be slow in 2009. PG&E reports 2010 will be a record year for electrical construction.

PG&E Pole test & treat groups are slowing but doing well.

PG&E AC load management is slowing during the wet months, but we expect it to rebound in spring.

PG&E AMI is exceeding our expectations. There continue to be material issues. The members are doing great. There are 300 workers between two different contractors.

Sierra Pacific, now called NV-Energy, has all but one contract job shut down.

SMUD has a few crews on the property, but work is slow.

WAPA has two projects in construction.

Traffic Signal work is slowing, as the muni's and cities are pulling back work.

Apprentice News

We currently have less than 300 Outside Line apprentices in the Cal-NeV JATC program. We interviewed over 90 potential apprentices in January 2009. We have a qualified list of 180 ready to start the climbing school as the work demands. We are not planning to interview again until September of 2009, if needed.

Grievances

We have had multiple grievances since the beginning of 2009, many more than usual. We have reached settlement on all but one. We will be in a Labor-Management hearing in Riverside, CA on March 18 to present our case on that grievance.

Compliance Issues

On going, this is a long process that leads to more work. One of the compliance issues has led us to this grievance that will be presented at labor management.

Jurisdictional Issues

Wow, we have had more jurisdictional problems in February of 2009 then all of 2008. As the economy continues to cool we have more problems with Building Trades unions trying to claim and do our work. We currently have several large jurisdictional problems pend-

ing, Trans-Bay cable project-Ironworkers claiming substation work; Starwood-Midway project inside IBEW contractor performing work not in their scope at lower rates; Conoco-Phillips refinery IBEW inside local claiming work their scope of work at lower rates; OSL contractors wanting to use inside workers to do HV underground work. Continuous issues at the Humboldt Power retooling project in the PG&E substation.

Background checks

Background checks may eventually touch everyone; we are at the beginning of a long road with all the utilities, Homeland Security, TSA and NERC requirements. It's hard to believe that for most of us, your may need all of these background checks to work on PG&E substation or power line built within an oil refinery, fuel transfer location or fuel storage location that touches navigable water ways, for example. We are being very proactive with everyone that will listen to try and steer this issue to one gold standard that members can use wherever they work.

This started as a simple task of who would pay for the background checks in Outside Line and is growing to be a bigger issue each day. PG&E has been willing to listen to us and we are working together as they are subject to all the same standards the contractors are held to. It is amazing what we have learned so far. In some cases one government department will not recognize another department's background checks. There is much more to come on this issue. As for now, it only affects a small part of the workforce.

Organizing

We are very near to agreement with PG&E on PLA that all electric contract work will be done union. We have identified eight contractors that we will be pursuing to organize. We have met with the largest and spoken with the second largest contractors on the list. The goal is to get all the contractors signed and paying prevailing rate for the work performed. This also has the potential of increasing the “A” membership by 200-300 new members in 2009.

continued on page 16



The Crane Class in March helped members achieve state-required certification.

Bubble didn't hurt economists. Just us.

The bulk of financial analysts and economists largely repeat the conventional wisdom without ever seriously trying to assess whether it makes sense. They unthinkingly follow the conventional wisdom because of the structure of incentives in their profession. No one is going to get fired because they didn't see the housing

bubble. In fact, few people are likely to even miss a promotion because they didn't see the bubble.

Economists and financial analysts are not like steelworkers or people in other occupations. They don't get evaluated based on their performance. They can mess up every day of the week through their whole careers, and this

would be just fine, as long as they messed up in the same way as their peers.

The incentives are such that the overwhelming majority of economists will never challenge conventional wisdom even if they think it is wrong. They are

there to hold on to their jobs, not to inform the public about the economy.

From an interview with economist Dean Baker, one of the few economists who warned of the housing bubble and predicted its collapse. He was interviewed by Leo Gerard, president of the United Steel Workers union.

Efficiency could cut 30% of US power use

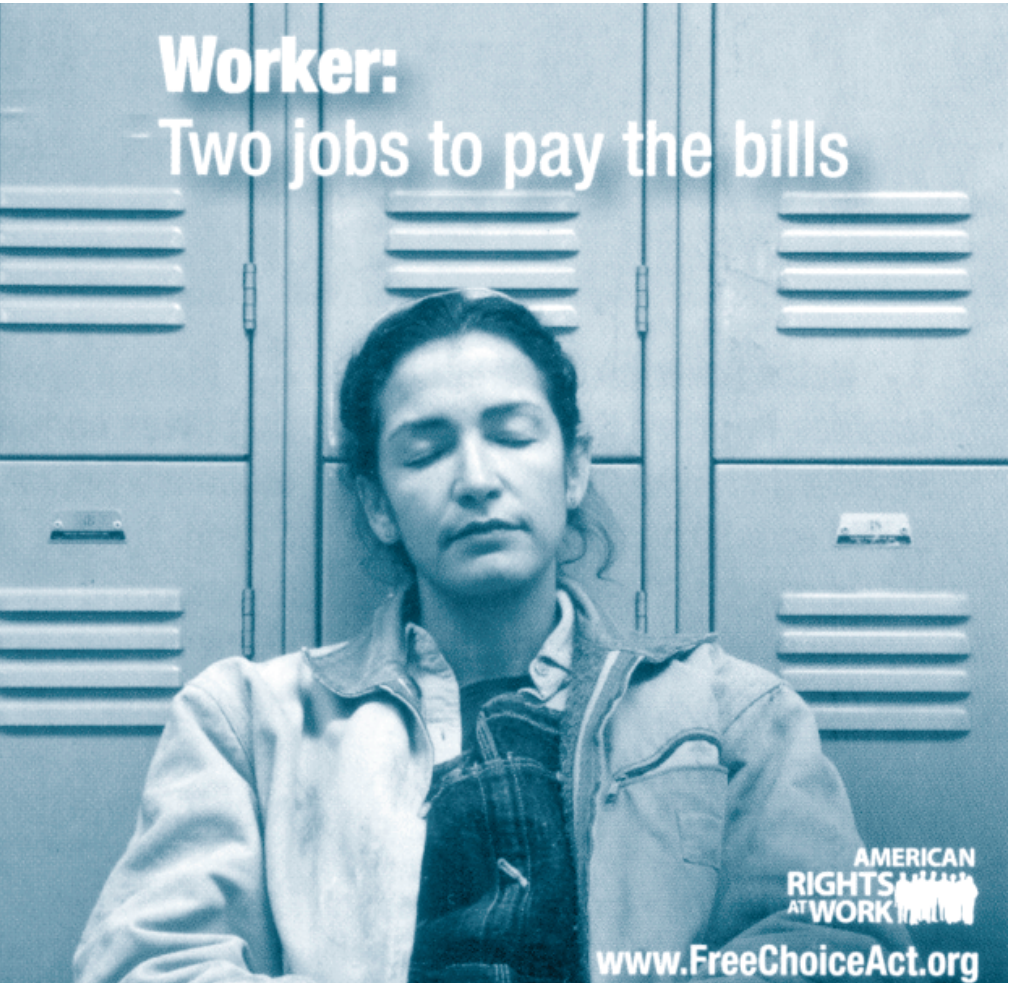
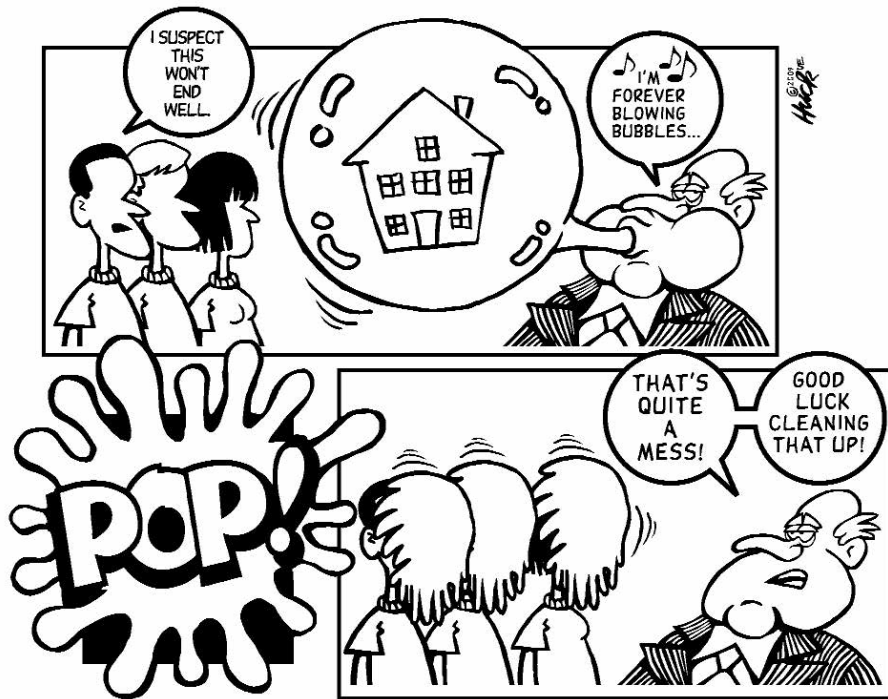
If states with low energy efficiency achieved the same level of energy efficiency as the 10 best performing states, more than 60% of coal-fired generation could be displaced in the US, according to a report released by the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), one of the nation's leading energy research organizations.

The search for alternative power sources has gained new urgency as the process of global warming threatens to disrupt human society. Coal is a major contributor to the release of greenhouse gasses that scientists say are warming the earth.

RMI also released a companion interactive map, which ranks the electric productivity of each of the 50 states, and points out opportunities for more states to adopt the practices of the best-ranked states. The map is available at <http://ert.rmi.org/cgu/>.

RMI's analysis, "Assessing the Electric Productivity Gap and the U.S. Efficiency Opportunity," says that the electric productivity of top performing states, such as California, New York and Connecticut can serve as examples of how to overcome barriers to efficiency practices. Lower performing states, like Kentucky and Mississippi, could build on the success of higher performing states by closing their electric productivity gap using known and tested technology and policy, RMI noted.

Existing buildings consume 41% of the energy from all sources in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Gearing up efficiency measures in existing residential, commercial and industrial buildings could prove to be the most cost-effective way to close the electric productivity gap in each state, according to RMI.



It's time the economy worked for everyone again.

You can help!

Urge Senator Feinstein to support the Employee Free Choice Act. It's easy. Go to: http://www.unionvoice.org/IBEW_1245/home.html



Santa Rosa retirees re-elect club officers

The Santa Rosa Chapter of the IBEW Local 1245 Retirees Club unanimously re-elected all of its officers to a new term at the monthly meeting on Feb. 3.



Larry Mead

Re-elected were Larry Mead as Unit Chairman, Dave Santori as Vice Chair-

man, and Ken Rawles as Unit Recorder. Business Rep. Joe Osterlund reported to the group that new rates affecting eligible PG&E retirees were slated to appear on February pension checks. Both the Physical and Clerical agreements provide pension adjustments of 5% for those who retired before 1990 and 3% for those who retired between Jan. 1, 1990 and Dec. 31, 1997.

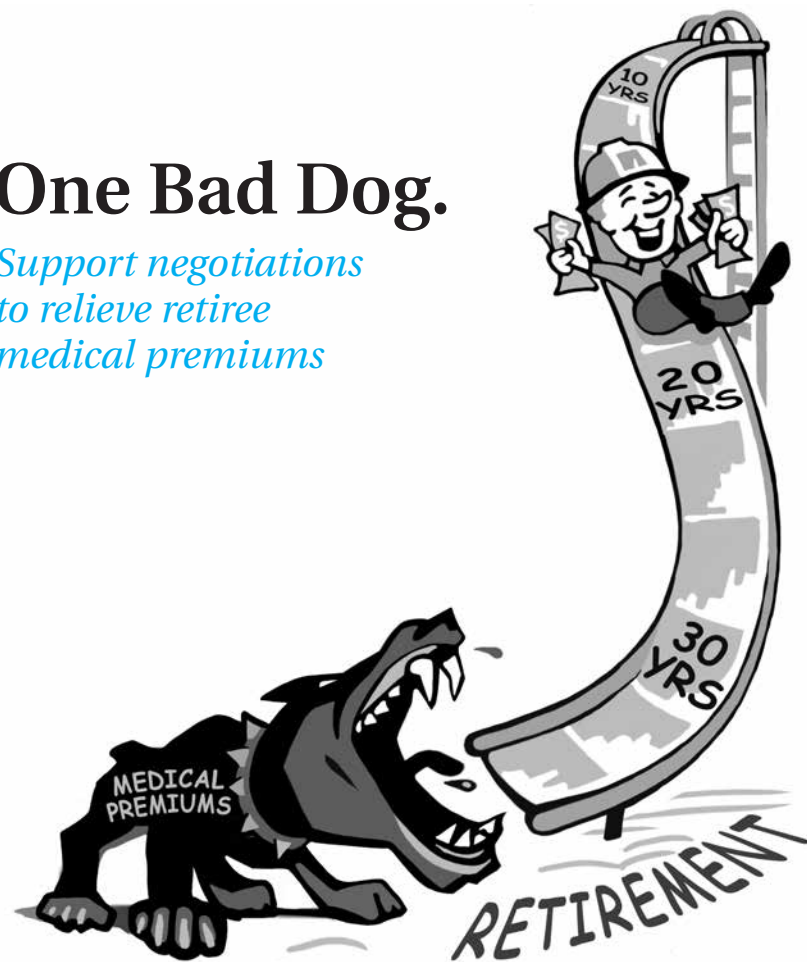
Negotiators for PG&E & Local 1245 met in January to resume talks over the benefits portion of the contract for both active members and retirees.

Osterlund discussed the need to write letters to Senator Feinstein to encourage her to support for the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill to make it easier for American workers to form unions. Materials were provided to make it easier for those present to write letters.

The Santa Rosa chapter of the Retirees Club meets at 10 a.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at COCO's Restaurant, 1501 Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa. All former members of IBEW Local 1245 are encouraged to attend meetings and join the club.

One Bad Dog.

Support negotiations to relieve retiree medical premiums



Big events in the wind – time to attend!

Bargaining is underway between PG&E and IBEW Local 1245 on medical benefits for current and retired employees.

Wouldn't this be a good time for you to attend a Retirees Club meeting in your area? Or how about this: if there isn't a meeting close to where you live, start one! For assistance in getting a chapter started you can call Tonya Alston at 707-452-2718.

We'd like to have you join us and we need to have you join us. Staying united is our only strength in negotiations. No

need to call in advance, just drop on by for any of the meetings scheduled below.

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.

Santa Rosa Chapter: 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., at Coco's Restaurant, 1501 Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa.

Merced Chapter: 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., Merced Senior Community, 755 W. 15th Street., Merced.

Retiring? Let us know!

If you're retiring, we'd like to know about it so that we can publish the news in the Utility Reporter.

Currently PG&E is the only Local 1245 employer who automatically provides the union a list of newly-minted retirees. We're trying to get the other employers to do likewise.

In the meantime, if you're a Local 1245 member and you're stepping out the door, let us know and we'll publish your name. Be sure to tell us your city of residence. To repeat, we do not need to hear from new retirees at PG&E because we already get that information directly from the company.

Thanks!



- * A free consultation of up to 30-minutes
- * A free simple document review and explanation
- * 30% off most additional services
- * No annual fee

1-888-993-8886
(9-7 ET, M-F)

www.UnionPlus.org/Legal

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!

Lana Bielstein 14 years	Harmon Ollar 26 years	Ronald De Silva 34 years	David Olivieri 31 years
Luetta Anne Borrego 10 years	Kenneth Parker 36 years	William Fullmer 39 years	Rosemary Paz 28 years
Bruce Clark 8 years	Victor Patton 41 years	Michael Gammel 30 years	John Perry 40 years
Helen Cruz 35 years	Steven Ramirez 34 years	Felix Garza 35 years	Robert Phillips 25 years
Enrico Dovichi 29 years	Thomas Retallack 39 years	Richard Gauthier 45 years	William Pope 35 years
Robert Favilla 36 years	Rosalio Salazar 34 years	Dennis Glynn 43 years	John Prehn 18 years
Alan Ferguson 33 years	Theresa Silva 13 years	Robert Goodyear 23 years	John Rogers 41 years
Denise Fergusson 9 years	George Sims 36 years	William Hrnjak 6 years	Joseph Sigala 38 years
Victor Flores 25 years	Pamela Tank 3 years	Dale Hubbard 36 years	Sheryl Silva 25 years
Wanda Fong 37 years	Raymond Thompson 28 years	Michael Johnson 35 years	Milton Silver 37 years
Ronald Frisch 44 years	Lonnie Wallington 26 years	Reva Johnson 35 years	Larry Simpson 27 years
Anthony Gniadek 10 years	Louis Whitfield 38 years	Edward Jones 38 years	Jonathan Smiga 35 years
John Hertzog 17 years	Dennis Blakley 39 years	Wayne Kingsley 31 years	Leo Starnes 42 years
Joseph Hug 25 years	Allan Bomagat 31 years	David Lee 33 years	James Sullivan 29 years
William Kenner 11 years	Charles Cameron 38 years	Marilyn Lynch 3 years	Lawrence Velasquez 41 years
Clifton Kerns 3 years	Thomas Cardoza 36 years	Cathleen Mazzacav-allo 27 years	Leticia Viray 36 years
Artis McHugh 24 years	Richard Cheney 36 years	Arthur Moniz 12 years	Wesley Wild 30 years
David McKee 18 years	Alan Clark 39 years	Robert Morante 35 years	
Linda Miller 13 years	Edward Conrado 33 years	Andrew Munoz 35 years	
Tony Miller 30 years	Herman Cox 40 years	Lawrence Murtha 39 years	
Douglas Moore 40 years	Charles Crittenden 3 years	John Nelson 16 years	
Alicia Nazario 34 years			

Congratulations Retirees!

We want you to stay connected



to IBEW 1245.



Safety Committee report

Manhole rescue resolved

On Feb. 3 a representative from PG&E Health and Safety, an OSHA attorney and Local 1245 Business Rep. Ralph Armstrong met to discuss manhole rescue requirements. The parties came to an agreement regarding confined space and rescue requirements that the union believes will suit both sides well.

In regards to the Cal-OSHA requirements for confined space, Standard 5158 regulates the utility industry. It specifies that whenever an atmosphere free of air contamination, oxygen enrichment and/or oxygen deficiency cannot be ensured the rescue requirements would be applicable.

PG&E contends that 95% of their spaces are free of or can be made free of contamination, ensuring good air quality, and therefore the rescue requirement in that portion of the standard does not apply. They are correct. Local 1245 would not want to force that requirement on them or any of our employers all the time because it would require some extreme and unnecessary requirements on our members. PG&E has agreed provide training and the rescue equipment for the other 5% of locations that would require the additional measures.

The Feb. 3 meeting also looked at the availability of this equipment for rescuing an employee that may have suffered an illness or injury not as a result of a hazardous atmosphere. If a member is working in one of the 95% spaces and goes down due to an illness, this equipment could be used to assist in the rescue. PG&E Health and Safety will work on language that will be added to CSP

232 regarding when to use this equipment and when not to.

This is a very important part of the training. When a rescue in a confined space is due to a bad atmosphere there are added risks, and with that comes added requirements. Any language to allow for rescue in a good environment will require a positive verification of air quality for the rescuer.

Although there may not be a requirement for this all the time there is definitely a need, which we believe will be addressed with the pending document. There is more work to do on the document and this committee will continue to monitor the progress of it.

Painters Grounding

Local 1245's position at the Feb. 3 meeting is 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. Painters are neither. PG&E's OSHA attorney feels there may be some missing language in the Cal-OSHA standard. The way the standard is written, and he is in agreement, does not support what they are currently doing and supports our position. PG&E will petition Cal-OSHA on this for either a clarification or a change.

Near Miss Program

No Near Misses were reported at the Local 1245 Safety Committee's Jan. 22 meeting at Weakley Hall. Guidelines and a description of this program have been established and are posted on the Local 1245 web site under the Safety Matters tab.

Accident Reporting

The new Safety Reporting requirements were introduced to the union Business Representatives during the Jan. 23 staff meeting. Beginning in February all unit meetings were to begin implementation of this requirement by filling out the green Safety Report form during the unit meeting and sending it into Vacaville with the other reports. This form will be given to the 1245 Safety Committee to review and take action on if needed. This committee feels this will help the effectiveness of this committee on all units Local 1245 represents.

December Electrical Contact Accident

The committee discussed the preliminary accident reports that took place in the Fresno area where a member had received an electrical contact while working on a car vs. pole interruption, which resulted in the loss of both of the members' hands.

The accident report was not available to fully review; however, new grounding and tailboard documents have been

implemented with PG&E as a result of this accident. These new rule changes will require a "Grounding Tailboard Briefing" which will have to document on a "Grounding Tailboard Form".

Items that must be included in the Grounding Tailboard appear in another story on this page.

A complete set of minutes from all Safety Committee meetings, as well as other safety information, can be found under the Safety tab at www.ibew1245.com

Fire retardant clothing

Fire retardant clothing was the topic of a meeting on Jan. 9 with PG&E and Tyndale.

Tyndale has been visiting several PG&E yards and trying to address some of the clothing concerns that they have been hearing from the end users, Local 1245 Safety Committee Chairman Ralph Armstrong reported. The complaints have ranged from durability, comfort, fitting issues, etc.

Tyndale and PG&E are looking at a couple of options for the concerns some of our members are expressing, such as having the employee bring the clothing to a local tailor that has been supplied with FR thread to have the clothing fitted properly.

The durability issue with some of the products is based on the article of clothing. Items of clothing that have a product ID number that starts with an (I) are good for approximately 52 washings. Items with a product ID that starts with

a (U) are good for approximately 78 washings and items that have a product ID that starts with an (F) are the most durable and are good for approximately 90 washings.

Tyndale and PG&E are looking to offer four new shirt products that are supposed to be lighter and made of inherently flame retardant materials versus the treated cotton. Details on this item are still being worked out with possible field trials this spring.

There have been complaints regarding allergic reactions to the clothing. Some of our members have been tested for allergies to the fabric and or treatment by a dermatologist. To date out of 10,000 employees in FR clothing the company has received 18 complaints of rashes, which is higher than Tyndale has seen historically. The company is working with Tyndale to resolve some of these complaints and concerns.

Grounding Tailboards

Items that must be included in the Grounding Tailboard are as follows:

1. The section of the circuit being grounded, as designated by switches and/or other clearance points.
2. The fault current of the circuit section being grounded.
3. The type and size of grounds being used.
4. The type of grounding procedure being utilized. Explain why either the equal potential zone (EPZ) or the bracket-grounding procedure is the best choice for the job.
5. The grounding source which will be utilized, i.e., station grounds, common neutral, permanently driven ground rods, anchor rods, temporarily driven ground rods
6. The specific locations where the grounds will be installed. Include both the physical location and the place in the circuit.
7. Discuss and ensure all other potential sources have been addressed, for example: lightning, back feed, induction, microwave, radio tower.
8. The method of testing for the presence of voltage that will be utilized.

9. The requirement to count all EPZ and bracket grounds during installation and removal. The PIC must record the number of devices being installed or removed, and report that information to the electric control center as described in Utility Standard S1403 "Clearance, Non Test, Switching Log, and Tagging Procedures (Attachment 1, Clearance and Application for Work)". Specifically, the PIC must report on the following devices:
 - All phase-to-phase grounding devices (line jumpers).
 - All phase-to-ground grounding devices.
 - All phase-to-structure grounding devices.
 - All cluster grounds (shall be counted as three grounds).
10. Ensure each employee understands their role and follows applicable safety and health rules and grounding procedures.

In addition to the Grounding Tailboard briefing there are some additional Protective Grounding Requirements.

continued on page 19



Members of the Local 1245 Safety Committee meeting in Vacaville in February were, clockwise from left: Sergio Munoz, Asplundh Tree; Darryl Rice, PG&E; Ralph Armstrong, Business Rep. and Chairman; Bob Burkle, City of Santa Clara; Art Torres, SMUD; Al White, PG&E; and Mike Gomes, Modesto Irrigation District. Not pictured: Tom Greer, Frontier.

Photo credit: Leslie Asher

Outside Construction, from page 15

Dispatch Summary

January

Lineman Referrals = 51

Out-of-work books:

Book 1:	46
Book 2:	63
Book 3:	5
Book 4:	61

Line Equipment Man Referrals = 9

Out-of-work books:

Book 1:	3
Book 2:	6

MMRI pacts ratified

Local 1245 members at MMRI approved two agreements in a mail ballot counted on March 6 at Weakley Hall in Vacaville.

The agreements provide general wage increases of 3.75% annually for three years. They also provide \$10.00 a day subsistence increase to \$50.00. Subsistence payments for over 51 miles will remain the same.

In-lieu-of benefits are increased \$0.17 in year one, \$0.25 in year two, and \$0.25 in year three.

The Substation, Communication, and Relay Technician agreement and the Construction Coordinator/Inspector agreement were both ratified without a dissenting vote.

Members at MMRI mostly perform telecom work inside PG&E buildings. The union received input from its members during bargaining via e-mails and texting.

"We will be printing new agreements in the next few weeks and distributing them to the members. We are delighted with the members that took the time to vote and return their ballots," said Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran.

The three-year agreements are effective June 1, 2009.

The balloting was judged by Peggy Proschold. Kevin Roberts served as Teller.

Book 3:	11
---------------	----

Groundman Referrals = 8

Out-of-work books:

Book 1:	17
Book 2:	16
Book 3:	74
Book 4:	119

Cable Splicer Referrals = 0

Out-of-work books:

Book 1:	4
Book 2:	1
Book 3:	0

Apprentice Lineman Referrals = 12

Street Light Maintenance Worker Referrals = 0

Portability = 4

Organizing:

BA = 69

A = 43

February

Lineman Referrals = 36

Out-of-work books:

Book 1:	34
Book 2:	56
Book 3:	4
Book 4:	72

Line Equipment Man Referrals = 8

Out-of-work books:

Tailboards, from page 18

- Conductors and or equipment are considered energized until they have been tested and proven de-energized by the installation of approved grounding devices.
- Conductors/equipment shall be tested through the use of an approved voltage detector. The approved voltage detector shall be on all job sites where protective grounding will be utilized. The approved voltage detector shall be affixed to an approved live line (hot stick) tool and tested while maintaining the safe working distance. A buzz test shall not be utilized to detect the presence of voltage with the following exception:

In the event the approved voltage detector is inoperable, an approved buzz test may be utilized in accordance

Book 1:	4
Book 2:	8
Book 3:	9

Groundman Referrals = 13

Out-of-work books:

Book 1:	18
Book 2:	16
Book 3:	80
Book 4:	118

Cable Splicer Referrals = 0

Out-of-work books:

Book 1:	3
Book 2:	4
Book 3:	0

Apprentice Lineman Referrals = 14

Street Light Maintenance Worker Referrals = 2

Portability = 4

Organizing:

BA = 26

A = 26

Canus agreement ratified

Members of Local 1245 at Canus have ratified new three-year agreements effective June 1, 2009.

The company made the offer before formal negotiations began and Local 1245 agreed to present the offer to the members for a vote.

The agreement provides a 3.75% general wage increase each year for three years. The agreement also increases daily subsistence pay to \$50, a \$10 increase. Subsistence over 51 miles will remain the same.

In Lieu of Benefits increases are: \$0.17 year one, \$0.25 year two, \$0.25 year three, for a total increase of \$0.87

an hour in the third year.

The Hydro Agreement passed with 100% approval from those casting ballots. The SUB Agreement also passed with 100% approval. The CC/I Agreement passed with 95% approval.

The union will print new agreements in the next few weeks and distribute them to the members.

"We are delighted with the members that took the time to vote and return the ballots," said Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran. "We will keep working toward a higher voter turnout in the future, but are pleased with the unity in which you voted. Thanks for taking the time to participate."

with requirements outlined below.

An approved buzz test is defined as attaching a 12" crescent wrench or equivalent mass of metal to the end of an approved live line (hot stick) tool and testing the line de-energized while maintaining the Safe Working Distance.

Testing a line de-energized (testing for presence of voltage) with an approved voltage detector or a buzz test shall not be performed while utilizing Rubber Glove work methods.

Whenever a conductor in excess of 600 volts is down and requires repair, rubber glove work procedures shall not be utilized. The line shall be properly grounded. A wire down is defined as:

- Broken and/or separated from the supporting structure and contacting a potential grounded source,

examples include, but are not limited to the following: contacting the ground, trees, buildings, messenger, etc., whether a single conductor or all conductors of the circuit are making contact.

Note: This would not prevent the use of rubber glove work methods where the line is still energized and off the supporting structure, and not contacting a potential ground source, i.e., a floating conductor, broken jumper, etc.

- At no time shall a "safety clearance" be established in lieu of applying protective grounding. Operations may not provide field personnel with a "safety clearance" when work is being performed on the line being cleared. If the line being worked on requires a clearance, Operations will require the requester to report on the line, reporting the number of grounds being utilized.
- The only grounding method approved for use during a broken and/or separated wire situation, as defined in a. above, is bracket grounding.
- These rules shall be adhered to at all times, including emergencies. Employees troubleshooting outages shall not expedite restoration by handling/cutting ungrounded primary voltage conductors utilizing class II rubber gloves.

Local 1245
The people behind the power

Current News:

- 1245's ALL-NEW UNION SHOPPER: Download, catalog and order form or shop On-Line
- Sacramento Regional Transit agreement ratified by members (Posted 5-11-08)
- The Vacaville Retiree Meeting for May 14 has been cancelled (Posted 5-11-08)
- PG&E Bargaining Committee: Bulletin #1 (Posted 5-8-08)
- Primary Election endorsements by IBEW Local 1245 (Revised 5-7-08)
- Next IBEW will meet at temporary location for May meeting (Posted 5-6-08)
- "Card Check" election adds new members at PG&E (Posted 5-5-08)
- Retiree Club Members urge "No on 98" and "Yes on 99" (Posted 5-5-08)
- Langshermen close ports to protest Iraq war (Posted 5-5-08)
- Paid Sick Days is goal of new bill in California legislature (Posted 5-5-08)
- Member Mobilization helps win contract Association Dist. (Posted 5-1-08)

Attention PG&E Exempt Employees!
Your job security improves with a union contract. And a secure union pension compares favorably with your current pension. Use the links below to check the numbers for yourself!

My 2007 Union Pension Calculator
Sample Retirement Calculations
Assumptions in Designing the Calculators

IBEW Action Squad
Expand Paid Family Leave: Ask legislators to support an expansion of California's successful Paid Family Leave law. (Note: this alert has now expired. Thanks for your participation)

See how Action Squad campaigns here

Tom Davoli
Business Manager
Legacy Costs
Legacy Premiums

Get the latest union news on-line!
Internet: www.ibew1245.com
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

Corporate Pickpocket

Wal-Mart is flush with cash during the current economic crisis.

How is this possible?

Store sales at Wal-Mart were up 2.1% in January. What's the key to Wal-Mart's success during hard times? No big mystery. Wal-Mart gives you low prices, then picks your pocket.

By paying the vast majority of its workers little more than the minimum wage and offering health care plans most can't afford, Wal-Mart shifts its corporate expenses onto the backs of taxpayers.

In 19 of 23 states surveyed by the AFL-

CIO, Wal-Mart topped the list of employers pushing workers into state-provided health care programs. Over 6% of all Georgia children covered by a state-run health care program, for example, had parents working for Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart offers squat for benefits, then expects taxpayers to pick up the tab for its employees' health care.

As state budgets collapse, many Wal-Mart workers could lose state-provided

health care assistance. Many will have to go to emergency rooms for medical care. Those ER visits will end up in the tax bills and private insurance premiums paid by the rest of us.

Meanwhile, Wal-Mart has wrung at least \$1 billion in economic development assistance from state and local governments over the past 20 years. More of our tax dollars—subsidizing Wal-Mart's "low" prices.

Former Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott in 2008 made \$30 million in total compensation. Wal-Mart CEOs will keep picking the taxpayers' pocket as long as you and I keep shopping there.

It's a scam. And we have the power to stop it.

**Take a Stand.
Don't shop at Wal-Mart.**

Wal-Mart vs. America



You Decide

Wal-Mart's America vs. Our America

600,000 workers without company health care	vs.	Affordable health care
2 million women suing for discrimination	vs.	Equal pay for equal work
Repeated child labor law violations	vs.	Protecting children
Poverty-level wages	vs.	Living wages
Corporate special interest lobbyists	vs.	The American people

This is one battle America can't afford to lose

Graphics courtesy of wakeupwalmart.com. Read their latest report on this campaign at <http://blog.wakeupwalmart.com>

PLEASE POST