

IBEW Local 1245 News
Posted: March 10, 2009

OUTSIDE CONSTRUCTION REPORT: CRANE CLASS PREPARES MEMBERS FOR CERTIFICATION

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

This class was for Outside Line Construction members who have the operating of cranes in their job descriptions. About 30 members attended.



Crane class

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 are 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 in the March-April Utility Reporter.

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 will be hosting a pre-retirement seminar on March 14 at the Ronald Weakley Hall in Vacaville. We plan to start around 9:00 AM and cover several topics, so retiring members can make the best decisions when the time comes. We will have guest speakers from NEBF/NEAP/NEFP and Lineco to explain benefits and answer questions. We also have 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 informal with NECA and the feeling that we 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, cases have had more jurisdictional problems in February of 2009 than 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 pending, 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, you 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 member 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.

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

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:

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

