Titus calls on utility to be “good corporate citizen”

Gubernatorial candidate Dina Titus explains her motto to Local 1245 members at the Reno Unit meeting: “Tell it straight and get it done.”

Sierra Pacific Power has a responsibility to negotiate in good faith and provide good wages and benefits to its employees, a leading candidate for governor of Nevada told a union hall packed with IBEW Local 1245 members on April 5.

Dina Titus, currently the Democratic leader in Nevada’s state senate, told Local 1245’s Reno unit that Sierra Pacific Power had the privilege of being a monopoly. “What comes with that,” she said, “is the responsibility to be a good corporate citizen—negotiating in good faith and providing good jobs with good benefits.”

Her expressions of support drew enthusiastic applause from union members who filled every chair in the room and all available standing room as well.

Union members employed at Sierra Pacific Power have good reason to be disgruntled with the utility’s approach to recent negotiations. The company has, at various times during the negotiations, pressed for massive takeaways in benefits and the virtual elimination of current work rules. (Negotiations remained at a standstill at Utility Reporter press time.)

The appearance of a leading candidate for governor at the union meeting was a strong indication that influential parts of Nevada’s political establishment are growing concerned about the utility’s failure to reach a fair settlement with its employees.

Titus didn’t mince words when dealing with issues near and dear to working people.

“Organized labor is under attack. They are rolling back wages, rolling back benefits, rolling back jobs,” she said. She has privately expressed interest in sponsoring an anti-outsourcing bill in the next session of the Nevada legislature.

“Titus, a professor of political science at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, said her concept of government is based on a few basic principles: “Educate our kids, lock up the bad guys, provide needed services, and then get out of the way.”

Noting that she was a gun owner, Titus emphasized that she was a strong believer in individual rights. But she made it clear that individual rights, in her view, include the right to an honest government.

“We’ve got a chain of corruption running through every branch of government, from the statehouse to the White House,” she said. “We’ve got a culture of corruption in Washington, D.C. A failed regulatory system. I’m going to break that, start by changing the culture.”

PG&E Transformation agreements signed

Editor’s note: The following joint statement was released by IBEW Local 1245 Business Manager Perry Zimmerman and PG&E Senior Vice President Russ Jackson on April 26.

Earlier this month, we reached agreement on critical Business Transformation issues including Dispatch functions and the new Resource Management Centers. We’re pleased to announce that today these agreements have been signed, allowing PG&E to continue moving forward to transform the way it does business.

The details of these agreements will help PG&E better serve its customers while being responsive to employees as we work to make change for the better. By leveraging the present skills and knowledge of IBEW members, PG&E will be able to best utilize the technology of the future. Technological advancements and streamlining efforts are expected to greatly improve our operating efficiencies.

One item that will require ratification by the Clerical Bargaining Unit is an agreement to best utilize the technology of the future. Technological advancements and streamlining efforts are expected to greatly improve our operating efficiencies.

The Merced Chapter of the Local 1245 Retirees Club got off to a spectacular beginning when 37 people crammed into the conference room of a local restaurant on April 5 to express their frustration over rising health care costs and stagnating pension benefits.

Gordon Borges, a 78-year-old PG&E retiree who labored for weeks to launch the chapter, gavelled the meeting to order and got straight to the point.

“I remember when our relationship with PG&E was one of mutual respect. The name we gave it was family—remember that?” Borges asked. Today, he continued, “PG&E has become a corporate entity that is indifferent to...”

PG&E AGREES TO MEET WITH RETIREES

Massive turnout in Merced

Retirees filled the meeting room to capacity at the launch of the Merced Chapter of the Retirees Club last month. Ken Rawles (standing right), Recording Secretary of the North Bay Chapter, reported on recent organizing activities among retirees.
Transformation bargaining produces agreements

In April, I tried to explain the thinking behind our decision to have bargaining unit employees join the employee engagement teams working on Transformation Business Initiatives at PG&E. We have now reached agreement on three of the four initial sets of Transformation negotiations, and those closest to the Transformation process are reporting a slight change in the company’s approach to Transformation Business Initiatives.

The three negotiations that have produced agreement involve the Materials Department, the new Dispatch centers, and the Resource Management Centers (RMCs).

The negotiations involving the Materials Department were the most straightforward for the simple fact that the company was not requesting any substantial changes in the collective bargaining agreement. Senior Business Representative Larry Pierce took advantage of these negotiations to consolidate and update a number of existing letter agreements involving Materials, but the actual Transformation negotiations were not of great consequence.

The same cannot be said of the negotiations over the Dispatch centers and the RMCs. As a result of these initiatives, fewer employees will ultimately be needed to do the work and that work will be centralized into far fewer locations than exist today. To make matters more difficult, in each instance the company would have been able to make most of the operational changes that they want to make without any change in the collective bargaining agreement.

It was thus the task of the Dispatch committee (led by Sam Tamimi, Sam Glero, and Darrel Norris) and the RMC committee (led by Dorothy Fortier) to convince the company that the bargaining unit’s cooperation and buy-in was worth concessions on the company’s part.

I am proud to say that both committees succeeded and that the company made concessions both in its plan and in contract language to obtain a measure of cooperation in staffing the new centers. Our members who end up working in the RMCs and the dispatch centers, as well as the clerical members from both bargaining units who remain in the field, will enjoy better working conditions as a result of the work of our two committees.

Of all three agreements, only part of one would pass our test of requiring ratification, and that is our agreement in the RMC negotiations to extend the clerical bargaining unit’s contract for two additional years. Now that an agreement has been reached on the final language of the RMC letter agreement, the two-year extension will be put out for ratification by the entire clerical unit.

The company’s willingness to cooperate rather than proceed unilaterally on these issues is in keeping with our longstanding relationship, and it also is consistent with what I am hearing about a heightened scrutiny by the company Transformation Business Initiatives coming from Accenture. We have seen wholesale change at PG&E in the past, but we have never seen the type of wholesale change that we are seeing today, in which the company is moving ahead without full-scale workforce and technology planning.

Such are the pressures of the new world order for utilities, I suppose. The mandate for change is so strong that planning is rushed and incomplete. I applaud the new caution that we are seeing at PG&E as they review proposed initiatives.

The only Transformation committee to have started but not come to agreement is the committee dealing with emergency response. That committee has yet to find the balance between the two important interests—employee rights and the need to improve emergency response. The bargaining unit members of that committee are among our best members, and I am confident that they will find their way in time.

You can see the full text of the Dispatch and RMC agreements on-line at www.ibew1245.com.

Even as we work our way through Transformation changes at PG&E, we know that this is not the only show in town. Our members at the City of Ukiah and the City of Santa Clara have come out smiling after long and difficult negotiations, while our members at Sierra Pacific and the City of Alameda are still engaged in difficult bargaining that has not led to agreement. Several major employers will begin bargaining in the next month or two, including outside line, WAPA, and SMUD.

Unit changes

Unit 4014, Elk Grove, has a new meeting location effective May 25, 2006. The unit will meet at Round Table Pizza, 5110 Laguna Blvd., in Elk Grove. The Elk Grove Unit meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm.

Ray Thomas, Business Rep.

Unit 1221, Buellton, has a new meeting location effective in April: Firestone Walker Brewery Co. in Buellton. Meeting dates and time remain the same.

Mike Haentjens, Business Rep.
Governor Candidate, continued from page 1

coming all the way from K Street,” she said, referring to the neighborhood in the nation’s capitol where many powerful corporate lobbyists are headquartered.

“We are taking it to ‘em!” pledged Titus, who said her campaign motto was “Tell it straight and get it done.”

Two words tell the story on why people form unions, said 40-year member Ron Borst: Unfair Management.

Liz Magallon

Aaron Coulson voices an opinion.

Sierra’s proposal “insulting, disloyal, dishonest”

To say I was alarmed by Sierra Pacific Power Company’s proposals would be mild. Outraged may get closer to the emotion! My decision to retire last year was based entirely on the retirement terms presented, and which I thought were guaranteed.

Now, less than a year after my retirement date, there is a company proposal to increase my medical costs by almost 40%, which results in decreasing my monthly income by $80. Based on a net monthly pension of $2238, an $80 decrease is huge. This represents most of my monthly electric payment. And, I’m just one year into retirement—what is my pension going to look like in 5 years?

Retirees do not get cost of living raises. Did the company give any consideration that knowledge of such a proposal would have greatly altered my decision to retire at 55? This is criminal!

I am now 56 years old. I gave the company 33 years of loyal service. As a lineman/foreman, I also gave the company my two knees (which will be replaced this April) and two shoulders (which are part of a workman’s compensation claim—yet to be acted on). When some of us say we “gave our all” for the company, we mean it literally.

Sierra Pacific Power Company was a company that you were proud to serve—and one that used to be proud to serve you. None of us gets healthier with age; we’re all going to break down over time. Everyone is aware that medical plan contributions paid when working and 14 years out on LTD from an injury on the job.

I’ve had one—yes one—2% rise in all those years, although my taxes, union dues, medical and every thing else has gone up.

During negotiations once again, if you’re on LTD and not on SSD you’re left out. I’ve already fallen into financial desperation. My medical health care costs me more and pays less, and no raise in sight.

I didn’t get sick working for PG&E. I was injured on the job. You’d think they’d do right by me.

Larry Say, Hot Springs, AZ

Without loyal employees you have no company. You reduce the benefits, you devalue the employee and reduce the loyalty. Who wins?

The company’s proposal is insulting, disloyal, dishonest and absolutely not workable for those of us who have planned our retirement years around the current medical plan and pension allotment. As for those who have yet to retire—how terribly daunting for them.

It’s one thing to devise a new plan applicable to new employees (or those with less than 5 years of service), it’s quite another issue when dealing with long-term employees and retirees.

I hope the company develops a conscience and stops the direction of their thinking immediately. The fact that they had to hire outside consultants to act as henchmen (and probably henchmen who are in their 30s and see retirement as something in another lifetime) is not a good sign that they want conscience to play any part in their decision. This only indicates that they want to dehumanize those they are affecting to justify their disloyal proposals.

Darryl Abraham, left, and Tammy Cray.

Below: Business Rep. Randy Osborn discusses a union wage proposal that was rejected by the company.

Thus begins a journey.

Letters to the Editor

You’d think they’d do right by me

In regard to “Retirees slip into financial desperation” (Letter to the Editor, Utility Reporter, April 2006). I’ve been with PG&E for 40 years—26 years working and 14 years out on LTD from an injury on the job.

I’ve had one—yes one—2% rise in all those years, although my taxes, union dues, medical and every thing else has gone up.

During negotiations once again, if you’re on LTD and not on SSD you’re left out. I’ve already fallen into financial desperation. My medical health care costs me more and pays less, and no raise in sight.

I didn’t get sick working for PG&E. I was injured on the job. You’d think they’d do right by me.

Larry Say, Hot Springs, AZ

UtilityReporter
Remembering Kathy Tindall

If you don’t know Kathy Tindall’s name, you haven’t been paying attention.

Tindall, who died April 18 after years of declining health, began serving as the Northern Area member of the Local 1245 Executive Board in 1976 and held that post continuously except for the years 1977-1983 when she served as the union’s Recording Secretary—also an Executive Board position.

“Kathy was the longest-serving Executive Board member in Local 1245’s history,” said Business Manager Perry Zimmerman. “She believed in Local 1245 and devoted a good part of her life to serving the union and its members.”

Tindall rose to a position of leadership at a time when the labor movement was dominated by men, and she knew she was blazing a trail for the women who would come after her. Tindall was a regular fixture at conferences on Women in the Workforce. In 1978 she helped plan a Women in the Economy conference.

“She was a good example of how to break through barriers against women, said union founder Ron Weakley, who encouraged Tindall’s activism early in her career. “She wasn’t a slugger or a fighter, she was just a steady person with basic principles. She had good basic principles,” Weakley said.


But Tindall’s enduring legacy will be her service on the Local 1245 Executive Board, where she made sure that her constituents in northern California and Nevada had a voice. Her position of leadership was acutely appreciated by members at Sierra Pacific Power, who recognized her as one of their own, as someone who could make sure their concerns were represented in the union’s governing body.

Tindall’s career at Sierra Pacific Power began in April of 1972, when she was hired as a Junior Clerk in General Accounting. She served subsequently as a Clerk in Customer Services, a Warehouseman in Material Services, a Utility Materials Specialist in Materials Services, and a Specialist-Purchasing.

It took only four years from the time Tindall hired on at Sierra Pacific to gain a seat on the Local 1245 Executive Board. The qualities that allowed her to succeed in union politics were pretty obvious, in the view of former union staffer Ann Kools, who knew Tindall first as a colleague and later as a friend and traveling companion.

“As a politician she was very astute. She knew politics. She knew elections. She was very savvy,” said Kools. “She knew a ton of people.”

Tindall “had the personality” for politics, according to Sierra Pacific Lineman Ken McNeal, Tindall’s brother-in-law. “She got along with people. They just liked her. It was amazing.”

But she wasn’t the sort of politician who tells people whatever they want to hear. Tindall wasn’t shy about expressing her convictions.

“She could be real ornery,” said McNeal. When it came to politics, “she could be real argumentative. You wouldn’t want to get her started.”

It was Tindall’s passion for the union cause that made her more than just a savvy politician. Her heart was in it, all the way. “She cared about the union,” said Kools. “The labor movement—that was her baby.”

Embezzled funds repaid in full

Local 1245 received a check on April 17 from Joy Wagoner’s attorney, repaying in full the money that Wagoner embezzled from the union.

Wagoner was terminated from the union’s office staff on Nov. 8, 2005 shortly after the union found irregular financial practices in the preparation of expense checks for committee members. A fraud auditor subsequently hired by the union identified over $50,000 in missing funds. Local 1245 is pleased to report the repayment of those funds.

No member of the union or its staff, other than Wagoner, was charged with any wrongdoing.

I would like to welcome aboard Ron Cochran as our new Outside Line Business Representative. Ron started out in 1981-1984 working on a logging crew in Northern California. In 1984-1987 Ron became an apprentice lineman through the Cal-Nev JATC and a member of Local 1245. Through his career Ron has worked as a Journeyman Lineman with the City of Redding, traveled to Alaska working construction out of Local 1547, and worked for PP&L, as a Journeyman Lineman and also went through an Apprenticeship Meter & Relay. The past six years Ron has been working for WAPA- Department of Energy as a Journeyman Communications and Instrumentation Craftsman.

In the Construction market we are starting to see work picking up for some of our utilities work, but at the same time some of our bigger jobs are starting to wind down.

We have been running about 4 Journeyman Lineman open calls a day that are left open.

THE NUMBERS

Since last month’s report, we’ve had 93 calls for Journeyman Lineman; 2 calls for Equipment Specialist; 19 calls for Groundman; zero calls for Cable Splicers; zero calls for UG Techs; and 3 calls for Apprentices, for a total of 99 calls.

The books, as of April 12:
- Journeyman Lineman, Book 1: 10
- Journeyman Lineman, Book 2: 1
- Lineman, Book 3: 2
- Lineman, Book 4: 41
- Equipment Specialist, Book 1: 6
- Equipment Specialist, Book 2: 6
- Equipment Specialist, Book 3: 2
- Groundman, Book 1: 5
- Groundman, Book 2: 9
- Groundman, Book 3: 33
- Groundman, Book 4: 116
- Cable Splicer, Book 1: 0
- Cable Splicer, Book 2: 0
- Cable Splicer, Book 3: 0

Total crews working on:
- Outside Agreement: 70
- U.G. Agreement: 10 crews
- Pole and Test Agreement: 10 crews
- Teledata Agreement: 10 crews
- Total crews working: 100

Currently we have 318 apprentices: 1 is traveling working in our jurisdiction, 50 are working out of Local 1245; 236 are working out of Local 47; 21 are working out of Local 396 and 10 are laid off due to various reasons. We graduated a total of 8 apprentices to Journeyman Lineman so far in 2006. We have indentured 44 apprentices into the program so far this year.

Sierra Pacific is putting out small projects. PARR has been working on the Tracy to Silver Lake 120 KV, Phase 1 Transmission Line Project, which is almost completed except for the pulling of the Underground. Sturgeon has picked up 20 miles of 120 KV line from Winnemucca, Nev. toward Battle Mountain, which has started and is going good.

PG&E is putting out small packages. The 230 KV Underground Project in San Francisco had to push back its soak test due to all the rain.

SMUD is putting out small projects.

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

NEGOTIATIONS

We are negotiating with San Francisco NECA on the Light Rail Agreement.

We are in negotiations with Canus Corp. and have a table settlement for a one-year agreement with an increase of 8.5%.

We are in negotiations with NECA and Henkels and McCoy on the Tele data Agreement.

We have sent opening letter to Western Line Contractors NECA on the Outside Line Agreement and are scheduled to meet April 24 and 25. Also sent opening letter to Henkels & McCoy on the Outside Line Construction Agreement and are scheduled to meet on April 26 and 27.

We have re-opened the Republic Electric Agreement for Street Light and Signal Light Maintenance Agreement.

OTHER NEWS

The next Joint Safety meeting is May 25.

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

On March 29 there was an underground circuit interruption in Westminster, CA with an underground crew.

David Crawford, Senior Outside Line Business Representative

Cochrane hired for Outside Construction

Ron Cochran has been hired by Local 1245 as a Business Representative for Outside Construction.

Cochrane will be joining Senior Business Rep. David Crawford in representing Outside Construction members.

Although Cochrane began his union career in Outside Construction, he has worked directly for a number of utilities, including the former Pacific Power and Light in Oregon, an investor-owned utility; the City of Redding, a municipal utility; and Western Area Power Administration, a federal power agency. His union experience includes negotiations and serving as a steward.

Welcome aboard, Ron!
Medicare vulnerable to scam artists

Keep a close watch on your Social Security, credit and Medicare cards. Scammers are being attracted to the new Medicare prescription drug program like flies to cow patties.

With the enrollment deadline fast approaching, swindlers have concocted simple, cheap and fraudulent ways to handle seniors’ medicinal needs.

“We found that any time Medicare offers a new benefit, the scam artists come in,” Anne Gray, community outreach coordinator for the California Health Advocates’ Senior Medicare Patrol project, told the Contra Costa Times. “Anything that makes it sound easy is going to get people to go that way.”

The prescription drug plan that began Jan. 1 allows Medicare clients to select drug-coverage plans offered by private companies. The multiplicity of programs has led to widespread confusion among seniors.

The $299 scam offers seniors a year’s worth of prescription drug coverage for a flat fee and is touted as a cheaper alternative to Medicare Part D prescription drug plans, Gray said.

Scammers have already ripped off some seniors in the Midwest by obtaining their credit card or bank account information over the phone and withdrawing $299. Medicare experts and senior advocates offer tips to prevent Medicare fraud:

• Never give personal financial information over the phone to unsolicited callers promoting prescription drug programs. Legitimate prescription drug plan representatives will not ask for Social Security numbers, Medicare numbers or credit card or bank account information, said Brian Pogor, president of Senior Educators.

• Medicare clients do not have to pay to join a plan. Burns said, and clients do not have to pay post-May 15 penalties in advance.

• Medicare planning and counseling is available free of charge. Clients do not have to pay for assistance.

• People who have questions about plans or want to enroll should contact Medicare, Area Agencies on Aging or the local Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program.

Legitimate businesses offering the private commercial drug plans for Medicare Part D may make unsolicited phone calls, making it necessary for seniors to differentiate between the scam artists and the legitimate businesses.

One way to sort the wheat from the chaff is to request an insurance agents’ license number if he or she requests financial information.
 Members ratify Davey Tree pact

Local 1245 members working for Davey Tree Surgery (contracted to perform Line Clearance Tree Trimming for Silicon Valley Power at the City of Santa Clara) have ratified a one-year extension of their labor agreement.

On the job for Davey Tree

Local 1245 members employed by Davey Tree were photographed by Business Rep. Junior Ornelas recently while working on Luther Gilson Highway in Solano County. On left is Francisco Cirigo, ACA, a one-year member of the union. On left is Ricardo Ibarra, Foreman, a four-year member of the union.

Working in San Leandro for Davey Tree are Jose Gonzalez (left) and Lionel Cordova (right), both new members of IBEW Local 1245.

In case of an emergency

By Art Torres

The American Society of Safety Engineers has joined with rescue personnel in asking people to program emergency phones numbers into their cell phone address book.

"In Case of Emergency." or ICE, contacts in your cell phone address book would allow rescuers to more easily reach family members or emergency contacts in case an illness or accident renders you unconscious.

With over 190 million people in the US with cell phones and even more worldwide, ICE can help emergency personnel to more quickly identify an injured individual and their next of kin in minutes instead of hours. Making ICE a common practice will in turn encourage police, fire and other emergency personnel to check cell phones in emergencies.

Even if you carry personal identification, such as a driver’s license, it is still recommended to use ICE, because an ID does not contain the names and phone numbers of next of kin, medical history or any other information that emergency personnel may need in rendering assistance.

Individuals can program a new contact in their cell phone address book with the letter’s ICE followed by the name and phone numbers of their emergency contacts. If adding more than one ICE contact, mark the primary contact as ICE 1, such as ICE 1- John Doe, ICE 2 - Jane Doe, and so on.

It would be very helpful if the ICE contact had basic information about you, such as your nearest family member, primary physician, work contact, basic medical history, a list of allergies, current medication.

Individuals under the age of 18 should list the guardian, mother or father as their primary ICE contacts.

Members voted 9 to 0 on April 6 to accept the one year agreement, which increases wages effective April 1, 2006 by 4.8% for Foremen, 4.5% for Foremen trainees, and 2.5% for Climbers.

Senior Business Representative Ray Thomas and Business Representative Junior Ornelas were assisted in negotiations by employee Representative Marcos Hernandez.

Bargaining with Provco

Meeting in Vacaville for Provco negotiations over the winter were, from left, Business Rep. Junior Ornelas, Senior Business Rep. Ray Thomas, Local 1245 Negotiating Committee member Angel Mondragon, Provco President George Barlow, and Provco Vice-President Scott Huffmaster.

The union committee on Emergency Response, chaired by Assistant Business Manager Howard Stiefer (right), in a recent meeting at union headquarters in Vacaville.

Transformation, continued

tension of the Clerical Agreement by two years, to December 31, 2010. The general wage increase for Clerical Bargaining Unit employees will be the same as that negotiated for the Physical Bargaining Unit in 2009 and 2010. While the vote will take place over the next few weeks, both IBWE and PG&E have agreed to move ahead in staffing a maximum of seven to ten clerical positions, utilizing Title 18 - Bidding, in the Concord Resource Management Center.

Other items covered in the Letter Agreements:

- Work will be effectively and efficiently dispatched across the organization and the service territory;
- Dispatch of work will be consolidated, including dispatch of design, gas/electric service and gas/electric construction functions, into the Resource Management Centers in Concord and Fresno.
- New position classifications will be established (Work and Resource Dispatcher, Work and Resource Dispatcher in Training, Work and Resource Dispatcher Relief) and future duties will be clarified.
- Training opportunities will be increased and enhanced for IBWE employees.
- Clerical jobs at the Resource Management Centers will be in the Operating Line of Progression and will support design, gas/electric service, and gas/electric construction.

Detailed Questions and Answers and Letters Agreement 06-19 and R1-06-20 are available on the PG&E and IBEW Local 1245 websites. There will be joint company/union meetings in the near future to further discuss the details of the agreements.

We will continue to work together on other Business Transformation-related issues. We realize that change is essential to moving PG&E forward but that it can have a significant impact on our employees. We are committed to support you through these efforts.

Russ Jackson
PG&E Senior Vice President
Human Resources

Perry Zimmerman
Business Manager
IBEW Local 1245
Merced, continued from page 1

to its retirees.

When the floor was thrown open for discussion, retiree after retiree spoke about the hardships they are experiencing with the dramatic rise in medical costs.

“When I first retired, PG&E was doing its part. Now I have $600 coming out of my paycheck every month,” said Dave Bower, a former truck driver who retired from PG&E in 1995.

John Cordoza, the only active employee in attendance, offered strong words of support to the retirees. Cordoza, a Gas ADE with 14 months to go until his own retirement, noted that current employees may not need as much medical attention as the retirees. But “the people who built this company are really getting hammered on the medical and they deserve better than that,” he said.

Business Rep. Mike Grill reminded the group that retiree health care and pension improvements are not mandatory subjects of bargaining, but that PG&E can bargain on the subject if it feels moved to do so. “That’s why this meeting is so important,” said Grill.

Mike Silva, president of the East Bay Chapter, and Ken Rawles, Recording Secretary of the North Bay Chapter, brought fraternal greetings from their respective groups and congratulated the Merced retirees on the great turnout for their first meeting.

PG&E Agrees to Meet

Meanwhile, on the same day, Local 1245 retirees in Vacaville debated whether to proceed with plans for a protest rally at PG&E’s annual shareholders meeting to register their discontent. The retirees decided to refrain from public demonstration after Business Manager Perry Zimmerman informed them that PG&E had agreed to meet with representatives from all of Local 1245’s Retiree Club chapters to listen to their concerns.

The North Bay Chapter, meeting in Santa Rosa on April 4, experienced its largest turnout to date, with many new people in attendance, reported Business Rep. Joe Osterlund.

“We need as many new Retiree clubs as possible forming to strengthen our numbers,” Recording Secretary Rawles noted in an e-mail following the Santa Rosa meeting. “We as retirees have to come together in order to seek our much-needed increases in our pension checks, and paid medical insurance.”

The East Bay chapter, after hearing that the company agreed to meet with retirees, chose three representatives to attend the meeting. President Silva reported that the chapter reaffirmed that its top two priorities were financial help with the medical plan and an annual cost-of-living increase for pensioners.

At the San Jose meeting, retirees celebrated the news that PG&E was willing to sit down and discuss retiree issues. “We thought that would be great. Everybody was enthusiastic,” said Jack Hill, who represented retirees in the last general bargaining with PG&E and is a member of the San Jose Chapter.

“A lot of people are close to the end of the RPOA (Retirement Premium Off-set Account), That’s why it’s imperative we get with the company—we’ve got to do something,” Hill said.

With the successful launch of a new chapter in Merced there can be little question that the retirees are, in fact, “doing something.” With their backs against the wall, Local 1245 retirees are organizing.

Borges, a life-long body builder, let it be known that retirees are not going to be shy about flexing their muscle. “We have worked long and hard so we can build momentum to get the job done,” said Borges, a one-time Meter Reader and B-Clerk, as he looked out at the filled-to-capacity room in Merced.

“This day we have proven we are not a bunch of senile couch potatoes.”

Retire Club Meeting Schedule

East Bay Chapter: 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA
San Jose Chapter: 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose, CA.
Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter: 2nd Wednesday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Cir-
cle, Vacaville, CA.
Santa Rosa Chapter: 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 551, 2525 Cleveland Ave., Suite B, Santa Rosa.
Merced Chapter: 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., Merced Senior Community Center, 755 W. 15th St., Merced.

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

Michael Alves, 17 years
Windson, CA
James Anderson 37 years
Morgan Hill, CA
Lester Bailey 30 years
Sacramento, CA
Dan Beer 25 years
Palo, HI
Jesse Bruch 3 years
Sacramento, CA
Edward Cardoza 20 years
San Leandro, CA
Glennda Carter 30 years
Sanger, CA
Joseph Charbonneau 32 years
San Francisco, CA
Sherman Coleman 34 years
San Jose, CA
Levon Collins 32 years
Clovis, CA
Mollie Conley 25 years
Mariposa, CA
Thomas Cooper 36 years
Alta, CA
Rudolph Cota 31 years
Lemoore, CA
Wayne Devoll 36 years
Chico, CA
Gary Donaldson 37 years
Reddley, CA
John Edmund 32 years
Berkeley, CA
John Eramdian 27 years
Modesto, CA
Dennis Easarte 9 years
Tracy, CA
Henry Everett 35 years
Ukiah, CA
Michael Farfan 32 years
Fremont, CA
Diane Fife 32 years
Brisbane, CA
David Fritz 36 years
Lodi, CA
Dennis Gabellini 34 years
Martinez, CA
Anthony Galan 31 years
Merced, CA
Michael Ginn 25 years
Clovis, CA
Dempsey Goins 35 years
Atascadero, CA
Gary Hamill 35 years
Alameda, CA
Edward Hedrick 40 years
Visalia, CA
James Hester 38 years
San Bruno, CA
Patrick Holland 35 years
San Francisco, CA
Ira Lee 30 years
Benicia, CA
Steven Lee 29 years
San Francisco, CA
William Manthey 21 years
Paradise, CA
Michael Marsland 33 years
Salinas, CA
Alfred McPhetridge 34 years
North Fork, CA
James Miller 35 years
Atascadero, CA
Thomas Modena 34 years
Half Moon Bay, CA
Carol Moreland 28 years
Chico, CA
Anthony Morgan 36 years
Bonanza, OR
Marvin Pennington 35 years
Fresno, CA
Billy Poe 35 years
Fairfield, CA
Larry Reis 36 years
Stratford, CA
Frank Rozza 31 years
Los Osos, CA
Danny L Sherman 34 years
Yuba City, CA

Gordon Borges, a long-time professional body builder, organized the Merced Chapter and chaired the first meeting.

“We have worked long and hard so we can build momentum to get the job done.”
Enjoying a rare break in this spring’s virtually non-stop rains, 56 line crews and 69 apprentices came to Sacramento on April 8 to demonstrate what public sector lineworkers can do.

The Sixth Annual Public Power Lineworkers’ Rodeo, sponsored by the American Public Power Association, featured competition in the 600 Amp Switch Out, Cross Arm Change, Cut Out Change, Four Bell Change, and Hurtman Rescue. Apprentices competed in the Conductor Tie, Dead End Change, Hurtman Rescue, Obstacle Course and Written Test. Awards are based upon safety, work practices, neatness, ability, equipment handling, and timely even completion.

IBEW Local 1245 represents lineworkers at five of the competing public utilities: Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Turlock Irrigation District, Roseville Electric, and SMUD.
Modesto Irrigation District, Turlock Irrigation District, Silicon Valley Power, and Roseville Electric.

To inaugurate the day’s activities, about a dozen SMUD apprentices participated in a dramatic flag-raising ceremony that also featured three of SMUD’s most senior IBEW members: Light Line Construction Foremen Don Kreuter and John Moe, and Heavy Foreman Richard Harper. The field of poles where the linemen competed was built in three rain-soaked days by SMUD apprentices under the direction of Jim Clamp.

No question about it, the home teams did well. Winning first place overall in the Journeyman competition was the SMUD team of Cayleb Bowman, Sean McClain, and Todd Prangley. Placing second overall...
Several IBEW members have been working on the Gulf Coast after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These hurricanes devastated the Gulf Coast last fall, and the IBEW Union Plus Credit Card that many members carry became much more than a piece of plastic in their wallet. That's because in the aftermath of the hurricanes 69 IBEW members received $34,500 in assistance from the Union Plus Credit Card Disaster Relief Fund. The need for solidarity was never stronger than during this disaster, and so those impacted were sent $500 checks from the Fund within days of requesting help.

"This money has changed the way I think about my Union Plus Credit Card. I never thought my credit card company would help me when they didn't have to," says Lindsey Wynn, a secretary for IBEW Local 861.

A mandatory evacuation led Wynn, her mother, brother and dog to flee to Mississippi, where they stayed for two weeks before being allowed to return home to Lake Charles, LA. "Things were so bad following Rita—there was no water, electricity, food or gas. It was hard to get help from FEMA without getting tied up in red tape," Wynn says. "On the other hand, when I called the Union Plus Credit Card, I received a check within a matter of days."

Rodrick Tart of New Orleans and Local 130 called his $500 check from the Union Plus Credit Card Disaster Relief Fund "a true blessing, one of the best our family has received."

For Tart and his family, Hurricane Katrina made an already tough situation even more harrowing. He was laid off from his job as an electrician just a few weeks before the hurricane hit the Gulf Coast. Then the disaster ripped away his New Orleans home, his car and his family's prized possessions, some of which had been handed down from previous generations. "At the time we received the grant, we were out of funds," he says.

The Tart family relocated to Atlanta, where they remain optimistic about the future.

The Union Plus Credit Card Disaster Relief Fund provided a total of $400,000 to some 800 union members to help ease hardships. The qualifications required only that a cardholder live in a FEMA-declared Katrina disaster area and experience an income loss of 25%. Hurricane grants are no longer available. Other assistance for union cardholders included payment waivers, lower rates, fee waivers, credit line increases and free credit counseling.

For more information about all the Union Plus benefits available, visit www.UnionPlus.org.
**Election of Delegates to the International Convention**

Local union elections for International Convention Delegates will be conducted by mail ballot during the month of June for the IBEW International Convention being held Sept. 11-15 in Cleveland, OH. Local 1245 members will receive their ballots around June 1st. Ballots will contain instructions on voting procedure, including the deadline for returning the ballot. Please follow the instructions carefully. A return envelope will be provided for you to return your completed ballot.

On the following pages you will find resumes for the candidates for Delegate. Information was supplied by each candidate. If the candidate supplied no information, only their initiation date will appear.

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**Ignacio Araquistain**  
Initiated into IBEW in June 1984.

**Joseph “Joe” Audelo**  
Initiated into IBEW in May 1978.

**Anna Bayless-Martinez**  
Initiated into IBEW in August 1980.

**Paul Boyd**  
Initiated into IBEW in May 1981.

**Bill Brill**  
Initiated into IBEW Local Union 1245 in June of 1980; Member of Unit 1511, San Jose; Classification: IBEW Business Representative. Shop Steward 1980-1999; Have attended many Shop Steward conferences, San Jose Unit Chair, 1981-1999; Ballot Committee, 1983; San Jose Division Labor Management Committee; Co-Chair of San Jose Labor Management Committee, 1993-1999; Continuous Improvement through Employee Involvement Advisory Board, 1993-1995; Member of San Jose Division Safety Walk Around Committee, 1991-1999; Chair of Safety Walk Around Committee, 1992-1999; Member of Meter Reading 94-53 Committee, 1997-1999; Member of CEO Meeting that met with Stan Skinner in 1994; Delegate to South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council, 1984 to present, Executive Board Member to South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council, 1984 to present; Delegate to Monterey AFL-CIO Labor Council, 2002 to present; Chair of Union Label Committee, South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council, 1989-1999; Attended 3 day organizing training, 1998; Graduated from George Meany Labor College class in organizing, 1999; Delegate to Consumer Federation of California, 1999; Collected over 2500 signatures in 1988 for CAL-OSHA Ballot Initiative, Attended the 2001 International Convention as an Alternate Delegate.

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**Carmier, Walter**

Initiated into IBEW Local Union 1245 in May 2000. Member of Unit 4014, Elk Grove; Classification: Transmission Tech. Shop Steward March – Present; Promissory Note Review Committee October 2005; Ballot Committee June 2004; Ballot Committee November 2004.

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**Robert (Bob) Choate**


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**David Crawford**


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**Dennis (Scooter) J. Flores**

Initiated into IBEW Local Union 1245 in February 1975. Member of Unit 1215, San Luis Obispo; Classification: Foreman’s Clerk.

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**Gloria Flores**

Initiated into IBEW in May 2001.

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**Al Fortier**


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**Cecelia De La Torre**

Initiated into IBEW in September 1987.

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**David Durston**

Initiated into IBEW in December 1979.

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**Ed Dwyer, Jr.**

Initiated into IBEW in August 1979.

Anthony E. Fortune

Initiated into IBEW Local Union 1245 in March 1972. Member of Unit 2515, Modesto; Classification: Gas Crew Leader. Shop Steward, 1975- Present; Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary; ADHOC Sub-Completion 2005-2006, Local Yard Committees, Labor Management Yosemite Division, Shop Stewards Training.

Mike Grill

Initiated into IBEW in February 1981.

Sam Gutierrez

Initiated into IBEW in April 1985.

Jason Haase

Initiated into IBEW in August 2002.

Alycia Gordon

Initiated into IBEW in October 2001.

Dorothy Fortier

Christine “Chris” Habecker

Initiated into IBEW in January 1976. Member of Unit 1111, Fresno; Classification: Operating Clerk. Unit Recorder; Recording Secretary for the Advisory Council; Executive Board Southern Area Member; Clerical at Large Advisory Council; Shop Steward 1982-present. Committees served on in Union (specify committee dates and year); Designated Alternate San Joaquin Valley Region Shop Steward for the Clerical Position evaluation System Appels procedure: 1990 to present. (Reference L.A. 90-43); Member of the San Joaquin Division Joint Grievance Committee: 1986 to present; Member of the 1989 Local 1245 Election Committee; Member of the 1990 PG&E General Negotiating Committee; Member of the 1994 PG&E General Negotiating Committee; Member of the 1992 Telephone Service Improvement Workstation Station Evaluation Committee; Member of the 1993 Telephone Service Study Committee; 1994 to current.; Participated as a “rank and file member” at the December 21, 1994 meeting with Stan Skinner.; Attended numerous Shop Steward Training Conferences.; Attended Effective Grievance Resolution Training.; Attended Positive Discipline Guidelines training in 2003.; Chairperson of the Fresno Unit #1111: 1989 to present; Advisory Council Clerical at Large 1994 to 1995; Southern Area Executive Board Member elected in 1995 to November 2001.; Recording Secretary Of IBEW Local 1245 appointed in November 2001 to present.; Recording Secretary for the IBEW 1245 Advisory Council appointed in November 2001 to present.

Mike Haentjens


Richard Harness

Initiated into IBEW in February 1980.

Mickey Harrington


Mary Herr


Mike Jameson

Initiated into IBEW in March 1977.

Mike Jimenez

Initiated into IBEW in September 2003.

Joe "Jypsy" Johnson

Initiated into IBEW in January 1971.

Linda S. Jurado


Steve Landers

Ed Mallory
tees (2001-2004); Chair and Hearing Officer LU 1245 Trial Board (2001-2004); Host for LU 1245 Leadership Conference (2002); Instructor for Unit Chair Workshop.

Oscar Martinez
Initiated into IBEW in February 1985.

Landis Marttila
Initiated into IBEW in March 1977.

Dan Mayo
Initiated into IBEW in June 1975.

Jim “Mac” McCauley
Initiated into IBEW in March 1960.

John Mendoza
Initiated into IBEW Local Union 1245 on December 1983. Member of Unit 2511. Classification: IBEW 1245 Temporary Representative/PG&E M.O.; Executive Board Member at Large; Shop Steward 1985-Present; Executive Board Member 1997-Present; Political Account Committee 1997-Present; Per Diem Ad Hoc Committee 2005-Present.

Darryl Norris

Arthur “Buddy” C. Palmer
Initiated into IBEW in March 1970.

Glenn Richards
Initiated into IBEW in June 1978.

Mike Romo
Initiated into IBEW in October 1970.

Michael Saner
Initiated into IBEW Local Union 1245 in October 1985. Member of Unit 2314. Classification: Sub foreman A/Line man; Shop Steward 1989-Present; Vice-Chairperson of Unit 2314 1999-2001; Sergeant of Arms of Unit 2314 2002-2004; Alternate for General Construction of Advisory Council 2001-2004; Member of Advisory Council for General Construction 2004-Present; Santa Nella IBEW/PG&E Partnership Forum 1995; Labor Management Committee; General Negotiation Committee; Advisory Council Committee; Delegate to the Alameda County Central Labor Council; Chairperson San Francisco Unit # 2414; Vice Chairperson San Francisco Unit # 2414. Attended numerous Shop Steward seminars; IBEW/PG&E Mutual Gains Bargaining Seminar and the California AFL-CIO Sponsored Summer School; Classes included Labor History, Grievance and Arbitration Handling.

Lonnie Smith
Initiated into IBEW in April 1978.

Hunter Stern

Diane Tatu
Initiated into IBEW in August 2003.

Ray Thomas
on Behalf of Local 1245; 1994 to present delegate to the 5-Counties Central Labor Council. Since 2000, I have attended courses at the National Labor College in Maryland and I am scheduled to graduate in June of 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Labor Studies

**Rob Thomas**
Initiated into IBEW in November 2003.

**Dennis H. Torres**
Initiated into IBEW in 1976; Member of Unit 5343413; Classification: Electronics Tech 2. Shop Steward San Diego Gas & Electric; J.A.C. 1980; Delegate of 1996 Convention.

**John Villegas**
Initiated into IBEW in April 1974.

**James Walpole**
Initiated into IBEW in February 1984.

**Geary Weaver**
Initiated into IBEW in July 1971.

**Eric Wolfe**

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**Utility Reporter 15**

**Terrance Husa**
(45 years), left, accepts award from Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer

**Lester Felkins**
(40 years), left, accepts award from Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer

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**Redding, CA**
**February 24, 2006**

**Terrance Husa (45 years), left, accepts award from Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer**

**Lester Felkins (40 years), left, accepts award from Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer**

**45 Years**
Terrance Husa

**40 Years**
Lester Felkins
William Raffety

**35 Years**
Jerry Covert
Daniel Derenobe
Charles Fisher
Jack Jardine

**30 Years**
Jessie Chandler
Connie Devlyne
Steven Fisher
John Gennnan

**25 Years**
Doyle Jennings
Dwayne Norman
Michael Perez
Michael Pierce
Stephen Prigmore
Dan Stone

**20 Years**
Michael Anderson
Mark Bailey
Gloria Baker
Matthew Clark
Dale Darrah

**15 Years**
Marc Holliday
Gregory Lynch
Michael McCullough
Kristina McGie
Darrel Meeker
Kevin Miller
Matthew Netzloff
Tim Perales
Roxanne Redenius
Paul Schargus
John Stacher
Sandra Weaver
Flying the lines

“Awesome and exhilarating experience” can save time and reduce exposure to injuries

by Russ Rylee

In the Line Department

Using helicopters is nothing new. I remember when we started using them to set poles and on rare occasions we would patrol a line to look for a problem. There have been good experiences and bad experiences along the way.

I remember one job that I was a lineman on. We had to set several poles in the backyards of homes that had no access. We thought the helicopter would be the way to go. It worked great except it blew most of the shingles off of the rooftops.

I also remember when PJ Helicopters purchased their 204 in the 1980’s and we set up a training session out on the east side of Redding. We had pre-dug holes and had poles on site. PJ Helicopters flew in and we practiced setting poles with the helicopter. It was a new tool and we thought it was great. It made our job easier and more efficient.

As a transmission troubleman for PG&E, I spend a lot of time flying the transmission lines. Transmission lines are usually in very remote and hard to access areas. With the help of the PJ Helicopters of Red Bluff, Ca., IBEW and PG&E have developed a program to allow linemen to long line and transfer to the tops of poles and towers. Along with the transfer method, we have also developed three new ways to do the work.

In late 2005, IBEW and PG&E completed most of the training for line workers in the transmission department in helicopter work procedures. This was a major step forward as this work procedure had never been done at PG&E. The class involved training the workers in safety procedures and then a day and a half was spent on the actual helicopter work procedures.

There are several work methods that have been incorporated into transmission line work to help the worker do his or her job more easily, more efficiently and—most important—more safely.

A new harness was developed that can be worn in all elevated positions and that also allows the helicopter to carry up to two workers to a structure. The ability to long-line workers to a remote location shortens the time on the job considerably. There are issues with landowners, waterways and environmental issues. These can all be mitigated by long lining the worker straight to the structure to be worked.

Transferring one or two workers from the skid of the helicopter is also an approved work method. The helicopter

Instructor Joe Ferriera looks on as Table Mountain transmission crew straps John Harper into the bosun’s chair. Crew from left to right: Ron Johnson, Greg Garretson, Donnie Landingham and John Little.

continued on page 10

Russ Rylee is a Transmission Troubleshooter for PG&E and a long-time steward for Local 1245.