PG&E Gas Control Tech Quyen Ha troubleshoots an issue with a valve at McDonald Island in Stockton, CA. Story on page 4.
CCAs have cropped up in wealthy communities like Marin, where they promise more green power and then automatically enroll all local customers in their plan. They then pay only 65 percent of the cost of power that the utility had purchased for those customers — and add the remaining 35 percent to the bills of non-CCA customers. This unfairly shifts costs to customers in other communities who end up paying more.

CCAs have also disrupted California’s Integrated Resource Plan — our state’s framework to ensure we have enough power for everyone and meet our renewable goals. By splintering into many tiny entities, CCAs make it all but impossible to track what kind of power is being used where, and the levels of associated emissions.

Our regulators and legislators know that under current policy, CCAs are unfair to regular customers and that fragmenting the system undermines our ability to work together towards a clean energy future — but they have done nothing to rein them in.

 Policymakers also know that utility power customers are paying more than their fair share to cover the costs of those who have rooftop solar — and this is a second source of inequity among our energy policies. Our current Net Energy Metering policy allows rooftop customers to be paid back at extremely generous rates for the power they put into the grid, creating tiny or non-existent bills for them. But that doesn’t mean they’re not using traditional power — it just means they’re generating more than they use during the day, and relying on traditional power at night. Rooftop solar customers also aren’t paying to maintain poles, wires, and other components of the grid — even though they use them regularly. The utilities essentially function as a free backup battery for them.

This went without much outcry when rooftop solar panels were few and far between — but as they proliferate (mainly among homeowners in wealthy communities), more and more Californians are being fleeced. Bills for regular customers are going up to cover what the rooftop customers are not required to pay. And in many cases, they are subsidizing not the actual solar customers, but the investment banks that have bought the leases the customers entered into when the panels were installed. This puts unnecessary financial stress on the monthly budgets of hardworking families across the state, and on the system overall. A legislative fix to make the system fair should be made immediately.

Most recently and most seriously, regulators and legislators have ignored the catastrophic implications of California’s policy of inverse condemnation with strict liability. Under the law, if utility equipment is found to have caused a fire, the utility is automatically liable for the damage — even if they were not negligent and followed all best practices for fighting fires.

As unseasonably hot weather and wind events bore down on the state in the late summer, the most devastating wildfires on record broke out in both northern and southern California. Because of the inverse condemnation/strict liability flaw, the state’s utilities and their customers may be on the hook for all of the damages associated with them — and it could push them into bankruptcy, undermining the reliability, safety and affordability of California’s power supply.

Regulators and legislators will privately concede that inverse condemnation is one-size-fits-all policy that creates a disincentive for investors to provide utilities with the capital they need to survive. San Diego Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power are all facing hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars of liability despite doing nothing wrong, and having worked hard to prevent fires and other disasters. Legislators and regulators know that the doctrine of inverse condemnation with strict liability is flawed, and they know that enforcing it is both unfair and could cause real disruption to our state’s economy — but they have not acted.

California’s energy infrastructure is the most basic building block of our economy. Every single one of us depends on safe, efficient power to work, live and thrive — every single day. Now is hardly the time for laissez faire, hands-off regulation or legislative lethargy. Our elected officials and regulators need to stand up and face these problems, and face them soon, before the foundation of our system is beyond repair.

**Correction:**

“BA” Dues Increase in 2018

There will be a $1 dues increase (from $20 to $21) for IBEW “BA” members in 2018, as well as a $1 increase for “A” members. Apologies for any confusion.

— Muriel Moore, IBEW 1245 Dues Processor

**Adam Weber Joins Local 1245 Staff**

Sixteen-year IBEW member Adam Weber has joined the Local 1245 staff as a Business Rep. He will be taking over for Randy Osborn, who is retiring this Spring.

Weber worked at NV Energy as a natural gas crew heavy foreman for the past 15 years. He has served the union in many capacities that IBEW 1245 represents with, and for, the industry’s best, and come on staff was easy. I want to work with, and for, the industry’s best, and the members that IBEW 1245 represents are the elite and best at their jobs,” said Weber. “I also love that the IBEW was founded on safety. Every one of us needs to make it home to our loved ones after a long day at work.”

**New Meeting Locations for Tree Units in San Jose, Sacramento and Newark**

The following tree units have changed their meeting locations: **Unit #4713**, San Jose/Utility Tree, will now meet at Mountain Mikes Pizza, 774 El Camino Real, San Carlos, CA. **Unit #4424**, Sacramento/Wright Tree, will now meet at Mountain Mikes Pizza, 7660 La Rivera Dr., Sacramento, CA. **Unit #4721**, Newark/Davey Tree, will now meet at Round Table Pizza, 24703 Amador St., Hayward, CA. The meeting dates and times will remain the same. — Junior Ornelas, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

**UtilityReporter** January — March 2018 Volume 67 No. 1 Circulation: 22,800

**Correction:**

On The Brink

California’s energy infrastructure on the edge of the abyss

California has been a leader on climate change, and for that our policy makers deserve praise. While other states fretted over the politics, we came together to pass bipartisan bills, and our regulatory agencies stood up and enforced them. We now lead the nation in reducing emissions, proving that real change is possible when we work together.

But while we’ve been making progress in this area, structural flaws in our existing regulatory framework have widened into cracks. And in recent months, several of them have worsened to the point that they are eroding the foundation of California’s energy system, threatening to bankrupt our major utilities and destroy the basis for the safe, affordable power we all rely on.

Recent newspaper headlines tell the story — for the second time in less than 20 years, California’s utilities have been pushed to the financial brink. In recent weeks, they have lost billions of dollars of market capitalization.

Three policy quirks, each of which started as a small wrinkle in another otherwise well thought-out plan, have grown into major problems that must be dealt with if we are to keep our power system safe, affordable and reliable.

As unseasonably hot weather and wind events bore down on the state in the late summer, the most devastating wildfires on record broke out in both northern and southern California. Because of the inverse condemnation/strict liability flaw, the state’s utilities and their customers may be on the hook for all of the damages associated with them — and it could push them into bankruptcy, undermining the reliability, safety and affordability of California’s power supply.

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## Get the latest news at

www.ibew1245.com

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7th Annual IBEW NOR-CAL Sporting Clay Shoot

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018

Northern California IBEW Locals would like to invite you to enjoy a day of brotherhood with fellow IBEW Union Members, Families, Friends and other Trade Unions. This year due to the growing popularity of the annual shoot, arrangements have been made at two (2) locations to run simultaneously! Both locations have overnight RV parking available and plenty of local hotels to choose from. So, mark your calendar for a Saturday of fun!

Locations:
- Rahaugee’s Pheasant, Chucker & Sporting Clays
  25835 County Road #
  Dunnigan, CA 95937
  www.rahaugees.com
- Rooster Ranch Wings & Clays
  26166 Kelley Road
  Hilmar, CA 95324
  www.roosterranchonline.com

Time:
- 08:00 — 09:00 Registration
  (donuts and coffee will be served)
- 09:00 — 09:25 Tailboard and safety briefing
- 09:30 — Shotgun Start
- NOONISH
  Luncheon following shoot

INCLUDED (per shooter)
- One Hat
- Shotgun Shells
- Eye & Ear Protection
- Lunch & Beverages
- One Raffle Ticket
  (Only registered shooters will receive a ticket.)

Awards & Raffle: To follow luncheon

Space Is Limited. First Come, First Serve, Basis. Register Today!
Proceeds Will Be Donated To The Boys & Girls Club

SPONSORSHIPS/REGISTRATION FORM for IBEW Nor-Cal Sporting Clay Shoot

EVENT DATE: Saturday, April 7, 2018

Please select your sponsorship level and fill in the names of your shooters below:

**Yes, I would like to sponsor:**

- [ ] Host $3,000 — Includes 8 shooter registrations
- [ ] Co-host $2,500 — Includes 4 shooter registrations
- [ ] Shotgun Shell - $2,500 Includes 4 shooter registrations
- [ ] Gold - $1,250 Includes 2 shooter registrations
- [ ] Silver - $1,000
- [ ] Raffle Station - $750
- [ ] Raffle prizes - $500
- [ ] Individual ADULT shooter $100
- [ ] Individual YOUTH shooter - $75 (15 years or younger)

Deadline for sponsorships and submission of shooter names is: March 28, 2018.
Onsite registrations will NOT be accepted.

[Make checks payable to: IBEW Local 1245 (in the memo line add: Nor-Cal Sporting Clay Shoot)]

- [ ] Rahaugee’s Pheasant, Chucker & Sporting Clays
  25835 County Road #
  Dunnigan, CA 95937
- [ ] Rooster Ranch Wings & Clays
  26166 Kelley Road
  Hilmar, CA 95324

Please check only one location per registration form. Fill out a separate form if you plan to have shooters at both locations.

Team Leader:

Affiliation:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Shooters: (Teams are made up of 4 shooters; individual shooters will paired with teams of less than 4)

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Mail payment to: IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA 95687
Questions: Call or email: Liz McNinis, 707-452-2720 orEnums@ibew1245.com

Unit meeting changes

**Unit #2515.** Modesto, has changed its unit meeting location to Round Table Pizza, 2441 Claribel Rd, Riverbank, CA. The time and dates will remain the same (second Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm).

— Lloyd Cargo, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

**Unit #1110.** Fresno Clerical (evening meeting), has changed its meeting location to Quesadilla Gorilla, 744 P. Street, Ste. 101, Fresno, CA 93721. The meeting will continue to be held the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm.

— Tonya Alston, IBEW 1245 Office Manager

**Unit #1511.** San Jose, has moved its meeting location to Rookies Sports Lodge, 1335 Meridian Ave #10, San Jose, CA. The meeting will continue to be held on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00pm.

— Casey Salkauskas, IBEW 1245 Business Rep
Local 1245 members keep PG&E’s largest gas storage facility safe and secure

As temperatures plummet and winter frost hits the air, millions of Californians are quick to turn on their gas-powered heaters — and few stop to think about the billions of cubic feet of gas needed to keep California’s homes, businesses and other buildings warm through the chilly season.

But the IBEW 1245 members who work at PG&E’s McDonald Island gas storage facility think about it every day, and the arrival of colder weather signals that it’s time for their facility to switch over from procurement mode to disbursement mode.

“During the summer, we’re mostly buying, storing and injecting gas into the [storage cavern]. And then in the winter, we’re usually pulling the gas out to meet the needs of the customers,” explained Gas Control Technician John Koga. “But sometimes we have to switch it up, for instance if we get a big order of gas in from Canada during the winter.”

Situated on a tiny, relatively remote island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta just west of Stockton, McDonald Island is PG&E’s largest gas storage facility, and the Local 1245 members employed there work day in and day out to ensure that millions of Californians have access to the gas they need when they need it, while also keeping the plant in tip-top shape.

“We do instrumentation, controls, and electrical work to maintain the gas storage facility and the natural gas compressor stations,” Koga said, explaining the roles and responsibilities of his department. “We deal with a lot of different systems, and new technology is always coming out, so we’re trying out new equipment, different types of programs and different control systems. We get to do a lot; I think it’s a really great job to have.”

Island Life

Hidden 5,000 feet below fields of growing potatoes and asparagus, the core component of the McDonald Island facility is the one few people ever see — the massive underground cavern where the gas is stored until it is needed.

On the surface, two gas compressor stations (one of which is being rented by PG&E from another company) inject the gas into the cavern, and two gas withdrawal/processing stations pull the gas out, measure it, and feed it into cities and towns all across PG&E’s service area. With a maximum capacity of 82 billion cubic feet (BCF), McDonald Island is capable of providing 25 percent of Northern California’s winter peak-day gas demand.

The Utility Reporter caught up with Koga and his team as they worked through their yearly maintenance inspection on one of the processing stations. After donning the required personal protective equipment, including two sets of gloves and a specialized helmet with a face cover, Koga de-energized the main breaker on the variable frequency drive (VFD) unit, and then double-checked it to ensure that it would be safe to inspect that particular motor.

Down on the lower level of the same station, Gas Control Technician Quyen Ha used a digital valve controller to troubleshoot a minor issue with some of the valves that control the flow of the gas.
Where the Gas Lives

gas coming out of the natural gas wells. There are 87 such wells on McDonald Island, and the corresponding valves need to be checked and calibrated regularly to ensure that they continue to operate properly.

In The Office
Like most yards, the McDonald Island team has its own dedicated support staff working behind the scenes to manage the paperwork. “I do payroll, order materials, keep track of valve cards and records on site, that type of thing,” explained Senior Maintenance Assistant Linda Sendig, noting that many of her responsibilities are similar to those of an Operating Clerk. “But with my classification, I’m on the physical side, and that means I can also operate the forklift. So if we get heavy duty deliveries, I can offload, unload, and deliver materials to other yards if needed.”

Sendig enjoys the fact that her job affords her the opportunity to expand her horizons and get a better understanding of the system that she helps to maintain. “In the few years that I’ve been here, I’ve been learning more and more about gas pipeline and the materials that are used to keep that pipeline operating safely,” she said.

Under Control
Over in the control room, Operator Joe Hidalgo sits in front of a mimic panel, an aptly named electronic map that mimics all of the operations going on throughout McDonald Island. His job involves monitoring the entire facility and keeping a close eye out for any potential anomalies. Between the gas pressure regulation, the various chemicals used to treat the gas, the dehydration system that can get as hot as 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, and all the other equipment in operation on a daily basis, careful monitoring and attention to detail is key for the plant’s overall safety, as well as the safety of the employees.

In fact, safety plays a huge role in the jobs that all the McDonald Island employees do. From the leak surveyors to the operators and technicians, every Local 1245 member at McDonald Island has to consider both their own safety, as well as the public’s safety, in the work that they do each day. For example, given that fact that natural gas is odorless, colorless and tasteless, the workers at McDonald Island are tasked with infusing the gas with Mercaptan, an additive that gives off the sulfuric odor that most people commonly recognize as “gas smell.” The addition of Mercaptan to the gas is critical for safety, ensuring that even the smallest of gas leaks can be detectable by scent alone.

Mercaptan is just one example of the countless safety-oriented processes that occur at McDonald Island every day. Natural gas may get a bad rap sometimes, but the truth is that gas power plays a key role in California’s transition to more renewable energy, and the Local 1245 members at McDonald Island pride themselves on the work they do to contribute to a safe and reliable pipeline.

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director
When you work in Hydro, heavy storms can be a blessing and a curse.

While the big rain and snow storms that wallop California last year seemed like a welcome reprieve from the state’s lengthy drought, those storms also resulted in a number of landslides, including a hefty one near Panther Creek that took out the only access road to PG&E’s Salt Springs Hydroelectric Powerhouse.

“It started out as a small mudslide on the roadway, but by the time we got up here, the whole thing had just let loose,” explained PG&E GC Hydro Working Foreman Shawn Genereux. “The road and everything went down the hill, so we had to start making repairs down at Tiger Creek [powerhouse], and then work our way up to this point.”

The Utility Reporter caught up with Genereux and his crew at the Panther Grade slide, nestled deep in the woods, about 35 minutes from the small mountain town of Pioneer, CA, in Amador County. The crew had been on that job for about nine weeks, aiming to complete the work and ensure access to Salt Springs would be available before the snows hit again.

“Last year, they had to put in a bypass road — which was about 3.5 to four miles longer — and they got that put in, but it’s still not really usable if it snows,” explained Genereux. “They ended up using a helicopter a couple times to fly in there last year. So this is a very critical road to get into Salt Springs.”

The first part of the repair project involved large-scale excavation just to get to the bottom of the slide. Then, the crew had to dig out a bench before they could move in an estimated 9,000 tons of rock to fill the hole.

“At this point, we have a total of three benches, with a French drain at each bench that connects to a main line, which drains completely out to the dissipater at the bottom of the hill, and then that drains out to the creek,” said Genereux. “Now all we have left are the fine details. We have a rock wall to finish putting in on the bank side, we have a culvert to put in uphill of the slide, and we have some blocks to put alongside the downhill side to keep vehicles from going over the edge.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director
In August of 2016, an Initial Joint Proposal was submitted by PG&E to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) requesting $350M (25% of annual pay) for employee retention, and three additional line items — 1) DCPP closure in 2024-2025, 2) local money to the county to offset future tax loss, and 3) replacement of power.

In November of 2017, an Administrative Law Judge presented a proposed decision (PD) to the CPUC, which recommended $160M for employee retention, and an opinion/changes to the other three line items of the original Joint Proposal.

In January of 2018, the CPUC unanimously voted yes on a revised proposed decision. The revised PD authorized $211M (15% of annual pay) for employee retention, and addressed the three additional line items.

The CPUC revised PD caps the annual retention bonus at 15%, which is less than 25% the parties had originally asked for. The company and union will meet to decide the path forward.

This news is disappointing to all of us, but especially the men and women who work so hard to make DCPP one of the best run plants in the world. We will be communicating with you, our members, on a regular basis as more information comes out. It is our goal to keep everyone informed so that each of you will be able to make the best possible decision for you and your family’s future. We will be at the Canyon to talk to individual members, we will host a call for all members at DCPP to answer your questions, and we will keep you informed as we move forward with negotiations. Please contact us with any questions you may have.

— Bob Dean, IBEW 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager
The Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) issued a new ruling mandating the inclusion of four new semi-synthetic opioids (pharmaceutical pain medications) as part of federally mandated drug testing that began January 1, 2018. These new drugs are in addition to the existing panel that are already included in testing, which includes marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), and opiates. The four opioids are oxycodone, oxymorphone, hydrocodone and hydromorphone. Some common brand names for these semi-synthetic opioids include OxyContin®, Percodan®, Percocet®, Vicodin®, Lortab®, Norco®, Dilaudid®, Exalgo®.

**FAQs**

What if I have an active/current prescription for one of these semi-synthetic opioids?

Be proactive in ensuring that your prescribing physician knows what type of safety-sensitive work you currently perform. This is important information for your prescribing physician to consider when deciding whether and what medication to prescribe for you. It is important for you to know whether your medications could impact your ability to safely perform your work.

For example, don’t just provide your physician a job title, but describe your exact job function(s) or ask your employer for a detailed description of your job function that you can give to your prescribing physician.

What if I test positive while holding a current prescription for an opioid?

According to DOT Rule 49 CFR Part 40 Section 40.135 subpart G:

1. Tell the employee if the test was positive.
2. Allow five business days for the employee medically unqualified or does not pose a safety risk.

What if I have an old/inactive prescription for one of these semi-synthetic opioid medications?

If your prescription is not active, speak with your physician and alert them ASAP to the fact that you perform safety-sensitive work. If you test positive with an inactive prescription it will be considered a positive test, and you will be subject to your employer’s existing drug and alcohol policy; possibly including discipline. Your physician may be able to issue you a new prescription or alter the prescription to one that will not make you medically unqualified to perform safety-sensitive work.

What if I have a current prescription for Medical Marijuana?

The Department of Transportation’s Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation – 49 CFR Part 40, at 40.151(e) – does not authorize “medical marijuana” under a state law to be a valid medical explanation for a transportation employee’s positive drug test result.

**For PG&E employee members:**

- PG&E DOT-covered employees include Commercial (Class A and B) Drivers, Aviation employees and Gas operations, call center and dispatching operations, maintenance and emergency response personnel.
- The November 13, 2017 DOT ruling includes testing for these four opioids: oxycodone, oxymorphone, hydrocodone and hydromorphone.
- Some common names for these semi-synthetic opioids include: OxyContin®, Percodan®, Percocet®, Vicodin®, Lortab®, Norco®, Dilaudid®, Exalgo®.
- Beginning January 1, 2018, PG&E will begin testing for these four opioids in addition to the current panel of THC, cocaine, PCP opiates, and amphetamines as part of its DOT Compliance random drug testing protocol.
- For DOT-covered PG&E employees that have a current prescription for one of these new opioids, this test will be a verified negative test, with a safety concern to the company.
- For DOT-covered employees that do NOT have a prescription, this will be treated as a positive test and the current process for a DOT positive test outlined in LA 04-16 would apply. If you test positive with a valid current prescription, the test will be considered a verified negative test with a safety concern.

This safety concern means that PG&E will not let you do safety-sensitive work (up to five days) until your prescribing physician has changed your prescription to one that won’t make you medically unqualified to do safety-sensitive work. That is why it is important to be proactive and speak with your physician in advance of a random DOT drug test.

**Additional Resources**

http://ibew1245.com/2018/01/16/dot-drug-testing-now-includes-semi-synthetic-opioids/

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**Merced GSR Performs Heimlich on Choking Customer**

When IBEW 1245 member Shannon Baptista showed up for a pre-arranged overtime shift on Saturday, December 30, she assumed it would be a day like any other.

Baptista, a Gas Service Rep who has been working for PG&E out of Merced for six years, was called out for an IR on a tag issued by Energy Partners. They had turned the gas off after identifying a potential hazard with a water heater, so Baptista went out to the home in Planada to follow up on the issue.

When she arrived at the location of the tag, she was greeted by an elderly woman who spoke no English, only Spanish. Baptista doesn’t speak Spanish, and she was unable to communicate with the customer to figure out where the water heater was located, so Baptista called up her colleague, Steven Pineda, to help her translate over the phone. With Pineda’s help, she was able to find the water heater which was located outside around the back of the house.

Baptista had stepped out to examine the water heater, and was still on the phone with Pineda, discussing the high CO concentration with flame distortion that she observed, as well as the fact that the propane water heater had been connected to a natural gas hook-up, when suddenly she heard a strange noise.

“I looked up and saw [the customer] gagging, holding on to her throat, and no noise was coming out. She couldn’t take a breath,” Baptista said. “I ran back up the stairs, and I was asking her, ‘Are you ok? Are you ok?’ I still had the phone in my hand, so I hung up with Steven and dialed 9-1-1.”

Baptista knew that the customer was choking and that she needed to take action right away, so she dropped the phone on the ground before she even had a chance to speak with the 9-1-1 operator, and attempted to help the elderly customer clear the obstruction from her airway.

“I didn’t even tell her I was going to do it. I just went behind her [and started to perform First Aid]. I was nervous, because she was an old, frail lady and I was hitting her as hard as I could on her back,” Baptista said, referring to the sharp blows between the shoulder blades that are administered as a first step for choking victims. “Mean-
Members Unanimously Approve Successor Agreement at Amec Foster Wheeler Martinez

On Nov. 13, IBEW 1245 members unanimously ratified its Tentative Agreement with Amec Foster Wheeler Martinez by a vote of 12-0. Amec Foster Wheeler Martinez (AFWM) is a 150 megawatt capacity power plant in Martinez, CA that provides power to a local petroleum refinery.

IBEW 1245 negotiating committee members Devin Mun, Victor Aviles, Richard Blaine and Business Represenative Al Fortier met with the company Oct. 24-26 and negotiated a three-year successor agreement to the Collective Bargaining Agreement that expired on October 15, 2017. The union negotiated wages increases of 3.5% in each year of the agreement for our members who maintain and operate the plant.

In addition to wage increases, the union negotiating committee also bargained several other improvements to the agreement. Under the Call-Outs/Report Pay article of the new agreement, employees who are called back to work will receive an additional hourly allowance of $15.00 per hour for all hours of call-in, while also improving on the stand-by pay for operators, working foreperson pay, and meal allowances. The company and our membership agreed to convert vacation and sick leave to a paid time off (PTO) policy. As a part of the conversion, the union members agreed to freeze their existing sick leave balances in a separate bank. Employees can use the banked sick leave when on long-term disability, or cash out when they leave the company. One of the few concessions gained by the company was a reduction in the company contribution to the employee's 401k plan, from 6% to 5%.

The company continued its trend of asking for increases in medical contributions. The company increased the employee share of the premium contribution to the medical insurance plan by 1% in the second and third year of the agreement, from 26% to 22%. But the union got the company to agree to contribute an additional $750/$1000/$1500 (single, spouse, family) in the first year of enrollment into the health savings accounts (HSA) of members who enroll into the high deductible health plan. Additionally, the company will contribute another $750/$1000/$1500 to the HSA annually. The company also agreed to meet in 2018 to confer over better and less expensive medical providers and plan options.

Amec Foster Wheeler and IBEW 1245 agreed to include in the Collective Bargaining Agreement a bonus program that pays up to 6% lump sum annually to each employee. Bonus language previously existed as a side letter.

— Al Fortier, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

Modesto Irrigation District Members Ratify New Five-Year Agreement

The three IBEW 1245-represented bargaining units at Modesto Irrigation District overwhelmingly ratified a five-year agreement. The Utility Services and Maintenance unit voted 168 yes/4 no, the Professional and Supervisory unit vote 6 yes/0 no, and the Administrative, Technical and Clerical unit voted 21 yes/0 no.

The new agreement includes a 3% wage increase each year, along with several important gains, including:
- Improvement to the size of bargaining team
- Removal of cap on time taken for union leave
- Improvement related to salary on promotion for grandfathers employees

The agreement includes a 3% wage increase for all IBEW 1245 represented classifications, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2018.

The negotiating committee consisted of Murray Janisse, William Trathen, Diana Ridenour, Patrick Severin and myself.

— Sam Ciero, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

Members Approve One-Year Agreement at USBR

The IBEW Local 1245 members employed at the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) Mid Pacific Region have ratified a one-year agreement, effective Jan. 1, 2018. Ninety-five percent of the membership participated in the ratification vote. The agreement was ratified on Nov. 22, 2017, with 99% voting Yes to 1% No.


The agreement includes a 3% wage increase for all IBEW 1245 represented classifications, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2018.

The negotiating committee consisted of Karri Daves, Mike Anderson, Tony Moore, Adam Master- son, Dave Rippetoe and Dave Ferriera.

— Sheila Lawton, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

Members Ratify New Agreement at Trayer

IBEW 1245 members at Trayer Engineering overwhelmingly ratified a two-year agreement on October 4, 2017. The final vote tally was 23-2.

The new agreement includes general wage increases of 2.75% in the first year and 2.5% in the second year, and pension increase of .50% in both years. Health care is 100% paid platinum style through Kaiser, and the members also secured 100% paid dental and vision, along with a $75,000 life insurance policy. The agreement also includes enhanced safety language, which requires the company to provide new and/or replacement safety glasses and safety boots each year, should they become damaged.

The bargaining committee was comprised of Shop Stewards Arnoldo Lizarraga and Paul Wolford.

— Cruz Serna, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

Local 1245 Members at City Light and Power Unanimously Ratify Six-Year Agreement

On Jan. 3, 2018, Local 1245 membership at City Light and Power Unanimously ratified a table agreement by a vote of 5-0.

The table agreement was reached with the company in late December with full support of the committee, and was overall very positive. Some key features of the agreement include:
- A six-year term, in effect until Dec. 31, 2023
- Annual wage increases based on CPI with a minimum of 2.5% effective July 1, 2018
- Improved language for temporary upgrades and permanent promotional opportunities
- Improved sick leave carry-over provisions
- Improved compensation and language for stand-by duty and new anticipated emergency crew stand-by language
- Reasonable paid time for CDL A medical exams

The negotiating committee consisted of Shop Steward/CL&P Maintenance Electrical Worker (Lineman) Tom Cooper and Business Representative JV Macor.

— JV Macor, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

From left: Enos Drummond, Crew Supervisor; Tom Cooper, Shop Steward/CL&P Maintenance Electrical Worker (Lineman); Jorge Contreras, General Maintenance Worker; Jed Marsh, Maintenance Electrical Worker (Lineman); Phillip Pointer, Maintenance Electrical Worker (Lineman)

Local Petroleum Refinery

Foster Wheeler bargaining committee members (from left) Devin Mun, Victor Aviles and Richard Blaine review a proposal during negotiations.

Photo by Al Fortier
Local 1245 members from Western Area Power Administration assist with post-hurricane restoration in the Virgin Islands

Just a few short days after Hurricane Maria devastated nearly everything in its path, the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which is part of the U.S. Department of Energy, quickly deployed two dozen linemen to the U.S. Virgin Islands to begin the arduous task of restoring power to the area.

The contingent of journeymen linemen – which included seven IBEW 1245 members from WAPA’s Sierra Nevada region, as well as other linemen from around the country – were stationed in St. Thomas for two full months as they worked tirelessly in exceptionally difficult conditions to help re-energize the island and get it back on its feet.

Maria’s Toll

The team from WAPA was tasked with repairing and heating up the transmission system from the St. Thomas power plant to its four main substations (one of which was connected to St. John via a submarine cable, so their work would enable that small island to regain power as well).

This is fairly commonplace work for experienced linemen, but when they arrived on the island of St. Thomas in late September, they quickly realized that the job would be anything but ordinary. Even those with a wealth of post-storm restoration experience were blown away by the extent of the damage.

“I worked [restoration] after Hurricane Sandy, but this was completely different,” said 19-year IBEW 1245 member Brian Adams, who works as a line foreman for WAPA out of Redding. “With Sandy, there was still some infrastructure and power within driving distance. But when we got to St. Thomas, there was nothing — no power at all anywhere throughout the island. The amount of work that was needed just to get their basic infrastructure — water desalination facilities, hospitals, that kind of stuff — back up, it was amazing to me.”

No Easy Feat

Although their equipment had been shipped out prior to the storm, the linemen still faced innumerable challenges when it came to simple logistics, which became quite apparent when a bucket truck needed to be repaired.

“Being on the island, we couldn’t just call over to the [mainland] and say we have issues with equipment. It was a lot harder than that,” said Adams. “It took about two-and-a-half weeks to get a replacement bucket shipped from Altec to St. Thomas. If we’d been anywhere else, we could have it the next day. But there was no UPS, no FedEx, and not a lot of flights going in or out, and that made it really difficult.”

Supplies and materials proved to be one of the biggest challenges that the crews faced each day, simply due to the fact that there was so little on hand, and acquiring the necessary parts and pieces involved both tenacity and ingenuity.

“We were setting a lot of poles, so we ended up re-using all the wire we could get from the downed poles, but our biggest issue was with the other stuff, like bolts, nuts, flat washers and insulators,” Adams explained. “We showed up so quickly after the storm that FEMA hadn’t yet gotten all the materials there. Once the materials started to trickle in, there were also a lot of other linemen showing up...
who needed it too, so every day was a mad dash to get to the warehouse in order to get what we needed for the day."

The crews faced other challenges as well, both natural and man-made. They had to contend with steep, rocky terrain and downed vegetation, which made digging pole holes more difficult, as well as unpredictable weather, with high temperatures and humidity close to 100%, intermixed with massive tropical rainstorms that would blow in aggressively and dump inches of rain in a matter of minutes. Navigating the roads also proved to be no easy feat. In St. Thomas, residents drive on the left side of the street — which can take quite a bit of getting used to for individuals who've spent their entire lives driving on the right. Traffic control was difficult, and roadway hazards were everywhere, but fortunately the crews managed it well and returned home with no accidents or injuries.

Despite all these challenges and more, the WAPA team still managed to complete their mission safely and ahead of schedule, which allowed them to use their remaining time working on other aspects of the electrical system that needed repair.

**Life on the Island**

Nearly all of the housing accommodations in the Virgin Islands were destroyed in the hurricane, so during their two-month stay in the Caribbean, the WAPA crews were housed on a boat — three different boats, to be precise. When they first arrived, they were stationed on the SS Wright, a logistics support ship on loan to FEMA during the aftermath of the hurricane. The quarters were far from spacious, with 70 men living in homes with no roofs. They're strong people, they just kept on going where others might have just given up... and they we so gracious and willing to help. Adams recalled one unique experience with some of the locals that really resonated with him. "When we were staying on the SS Wright, there was no place to sit down and relax; you could either lay in your cot or sit in the cafe, which was always crowded and noisy," said Adams. "We started going over to this little local restaurant that was right near the boat, and we built a good relationship with the owner and bartender... so on days when we'd come in late, they had food prepared for us. Now this wasn't food that they made in the restaurant; they were bringing it from their homes, and remember they didn't have any light or electricity! Truthfully, the food on the ship was pretty much always the same thing, cooked in bulk, so to come in and have this local island food prepared for us, it was awesome and delicious. They fact that they were doing that for us... I just thought that was a really neat experience." "It was nothing we would have expected from them, because we knew how much they'd lost in the storm, and that they had very little," Adams continued. "But they were so kind to us. Almost everyone we met down there was willing to help any way they could. And I got a kick out of learning about their culture, it's very unique and I'd never experienced anything like that before."

**PG&E Aerial Patrollers Vote to Join IBEW 1245**

On Thursday, October 19, PG&E's aerial patrollers voted to join IBEW 1245 in a secret ballot election. All members of the unit participated, and the vote was a unanimous Yes. "We are excited to move ahead and continue this journey," said Paul Bonini, one of the seven aerial patrollers. "I am also very glad that our team came together to all vote in favor."

Aerial patrollers perform airborne monitoring of PG&E's gas distribution/transmission system, which is an integral part of protecting public safety. Their home base is the Bishop Ranch campus in San Ramon; flights are conducted out of the Buchanan Field Airport in Concord.

The patrollers utilize Light Detection and Ranging technology a.k.a. LiDar to identify and report a variety of observations, which are then investigated by ground patrollers (which is already a 1245-represented classification). According to the company's website, PG&E's aerial patrols exceed the mileage required by the Code of Federal Regulations by 4.5 times on average, which in 2016 added to over 123,000 total miles. Prior to 2017, the aerial team was employed by a contractor, however PG&E brought them all on as bona fide employees in January.

"I am very grateful to work for Pacific Gas and Electric. The extensive and positive history the IBEW has with PG&E made this an easy decision for me," said Bonini. "I expressed that my main motivation for organizing was to take advantage of the greater voice at work that IBEW members enjoy. Fellow Aerial Patroller Daniel Gadek echoed these sentiments.

"I have wanted to join IBEW Local 1245 because it has a proven record of working for the common man. I believe it will give our team a collective voice and a seat at the table in regards to safety, wages, [and] scope of work," said Gadek. He and his coworkers hope to clarify proper lines of progressions and bargaining, and aspire to improve their team's workflow by better outlining their individual duties and job descriptions.

"Our team has been through a lot over the past four years," he added, and says they are ready to head forward "in the hopes that we will have some say over our careers and our futures."

— Rick Thompson, IBEW International Lead Organizer

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**PG&E Aircraft Pilots Say “Yes” to IBEW 1245**

On Nov. 27, a unit of PG&E fixed wing aircraft pilots voted Yes to join IBEW Local 1245. The election, which was administered by mail-in ballot, resulted in a 7-1 decision for union representation. All eight pilots returned ballots.

"The pilots work within the Aviation Services department, which is part of Gas Operations at PG&E. They each perform one of two roles at the company: operating either jet passenger flights or gas pipeline patrol flights. The group wanted to address a number of issues in collective bargaining, but with few represented classifications they could easily compare themselves to, the organizing committee faced a unique challenge. "I found the most significant obstacle to organizing was being able to effectively communicate the roles of unions [to my colleagues]," explained Gary Major, who was one of the first pilots to reach out to IBEW with interest in organizing. Major drew upon his experience as a representative with an airline pilots’ union, as well as guidance from our staff, to find examples in the PG&E contract of how IBEW has tackled problems similar to their own. For more unique issues, the organizing committee and 1245’s staff met a number of times to brainstorm potential solutions.

Now that the election is over, the group will meet with Local 1245’s staff to form their bargaining committee and begin drafting their first proposals. The issues they wish to address are related to scheduling inconsistencies, discipline and evaluations, and disagreement with management over the scope of job duties and assignments.
At Advance Carbon Products Inc. (ACP) in Hayward, CA, a small but dedicated team of IBEW 1245 members work diligently to craft specialized carbon-based components for a wide range of high-tech applications, including robotics, electrical motors, and aerospace equipment, as well as petrochemical and semi-conductor-specific products.

**Meticulous Work**

Local 1245 member Dale Oliveira originally worked in ACP’s brush department, but was transferred over to the mechanical department, where he runs lathes, mills, grinders and diamond saws. When the Utility Reporter caught up with him, he was precision grinding a part for an aircraft compressor.

“This product requires a specific tolerance and finish in order to warrant this type of process,” Oliveira explained. “It was originally cut from a solid billet that was tested for its purity, because this happens to be a very expensive form of carbon, due to its molecular structure, which makes it harder than some of the other forms of carbon that we work with.”

But even a harder type of carbon is still pretty fragile, and Oliveira’s work requires the utmost skill, especially given the fact that he’s working within specs of .0002 inches — a fraction of the width of a single strand of human hair.

“We take pride in our ability to do that, whereas other companies haven’t found a solution that would enable them to make this part,” said Oliveira, noting that ACP’s process is highly proprietary. “We’re pretty proud of the fact that we came up with the solution to be able to machine this part.”

Oliveira and his co-workers must be extremely meticulous in their work to ensure that it lives up to the company’s very high standards. “We have to be very careful, because we do not want any chipping in any of our parts.” He said. “We actually scan them under a magnification device, in order to make sure that when the customer gets it, it is chip-free.”

**Very Unique**

ACP is a family-run company, and Oliveira appreciates the quality management and mentorship he’s received as an employee. “This company is very unique. They treat us well, and my boss is quite knowledgeable and friendly. He’s been willing to show us bits of information he’s acquired during his time here,” he said.

While the employees at ACP don’t often butt heads with the bosses, Oliveira is still grateful to have the union on his side. He noted the many benefits that the IBEW has helped to secure for him and his co-workers through negotiation and arbitration, including fair wages, quality medical coverage and job security.

“I’ve only been here for about three-and-a-half years, but from what I’ve seen, the union really seems to have a bona-fide interest in our work environment,” he said. “I think highly of my union rep, Cruz Serna. He’s come out here on many occasions to talk with the employees about any issues that we may have. We, the employees of ACP, feel grateful to be represented by a union that takes interest not only in the bigger companies, but the smaller ones as well.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director


Local 1245 members produce specialized components at Advance Carbon Products

**Carbon Copy**

Dale Oliveira

Nyi Maung

Tommy Phan

New Agreement Approved at Advance Carbon

IBEW 1245 members employed at Advance Carbon Products in Hayward have unanimously ratified a three-year contract by a vote of 15–0.

The new agreement includes an immediate 2.7% wage increase, based on the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI), which went into effect on Nov. 25, 2017. Members will also receive wage increases in 2018 and 2019, based on the CPI, with a minimum of 1% and maximum of 4%. The company will continue to pay 100% bronze level insurance, with the option to select a better level with a cost share. Additionally, the company will provide anti-fatigue mats at the request of the employee. The members are pleased to have preserved their 100% employer-paid health care coverage.

The negotiating committee was comprised of Shop Steward Phuong Lee and Local 1245 member Dale Oliveira.

— Cruz Serna, IBEW 1245 Business Rep
We have had an increase in reports of problem to have, however, we need to plenty of work would seem to be a good ural disasters as we saw in 2017. Having same, especially if the industry contin- can expect to see even more of the increase in projected work in 2018 we lineman classification. With the experienced towards the end of 2016, at tant because of all the standing calls we patched in 2016. This number is impor- for journeyman linemen, which is also a significant increase from the 992 dis- patched in 2016. This number is import- tant because of all the standing calls we experienced towards the end of 2016, at least 90% of them were in the journey- man lineman classification. With the increase in projected work in 2018 we can expect to see even more of the same, especially if the industry continues to experience the same level of nat- ural disasters as we saw in 2017. Having plenty of work would seem to be a good problem to have, however, we need to make sure we can man this work with a well-qualified workforce.

California

We are continuing to host lots of safety orientations, job and yard visits. We have had an increase in reports of pay issues where an employer lays off a member over text, the member is owed monies, yet they are not paid in full at time of layoff.

Wilson is running 13 distribution crews in the Bay Area to the Sierra Mountains. They are also running five transmission crews from Dixon to Cameron Park.

Abercrombie Pipeline has all but fin- ished the shoefly project at the Oroville Dam. There still running one crew, fin- ishing up odds and ends.

Cupertino Electric is leading the MHP (Mobile Home Parks) project in northern California, with 27 parks in construction. They are currently run- ning 3-5-man line crews. (There are sev- eral civil contractors — CSL, Fidelis Green, Veteran Power — that are also in the process of completing phase 1 of the MHP project.)

Cupertino just started a project in Dixon where they will do all the below ground work also. The company has line crews in the San Jose and San Carlos area, doing CCM work. They are also in the middle of completing their ancestor project in the Bay Area.

Underground Electric, an offshoot of Underground Construction, are up to two electric crews now. They are working mostly on underground cable replacement in the Sacramento area.

PAR Electric has crews all over the State. There are four cell site crews, Tur- lock crews, the Feather River project and Greenville. The PG&E tower paint- ing project for 2018 will be double the towers of 2017. This tower painting work will be about 1,000 towers in 2018, and another 1,500 in 2019. We are trying to find ways to maintain a workforce with all the other work out there that will stabilize and meet the need of the customer. There is more to come on this.

Hotline is currently working on three substations in Northern California. One of these is the V5 Sub for South- ter in Santa Clara. They are also running two-line crew, and two splicer crew.

Henkles & McCoy has a 14-mile transmission project that includes pole replacement and a reconductor. They are also working on four substation projects throughout our jurisdiction.

Nevada

Titan Reno has one crew that has been staying busy on small projects for NV Energy.

PAR has two crews working. One is in Reno for NV Energy staying busy on small projects, and the other is in North Lake Tahoe working for Liberty Utilities on new business and maintenance work on a T&I basis.

Cache Valley Electric is working on two substations — one in Mason Valley and one in Smith Valley NV. Completion date is Feb. 15, but material issues may delay completion.

Wasatch has 14 doc linemen and five doc sub-techs working at various locations for NV Energy. Wasatch also has 17 miles of 120kV w/ distribution under- build in Smith Valley.

Titan Wyoming and Newman Elec- tric have completed their 4/25kV cutovers and moved on.

Summit Line is currently working on a five-mile section of 120kv line at the Reno-Tahoe industrial park, west of Reno. This project is slated to be completed in March, but material issues may delay that.

NV Energy has put out a couple of bids. One is a 4 miles of 120kv under- ground and a 129 pole 4/25kv cutover in Reno. Work picture for Nevada is look- ing good for this year, with lots of talk about some substantial substations and transmission projects, and some good distribution work as well.

Liberty Utilities has put out a 30 pole 120kv pole replacement job and a small 120kv UG project in Truckee for a new commercial complex.

POLE TEST and TREAT

The new five-year pole test and treat agreement was ratified by the membership in mid-December. The Osmose work group ratified the agreement with 100% yes vote, and the Davey Test group was a lot closer, with a 51% yes vote for ratification. The big difference between the two work groups is the way the compa- nies were structured, with regards to the number of members who will now receive paid vacation.

GRIEVANCES

As mentioned in every report, we deal with issues daily, most of which are resolved in a day or two and in the first steps of the process. Sometimes they go a little longer and further, however our reps do a good job of getting resolution before needing to go too far.

Towards the end of 2017, we had a couple of issues that took a little longer than normal, but we were able to close out one that resulted in a contractor donating to the OSL injured workers fund for a violation related to the mis- use of the foreman classification.

We are currently dealing with another case in Nevada related to the misuse of the referral process and not clearing a few members through dis- patch as required. We feel this situation will be resolved quickly.

Paycheck issues continue to be the number one problem. It’s amazing that, with all the technologies out there, we continue to see paychecks wrong or not processed in the time specified in the collective bargaining agreement.

As always, since we share the same agreements, Local 1245 and Local 47 continue to support each other during Labor Management when grievances make it to that step.

JATC

It’s been almost two years since the Cal Nev. JATC has been open for appli- cations. This was mostly due to the number of applicants that were obtained when the processed was opened last. We expect to see the appli- cation process open again sometime in the next couple of months. Just like last time, there will be a 10-day period that it will be open anyone wanting to apply will want to make sure they have everything they need to apply. There will be one change to the application requirement, and we are waiting on the final approval from the DOL before opening the application period. The new requirement will make it manda- tory to have a CDL in order to apply. If you are interested in applying please visit www.calnevjatc.org routinely for information.

Given the need for skilled manpower, the JATC has done a good job of bring- ing in new apprentices. There are, on average, around 350 to 360 apprentices indented in the program. This is for all steps, and in 2017 there were 115 new apprentices indented into that num- ber, while 89 graduated to Journeyman Lineman. As we increase the numbers of new apprentices (we have been bringing in around 90 over the last cou- ple of years), we would think that the total number in the program would increase. However, the rate of appli- cants who get indented and then wash out due to various reasons is higher than we would like.

LINECO

On January 1, 2018 Lineco premiums went up another $.25 an hour. This is the third increase in as many years. For the OSL agreements, as well as the pole test agreements, the contractor will pick up those increases for 2018.

EVENTS CALENDAR

- First Aid & CPR is the 2nd Saturday of every month at our Riverside and Sacramento locations.

ORGANIZING

The following contractors have been organized and signed the CA Outside Line Construction agreement in the last quarter of 2017:

- Cedar Creek Corporation
- Cal Pacific Constructors Inc.

INJURED WORKERS FUND

As of December 31, 2017, the balance of the Injured Workers Fund was $1,148,134.11.

As the Fund balance continues to rise, the Trustees are constantly looking at new ways this money can benefit the outside line membership who pay into the fund.

Effective March 1, 2018, the fund will offer parental leave benefits and non- work disability benefits. The details, including the eligibility requirements, were mailed during the last week of December 2017 to all active outside members who are working under the CA Outside Line Construction agreement. If you do not receive a copy or if you have any questions, please contact Liz McInnis at (707) 452-2720 or EIMH@ibew1245.com.

DISPATCH

Please call the Hotline after hours for daily counts related to actual numbers on the Books. All 1245 OSL members are encour- aged to sign up and register your own personal account through the Local 1245 website. Once registered, you will be able to check your books status, make changes to personal information, pay union dues and even check on available jobs without having to call the dispatch office for this information. This is a very useful tool for our OSL members.
What Employer Misconduct Rises to the Level of “Serious and Willful”?

When an employee’s industrial injury is caused by the serious and willful misconduct of the employer, Labor Code section 4553 allows for the employee’s compensation to be increased by one-half upon a petition for penalties to the Workers Compensation Appeals Board. The California Supreme Court has determined that the one-half increase applies to every benefit or payment provided to the applicant under Division Four of the Labor Code, including medical treatment payments, medical-legal fees, vocational rehabilitation costs, and all indemnity benefit payments. As the penalty is due to quasi-criminal conduct, Workers’ Compensation insurance does not cover employer serious and willful misconduct; and the penalty is assessed directly against the employer.

Serious and willful misconduct petitions claim injury through either the employer or his managing representative, or general superintendent’s violation of a Cal/OSHA safety order, or the failure of the employer to provide a safe working environment under Labor Code section 6400. Safety Orders are contained within Division 5 of the Labor Code. Should the injured worker believe that the employer committed serious and willful misconduct, he must file his petition within one year of the date of injury.

To prove an employer’s violation of a safety order, the injured worker must show (1) the specific manner how the order was violated; (2) how the violation proximately caused the injury to the applicant; and (3) either — the safety order and the conditions of its violation were actually known and violated by a specific individual; — or where the condition making the safety order applicable was obvious to the employer or his representative as designated under Labor Code section 4553, and the failure of that individual to correct the problem constituted reckless disregard for the consequences.

Labor Code Section 6400 requires every employer to furnish employment and a place of employment that is safe and healthful for its employees. Lab. Code § 6400. To prove employer serious and willful misconduct for an unsafe environment, an injured employee must prove that the employer (1) knew of the dangerous condition; (2) knew that the probable consequences of the condition would involve serious injury to an employee; and (3) deliberately failed to take action.

For a single instance of serious misconduct, the injured worker must show with reasonable particularity that the reckless disregard for safety was made by a person in the managerial class of the employer. Where obvious, fixed, and long-maintained conditions of hazard exist, the courts have inferred that the conditions were known to members of the managerial class, and can be proved by circumstantial evidence, including evidence of prior injuries arising from similar circumstances.

Courts have required egregious conduct by the employer to be considered serious and willful misconduct. Serious and willful misconduct involves conduct of a quasi-criminal standard, and are acts that are either likely to result in serious injury, or with a wanton and reckless disregard of their possible consequences. The misconduct requires an intention to do harm, making it the antithesis of negligence of any degree. A willful failure to protect an employee from likely injury has been found sufficient to meet the standard. This standard is applicable both in violations of the Labor Code as well as a violation of Labor Code section 6400.

Under Labor Code section 4551, an injured worker can be penalized, upon petition by the employer, for his own serious and willful misconduct which caused injury. If the employer proves that the employee’s own misconduct caused his injury, the otherwise recoverable compensation may be reduced by up to one half upon a findings and award by the Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board.

Gregory Gomez is an attorney with Mastagni Holstedt, A.P.C.
Tree Trimmer Negotiations Wage On

The five-year tree trimmer agreement expired on Dec. 30, 2017. IBEW 1245 and its line clearance tree trimmer negotiating committee spent four days meeting with several tree employers during the months of October and December in an attempt to negotiate a new agreement, however, talks broke off in late December as both sides were too far off on proposals. The terms of the agreement, wages, health care increases, apprenticeship, and mandatory overtime are the major areas that remain unresolved. These issues have a financial impact under the total compensation of any proposal, which is where the difficulty lies.

Negotiations were scheduled to resume on Jan. 9, 2018, however they were pushed out as the union continues to try and find ways to resolve these issues. These negotiations have been difficult, but Local 1245 and its bargaining committee will continue to work hard to get a resolution.

Northern Area

Things were busy for the tree department in the North towards the end of 2017, particularly given the year-end push for the tree companies to get all their work completed before the end of the year. This had the crews running all over the place, with some shipped out of town to help other areas get caught up.

A few crews were left wondering if they were going to be at home for the holidays, or whether they were going to be stuck out of town. As far as we have heard, most people did get to make it home.

This was also the time of year that a lot of people wanted to take vacation to spend time with their families. With the work load that the tree companies had, it was hard for the employers to give time off. This caused some issues, as some crews rushed to complete their schedule. Some vacations were canceled, but most were honored.

Although negotiations for tree trimmers are ongoing, we did settle a new contract with Osmose and Davey for the pole test and treat members. It includes a raise in their pay, increases in their NEAP account, and vacation for their treatment and restoration technicians.

Both Davey and Osmose members voted to approve the new five-year contract. I have met with most of the members in my area since I have taken over this assignment, and I plan on meeting with the rest very soon. It has been kind of a struggle finding where all the yards are, because of the crews constantly on the move, trying to finish up their year-end work. Now that the new year is here, hopefully the yard-jumping will settle down and we will be able to meet the rest of the members.

Central Area

Asplundh Tree Expert (Nevada Energy) — Work continues in Fallon, Carson City, & Reno. Grievance activity picked up in Reno & Carson City. All open grievances have been scheduled to the next Grievance Review Committee in January. Members have been submitting proposals for contract negotiations.

Mowbray (PG&E & SMUD) — The complaining about the lack of gear has subsided now that the company has started supplying new equipment. We had an issue regarding vacation owed due to portability from the previous contractor. The company claims they lost the union seniority dates we had delivered to them in 2015, 2016 and now 2017. We plan on meeting with them on this issue. Crews continue to get work from Davey Tree Surgery in the East Bay & Sierra Division. We have a termination grievance in Placerville where the company took action against five employees for leaving the job to go on a vacation that had been approved by their supervisor. While en route on their way home, the supervisor informed the members of their job terminations. We've directed them to request for vacation. The supervisor had instructed the group to disengage the GPS because the company had called OSHA to report the company vehicles as stolen. None of the employees followed the order, and drove home, after a full day of work they then manually leave them when not in use. This grievance is in process.

Mountain Enterprise (Liberty Energy & PG&E) — Mountain has crews working for Liberty Energy in South Lake Tahoe & Truckee, and numerous crews working all over the PG&E territory. The company has been awarded a large contract by PG&E to clear areas from the fire systems-wide.

Davey Tree Surgery (Pole Test & Treatment) — The GRC Committee is still working on a few open grievances involving the contract. We have the date for mid-February 2018. All crews in Diablo and Sierra have been working nine-hour days, except for Mission & East Bay, where they were working eight-hour shifts.

Davey Tree Surgery (City of Santa Clara) — The contract had been with the city, waiting for approval by the Board. After several meetings, the City of Santa Clara agreed to cost adjustments that provided the additional funding that would match the state prevailing wage determination (which was required). If not approved, there was a chance that Davey Tree may have walked away from the contract, which would have had an impact on nine of our members. By approving these adjustments, our nine members all will receive a wage increase, as well as back pay from July 1, 2017 to Dec. 31, 2017 and a few other things, bringing them in line with the tree master agreement. Depending on classification & benefit packages, some members could benefit substantially. The key thing here is that there is now no more secondary existing contract. All the wages and benefits are all the same, just like the Master Agreement.

Osmose (Pole test & treatment) — We reached a table agreement on Oct. 10, 2017, which includes vacation for all hands, an issue that has been hugely important for the employees, as well as the addition of three paid sick days for all employees, and increase to the pension. The vote was overwhelmingly in support of the new contract.

Utility Tree Service (Golden Gate, De Anza, San Jose & the Peninsula) — Sub-contracting continues system-wide. We're still working on a few open GRC matters. We expect to secure a meeting in February 2018.

Utility Tree Service (Northern area) — Crews have been working out of Winter, Williams, and Dixon. We had a member that became ill on the job and was taken to the hospital via ambulance. The company had not attempted to address this matter that took place on the job in meeting the member to the proper legal assistance to help him through this ordeal. Somehow no workers’ compensation claim was ever filled out. UTS is still issuing work to Mario’s Tree Service & Synergy Tree Service.

Synergy Tree Service — Crews continue to work in Mountain View and the Peninsula. We continue to have progressions issues that are currently being addressed by the company. On Oct. 23, we had a fatality (fall) in San Jose with Ramon Ayala, FMA. Brother Ayala was very good hand with over 16 years of experience, and was well-respected among his peers. He was a well-known soccer coach in the community, a father, a brother, and a husband. He’ll surely be missed! This incident is still under a Cal-Osha investigation. PG&E is involved, and the CUPUC has been participating in the investigation as well.

The company questioned how the Lineco Medical works as to the contribution on part of the company. The company will continue to work in Mountain View and the Southern Area.

The Joe Cooper fatality that took place earlier in the year is still under a Cal-Osha investigation. We are expecting this be finalized soon. All crews continue to be working eight-hour shifts.

Southern Area

It has been a very busy time. The tree companies have been hard-pressed to complete on their schedues from different yards to areas that they are behind. This created some hardship for members during the holidays, as members had to be away from families, and vacation issues came up.

We were asked by PG&E to be part of the SJG foreman team regarding the Ramon Ayala fatality. We had a lot of meetings over the course of the last three months of the year, as well as a couple of site visits of the accident. A lot of time put into coming up with the facts. We met with OSHA and Synergy at the site and at Synergy yard, and we talked with the ground man who was working with Ayala on the day of the accident.

A Task Force Committee with PG&E and tree contractors has been established, to look into some industry best practices.

We have a grievance with Trees Inc. for bringing in non-union sub-contractors doing unit and CEMA work on PG&E property.

Miguel Orozco from Utility Tree

Work Accident Claims Life of Local 1245 Tree Trimmer

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of IBEW 1245 member Line Clearance Tree Trimmer Ramon Ayala. Brother Ayala, age 49, was working for Synergy in San Jose when he was involved in what appears to have been a 14.5-foot fall on Monday, October 23.

Ayala suffered numerous severe injuries as a result of this fall and was on life support and in an induced coma while these injuries were assessed. His medical team eventually determined that there would be no coming back from these injuries. He was subsequently taken off life support on Sunday, October 29. Ayala was an organ donor, which allowed some of his organs to be donated to others in need.

Ayala leaves behind a loving partner, Alma, and their family, which consists of her three children and one of his own. A viewing was held on Nov. 8, and the funeral was on Nov. 9, at 1:00 pm at Oak Hill Funeral Home in San Jose.

Brother Ayala is the fourth tree trimmer to lose his life while working in IBEW 1245 jurisdiction over the past 12 months. The investigation into this incident is still ongoing.
Comienzan las negociaciones de los salarios de los podadores de árboles

E l acuerdo de cinco años de los podadores de árboles venció el 30 de diciembre de 2017. El IBEW 1245 junto con el comité de negociación de los podadores de árboles para el despacho de líneas pasaron cuatro días en reuniones con varios empleadores durante los meses de octubre y diciembre, en un intento por negociar un nuevo acuerdo. Sin embargo, las conversaciones se interrumpieron a finales de diciembre ya que las propuestas de ambos partes eran muy distintas. Los términos del acuerdo, los salarios, los aumentos en los costos de atención de la salud, las ausencias por enfermedad, la formación de aprendices y las horas extras obligatorias son los principales temas que permanecen sin resolver. Estos asuntos tienen un impacto financiero sobre la remuneración total de cualquier propuesta, y esto es la raíz del problema.

Las negociaciones fueron programadas para reanudarse el 9 de enero de 2018, sin embargo, se retrasó la fecha hasta el 25 de enero mientras el sindicato continúa intentando encontrar maneras de resolver estos problemas. Estas negociaciones han sido difíciles, sin embargo, el Local 1245 y su comité de negociación seguirá trabajando arduamente para obtener una resolución.

Zona norte

En lo que se refiere a árboles, las cosas estuvieron muy movidas hacia finales de 2017, especialmente dado el empuje de fin de año para que las compañías de árboles completaran todo el trabajo de fin de año. Por esta razón las cuadrillas estaban apuradas por todas partes, y algunas se enviaron fuera de la ciudad para ayudar a otras zonas a ponerse al día. Algunas cuadrillas no estaban seguras de poder regresar a su casa tiempo para las festividades, y si lo lograban tendrían que estar lejos de sus familias, ya que los miembros tuvieron que estar lejos de sus familias, y surgieron problemas de vacaciones.

PG&E me pidió que fuera parte del equipo de investigación de SIF en referencia a la muerte de Ramon Ayala. Hemos tenido muchas reuniones durante el transcurso de los últimos tres meses del año, así como un par de visitas a sitios del accidente. Se ha invertido mucho tiempo para entender qué ocurrió. Nos reunimos con OSHA y Syn-ergy Tree Service, y hablamos con el operador de tierra que estaba trabajando con Ayala el día del accidente. Se estableció un Comité de Trabajo con PG&E y los contratistas de árboles para estudiar algunas de las mejoras necesarias para la industria.

Presentamos una queja con Trees Inc. por incorporar a sub-contratistas que no pertenecen al sindicato para ejecutar trabajos de la unidad y CEMA en las propiedades de PG&E. Seguimos teniendo problemas de ascenso. La compañía está abordando actualmente. El 23 de octubre tuvimos una fatalidad (caída) en San Jose con Ramon Ayala, FMA. El hermano Ayala era un trabajador muy bueno con más de 16 años de experiencia, y era muy respetado entre sus compañeros. Él era un conocido entrenador de fútbol en la comunidad, padre, hermano, y esposo. ¡Lo extrañaremos mucho! Este incidente está aún bajo investigación de Cal-Osha. PG&E está involucrado, y la CPUC también ha participado en la investigación.

La compañía cuestionó cómo funciona Lineco Medical en lo que se refiere a la contribución por parte de la empresa. La información ha sido remitida, y se aplica a todos los Contratistas que ejecutan trabajos en todo el sistema.

Wright Tree (SMUD) — Todas las cuadrillas habían estado trabajando en el centro de Sacramento antes de las festividades. La muerte de Joe Cooper que ocurrió a comienzos de año aún se encuentra bajo investigación de Cal-Osha. Estamos a la espera de que esto finalice pronto. Todas las cuadrillas continúan trabajando turnos de ocho horas.

Zona sur

Ha sido una temporada muy ocupada. Las compañías de árboles han estado en apuros para cumplir con lo programado y están enviando cuadrillas de diferentes patios a zonas que están retrasadas. Esto creó serias dificultades para los miembros durante las festividades, ya que los miembros tuvieron que estar lejos de sus familias, y surgieron problemas de vacaciones.

PG&E continúa intentando encontrar los cambios de lugar de los miembros. Al aprobar estos ajustes, nuestros nueve miembros recibirán un aumento salarial, así como el pago retroactivo a partir del 1° de julio de 2017 al 31 de diciembre de 2017 y algunas otras cosas, poniéndolas en consonancia con el acuerdo maestro de los podadores de árboles. Según su clasificación y el paquete de beneficios, algunos miembros podrían beneficiarse considerablemente. Lo más importante de esto es que ahora no hay más contratos secundarios vigentes. Todos los salarios y beneficios son los mismos, tal como el acuerdo principal.

Asplundh Tree Expert (Nevada Energy) — Los trabajos continúan en Fallon, Carson City y Reno. La actividad de manejo de malezas repuntó en Reno y Carson City. Todas las quejas pendientes han sido programadas para la próxima reunión del Comité de Revisión de Quejas en enero. Los miembros han presentado propuestas para la negociación del contrato.

Mowbray (PG&E y SMUD) — La quejas sobre la falta de equipo se han calado ahora que la compañía ha empezado a suministrar equipos nuevos. Tuvimos un problema con respecto a las vacaciones pendientes debido al movimiento de arista anterior. La compañía afirmó que perdido las fechas de antigüedad del sindicato que le habíamos entregado en 2015, 2016 y 2017. Tenemos planes de reunirnos con ellos sobre este asunto. Las cuadrillas siempre recibiendo trabajo de Davey Tree Service y Synergy Tree Service. El supervisor les había llamado para decirles que iban camino a casa, el supervisor les informó a los miembros sobre un problema en su solicitud de vacaciones. El supervisor les había llamado para decir que desactivar el GPS porque la compañía había llamado a las patrullas CHP para informar que algunos vehículos con algunos trabajadores no estaban haciendo su trabajo y estaban incumpliendo la orden. Siguieron a sus casas, y estacionaron los vehículos donde normalmente los dejan cuando no está en uso. Este reclamo está en curso.

Mountain Enterprise (Liberty Energy y PG&E) — Mountain tiene cuadrillas trabajando para Liberty Energy en South Lake Tahoe y Truckee, y numerosas cuadrillas trabajando en todo el territorio de PG&E. A la compañía se le adjudicó un contrato con la propiedad para el estado en apuros para cumplir con en el 1° de julio de 2017. Todas las cuadrillas en Diablo y Sierra han estado trabajando nueve horas al día, excepto en el caso de Mision y East Bay, donde trabajan turnos de ocho horas.

Davey Tree Surgery (PG&E y PG&E) — Mountain tiene cuadrillas trabajando para Liberty Energy en South Lake Tahoe y Truckee, y numerosas cuadrillas trabajando en todo el territorio de PG&E. A la compañía se le adjudicó un contrato con la propiedad para despajar las cuadrillas en el caso de que el contrato no estuviera en uso. Este reclamo está en curso.

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Davey Tree Surgery (Pole Test & Treatment) — El Comité de Resolución de Quejas (GRC) sigue trabajando en algunas pocas quejas pendientes desde 2017. Ahora estamos trabajando para que la fecha sea a mediados de febrero de 2018. Todas las cuadrillas en Diablo y Sierra ha estado trabajando nueve horas al día, excepto en el caso de Mision y East Bay, donde trabajan turnos de ocho horas.

Davey Tree Surgery (Ciudad de Santa Clara) — El contrato se había firmado con la ciudad, se espera su aprobación
MEET HARRY BRIDGES. HE FOUNDED THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE AND WAREHOUSE UNION (ILWU) BACK IN 1934, AND LED IT UNTIL HE RETIRED IN 1977. HE WAS A SMART AND DETERMINED GUY, AND WHEN HE SAW THAT NEW TECHNOLOGY WAS BRINGING BIG CHANGES TO HIS INDUSTRY, HE TOOK ACTION TO GET HIS MEMBERS...

IN THE 1930S, WORKING CONDITIONS ON THE DOCKS WERE TOUGH. THE ECONOMY WAS IN RUINS AND THE BOSSES CALLED ALL THE SHOTS. WORKERS HAD TO REQUEST WORK DAILY, AND WORK DAYS COULD LAST 36 HOURS OR MORE. TO KEEP CONTROL OVER THE WORKERS, THE BOSSES CREATED A COMPANY-RUN "UNION" AND REQUIRED WORKERS TO CARRY "BLUE BOOKS," WHICH THE WORKERS REFERRED TO AS PINK BOOKS.

FOR A GENERATION, THE UNION MANAGED THE HIRING AND TRAINING OF DOCK WORKERS, EQUALIZED WORK OPPORTUNITIES, FORMALIZED A REGULAR WORKFORCE, AND INITIATED A 6-HOUR WORK SHIFT WHICH HELPED SPREAD THE WORK MORE EQUITABLY AMONG THE WORKERS. THE UNION AND ITS MILITANT WORK STOPPAGES WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN IMPROVING WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS. BUT WHEN THE NEW MACHINES, SUCH AS THE FORKLIFT, CAME TO THE DOCKS, EVERYTHING CHANGED.

IN THE LATE 1950S, DELEGATES FROM ALL OF THE LONGSHORE LOCALS MET TO DEBATE THE MERITS OF EACH APPROACH AND EVENTUALLY CONCLUDED THAT THEIR GUERILLA RESISTANCE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO STAVE OFF THE TECHNOLOGY. THEY CAME UP WITH A NEW MECHANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION AGREEMENT WHICH ALLOWED THE EMPLOYERS TO INCORPORATE NEW MACHINERY INTO THE WORKPLACE AND CHANGE WORK RULES ACCORDINGLY. IN EXCHANGE THE UNION WOULD SECURE FINANCIAL COMPENSATION FOR WORKERS WHO WERE DISPLACED BY THE MACHINES, AND ENSURE THAT THE JOBS THAT REMAINED WERE BETTER, SAFER, AND HIGHER-PAYING.
IN 1933 A GROUP OF LONGSHORE WORKERS DECIDED THEY’D HAD ENOUGH. THEY WALKED OFF THE JOB IN SAN FRANCISCO AND DESTROYED THEIR FINK BOOKS IN PROTEST.

SOON ALL THE PORTS ON THE WEST COAST WERE INVOLVED IN A LONG, BRUTAL STRIKE. IT ENDED WITH A FEDERAL SETTLEMENT THAT GAVE ILWU THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE THE DOCKS ON THE WEST COAST.

FOR LONGSHOREMEN, THE MECHANIZATION OF THEIR INDUSTRY WAS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD. FORKLIFTS DID THE HEAVY LIFTING AND MADE JOBS SAFER, BUT THEY ALSO REPLACED MANY OF THEM ALTOGETHER.

THE UNION WAS AT A CROSSROADS. WHILE BRIDGES RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WAS NO WAY TO STOP THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY, MANY MEMBERS OF THE ILWU WANTED TO TRY AND FIGHT OFF THE MECHANIZATION. THEY STILL BELIEVED MILITANT WORK STOPPAGES WERE THE BEST APPROACH, BUT BRIDGES HAD A MORE FORWARD-THINKING PERSPECTIVE--HE KNEW THOSE MACHINES WERE HERE TO STAY, AND HE THOUGHT THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION WAS TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT FOR HIS MEMBERS--A "SHARE OF THE MACHINE."

RIGHT NOW, IBEW 1245 IS FACING A SIMILAR SITUATION. NEW TECHNOLOGIES--SUCH AS SMART METERS, DRONES, DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES, LOAD PUSHING TECHNOLOGY, COMPUTERS AND WEB APPS--ARE ALREADY CHANGING THE FACE OF OUR WORK AND THERE IS CLEARLY NO STOPPING IT. WE’D BE WELL ADVISED TO STUDY WHAT BRIDGES AND THE ILWU DID, AND MAKE THE MOST OF OUR NEGOTIATING POWER.

MECHANIZATION & MODERNIZATION AGREEMENT OF 1960

IN THE WINTER OF 1960, WORKERS VOTED TO APPROVE THE REVOLUTIONARY AGREEMENT BY A MARGIN OF 2-TO-1. THE DEAL SPARKED CONTROVERSY--SOME SAID THE UNION MEMBERS GOT TOO MUCH, WHILE OTHERS BELIEVED THEY SHOULD HAVE FUGHT FOR MORE. REGARDLESS, BRIDGES SAW THERE WAS NO STOPPING THE MACHINES, AND TOOK THE FIGHT TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE TO PROTECT HIS MEMBERS’ LIVELIHOODS.©2018 by IBEW Local 1245. Produced by Tom Christopher. Permission is hereby granted to other unions to reproduce this poster, so long as this copyright statement is included.
IBEW 1245’s Public Sector Organizing Campaign

Building Power Through Member Engagement

In anticipation of the SCOTUS decision in 2018, IBEW 1245 launched a twelve-month internal organizing drive, with the goal of reaching all of our 2,500+ public sector members employed at 34 public sector employers. The centerpiece of the plan revolves around the development of Volunteer Organizing Committees (VOC) at every employer. The VOCs are comprised of member-leaders who have committed to holding one-on-one, face-to-face conversations with their co-workers, sharing their stories about the concrete difference that the union makes in their lives, and inviting their fellow members to re-commit to the union by signing voluntary membership cards.

Over the past six months, IBEW 1245 business representatives, organizers and VOC members have identified and trained more than 153 leaders at 22 of our public sector properties, and the results have been nothing short of phenomenal. VOC members have completed one-on-one conversations and card signing drives at 11 public sector employers, and as of this writing, out-reach is nearly complete at 11 additional properties. The City of Lodi, the City of Lompoc, Merced Irrigation District, and Sacramento Regional Transit are among the properties that have completed the drive, and all succeeded in getting 93% or more of the members to re-sign with the union. Some properties actually achieved 100%! To date, we’ve engaged 76% of our membership, and are on pace to re-sign over 90% of our current membership in the public sector. We have also distributed over 2,000 “I’m in!” t-shirts and 3,000 stickers so the members can proudly show how they feel about the union.

Talking About the Union Difference

“Because of my membership in my 1245 union, I’m able to have the opportunity and security to provide for my wife and kids”

“Rep and co-workers saved my job when I was falsely accused”

“We've focused on member unity, thanks to the work of organizing stewards and VOC leaders Kim Camatti, Eli Escamilla, Larry Gonzalez and Justin Hirschi, along with the 51-member VOC Camatti, a materials/warehouse specialist, spear-headed the drive after attending two trainings sponsored by the union. Escamilla, Gonzalez and Hirschi, all experienced journeymen linemen, joined with Camatti and have galvanized their peers through one-on-one conversations. SMUD is IBEW 1245's largest public property, with 553 members. As of this writing, 76% of our SMUD members have re-signed as voluntary dues-paying members, Camatti and Escamilla joined IBEW 1245 Staff Organizer Rene Cruz Martinez to share our organizing model and experience with 550 delegates at the annual Electrical Workers' Minority Caucus (EWMC) in Detroit, Michigan in January of 2018.

On January 9, we held our third VOC meeting at the Modesto Irrigation District, following their monthly Unit Meeting. We provided updates and shared wall charts which listed all of the MID members’ names alphabetically. The VOC members identified each of their co-workers’ departments, and took assignments, logging them on the wall charts and their personal tracker. They kicked off the campaign by filling out and submitting their own cards. They reached more than a third of their members in just the first 48 hours, with 90 cards signed and returned right off the bat.

Case Studies

Our 20-member VOC at the City of Redding is a case in point. Together with the members, our organizing team developed a detailed departmental map and converted it to wall charts. The VOC members each took assignments, began holding conversations with their co-workers, and tracked their progress. To date, our Redding VOC members have held more than 200 one-on-one conversations (89% of the active workforce), resulting in 188 (94%) who have signed the new cards. With fewer than 25 conversations to go, we aim to complete the effort in Redding before their February unit meeting.

Tough Questions

While the results of the one-on-one conversations have been outstanding, the VOC members have certainly encountered more than a few tough ques-
campaign at EWMC.

Martinez presenting our Public Sector
Camatti and Staff Organizer Rene Cruz
IBEW 1245 Organizing Steward Kim

double-time and no take-aways on our
answer is simple. “Look at our new five-
ber at Modesto Irrigation District, the
place to work,” noted Escamilla.

tion when work issues arise, and a safer
es, better health benefits, representa-
ions — not the least of which is “What
has the union done for me lately?”

“How about the negotiated benefits
we’ve received over the past 40 years?”
Camatti said. “Hot meals, paid rest peri-
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“[The union] has helped give us rais-
ths and helped them find work. “I
never thought they were capable of.

VOC members at Modesto Irrigation District sign up for assignments.

Reaping the Rewards,
Strengthening the Brotherhood

One of the direct outcomes of the or-
organizing drive has been identifying new
“spark plugs” within our membership,
and inviting them to take leadership
roles. In the process, members have dug
into their union history, lifted up their
own stories, rediscovered the camara-
derie of the brotherhood and stretched
themselves to take on tasks they never
thought they were capable of.

“We’re giving members the chance
to take ownership of their union,” de-
clared veteran IBEW 1245 Organizer
Fred Ross.

When asked what the best part of the
campaign has been for her, Camatti re-
plied, “realizing how much of an IBEW
brotherhood there really is here at
SMUD. Watching our Volunteer Orga-
nizing Committee members (who are
ALL field employees) step-up in help-
ing to get 553 employee signatures as
volunteer dues-paying members ... And
having the opportunity in helping cre-
ate a more impactful IBEW presence of
our unity onsite.”

VOC member and journeyman line-
man Hirschli declared, “So many of our
former union brothers/sisters have
lived and died to create all the rights we
today. Thank you for giving me
the opportunity to stand united with my
union brothers and sisters to help fight
to maintain those rights!”

Our work has garnered the attention
of others outside of our local as well.
In addition to presenting our organ-
izing model to the EWMC, IBEW 1245
organizers and lead VOC members have
shared it with the Alameda Central La-
bor Council, the Los Angeles County
Federation of Labor, the Northern Valley
Labor Federation, the California Labor
Federation, and SEIU Local 2015. We
have also been contacted by many more
local unions and labor councils. In mid-
February, we will meet with the leader-
ship of IBEW’s 9th district to share our
strategy and results.

— Eileen Purcell, IBEW 1245
Staff Organizer

City of Redding VOC with Business Rep Charley Souders

As of Jan. 21, 2018, the following properties have completed their
one-on-one conversations and cards:

1. City of Lodi: 36 of 37 (97%) VOC = 4
2. City of Lompoc: 151 of 161 (94%) VOC = 18
3. TDPUD: 47 of 49 (96%) VOC = 2
4. Lassen MUD: 23 of 23 (100%) VOC = 2
5. SRT: 186 of 195 (95%) VOC = 16
6. City of Oakland: 19 of 19 (100%) VOC = 1
7. Merced Irrigation District: 81 of 87 (93%) VOC = 11
8. City of Willits: 4 of 6 (67%)
9. Shelter Cove: 8 of 8 (100%)
10. City of Ukiah: 13 of 13 (100%)
11. City of Berkeley: 8 of 9 (88%) VOC = 1

The following properties are still in the process of completing their
outreach. Here are their results to date:

1. City of Redding: 200 out of 224 (89%) VOC = 21
2. City of Healdsburg: 33 of 57 (58%) VOC = 8
3. SMUD: 420 of 553 (76%) VOC = 51
4. City of Alameda: 15 of 24 (62%)
5. AC Transit: 27 of 29 (93%)
6. Port of Oakland: 17 of 36 (47%) VOC = 2

The following properties recently launched or will be kicking off
their efforts in early 2018:

2. City of Vallejo & GVRD: VOC = 10
3. NCPA: still building their VOC
4. Modesto Irrigation District: 116 of 255 (45%) VOC = 19+
5. City of Roseville: Still building their VOC

— Eileen Purcell, IBEW 1245 Staff Organizer
Organizing is the lifeblood of the union movement. It is through organizing that our union was born. It was organizing that enabled us to negotiate our earliest contracts, not to mention all of the subsequent gains we've made at the bargaining table ever since. It is organizing that gives us our collective power, and organizing will be what sustains and strengthens our union for years to come. Nowadays, IBEW Local 1245 has become synonymous with organizing, thanks in large part to our extraordinary and dynamic Organizing Steward program. This relatively new program has cemented Local 1245’s place as one of the most effective organizing locals in the Labor Movement, both locally as well as nationally. The program empowers rank-and-file members to get involved in issues and campaigns that truly matter to working families, enables them to hone their leadership capabilities, and equips them with the tools and skills they need to fight — and win — for workers.

At the dawn of this decade, IBEW 1245’s Organizing Steward program was little more than a pipe dream in the mind of Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. It grew out of the NV Energy fight led by retirees, as well as the PG&E clerical contract fight in 2009 and 2010. With the vision of Dalzell, the enthusiastic endorsement of the Local 1245 Executive Board and the talent of veteran organizers Fred Ross and Eileen Purcell, the Organizing Steward program was born. It was tailored as a hands-on, intergenerational leadership development program that placed stewards in live campaigns. The first Class of 28 organizing stewards was inducted in 2014. Over the past five years, the program has exploded in both size and reach, and on January 26, 2018, Local 1245 welcomed a whopping 111 Organizing Stewards — our largest class to date — to Weakley Hall for the annual kickoff and orientation.

Approximately half of this year’s class are newcomers to the program. Many of the first-year stewards, like Cinnamon “Cindy” Stafford, were recruited into the program by other organizing stewards who see their potential as future leaders.

“I’ve been with the company for 17 years, but I never really knew about the union and what it actually does for the employees before,” said Stafford, who works in PG&E’s credit department in Stockton. “I’m just now realizing what the union does for me. For instance, when I would get a raise, I used to think the company just gave it to me — I didn’t realize that all our raises are all because of the union negotiations for them. When you aren’t that involved with the union, then you don’t know this stuff, until someone sits down next to you and starts explaining it to you. I’m sure there are others just like me who just don’t know, and I hope that, as an organizing steward, I can help educate them.”

Felicia Martinez is another first-year organizing steward. In 2017, as a prospective organizing steward, she worked on a union organizing campaign at San Diego Gas & Electric, and found the experience to be both empowering and inspiring.

“I’m excited for the opportunity to become more involved in the union, and to help others get the same rights and benefits that I have,” said Martinez. “I’ve had a union job my whole adult life, and it’s given me so much — it’s allowed me to provide not just for my child, but also for my own mom and my two brothers. I know I have it pretty good, and I just want to pay it forward and continue to help others, and know that I made a difference in their lives.”

In what has become a tradition, the organizing steward orientation kicked off with a rousing sing-a-long, led by Staff Organizer Eileen Purcell on the accordion, Local 1245 retiree Jim Lappin on banjo and musician Francisco Herrera on the guitar.

Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell welcomed the packed house of stewards with some words of gratitude and motivation.

“[The Organizing Steward program] has changed the character and culture of this union. We have made it much more powerful, and we have become an example for other unions. I can’t go anywhere in the United States without people asking about this program,” Dalzell told the stewards. “We’re facing some of the toughest fights we’ve ever faced, but now we have this powerful weapon that was not in our arsenal before. I couldn’t be prouder. Thank you for all of the work you do!”

The first activity allowed the stewards to get to know one another. They broke out into groups, introduced themselves, shared their personal stories and talked about some of the concrete differences the union has made in their lives.

“I value the stability that we have. I was in and out of different jobs my whole life until I got in with the union,” said Mark Goodwin. “And I like the solidarity, the whole feeling of working people standing together.”

“The union has changed my life. It’s been really eye-opening for me,” said Alvin Dayoan. “I appreciate that the union gives us job security and great benefits, and also the right to have a voice and organize!”

“Before I started working at PG&E, I didn’t really like unions,” said Georgette Carrillo, who has been part of the Organizing Stewards — our largest class to date — to Weakley Hall for the annual kickoff and orientation. Approximately half of this year’s class are newcomers to the program. Many of the first-year stewards, like Cinnamon “Cindy” Stafford, were recruited into the program by other organizing stewards who see their potential as future leaders.

“I’ve been with the company for 17 years, but I never really knew about the union and what it actually does for the employees before,” said Stafford, who works in PG&E’s credit department in Stockton. “I’m just now realizing what the union does for me. For instance, when I would get a raise, I used to think the company just gave it to me — I didn’t realize that all our raises are all because of the union negotiations for them. When you aren’t that involved with the union, then you don’t know this stuff, until someone sits down next to you and starts explaining it to you. I’m sure there are others just like me who just don’t know, and I hope that, as an organizing steward, I can help educate them.”

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nizing Steward program since its inception. “But once I got a good union job, I was like, ‘Who wouldn’t want this? It’s great!’”

After the initial ice breaker, the group got right down to brass tacks. Staff Organizers Fred Ross, Eileen Purcell and Rene Cruz Martinez discussed the goals and some of the important campaigns that the organizing stewards will be tasked with in 2018, including building power in the public sector, and working to elect more worker-friendly candidates to office in this key election year. IBEW International Lead Organizer Rick Thompson shared the details of some new worksites that we hope to bring in to the IBEW, and called on the stewards for their support to grow our union’s ranks this year.

The stewards had the unique opportunity to screen a powerful film called “Union Time,” which tells the story of the lengthy, contentious and often violent fight for worker justice and union representation at Smithfield Foods, a massive meat processing facility in North Carolina. The workers fought for more than a decade to win union representation in the face of an extremely hostile employer — but with the right organizing tactics and a dedicated team of member-leaders, they ultimately prevailed and won their union in 2008.

The next breakout session focused on the importance of having one-on-one conversations with other union members at work, to help them better understand the value of the union and the importance of getting involved. Eighty-three of the organizing stewards committed to recruit and bring one non-steward to the February 24th training on Janus and attacks on Labor Movement. Altogether, 165 members will be giving up a Saturday to build a stronger union.

At the end of the day, the stewards broke out into groups by region, and discussed activities, approaches and tactics to increase member engagement within their specific areas. Each steward left with a sense of purpose, a better understanding of the critical nature of the union movement, and an assignment to begin their important work right away.

“We don’t just talk about it. We learn by doing,” said longtime Organizer Fred Ross. “That’s the underpinning of this program, and that’s what solidarity is all about.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

Before I started working at PG&E, I didn’t really like unions. But once I got a good union job, I was like, ‘Who wouldn’t want this? It’s great!’ — Georgette Carrillo
Transforming the Dream to Reality

Highlights from the 28th Annual EWMC Conference

IEWC’s Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) held its 28th annual conference on Jan. 10-14, 2018 in Detroit, MI. This year’s theme was Transforming the Dream to Reality: Achieving Political, Economic, Racial and Social Justice.

More than 550 IBEW delegates from across the United States and Canada attended this year’s conference. Local 1245 sent 19 delegates to the conference, including 13 rank-and-file members from both public and private sector employers, 50% of which were first-time attendees.

The week-long event kicked off with a special pre-conference hosted by RENEW (Reach Out and Engage Next-Gen Electrical Workers), which unique programing geared specifically towards younger members.

“We had many great speakers at RENEW, and one individual who stood out to me was a youth educator who was discussing the importance of educating our youth about the benefits of a union,” said Brittney Santana, who works as a first field clerk for PG&E out of Fresno. “She mentioned in her speech that sometimes college isn’t for everyone, sometimes kids want to go directly into a career path. This really hit home for me, because I had planned to go to college, but my parents had discussed the importance of finding a union job and encouraged me to apply to PG&E. Luckily, I got the job, just four months out of high school, and have been a part of the IBEW for 10 years now.”

Brian Huffman with IBEW International President Lonnie Stephenson

PG&E Customer Service Rep Brian Huffman was also moved by that same speaker.

“I’m one of those individuals who wasn’t cut out for college. I wasted a lot of time and money, knowing college wasn’t for me,” said Huffman. “I want to reach out to the children in the high schools and give them the union option... working in a trade can be a wonderful choice for their future. I am truly fired up about getting active in the community, not only my community, but other communities in need.”

“Having gone to the RENEW conference, I recognize the need to build membership, grow our ranks and create new opportunities,” added PG&E Gas Service Rep Joseph Stewart. “The larger our numbers, the farther our reach will be.”

The full EWMC conference began on Thursday, Jan. 11 with a Day of Giving. Delegates had the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of community service projects throughout the Detroit area.

“During our Day of Giving, we volunteered at Gleaners Food Bank. Some of our tasks were to bag apples, sort potatoes, and pull inventory of non-perishable items onto pallets to be delivered,” said Melissa Echeverria, who works for PG&E out of Fresno. “Over the course of the day, we were able to positively impact thousands of families in Detroit and give back to the community. It felt like such an accomplishment.”

“I enjoyed the day of service the most. Giving back to the community leaves such a good feeling in your heart, knowing you left the city a better place than when you got there,” added PG&E Customer Service Rep Alyssa Fernandez.

“Just knowing that our work helped impact so many families made me feel appreciative of the opportunity to make a difference,” said Melissa Echeverria, who works for PG&E out of Fresno.

The EWMC delegates also gave back to the Detroit community through direct financial contributions.

“I enjoyed the positive responses from the attending union members that were willing to donate money to a local charity in Detroit,” said SMUD Lineman Elias Escamilla. “The money that was donated from all the brothers and sisters. 2018 is such an important year, and I feel that this conference was just what I needed to get me ‘fired up and ready to go!'”

Rene Cruz Martinez contributed to this report.

The delegation from Local 1245

Supreme Court, which is expected this spring.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to attend this conference and to share my worksite story, showcasing our organizing efforts with the ‘Right to Work is Wrong’ campaign at my workplace,” said Camatti, a materials specialist and leader of the Volunteer Organizing Committee at SMUD. “What I learned most throughout the event was a concrete definition of ‘brotherhood.’ Even though I’ve been an IBEW member for many years, this conference and the focus on community service, unity and coming together for the common good — regardless of title, age, gender, etc. — really showed me what ‘brotherhood’ truly means.”

On the final day of the conference, delegates had the opportunity to attend multiple workshops on a wide variety of topics.

“At the Labor Law workshop, it was interesting to learn how the National Labor Relations Act came about,” said Nilda Garcia, who works for PG&E in Sacramento. “The class got to participate in an exercise with the instructor, Attorney Gayle Hamilton, a professor at Wayne State University. We went over scenarios of protected, unprotected or illegal issues, and she helped us better understand the differences. This was important info for me to take back and use to educate my peers.”

“The second workshop that I was able to attend was my favorite: ‘The Power of Our Personal Stories,’” said Stewart. “We first established a common ground; what we all want out of our professional lives to help make us happy. Once we agreed that everyone wants the same thing — ability to take care of family, be loved, accepted and prosperous — we were able to share why being in a union helped further that goal. We then discussed why our work with IBEW or organizing has had such a profound and lasting impact on us, and were asked to tell a personal story that defined the point we started to feel so passionately about it. [At first] I did not know what the speaker meant by, ‘the POWER in our personal stories’ but I understand now. The stories from my union brothers and sisters were POWERFUL! I feel I am a better person, employee, and union member having been able to attend this workshop.”

Our delegates traveled back home on Sunday, filled with a renewed sense of purpose.

“This conference gave me hope, it inspired me, it energized me! To be in a room full of 600 other delegates who are just as passionate and determined about growing and caring for our union as I am made me want to cry,” said Fernandez.

“With an overwhelming number of eloquently spoken speakers and informative workshops throughout the week, one would think the message from the conference would get convoluted, but it didn’t,” said David Ly, who works at PG&E’s San Jose call center. “The message was clear. I now understand the mission of EWMC. We must unite, inform our members, educate them about the benefits of unionized labor, and promote minority representation. All of this starts at the local level.”

“This conference opened my eyes to the incredible strides we are taking to make the IBEW all-inclusive to gender, race, sexual orientation, and people with disabilities,” said PG&E Customer Service Rep Ashley Nelson Finley. “I feel so energized and ready to share all that I have learned with my fellow brothers and sisters. 2018 is such an important year, and I feel that this conference was just what I needed to get me ‘fired up and ready to go!'”
Winneumucca Retirees Present Donation to Humboldt County Senior Center

On Jan. 17, 2018, the Winnemucca Battle Mountain IBEW Retirees Club presented a donation to the Humboldt County Senior Center. Retirees Club Treasurer Michael Dean presented the check to Post President Denny Parquette. Local 1245 retiree Jack Pardick is holding the IBEW banner on the left.

— Thomas “T” Bird, IBEW 1245 Retirees Club

Winneumucca Retirees Support Vietnam Vets

Members of the IBEW Local 1245 Winnemucca Retirees Club presented a donation to the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Post #744 in Winnemucca, NV to help the post further its mission to support of Vietnam Veterans. Winnemucca Retirees Club Treasurer Michael Dean presented the check to Post President Denny Parquette. Local 1245 retiree Jack Pardick is holding the IBEW banner on the left.

— Thomas “T” Bird, IBEW 1245 Retirees Club

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, Cotati, Merced, Reno/Sparks, Yerington, Carson City and Winnemucca. If you don't have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

We want you to Stay Connected

Congratulations Retirees!

We want you to Stay Connected

to IBEW 1245.
Local 1245 Members at NV Energy Raise Funds for Evelyn Mount’s Holiday Food Drive

In what has become an annual tradition, IBEW Local 1245 members at NV Energy came together over the holidays to support Evelyn Mount’s holiday food drive. Mount is well known in the Reno community for her tireless efforts to collect and distribute food for needy families.

Local 1245 member and NV Energy Fleet Mechanic John Wilson has been spearheading the effort for several years, and noted that “the generosity this year was phenomenal.” The Local 1245 members raised more than $4,000, and received an additional $3,000 from the company, for a grand total of $7,000. The money was used to purchase a wide variety of groceries, including turkeys, side dishes and desserts, which were all delivered to Mount the week before Christmas, enabling her to provide meals for 360 local families in need.

Lompoc Unit Supports Local 1245 Member with Premature Baby in NICU

When IBEW 1245 member Gustavo “Goose” Lopez’s baby was born six weeks premature, weighing just three pounds, the doctors told Lopez and his family that the baby would need to stay in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in Santa Barbara for at least two weeks.

“At first, we had no idea how we could afford to drive to Santa Barbara and see our son every day,” said Lopez, who works in the Street Division for the City of Lompoc. The drive from Lopez’s home to the hospital in Santa Barbara is about 100 miles round trip.

Lopez’ father decided to approach the union to see if they might be able to help. Without hesitation, the IBEW 1245 Lompoc Unit used money from the unit’s Community Fund to issue Lopez a $150 gas card, ensuring that the Lopez family would be able to make the drive to see their baby in the NICU.

“Receiving the gas card helped us immensely,” said Lopez. “We are extremely grateful and appreciative that the union was able to help us during one of our biggest times of need.”

The baby, Lorenzo Robert Lopez, was released from the hospital after two weeks. He is now a healthy eight-month-old with no developmental delays or issues.

Sacramento Regional Transit Unit #3011 donated $500 to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month.

SMUD/Wright Tree Unit #4424 also donated $500 to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Placerville Unit #3813 for Cancer Awareness month.

Sacramento Regional Transit Unit #3011 donated $500, along with the request for up to $350 in matching funds to the Evelyn Mount Christmas Food Drive.

Stockton Unit #2511 donated $200 to Saint Mary’s Dining Hall and $200 to San Joaquin Hospice Tree of Lights.

Sacramento/Trees Unit #4717 donated $250 to the Holy Spirit Tornados Girls Soccer Team.

San Jose/Utility Tree Unit #4713 donated $500 to MaryHouse c/o Loaves & Fishes.

Salinas Unit #1211 donated $250 to the Salvation Army of Santa Clara for the holidays to support Children in Sacramento.

Fresno Clerical Unit #1111 donated $500 to the Fresno Teachers Association for their potential strike.

Fresno Clerical Unit #1111 donated $250 to the Central Valley Community Foundation Honor Flight.

Salinas Unit #1211 donated $250 to the Monterey Christian School Agriculture Club.

Stockton Unit #2511 donated $200 to Saint Mary’s Dining Hall and $200 to San Joaquin Hospice Tree of Lights.

Reno Unit #3311 donated $500, along with the request for up to $350 in matching funds to the Evelyn Mount Christmas Food Drive.

Roseville Unit #3512 donated $250 to Bayside Military Outreach and $250 to Gathering Ian.

Rocklin Unit #3515 donated $250 plus $175 in matching funds to Rocklin Youth Lacrosse Club, and $250 plus $175 in matching funds to Child Advocates of Placer County.

Ukiah Unit #3714 donated $250 to Willits Sober Grad night and $250 to Willits Senior Citizens Center.

Watsonville/Davey Tree Unit #4723 donated $500 to the Everett Alvarez High School Girls’ Soccer Team.

Yerington Retirees Club donated $250 to the American Legion Wyatt Post #9.

Carson City Retirees Club donated $250 to the Back-Pack Buddies program of Douglas County.

North Bay Retirees Club donated $250 plus $175 in matching funds to both the Santa Rosa Neptune Swim Club and the Santa Rosa Stallions Football team.

Turlock Irrigation District Unit #1126 donated $250 to Pitman Softball and $250 to Bikes for Kids.

Winnemucca Retirees Club donated $250 to Senior Citizens of Humboldt and $250 to Vietnam Veterans of America #744.

Salinas Unit #1211 donated $250 to the Salvation Army of Santa Clara.

Hollister Unit #1219 donated $500 to the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation.

City of Santa Clara Unit #1411 donated $500 to the Salvation Army of Santa Clara.

East Bay Clerical Unit #2301 donated $250 to Eura-Dells Court and $250 to Oakland Rebels.

Oakland Physical Unit #2311 donated $500 to the Alameda County Food Bank.

Modesto Irrigation District Unit #2518 donated $500 to the Wilson Elementary School baseball fund.

Santa Rosa Unit #3712 donated $250 to Roseland Community Center and $250 to Santa Rosa Stallions Youth Football.

Susanville Unit #4012 donated $250 to Salvation Army and $250 to Lassen County Toys for Tots.

Redding/Davey & Utility Tree Unit #4419 donated $250 to Western Service Workers and $250 to Good News Rescue Mission.

South Lake Tahoe Unit #5231 donated $500 to the Live Violence Free program at the Tahoe Women’s Center.

Local 1245 Business Rep Pat Waite and NV Energy Labor Relations Manager Nanette Quitt.
Fresno Charity Bowl Raises Money for Local 1245 Members Who Lost Homes in North Bay Fires

On Sunday, Dec. 10, IBEW 1245 members and their families enjoyed an afternoon of bowling at our Ugly Holiday Sweater Charity Bowl in Selma, CA. Over 35 people were in attendance and together, we were able to raise more than $500 for our Local 1245 brothers and sisters who lost their homes in the North Bay fires. Several lucky bowlers left the event with exciting raffle prizes, including a TV, gift cards, and a spa package. It was a wonderful afternoon of fun and solidarity, and the Fresno Organizing Committee welcomed the opportunity to come together to help our fellow members who need all the support that they can get this holiday season.

— Ashley Nelson Finley, IBEW 1245 Organizing Steward

City of Roseville Members Prepare Care Packages for the Troops

IBEW 1245 members from the City of Roseville supported the Bayside Military Outreach program for the second year in a row by assembling holiday care packages for our deployed troops. Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Jennifer Gray joined City of Roseville Unit Officers, including Chair Gary Kidder, Vice Chair Mike Barton and Recording Secretary Brian Boyd, to present Bayside Church with a donation of $250, to assist with the cost of supplies and postage.

Photos by John Storey
The purpose of this contest is to provide a grant in aid for scholarships to colleges and junior colleges, thereby making financial assistance toward the attainment of a higher education.

1. The grant will be as follows:
   - Twenty-five hundred dollars ($2,500.00) per year, up to four (4) years, as long as a C (2.0) average is maintained and the parent maintains their membership in good standing in Local Union 1245.

2. In order to be a candidate in this contest, you must be a son or daughter, natural, legally adopted or a legal ward of a member of Local Union 1245. You must also be a high school student who has graduated or is graduating in the year of the contest. A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in 2018 must be attached to your scholarship application.

3. The Scholarship Grant will be made only to that candidate who intends to enroll full-time in any college certified by their State Department of Education and accredited by the Local Accrediting Association.

   Responsibility of Scholarship Recipient: Scholarship winner must begin their studies in their next term or, at the very latest, in January of the following year.

4. Applications may be secured by addressing the Recording Secretary of Local Union 1245 or by calling the Union Office or by using the form loaded from the Local’s website (www.ibew1245.com).

5. Checks will be paid directly to the scholarship recipient.

6. All applications shall be accompanied with a written essay, not to exceed five hundred (500) words, on the subject determined by the Executive Board.

7. Essays should be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, on one side, preferably typed and doubled spaced with applicant's written signature at the conclusion of the essay.

8. Applications and essays must be mailed to I.B.E.W., Local Union 1245, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, California 95696, by REGISTERED CERTIFIED MAIL ONLY, and be postmarked no later than the first Monday in March of each year.

9. Each year the scholarship shall be presented at the Advisory Council meeting in April; the Judge and a guest and the recipient and parents shall be invited, at Local Union expense, to present and receive the Scholarship Award.

   A suitable trophy or plaque shall be purchased by the Local Union to be presented to the scholarship recipient.

NOTE: The topic for the 2018 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship essay is: “Why is the right wing in America determined to destroy all trade unions?”
IBEW 1245 Scholarship Application 2018

Which IBEW 1245 Scholarship are you applying for? (please check one)

- Ron T. Weakley (Trade/vocational/line school) Scholarship
- Roger Stalcup (Community College) Scholarship
- Survivor's Scholarship
- Veteran's Scholarship

Applicant's Personal Information

First Name:

Middle Name:

Last Name:

Street Address:

City, State, Zip Code:

Country: Gender:

Home Phone Number: Applicant's Cell Phone Number:

Applicant's Email Address:

How did you (or a family member) hear about the IBEW 1245 Scholarship?

College and Career Information

In 2018, I plan to attend:

Intended major:

1.) First Choice School. List the Name of the School and Location (City and State):

Have you been accepted at this school?:

2.) Second Choice School. List the Name of the School and Location (City and State):

Have you been accepted at this school?:

What is your anticipated graduation date? (enter month/year e.g. 06/2018):

Briefly outline your career goals, while addressing the following: Explain why you want to pursue a college education. How will this education contribute towards your immediate and/or long term career plans?

Employment, Awards & Activities

**EMPLOYMENT.** Provide information on up to three jobs you have held (include name of employer, your job/title, dates of employment). Describe why these jobs are most important to you. If you do not have any employment to list, enter "Not Applicable" in the Employment #1 section below.

Employment #1:

Employment #2:

Employment #3:

**COMMUNITY SERVICE.** provide information on up to three Community Service projects you have been involved with. Please include a brief description of the project, dates of your involvement and why the project was meaningful to you.

Community Service #1:

Community Service #2:

Community Service #3:

**AWARDS.** Provide information on up to three special honors, awards or certificates you have received (include dates). Describe and explain why each award is especially meaningful to you. If you do not have any awards to list, enter "Not Applicable" in the Award #1 section below.

Awards #1:

Awards #2:

Awards #3:

**ACTIVITIES.** Provide information on up to 5 extracurricular activities (internships, sports, clubs) in which you have participated on a consistent basis. Highlight any leadership positions you have held. (Include dates).

Activity #1:

Activity #2:

Activity #3:

Activity #4:

Activity #5:

Letters of Reference

We encourage applicants obtain and submit this letter or reference on their own. However, if your reference requires that the letter remain confidential, you may nominate a reference and have them confidentially submit a letter. Submit letters to IBEW 1245 Scholarship Committee, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA 95687

By checking this box you certify that the letter was written by a teacher or other adult familiar with your achievements and abilities.

Scholarship Essay

Please submit an essay of approximately 500 words describing your relationship with the union and the labor movement. In what ways has it personally affected your life and your family's life? Explain why you believe you are a good choice for this IBEW 1245 scholarship.

Estimated Financial Need

List the total anticipated dollar amount you will need for the year. Include the cost of tuition and expenses such as books, transportation and housing.

Enter total number of people in your household

Provide any additional information that you believe would be helpful to the Scholarship Committee in assessing your personal or financial need.

Utility Reporter
Organizing Stewards Inducted

On the heels of a dynamic and inspiring orientation (see pages 22–23), the fifth annual class of organizing stewards was formally inducted at the Advisory Council meeting in January.

Business Manager Tom Dalzell highlighted the key role that the organizing stewards have played in a number of recent critical efforts, including the successful campaign to stave off a precipitous shutdown at Diablo Canyon. He also underscored the positive momentum and notoriety that the program has garnered in recent years. Staff Organizer Rene Cruz Martinez followed up by pointing out the explosive growth that the program has undergone in just a few short years.

“We started with 28 organizing stewards five years ago, last year we had 83, and now we have 111!” Cruz Martinez told the Advisory Council. “These members are stepping up to help on all the fights we are facing. Everyone is energized and fired up!”

“When I attended my new employee orientation at PG&E six-and-a-half years ago, all I remember is that I was a union member now, I would pay dues and have a contract,” longtime Organizing Steward Nilda Garcia told the Advisory Council. “But the organizing steward program has taught me about the ‘why’ of our dues and our contract. I’ve been educated, energized, and given the tools to go out and motivate others. My union changed my life by empowering me and giving me that spark.”

“Being an organizing steward has been one of my greatest achievements … it molded me into the person I am today,” added Lead Organizing Steward Laquania “Q” Thompson. “This program has taught me that we have to work hard for what we believe in, and we must continue to fight for what’s right. If we get knocked down, we always get right back up and keep going.”
Local 1245 member Jordan Skarda is the winner of the quarterly photo contest. Brother Skarda works for PG&E out of Pismo Beach. The unique and eye-catching composition of this image helped him to secure victory and the $500 cash prize.

All active Local 1245 members in good standing are eligible to enter the contest. Submit high-resolution, work-related photos to rgb1@ibew1245.com. Limit five photo submissions per member, per quarter.

“Share of the Machine” Video Premieres at Advisory Council

As a follow-up to the unique re-telling of the life of ILWU leader Harry Bridges, which was featured at the last Advisory Council meeting, Local 1245 premiered a new video about Bridges and the ILWU’s Mechanization and Modernization Agreement of 1960. The video, which is based on the two-part history series “A Share of the Machine,” offers an insightful look at how the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) addressed new technology and mechanization which threatened their members’ jobs in the decades following the Great Depression.

“One of the biggest issues we are facing as a union is the accelerated growth of technology replacing jobs … whether it be applications replacing clerical workers, or artificial intelligence that may be replacing operators, or robotics in all lines of work. In deciding how to respond to this issue, we started looking to history, and the example that stood out for us was from Harry Bridges and the ILWU,” Business Manager Tom Dalzell told the Advisory Council as he introduced the video.

“In the 1930s and 40s, there were thousands of stevedores unloading ships, but then containerization came along, and by the 1950s, many of those unskilled jobs were being replaced by fewer skilled jobs. As the leader of a militant union, Harry had two choices — try and fight the new technology by shutting down the ports, or do what he can to help the members. Ultimately, he decided to negotiate the best he could for as many people as he could. This video is a capsule of what he did.”

NEW APPROACH TO JOB SECURITY

In April of 1957, the problem of mechanization was taken up by the longshore caucus, a regular meeting of delegates representing all the longshore locals. This caucus was similar in its form and function to the IBEW 1245 Policy Committee, which Weakley had created in the early 1950s to provide a strong voice for rank-and-file members.

The longshore caucus decided that the term “mechanization” should be used to describe any change in methods of work that replaced human labor, whether any mechanical devices were involved or not. Research indicated that only a small portion of cargo operations had been mechanized so far, but the trend toward mechanization was clear.

The delegates saw two basic approaches for dealing with the problem. The first was to hold tight and try to keep the maximum number of men on the job, as they had always done before. But the minutes from that 1957 caucus meeting indicated serious doubt among the delegates that such a strategy could work for much longer.

“Realistically, the specific terms and language of the contract hold little promise of permitting the union to maintain the status quo as an answer to the problem of mechanization.”

In the second approach considered by delegates, the union would agree to modify the working rules and standard gang sizes that got in the way of efficiency improvements. In exchange, the union would seek specific protections for the current workforce, including:

1. Guarantees against speedup of individual longshoremen.
2. Guarantees of safety.
3. Guarantees against layoffs of the basic workforce, meaning those longshoremen who were currently “registered”.
4. No reduction in take-home pay.
5. Shortened work shift.

During three full days of contentious debate, the delegates came to the conclusion that to continue guerrilla resistance through job actions and stonewalling at the bargaining table was “a losing battle.” They believed the general economic climate did not bode well for a prolonged strike over an issue where public support for the workers would be unlikely. Nor were they optimistic that arbitrators would agree to protect the use of “unnecessary” men—the so-called “witnesses”—which meant that existing grievance process could not be counted on for job security.

Perhaps the most persuasive argument of all was this: Employers had succeeded in making many operating changes in recent years and the workers had nothing to show for their militant resistance. No positive benefits or gains, the delegates concluded, “had accrued to the men from the changes already put into effect by management.”

It was time for a new approach to job security. The delegates at this caucus had glimpsed the broad outlines of such a strategy. But could they convince their fellow longshoremen to embrace it? And could union negotiators actually deliver the goods when they sat down with employers at the bargaining table?

ECONOMIC SECURITY

When you’ve fought hard for something it can be hard to give it up. Each of the rules protecting longshoremen on the waterfront served some important purpose when it was first proposed and fought for. The rules were treasured by the workers because many of them remembered the conditions that had prevailed before, and the struggle involved in winning the rules that changed those conditions. Establishing large gangs, setting a limit on the size of sling loads—these and countless other rules had made difficult work more tolerable. More than that, these rules were living proof that organized longshoremen could be masters of their own destiny, at least as far as their work life was concerned.

But times change. Industries change. In many cases the original need for a particular rule had disappeared with the adoption of other contract provisions, or the rise of new methods for doing longshore work. The rules belonged to a world that was vanishing. But could the men be persuaded to give them up?

Fundamentally, the rules were about protecting job security, or more fundamentally, about protecting the men’s economic security. The union had to find a way to trade in the old rules for some other form of economic security.

The union had two basic arguments why workers should get compensated for mechanization and modernization.

First, the unionized workforce “owned” the traditional work rules, not just in some metaphorical way, but as a vested economic interest that amounted to a property right. If employers wanted to take that “property” back, they needed to pay the workers for it.

Second, it was longshoremen on the ground who provided the muscle for this industry; they were as much a part of it as the bosses. If mechanization was going to enrich the bosses, the longshoremen wanted their “share of the machine.”

In all likelihood, employers would have won this fight to mechanize their indus-
try, whether the longshoremen went along with it or not. But it would have been a long and costly battle. The genius of Harry Bridges was that he offered the employers an attractive alternative to war: Mechanize and profit, but also take care of the workers. Everybody wins.

**MECHANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION**

The Mechanization and Modernization Agreement (MMA) was signed in October of 1960. Employers gained the right to put in any new machine or method they wanted, and the right to change existing work rules that limited efficiency. However, safety could not be compromised, there could be no speed-up, and the work could not be “onerous.” The grievance process remained in place for the union to enforce these protections.

The agreement acknowledged that during the “normal cycle of operations” not all men on the clock would be working all the time, but employers would no longer be obliged to pay “witnesses” if their jobs were no longer necessary. The agreement provided a transition period during which, for example, the old sling-load limits would still apply, but would be eliminated for changed operations or where new operations developed.

Besides the continuing protection against speedup and unsafe or onerous work, registered longshoremen got specific economic guarantees, including a trust fund for the exclusive use of longshoremen who were registered at the time the agreement was signed, and a generous early retirement and death benefit contribution, as well as a handsome pay-out for those who worked until normal retirement.

In addition, there was a flat guarantee against laying off registered men. This provision was made easier by a freeze on registering new men, as well as by new rules that made it easier for registered men to shift from one area to another. Balloting on the MMA took place in December, with final results announced on January 3, 1961. All but one local supported the agreement. The overall vote was 7,882 in favor, 3,695 opposed.

With the introduction of clamp briddles and the clamp lift jitneys in the hold, discharge of newsprint became faster, easier ... and safer for the longshoremen.

**A PROVEN WEAPON**

The MMA was revolutionary for its time. It was also controversial, but that hasn't stopped other unions, including our own, from adopting elements of Bridges' strategy.

For example: In 1990, IBEW 1245 reversed its long opposition to the use of rubber gloving on energized electric lines at PG&E. The union convened a group of linemen to study the issue. After addressing various safety issues, the union allowed the use of rubber gloves. No PG&E linemen on the payroll at that time were required to adopt the new practice, but anyone who did received a pay premium. It was the IBEW 1245 equivalent of getting a "share of the machine," or in this case, a share of the money that the new work practice was going to save the company.

Another example: In 1993, when PG&E was seeking to radically downsize its workforce, IBEW 1245 negotiated voluntary severance and early retirement incentives that helped protect the workforce against forced layoffs as the company restructured. Whether longshoremen in the 1960s or electrical workers in the 1990s, the union is what gave workers the strength to take care of their own in a time of industry restructuring.

The world of work will continue to undergo profound and rapid transformation. As surely as the longshoremen did 60 years ago, IBEW 1245 members have in their favor a proven weapon for defending their livelihoods: the power of a union.

Eric Wolfe was communications director for IBEW 1245 from 1990-2016. Robin Walker, Librarian/Archivist for ILWU, provided generous access to the ILWU’s document and photo archive for this article.

Eric Wolfe’s history of IBEW 1245, Fist Full of Lightning, is available through the union office, or online: http://bit.ly/FistFullofLightning

Harry Bridges: Protecting the members’ livelihoods meant more to him than defending outdated work practices.
n a rural, mountainous area known as Topaz Ranch Estates in Wellington, NV, a line crew from NV Energy was tasked with upgrading a transformer on the 204 line out of Anaconda substation in Yerington, about 30 miles northeast.

“We’re taking down a CSP [completely self-protected] transformer, which used to be internally fused, and we’re replacing it with a new transformer,” explained NV Energy Line Foreman Aaron Van Winkle. “We’re upgrading it from a 15kva to 25kva and adding some protection, fusing it for troubleshooting purposes later so it’ll be a lot easier. We also upgraded it for multiple services, for load.”

Although transformer replacement is a fairly basic and commonplace task, Van Winkle and his crew recognized that the job, like most that they do, came with its fair share of challenges, from the oncoming traffic to the fact that the line remained energized while they were working.

“You always gotta keep your head in the game,” he said, “whether you’re climbing, setting poles… it all has its risks.”

But Van Winkle appreciates the fact that he has the union to look after his safety and provide him with the necessary training.

“I love the union. I’ve been in for 15 years, and it’s done good for me, provided me a good living, and great training,” said Van Winkle. “When we see people coming here from other places, it makes us realize what 1245 actually does for us.”

*Photos by John Storey*
Members Unanimously Approve New Agreement at Mt. Wheeler

IBEW 1245 members at Mt. Wheeler Power have unanimously approved a new four-year contract at a vote of 14-0. The Board of Mt. Wheeler has also approved the agreement, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2018.

The agreement includes annual wage increases of 2.75% in 2018, 2.5% in 2019, 2.5% in 2020 and 2.25% in 2021. The 401k match will increase by 1% at the start of 2018 and another 1% in 2020. This brings the company match to 1% in 2018, with an employee contribution of 10%. Additional improvements include an annual boot allowance (previously, it was every three years), and double-time for callouts worked after 10pm (previously, it was every three years), and massive job loss throughout the state — on average, 3% was the proverbial “Loaded Question,” demonstrating more time with my wife and family. I’ve got fish to fry, my kids to raise, and the union to lead.

After 18 years on staff at IBEW Local 1245, Business Rep Randy Osborn will be retiring from the union this spring.

Osborn started his career as an apprentice pipefitter welder with the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing, Pipefiting and Sprinkler Fitting Industry (more commonly known as the UA). After he topped out of his apprenticeship, he went to work for Sierra Pacific Power (now known as NV Energy). He was assigned to the construction of the Valmy Power Plant, where he worked as a welder. Once construction of the plant was complete, Osborn decided to stay and work at the power plant that he helped build, and was initiated into the IBEW in September of 1985.

Osborn worked for Sierra Pacific for 15 years, and was consistently active in the union, serving as a shop steward, unit chair, and member of the bargaining committee. “Randy had back-to-back negotiations with Sierra Pacific where the CEO was hell bent on busting local 1245. I can’t remember any tougher negotiations in my 37 years with 1245,” remarked IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. “Randy took everything that the CEO and his hired gun negotiator dished out. He was bloodied but unbowed. Our members at Nevada Energy have a strong contract and a strong relationship with the company thanks to the fortitude and courage of a welder from eastern Nevada. He took a licking, but kept on ticking.”

Osborn joined the staff of Local 1245 in 2000, and has been serving members throughout the Sierras and on the Nevada side of the union’s jurisdiction ever since. His last assignment was geographically enormous — extending from Lassen Municipal Utility District on the western end, all the way out to Frontier Elko on the eastern side, which is a long seven hour-drive from the union hall in Vacaville. As a result, Osborn has spent quite a few hours in the car, but despite the extensive travel, he’s enjoyed his years with the union immensely.

“I’ve got a ton of fond memories of fun and good times with the members, especially at BBQs and social events,” said Osborn.

Of course, being a business rep isn’t all fun and games. Osborn handled his fair share of grievances, including one very unusual one that sticks out in his mind.

“My most memorable grievance was the Viagra grievance,” Osborn recalled with a smile. “This was several years ago, after the company had put quantity limits on Viagra in its prescription drug plan. We had one member who filed a grievance because he said that 14 Viagara pills per month wasn’t enough. The funniest part was, when it came time to argue the case, his wife showed up at the hearing, instead of him!”

For Osborn, leaving the union is bittersweet.

“I’ll miss the people. I’ve met a lot of good people here. I’ve built some special bonds with [Senior Assistant Business Manager] Ray Thomas – he was instrumental in me coming on staff, he trained me, and he’s given me a bunch,” said Osborn. “But I’m looking forward to spending more time with my wife and family. I’ve got fish to fry, my kids to raise, and the union to lead.”

Immediately after the company put its not-so-“mutual gains” proposal on the table, Randy Osborn stood up and kicked a chair further than I believed a human possibly could. That chair flew into the wall of the third floor general office building and ricocheted into another chair in the vicinity. Needless to say, we all knew the jig was up, and that the company’s committee was not in compliance with the mutual gains concept we had just spent days learning. With Randy’s chair kicking exclamation point, the parties returned to traditional bargaining. I would like to note that while we shared his anger and disappointment, most of Local 1245’s committee members, including yours truly, were a little taken aback at Randy’s assault on the company’s office furniture, except for Lee Soukup, who I remember was boasting a satisfied smile on his face during the entire event.

While Local 1245’s committee negotiated an excellent agreement with the company, maintaining all our benefits including sick leave and sick leave accrual, we were fortunate that the divestiture never came to fruition. On behalf of Local 1245, Randy and I joined Nevada State AFL-CIO Executive Secretary-Treasurer Danny Thompson in testifying against deregulation in Nevada. Ultimately the Nevada State Legislature made the right decision and they stopped power company deregulation in Nevada.

I recognized Randy as a fighter when I first met him at the Valmy generating facility where he was an IBEW Local 1245 shop steward. I soon learned that he was an intelligent man with strong math skills, and I also heard that he’s a “so-so” welder. I appreciated working with Randy, I know he gave his all for the membership, and, at least in one episode, when his keen intelligence didn’t at least in one episode, when his keen intelligence didn’t

— Ray Thomas, IBEW 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager

Utility Reporter
to the state constitution to be passed twice by voters — and for good reason. The so-called “Energy Choice Initiative” will not only be harmful to Nevada’s economy, but can also result in loss of jobs, reduced energy efficiency, and increased costs for all consumers. The initiative will also effectively privatize the current energy infrastructure, leaving Nevada’s workers and ratepayers at the mercy of private companies that prioritize profit over public safety and the environment.

As an IBEW member, I know how important it is to have a strong, reliable utility system that provides clean energy to residents and businesses alike. I have seen firsthand how our union has fought to protect these jobs and ensure that our energy infrastructure is maintained and modernized. I encourage all Nevadans to vote “No” on Question 3, so that we can continue to work together to build a strong future for our state.

For more information, please visit www.ibew1245.com.

Rich Cowart.

In Memoriam

Rich was always there to help with his mental database and numerous local contacts,” said Business Rep JV Macor, who currently represents much of Cowarts former assignment area. “Rich became my go-to contact for history and knowledge required for old NCPA, Shelter Cove and Willits.

Cowart was initiated into the IBEW in 1972, and worked as a troubleshooter and electric crew foreman for PG&E out of the Concord yard for many years. He was an active shop steward and served on numerous union committees, as well as the union’s Advisory Council. Cowart was also instrumental in the development of the union’s memorial wall, which was first erected in Walnut Creek in 1997.

“Rich was always willing to volunteer for almost anything the union had going on,” said Former Business Manager Jack McNally. “He volunteered for union-sponsored events, picket lines, and demonstrations — including the demonstration in San Francisco on the lay-offs and the CPUC’s re-structuring the utilities in California. He was a good man.”

“Rich Cowart was one of those members who always seemed to be around,” recalled former Communications Director Eric Wolfe. “He was really engaged in the mission. He was very soft-spoken, but he was rock solid whenever he talked about the union. I think he was a true believer in the best sense of the word.”

“He was definitively one of the good guys,” added IBEW 1245 Administrative Assistant Karen Kiley. “Rich broke me in as green shop steward years ago,” said Local 1245 member Jimmy Lozano, who works for the City of Ukiah. “Always confident, told it like it was, wouldn’t back down during negotiations and always made himself available for me and the City of Ukiah Electric Utility guys.”

During the 1990s, Rich took personal time off to assist Local 1245 during the Asplundh strike and the Arbor Tree informational picket line in Auburn,” said Business Rep Landis Marttila. “Rich was a very tough guy but he had a very gentle side of interacting with folks. He had a quiet laugh and was a natural leader. The world should have more people like Rich Cowart.”

When he wasn’t working or volunteering his time with the union, Cowart enjoyed cooking, mixing cocktails and cruising around in his bright red Crown Victoria. Some of his colleagues jokingly nicknamed him “Fire Marshall Bill” because of that unusual, eye-catching car. Never one to shy away from helping others, Cowart continued to give back in retirement, serving his local community of Cloverdale in a myriad of ways — as a member of the Board of the Cloverdale Senior Center, helping victims of the North Bay firestorm, when he began feeling unwell. He went in to seek medical treatment, and tragically never recovered. He passed away at Healdsburg General Hospital on Oct. 21.

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

Nevada’s Bogus “Energy Choice” continued from previous page

...to serve, instead of customers choosing their providers. This does not bode well for residential customers, especially those in rural areas, who are often left with less preferred options for generation and industrial power consumers. In addition, without the regulations in place now, there will not be any safeguards for low-income or other vulnerable customers, even if they want to keep their current energy provider. And the initiative left the establishment of any requirements for new providers up to the state legislature.

Question 3 also failed to inform voters about the hundreds of Nevadans who will lose their jobs now and in the future as a result of this measure, including many IBEW members. With new, free-wheeling energy providers dominating the small market, IBEW 1245, which represents NV Energy workers and line contractors in the north, as well as IBEW 396, which represents the workers at Nevada Power, Valley Electric and line contractors in the South, could each immediately lose at least 150 good, middle class jobs with full benefits. Additionally, IBEW members from other locals stand to lose a number of jobs in transmission, substation and distribution work. And a significant portion of jobs filled by workers building natural gas-fired and renewable geothermal power plants are also at risk, along with the loss of ongoing infrastructure projects for the state. Over the next three to seven years, the measure would strip hundreds of thousands of dollars from the local economy — a significant loss for NV Energy, Valley Electric and line contractors, as well as the Valley Electric Cooperative, Tri-Ed Electric, and their communities.

And while the measure claims to support “clean energy,” the constitutional changes would threaten current and future solar projects. As it stands now, IBEW utility locals can build these solar projects, producing energy for Nevadans that comes from Nevada facilities. In fact, NV Energy has already built several of their own solar plants with IBEW manpower, and purchases power from a number of other solar plants that were built by IBEW members in Ukiah, Willits and Shelter Cove. Our information-gathering sessions were never without eye-opening results and, best of all, no meeting would be without a linenman story or two.”

“Rich’s dedication to helping others in the struggle to gain a better work life extended beyond electrical workers. During the 1990s, Rich took personal time off to assist Local 1245 during the Asplundh strike and the Arbor Tree informational picket line in Auburn,” said Business Rep Landis Marttila. “Rich was a very tough guy but he had a very gentle side of interacting with folks. He had a quiet laugh and was a natural leader. The world should have more people like Rich Cowart.”

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