PG&E crews performing restoration work after the Camp Fire in Paradise, CA. Story begins on page 22.

Photo by John Storey
Build Power, Use Power

As I write this we aren’t even a week into 2019, and yet the threats to our members are already lining up. As we prepare for battle, we look to the simple lessons we learned in 2018. As a local, we faced many challenges last year. Our public sector members took the lead on organizing their colleagues to stay union even after the Supreme Court Janus decision allowed them to drop their membership but still receive union representation. Our Nevada members were at the forefront of a hard-fought and overwhelmingly successful battle against Question 3, a billionaire-backed ballot measure to deregulate electric utilities. And our PG&E members, especially our organizing stewards, were a powerful presence at the State Capitol as we fought for sensible wildfire legislation known as SB 901, which requires utilities to implement fire prevention plans, upgrade equipment and more. They also played a pivotal role in the passage of a bill that required utilities to implement more fire prevention plans, upgrade equipment and more.

Our organizing stewards are the key to our success: they hire consultants and economists and lawyers and lobbyists to help us. Their expertise is invaluable, but it’s the union members and leaders who remain the face of Local 1245. The last ingredient in building power is money. We don’t use your dues to buy support. But, we do use them to develop our ground troops, the organizing stewards. Our members voted to raise dues in 2008 to be prepared for precisely these types of fights. Our Executive Board has carefully built our reserves and has overseen the prudent use of our funds for these fights.

So, no matter what the fights are in 2019, we are prepared. We know what to do. Number one: build power. Number two: use power.

“I” Member $1 Dues Increase in 2019

As of Jan. 1, 2019, dues for all IBEW “I” members increased by $1, to $39. “BA” member dues will remain the same.

— Muriel Moore, IBEW 1245 Dues Processor

Utility Reporter

January — March 2019

Volume 68 No. 1

Circulation: 22,800

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— Central Area Gary Maschio

— Southern Area James Hayes

— Line Clearance Tree Trimmers and Outside Construction Mike Crotty

— At-Large PG&E General Brotherhood Stan Zamora

Published quarterly at 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA 95687.

Official publication of Local Union 1245, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

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IBEW 1245

AFL-CIO

P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95689.

Our phone number is (707) 452-2700. We hire consultants and economists and lawyers and lobbyists to help us. Their expertise is invaluable, but it’s the union members and leaders who remain the face of Local 1245.

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— Muriel Moore, IBEW 1245 Dues Processor

International Labor Communicators Association Awards

IBEW 1245 Wins 13 Awards

We are thrilled to announce that IBEW Local 1245 has won an astounding 13 awards and three honorable mentions from the International Labor Communication Awards (ILCA) in 2018.

• First Place: Writing — Best Electronic Content — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — IBEW 1245 website

• First Place: Electronic Media — Best Use of Social Media — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — The History of IBEW 1245 — a Seven-Part Video Series

• First Place: Electronic Media — Best Issues Advocacy Video — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — Hold the Pulp: An Important Safety Message from IBEW 1245

• First Place: Electronic Media — Best Promotional Video — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — Women of IBEW 1245 (International Women’s Day)

• Second Place: Writing — Saul Miller Awards — Political Action — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — Utility Reporter

• Second Place: Writing — Best News Story — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — The Spillway Saga: IBEW members work to repair damage at Oroville Dam

• Second Place: Writing — Best Analysis — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — The True Cost of a PG&E Bankruptcy

• Second Place: Best Multimedia Campaign — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — “Share of the Machine”

• Second Place: Electronic Media — Best Use of Social Media Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — Lineman Appreciation Day

• Third Place: Visual Communications — Best Cartoon — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — Tower of Power: Local 1245 members recoup transmission towers to protect the environment

• Honorable Mention: Visual Communications — Best Photo Essay or Gallery — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — Chasing Irma: Local 1245 members provide mutual aid in Florida

• Honorable Mention: General Excellence — Website — Local/Regional/State Unions, Federations, Central/Area Labor Councils & Allied Organizations — IBEW 1245 Website

Local 1245 received seven ILCA awards in 2017, six in 2016, and five in 2015.
Members Ratify Three-Year Agreement at NCPA

In November, IBEW 1245 members at the Northern California Power Agency ratified a three-year agreement with the Agency, which was subsequently adopted by the NCPA Commission. The agreement, which runs from Dec. 23, 2018 through Dec. 18, 2021, includes 2.7% general wage increases, along with 2.5% labor market adjustments, in each year of the agreement for all classifications, and a new Level 6 Instrument Control/Elec Tech class will be created/added to existing broadbanded classifications, where applicable. Shift premium for shift operators will be converted from a flat dollar amount to a percent of base wages, where applicable, and the same goes for relief operators. The union also negotiated improved safety footwear and safety eyewear language.

Our Local 1245 negotiating committee bargained extensively and professionally with the Agency on a variety of topics, including numerous non-economic improvements to contracts language. The Local 1245 negotiating committee consisted of Charles Beck and Jerry Pangle from the geothermal facilities in Middletown, along with Mark Dempsey and Dylan Turner from the combustion turbine facilities in Lodi. Special thanks also go out to geothermal members Shawn Beverlin, Tom O’Brien and Nish McDowell, who provided oversight of the ballot counting and recording process. — JV Macor, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

IBEW 1245 Members Approve New Agreement at City of Vallejo

On Oct. 22, 2018, Local 1245 members from the City of Vallejo ratified a table agreement, with 96% voting yes out of the 94 votes that were cast. The City Council subsequently adopted the agreement on Nov. 13.

The two-year agreement, which was reached after seven months and 16 positive and productive bargaining sessions, includes general wages increases of 2.5% in the first full pay period following Council adoption, and another 2.5% in the first full pay period following January 1, 2019. Bargaining unit members who were employed by the city as of June 30, 2018, and continue to be employed during the first full pay period following Council adoption, will also receive a ratification bonus of $1,250. The agreement also provides for a guaranteed step increase if evaluations are not performed within 60 days of an employee’s anniversary date where a step increase was due. Bargaining unit members who participated in the Retirement Health Savings Plan (RHSP) while the city secured a third party account fund manager will receive one time lump-sum contribution into their plan accounts. We also secured numerous non-economic improvements to contracts language.

The Local 1245 negotiating committee consisted of Shop Stewards Marcus Adams, Oni Brown, Dana Koutnik, Jorge Pomagos and Bill Stockman. We would also like to thank Election Judge Julie Bell, and Tellers Aaron Cano and Erica McCRay-Hamilton.

— JV Macor, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

New Three-Year Agreement Ratified at City of Willits

IBEW Local 1245 members at the City of Willits recently ratified a three-year successor MOU, which was subsequently adopted by the City Council. High points of the agreement include a one-time ratification bonus of $1,000, as well as a 2% wage increase upon adoption by Council, another 2% in July 2019, and 2% in July 2020 (2019 and 2020 are subject the city’s ability to maintain steady operating reserves). There are also newly established premium percentages for various certifications held by members working water and wastewater operations.

The committee was also able to secure improvements to the medical benefits, allowing members to upgrade into higher-cost plans at a more affordable amount. Additionally, we negotiated improvements to safety shoe allowances, and many other positive changes to condition language throughout the agreement.

Securing this very favorable agreement was no small feat given recent challenges the city has faced, many of which may be attributed to the new Willits Bypass of Highway 101, which took a significant amount of traffic away from city streets and businesses.

The Local 1245 negotiating committee consisted of Bud Fritz, Logan Gamble, and alternate member Kenan O’Shea.

— JV Macor, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

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— JV Macor, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

New MOU Approved at City of Berkeley

IBEW 1245 members at the City of Berkeley recently voted to approve a tentative agreement on terms for a new MOU, effective October of 2018 through June of 2020. Upon City Council approval, members will receive a 3% cost-of-living adjustment and a lump sum of $2,000. Effective October 21, 2019, there will be an additional 2% COLA. The MOU also includes new rest period language, and the six-month waiting period to accrue vacation is removed. Health insurance in-lieu payments will be increased by an additional $44 per month. The meal provisions are revised to clarify that employees shall earn additional meals for every four hours of continuous emergency overtime work with up to $25 reimbursement per meal when no meal is provided.

The bargaining team was comprised of members Greg Marwick and Tom Hartman, as well as IBEW 1245 Assistant Business Manager Al Fortier and myself.

— Charely Souders, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

New MOU Ratified at Paradise Irrigation District

The IBEW 1245 members employed at Paradise Irrigation District have ratified a successor MOU by a vote of 20-3. The Irrigation District Board subsequently approved the MOU at its Oct. 17 board meeting. The newly negotiated successor MOU includes a 5% general wage increase retroactive to July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019. The agreement also caps health plan contribution costs at $829.96 per employee, $1,691.05 per couple, and $2,183.10 per family, and provides for a cash payment to any eligible employee that elects to opt out of District provided health benefits in the amount of one half the District’s premium contribution. We successfully negotiated new upgrade language to reclassify employees who are assigned to perform work in a higher classification for more than 540 days within a five-year time period, and we also added language regarding cell phone reimbursement, and optional purchase of spouse/dependent life insurance.

The bargaining committee consisted of Business Rep Charlie Souders, members Laura Capra, Jeremy Gentry, Clint Stanley and Rick Siter, and myself.

— Dominic McCurtain, IBEW 1245 Business Rep
In the Wind: Meet the IBEW 1245 members behind the world-class aerospace equipment at NASA's Ames Research Center

Before any newly designed airplane, chopper or rocket can take flight, it must first go through extensive testing in a simulated environment — and the only place in the U.S. where a full-size plane can go through that sort of test is at the U.S. Air Force's National Full-scale Aerodynamics Complex (NFAC), an Arnold Engineering Development Complex test facility located at NASA Ames Research Center at Moffett Field in Mountain View, CA. Ames is world-renowned for its cutting-edge work in the field of aerodynamics, and is capable of performing research, development and testing of aerospace equipment that would be next to impossible anywhere else.

"Anything that flies — subsonic and supersonic — needs to go through our wind tunnels," said IBEW 1245 member Bill Van Zuylen, who works at Ames in the wind tunnels as an instrumentation technician for Jacobs Technology, which is NASA's largest support service prime contractor. "I assemble all the sensors that go inside of the model and connect them up to our data acquisition system and actually acquire the data during the wind tunnel test."

IBEW 1245 is proud to represent the electrical and mechanical workers employed by Jacobs Technology as well as National Aerospace Solutions (NAS), a U.S. Air Force contractor that operates on site at Ames. The Local 1245 members at NAS also help to facilitate the testing of new aerospace equipment when it is brought in for a trip through the wind tunnels.

"We provide the hardware and tech support for a lot of our customers. When they come in with their model, it is our job to facilitate as far as hooking up their instrumentation so that they can communicate with our control room ... so they get the raw data that they're trying to look for," explained IBEW 1245 member Lex Alday, NASA's lead instrumentation technician for the NFAC division. "We also install some of the cabling for their gauges to allow them to monitor throughout the wind tunnel testing that goes on, amongst other things. We do fabrication as well, if they need to build any special cables, chasis, anything like that."

Building and maintaining the massive and powerful wind tunnel systems at Moffett Field is no small job. It takes an extremely skilled, meticulous and knowledgeable workforce to keep these remarkable simulations up and running.

"The Unitary Plan Wind Tunnel Complex has the 11-foot test section which goes from .2 to 1.5 Mach. The 9-by-7 wind tunnel goes from .5 Mach to 2.5 Mach," explained Lead Electrician and IBEW 1245 member Don Ecclestone, who works for Jacobs Technology. "We maintain all the support equipment to make it work; lube system, motors, pressure switches, temperature switches, pressure transmitters, temperature transmitters."

In an environment geared towards rapid technological advancement, human capital runs the risk of being neglected, which is why the workers at Jacobs and NAS are grateful to have the IBEW on their side. These workers were formerly members of IBEW 2131, a small manufacturing local which struggled for years to provide quality representation with limited resources. In early 2014, Local 2131 officially merged with Local 1245 members at Ames, as well as tens of thousands of other workers employed by the federal government.

Due to security clearance issues, members of the general public cannot enter Ames, so regretfully, the Utility Reporter was not able to capture images of our members at work inside the facility. For a glimpse inside Ames, visit NASA's photo gallery at www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/orgs/aeronautics/windtunnels/arc-upwt-multimedia/index.html.

"The union's been there for us all along," said Van Zuylen. "We appreciate their help in negotiations for a new contract, pay raises, wages and health benefits."

"Cruz Serna, our business rep, he stays in contact pretty well in case there's ever any issues, which is really nice," added Ecclestone. "We are a little bit of a smaller group compared to the other [workgroups in Local 1245] ... but he makes us feel like we're just as important as somebody who's in a 600-member segment."

The IBEW 1245 members who work on the U.S. Air Force contract for NFAC support are fully funded through the Department of Defense. However, many of the 1245 members who work on the NASA side were denied access to their worksites during the government shutdown. If another shutdown occurs, it could drastically impact these 1245 members at Ames, as well as tens of thousands of other workers employed by the federal government.

"We would hate for that to ever happen again," said Ecclestone. "It would really set us back. We have neglected, which is why the workers at Ames, as well as tens of thousands of other workers employed by the federal government."

"The union's been there for us all along," said Van Zuylen. "We appreciate their help in negotiations for a new contract, pay raises, wages and health benefits."

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— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director
NOTICE OF LOCAL UNION ELECTION

I

n the coming months, IBEW Local 1245 will have nominations and elections for all elected leadership positions within the union. The election process will begin in March of 2019 for Officers, Executive Board, Advisory Council and Examining Board, with balloting in June of 2019 for new three-year terms.

Complete information on nominations, elections, duties, and qualifications of officers, the Executive Board, Advisory Council and Examining Board are found in the Local Union Bylaws and the International Union Constitution. The bylaws have recently been updated to reflect the amendments approved by Local 1245 members in the fall of 2018. The most up-to-date version of the Local Union bylaws can be viewed at www.ibew1245.com/bylaws.

ELECTED LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

The following officers shall be elected in accordance with Article XV of the IBEW Constitution and Article III of the Local Union Bylaws.

President

Mr. President

First Vice President

Recording Secretary

Treasurer

Business Manager/Financial Secretary

and six Executive Board members shall be elected as follows:

1. from the Southern Area

2. from the Central Area

3. from the Northern Area

4. from the Southeastern Area

5. at-large from the group composed of the members from the General Construction Department of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company

6. from outside construction and non-trimming companies

For the purpose of the selection of the Executive Board members, the composition of the above areas and groups shall be defined as follows based on the member’s organizational code (please note changes from the previous election resulting from the member-approved bylaws amendments).

SOUTHERN AREA

1103 San Joaquin – Physical & PGE

1101 San Joaquin – Physical

1121 Merced Irrigation District

1141 Turlock Irrigation District

1171 Lodi / Modesto Irrigation District

1200 Coast Valley – Physical & PGE

1201 Coast Valley – Physical

1221 City of Lompoc

1301 Pipeline Operations Physical & PGE

1401 City of Santa Clara

1500 San Jose – Physical & PGE

1501 San Jose – Physical & PGE

2551 South San Joaquin Irrigation District

3031 Dyer Creek

3041 Dyer Creek

4002 Fresno (Citizen) – Needer

5651 Jacobs Technology

5667 Lockheed Martin Space Systems

5761 Northrop Grumman Corporation

7601 PG&E Diablo Canyon Outage Workers

CENTRAL AREA

2000 Port of Oakland

2001 AC Transit

2300 East Bay – Clinical

2301 East Bay – Physical

2331 Franklin Wheeler

2400 San Francisco – Clinical

2401 San Francisco – Physical

2420 General Office – Clinical

2421 General Office – Physical

2500 Stockton – Clinical

2500 Stockton – Physical

2531 Modesto Irrigation District

2532 Modesto ElAdmin/Technical/Clinical Unit

2533 Modesto El Professional & Supervisory

2541 Tri – A Dam Project

2601 Alameda Power Telecom City Of Alameda

2701 City of Berkeley

2701 City of Red – Utility

2901 City of Oakland

3051 Genon Energy HH

3061 Genon Energy HH

5601 Ace Carbon Products Inc.

5611 Assured Brands, Inc. (Hitchcock)

5621 Border Lighting

5641 Delta Star

5641 Traiger Engineering

6041 Hiring Hall – City of Lodi

6111 Hiring Hall – Physical PGE

NORTHERN AREA

2376 City of Vallejo

2377 Greater Vallejo Recreation District

3001 Sacramento Regional Transit District

3100 Humboldt – Clinical – PGE

3101 Humboldt – Physical – PGE

3200 Shasta – Clinical – PGE

3201 Shasta – Physical – PGE

3202 Yuba / Sutter Valley Water District

3203 City of Redding – Electric

3221 City of Redding – Maintenance Management

3251 City of Shasta Lake

3261 Resort Improvement Dist #1

3240 De Sabo – Clinical – PGE

3240 De Sabo – Physical – PGE

3241 Paradise Irrigation District

3250 DRUM – Clinical – PGE

3250 DRUM – Physical – PGE

3254 City of Roseville

3601 Coyote – Clinical – PGE

3601 Coyote – Physical – PGE

3620 South Feather Power & Water

3621 South Feather Water Hydro Power (Orville)

3651 Yuba County Water Agency

3671 City of Gridley

3700 North Bay – Clinical – PGE

3701 North Bay – Physical – PGE

3702 City of Health

3702 City of White

3702 City of Willows

3801 Sacramento – Clinical – PGE

3801 Sacramento – Physical – PGE

3901 SMUD

3961 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

3981 USDA

4004 Frontier (Citizen) – Colusa

4176 NCPA – GRO – Them

4571 City Light & Power

5577 City of Folsom

6001 Hiring Hall – Clinical PGE

6001 Hiring Hall – Clinical PGE

NORTHERN AREA

3210 Transcanada Gaz

3231 Lassen MUD

3301 NV Energy (Sierra Pacific)

3351 Truckee – Donner PUD

3351 Truckee Meadows Water Authority

3371 MT Power

3381 We R Rural Electric

3381 Plumas Sierra REC – Phys.

3501 City of Fernley

4001 Frontier (Citizen) – Alamos

4003 Frontier (Citizen) – Oro

5321 Liberty/English

6301 Hiring Hall – NV Energy

ADVOCACY COUNCIL

The following Advocacy Council seats shall be elected in accordance with Articles XIV, XIII and XIII of the local union bylaws. For the purpose of the selection of the Advocacy Council members, the composition of the areas and groups shall be defined as follows based on the member’s organizational code as listed above (please note changes from the previous election resulting from the member-approved bylaws amendments).

1. San Joaquin Division of PGE – Physical

2. Coast Valleys Division of PGE – Physical

3. Diaboy Canyon Nuclear Generating Station

4. PG&E/TJ Gas and Distribution Center

5. City of Santa Clara and San Jose Division of PG&E – Physical

6. Alameda/Contra Costa Transit District and East Bay Municipalities

7. East Bay Division of Physical & PGE, San Francisco Division of Physical & PGE and General Office of Physical & PGE

8. Stockton Division of PGE – Physical

9. Sacramento Regional Transit District

10. TransCanada

11. Humboldt Division of PGE – Physical and Resort Improvement Dist #1

12. Shasta Division of PGE – Physical, City of Redding, City of Shasta Lake, and West Side Water District


For more information and FAQs, visit www.ibew1245.com/union-election-faqs

No member may be elected to more than one office. Anyone nominated to more than one office must choose the office for which she or he will be a candidate.

UNIT OFFICERS

Nominations and elections of Unit Officers shall take place at June 2019 unit elections (General Membership Meetings) in accordance with Article III of the Local Union Bylaws. Units which do not meet in the month of June may elect their unit officers at their first unit meeting after June 2019.

VOTING

As provided in Local Union Bylaws Article III, Section 10, there shall be published in the May (second quarter) issue of The Utility Reporter a list of all candidates for Local Union office, together with a factual record of their activities within the Local Union, committee assignments performed, offices held, and experience gained for and in behalf of the Local Union. Ballots will be mailed by June 1, 2019. To be eligible to vote, you must have paid your dues for March 2019 or on or before May 31, 2019, per Local Union Bylaws Article III, Section 9. Completed ballots must be received by the Unit at the designated post office box no later than 10:00 am on Tuesday, June 25 at which time counting will begin.

FURTHER INFORMATION

In addition to the Local Union Bylaws and the IBEW Constitution, members of labor union elections is also covered by Title IV of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA).

The U.S. Department of Labor publishes two relevant booklets: Rights and Responsibilities Under the LMRDA and CSRA and Electing Union Officers. These booklets are available by writing to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Elected Officials, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 6119, Washington, DC 20210, and as of November 19, 2015, could be accessed at www.dol.gov/olms/regr/compliance/members.htm.

EXAMINING BOARD

The Examining Board shall consist of three (3) journeyman members from the Construction Unit (Outside Line).
IBEW 1245 Members Help Propel Union-Backed Candidates and Campaigns to Victory

On Wednesday, Nov. 7, Americans woke up to election results that could very well change the future of our country. Amid a flurry of wins and losses, one thing is abundantly clear — voter turnout matters. Nowhere is that more apparent than here in IBEW 1245’s jurisdiction, where our own members helped to push a number of key ballot measures and candidates to victory, thanks to their hard work in getting out the vote in their communities.

Local 1245’s biggest win of the night came of out of the state of Nevada, where we defeated the billionaire-backed effort to deregulate the state’s energy market. The risky and costly deregulation measure, known as Question 3, had passed by more than 2-to-1 when it first appeared on the ballot in 2016. But thanks to our members’ hard work and dedication, as well as the broad bipartisan coalition we built in opposition to Question 3, we succeeded in turning the tables and this time, the measure lost 2-to-1 (see more on page 8). Our extensive Get Out the Vote effort also had a magnanimous effect on the rest of the ticket. Together, we ousted anti-union incumbent US Senator Dean Heller and replaced him with our friend Jacky Rosen, and we also helped elect pro-union Governor Steve Sisolak and Lt. Governor Kate Marshall.

In Sacramento, Local 1245 secured a big victory for Rosanna Herber, the newly elected member of the SMUD Board in Ward 4. The hundreds of IBEW 1245 members who work at SMUD are incredibly grateful to have Herber as an ally when it comes time to bargain their contract. In fact, Local 1245 carried the Sacramento Labor Council’s Get Out the Vote effort almost single-handedly, as we were the only union who released members to work with the Labor Council on this election, and our organizing stewards turned our dozens of 1245 volunteers who put in thousands of hours of work. Thanks to their tireless efforts, the Sacramento Labor Council secured six out of the top ten spots for the most calls to voters made from a California labor council during this election cycle.

In the Bay Area, Local 1245 also helped rack up a victory for our longtime ally Katie Harrison, who handily won her re-election bid to the Berkeley City Council. Harrison has proved herself to be a fierce supporter of labor rights and has lived up to her promise to stand with IBEW 1245 on utility issues. She’s exactly the kind of elected official our members who work at the City of Berkeley deserve to have in their corner.

Our 220 members employed at the City of Vallejo are looking forward to having a new ally on the City Council with the victory of HakHeem Brown, our members at the City of Alameda are feeling the same way about the election of John Knox White to their City Council, and our members working at AC Transit are glad to have Joel B Young and Mark Williams keep their seats on the AC Transit Board.

In the Central Valley, IBEW 1245 helped propel Measure L to victory in Lodi. This sales tax will directly benefit the Local 1245 members who work for the City of Lodi. Our members also helped longtime labor ally Heath Flora retain his Assembly seat. Other union-backed candidates, including Assemblymembers Jim Patterson and Joaquin Arambula, as well as Fresno City Council candidate Nelson Esparza, also secured victories in their respective races.

In the City of Lompoc, Local 1245 members worked hard to successfully elect Jenelle Osborne as the city’s new mayor, and they also worked to re-elect City Council member Victor Vega. Both Osborne (who formerly served on the City Council) and Vega have been friendly to the IBEW 1245 members who work for the City. Their attempt to oust an unfriendly City Council member wasn’t as fruitful, but they are still pleased to have assisted with two victorious campaigns.

Additionally, Local 1245 also played a role in one of the biggest electoral upsets of the night, which came from the state of Wisconsin. Notoriously anti-union Gov. Scott Walker, who rose to fame by stripping Wisconsin union members of their collective bargaining rights, lost his re-election bid to challenger Tony Evers, and two Local 1245 members assisted with what is being considered the biggest labor-driven coup in the nation. Walker had worked closely with the Koch Brothers to aggressively weaken unions and dismantle the labor movement, and in fact became the poster child for union-busting policies that have spread to other states as well. But on election night, Walker got a taste of his own medicine, as he learned that unions will never back down from a bully until that bully is defeated.

“When I look at all of the races that our IBEW 1245 organizing stewards and volunteers had a hand in during this election cycle, it’s obvious that our members made a real difference,” said IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Daizell. “The amount of time and effort that they put in over several months has paid off in ways that even I didn’t expect, and the end result is a much brighter future for us all. I couldn’t be prouder of everything that we’ve accomplished.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director
Unprecedented Solidarity: IBEW Members from a Dozen Locals Band Together to Stop Question 3 in Nevada

When ever other IBEW locals are under attack, Local 1245 never hesitates to dispatch our own activists to assist our brothers and sisters in their fight. This past fall, as Local 1245 members in Nevada faced a massing attack of their own, IBEW locals from all around the country, including many locals that we’ve supported in the past, flocked to our jurisdiction to return the favor.

In mid-October, IBEW members from Locals 47, 57, 77, 104, 124, 125, 465, 499, 658 and 1547 joined with members and leaders from Local 1245 and Las Vegas-based Local 396 to get the word out about Nevada’s Question 3, a deceptive and dangerous energy deregulation measure that could have led to widespread job loss, increased energy costs, unreliable power, rolling blackouts and consumer fraud.

In the weeks leading up to Election Day, the pressure was mounting to make sure Nevada voters truly understood what was at stake with this risky and costly measure. So Locals 1245 and 396 partnered with NV Energy to host a canvassing blitz in the Las Vegas area, with the intention of reaching as many voters as possible and encouraging them to vote No on Question 3.

Unprecedented Solidarity

Before they hit the streets on Oct 17, the IBEW members, many of whom traveled hundreds of miles from their home local to participate, came together to hear from some inspiring speakers, including notable labor leaders, utility execs and elected officials.

“Looking out over this group … what a dream come true. I think that this is truly unprecedented solidarity among the different IBEW locals, as well as remarkable labor-management cooperation, the likes of which are rarely seen in the United States,” IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell told the group as he kicked off the day. “You can’t put a price tag on what we have in this room. Your honesty, and your truth, and your enthusiasm, and your passion, and your devotion and commitment … that’s what will win it.”

“You’re out there doing the hard work that needs to be done… We couldn’t do it without all of your help,” echoed IBEW International President Lonnie Stephenson. “And I want to acknowledge, of course, Tom Dalzell. He’s pretty reserved and he doesn’t take much credit, but I can tell you he’s been a big catalyst that has really brought us together. He spearheaded a coalition of all the IBEW local unions that have members working at Berkshire Hathaway properties. And we have seen our relationship build and grow at each one of those properties across the country.”

Dalzell’s leadership, coupled with the forward-thinking perspective of NV Energy CEO Paul Caudill, has brought about a new era of collaboration between IBEW and NV Energy after many years of contention and strife.

“We knew that we couldn’t position this company, and frankly, the state of Nevada, to be able to take on the changes in the market without the IBEW,” Caudill told the IBEW activists and supporters. “But this [campaign] is not just about some mundane energy regulatory matter. It’s about the people in the state of Nevada that will be impacted by this.

And, frankly, it’s about people who can’t afford to pay more for their electricity as they go forward … So, it’s a good one to fight. We’re not backing down from anybody, and I just can’t tell you how much I appreciate what you guys are doing.”

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, who comes out of IBEW 125 in Portland, put the No on 3 campaign in the context of other notable labor victories that defined 2018, including the teachers’ strike in West Virginia, and the defeat of right-to-work in Missouri.

“Some of you were out there working to defeat Prop A in Missouri. And that’s a lesson, that when we come together, no one can stop us,” Shuler said. “This is the same message we are in Nevada and No on 3 here in Nevada is going be the next victory, the next milestone for working people in this country.”

IBEW members from a dozen locals came together in Las Vegas to get out the vote for No on Question 3.

AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer Liz Shuler

“Make no mistake, this isn’t just about some mundane energy regulatory matter. It’s about the people in the state of Nevada that will be impacted by this. And, frankly, it’s about people who can’t afford to pay more for their electricity as they go forward … So, it’s a good one to fight. We’re not backing down from anybody, and I just can’t tell you how much I appreciate what you guys are doing.”

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IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell

Open to Listening

After the rousing speeches concluded, the IBEW members quickly went right back to work, knocking on thousands of doors to talk with voters about Question 3 and what deregulation would mean for everyday Nevadans.

For IBEW Local 47 Staff Organizer Erin Koh, the issue of deregulation hits close to home. As a former SoCal Edison employee who was working for the utility in the wake of California’s own deregulation debacle, Koh was able to incorporate her first-hand experience into her conversations with voters.

“It was actually easy for me to explain exactly how bad [Question 3] would be for Nevada,” she said, noting that she had a front-row seat to the harm that a similar type of deregulatory maneuver brought to California. “It was really good, people were definitely open to listening to us and understanding that it was not something that Nevada needs.”

As a seasoned campaigner, Koh found door-to-door canvassing in Vegas to be highly effective. Even in neighborhoods where the majority of people weren’t home when she came knocking, she was still able to speak with many voters virtually face-to-face, thanks to the prevalence of new video-surveillance doorbells that allow residents to see and communicate with people on their doorstep remotely through a mobile app.

While some of the IBEW canvassers, like Koh, brought a wealth of campaign experience, others came to Vegas without having ever participated in a get-out-the-vote effort before. Matt McEntire, who hails from IBEW 659 in Medford, OR, works as a linenman for Pacific Power, another Berkshire Hathaway-owned utility. He doesn’t have any experience working in politics, but he saw a call for volunteers in his local union bulletin, and without knowing anything at all about Question 3, he signed up — and soon found himself going door-to-door in Vegas.

“It was a little nerve-wracking at first, but I’m getting used to it,” he said, noting that he received excellent mentorship from some of the more experienced organizers from other IBEW locals. “A lot of the younger people here are pretty receptive once you make contact and tell them what it’s all about … when you start talking dollars, they start paying attention.”

Both Koh and McEntire spent a little
Rodo Flores is a 19-year member of IBEW 1245 and works at the Merced Irrigation District. As a Local 1245 organizing steward, Flores has been involved in a number of political campaigns to help get out the vote — and in 2018, he decided to embark on a campaign of his very own. Flores ran for the Weaver Union School Board of Trustees, which is a small school district situated on the outskirts of Merced, comprised of one preschool, two elementary schools and one middle school. Flores himself attended school in the district, his son is currently a sixth grader at Weaver Middle, and his wife also works for the district as a teacher, so he has very close ties to Weaver Union.

Flores feels very passionately about working to improve the district for his own family as well as the many other families who work and go to school in Weaver Union.

“I’m running because I want to give back to the district. We’ve had the same people in office for a long time here, and I think it’s time for a change,” said Flores at the start of his campaign, noting that the incumbent in his area has been in office for nine years. “I feel like I have a lot to contribute. I want to integrate the community more into the decision-making processes, and make people more aware of what goes on at the schools.”

“Rodrigo is both excited and nervous [about the election],” IBEW 1245 Staff Organizer Fred Ross reported from the field in the area of Weaver Union. Flores is running to represent. “He really appreciates the help from the two teams of IBEW organizing stewards who have come out to canvass with him, and he credits the organizing steward program for his commitment to public service.”

As a municipal utility worker, Flores isn’t your average school board trustee. But he was motivated to effect positive change for the students and school employees alike, and in his opinion, that’s the most important attribute that any political candidate can have. “If someone feels strongly about making change, then they should just go for it and run for office!” he said. “Instead of being negative and griping about problems that you see, run and do something positive for your community!”

It was an exceptionally close race, but when the votes were finally all counted, Flores lost to the incumbent by just nine votes.

“I want to thank my wife and my two boys for all the support,” he wrote to his friends on Facebook. “Thank you to IBEW 1245 Staff Organizer Fred Ross, and [Organizing Stewards] Mark, Matt, Aileen, and Hector at IBEW 1245 for the great help.”

Flores ran into one of his former teachers when he was out canvassing.

Ross reports that Flores (right) has a disarming smile and open personality as he meets and greets voters.

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IBEW 1245 Member Runs for Local School Board of Trustees

Flores bumped into a co-worker from Merced Irrigation District as he worked to get out the vote.

Flores with fellow organizing stewards Aileen Zuehlke and Hector Gonzalez, and 1245 Staff Organizer Fred Ross

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IBEW 1245 Member Elected to Hercules City Council

Fourteen-year IBEW 1245 member Dion Bailey is no stranger to serving the public. He’s made civil service his career, and currently works as an airport duty manager at the Port of Oakland. For the past five years, he’s also sat on the planning commission for the town of Hercules. And on Nov. 6, 2018, he was elected to serve as a member of the Hercules City Council.

“I’ve always wanted to give back to my community,” said Bailey. “And I’ve done that as a planning commissioner, but this new role on the City Council will enable me to help bring about change in a much broader sense.”

Bailey has lived in Hercules for 25 years, ever since his family moved out to the East Bay from San Francisco when he was still in high school. He clearly adores his city, and is brimming with new ideas to help improve it. One of his more ambitious goals involves the development of a rail station in Hercules.

“Amtrak comes through here every day, but it doesn’t stop,” said Bailey, noting that although the rail line runs right through his town, residents have to drive all the way to Emeryville or Martinez to catch the train. “I would like to get that done as a way to get folks off of I-80 and ease traffic congestion. My major goals have to do with transportation, but I also ran on a platform of improving public safety and financial sustainability.”

Serving on the City Council is a substantial time commitment, but it’s not a full-time job, so Bailey will be able to continue working at the Port and serving his co-workers as a union shop steward — but he will be required to vacate his seat on the planning commission now that he’s been elected to the City Council.

Bailey believes that the years he’s spent as a shop steward have equipped him with a unique set of skills that enable him to be a forward-thinking elected official.

“Being a shop steward has taught me how to listen, how to figure out what people really want, and how to go out and try and make it happen — because nothing is impossible,” said Bailey. “Our previous IBEW Business Rep, Al Fortier [now an IBEW 1245 Assistant Business Manager], has always said ‘Go for it and try, because you never know.’ Some of the things we’ve accomplished [as a bargaining unit] were from that ‘you never know’ category. So I apply that same thinking here — I listen to people’s ideas and I take things forward.”

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IBEW 1245 member Dion Bailey has been elected to serve on the Hercules City Council. Photo by John Storey.

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Utility Reporter
IBEW 1245 Demonstrates Support for CARB’s Innovative Clean Transit Regulation

On Friday, Dec. 14, 2018, three IBEW 1245 organizing stewards joined with IBEW representatives from locals all across California to express their support for the state’s landmark Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) proposal at a hearing before the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

“The regulation will mandate zero emissions of all public transit throughout the state by the year 2040,” explained Organizing Steward Charlotte Stevens, who was among those who attended the hearing. “This will promote a healthier environment and create jobs for our members.”

According to CARB, this first-of-its-kind regulation “is part of a statewide effort to reduce emissions from the transportation sector, which accounts for 40 percent of climate-changing gas emissions and 80-90 percent of smog-forming pollutants.” The transition to zero-emission technologies, where feasible, is essential to meeting California’s air quality and climate goals.

At the hearing, the public support for the ICT regulation was clearly on display. More than 40 people testified before the Board, and only two were in opposition to the regulation.

“The highlight of the hearing was when Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna, Dr. John Balmes, and Diane Takvorian — all of whom are CARB Board members — gave IBEW recognition during their speeches,” said Organizing Steward Georgette Carrillo.

“Charlotte, Alvin, and I sat in the third row because we definitely wanted to make our presence known, and I think we accomplished our goal, since you could see us clearly on the TV screen.”

At the end of the day, the Board voted to approve the new regulation, which is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 19 million metric tons from 2020 to 2050 — the equivalent of taking four million cars off the road.

“Not only will this benefit our IBEW members in many ways … but it will also benefit the public by decreasing lung-related illnesses, providing affordable transit in low-income communities, and combating emissions that are contributing to our drastic climate change,” said Organizing Steward Alvin Dayoan.

“Each time I represent IBEW at the Capitol or other government agencies, I see the obvious proof that the work we do matters and makes a significant difference,” added Stevens.

At Utility Gas Conference, California Gas Workers Unite to Face Challenges Ahead

Approximately 30 union members from across the state participated in the fourth annual California Utility Gas Workers conference, which took place in Palm Springs in mid-December. Members from IBEW 1245, ESC Local 29, IBEW Local 465, and UWUA Locals 132, 483, and 522 attended the two-day conference, which was geared towards strengthening the natural gas side of the company and many of the large-scale changes that are impacting the natural gas industry in California.

The conference kicked off with a quick look at some of the victories and struggles that our locals worked through in 2018. Dave Lewis, PG&E’s director of gas transportation, provided a broad overview of the gas side of the company and many of the large-scale changes that are impacting the natural gas industry in California.

The conference wrapped up with a quick look at some of the victories and struggles that our locals worked through in 2018. Dave Lewis, PG&E’s director of gas transportation, provided a broad overview of the gas side of the company and many of the large-scale changes that are impacting the natural gas industry in California.

The organizing presentation was exceptionally well-received and piqued the interest of the other unions, inspiring many to consider the possibility of organizing from the organizing stewards doing the work. The IBEW 1245 Staff Organizers team from local 1245 Staff Organizers Eileen Purcell and Rene Cruz-Martinez lead conference attendees through a deep dive into the world of membership engagement and the opportunities that events are likely to unfold at a rapid pace over the next 12 months, and if we wait until next December to talk again, we will not have taken advantage of the time we spent identifying our opportunities to shape what comes of a rapidly changing utility and energy landscape.

— Anthony Brown, Senior IBEW 1245 Assistant Business Manager Rene Cruz-Martinez contributed to this report. Photos by Nilda Garcia.
A diverse delegation of IBEW 1245 members attended the Inter-Union Gas Conference in Niagara Falls in late October. This unique international conference brings together gas workers from the IBEW, as well as International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC), United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA), United Steelworkers (USW), Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) and UNITE-HERE. Its theme for the action-packed four-day conference was “Protecting Gas Workers’ Mental Health and Wellness,” and featured a variety of health-related issues, including tough challenges such as suicide prevention. The members also participated in workshops broken out by line of business (clerical, distribution, service, and storage/management/field), where they were able to delve into some of the challenges and successes they experience in their particular work environments.

“Attending this conference has definitely opened my eyes to get involved and do more with my union,” said IBEW 1245 member Teofilo Freeman.

Representing Local 1245 at the conference were members Joe Sanchez, Phil Wiltens, Teofilo Freeman, Trevor Robertson, Sandi Busse, Kathy Polido, Phuong Tran, Ricardo Hernandez, Troy Callahan, Lou Campagna, PJ Doherty, Rich Eisenbeiss, David Holz, David Keef, Marty Kumerle, Leo Lopez, Steve Lange, Marty Marshall, and Carson McAtee, along with IBEW 1245 staffers Adam Weber, Lloyd Cargo and Dennis Seyfer.

Working Together to Solve Problems

GOP Asm. Cunningham Meets with Local 1245 Shop Stewards in San Luis Obispo

When the CPUC decided to gut the meticulously negotiated Joint Proposal Agreement intended to ensure a safe and equitable decommissioning of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, IBEW 1245 refused to take the decision lying down. Instead, the union opted to pursue a legislative remedy — but in order to pass the legislation needed to restore the original terms of the Joint Proposal, we needed to find state lawmakers who would be willing to go to bat for us.

Enter Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, a San Luis Obispo native who was elected to the Assembly in 2016. As a Republican, Cunningham couldn’t necessarily be on a union’s list of likely bill sponsors. But thanks to the work that IBEW 1245 has done to build relationships with legislators on both sides of the aisle, Asm. Cunningham was more than willing to partner with 1245 and co-sponsor the Diablo Canyon bill with Sen. Bill Monning (D-Central Coast).

In these highly divisive political times, “bipartisan” isn’t a word that comes up often, but IBEW 1245 is incredibly proud of our bipartisan achievement we accomplished with the passage of the Diablo Canyon bill, known as SB 1090. And Asm. Cunningham is clearly pleased as well, as he took time out of his busy schedule to share his sentiments with a group of IBEW 1245 shop stewards at their annual training in SLO in late October.

“We got through three committees in the Senate, and the Senate floor, and two committees in the Assembly, and the Assembly floor, with only one ‘no’ vote through that entire process. And that’s a testament to IBEW 1245’s hard work and ingenuity, Senator Monning’s leadership, and maybe a little bit of my leadership… That’s how you solve problems in a bipartisan way.”

“We had such an awesome coalition. And it gives me such hope for the future,” he continued. “It’s all about finding alliances and working together to solve problems.”

Asm. Cunningham proceeded to engage in a candid discussion with the Local 1245 stewards, answering questions on a wide range of issues, from the economic impact of the closure of Diablo Canyon, to inverse condemnation, to the DMV, to climate change.

On that last topic, Asm. Cunningham wasn’t afraid to discuss his views, despite the fact that they do not align with many of the members and leaders of his own party.

“I accept the science of climate change. I have a bachelor’s degree in physics. I think that the evidence is piled up and is pretty strong that carbon emissions are contributing to what might be somewhat a natural warming cycle anyway, but I think we’re making a contribution to it,” he told the stewards proudly. “There were two big bills that attempted to put California ahead of anybody else on climate change. One was the cap and trade extension... and I voted for that. I was one of eight Republicans in the legislature — seven in the Assembly, one in the Senate — to do so. And I thought that the evidence was pretty strong that that program was working pretty effectively. It had been tried, it was successful, and it seemed like the most economically feasible way to do that.”

Cunningham is also a staunch advocate for infrastructure investment, which is not always a popular position among the GOP. On building a brighter, bipartisan future for California, Asm. Cunningham had this to say:

“I think the future of California is going to depend on making intelligent investments in our infrastructure. Our population growth, our housing, our energy supply, our transportation network — we have major, major needs and major gaps. And we need to step up and start plugging those gaps. And I think it’s going to be a future [with] less R versus D … the defining contours are going to be people who want to build things that human beings need, and people who, for whatever reason, do not.”

— Rebecca Basul, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell (right) thanked Asm. Cunningham for his leadership on SB 1090.

IBEW 1245 Members Attend Inter-Union Gas Conference

From left to right, back row: Joe Sanchez, Phil Wiltens, Teofilo Freeman, and Trevor Robertson. Front row: Sandi Busse, Kathy Polido, IBEW 9th District International Rep Charles Randall, Lloyd Cargo, Phuong Tran, and Ricardo Hernandez at the Inter-Union Gas Conference in Niagara Falls

Asm. Cunningham posed for a group photo with IBEW 1245 shop stewards in San Luis Obispo.
Statement on PG&E Bankruptcy from IBEW 1245 Business Manager
Tom Dalzell

In response to PG&E's Chapter 11 filing on Jan. 29, 2019, IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell issued the following statement:

"At this point, we do not know exactly what the utility will look like once it emerges from bankruptcy. However, we remain fully committed to protecting our members’ jobs, as well as the wages and benefits that they have earned, so that they can continue to provide safe and reliable gas and electric service to millions of Californians in thousands of communities across the state.

“We staunchly oppose any sale, break-up, municipalization or change of ownership at PG&E for a number of reasons. Parcelling out the utility into smaller, weaker segments would unquestionably have a negative impact on the safety and stability of both gas and electric service, it would increase costs, and it would decelerate progress towards California’s ambitious clean energy goals. Furthermore, selling or municipalizing some or all of PG&E’s gas or electric transmission or distribution systems would not solve the overarching issue of climate change and the strict liability policies that have put PG&E and all other California utilities on an unsustainable trajectory.

“The claims from the 2017 and 2018 wildfires, filed under California’s inverse condemnation law, are the single largest cause of the company’s financial woes that have led them to this point. Under inverse condemnation, plaintiffs do not need to prove negligence on the part of PG&E, they only have to prove that PG&E equipment was involved in the fire (even in instances of extreme and unanticipated climate change-induced weather events). If left in place, this policy will continue to put an undue onus on all power utilities in California, regardless of ownership, and we urge state lawmakers to act quickly and decisively to reform inverse condemnation immediately.

“There are no easy solutions to the structural, regulatory and climate change-induced problems that PG&E is facing. The company, the unions, the CPUC and state lawmakers must all work together on a comprehensive plan that will harden the system, alleviate undue liability, protect customers and workers, and keep us on track towards 100% renewable energy.”

For the latest news and information on the bankruptcy proceedings at PG&E, please visit www.ibew1245.com/pge.

PG&E Bankruptcy Court Update: Jan. 31, 2019

The “first day motions” were argued in bankruptcy court and ruled on. The two that are most important to us are in the first bullet and we prevailed on both. Our bankruptcy counsel was in court all day involved with the motions.

• Most importantly, the cash management and wage and benefits motions were granted on an interim basis. This approves the normal payment processes and use of payroll accounts and other related benefits accounts pending the final hearing.

• PG&E was approved for their DIP loan on an interim basis. This gives them immediate access to $1.5B in credit, which will also help them maintain normal operations, payroll, and benefits.

• The wildfire victim plaintiffs’ lawyers spent quite a bit of time arguing. Some took the position that no one should be paid until victims are paid, but the judge respectfully overruled them. Others indicated a desire to have a very quick claims process implemented to allow access to funds for victims.

• With respect to the future of the case, PG&E’s counsel indicated they plan to set up a fire victim claim fund (which would be similar to Takata). They were not specific about how they plan to free up money for that fund, but the general speculation seems to be that they will focus on their Power Purchase Agreements.

• A number of parties are calling for the creation of other creditor committees. There have apparently been requests for a municipality committee, a fire victims committee, and an equity committee. It will be sometime next week before we hear the US Trustee’s position on whether they intend to support formation of those committees. The creditor committees vote on the eventual plan for reorganization. We have expressed our interest in being on the creditor’s committee.

The STIP Issue, which only affects about 15 Local 1245 members, was not decided today. It has taken a lot of heat because it is seen as a bonus, not at-risk pay.

To view the interim orders, visit http://bit.ly/pge-bankruptcy

(scroll to the bottom of the page for links to the interim orders)
PG&E Line Crew Replaces Transformer in Atascadero

Some days at work are tough. But other times, the job is as smooth as can be. It was one of those glorious days for a three-man PG&E line crew in Atascadero when the Utility Reporter caught up with them in late October. The weather was clear, the conditions were favorable, and their transformer replacement job near a mobile home park was as straightforward as any crew could want.

“The transformer was overloaded due to some upgrades in the neighborhood, so we’re just putting in a larger overhead transformer,” explained Crew Foreman Thomas Grennan. “This job is pretty nice. We’re able to get two trucks to it, which makes it pretty easy. And it’s a beautiful California morning.”

Grennan, a 23-year member of IBEW 1245, was all smiles as he spoke about his experience with the union.

“The union has always kept my job safe, and kept me safe,” he said. “It’s kept our wages high, and our benefits great. Plus we’ve got a great rep here in [Jerry] Camacho.”
The City of Lodi skyrocketed to notoriety with the 1969 release of the Creedence Clearwater Revival song by the same name. The song “Lodi” tells the story of a seasoned musician who laments the stagnation of his career in the Central Valley town. But if all you know of the area is the impression you’ve gotten from that 50-year-old CCR tune, a short visit to Lodi will quickly have you singing a different one.

Coined the “Zinfandel Capital of the World,” Lodi is a well-known wine growing region with over 113,000 acres of vineyards and a climate similar to nearby Sonoma and Napa counties. And while the lyrics of “Lodi” paint a somewhat bleak picture of the types of opportunities available there, the town itself can actually be a wonderful place to launch and grow a career — just ask any of the IBEW 1245 members who work for the City of Lodi’s electric utility.

**Designing the Future of Lodi Electrical**

Five-year IBEW 1245 member Benjamin Griffith works as a senior electrical engineering technician for the City of Lodi, and values the unique opportunities he’s been given through his quality union job. He oversees a broad range of work, from replacing getaways to installing a station feeder and a mile-and-a-half of new primary cable, to routine maintenance. He also does all the single line and three-line drawings for construction crews and customer-based projects, determining required materials and labor estimates which impact the city budget.

“I design electrical power systems, system maintenance and capital projects,” he explained with pride. “I design and estimate pretty much all of the electrical utility projects for the City of Lodi.”

Urgent issues also require Griffith’s attention. He told the Utility Reporter about a low-voltage report he had responded to out in the field earlier that day, noting that he and his colleagues always try to create as little impact on customers as possible, working through the night and into the early pre-dawn hours when necessary to minimize disruptions.

Griffith recognizes the value that the union plays in improving his pay and working conditions and has seen the power of collective action first-hand at the bargaining table.

“We’re stronger as a group than as a single person asking for benefits or increases in wages or time off,” he said. “When you have [dozens] of people, and you tell ALL of them ‘no,’ that’s a big group of people to have to ignore. A single person is easy to ignore.”

**Keeping the Public Safe**

Journeyman Lineman Layne Worley, January — March 2019
a native of nearby Oakdale, also works for the City of Lodi’s Electric Utility Department and has been an IBEW mem-
ber since 2013.

Worley recently returned home af-
after completing his line apprenticeship with Mountain States JATC in Mon-
tana. He appreciated his time in Big Sky Country, but is glad to be back home
with his crew.

“I enjoy it here. It’s a great group of
Why Worley’s work includes routine
a group dynamic is crit-
ical for safety on the job.

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At the intersection of La Rue and South Virginia on the south side of Reno’s midtown district, NV Energy Gas Ops Working Foreman Mark Hicks and his crew were busy offsetting a gas main.

“Our gas main is in the way of a storm drain that they’re running through, so we're going to lower the pipe so they can run their storm drain over the top of us,” said Hicks, a five-year member of IBEW 1245. “We’ll dig up the storm drain to de-pool … and then we’ll weld plots on the pipe. Then we tap the plots, stop the flow of gas, cut the pipe out of the way, and weld 90s on to lower the pipe down back to the hole.”

This 10-foot section of pipe is part of a much larger project that NV Energy’s gas ops team has been working on since September. It’s relatively commonplace work for the crew, but on this particular day, the crew had to contend with a thick blanket of snow on the ground, adding additional challenges to the tough, rocky terrain they were digging in.

“The weather’s getting pretty tricky,” added Hicks. “It’s winter time, so the snow and ice are making it slippery.”

Reno averages about 22 inches of snow annually, so the six inches of snowfall that hit the area the day before was definitely a bit more than what NV Energy crews are accustomed to working in. But they didn’t allow the wintery weather to get in the way of them completing the job in a safe and timely fashion.

Meanwhile, on the outskirts of town, another NV Energy gas crew was working to remove old valves and couplings that are no longer up to snuff.

“We've got to tap in to the existing pipe in order to stop off the flow all the way around, so we can have a safe work area in the middle, where we're doing our work,” said Gas Division Foreman Scott Kohlman, a 15-year member of IBEW 1245. “And then we bypass … so no customers lose their gas service. Then I replace the valve, or we cut the valve out and we put this pipe in there.”

NV Energy is about half-way through this expansive, years-long upgrade, and the gas team completes about a dozen of these change-outs per month, but with half a foot of snow on the ground, everything becomes more precarious, and time is of the essence.

“We spread some ice melt around the job site and we're getting her done because we don't want this hole to fill up with water,” Kohlman said. While the IBEW 1245 members who work on the gas side of NV Energy may be assigned to all sorts of different tasks, they share a common bond through their union brotherhood. Since Nevada is a so-called “right to work” state, the employees are not required to pay union fees, but the majority of them choose to voluntarily maintain their membership with IBEW 1245 because they value the protections and benefits that the union has fought to secure for them. In fact, living in a right to work state has caused many of the members to have an even greater appreciation for the union.

“We're all union members here. We like the union because they stand up for us, and they help us get extra little incentives [from the employer] like meals and travel time and whatnot,” said Kohlman. “I like working here better than my last job [which was non-union], because the employer can't walk all over you when you're in the union.”

Hicks expressed a similar sentiment.

“I wasn't in the union before I came here. I didn't have retirement, I didn't have anything like that,” he said. “There's definitely a lot of benefits to [union representation]. We feel comfortable, and that's something I didn't have on the outside. And we've got a bunch of good people like [Business Rep Adam Weber], and I feel like they have our back.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

Photos by John Storey

January — March 2019
Welder Larry Walburn

Larry Walburn welds a pipe while Roberto Peña holds the fire extinguisher. Byron Ayala

Byron Ayala

Welder Richard Eisenbeiss cuts a pipe. Eric Culp hands a tool to Roberto Peña.

Eric Culp hands a tool to Roberto Peña.

Left to right: Byron Ayala, Mark Hicks and Richard Eisenbeiss

Left to right: Scott Kohlman, Roberto Peña, Eric Culp and Larry Walburn
In the wake of recent wildfires, there’s lots of talk about hardening the electric grid as a protective measure to make the system more resilient and less susceptible to future fires. But what, exactly, does “grid hardening” look like?

The Utility Reporter caught up with Outside Construction Journeyman Lineman and Crew Foreman Travis Citro and his crew at a grid-hardening project in Nevada City to get an up-close look at the work involved.

Citro, who works for Summit Line Construction, has been assigned to a six-and-a-half-mile fire hardening project, which includes installing bigger and taller poles, new tree wire, new transformers that use non-burning oil which is better for the environment, and fire-resistant elf fuses and fault-tamer fuses.

“Anything and everything that’s on the system is getting upgraded and replaced,” Citro explained. “All the service wire is getting updated. Any gray services that may be cracked or smaller services are getting upgraded to larger services. All the services that are currently attached to trees are getting service poles instead. All the primary wire is new tree wire for PG&E’s system.”

Dedicated IBEW crews — including Citro’s — are working to address PG&E’s new specifications for fire hardening, which includes installing these new materials and implementing a new pole-setting depth chart. Previously, a 50-foot pole would be set ten percent deep plus a foot-and-a-half. Now, that same pole will be set ten percent deep plus three feet. Additionally, all bore holes on the bottom of a pole are now underneath ground level, which requires installation of a treatment pole wrap that was not previously done.

Citro’s project, like most of the current grid-hardening work, is situated in a heavily wooded area, so workers are minimizing exposed parts and conductors as much as possible to reduce fire danger. They are installing bird covers and covered jumpers, and anything that’s exposed is getting wrapped with a self-fusing tape for insulation.

The upgrades are critically important work, but with so many new components, the crews must determine best practices for the new equipment specs — both the installation and maintenance. Many of these upgrades are industry-leading standards and require careful learning to address the differences and challenges these new processes create.

For example, Citro said one challenge his crew has had to tackle was discovering that after de-energizing the new tree wire, it still holds a capacitance charge on it, making it hot for a period of time. Linemen have to take that into consideration when testing and grounding. They are also learning how to manage new fully insulated wire, which is heavier and cannot support a ground on it.

Now as much as ever, IBEW workers are building the grid of the future — one that is state-of-the-art, safe and reliable — and responsive to the energy, weather and capacity demands of the future. At the same time, these skilled members are committed to ensuring a smooth transition that has the least impact on customers and their service during the upgrades.

Despite the numerous changes to work procedures and processes, the union’s commitment to safety and brotherhood is unwavering. As Citro said, “I’ve been with 1245 for 13 years. There’s a camaraderie within the union. People have a lot of pride in what that represents. We keep everybody working safe and together.”
Travis Citro sends up tools to his crew.

Louis Campbell works on an arm.

Jim Taylor prepares a cutout for installation.

Jake Jared guides a transformer up to Jim Taylor and Bronson Lee II.

Travis Citro sends up tools to his crew.

Bronson Lee II works in a bucket.

Bronson Lee II (above) and Louis Campbell
Enthusiasm is contagious — and union activism is the kind of enthusiasm that spreads at a breakneck pace.

For a prime example, look no further than the 2019 class of IBEW 1245 organizing stewards. When the union officially launched its ground-breaking organizing steward program back in 2014, the inaugural class was comprised of just 28 activists. But these enthusiastic member-leaders quickly spread the organizing bug to their peers, who then spread it along to even more co-workers — and before long, members in every corner of 1245’s jurisdiction were clamoring to catch the bug for themselves. In just five short years, the program has grown more than five times its original size, and now boasts a whopping 148 organizing stewards in its ranks.

Second-year Organizing Steward Gabrielle Baker, who works at PG&E’s Fresno Contact Center, wasn’t always a union activist. She’s had union representation at her previous jobs, but didn’t catch the organizing bug until she joined IBEW 1245.

“I used to be one of those people that did not believe in unions. I was never in trouble, so I never needed a shop steward, and I thought the union was only good for discounts to amusement parks,” she confessed. “Once I came over to PG&E, everybody was talking about the union, and my friend Tracy Amaro invited me out to an IBEW 1245 event. Once I saw for myself the work that’s being done, and the comradery — hook, line and sinker, here I am!”

Alex Abrego, who works in the warehouse at SMUD, caught the bug from his co-worker, Kim Camatti, who got him involved with organizing around the Janus vs. AFSCME Supreme Court case. That case sought to weaken unions in the public sector — but has ended up having quite the opposite effect, as Abrego has exemplified through his newfound union activism.

“Before I came to SMUD, I was non-union. But now I can see the benefits of the union, and if I can help out any way I can, I’m going to do it,” Abrego said. “I really value the brotherhood. No matter where you work — PG&E, or SMUD, or Reno, or wherever — we’re all one huge family, and that’s what makes us strong.”

Dana Johnson, who works for PG&E in payment processing, also shared a story about shifting her perspective on the union. She was having issues at work, and became disillusioned with the union because she wasn’t really familiar with how it operates.

“I was ready to stop paying union dues … but my union rep, Gerald, got me in to a meeting — the Union Network Member Experience — and I got to hear what actually goes on with our union, and all the different roles that the stewards take on [to strengthen the union],” she said. “I met with Gerald again after that, and he asked if I wanted to go out to Nevada to work on the No on Question 3 campaign, because he knew that I’m from Nevada and have family there. That experience made me realize that I wanted to take on a bigger role in the union — especially because there are no other organizing stewards in my building.”

Baker, Abrego and Johnson each come from different backgrounds, workgroups and experiences — but they all caught the bug, and they’re thrilled to be a part of the 2019 class of organizing stewards.

On January 25, they came together with their fellow organizing stewards for the annual kick-off meeting and training at Weakley Hall. The diverse group contains individuals from all walks of life, a wide variety of workgroups including clerical and physical, and even some retirees. Many of them have extensive organizing experience, while others have only just begun to explore the world of union activism. But despite their differences, they all share a common bond through the IBEW.

“I love to see how much pride our stewards take into being appointed to this role,” said IBEW 1245 Staff Organizer Rene Cruz Martinez, who emceed the event. “Having been an organizing steward myself prior to coming on staff with IBEW 1245, I know the feeling. It is a sense of belonging, knowing we are making a difference to make our union stronger, ready to take on challenges head-on. We are the front line of the defense against attacks on labor.”

In his opening remarks, IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell echoed these sentiments, sharing words of appreciation and inspiration with the room full of organizing stewards.

“What we’re doing at Local 1245 right now is building power and using power — and 90% of that power comes from the people in this room. You are ordinary people doing extraordinary things,” he told them. “It’s remarkable to see how this dedicated group within our membership has fundamentally changed this union in terms of the
What has been your most meaningful accomplishment through IBEW 1245’s member-driven organizing program?

“I’ve been able to talk to people who do not vote, who feel like their voice doesn’t matter. But once we started engaging in conversation ... they knew that we were there to help them, and they knew that it was important. Being able to influence their decision to get out and vote, it means a lot. It’s really fulfilling.” — Gabby Baker, PG&E

“One of the most rewarding things I did was the fight against Janus vs AFSCME. We had at least 90% of our members at SMUD stay on with the union. It was really unifying to see everyone come together. I had no idea we could be that strong when we went into it.” — Justin Hirschi, SMUD

“I’ve been able to help fellow employees see all the benefits in belonging to IBEW 1245 and how our union has been the driving force for democracy in both the workplace and the community. Organizing Stewards are the vehicle for that driving force!” — Kim Camatti, SMUD

“I have become resource for others in achieving their goals. I feel empowered to lift others in their fights for equality and justice.” — Kristen Rasmussen, PG&E

“I’ve been able to help my co-workers. I had a few experiences where some were doubting the union. But now they’re asking more questions, and wanting to go to meetings. It’s very exciting to see more people wanting to be involved.” — Armando Vasquez, PG&E

“Having one-on-one conversations with my co-workers. It’s a very exciting to see more people wanting to be involved.” — Armando Vasquez, PG&E

“Working on the Janus campaign was really rewarding. It feels good to know that your coworkers support what you believe in. And it was great opportunity to learn more about them!” — Rodrigo Flores, Merced Irrigation District

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(power we can exert — and now we’re known far and wide as the union that can deliver. You are the arrows in our quiver, the lightning bolts in the fist of 1245. You are the power! From the bottom of my heart, thank you for everything you’ve done and continue to do.”

The organizing stewards proceeded to spend the afternoon recap and discussing the numerous organizing, legislative and political campaigns that they engaged in over the past year, highlighting the ones that left the biggest impact — including the passage of the wildfire bill, the defeat of an energy deregulation measure in Nevada, the successful internal organizing effort around Janus, and the election of Rosanna Herber to the SMUD Board.

They also discussed what it means to be an organizing steward, including the obstacles and opportunities they face, and then proceeded to break out into their new teams to lay out a game plan for the coming year. Due to the colossal size of this year’s class, the union has appointed 20 leads, each of whom is responsible for guiding a team of 8-10 stewards over the course of the next 12 months.

The action-packed day concluded with a special screening of the film “Made in Dagenham,” which tells the remarkable story of a group of British women workers who went on strike for equal pay at a Ford motor plant. The strike eventually led to the passage of the UK Equal Pay Act in 1970.

Although the film is set in Great Britain factory in the 60s, the organizing stewards were still able to draw many parallels and gleaned a number of key lessons that they can apply to their own organizing efforts in what is already shaping up to be another highly eventful year. Staff Organizer Fred Ross summed it up best:

“At its core, organizing is about moving people to take action. It’s not about lecturing, it’s about listening, and it’s about engaging them to make a difference. That’s what we’re here to do.”

Photos by John Storey
California has seen more than its fair share of horrific wildfires, but none can compare to the Camp Fire, now the largest and most deadly fire in California history. The fire claimed at least 86 lives, demolished entire towns, sent tens of thousands of residents fleeing, and left many of them—including 86 members of IBEW 1245—homeless right before the holidays.

The fire spread so quickly and with such fortitude that it caught most residents completely by surprise. For 10-year IBEW 1245 member and Paradise resident Brian Clarke, that fateful day started much like any other. Clarke, who works in vegetation management for Trees Inc, went into work around dawn, as he usually does. But as he was leaving the yard around 7:30 am to get to his work assignment, he noticed a large plume of smoke on the horizon. After making some calls to a family member and the Butte County sheriff, he learned that the fire was encroaching on the nearby town of Concow, and the entire area in and around Paradise was being evacuated. He quickly reached out to his general foreman and made plans to evacuate.

Shortly thereafter, Clarke got a call from his wife, who was crying as she struggled to round up the family pets. She had collected three of their four dogs, but was unable to get the last one, a blind goldendoodle. So Clarke and his son, who also works with him at Trees Inc, headed towards home on an animal rescue mission.

“By that time, the roads were blocked and we couldn’t get into Paradise [by car], so we jumped out and started running down the street,” Clarke recalled. “The fire was everywhere, things were blowing up all around us … fortunately someone picked us up, and we got our dog, and a few of our chickens, and one of our cats. We didn’t have time to get anything else, so we just got out with the animals and the clothes on our backs, and that’s it.”

Clarke, his son and the pets narrowly escaped the fire, and there was a point in time when he wasn’t sure if they would make it.

“We were sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic and it started to get really dark, and everything around us was catching fire,” he said. “Embers were bouncing off the hood of the car, and it got really, really hot … I called my wife to say, ‘This might be it.’ But somehow we made it to Chico. The last thing I saw as we got out was the ‘Welcome to Paradise’ sign burning up in flames.”

Within a matter of hours, Clarke’s primary residence, as well as his rental property, would be reduced to rubble. Clarke, noting that several of his Trees Inc coworkers were also displaced by the fire, has actually eased my mind.”

The fire may be contained, but the aftermath of the blaze is still wreaking devastation across Butte County. As utility first responders, hundreds of IBEW 1245 members from PG&E have been on the scene from day 1, capping gas lines, cleaning up downed wires and transformers, and beginning the arduous gas and electric restoration process.

For 15-year IBEW 1245 member Steve Lange, who grew up in the town of Paradise, working in the ruins of his beloved hometown has been exceptionally emotional.

“This is the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do for PG&E, hands down,” Lange said as he choked up with emotion. “Paradise is where I call home. I went to school here, graduated here, went to work here, met all my friends here. I live in Chico now, and I have for quite a while, but when I talk about Paradise, I always call it home. The unions have been great. I called up my union rep, Ray Banfill, right away, to tell him what was going on, and he showed us quite a bit of support,” said Clarke, noting that several of his Trees Inc coworkers were also displaced by the fire. IBEW 1245 is issuing $1,000 checks to each member who lost their home in the fire — funded through a combination of donations, assistance from IBEW International, and the local’s own funds.

Clarke’s employer has been extremely understanding of the situation and provided them with hotel rooms, gift cards, and flexibility at work so they can get their affairs in order. Clarke returned to his tree trimming job in Oroville just a couple weeks after the fire, and has found that being back on the job has been surprisingly cathartic. "Going back to work helps," he said. "Sitting around all day and waiting for calls and emails from the insurance claims adjusters, it’s stressful. But work has actually eased my mind."

The weeks since the fire have been tough for the Clarkes, but they feel fortunate to have received assistance from friends, co-workers and others, and they also appreciate the support they’ve gotten from both Trees Inc and IBEW 1245. "The union’s been great. I called up my union rep, Ray Banfill, right away, to tell him what was going on, and he showed us quite a bit of support," said Clarke, noting that several of his Trees Inc coworkers were also displaced by the fire. IBEW 1245 is issuing $1,000 checks to each member who lost their home in the fire — funded through a combination of donations, assistance from IBEW International, and the local’s own funds.

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Steve Lange choked up with emotion during an interview with the Utility Reporter.

PG&E gas crews cover trenches after the fire.

GSR Phuong Tran caps a valve in a burnt home.

Photos by John Storey
I said at that time that I would never forget [the aftermath of the wine country fires], that it would probably affect the rest of my life. But this is far worse than last year’s fires, from the totality of the damages we’re seeing,” said Tran, who works out of PG&E’s Fremont yard.

“This is the most devastation I’ve ever seen. Block after block after block with nothing left.”

Even with their vast fire experience, the PG&E crews were blown away by what they encountered and had to work around. They face exceptionally hazardous driving conditions, with lines and trees down across nearly every roadway. They came across transformers and other equipment perilously dangling in trees. They had to contend with some of the worst air quality ever recorded in the United States. They crossed paths with countless terrified animals — both wild and domesticated — who were hungry, confused, and left with nowhere to go. And they had to ensure ample communication and coordination among the hundreds of first responders, as well as the 80+ mutual aid crews and contractors, in order to keep everyone safe.

The work is taxing, the days are long, and every pile of rubble is a painful reminder of the lives and homes that have been lost. But the 1245 members on the scene are committed to doing all the can for the communities and residents impacted by the fires.

I’m here for as long as they need us to do the work. This is what I signed up for,” said Tran. “This is what all of us signed up for. If we can’t show up for this, then we shouldn’t be in this classification. This is when our company and our customers need us the most. This is why we’re here.”

Steve Lange and colleague Dave Elkington rescued this pair of tortoises that survived the fire in Paradise.

Paradise Lost, from page 22

Rebuilding After the Camp Fire

Every day since November 8th when the Camp Fire started, members of IBEW 1245 have been working to rebuild the gas and electric systems of Paradise, Magalia, and Concow. In the early hours of the fire they risked their lives to help evacuate those with no way to get out. Since then, they have worked from dawn to dusk, and sometimes more, seven days a week. They have worked through weeks of horrible air quality and they have worked through rain. For weeks, many were living in a temporary camp; all have given up time with their families. Dozens of crews were thousands of miles away from their families as the holiday season passed by.

By now, more than 5,000 union members have been involved either in rebuilding the infrastructure that will allow restoration of gas and electric service or in an unprecedented, massive mobilization to prevent future fires. Many of our members are a part of the communities devastated by the fires. They lost their homes, and their families and friends lost their homes. For many, the rebuilding effort is personal as well as professional.

The peculiarity that is a part of everyday life on the crews isn’t seen. The destruction and loss of life and property make for a somber workplace. They are keeping their heads down, working hard and focusing on the tasks at hand. They remember that a union brother died during restoration of electric service after the Carr fire over the summer, and they pay attention to working safely.

There aren’t a lot of discussions about wildfire policy among the crews, but they have their opinions — opinions based on years of building and maintaining gas and electric systems.

When they see the advertisements and client solicitations by trial lawyers, they are stunned by the naiveté of the claim that a gas or electric system can be perfect, wherever it is or whoever is running it. They understand that the type of utility incidents that have started fires over the last few years are minor mechanical failures that happen every day at every utility, but that climate change has made those unpreventable minor failures very costly. They know that the deadly Carr fire in June was started by a minor car accident — a flat tire on a trailer led its rim to scrape the asphalt, igniting sparks that started a fire that burned 229,651 acres. They get it — minor events can have major consequences.

And when they see the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection deeming one branch on one tree cut by a licensed line clearance tree trimming contractor to be criminal negligence, they just scratch their heads and wonder. Does CalFire not know that the contractors are trimming more than a million trees away from lines in northern California every year? Does it not know that predicting the rate of growth on a tree is not a simple exercise? Does it really expect that every branch on every tree is going to be cut perfectly? Does it really consider inadequately trimming one branch on one tree to be possible criminal negligence?

The workers who are rebuilding the infrastructure in Butte County see the blame game and the huge contingency fees for trial lawyers and wonder if anyone else understands that no utility can operate for long under the existing conditions, rules, and laws in a climate-changed northern California. Mostly though, they don’t think about policy. They think about their job today — rebuilding after the Camp Fire.
I BEW 1245 member Eric Zimmerman just started working as a PG&E Communications Dispatcher in July of 2018, and with just a few short months on the job, he has already learned to expect the unexpected.

Zimmerman had been applying for full-time jobs at PG&E for quite some time, and was absolutely thrilled when he secured a position as a GSR out of PG&E’s Concord yard. He had just left his previous job as an emergency medical technician and appreciated the opportunity to continue helping the community in a new way. But little did he know that his first few months on the job would be marked by not one, but two instances where he’d find himself utilizing those EMT skills in life-threatening situations.

The first such instance occurred at Diggers Diner in Concord. Zimmerman was working a Saturday overtime shift and had stopped in to the busy diner for his lunch break. As he was waiting for his food, a man came in to the diner, yelling that someone had just tried to run him over with a car. The staff at the diner immediately grabbed the phone to call 9-1-1, and Zimmerman quickly glanced outside to see if he could spot the alleged attacker but didn’t see anything. He then looked over the man for apparent injuries and spotted nothing that seemed serious, save for a small amount of blood on the man’s hand.

Minutes later, a second man came into the diner, exclaiming that he had been stabbed by the first man, who was still inside the diner. The first man started to make his way towards the bathrooms at the back of the restaurant, but Zimmerman was sure to get a good look at him before getting up to assist the second man, who had fresh blood all over his leg.

“I could tell this was serious. So I went up and introduced myself, told him I’m EMT certified, and began to assess him for life-threatening injuries,” said Zimmerman. “He said that his side hurt, and he showed me what looked like about a four-inch laceration that penetrated down to the fatty tissue near his hip. He was bleeding pretty good.”

Zimmerman knew that he needed to control the bleeding, so without hesitation, he brought the man out to the curb and got the waitress to bring over some fresh napkins and a clean rag. The restaurant staff asked Zimmerman if he could explain the situation to the 9-1-1 dispatcher, so he told the injured man to use the napkins and rag to press down hard on the wound and hold the pressure while he was on the phone.

“After I handed the phone back to the waitress, I was talking to the injured man, trying to keep him calm,” said Zimmerman. “He told me that he felt like he was going to pass out, and it was then that I noticed there was a smear of blood on his neck, so I had him wipe his neck and saw that he actually had a sec-

ond stab wound to the neck — it looked like a small puncture, but that right there could have definitely have changed things quickly.”

Zimmerman told the man to use the rag to put pressure on the neck wound, and within five minutes the police arrived and arrested the first man, and then the fire department came and took over first aid for the victim. Zimmerman reported the incident to his supervisor, and then returned to his lunch and continued on with his shift.

“When I told the guys in yard [about the incident], they said that a lot of people wouldn’t have stepped up like that. It’s not that they wouldn’t want to help, but they just couldn’t have known what to do,” said Zimmerman, noting that there were about 40 other people in the diner at the time, but he was the only one who jumped up to offer first aid. “When I get into a situation like that, I don’t even think twice, I just start helping any way I can.”

Less than two months later, Zimmerman once again found himself tapping into his EMT background on the job. It was another Saturday shift, but this time, he was working in San Francisco, helping out their gas service department with some extra compliance work. He had just started his task and was knocking on his third door of the morning when he inadvertently came across a medical emergency inside a customer’s home.

As the customer opened the door, Zimmerman immediately got a sense that something wasn’t right, as the woman at the door seemed extremely upset and agitated. She said something unintelligible to Zimmerman, and then closed the door on him. He waited, hoping that she would send another family member to speak with him. And within a few moments, the door opened again, and this second family member said, “Is there something I can help you with? I’m on the phone with 9-1-1!”

Once again, Zimmerman’s training kicked in. He introduced himself, mentioned his background as an EMT, and asked what was going on. The customer told him that her elderly grandmother had suffered a serious fall, and Zimmerman asked if he could step inside and talk to the person.

“I walked in and right in the hall I could see her laying down — she was probably in her 80s or 90s. A family member was propping her up,” Zimmerman recalled. “I asked what happened, and they said she had fallen through the bathroom door and hit her head on the wall. I did a quick assessment to her head and neck to check for injuries and lacerations. I didn’t feel anything, so I laid her down to make her comfortable.”

Zimmerman asked one family member to round up a list of all the medications she was taking, and her medical history, so it would be available when the emergency responders arrived. It was then that Zimmerman learned she was pregnant.

Member Spotlight: Thomas Mora

The Utility Reporter talked with IB EW 1245 member Thomas Mora, a veteran who completed PG&E’s PowerPathway program and now has a career he loves and a brotherhood he can’t imagine life without. Below, Mora shares his personal story, his experience finding a career at the PG&E call center in Fresno, and what motivated him to become more involved with the union as an Organizing Steward in 2019.

Tell us about your military service.

I was in the Marine Corps from 2002-2006, stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, and I served two tours of duty in Iraq. My Marine Expeditionary Unit was part of the takeover of Fallujah.

Because of events that happened during my tour of duty, I received a combat meritorious promotion to Corporal. It usually takes two to three years, but I got it after about a year and half. I was immediately in a supervisory role, in charge of a truck of Marines. I was 19 years old, right out of high school.

The second deployment was hard. It was hard to go back, but my friends were going and we had a brotherhood and I didn’t want to break that. I needed to be a protector, and I wanted to be there if someone got injured.

What did you do, career-wise, after you left the Marines?

I always thought I would be in the Marine Corps for 20 years, but after two deployments, I decided to come out. Coming back was tough. It was a hard adjustment and took a lot of help from my family.

I went home to Fresno at 22 years old and decided to go back to school. It helped being around people my own age, but it was hard not having some of the power and responsibility.

I went on to work for Bank of America doing customer service for three years, and then to a payroll company.

How has your PowerPathway experience impacted your career?

I first heard about the PowerPathway program from my friend Nesha who is also a veteran. We worked together and he told me the program was planning a class for veterans only, and that PG&E and IB EW 1245 were committed to bringing 18 veterans into the company.

I joined the PowerPathway program and my life changed. I learned a lot about the company and traveled to places like San Bruno and Bishop Ranch that are very important to understand. Then I went into customer service training in Fresno.

Being with a class of veterans felt like being back in the military. There is something about the camaraderie and the way you can talk to each other. We all got along well, and I formed some really close friendships.

Why do you think veterans make such excellent employees?

For one, veterans take orders well. On top of that, we understand what being on time is. Being in the military, everything is about time and doing things on time. We have a saying, on time means being 15 minutes prior to 15 minutes prior.

Veterans also have strong work ethic. A lot of military people are really driven,
F or more than a century, the Para- disie Irrigation District has been providing water and related serv- ices to residents and business in the quaint, mountain town of Paradise, CA — a place that was relatively unknown to most Americans before the Camp Fire leveled the town in early November.

In a matter of hours, the town of Par- adise transformed from a hidden gem into a national headline, and the IBEW 1245 members who work for Paradise Irrigation District saw their world turned upside down.

The majority of these members are Paradise residents who lost their homes and all of their worldly belongings in the fire. Just four of the members who live in Paradise have homes that are still stand- ing — but due to the massive amount of damage and chemical exposure, their houses are still uninhabitable as of this writing, and there's no telling when they might be able to move back in.

But despite the unimaginable loss and devastation that this workgroup has suffered through, nearly all of them have returned to work, doing their part to help repair and restore water service to their tight knit community. Six full- time workers and three part-timers have left the District since the fire; most of them accepted an early retirement offer from the District. But the remain- ing 18 members who are still with the District have been hard at work — and their first order of business has been identifying and repairing the numerous leaks that the fire left in its wake.

It can be hard to quantify the magni- tude of damage that these crews have set out to repair, but it is truly massive. According to one member who works at the water treatment plant, immediately after the fire, when there were few, if any,香水， ill-defined water systems in the system, the plant was still treating around 2.7 million gallons per day, which is about one-third of the normal production for the average day’s use for the District. Despite the fact that no one was using water, it kept moving due to the massive amount of leaks within the system.

Detecting and repairing these leaks is an arduous task to say the least, but the members are committed to doing their work so that one day their friends and neighbors may be able to access potable water again.

“The crews are repairing main line leaks with open trench methods, as well as capping service lines that go to lots with no structure, and they are replac- ing infrastructure to those that are still standing, to restore service,” explained IBEW 1245 Business Rep Dominic McCurtain, who represents the mem- bers at Paradise ID.

Detecting and repairing leaks is only one part of the lengthy service restora- tion process. Once leaks are repaired and pipe segments are able to be com- missioned, the District must conduct extensive water-safety testing, which will likely take many months. The test- ing is necessary due to the potential for benzene and/or bacteria to accumulate in the pipes, and once an individual pipe segment is commissioned, it can take days or weeks for the test results to come back.

Fortunately, the testing that has been conducted so far has shown limited benzene levels in the public water sys- tem. The issue of benzene in water sup- plies only became apparent after the 2017 fire in Santa Rosa, where melted pipes resulted in benzene contamina- tion. Benzene is easily absorbed into plastic and rubber and can absorb into the body over time. Sometimes the benzene is lightly absorbed and can be eliminated by flushing, but if the benzene is heavily absorbed, then the plastic or rubber gasket pipe seg- ments may need to be replaced. Para- disie Irrigation District is continuing to test water samples and will update the public as soon as test results are known.

In the meantime, the District is advising residents to use only bottled water for drinking, cooking and brush- ing teeth, and customers can pick up cases of water from the District main office during specified hours, and can also utilize licensed water haulers and public filling stations in adjacent areas.

Water service is being restored, street by street, and the progress that has been made given the conditions is nothing short of outstanding. As of this writing (Jan. 23) the District website reports that its transmission system is 90% filled, and the distribution system is 50% filled. IBEW 1245 commends the work of its members,* and looks for- ward to the day when Paradise residents can consume their tap water once again.

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

Dominic McCurtain contributed to this report.

*Regrettfully, IBEW 1245 members at Paradise ID were not available for inter- view at press time.

Tell me about your experience work- ing to pass union-backed legislation.

I went to Sacramento this summer in support of SB 901, important legislation related to California wildfire recovery. It was a good experience seeing the union together on this issue. About 100 of us descended on the Capitol in full force, with members on all four stories. We went to every legislator’s office and gave them a breakdown of how this change would help us as employees and union workers and would help fire victims. We gave our opinion whether they liked it or not. I stayed up until midnight watching for the outcome that night, and it passed!

What was it like working on getting out the vote during the 2018 election?

It was my first time canvassing, and it was an eye-opening experience. We worked with four or five different organiza- tions, including the IBEW Local and other organizations, and our teams hit the streets hard to help get out the vote. I worked with [organizing steward] Kurene Turner to manage a team of vol- unteers. We made sure doors were get- ting knocked, would go to houses with volunteers, and answered any ques- tions. It was a good experience and I learned a lot. And I’m pretty proud, our candidate was down by about 2,000 votes based off mail-in ballots — and she ended up winning!

How has having a union job changed your life?

I’m big in the union. I had never been in any type of union prior to IBEW 1245 and my family isn’t union, so I really didn’t know how they help workers. All I ever heard was that you have to pay dues and it never made sense to me. After attending meetings and finding out everything the union does for work- ers, it’s amazing. It’s changed my life, and I could never leave.

Who inspired you to get more active in the union, and what are you most looking forward to as an organizing steward?

The two people who really inspired me to get more active in the union were Ashley Finley and Joe Sanchez, who is also a Marine Corps veteran. Joe asked me every day for a month if I was going to the next union meeting. Ashley is an organizing lead and she was also really persistent in keeping me updated and involved.

I’m really looking forward to getting the word out. I’m always ready to hit the street. Whatever needs to happen, I’ll make it happen and I’ll help get the word out.

Tell us a little more about yourself. What do you like to do in your free time?

I live in Fresno and enjoy spending time with my girlfriend, my dog, and my five nephews and three nieces. Go Lakers!

I’m really do like helping — and she needed my help. It’s just in my nature, and I was in the right place at the right time,” said Zimmerman.

When Zimmerman took the job at PG&E, he was excited to begin a new career in service to his community. He never imagined he would find himself in two medical emergencies during his first four months on the job, but he feels like he was exactly where he was meant to be in those moments.

“It might sound cliché, but I’m so happy to be working here, and I really value the fact that we’re taught to always put safety first,” he said, acknowledging that he had also gone through the com- pany’s mandatory CPR and First Aid refresher course right after he hired on.

“Being able to help people is truly amazing… and being able to help in a PG&E uniform is even better.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director.
Local 1245 Welcomes New Advisory Council Members

IBEW 1245 President Art Freitas administered the oath to four new Advisory Council members at the January 2019 meeting. (Pictured from left) Ivan Pereda has been appointed to the PG&E Clerical Northern Area seat, Steve Lange has assumed one of the PG&E GC At-Large seats, Phuong Tran has filled the PG&E East Bay seat, and Oni Brown will be representing City of Vallejo/GVRD.

New Video Highlights IBEW 1245’s Biggest Wins in 2018

2018 was an action-packed year for IBEW 1245. In a new video that premiered at the quarterly Advisory Council meeting, Business Manager Tom Dalzell details some of Local 1245’s tough fights and big victories from the past year. Watch it at bit.ly/ibew2018yearinreview.

2019 Class of Organizing Stewards Sworn In

In what has become an annual tradition, IBEW 1245’s fifth class of organizing stewards flooded into the first Advisory Council meeting for their formal swearing-in. The 142 activists, clad in their signature blue shirts and jackets, raised their right hands to take the oath.

Advisory Council Honors the Legacy of Mike Davis

When IBEW 1245 President Emeritus Mike Davis passed away in early January, the loss sent shockwaves through the union (see obituary on page 42).

To commemorate Davis’ life and his contributions to the union, the IBEW Local 1245 Executive Board held a small memorial for his friends and family in conjunction with the quarterly Advisory Council meeting.

“Mike Davis was a big part of 1245 for many years, and he always will be,” Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell said at the start of the ceremony. “What he did, the changes he made, and the dedication he had to this organization will live on … and we are better because of him.”

Former Business Manager Jack McNally worked closely with Davis over the course of many years. During the memorial, McNally shared many anecdotes about Davis, including a story about his no-holds-barred approach to enforcing the union’s expense policies when he served as Local 1245’s treasurer — questioning and even rejecting one of McNally’s own meal expenses to set an example.

“I looked at him as being a very valuable leader of 1245,” said McNally. “Mike was a great unionist through and through … and he was a good man as well.”

Steve Rayburn, PG&E’s former director of labor relations, often sat on the opposite side of the table from Davis during labor-management meetings, but despite this seemingly adversarial relationship, he and Davis formed a unique bond. Rayburn wasn’t able to attend the memorial, but he sent in a letter, which Dalzell read aloud to all in attendance.

“Mike’s passing comes at a time when there is an unprecedented level of divisiveness in our country. Today’s political leaders could have learned a lot from Mike … When it came to issues when parties had a disagreement, Mike was always calm and respectful,” Rayburn wrote in the letter. “He was a fair and tough union leader, but he would never be a trouble maker in my eyes.”

Dalzell shared a story from early in his career as business manager, when he and Davis were debating whether or not they should push for a dues increase in order to build up a war chest to use for big fights that they knew would soon be on the horizon.

“Mike said, ‘This is something we have to do for the local. We’ll go out and make our case, and if the members agree, that’s fine, and if they don’t agree and it ends our careers with the union, that’s fine too.’ … Well, it ended up passing, and it left us in a very sound financial position, in a way we wouldn’t have been if Mike hadn’t led that fight.”

Current President Art Freitas viewed Davis as an invaluable mentor, and expressed his appreciation for the lessons he gleaned from his predecessor.

“I’m where I am today because of what I learned from Mike,” said Freitas. “He taught me to stop, listen, and analyze — and then act.”

Davis’ widow, Dee, and several members of the family were in attendance at the memorial as well. The union presented the family with a framed photo collage, featuring photos of Davis throughout the course of his 45 years with the union.

Davis’ family took a moment to look at Davis’ name etched on the memorial wall near the front entrance of the union hall.

Davis’ wife Dee wipes away tears as President Art Freitas presents her with a photo collage of her late husband.

Georgette Carrillo addressed the Advisory Council.
Sen. Bill Dodd Thanks Local 1245 for Assisting in the Passage of Wildfire Legislation

State Senator Bill Dodd is one of IBEW 1245’s greatest allies in the California State Legislature. Among Local 1245 members, he is best known as the author of SB 901, the wildfire bill that the union worked aggressively to get signed into law in 2018.

Sen. Dodd took time out of his busy schedule to stop by Local 1245’s January Advisory Council meeting in order to pay homage to the union leaders and activists who worked tirelessly in California’s halls of the State Capitol, testifying during committee hearings and lobbying legislators at the 11th hour to ensure passage of the hotly contested bill.

“I’d like to thank all of the brothers and sisters who are here today — I recognize many of your faces,” Sen. Dodd said. “You were there with your blue shirts on in those hearings, and that means a lot to me and my colleagues.”

He also noted the key role that the union’s business manager played in crafting and passing the bill.

“Tom Dalzell was instrumental [in the passage of SB 901], and has been a guiding light for me on a number of issues,” Dodd added, noting that like most lawmakers, he was an inch deep and a mile wide in utility issues prior to the wildfires. “It really helps having someone with skills and expertise in this area … I can’t even believe that I’ve learned as much as I did about IBEW and your jobs.”

Dodd made it abundantly clear that he truly values the working men and women who do the difficult and sometimes dangerous work that most other lawmakers take for granted — and he will never cease to fight for the workers, no matter what the future holds for PG&E.

“I know these are turbulent times, but nothing should diminish the hard-working people who are doing all the work on the ground to make sure we have a safe, reliable and affordable electrical grid — and that’s you,” he said, noting that, thanks to Labor, SB 901 contains several critical worker protections. “I consider it an honor to have my bill directed to get this work done … and I will continue to push for investment and planning, regardless of what happens with the bankruptcy.”

After answering a few questions from members, Sen. Dodd thanked the union once again, and asked if he could go on a ride-along with an IBEW 1245 crew in the near future so he could get an up-close-and-personal look at the work our members do each and every day. The union’s leadership is already working to set that up.

And to demonstrate that the appreciation goes both ways, Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell gave Dodd a framed photo of an IBEW 1245 line crew working in Napa — where Dodd is from and represents in the State Senate — for him to hang in his Senate office.

“Senator Dodd is a great champion for Local 1245,” said Dalzell. “He’s unafraid of what people think, and he takes on the tough fights. We’re lucky to have him on our side.”

Sen. Bill Dodd

As a token of appreciation, Business Manager Tom Dalzell presented Sen. Dodd with a framed photo of an IBEW 1245 crew working in Dodd’s Napa jurisdiction.

Sen. Bill Dodd

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PG&E Towerman Tyler Traynor joined IBEW 1245 just a few short months before the Camp Fire swept through his hometown of Paradise, CA. Traynor is among the 86 members of Local 1245 who lost their homes in the devastating fire. The young towerman captured this photo from the fire zone that ended up being selected as the winning entry in this quarter's photo contest.

“The fire happened on Thursday, and I went back to work that Saturday,” Traynor told the Advisory Council. “We were patrolling the lines [via helicopter]… I landed, and my buddies came in right behind me. As they were coming down over this burned car, I thought, 'This would be a great picture,' so I pulled out my phone.”

Traynor accepted his $500 price with his fiancé, Tilly, by his side.
WORK PICTURE

The work picture throughout our jurisdiction continues to remain very strong with no end in sight for both California and Nevada. Just as PG&E was moving into an accelerated fire hardening program, which is expected to provide additional work for our members for at least the next 15 years, we were hit with the Camp Fire. Resources from just about all of our contractors — as well as from other utilities from other states in the form of virtual aid — were moved to that restoration effort. They worked very long hours in physically and emotionally taxing conditions, and we thank everyone who helped in this effort.

California

While this effort was underway, we were at full employment at the hall and had standing calls for up to 25 linemen daily. PG&E announced in the middle of this effort the need for an additional 2,000 linemen to perform and make repairs to 50,000 transmission structures that covered 5,400 line-miles, and initially set a goal to complete the project in 90 days. Resources of this magnitude in such a short period of time when we were already facing severe shortages would seem impossible. From the Friday before Thanksgiving until the week after, we worked closely with the customer to devise a plan to get the resources in place to do this without disrupting all the other work that is going on. This is an emergency for PG&E, and we need to be part of the solution, as it has a direct impact on our members.

The National Emergency Response Agreement, which has been in place since 2010, as well as the National Transmission Portability Agreement, were tools to achieve this. We also worked closely with the customer on what it would take to draw linemen here around the holidays. Eventually the numbers went down from 2,000 and have settled at a little over 600. This work is under way with a slightly later completion date. I constantly try to explain to our membership that the two biggest threats to the 100% union workforce are safety/quality and our ability to provide manpower to perform the work when called upon. If we don’t do it, someone else will — and that is not an option for us. Business Rep. Ralph Kenyon has spent every morning working with the customer and the employer as they on-boarded this inspection work. We quickly reached the 600 number which was set-tled on. We have been diligent that these agreements are followed to the letter, and everyone here is an IBEW member on a referral.

Our work is nowhere near done. On Monday January 14, bids were due in for a similar undertaking on the distribution system in the high fire-prone areas. This amounts to 640,000 structures. Work is supposed to be completed in 120 days after it’s awarded, and based on a six-day work schedule, this represents about 5,000 structures per day. This will be another huge draw on resources. The first part of this will require a visual inspection to document what, if anything, needs repair. We have worked with the Western Line Chapter of NECA on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to address this work as a single-man operation. We have inspection agreements in place and, in an effort to move this work to the construction workforce, this was needed.

There is a wage rate increase for this to the wage rate of the Compliance Inspector 2 that is covered in the inspection agreements and all the other benefits afforded in the OSL agreement. Any-thing that is found to be more than a minor repair from the ground level will be sent for crew work.

All the above-mentioned work is in addition to all the Accelerated Fire Hardening upgrade work in the fire-prone areas as well as the rest of the work our contractors have all over the system. There is a lot of work we are doing to make this successful, and we will continue to work closely to make this happen. Thanks to everyone who is out here every day contributing to this effort as professionals. I am confident we will get through all the coming challenges and you are all part of the reason for that confidence.

All of the OSL reps are very busy in the field visiting crews as well as dealing with all the additional issues that come with the increase in work.

Nevada

Work picture for Nevada remains strong. We are seeing some good size transmission projects and some good distribution work as well. PAR has done linemen in North Lake Tahoe and South Lake Tahoe working on the crews where needed. PAR has also picked up some 4/25 kV cutover work in Reno.

Wasatch has 35+- doc linemen working at various locations for NV Energy. Wasatch also has a doc crew in Yerington and Reno working on a T&D basis. The five sub techs have returned to work for the substation group all over the system. Wasatch is working on 23 miles of 120 kV rebuild from Lahontan to Interstate 80. They have also begun working 300 or so pole replacements in Paradise Valley and Eden Valley. All work on these projects is progressing well.

Titan is currently working on the crews where needed. PAR has also picked up some 4/25 kV cutover work in Reno. The 4/25 kv cutover job off El Rancho has started and currently has one crew working. All the poles have been set and work is progressing well. Titan also picked up a 60-pole re-conductor/ pole replacement job in Stead that they will roll into after the other two projects are completed. The new UG replacement job in Elko is completed.

Newman has started on a small 4-5 week distribution job in Battle Mountain converting single phase to three phase.

Summit is working on a substation job for Liberty Utilities in South Lake Tahoe which includes a new control house and all new distribution breakers and getaways. The new poles for the new NG getaways have been set and the OH wire has been transferred. They are currently working on the control wiring and substation equipment.

CONTRACT RATIFICATIONS

We had two contracts set to expire at the end of 2018, and we were successful in ratifying extensions to both of these agreements.

San Francisco Trolley Agreement (SFeca agreement): This agreement expired on December 31, 2018. We successfully negotiated a new five-year deal that included 3% wage increases each year for the first three years, and wage increases in the final two years will be based on a CPI formula that has been used in the past. It also included 5.25 a year for each year for healthcare, if it’s not needed, it would be added to the NEAP rate. The last thing that was bargained was the sick leave mandate. In exchange for writing this out of the agreement, they agreed to phase in an HRA fund that will reach $1.00 an hour by the term of the agreement.

Franklin Energy dba GoodCents Solutions: This agreement has been in place since 2006 and has been successfully negotiated several times since then. The work for workers who have been performing and maintaining the SmartThermostat program for PG&E. The company has made some enhancements to its medical and disability benefits and we came to an agreement to extend this current agreement addressing wages only. Both parties have agreed to a three-year extension with wage increases for all classification of 3% a year for each year or 9% over the term of the extension.

JATC

The California-Nevada JATC will accept applications online for 10 days from February 11, 2019 until February 22, 2019. Applications can ONLY be submitted online through the www.CalNev-JATC.org website and will not be available until February 11, 2019. The application must be completed online no later than February 22, 2019 and all required documentation MUST be received by February 22, 2019.

We have been encouraging the contractors in 1245’s jurisdiction to use more apprentices, as the indenturing of new apprentices is done by supply and demand. It is working and we hope it will continue to do so.

Currently, we currently have 421 outside line apprentices registered in our jurisdiction.
Regionalization Plan Could Bring Big Changes

From the Accelerated Vegetation Reduction Plan that began in September, to the Camp Fire in November, there was no shortage of work for our line clearance tree trimmers as 2018 came to close. And as 2019 began, we received word of changes coming to PG&E’s regionalization plans for routine work. This was something that PG&E had been planning for some time and we intend to disseminate the details soon, however, the plan has changed a couple times, and we want to ensure that any information we share with our membership is up-to-date and factual, so as not to contribute to the rumor mill.

With the new regionalization plan, there are bound to be changes — and change is hard, but we will all get through this together. IBEW Local 1245 business reps will be working with the membership and contractors to make sure everything is done according to the agreement in as smooth a manner as possible. It has been about 25 years since any re-alignment like this has taken place, and that was not of this magnitude. But we get through it then and we well make it through this one as well.

There are many things that are in flux right now, but one thing we know for sure is that the need for skilled and qualified line clearance tree workers isn’t going anywhere. Keep your focus on safety, as it is the main priority for all of us.

IBEW 1245 members arrive early morning to do emergency tree work for PG&E in Sonora.

El plan de regionalización podría traer grandes cambios

Desde el Plan Acelerado de Reducción de la Vegetación que se inició en septiembre, hasta el Incendio del campamento en noviembre, nuestros podadores de árboles para el despeje de líneas estuvieron muy ocupados hasta el cierre de 2018. Y comenzando 2019, hemos recibido noticias sobre cambios en los planes de regionalización del trabajo rutinario de PG&E. Esto era algo que PG&E ha estado planeando durante algún tiempo y tenemos la intención de divulgar los detalles pronto. Sin embargo, el plan ha cambiado un par de veces y queremos asegurarnos de que cualquier información que compartimos con nuestros miembros esté actualizada y basada en hechos, para no contribuir a los rumores.

Con el nuevo plan de regionalización, seguramente habrá cambios — y los cambios siempre son difíciles, pero todos vamos a superarlo juntos. Los representantes de negocios del Local 1245 del IBEW están trabajando con los miembros y contratistas para asegurarse de que todo se realice cumpliendo con el acuerdo de la mejor manera posible. Han transcurrido 25 años desde que hubo un cambio en los planes, y ese cambio no fue de esta magnitud. Superamos los cambios en esa oportunidad y lo haremos de nuevo esta vez.

Hay muchas cosas que están cambiando ahora, pero una cosa que sabemos con certeza es que la necesidad de trabajadores calificados para el despeje de líneas no desaparecerá. Mantengan su enfoque en la seguridad, ya que es la principal prioridad para todos nosotros.

Zona norte

La zona norte ha tenido mucha actividad en los últimos tres meses. Establecimos y operamos centros para la Reducción del Riesgo de Incendios Forestales, e hicimos un gran esfuerzo para que todos los nuevos contratistas y empleados se inscribieran en el sindicato. Esto ha sido un proceso largo y una gran experiencia de aprendizaje para muchos de estos contratistas, ya que la mayoría de ellos nunca habían trabajado con un sindicato y no estaban seguros de qué hacer. Al principio hubo muchas preguntas y un montón de llamadas telefónicas, pero parece que todos ya se están adaptando a las nuevas circunstancias.

Justo cuando todo estaba comenzando a funcionar sin problemas...
Local 1245 Welcomes Temporary Vegetation Management Workers Into the Union

When PG&E launched its Accelerated Wildfire Risk Reduction plan in September of 2018, upwards of 1,500 line clearance tree workers from 29 different contractors flooded in to IBEW 1245’s jurisdiction to begin work on the massive project, which involves clearing all vegetation within 12 feet of the conductor on more than 7,000 miles of line in the highest-risk fire areas.

In any situation where a temporary workforce is brought in for a special assignment, there’s always a risk of those individuals being treated and compensated unfairly, but Local 1245 refused to allow that to happen. IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell got a commitment from the company that the work and associated resources would all be union, and Senior Assistant Business Manager Ralph Armstrong specifically secured a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) to ensure that these temporary workers received wages and protections that are commensurate with the full package enjoyed by the permanent tree trimmers already working in IBEW 1245’s jurisdiction.

Under the PLA, all the temporary tree workers would be given the opportunity to sign up with the union, and their employers would all become signatory to IBEW 1245. But organizing this onslaught of new workers doesn’t just happen overnight — it takes a time-intensive and highly coordinated effort on the part of IBEW 1245’s staff and organizing stewards.

Armstrong worked with Business Rep Liz McInnis to lay the groundwork for identifying, welcoming and signing up the new tree trimmers. Together with Business Representatives Abel Sanchez, Ray Banfill, and Junior Ornelas, they briefed the current membership about the plan, while staff organizers Eileen Purcell, Fred Ross and Rene Cruz Martinez identified, recruited and trained 15 bilingual organizing stewards to help the business representatives welcome, educate and sign up the new tree members, most of whom are native Spanish speakers. And of course, the entire process wouldn’t be possible without the union’s office staff, including Muriel Moore, Peggy Proschold, Ashley Crase, Tanya Iniguez and Jennifer Edwards, who have handled the massive influx of clerical work seamlessly.

“This was and continues to be a massive undertaking, the likes of which I have not experienced in my 18 years with Local 1245,” said McInnis, who has helped to spearhead the entire operation. “It is overwhelming at times, but we adapt and push forward.”

A Warm Bienvenido

Providing union orientations for all of the new tree workers has been anything but simple. As Organizer Eileen Purcell noted, “For many of the temporary workers — who hail from across the United States — membership in IBEW 1245 is their first union experience.”

That meant that each and every individual needed to be informed about the union and what it does, as well as the terms of the PLA, so they had a firm understanding of their rights. This proved to be more challenging than expected, due to the fact that there were remote base camp sites, language barriers, literacy issues, and time constraints to contend with — not to mention the fact that a substantial percentage of the tree trimmers and contractors come from right-to-work states, with little to no experience working in unionized environments, and a slew of negative presumptions about unions.

“I was surprised on how some of the new members did not know what a union was, and how hesitant they were to become members. But after talking to them and educating on what our union stands for, they were very surprised and interested in becoming members,” said prospective Organizing Steward Griselda Fernandez. “I felt proud to be able to speak to the new members in Spanish and be able to build trust between their work place and their union.”

“It’s a great experience any time you are bettering someone’s life,” said Lead Organizing Steward Nildia Garcia. “I take pride in being an active union member, and I expressed that when talking to the workers. It wasn’t hard for them to know that signing up was the best choice.”

After hearing about the union difference and receiving thoughtful answers to their questions, nearly all the tree trimmers were enthusiastic about signing up with the union. The organizing stewards may have thought that meant their work was done — but they quickly realized that many of the new members had a hard time understanding and completing the union membership forms, so they stepped up to assist their new union brothers.

“Honestly, I could totally relate with them, since my father to this day always has a difficult time filling out applications, whether they be in English or Spanish,” remarked Organizing Steward Luz Rivera. “It gave me great satisfaction that we were able to help sign up all these new members.”

“I enjoyed making a difference and letting them know the language barrier will not stop them from knowing what they are part of,” added Organizing Steward Melissa Fernandez.

With more and more tree trimmers coming in to PG&E territory every week, the organizing process is still ongoing, but the system put in place by Local 1245 has proven to be highly effective and will continue to give all tree trimmers working in 1245’s jurisdiction the same knowledge, opportunities, and protections.

“Our goal is to make sure that every tree trimmer who works in our territory knows that the union is here for them. We’re looking out for their safety, we’re ensuring they get fair pay, and we’ve got their backs if there’s an issue with the employer that they need help with,” said Senior Assistant Business Manager Ralph Armstrong. “They may only be here temporarily, but they are a part of the 1245 family now, and we’re doing everything we can to make sure they have the same rights and wages as our 1,800 other tree trimmers.”

Eileen Purcell, Liz McInnis and Rene Cruz Martinez contributed to this report.

Vegetation management workers came together before dawn for a union orientation at the micro-base camp in Rohnert Park.

Bilingual Organizing Stewards and IBEW 1245 Business Reps traveled to base camps all over 1245’s territory to welcome new tree trimmers into the union. This photo was taken in Paradise, CA.

Photo by Eileen Purcell

Business Rep Abel Sanchez and Organizing Steward Rachel Ramirez sign up tree trimmers in Oakhurst.

Photo by Miguel Pagan
La jurisdicción del IBEW 1245.
que gozan los podadores de árboles con
aciones acordes con el paquete completo
para garantizar que estos trabajadores
promiso por parte de la empresa para
Negocios del IBEW 1245, logró un com-
sucediera. Tom Dalzell, Gerente de
1245 se negó a permitir que eso
pensadas injustamente, pero el Local
habría terminado su trabajo, pero
pronto se dieron cuenta de que muchos
de los nuevos miembros tenían proble-
mas para entender y llenar los formula-
arios de inscripción del sindicato, así que
intervinieron para ayudar a sus nuevos
hermanos del sindicato.
“Sinceramente, los entiendo perfec-
tamente, ya que mi padre, hasta hoy en
tiempo, tiene problemas para llenar formu-
larios, ya sean en inglés o en español”;
Eileen Purcell, Delegada Organizadora.
Rivera. “Me dio mucha satisfacción
poder hablar con ellos y educarlos sobre lo
sindicatos.
trabajo para ayudar a PG&E a prevenir
futuras incendios forestales.
Esto resultó ser más difícil de lo espe-
ado ya que había que enfrentar proble-
más como la existencia de campamen-
tos en zonas remotas, barreras de
idioma, problemas de alfabetización y
limitaciones de tiempo. Además de que
comprendan claramente sus derechos.

El Local 1245 la da la bienvenida al sindicato, a los
trabajadores temporales para el control de la vegetación

El paisaje cambiante para IBEW
1245 para podadores de árboles
Safety Stalwart Rich Lane Retires From the Union

A
fter nearly seven years on staff at IBEW 1245, Business Rep Rich Lane will be retiring from the union this spring. Brother Lane is well known for his role in organizing the union at Turlock Irrigation District, and for developing and growing Local 1245’s landmark peer-to-peer safety programs.

“As organizer, negotiator, and safety preacher, Rich has embodied the spirit of the IBEW,” said IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. “He was instrumental in bringing the line department of the Turlock Irrigation District into Local 1245, served well on several negotiating committees there, and has consistently done a great job in helping the union thrive.”

“Working with the peer to peer programs and watching people go out of their comfort zones to do something for the good of others … was profound to me, and their individual effort is inspiring in so many ways,” said Lane. “I am so proud to have been affiliated with them.”

As Lane departs from the union, his absence will be felt by many. “Rich has been a wealth of knowledge when it comes to OSHA and safety,” said Senior Assistant Business Manager Ralph Armstrong, who supervises all of Local 1245’s safety initiatives. “Rich was a big part of the success of these programs, and he also provided substantial guidance for the union’s health and safety committee.”

Santa Rosa Retirees Club
President Receives Sentimental “Guerneville Gang” Plaque

A
t the November meeting of the IBEW 1245 Santa Rosa Retirees Club, retiree Greg Kestel presented Club President Art Fahrner with a plaque that hung on the wall of the PG&E Guerneville Service Center, a relic from his days as a part of the “Guerneville Gang” back in the mid-80s.

Fahrner recently returned to his Presidential duties after having suffered a broken hip accompanied by a long and painful recovery. It’s great to see him back with the brothers and sisters he loves so much, not to mention seeing that smile on his face when Brother Kestel (who also worked for many years out of the Guerneville customer service front office before retiring recently) presented him with the old Guerneville Gang plaque.

— JV Macou, IBEW 1245 Business Rep
Regionalization, continued from page 31

having to make their big year-end push to get all their scheduled work done for 2018. In the areas not effected by the fire, the base camp crews were pulled off the Wild Fire Risk Reduction and put back on routine work to get all that work done. This caused a lot of confusion with the routine work guys, because sometimes they are working less than a block away from the base camp guys. We try to keep lots of time on the phone with our members who were wondering what was going on. Once it was all explained, things started to calm down.

Unit meeting attendance has been a little stronger than normal in most areas, mostly because there is a lot of concern of tree companies and their contracts in some areas and what companies will be taking over those areas. This has created a sense of worry among some members. We have been explaining that there is very strong language in the contract that protects members when a new company takes over. The results of which areas are uncovered a situation where the company has ramped up crews on PG&E property. All subject work went to PG&E. Members have rights to the work subject to the fire reduction project to trim and fall trees. The results of which areas are being impacted this way is still unknown. Meeting attendance has been good in Hayward. Placerville's unit attendance has been very good with the concern of proposed changes by PG&E.

Osmose: Crews recently started working in the Bay Area and in specifically the City of Santa Clara.

Utility Tree Service: In Golden Gate, De Anza, San Jose and the Peninsula, the company did not participate in any of the Fire Risk Reduction work on PG&E property. All subject work went to outside contractors to work the unit reduction projects. UTs stayed working on routine work. The UTs northern crews have been working out of Woodland and Dixon, where they are also focused on routine work. The members were concerned about the amount of time outside contractors would be working in the future with PG&E as rumors of them leaving have been going around for months. All hands are aware protections are in place to secure their positions with the new contractor, if a change takes place. Meeting attendance has been good in Hayward. Placerville's unit attendance has been average.

Mountain Enterprise (Liberty Energy & PG&E): For Liberty Energy, crews are in South Lake Tahoe and Truckee. Mountain Enterprise, in the De Anza division, is changing to a different company very slowly starting to come in. We are trying to keep our members up to date once the information is confirmed, and we are being very careful not to give out any false information. We know that there will be lots of time on the phone with our members and trying to restructure their restructing plan and move forward.

Central Area

Asplundh Tree Expert (Nevada Energy): Work continues in northern Nevada and Reno. The company hired Eric Rogen as the new area supervisor. Eric was formally working for Movbray's as manager of operations. We look forward in having a good working relationship. All hands are still working five 10-hour shifts.

Movbray's (PG&E & SMUD): The company brought in numerous crews from outside the area to work on the PG&E projects, and for Davey Tree Service in Sierra, East Bay, and Bay Area. We uncovered a situation where the company has not been reporting all employees currently working on PG&E property. We're currently looking at our options in addressing this matter. We continue to hear concerns from the members about the lack of gear. As we try to address these concerns, we are also aware that the company has another business of selling gear to employees. They have an individual that comes out with a trailer that sells gear and demonstrates all the new gear and equipment on the market, all for sale at wholesale prices. Unit meeting attendance has been good!

Mountain Enterprise (Liberty Energy & PG&E): For Liberty Energy, crews are in South Lake Tahoe and Truckee. Mountain Enterprise, in the De Anza division, is changing to a different company very slowly starting to come in. We are trying to keep our members up to date once the information is confirmed, and we are being very careful not to give out any false information. We know that there will be lots of time on the phone with our members and trying to restructure their restructing plan and move forward.
Regionalización, a partir de la página 31

Forestales fueron transferidos a esa zona, para despejar los árboles quema- dos. Esto también atrajo a más con- tratistas a la zona para ayudar. Nunca habíamos visto tantos contratistas de árboles trabajando en las instalaciones de PG&E. Todo esto sucedió al mismo tiempo que los contratistas de trabajo rutinario ejecutaban su impulso de fin de año para cumplir con el trabajo pro- gramado de 2018. En las zonas que no fueron afectadas por los incendios, las cuadrillas de los campamentos base fueron retiradas del programa de Reducción del Riesgo de Incendios Forestales y colocadas nuevamente en los trabajos de rutina para cumplir con el programa. Esto causó mucha con- fusión entre los trabajadores de trabajo rutinario, porque en ocasiones trabajan a menos de una cuadra de distancia de la rutina, porque en ocasiones trabajan a menos de una cuadra de distancia de la rutina.

Mowbray’s (PG&E y SMUD): La com- pañía trajo numerosas cuadrillas de otras zonas para trabajar en los proyec- tos de PG&E, y para Davey Tree Surgery en Sierra, East Bay y Bay Area. Hemos descubierto una situación en la que la compañía no ha estado informando sobre todos los empleados que actual- mente trabajan en instalaciones de PG&E. Actualmente estamos anali- zando nuestras opciones para abordar este asunto. Continuamos escuchando las preocupaciones de los miembros sobre el tema de equipo. Al intentar abordar estas preocupaciones, nos hemos enterado que la compañía tiene un negocio de venta de equipo a los empleados. Tienen una persona que sale en un recorrido y hace una demostración del funcionamiento de los equipos que tienen en el mercado y los vende a precios de may- orista. ¿La asistencia a las reuniones de la unidad ha sido buena?

Mountain Enterprise (Liberty Energy y PG&E): Las cuadrillas de Lib- erty Energy están en South Lake Tahoe y Truckee. La mayoría de las cuadrillas de Mountain están trabajando en todo el sistema de PG&E. Esperamos que la compañía desempeñe un papel más importante en la obtención de un con- trato de trabajo rutinario con PG&E. Sabemos que la compañía ha ampliado sus recursos de equipo de patrulla e inspecciones de seguridad.

Davey Tree Surgery: El Comité de resolución de quejas se reunió en San Ramon el 21 de diciembre para discutir varios asuntos pendientes. El Comité espera tener todos los asuntos resueltos pronto. Todas las cuadrillas en Diablo, Mission y Sierra han estado trabajando durante días 10 horas excepto East Bay. Davey participó en los proyectos de Reducción de Riesgos Forestales en Sierra y East Bay. La compañía anunció que perdió el contrato de PG&E en Sierra. La infor- mación fue dada a conocer antes de tiempo y los detalles aún no están definidos. Esperamos tener los cambios pronto, una vez que PG&E informe cuál contratista asumirá las diferentes zonas y cuándo. Todos los miembros tienen derechos en lo que se refiere al trabajo según el Acuerdo Colectivo, y los exhor- tamos a que se tranquilicen y per- manezcan en sus puestos de trabajo hasta que tengan a mano todos los detalles. Pole Test comenzó trabajos en el East Bay por ahora. La asistencia a las reuniones de la unidad en Hayward ha sido buena. La asistencia de la unidad de Placerville ha sido muy buena y están preocupados por los cambios propuestos por PG&E.

Osmose: Las cuadrillas comenzaron a trabajar recientemente en Bay Area, específicamente en la ciudad de Santa Clara.

Utility Tree Service: En Golden Gate, De Anza, San Jose y la Península, la compa- ñía no participó en ningún de los trabajos de Reducción de Riesgos Forestales en las instalaciones de PG&E. Todo el trabajo fue otorgado a contratistas externos en los proyectos de reduc- ciones de árboles que corresponden a la unidad. Los cuadrillas de UTSM han estado trabajando desde Woodland y Dixon, donde también se han centrado en trabajo rutinario. Los miembros están preocupados por el futuro de la compañía con PG&E, ya que desde hace meses hay rumores de que se irán. Todos los trabajadores saben que sus empleos con el nuevo contratista están protegidos por el Acuerdo, en caso de que ocurra algún cambio de contratistas. La asistencia a las reuniones en San Carlos ha sido promedio.

Reuniones de la unidad han sido promedio.

Zona sur

Habían ocurrido muchos incendios en este último trimestre que han afectado a muchos de los miembros de nuestro sindicato. Nuestras oraciones acom- pañan a todas las víctimas y sus famil- ias. Los incendios también han creado mucho trabajo y horas extras. PG&E creó el proyecto de reducción de incen-
SERVICE AWARDS

Stockton
January 25, 2019

35 Years
Front row, from left: Kenneth Fung, Vicki Johnson and James Hayes.
Back row, from left: Melanie Medina, (Dalzell), Jim Quattro and Dennis Armstrong

20 Years
(Dalzell) with Chai Xiong

15 Years
Front row, from left: Brandon Roux, Rosa Guerrero and Ann Relich. Back row, from left: Eugene Mace, Michael San Juan, Nicole Pruitt and Lavonia Duncan

Utility Reporter

HONOREES

55 Years
Grantees, Steve

45 Years
Andona, Gary Blankenship, Calvin

40 Years
Attawey, Deborah Brook, Raylon Bunney, Timothy Chavez, Jorge Durston, David Gouveia, Dennis Henlon, Philip Lovecchio, Richard Lyons, Patricia Mercado, Olivia Parke, Gary Periano, Mike Takahashi, John Walko, Michael

35 Years

30 Years

25 Years
Gamez, Bryan Hagens, Timothy Herbert, Curtis Johnson, Marvin Landa, Marco Munnemaker, Vincent Rico, Martin

20 Years
Alcazar, Miguel Anderson, Richard Bencher, Scott Brazil, Michael Chavez, Narcisco Elias, Rosie Farkas, Lee Garcia, Agustin Gonzalez, Rafael Lopez, Uriel Marin, Jose Novinger, Patricia Nunez, Jose Rivera, Gonzalo Rodriguez, Abel Romero, Jose Stewart, Ryan Xiong, Chai

15 Years
Arreola, Elena Bagalayos, Pete Bailey, Weston Bashor, Robert Berg, Ken Bailey, Ryan Blake, Leslie Cargo, Jr., Lloyd Caja, Veronica Collins, Ean Dias, Barry Duncan, Lavonia Emory, Kristine Fetz, Michael Flurry, James (Greg) Gere, Christopher Gomez, Jose Gonzalez, Hugo Goudarte, Karen Govea, Thomas Guerrero, Rosa Hulse, Charles Harden, Corey Harper, Christy Herrera, Jason Hickerson, Eric Higgins, Robert Huber, Richard Hussain, Shabana Johnson, Robert Jones, Brandon Jones, Carlton Kramer, Danielle Lehneritz, Ricky Leyba, Marla Leyva, Frank Lo, Simon (Siu Chau) Lynn, Susan Mace, Eugene

10 Years
Alican, Rodney Arif, Muhammad Barajas, Celia Clark, Jeffrey Cockshott, Everett Dean, Abdul Dimas, Mark Dolge, David Furr, Euan, Lachlan Fussell, Jack Garcia, Rosario Garner, Debbie Goodwin, Mark Guajardo, Michael Guerrero, Preeti Guzman-Moreno, Claudio Ha, Quyen Herbeck, Theresa Ildefonso, Jeremy Jones, Brian Link, Steven

Macedo, Matthew MacWilliams, Jason McCartney, Mark McIntire, Joseph Miller, Jennifer Moore, Brian Mount, Russ Orozco, Francisco Orozco, David Palacio, Adeline Pratt, Nicole Ramos (Anaya), Faustina Relich, Ann Roux, Brandon Ruiz, Lupe San Juan, Michael Schoeneder, Arvina Shergill, Randy Stockwell, Jeffry Strach, Jacqueline Teisnaire, Steve Tuck, Matt Velazquez, Desiree Ward, David Wilbor, Bonnie Wilkins, Leslie Yerby, Craig Zerdanski, Brian

continued on page 39
IBEW 1245 Community Fund

Units lend a helping hand

All of the following unit donations to various charitable organizations from October through December 2018 were approved by the IBEW 1245 Executive Board.

**Fresno Unit #1111** donated $500 to the Central Valley Community Foundation, Central Valley Honor Flight in Fresno.

**Bakersfield Unit #1112** donated $500 to the Christmas for Seniors of Kern County.

**SLO/Pismo Beach Unit #1215** donated $500 to the North Valley Retirees.

**Oakland Physical Unit #2311** donated $250 to the members effected by the Camp Fire.

**Yreka Unit #3131** donated $500 to the Angel Tree in Yreka.

**City of Roseville Unit #3512** donated $250 to the Water for a Warrior Golf Tournament and $250 to the Roseville Moose Lodge.

**Susanville Unit #4012** donated $250 to Toys for Tots program in Lassen County and $250 to the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign.

**Redding/Davey & Utility Tree Unit #4419** donated $500 to the Camp Fire victims.

**Richmond Unit #2318** donated $250 to the IBEW 1245 members effected by the Camp Fire.

**Outside Line Unit #4911** donated $500 to the Cottonwood Little League.

**Carson City retirees** donated $250 to Douglas County Backpack Buddies program in Minden, NV and $250 to NAMI Western Nevada.

**North Bay Retirees** donated $500 to the Moose Lodge 2284, in Clear Lake Oaks.

**Concord DCC Unit #2320** donated $500 along with $350 in Matching Funds to the Catalyst Domestic Violence Services in Chico.

**Reno Unit #3311** donated $500 along with $350 in Matching Funds to the Evelyn Mount Community Outreach program.

**Yerenton Unit #3313** donated $500 to the Angel Tree in Yerenton.

**Sacramento Regional Transit Unit #3011** donated $200 to Komen for the Cure and $100 to Sacramento SPCA.

**Eureka Unit #3111** donated $250 to Arcata Bottom 4H and $250 to Redwood Fastpitch.

IBEW 1245 Members Visit Youth Spirit Artworks in Berkeley

On Tuesday, October 30, 2018, 15 IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell for a morning field trip to Youth Spirit Artworks in Berkeley, CA. YSA is a nonprofit organization that uses art as a vehicle for healing and transformation, with a focus on homeless and low-income youth in the East Bay between the ages of 16-25. The organization carries out work through fine art, community art, art sales and community organizing. YSA Executive Director Sally Hindman described how they used art for organizing around a pesticide use issue. They did not expect to win this campaign, but the art captured mass media attention which helped propel the campaign to victory. We also got to hear from Angel Jesus Perez, Sr., and artist who came from Washington, D.C to Berkeley to finish his education and ended up at YSA. Now he is an experienced artist who carries out most of the community murals in the area. He talked to us about the process of doing murals and his inspiration. The organization is also hoping to kick off their 25-unit tiny house village for transitional age youth in partnership with a non-profit developer in the East Bay.

The day concluded with a tour of the art gallery, a peek at the model tiny house in the backyard, and a tour of community murals on Alcatraz Ave. It was a great day, and everyone enjoyed the visit and left inspired by the art and the work that YSA is doing in the local community. Business Manager Tom Dalzell expressed his desire to get Local 1245 involved with the organization, with our members potentially assisting with some of the solar installations at the tiny house village.

— Rene Cruz Martinez, IBEW 1245 Staff Organizer

IBEW 1245 Family Distributes 120 Bikes to Children in Lompoc

IBEW 1245 member Dorine Fabing and her husband, IBEW 1245 retiree Mark Fabing, organized their 12th annual Brice Fabing Memorial Bikes 4 Kids drive in December of 2018. The drive is in memory of their son, Brice, who died in 2005 at the age of 17.

Thanks to the Fabings’ tireless fundraising efforts, this year’s drive resulted in 120 bikes and 100 helmets being distributed to children throughout the Lompoc community.

“We are extremely proud that we were able to give back to our community in a small way, but a rewarding way, and remember Brice on this 13th year anniversary of his passing,” the Fabings wrote in a statement.

From left: Mark Fabing (retired), Dorine Fabing, Lesa Keasler and Carol Hesson at the 12th Annual Bikes 4 Kids drive
Manufacturing Unit Donates Socks to Sunnyvale Community Services

Unit #5000, Manufacturing, contributed $500 from the Community Fund to Sunnyvale Community Services, a nonprofit emergency assistance agency whose mission is to prevent homelessness and hunger for low-income families and seniors facing temporary crisis. The unit used the funds to purchase socks for the individuals seeking assistance through SCS.

Manufacturing members (from left): Arnaldo Lizarra, Jim Baker, Elvira Bernal, Perry Eckhoff, Rogelio Serrano and Ruben Hernandez.

On EWMC’s International Day of Service, Local 1245 Members Help the Homeless

BEW’s Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) Solano Chapter commemorated EWMC’s Fourth Annual International Day of Service in November at three different community service activities across the Local’s jurisdiction.

In Sacramento, IBEW 1245 Staff Organizer Rene Cruz Martinez coordinated the EWMC volunteer effort at Loaves and Fishes, an organization committed to feeding the hungry and housing the homeless. The nine union volunteers assisted in thawing, cutting, marinating and preparing 140 turkeys, which would end up feeding more than 1,000 people on Thanksgiving.

In Vacaville, IBEW 1245 Office Manager Tonya Alston spearheaded the Day of Service in conjunction with Hash-tagLunchbag (HTLB) and her family’s own community service organization, the We Are Deeply Rooted Foundation. The 11 volunteers made 121 lunches in individualized hand-decorated bags, as well as 101 care packages. They passed out the care packages and lunches to homeless individuals in Suisun and Sacramento.

“One is genuinely grateful for our HTLB volunteers and the enthusiasm they bring to these events,” said Alston, who regularly hosts HTLB events at the union hall. “It’s amazing… that we as a union family can make such a big difference in people’s lives,” added Omar Anguiano.

In Fresno, Local 1245 Lead Organizing Steward Laquania “Q” Davis brought 14 union volunteers together to help out at the Poverello House, which provides food, shelter and critical services to needy children and families. The volunteers spent the day sorting and folding clothing that will be given to homeless individuals in the community.

“Overall, the EWMC Solano chapter had a total of 33 volunteers completing 129 volunteer hours for EWMC International Day of Service,” reported Davis.

To get involved with EWMC’s Solano Chapter, email ewmsolanocounty- chapter@gmail.com.

Local 1245 Retirees and Members at NV Energy Support Evelyn Mount’s Annual Food Drive

For the past decade, IBEW 1245 members at NV Energy have been providing support—in both money and time—to the Evelyn Mount Community Outreach Program's food pantry as well as the annual holiday food drive. This year, the members, in conjunction with the company, raised more than $7,000 for the food drive. According to Mount’s organization, this generous donation helped fund Christmas dinners for 350 families in the greater Reno area.

Fleet Mechanic John Wilson once again took the lead in the fundraising efforts, collecting donations from his co-workers throughout the company, and pooling it with the IBEW 1245 Reno unit’s community fund donation. IBEW 1245 Reno/Sparks retirees also contributed $600 to Mount’s food drive this year (see below).

Mount, age 92, has announced that this will be her final year running the well-known and appreciated food assistance program for the needy. Local 1245 wishes her all the best in her retirement and thanks her for her 42 years of service to the community.

Honoraries, from page 37

In what has become an annual tradition, IBEW 1245’s Reno/Sparks Retirees Club stopped by the Evelyn Mount Community Outreach Program to deliver a $600 donation check in support of her annual food drive.

Congratulations on your service!
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:

Two thousand 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. To be a candidate in this contest, you must be the 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 2019. A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in 2019 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 printed in the Utility Reporter or downloaded from the Local’s website (www.ibew1245.com)

5. Checks will be paid directly to the college upon presentation of tuition bills to the Local Union.

6. All applications shall be accompanied with a written essay, not to exceed five hundred (500) words, on the subject designated 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 end 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 April of each year.

9. Each year the scholarship shall be presented at the October 2019 Advisory Council meeting. The recipient and parents shall be invited, at Local Union expense, to receive the Scholarship Award.

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

NOTE: The topic for the 2019 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship essay is: “What is the effect of the newly enacted tariffs on the American worker?”

| Name ___________________________ | Date of Birth ___________________________ |
|__________________________________|________________________________________|
| Address ___________________________ | Telephone (______) ________________________ |
| (Last) (First) (Initial) ____________ | (Street) (City) (State) (Zip) ________________ |
| ____________________________________|__________________________________________|
| Name of Parent ______________________|__________________________________________ |
| Company ____________________________|__________________________________________ |
| Work Location ________________________|__________________________________________ |
| I graduated or will graduate from ___________________________ High School |
| Which is located at ____________________________ | |
| I expect to attend ___________________________ College or School |
| Location ____________________________|__________________________________________ |
| Candidate’s Signature __________________________ | Date ___________________________ |
| This is to certify that the above named candidate is currently enrolled as a student at: ___________________________ |
| ___________________________ and has or will be graduating ___________________________ High School |
| ___________________________ and has or will be graduating ___________________________ High School |
| (School Name) ___________________________ | (Month and Year) ___________________________ |
| ____________________________________|________________________________________ |
| (Official’s signature and position) ____________________________________ |
| This is to certify that I am a member in good standing of Local Union 1245, I.B.E.W. and the Candidate, whose name is signed to this application is my ___________________________ and has or will graduate during the term ending ___________________________ High School |
| ___________________________ and has or will graduate during the term ending ___________________________ High School |
| ____________________________________|________________________________________ |
| (Parent’s Signature and Card No.) ____________________________________ |
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 2019, 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. 06/2019): 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 letters reference on their own. However, if your reference requires that the letter remain confidential, you may nominate a reference and have them submit a letter to the Scholarship Committee, IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA 95687. Otherwise, submit letters with your application.

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 your total household income (estimate)
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.
During his long career at Pacific Gas & Electric and with IBEW Local 1245, Mike Davis didn’t have to raise his voice to make himself heard. His knowledge of electric operations earned him high regard as a system operator in San Jose, while his deep commitment to labor’s cause won the respect of his union brethren. He turned a quiet personal style into a strength: He didn’t hurry. He listened well. He spoke up when it mattered.

Art Freitas, who served as the union’s vice president when Mike was president, got to see him up close. Mike was his mentor.

“He helped me with learning to run a meeting, learning how to make decisions,” said Freitas, who was appointed president when Mike stepped down from the position in 2014.

Freitas confesses he might have been overly “passionate” about certain issues when he first came on the Executive Board, sometimes reacting too quickly when he should have been gathering information instead.

“Mike told me the best thing to do was listen, analyze and then act — in that order,” Freitas said. Listening carefully, it turns out, is an important quality of leadership, especially when there are conflicting points of view to be reconciled.

“As president, Mike would listen to everybody and then he’d get everybody on the same page so we could come to a consensus,” Freitas said.

Mike Davis didn’t command unity. He quietly inspired it. A succession of union business managers benefited from Mike’s presence and his leadership qualities.
Executive Board replaced him with one of the most seasoned leaders in the union stable: Mike Davis.

New Challenges

The challenges kept coming. PG&E was emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2004 and promptly chose to plunge the workforce into fresh chaos with a plan for so-called Business Transformation. On top of that, the International Office of the IBEW had recently transferred a large chunk of Local 1245’s Outside Line membership to Local 47. Mike Davis now presided over the treasury of a union whose funds were dwindling and whose capacity to serve its members was under threat.

There was only one realistic solution. Local 1245’s dues at the time were significantly below most other IBEW locals. They needed to be raised. Increasing dues is something no elected union leader in his right mind ever wants to do. But Business Manager Tom Dalzell saw there was no other choice.

“Mike and I led the fight in 2008 to raise our dues to give us resources for the big fights that we knew were coming,” Dalzell said.

Mike’s stature and his calm demeanor were key assets in this difficult campaign.

“Mike never wavered,” Dalzell said.

“When we did the dues increase, he had to school the board in how we had to present this and why it was needed and how we were going to go about it,” said Freitas. Members approved the dues hike overwhelmingly. And the big fights came. One of the biggest was stopping NV Energy from cutting medical benefits for retired IBEW 1245 members. It was an expensive fight, but one the union could afford, thanks in part to the PG&E system operator from San Jose who wasn’t afraid to make hard choices if it was for the good of the union.

“He was very good. He was all for the members,” said Anna Bayless Martinez, the union’s current vice president. When the Executive Board faced difficult decisions, Mike’s patient manner helped smooth the way.

“He was always very respectful. He never had a bad word about anybody. It was very rare that he ever said anything negative,” Bayless Martinez said. She thought about that for a second, then added: “Oh, he’d get a look. But he’d never says.”

Retired Senior Assistant Business Manager Dorothy Fortier believed Mike’s overriding goal was to “unify our membership” regardless of the circumstances. Unity, after all, is what gives the union its strength.

As much as anyone, Mike Davis spent his decades at IBEW 1245 crafting unity. “He was a person of honor and integrity,” Fortier said.

Farm Boy

Michael Davis was born April 26, 1943 and grew up on a farm in White, South Dakota, according to his fellow operator Dennis Silacci.

“He was a country farm boy, talked about it all the time, talking about his dad and his uncle on the ranch,” Silacci said.

After graduating high school he went directly into the Navy, serving on the USS Midway as an electrician’s mate. Silacci thinks he served a total of six years.

From the Navy, Mike went directly into PG&E, hiring on as a groundman in the electric department. He became the lead lineman for Corwin. “Corky” Spears, according to Silacci.

Silacci acknowledges the obvious facts about Mike Davis. He was “logical.” He was “easy-going.”

Utility Reporter

Mike was “even-keeled.”

But Silacci also saw another side of Brother Davis that not everyone got a chance to see. As linemen, the two men often “worked on the same pole, worked on the same tower.” And when they could have the following weekend off, but a couple of days later he came back and held another tailboard. He said he wanted the men to keep working that weekend because they were all mobilized, they had all the equipment and all the material in place, and management wanted the crews to “bury the whole hill and put it to rest.” That didn’t sit too well with Mike Davis. Salacci recalled the scene:

During the tailboard, Mike tells the general foreman, “You said we could have the weekend off, and now you’re changing it. I made some plans and I’d like to keep them.”

The GF said, “Well Michael, you’re going to have to change your plans because we’re going to be working this weekend.”

But Mike isn’t ready to give up his plans, and he tells the general foreman, “All due respect, sir, my wife was thinking about getting pregnant this weekend and I kind of wanted to be there.”

But it was emergency work there on the mountain and no one was allowed off. Salacci continued:

Mike worked just like the rest of us. Nobody got the time off. It was kind of a condition of our employment, you know. But it was all good. We made a lot of money. We were young.

It wasn’t easy to get Mike to take the bait in an argument.

Minnesota nice may run deep, but South Dakota polite apparently runs deeper. Naturally that didn’t stop Salacci from trying to ruffle Mike’s unruffleable feathers. He recalled this incident from their operator days:

One time I wrote a load transfer to clear a station bank out of San Jose B. Mike was the switch checker. He checked my tag that I wrote and he was questioning why I wrote it a specific way. I explained to him that I preferred that the switching go a little different way than we had gone in the past and I did all the load checks and I knew it would work. He kept saying that that wasn’t the way we routinely did a tag.

Mike was his senior, but by now they were both veteran operators, so Salacci tried his hand at getting a rise out of his friend.

“So I said, ‘Listen you deprect old fart, that’s the way we’re switching it, that tag works just fine.’ And Mike says, ‘OK, the tag works fine.’

And he’s checking the tag and then he’s signing it. Finally he says, ‘OK, I guess that’s why they make Ford’s and Chevys.’

“That was Michael’s logic,” said Salacci. “You gotta love Michael Davis. We were like brothers.”

Salacci knew there was one sure way to get Mike riled up. But you had to wait until meal time.

When he gets hungry and he wants to eat — oh boy, does he cop an attitude. When it was time to eat it was time to eat. We’d be on swing shift together. He’d say, “We’re going to eat together,” and I’d say, “Oh yeah, we’ll eat,” but I’d keep on working. And a little later he’d say, “When are we going to eat?” And I’d say, “Oh yeah, we’ll eat,” and keep working. Then later he’d say, “When are we going to eat?” but I’d say it with a little more attitude.

And Salacci can tell you what Mike would eat, given half a chance: KFC. Three pieces. Extra crispy. Mashed potatoes. Cole slaw. “He had to have cole slaw.”

Mike voluntarily resigned as president when he learned he had Alzheimer’s. His wife Dee said it “broke his heart” to retire from the union life he loved.

“But he knew it was the best thing for him to do. He took the step he knew needed to be taken. He cared that much about the union,” Dee said.

Silacci visited Mike a couple of times after he retired. Mike still had a cat. Mike had a parakeet. The South Dakota farm boy liked his animals.

“Mike treated his animals just like they were as important as any other living thing he knew,” Silacci said.

But sadly, Mike’s rottweiler, Otto, had passed away. Rottweilers, of course, are a powerful breed. They’re known to be calm and confident, courageous but not unduly aggressive.

“His rottweiler was much like him,” said Silacci. “Very nice.”

Mike Davis, union brother, is survived by his wife Dee, sons Joseph Molina and Byron Davis, and three grandchildren. A third son, Michael Molina, died in 2015. Photos by John Storey.

— Eric Wolfe, IBEW 1245 Communications Director Emeritus
I see that the union has been in a lot of different coalitions lately. Like the Brite Coalition that helped to pass the wildfire legislation in California last year.

We're also part of the Coalition of California Utility Employees— they lobby the legislature on all sorts of policies that impact our industry.

Don't forget the Coalition that helped defeat the energy deregulation ballot measure in Nevada! That was a good one. And the one we formed when the Diablo Canyon plant closure was announced? Hey, weren't you involved in that?

Yup, I was! It's great our union has been able to bring together so many diverse interests—including employers and politicians with whom we don't always see eye-to-eye—in order to achieve the best result for the members.

So how do these coalitions get formed?

With 90 years of experience, the union knows who is most likely to be on our side, and the best way to reach out to them. So when the union is facing a big issue, our leadership and staff will approach possible allies and invite them to team up and work together for a mutually beneficial result. Sometimes, this means we end up with some pretty strange bedfellows, but it almost always works out in our favor.

Not a lot of unions would be willing to partner with former opponents— but those unions also aren't as effective for their members. That's what makes IBEW 1245 different, and it's also what has allowed our union to make such substantial gains at a time when other unions are making big concessions.

Coalition-building isn't easy. It requires finesse, humility, and patience. But a strong coalition is able to achieve much more than a single union. After all, we're always stronger when we stand together.