“There’s a lot of good things about the union. You have them looking out for you, watching your back. You have somebody advocating for you on your behalf. If you have problems, if you have questions, the union’s there. To me, that’s huge.”

— NV Energy Lineman Willis Bland
The Ultimate Test

This summer, our union faced the ultimate test of what we have been building for years — our political power. Local 1245 played a major role in drafting Assembly Bill 1054 — the new wildfire bill — and our members were on the front lines of the lobbying effort that ushered it through.

In the last week before the California Legislature recessed for the summer, AB 1054 was heard in a Senate committee, passed the Senate, was heard by an Assembly committee, passed the Assembly, and was ultimately signed into law by Governor Newsom. Rarely do bills ever move this fast.

I say we faced a test because the legislation had many powerful and vocal opponents — and had they been successful, the future of the utility industry in California would have been in jeopardy. While AB 1054 is not guaranteed to wholly fix the problems wildfires pose for our union, we know that had it not passed, failure would be inevitable.

AB 1054 was designed to stabilize California’s utilities in the wake of the climate-driven fires that have demolished communities, killed dozens of people, threatened the viability of electric utilities all across the state, and thrown PG&E into bankruptcy.

Key components of the bill are:

- A $21 billion fund to address damage and support recovery efforts. Instead of requiring utilities to pay the full cost associated with wildfires that involve their equipment, the new law sets up a $21 billion fund to cover costs associated with future fires.

The cost will be split between customers (by extending an existing $2.50 monthly charge that was set to expire) and investors.

- A $5 billion fund for improvements and prevention. Shareholders are required to spend $5 billion on updating equipment and other grid hardening measures to prevent future fires.

A June 30, 2020 deadline. PG&E is required to exit bankruptcy and pay out all claims by wildfire victims by June 30, 2020.

The political power behind this solution starts with our members. (Learn more about AB 1054 on page 11.) Our Organizing Stewards have worked on campaigns throughout California for the last several election cycles, demonstrating our ability to elect worker-friendly candidates. Our criteria for support has nothing to do with political party. When evaluating candidates, we ask one key question: How will they support Local 1245 members? We’ve worked to elect lawmakers from both parties who stand on the right side of our issues, so when the time came for them to vote on this critical bill, we knew that we could count on them.

And to make sure our allies (and our fair-weather friends) in the Legislature knew how important this bill is to us, nearly 100 of our union members walked the halls of the Capitol lobbying for the wildfire bill, including almost 20 whores who are part of 1245’s newly formed Emergency Response Team. The ERT meets directly with lawmakers that represent areas in PG&E’s service territory, and has been successfully building relationships in the legislature and executive branch, on both sides of the aisle. Our team is honest, candid, and blunt when meeting with officials, urging them to consider and respect the enormous value that highly-skilled professionals add to California’s power infrastructure — and encouraging them not to burn bridges.

This two-track approach, combined with a strong team of lawyers and lobbyists, allows us to punch well above our weight. (We have even heard that some in Sacramento refer to us as the fourth branch of government.) We don’t spend lavishly — our capital is our members. Using a simple set of tools, we did what few believed to be possible: deliver a bill that protects our members while maintaining safe and reliable energy for 40 million Californians.

This approach serves us well in California, and has also paid dividends in Nevada. We are also using our political infrastructure to navigate PG&E’s ongoing bankruptcy, and to size up the various hedge fund consortiums that are making plays.

The past several years have posed enormous challenges to our union — from the wildfires, to political turmoil, to bankruptcy, and more. Combating the attacks that threaten us can seem very complicated, but when we go back to the basics, the path is clear: build power, and use that power to help our members.

Dylan Gottfried Joins IBEW 1245 Staff

IBEW 1245 welcomed its newest Assistant Business Manager, Dylan Gottfried, to the union staff in June. Gottfried has over 25 years of experience working with and managing union-represented employees. At 1245, he will be working with business reps and members at 1245’s public- and private-sector properties.

Before joining the union staff, Gottfried worked at PG&E in the Labor Relations department, where he served as principal negotiator for gas, aviation, IT and sourcing. He was also responsible for all day-to-day labor relations in power generation, and oversaw dozens of grievances as the chair of the Company’s Pre-Review Committee/Review Committee grievance team.

Gottfried has a long track record of union activism, stemming from his years as a member of Teamsters Local 315. As a Teamsters shop steward, he helped his co-workers at UPS as they fought for justice and fairness on the job. He was an active member of the Teamsters Stewards’ Council, and also served as the union’s treasurer for several years.

“I’m excited to return to the House of Labor, as I truly believe in the union cause and the work that 1245 does for its members,” he said. “I think this new role will allow me to make the best use of my skillset, and it’s also a wonderful opportunity for me and my family.”

Gottfried lives in Fair Oaks with his wife and two young children, ages 6 and 3. In his free time, he enjoys dirt biking and trains. He’s also a power gen aficionado and has always dreamed of one day becoming a hydro operator. He has a Bachelors degree in finance and risk management, and a Masters in Business Administration from CSU Sacramento.

Free College

The Union Plus Free College Benefit offers working families an accessible, debt-free and convenient higher education opportunity. You, your spouse, children, financial dependents and grandchildren can all benefit from this exciting program.

Learn more at unionplus.org

Utility Reporter

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— Northern Area
  Steve Segale
— Northeastern Area
  Ryan Morris
— Central Area
  Gary Maschio
— Southern Area
  William Harris
— Line Clearance
  Tree Trimmers and
  Underground Construction
  Scott Hudson
— At-Large PG&E
  General Construction
  Stan Zamora

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Executive Board, Officers and Examining Board

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Cloudbell Douglas Jr. .......... 301
Michael Scafani ............... 623

Vice President
James “Hammer” Hayes ........ 713
Nathan Datus .................. 221
Kevin Krummes ................ 496
Carl ”CO” Olguin ............... 234

Recording Secretary
Rachel Ramirez ................. 869
Sonia Brum .................... 275
Mona McCarthy ............... 495

Treasurer
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Business Manager/Financial Secretary and Delegate To the International Convention of the IBEW
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Grant Todd .................... 878

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Coast Valleys Division of PG&E
Todd Kadota (unopposed)

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Jamar Parker ................ 10
Ronald Greenlee .......... 20

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Michael Patterson (unopposed)

East Bay Division of PG&E — Physical
Phioung Tran (unopposed)

San Francisco Division and General Office of PG&E — Physical
Damien Padilla (unopposed)

Stockton Division of PG&E
Jodiah Castro (unopposed)

Sacramento Regional Transit District
Lauren Bartlett (unopposed)

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Jonathon McCue ............ 29
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Victor Barajas .......... 23

De Sable Division of PG&E
Sandi Busse (unopposed)

Colgate Division of PG&E, Yuba County Water Agency, and City of Gridley
Michael Graning (unopposed)

Sacramento Division of PG&E and City Light & Power
Marcos Luna (unopposed)

Sacramento Municipal Utility District and City of Lodi
Earl Ferris II (unopposed)

USBR, Western Area Power Administration
Patrick Severin (unopposed)

Frontier Communications
Ken Lawson (unopposed)

General Construction of PG&E at Large (3 seats)
(A) Geraldine Brooks (unopposed)
(B) Joanne Viloria-McGrath (unopposed)

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Rodrigo Flores (unopposed)

City of Lompoc
Leo Ramirez ............... 13
Travis Border ............ 5
John Daniel ............... 3
Candace Koff .......... 0

Manufacturing
Arnaldo Lizarraga (unopposed)

City of Vallejo and Greater Vallejo Recreation District
Oni Brown (unopposed)

*Seats that are not listed had no valid nominations

Advisory Council Appointments
In July, the new Executive Board made the following appointments to vacant Advisory Council seats:
- Humboldt Division: Jim Walpole
- North Bay Division: Garrett Markwood
- California Gas Transmission: Janelle Bucci
- Clerical At-Large Northern Area: Alvin Dayoan
- TransCanada: Nick Corey
- General Construction At-Large (C): Richard Olguin
- Materials: Steve Mayfield

Unit meeting changes
Unit #1112, Bakersfield, has moved its meeting time from 6pm to 5pm. The meeting dates and location will remain the same.
— Mark Rolou, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

Unit #3318, Elko, has relocated its unit meeting to Round Table Pizza, 2503 Mountain City Hwy, Elko, NV. The meeting dates and time will remain the same.
— Mike Venturino, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

New Unit Meetings in Wheatland and Healdsburg
The IBEW 1245 Executive Board has established two new units which began monthly meetings in July.
Unit #3615, Wheatland, will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 4pm at Primetime Pizza, 1920 State Highway 65, Unit #170, in Wheatland.
Unit #3731, City of Healdsburg, will meet on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30pm at Giorgio’s Restaurant, 25 Grant Avenue, in Healdsburg.

Learn more about IBEW 1245’s structure and leadership at https://ibew1245.com/ourunion/structure/
Electricity is something that most Americans take for granted. When we go home at night, we know that we’ll be able to turn on the lights, charge our cell phones, take a hot shower, grab some food from the fridge and heat it up in the microwave. But for those 15,000 homes located on the Navajo Nation reservation, access to power is anything but guaranteed.

Approximately 15,000 of the 55,000 homes located on the Navajo Reservation do not have any electricity. In fact, 75% of all unelectrified homes in the United States are located within the Navajo Nation’s 27,000-square-mile territory. For these families, there are no cell phone chargers, no refrigerators, no televisions, no microwaves, no TVs or other common household appliances — and access to the most basic life-sustaining necessities is, at best, extraordinarily onerous. For example, without power, there is no clean running water, so these families must drive up to 15 hours every week to fill their 250-gallon water tanks with water from the nearest source, and the kids start playing with prohibition on the use and possession of alcohol. And the utility infrastructure is unlike what the SMUD crew is accustomed to, with mostly single-phase con-

IBEW 1245 Members From SMUD Help

“Light Up Navajo”

According to APPA, more than 120 utility workers from 25 different public power companies — including five IBEW Local 1245 members from the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) — volunteered to build lines that will connect more than 100 Navajo households to the grid. APPA and NTUA hope that this pilot project will pave the way for more electrification projects in the future.

Destination: Four Corners

On Friday, April 26, the five-man IBEW 1245 team from SMUD embarked on their two-week “Light Up Navajo” volunteer mission. They drove for two days before finally arriving at the Navajo Nation, which is situated near the “four corners” region and includes parts of northeastern Arizona, southeastern Utah, and northwestern New Mexico. The SMUD crew had spent some time learning about the area and its unique tribal culture, so they knew that they would be entering a community that’s quite different from their own. They weren’t exactly sure what to expect, but when they arrived, they were touched by the warm reception they received from NTUA and the Navajo people.

“They gave us an appreciation dinner, which was basically their way of showing how much they appreciated us coming down here, volunteering time to heat them up for the first time,” said SMUD Lineman and 16-year IBEW 1245 member Corey Smith. “It was pretty emocional watching the kids and the families all show up, and they made home-cooked meals. It was delicious, unbelievable food.”

“The hospitality is great, they’ve been very welcoming,” echoed SMUD Lineman Chris Worth, a 11-year IBEW member. “Everyone has been very comfortable to talk to. Great culture, good people, and very helpful. It’s been very nice.”

“It’s a great opportunity for us and for them — and it’s very special to our people, especially the people that are getting their lights on for the first time,” said David Yazzie, electrical service foreman with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority. “They have tears of joy, happiness and they’re very appreciative. Something like this is only dreamt about.”

Best Part of the Job

On the day that the Utility Reporter caught up with Smith, Worth and the rest of the SMUD crew, they were working on constructing a new service line that would reach 26 previously unelectrified customers in an area known as Black Mesa. The crew was tasked with setting about 200 poles and taps along the way.

While the work itself is familiar to the SMUD crew, working in the Navajo Nation is a far cry from working at home in Sacramento. The terrain, while breath-takingly scenic, is also quite a challenge to traverse in SMUD’s trucks, and GPS is practically non-existent, so they must rely on the locals for directions. The weather can be unpredictable at times, as this time of year often brings short but highly aggressive storms that would blow in quickly and forcefully, with winds strong enough to take a hard hat right off a lineman’s head. Even the laws are different, as the Navajo Nation is governed by its own tribal authority that has put in place policies that some linemen might balk at, such as the strict prohibition on the use and possession of alcohol. And the utility infrastructure is unlike what the SMUD crew is accustomed to, with mostly single-phase con-

“Once you plug that meter in, and they flip their main, and the kids start playing with the lights, and they can finally go shop for a refrigerator, or a TV ... It can get pretty emotional.”

— SMUD Lineman Chris Worth
struction and different types of framing and wiring. But the Local 1245 team from SMUD acclimated quickly, and before long, they were bringing electricity into homes that had never experienced it before — and the response from the residents was monumental.

"Once you plug that meter in, and they flip their main, and the kids start playing with the lights, and they can finally go shop for a refrigerator, or a TV ... It can get pretty emotional," said Worth. "They're very grateful. It's good to see. It's the best part of our job, by far."

"Some of them would actually cry because they were so happy to turn lights on for the first time. They're clapping, yelling, screaming — it's pretty amazing," added Smith. "It's not like back at home where you build a house, and you know you're going to get power within a couple of weeks. Or if you have power and it goes out, you can get it back within 24 hours with us. Some of these [Navajo families] have been waiting for 10 years to get power. Pretty crazy."

The Navajo utility workers were exceptionally grateful to have the assistance of SMUD and the other public utilities to help them move this ambitious project forward.

"This is a big endeavor for us, and we appreciate SMUD being out here, the brotherhood, the partnership and building long lasting relationships," said NTUA's Yazzie, who grew up on the reservation. "It's been a great opportunity to learn from them and get that teamwork, that cohesiveness and sharing brotherhood. Good feeling, good spirits. It is awesome."

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

Photos by John Storey
When a person is gravely ill, an emergency response team is quickly dispatched to the scene to bring that individual to the hospital. Interestingly enough, when a PG&E transformer is no longer operating as it should, the experience is somewhat similar. But in this instance, the emergency response team is a utility line crew — and the hospital is a specialized equipment repair facility staffed by a highly skilled team of IBEW 1245 electricians.

Many of PG&E’s “sick” transformers and other equipment will end up being triaged at the company’s Emeryville Repair Facility, which in some ways resembles a hospital intensive care unit — except the patients are all out-of-service equipment and parts.

First, the equipment is assessed by an electrician, who will run several tests on it to determine what went wrong. If it’s something fixable, the IBEW 1245 members at the shop take the necessary steps to repair it so it can go back into circulation — ostensibly giving old equipment a new lease on life.

When the Utility Reporter visited the repair shop in May, PG&E Electrician and 12-year IBEW member Orlando Morfin was working on an out-of-service transformer with a suspected leak that had been brought down from Santa Rosa.

“I just finished the TTR [transformer turn ratio] testing, to make sure that it converts the voltage from the lower voltage to the higher voltage, and to check for any kind of grounds on the high side, the low side,” Morfin explained. “So, I tested it to make sure it’s good, and the next thing I’ll be doing is checking for leaks… I’ll pressure test it and put air into it, and if it’s leaking then I repair the leak. Sometimes it’s a bushing. Sometimes it’s a sight glass. Sometimes, it’s the fuse bayonet. It all depends.”

Transformers aren’t the only equipment that get serviced by the team at
the shop. All sorts of components are fixed up here — and if the electricians need a part to perform a repair, their colleagues over on the machine shop side of the building are ready to pitch in.

According to PG&E Machinist and IBEW 1245 member Jayson Gavaldon, when PG&E needs a part that’s not readily available, he and his colleagues will be tasked with fabricating it. When the Utility Reporter caught up with Gavaldon at the shop, he was working on some small gas components, and he says he is often tasked with these types of odds and ends.

“I get everybody’s flex connectors, everybody’s little target jobs that are put-in-a-bolt-in-a-bag, that’s me,” said Gavaldon. “They just give me the blueprint and I make it to the spec.”

And over in the carpentry shop, IBEW 1245 members fulfill the company’s wood-based orders. According to PG&E Carpenter Michael Deschaine, back in the days when the company had a fully operational foundry, the carpenters would be tasked with patterning, molding and casting for substations, specialty projects and whatever may arise in the field. But times have changed, and the work has changed too.

“Most of the work we do now is related to preparing equipment for shipment — to go to the yards, and out in the field,” said Deschaine, who has been at the shop for 36 years. “So we’re building skids for heavy pad mount equipment, beefing up stuff for pole vaults, things like that.”

The Emeryville shop is one of PG&E’s oldest facilities — it’s been up and running for 95 years, and while the work that’s gone on inside of it has changed dramatically over the years, the hard-working individuals who take on these tasks remain grateful to have IBEW 1245 looking out for them.

“The union fights for us any time we have a grievance, and they’re there whenever we have questions. They can also point you in the right direction if you want to promote yourself,” said Morfin. “And it helps with the bidding process to keep it fair, so if you want to transfer to another place or laterally, it helps you.”

“One thing I like about the union is we’re getting our benefits protected ... And they fight to keep the wages up, so we don’t have to worry about making our bills every month,” said Deschaine. “We’re able to make a decent living here, and in today’s economy, that’s pretty good. I’d say that’s one blessing about having the union.”

“The union for me is a support structure,” added Gavaldon. “They’ve been great to me. I have no complaints.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director
The Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC) Solano Chapter hosted a bowling fundraiser on Friday, March 22 at the Starz Recreational Center in Vacaville. Twenty-nine union members and family participated in the event, which raised $288 for the EWMC.

EWMC-Solano plans to do more events in the future to bring awareness to the organization and local. Keep up with EWMC-Solano on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/EWMCLocal1245SolanoCounty/.

Photos by Que Thompson

Local 1245 Members Attend IBEW International Utility Conference

The IBEW represents around 250,000 utility workers at 433 different locals in the United States and Canada — and each year, these members have an opportunity to come together to connect and learn at the annual IBEW International Utility Conference.

This spring, four Local 1245 members — Steve Marcotte, Charlotte Stevens, Isaac Mazon and Mark Makowiecki — attended the 2019 Utility Conference in Detroit, MI, where they were joined by hundreds of other utility workers from every corner of the IBEW’s international jurisdiction.

“Walking into the utility conference, I was in awe over how big the IBEW is. We always see it on a local level, but to see how it works on an international level is amazing,” said Local 1245 member Isaac Mazon, who works for PG&E Fresno Fleet.

The action-packed two-day conference featured a wide range of dynamic speakers, including elected officials and leaders in the energy industry, who touched on some of the biggest hot-button issues facing the utility industry, like nuclear power and the Green New Deal.

“The IBEW recognizes the need for a Green New Deal, however the IBEW wasn’t consulted on the current proposal,” SMUD Line Inspector and 1245 member Mark Makowiecki reported from the conference. “The goals, as they were, were overambitious. Whatever the future of the Green New Deal may be, we as the IBEW want to have a say in what is put forth.”

Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to attend workshops on a variety of topics that impact utility employees, from PPE to call center operations.

“My highlight from the clerical workshop was how one local reintroduced the Code of Excellence to their clerical section to lower absenteeism and remind members of the value and standard that union workers bring to the table,” said PG&E Customer Service Rep Charlotte Stevens.

As usual, our Local 1245 members were among the most outspoken participants at the conference.

“A proud 1245 moment for me was when one of the workshop presenters personally thanked me for the active participation from Local 1245 attendees, who help keep the discussion interesting for all attending,” said Marcotte.

Overall, the 1245 delegation valued the experience.

“It was a pleasure and privilege to represent 1245 in the Motor City,” said Makowiecki.

“Thank you for selecting me to attend the conference,” said Stevens. “I gained valuable information from the experience that I would like to implement at our call center.”

“To know that there are other people as passionate as the ones in 1245 is a good sign that the union and our brotherhood will always be around if we stick together,” added Mazon.

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

The 32nd Annual IBEW 1245 Golf Tournament is coming up on Oct. 5!

Register today at bit.ly/ibew1245golf.
On April 13, the Alameda County Central Labor Council hosted "Labor Convergence on Climate," a one-day summit focused on the impact that climate change is having on working families. The solutions-oriented event featured a number of notable speakers and presenters, including IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell and Assistant Business Manager Hunter Stern. Organizing Stewards Phuong Tran, Arnaldo Lizarraga, Ruben Hernandez, David Ly, Nilda Garcia and Georgette Carrillo, along with 1245 staffers Al Fortier and Rene Cruz Martinez, also represented Local 1245 as participants at the summit.

Dalzell served as a panelist during a discussion on a "just transition" to a new, green economy. He explained how labor unions can protect jobs and help prepare workers to fill the new green jobs of the future, citing a number of examples from Local 1245’s own recent past.

"I appreciated hearing about how our union has protected and keeps jobs for members through technology and business changes," said Georgette Carrillo. "After Tom explained the issues with climate change and how it affects California’s utilities, it seemed like the audience was more supportive of PG&E employees."

Stern helped to present a workshop on the PG&E bankruptcy, and detailed Local 1245’s firm positions on related topics, including municipalization and breaking up the company.

"Hunter gave a great class on the bankruptcy process," reported David Ly.

In early May, IBEW 1245 Organizing Stewards Arnaldo Lizarraga (Traycer), Mark Goodwin (PG&E Gas) and Phuong Tran (PG&E Gas) attended a comprehensive new organizing training in the East Bay, hosted by the IBEW 9th District. They were joined by IBEW organizers from Los Angeles, Seattle, Colorado and San Diego, and the group spent three intensive days learning all about growing the IBEW ranks by using different approaches to organize workers that are not yet unionized.

"I thought it was very informative. We learned about the ins and outs of organizing new workers and/or groups of workers ... it was very interesting to learn how it all worked, what the process was to get signatory workers or bring new members into the IBEW altogether," said Goodwin. "It was also nice to meet and hear from the organizers from other locals, learn what they do and what works or doesn’t work for them."

"I learned that the core of organizing is building relationships, clear communication, and honesty," added Lizarraga. "IBEW International Rep Tracy Prezeau had us engaged throughout the training. She energized the room, which make me feel powerful in order to fight for the labor movement."

On the second day of the training, which coincided with May Day, the 1245 contingent stood in solidarity with IBEW 595, the Hayward-based inside local that’s engaged in a labor dispute at Helix. Lizarraga, Goodwin and Tran picketed outside the Helix worksite from 5:30am until 7:30am.

"Wish we could have stayed longer with the rest of the group, but we had to get back to our class," said Goodwin.

"We were glad to wake up early and help our brothers and sisters in the fight. Thank you for the opportunity," said Lizarraga.

The IBEW 1245 delegation at the Alameda CLC’s Labor Convergence on Climate

IBEW 1245 Joins Labor Convergence on Climate

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The IBEW 9th District New Organizing Training took place April 30-May 2 in the East Bay.

From left: Mark Goodwin, Phuong Tran and Arnaldo Lizarraga on the picket line at Helix

Local 1245 Receives Henry Miller Award for Excellence in Organizing

At the IBEW 9th District Progress Meeting, Local 1245 once again received the Henry Miller Award for its ongoing commitment to the IBEW’s organizing principles over the past year. This marks the sixth consecutive year that Local 1245 has received this coveted award.
when Marine Corps veteran and 22-year IBEW 1245 member Kenny Meyer returned to his job at PG&E in 2006, after serving two tours of duty — first as Homeland Security, followed by a combat mission in Iraq — he wasn’t the same guy that his co-workers once knew. He was angry, moody and sleep deprived, and even the slightest thing could set him off. He had trouble remembering and concentrating, he kept bumping heads with his supervisor, and he was really struggling, not just at work, but at home as well.

Meyer was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury (TBI) stemming from the five IEDs he had been hit by in Fallujah, and he assumed that the TBI was the root cause of all his issues. His doctor had also told him that he has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but Meyer brushed it off.

“Back then, I thought that PTSD was for sissies, an excuse that people use to avoid doing things they don’t want to do. That’s the stigma that I had put to it,” Meyer recalled. “I told the doctor, ‘I don’t know what you’re talking about, I don’t have PTSD. I can deal with my issues.’”

As a Marine, Meyer prided himself on being tough and independent, so he refused to get help for his PTSD, and continued to struggle with the condition, untreated, for nine long years. At his lowest point, he was exceedingly close to losing his job and his family. He contemplated running away from it all, leaving the career he once loved, as well as his wife and two young sons, both of whom were close to losing his job and his family.

His lowest point, he was exceedingly close to losing his job and his family. Leaving the career he once loved, as well as his wife and two young sons, both of whom were close to losing their homes.

“His kids changed the course of his life forever.”

“One day, I heard my little boys talking, and they didn’t know that I could hear them. My youngest boy told his older brother that he’s scared to death of daddy, because daddy is so mean and violent, and he doesn’t want to be around daddy. That broke my heart,” Meyer choked up with emotion as he recounted the complete breakdown he had at work the following day. “That’s when I knew that something was wrong with me, and that’s when I reached out to get help.”

Meyer went to the Veterans Affairs Hospital (VA) and entered an intensive treatment program for combat vets with PTSD. At first, he was skeptical, but after working with a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a counselor three days a week for almost three years, Meyer finally started to feel like himself again.

“It was a hard road, and I’ve learned a lot of things… but I’d consider myself a success story with PTSD,” he said, noting that while he will never be cured of the condition, his treatment helps him manage it so he can once again excel at work, and be the husband and father his family deserves.

“We need to help each other out”

When he returned to work, Meyer apologized to his supervisor and explained what he’d been going through. His supervisor apologized too, because he didn’t realize that Meyer had a medical condition and needed treatment. Serna talked about the neurobiology behind PTSD, explained the signs of suicide, and detailed the processes of suicide. Serna and Ibardolasa were incredible teachers. And before long, Meyer, Serna and Ibardolasa were standing in front of a room full of 60 supervisors from station maintenance, talking about PTSD. The first “Warrior to Workplace” session, which was held in 2018, was incredibly well-received, and the feedback from those who attended underscored that everyone at the company — not just supervisors — could benefit from this knowledge. Soon other workgroups started calling for the workshops and they began holding sessions all over the system for both supervisors and the rank-and-file.

On the day that the Utility Reporter caught up with Meyer and his team in Walnut Creek, they were leading their seventh session of the year, presenting to about 20 employees from station maintenance, all of whom had volunteered to attend, and only one of whom had personally served in the armed forces. Michael Coyle from PG&E’s Performance and Inclusion Department kill-la-kill (meaning no session (Ibardolasa was on vacation that day), and then Meyer shared his emotionally charged personal story, including the remarkable turnaround he’s experienced since seeking treatment. Serna talked about the stigmas and strengths associated with being a veteran in the workforce, and then dove into a thorough overview of PTSD. She highlighted some of the most common symptoms to look out for, explained the neurobiology behind PTSD, underscored red flags (including warning signs of suicide), and detailed the best practices for intervention by creating an environment of safety. The session concluded with an overview of the company’s employee assistance program and other resources that are available to help workers who are struggling with PTSD, but Serna let the attendees know that even if someone isn’t ready to pursue treatment, just being there for a co-worker who is going through PTSD can have an enormous impact.

“You can be a part of changing someone’s life,” she emphasized to the attendees. “Professional support is great, but peer support is so much more powerful.”

“Our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers”

In recent years, PG&E has been striving to increase the number of veterans it employs, with a goal of having 9% of its new recruits coming out of the armed forces. And there’s a reason for that, according to Meyer.

“Veterans are some of the best employees you can get. They’re good follow-ups, they’re good leaders and they are highly trained individuals. They’re very loyal and team drivers,” said Meyer, who is an I&C working foreman B, but is currently on a temporary assignment as a T-Line supervisor. “But anybody can get PTSD, not just veterans. We’re seeing it more and more, especially now with all the wildfires and people losing their homes.”

“Through this program, my hope is for people to just have more empathy, to do a little bit more for somebody that is struggling with PTSD. Because it is a real thing,” Meyer added. “It makes a safe atmosphere at work when you know you can trust and help your teammates out. We are all our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers — and if I can help even one brother or sister, I consider that a positive.”

If you or someone you know is struggling with PTSD, help is available through the Veterans Crisis hotline: 1-800-273-8255 or online at https://www ptsd.va.gov/. Non-veterans can call the National Alliance on Mental Illness hotline at 800-950-NAMI or text “NAMI” to 741741. PG&E employees can also use the EAP hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 888-445-4436.

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

July – September 2019
Local 1245 Activists Propel New Wildfire Legislation Into Law

IBEW 1245 members have been working around the clock for many months to harden the grid in order to mitigate the risk of wildfire. But the new normal in California — hotter, drier weather, an overgrowth of foliage that can turn into fire fuel in an instant, and increasingly unpredictable winds — means that we may still be at risk of another catastrophic wildfire. With so much at stake, IBEW 1245 put pressure on California legislators to reform the state’s outdated policies regarding utility-related wildfires — reforms that are sorely needed not just for the utilities, but for the wildfire victims, the workers, and the communities across California that deserve safe and reliable electricity.

In early July, just days before the legislative recess, and with a potential credit rating downgrade looming for all of California’s utilities if the legislature failed to act, we succeeded in passing AB 1054, a critical piece of legislation that will reform and modernize our state’s policies regarding wildfires that involve utility equipment. The final vote in the State Assembly came just one day after a large group of IBEW 1245 activists — including dozens of organizing stewards, retirees and emergency response team members — descended on the Capitol to demonstrate their support for the bill. AB 1054 had already been approved by the State Senate earlier that week, and was subsequently signed into law by Gov. Newsom the following day.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that our members played a significant role in the passage of this bill,” said IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. “After the bill passed the Senate, rumors indicated that it may be stalled in the Assembly. But our army of activists flooded the halls of the Capitol, speaking directly with Assemblymembers and their staffers to explain why this bill is essential, not only for our members’ livelihoods, but for the millions of utility customers in hundreds of communities around the state. Local 1245 members made their voices heard, the Assembly heeded the call, and the end result is a new policy that will make our utility infrastructure safer and more resilient to fire, while simultaneously ensuring that wildfire victims are compensated quickly and fairly.”

This new law will:

• Create a structured $21 billion insurance fund for utility-related wildfires. Together, California’s three investor-owned utilities (IOUs) will contribute $10.5 billion, and the state will contribute another $10.5 billion. The fund will be exclusively used for utility-related fire costs, including fire victim compensation. This provision will ensure that utilities have access to the capital they need so our members can continue critical grid-hardening projects and upgrades.

• Implement a new fire safety certification process with oversight, requiring each IOU to submit, get approval, and enact a comprehensive fire mitigation and safety plan. Any utility that doesn’t have a certified safety plan in place would be held wholly responsible for any fire involving their equipment.

• Strengthen worker protection language in the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) code, expanding upon the language we advocated for and implemented last year through SB 901. Getting this improved language into AB 1054 was Local 1245’s top priority, and the process was exceedingly challenging, but we are pleased that the worker protections we pushed for were incorporated into the final version of the bill.

Read the full bill at bit.ly/AB_1054.

“I couldn’t be more proud of what our members have accomplished in Sacramento over the past year,” said Dalzell. “IBEW 1245 is truly a force to be reckoned with in the Capitol.”

Member-Held PG&E Stocks in Retirement Accounts Would be Trued Up Under Bondholder Reorganization Plan

The union has received a number of inquiries from IBEW 1245 members and retirees who are concerned that their PG&E stock in company retirement accounts could be diluted under the recently proposed bondholder reorganization plan.

According to the court filing, “All PG&E Corp. common stock currently held by employees and retirees in pension accounts, 401(k) accounts and company-sponsored plans will be trued-up for any dilution on account of the Plan with new equity issuances within 90 days after the Effective Date. Such equity interests will be structured to comply with all applicable securities laws.”

For the latest news and updates on the PG&E bankruptcy, visit ibew1245.com/pge-bankruptcy

Utilities Reporter
Local 1245 Propels Republican Brian Dahle to Victory in State Senate Special Election

As a member of the California State Assembly, Republican Brian Dahle raised more than a few eyebrows last year when he voiced his strong support of SB 901, the wildfire bill that IBEW 1245 advocated for in 2018. Dahle proved that he’s willing to stand with 1245 and take on the tough fights in defense of our members and the communities they serve, so when he announced his candidacy to fill the State Senate seat formerly held by Ted Gaines (who was elected to the Board of Equalization in November), IBEW 1245 was quick to endorse Dahle’s campaign.

Dahle — who previously served as the Assembly Republican Leader and takes pride in his background as a farmer and small business owner — isn’t your typical labor-endorsed candidate. His party affiliation alone would likely cause many other unions to write him off entirely. But Local 1245 firmly believes that the key factor when determining whether a candidate should receive the union’s support is where that candidate stands on the issues that have the biggest impact on our members. IBEW 1245 looked at Dahle’s track record on critical utility issues, and decided not only to endorse him, but also to dispatch a team of Local 1245 organizing stewards to work on his behalf for the special election. Additionally, Local 1245 advocated for the endorsement of Dahle at the Sacramento Central Labor Council, which allowed Dahle to amass far more labor support than his campaign had anticipated.

“The Sacramento Central Labor Council stepped in and helped manage the campaign, so our team was able to work directly with them,” Local 1245 Organizing Steward Vanessa Mejia reported. “We had a very successful phone bank at the Labor Council, with Brian Dahle making an appearance and even calling voters himself! It was a great turnout and I know it made a difference.”

While 1245 and the Labor Council helped coalesce union support for Dahle, running a labor-backed campaign for a GOP lawmaker wasn’t without its hiccups. Things got off to a bit of a rocky start, but Local 1245 quickly got Dahle’s team up to speed on what it means to be a union-endorsed candidate. Local 1245 staffers Hunter Stern and Rene Cruz Martinez worked with Dahle’s campaign manager and the Labor Council to craft campaign literature that would appeal to voters of all parties (given that his opponent was also a Republican, Dahle’s ability to garner support from Democrats and ‘No Party Preference’ voters in the district could make or break the election). Local 1245 also helped to connect the campaign with a unionized print shop to make sure his campaign materials were union-made.

While Dahle’s opponent, Republican Kevin Kiley, was busy smearing Dahle for his support of SB 901, the Local 1245 organizing stewards were diligently working to get out the vote on Kiley’s home turf in Placer county.

“The campaign was impressed by the rate of precincts we were completing and the effectiveness of the new literature,” said Lead Organizing Steward Alvin Dayoan. “We were able to speak more people at the doors and have effective conversations on why it is important to gain their support for our candidate.”

“It was a huge surprise for me to see how much the union does for the candidates, and how much the organizing stewards do to make (the campaign) a huge success,” said new Organizing Steward Dana Johnson, who also happens to be a registered Republican. “I learned so much.”

The 1245 team, which comprised of both Republicans and Democrats, willingly set their party affiliations aside to support the most pro-union candidate in the race.

“I must say when telling my family about this campaign I did get a little backlash, but one thing I had to explain is that Brian Dahle definitely helped us out with the SB 901 bill, which helped save my job and many others, and for that reason alone I decided to accept the challenge of working this campaign,” said Organizing Steward Bridgette Thomas. “(On the campaign) I was challenged to have those tough conversations when approaching a home full of Democrats … but educating the voters on what he stands for is key. Not to mention he’s for the working people, and he works across party lines.”

“The Dahle campaign was definitely something new for me; never did I think I would find myself out canvassing for a Republican!” echoed Organizing Steward Ramon Gonzalez. “It was a good experience however, because we got to gauge what all voters feel, not just Democrats.”

The special election was held on Tuesday, June 4, and once all the votes were counted, Brian Dahle took the win with a little over 53% of the vote, while his opponent garnered just under 47%. A total of 132,815 ballots were cast, which is an outstanding turnout for a special election held with relatively short notice.

“The big win came from the areas where our organizing stewards put in the work,” said Staff Organizer Rene Cruz Martinez, who served as a liaison with the Dahle campaign and helped coordinate the 1245 campaigners. “Dahle’s campaign was not optimistic that we would be able to win, as his opponent was supposedly the heavily favored candidate, especially in Placer county, which is where we spent a lot of time getting out the vote. Dahle ended up getting 39% of the vote in Placer, where Kiley was expected to take 80% of the votes.”

“This campaign is a true demonstration of the influence and power that organized labor brings to the table, and it is a great example of how we can work across party lines to help those politicians who are friends of labor,” Cruz Martinez added. “I am glad to have been part of this campaign, where I was able to look outside of party politics and learn from the other side.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

Dahle with IBEW 1245 members in Grass Valley at the start of the campaign.

The Local 1245 organizing stewards who were released to the Dahle campaign (from left) Dana Johnson, Ramon Gonzalez, Donny Davis, Bridgette Thomas, Vanessa Mejia, and Alvin Dayoan

Alvin Dayoan delivers a lawn sign to a Dahle supporter.

Dana Johnson (right) with Dahle shortly after he was sworn in
The City of Redding sent four IBEW 1245 members to the American Public Power Association (APPA) Lineworker’s Rodeo in Colorado Springs, Colorado on March 29-30. Local 1245 members from City of Roseville, SMUD and Truckee Donner PUD also competed in the nationwide event.

— Dominic McCurtain, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

Local 1245 Members Compete at APPA Lineworkers Rodeo

The team won a number of events and came in 2nd overall at the SDG&E Rodeo.

Local 1245 Members Place Second at SDGE Rodeo, Third at LADWP Rodeo

IBEW 1245 members and PG&E Linemen Jordan Chene, Jacob “Floppy” Hunt and Dustin Curry took second place overall at the San Diego Gas & Electric Rodeo, and third place overall at the LADWP Lineman’s Rodeo. Way to make us proud!

Save the Date!
IBEW 1245/PG&E Lineman’s Rodeo on Sept 14!
**Control the Pressure Committee Holds Annual Gas Safety Summit**

On May 8, 2019, IBEW 1245’s Control the Pressure (CTP) peer-to-peer safety committee hosted its annual Safety Summit at the union hall in Vacaville. Forty-one gas safety stewards from all across the union’s jurisdiction came together at this year’s summit to have candid discussions about the safety-related issues and challenges they face at work.

**CTP Committee Chair Ernie Pena** opened the summit with a traditional moment of silence to honor our fallen brothers, followed by introductions and a safety briefing. The group then moved into a discussion on some of the CTP committee’s top priorities and projects, including quick clot, communications specialists Rene Picazo, Jesse Garcia, Jenni Branson, Melanie Price and Jaime Price. This workgroup came up with a simple but powerful innovation to improve the gas service emergency response process — an innovation that could end up saving lives.

The committee highlighted the importance of everyone on the crew not being afraid to speak up. Each and every member ought to be a safety leader in their profession, and do the job right all the time. There was some discussion about why different departments have different crew make-ups for the same jobs — for example, valve change is a one-man job in field service, but for OM&C it was a two-man job, then it was changed to one-man in some areas, but still a two-man job and in other areas.

The group also discussed QOs, which are intended to set us up to do the job right way and ensure that we are competent in our job at every level. Several members expressed concern that the focus is more on testing and studying rather than hands-on field work. Members are being trained to pass a test — not to do the job correctly through repetitive, consistent training. The topic of five-minute meetings also came up. Some members noted that not everybody gets to be there for the presentation, and they are sometimes being used to update existing procedures without an official change to the procedure language.

The gas safety stewards also discussed some of the other challenges they face in the field. GSRs talked about the concerns they have regarding doing maintenance work at dusk or dinner time, because it’s bad for customer service and unsafe for the workers. Mark & Locate is being pushed quite hard by new supervision to get numbers, prompting members to cut corners on safety, for instance opening electrical boxes for locates when they’re not QEWs. Ultimately, the stewards agreed that safety is up to the workers, and it’s our responsibility to do the job right each and every time when we’re out in the field. The company cannot force us to do our job safe — that’s our responsibility.

The topic of the CAP program also came up. CTP wants to encourage folks who are having difficulty with the CAP Program to submit their safety related CAP numbers to the CTP committee, and CTP will try to help out. The committee is dedicated to seeing this program grow in the hopes that it will help all gas workers work safer.

CTP hosted a special guest speaker named Kayla Rath. At last year’s summit, Rath’s father spoke about his grievous injury, and this year, Kayla recounted the experience from her own perspective. At the time of the accident, she was just nine years old, and she told the summit attendees what it was like for her on that day when she was pulled out of school and told her father may not live. Her talk left a lasting impression on the attendees, and the point she made about the impact that the accident had on the rest of her life is something all parents should think about.

Overall, the summit was highly impactful and the committee would like to thank all who participated. Control the Pressure also wants to remind all members to remain vigilant when reviewing your work. Be sure to check, and double check, especially in emergency situations. Remember that the employers want us to do things the right way all the time. The only way we can do that is to get up each day and tell ourselves that we are going to work safe, and we are going to be sure that our brothers around us are going to work safe as well.

— Casey Kelley, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

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**Gas Service Emergency Protocol Innovation Earns IBEW 1245 Members the Sibley Safety Award**

Workplace safety has always been our union’s core value, ever since the founding of the IBEW in the late 1800s, and each and every day, IBEW 1245 members are continually looking for ways to enhance safety for both workers and customers.

For a prime example of our union members’ commitment to safety, look no further than PG&E Gas Control Communications Specialists Rene Picazo, Jesse Garcia, Jenni Branson, Melanie Price and Jaime Price. This workgroup came up with a simple but powerful innovation to improve the gas service emergency response process — an innovation that could end up saving lives.

The communications specialist workgroup is relatively new to the IBEW — they voted unanimously to join Local 1245 just three years ago. This small but mighty team deals with many types of gas emergencies, including dig-ins, fires and vehicle impacts. They serve as point persons between internal and external parties, including dispatch, gas service managers and the emergency operations center. When a gas service rep (GSR) is dispatched to an emergency, the communications specialists need to convey accurate information about the event as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Previously, the standard practice was to call the GSR on the phone with the GSR, describing assets and critical structures in the field as the GSR traveled to the event. Upon arrival on site, the GSR would need to log in to their laptop to further assess the situation — all while trying to interact with the customers, as well as police and fire personnel.

The communications specialists had a better idea to improve this critical process. If they could email a plat map to the GSR’s phone, the GSR could identify the location of all assets in the field, and better understand the situation and potential hazards before even arriving at the event. There would be no need to

Continued on page 15
Hold the Pull Peer Safety Committee Hosts Annual Summit

On June 5, 2019, IBEW 1245's Hold the Pull (HTP) peer-to-peer electric safety committee hosted its annual Safety Summit at IBEW 1245's union hall in Vacaville, Ca. This year marks the 10th anniversary of Local 1245's peer safety program, with more than 54 of our safety stewards from a wide array of properties, including six substation members who have recently been brought in to HTP, were in attendance to make sure the group thrives. They were joined by three members from Local 77 in Washington state, where Local 1245 has been working in partnership to create a similar safety program for that local.

HTP Committee Chair Mike Van Egmond and I kicked off the day-long summit with a safety briefing, followed by the traditional moment of silence recognizing the fallen brothers of IBEW 1245.

Dela Marth was the keynote speaker at the summit. Her gut-wrenching story about her son, Apprentice Lineman Brandon Orozco, who passed away in September 2013 at the age of 28, touched everyone in the room. Orozco died while working alone in a vault, and while nobody knows exactly what happened during the accident, the investigation found that he wasn't wearing rubber gloves and he didn't have a tester with him at the time of the accident. Marth spoke about the personal impact that the accident has had on her as a mother, and how she struggled to stay on the right path as a person. She decided to turn her experience into something positive by sharing it with linemen everywhere, in an effort to try and help others avoid the experiences she endured. She has created a non-profit called Brother's Keeper, which works in conjunction with the National Sisterhood United for Journeyman Lineman to support the families of line workers after terrible tragedies. The proceeds from Marth's work and sales from her website go towards supporting families of fallen lineworkers, as well as lineworkers in the field. Items can be purchased at brotherskeeperlinemanship.com.

At the summit, attendees had the opportunity to discuss some of the major safety issues they are facing at work. Mutual aid in wildfire disaster areas was a topic that elicited much discussion. Hazards such as smoke inhalation, toxic debris, backfeed on downed lines, switching errors, and firefighters doing things they shouldn't when it comes to downed electrical lines were all raised. The group discussed changes to construction standards as they relate to wildfire disasters. Associated hazards come into play when items such as tree wire, fault tamer cutout doors, and trip saver cutout doors are being installed in the field. Conductors such as tree wires are known to lay on the ground energized, creating hazards for the public and first responders.

Utilities are reporting mixed results regarding first responder training with local fire agencies and law enforcement. The training gives them a very basic understanding of electricity, while teaching them to identify potential hazards associated with downed electrical lines or damaged electrical equipment. Emphasis for first responders has been to keep themselves and the public out of harm's way until the power company can arrive to make the area safe.

Back-feed in association with solar installations was another topic of conversation. Companies seem to have different standards for how these installations are installed. Some of the varying standards may be attributed to local electrical code.

Safety issues were also identified with resetting CSP transformers. Every-one in the room recommended that if workers see any deformities in these transformers, do not reset, due to the hazards associated with a catastrophic failure. It is much safer and less costly to replace these transformers than it is for a catastrophic failure causing a spill, fire, or severe burns to yourself.

Hold the Pull would also like to thank everyone who participated in this year's event.

— Casey Kelley, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

Sibley Award, from page 14

log in to their laptop, and it would also enable the GSR to discuss a situation over the phone with their supervisor and ensure they were looking at the same overview at the same time.

The new program started as a trial to see if it would streamline how communications specialists delivered crucial safety information to GSRs — and it was an overwhelming success. Now, almost immediately after a call is reported, the responding personnel receive a plat map in an email, and they are able to access it on their phones to see any hazards, plan isolation strategies and move the response along more quickly. The immediate notification allows the GSR to discuss a situation with their supervisor and ensures that they were looking at the same overview at the same time.

While some of the hazards are known to lay on the ground energized, creating hazards for the public and first responders, others avoid the experiences Marth endured. She has created a non-profit called Brother's Keeper, which works in conjunction with the National Sisterhood United for Journeyman Lineman to support the families of line workers after terrible tragedies. The proceeds from Marth's work and sales from her website go towards supporting families of fallen lineworkers, as well as lineworkers in the field. Items can be purchased at brotherskeeperlinemanship.com.

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Workplace Accident in Plumas County Claims the Life of IBEW Traveler

On Monday, July 22, an on-the-job accident in IBEW 1245's jurisdiction claimed the life of one IBEW member and injured another. The two men were outside line travelers from other IBEW Locals, working on a transmission line grid hardening project for Par Electric on PG&E property at the time of the accident. Preliminary reports indicate that they fell from an insulated work platform (baker board/diving board) on a transmission pole while working near Grays Flat in Plumas county.

IBEW Local 304 member Logan Grant Ruhnke, age 33, of Perry, Kansas, tragically lost his life in the accident. Ruhnke had been with the company since 2006, and recently came to California to assist with grid hardening work. According to his obituary, “Logan was equipped with a dry sense of humor that endeared him to many. He loved riding and working on all things motorized, often times pushing them to their top speed. He couldn’t sit still, and he preferred to be outdoors. He was a very hard worker and had a wide range of practical skills. There wasn’t much he couldn’t build or fix. He was known for lending a helping hand.”

IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell attended the funeral services for Brother Ruhnke, who were held on Aug. 2 in Kansas. He was joined by a large number of young line men, many of whom had traveled from California to attend the funeral.

"Logan was a dedicated, hard-working IBEW brother who left this world far too soon, and our hearts go out to his family, friends and colleagues who are grappling with this tragedy," Dalzell said.

Brother Ruhnke leaves behind a loving family, including his wife Kayla and their one-year-old son, Easton.

For those who wish to support the family, donations can be made to Easton Ruhnke Education Fund, sent in care of Danner Funeral Home, 501 N Buckeye Ave, Abilene, KS 67410. A GoFundMe has also been set up for the Ruhnke family. Please contribute what you can at gofund.me/uJlC68.

The accident is under investigation, and IBEW 1245 staffers are actively participating in the process. We will share more information on our website as it becomes available.

Utility Reporter
crews towards the end of the year. One of the biggest issues that everyone is experiencing is the inability to get enough work packages out to the 250 crews that are currently on property. This created a small slowdown in the amount of dispatches and crew build-up over the first couple of weeks in July, but thoughts are things will pick back up shortly, especially if they plan on achieving the 500 crews they state are needed for next year’s work.

This has not slowed down the number of people showing up at the hall and signing the books. Over the last three months, we have seen a record number of linemen from all over the country traveling to California to chase this work. Mondays seem to be the busiest, with linemen who traveled through the weekend to get here lining up around the building, waiting to get in. There simply isn’t enough room in our dispatch office to handle these crowds, so we have had to provide paperwork that is numbered on a first-come first-serve basis to these linemen, and we bring them into the dispatch office in groups of 5 to 10 at a time to sign and provide their documentation. This has also delayed a lot of the dispatching on those mornings back home to support these 250+ linemen who were there before 9am gets entered in the system and receives their safety orientation so they are eligible for calls on that day.

We’ve had roughly 4,500 people referred out of Local 1245 Outside Line dispatch since January 1 of this year. Our dispatchers have been extremely busy, and as a result, we’ve needed to make some adjustments to our dispatch hours of operation. Our dispatchers are now able to assist members from 7am to 9am. At 9am, the dispatch window will be closed and will not open again until one of the dispatchers completes their calls, or 1pm. This new policy is an attempt to have everyone who was there before 9am, along with all the new manpower requests, entered into the system, in order to have the dispatchers make it through this year’s work as fast as possible and have everything completed by 5pm.

All the required inspection work in the fire zone areas has been completed, and much of the work that is being done now is related to repairing what was found during the inspection. There are crews doing fire hardening work as well, and a lot of other maintenance work outside of the fire areas. We don’t see any slowdown in work anytime soon, with projections of 10-15 years’ worth of work. Currently most crews are working 6-7 days a week, 12 hours a day, with a $200 per diem. There are also an unprecedented number of contractors working in California, with many calling daily inquiring about becoming signatory.

The Paradise rebuilding efforts will soon be underway with current estimates of approximately 1.7 billion dollars to put everything underground. There are several contractors bidding this project, and we hope to find out soon who the successful bidder(s) are.

Nevada
We also have lots of work currently taking place and lots of work out to bid in Nevada. It looks like some of the surrounding utilities are following suit and beginning to look at doing some fire hardening in the wake of the fires in PG&E’s territory.

PAR has doc crews and linemen in North & South Lake Tahoe working for Liberty Utilities. PAR has recently completed their 4/25 KV cutover work in Reno.

Wasatch has 40+/- doc linemen working at various locations for NV Energy. Wasatch also has a doc crew in Yerington & Winnemucca. There are 10+/- sub techs working for NV Energy’s substation group all over the system. Wasatch has completed the 23 miles of 120 KV rebuild from Lahontan to Interstate 80.

Titan has been working their UG job pulling and splicing Million MCM feeder for a new back tie in Lemmon valley which is moving along. Titan is also working on a transmission project in Reno out of the Mira Loma sub, approximately three miles, changing out wood poles for steel and reconductoring. This project is well under way and should wrap up by early August.

Titan has also landed a job at the Pump House for a new sub in Yerington that should start soon.

TW Powerline has picked up a pole replacement job for Truckee Donner PUD and will have one crew working on that project.

Summit has picked up a small sub-transmission job for the short fiber plants and subsequent transmission line to feed it as well. The transmission line is only a real short section to tie into the existing line just outside of the plant.

Newman is near completion on two 4/25KV cutover projects in Reno, and Cache Valley has completed a project for Mt. Wheeler in Lund, NV.

Safety
Everyone who has taken a call from Local 1245 over the last five years or so has had to go through the short fire hardening training that basically goes over their responsibilities and (besides the obvious) what can happen if they are terminated for a safety violation. We need to remind our members as well as all the travelers working here that it’s their responsibility to know the contract and safety rules at Local 1245. We continue to see a rash of safety violations that have ended up with IBEW members receiving 30 or more days off and required training before being able to take another referral. A restriction here is also a restriction at Local 47 as both local unions work closely and share this information. Please be safe, as we are our Brothers’ Keepers.

New “A” Membership
We currently have 35 members in different stages of the process, seeking to obtain “A” status as a Journeyman Lineman. This process has tripled due to PG&E filing for bankruptcy. Obtaining this status is very affordable, and with it comes a small pension, an additional life insurance policy and the ability to sign the books anywhere in the country if needed. With the increased number of members applying, please allow a little extra time for approval, and if someone has plans to apply in the future, they only has a “BA” membership we encourage them to not wait until the last minute for this. Operator and Fab Tech applications are also being turned in at an increased rate due to all the work we currently have.

Organizing
Organizing is ongoing, with several new contractors contacting us on how to become signatory. Below are some of the new contractors that were signed since January 1, 2019:

CA Outside Line Construction Agreement
• Shermco (Substation)
• Outsource Utility Contractor Corp. (OSL)
• C&C Utility Inc. (OSL)
• Mesa Pacific Power (OSL)
• CalBurban Inc. (Gas)
• ICON Utility Services (OSL)
• TW Power Line Construction (OSL)

JATC
When the CalNew JATC opened the application process in February, there were over 800 applicants that qualified to sign up for the JATC. In August, we will have completed all the interviews and have everyone ranked. Shortly after that we will be looking to open up the application process again. The JATC has been running climbing schools almost weekly and has more apprentices in its current program than any other time in its past since it started.

With all the extra work in California and the demand for manpower it is always better to grow your own. Currently there are 556 outside line apprentices registered in our JATC program with 62 traveling apprentices working in our jurisdiction. We are on pace to have close to 700 apprentices in the program by the end of 2019.

As of the end of July:
• 214 Apprentices are working out of local 1245
• 31 are working out of 47
• 18 are working out of 396
• 0 are unemployed
• 7 are not available to work for various reasons
• 4 are on a leave
We have graduated 51 apprentices to journeyman lineman this year, and we have indentured 196 outside line apprentices this year.

New Facility Update
In our last report, we mentioned that the current facility in Southern California is running at capacity and the trustees have been looking for land in Northern California. It was also reported that we had 8.3 acres in Vacaville in contract for a northern facility. During the 90-day disclosure period, we found some environmental issues that were of a concern and could have delayed the construction of the facility for more than a year. It was decided to move on from that property and see what else we could find. Subsequently, we found a facility in Woodland that would have worked perfectly, and we were negotiating with the owners.

We had reached the point where everything was addressed, and at the 11th hour they decided to pull the property off the market. We are still working with the owners but need them to know that we need something now to handle the increased number of apprentices and work in Northern California. We are currently working on leasing a facility in Sacramento that can be used all week if needed until we can lock down the land we need for a new location.

The JATC is in need of instructors in Northern California and will be looking to hire a full-time instructor up north in the near future. If you are interested in teaching, please contact the CalNev JATC.

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

Know Your Contract
Every month we run into many basic contract issues with simple solutions that we are here and for ourselves by looking into the agreement. Then there are times when the answer is not that simple, and additional help is needed. In both cases, if a member or crew is not aware of or educated in the language in the agreement, conditions are broken and safety rules at Local 1245 are not followed. In some cases, members find themselves being shorted on pay. With the amount of work we have going and the large number of travelers, it is important that everyone is familiar with the agreement, so we are able to keep what has been negotiated in place. We are here and for our members applying, please allow a little extra time for approval, and if someone has plans to apply in the future, they only has a “BA” membership we encourage them to not wait until the last minute for this. Operator and Fab Tech applications are also being turned in at an increased rate due to all the work we currently have.

With all the overhead distribution work going on in the jurisdiction, it is important for everyone to know the requirements around manning crews for different types of work. This information can be found in Article VI of the agreement — specifically 6.9, Manning Line Crews. The agreement is clear, especially when discussing the work on lines and equipment of 600 volts and more, what the crew make-up should be under (b) below. This seems to be the section that gets questioned a lot, especially from workers that are new to the area.

July – September 2019
Manning Line Crews

(a) The erection of poles by hand and the stringing of all wire shall be done by regularly constituted line crews consisting of Foreman, Linemen, Groundmen, or Apprentice Linemen. Tamping and Line crews shall consist of Foreman, Lineman, Groundman or Apprentice Linemen. In such crews the majority of men shall be Linemen, Foreman included.

(b) When energized work on lines or equipment of 600 volts or more is performed except as noted in paragraph (c) below, the crew shall consist of at least three (3) Journeyman Linemen and one (1) Groundman, Foreman included, or two (2) Journeyman Lineman, one (1) Hot Apprentice, and one (1) Groundman, Foreman included. A Cold Apprentice may be substituted for a Groundman.

(c) On G.O. 95 maintenance work, radio interference, maintenance work or other light maintenance work, limited to greasing insulators, tightening of hardware, guy replacement, a three (3) man crew consisting of three (3) Journeyman Linemen (Foreman included) or two (2) Journeyman Lineman (Foreman included) and one (1) Hot Apprentice.

(d) A service crew shall consist of two (2) Journeyman Lineman or one (1) Journeyman Lineman and one (1) Apprentice. A Journeyman Lineman shall be designated as a Working Foreman on each service crew.

Dispatch

All 1245 OSL members are encouraged to sign up and register your own personal account through the Local 1245 website. Once registered, you will be able to check your books status, make changes to personal information, pay union dues and even check on available jobs without having to call the dispatch office for this information. This is a very useful tool for our OSL members.

Please call the hotline after hours for daily counts related to actual numbers on the books and for details on all available calls.

Dispatch Call Counts through the end of June

As of the end of June, local 1245’s Dispatch office had dispatched 4,370 calls. To put this in perspective of the increased load that our dispatchers are working under, over all 12 months of 2018, there were 3,883 dispatches — which was a record at the time. The Lineman classification that has been dispatched the most, with a total of 2,961 of those nearly 4,400 calls.

The dispatch office is very busy, so please refrain from calling it during dispatch hours.

Get the latest news at
www.ibew1245.com

Utility Reporter
IBEW 1245 Expands U-N-ME Program to SMUD

Four years ago, IBEW 1245 launched an innovative and unique program designed to welcome newer members into the union and help them learn more about 1245’s history, mission, goals, structure, leadership, collective bargaining agreements, politics and more. The one-day program, known as U-N-ME, was originally developed for new members at PG&E, but due to its overwhelming popularity, it quickly expanded to PG&E members with a bit more seniority. Now, U-N-ME is reaching members working for other employers as well — beginning with Local 1245’s largest public sector employer, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD).

IBEW 1245 staff organizers worked closely with SMUD Business Representative Lou Mennel to create an organizing committee comprised of IBEW 1245 members from SMUD who shaped the U-N-ME program and customized it to SMUD’s culture. Kim Camatti, a veteran Volunteer Organizing Committee (VOC) leader, led the group. Camatti was pivotal in developing the 12-month “I’m In!” campaign that led to 90% of SMUD members re-signing as voluntary dues paying members in anticipation of the Janus decision (learn more about the successful effort at ibew1245.com/2018/08/16/life-after-janus/). Kim was joined by veteran VOC member and linenman Justin Hirschi, as well as co-workers Bill Matthews and Sean Stevens, to craft the day-long curriculum that would provide the attendees with valuable information, understanding and connection to the union.

“We have so many employees at SMUD who have never even been to our union hall. I remember the nostalgic feeling I had the first time I came here to the hall, looking at all the history on the walls … I just want to share that,” said Camatti. “And I also want to help other members really understand what’s in our contract and how it got there, so they can have that same ‘A-ha!’ moment I had. We’re starting with new members, but our goal is to eventually have all the members at SMUD come through a U-N-ME session.”

The inaugural SMUD U-N-ME session took place in early May at the IBEW 1245 hall in Vacaville. The day kicked off with a brief ice-breaker, where members in attendance were asked to think of one descriptive term that describes the union: Brotherhood, Solidarity, Pride, Fairness, Representation and Strength were among the descriptive terms thrown out, and it was clear that despite being new to the union, the group already had a strong affinity for 1245 — and it would only grow stronger as the day progressed.

Before lunch, IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell stopped in to share a few personal anecdotes about some of the interesting arbitrations he worked on at SMUD as Local 1245’s in-house attorney for many decades, and tied these historic wins in to the bargaining and organizing power that Local 1245 members have continued to amass over the years. “Building worker power has been the work of my life, and I can’t imagine doing anything else besides watching workers exercise that power,” Dalzell told the group in attendance. “We’ve got a good contract at SMUD because of the power we’ve built there, and you all are the source of that power. To see you coming in to spend the day here at the union hall is just great, and the work you do makes us proud!”

Business Rep Lou Mennel proceeded to lead the new members on a deep dive into their collective bargaining agreement (or MOU as it’s often referred to in the public sector). They discovered aspects of the contract that they may never had known about otherwise, and they learned how to look up specific contractual issues should they arise at work. Mennel also explained exactly how contract negotiations work at SMUD, from the solicitation of bargaining proposals from the membership, to the back-and-forth exchanges with the employer, to the end result that enshrines the members’ workplace rights, wages, benefits and critical protections.

The members also received a comprehensive break-down on how their dues are spent, and they clearly appreciated the union’s transparency on this matter. The conversation about dues seg-ued into a discussion on politics, so the
new members could understand that the union bases its political endorsements exclusively on where the given candidate stands on utility and related labor issues, and social issues and party affiliation are not taken into account at all during the process.

Additionally, the organizers presented the attendees with a detailed overview of the union’s structure, including its shop steward, organizing steward and safety steward programs, as well as the other programs and resources that are available to members through the union. IBEW 1245 Hold the Pull Peer-to-Peer Safety Committee member Fred Aboud (NV Energy) led a conversation about safety and the importance of being our brothers’ (and sisters’) keepers on the job.

As the old saying goes, the best laid plans always seem to go astray, and thanks to a late spring storm and resulting outages in the SMUD service area, a number of members who planned to attend, including Justin Hirschi, one of the VOC leaders who helped craft the program, ended up being called in to work to restore power. But the ten members who were able to come to U-N-ME embraced the experience fully and found it engaging and enlightening.

“I think it’s pretty invaluable to know what the union stands for, because there’s a lot of questions, and a lot of misconceptions about unions … This definitely makes me feel more empowered because I have more knowledge about the union,” said SMUD Utility Worker and U-N-ME attendee Jose Medina, noting that he found the session on dues to be the most impactful. “I’m sure people can wonder where the [dues] money goes to, but when you actually come here and see where it goes, it just makes you want to be more involved.”

The attendees weren’t the only ones who appreciated the experience. The union activists and staffers also valued the opportunity to bring this kind of knowledge to the newer members.

“This was one of the most rewarding events that I have ever been a part of as a business rep for 1245,” said Mennel, the SMUD business rep. “The members spent the day learning about their union, and I also got to spend more time than usual with the membership which will shape my relationships with them moving forward.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director

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**Members Approve Successor MOU at City of Roseville**

After overwhelmingly rejecting the City’s Last, Best and Final offer, the IBEW 1245 members at the City of Roseville have approved a new three-year successor MOU with an 83% yes vote. The City Council subsequently approved the new agreement.

The successor MOU includes a 2% salary increase (or market adjustment if the market adjustment survey is higher than 2%), effective April 27, 2019, and additional market adjustment wage increases in May of 2020 and May of 2021. The bargaining committee also negotiated increases for certain certifications, including the Environmental Utilities max certification, which was increased to 5%, and DOT Tanker endorsement and USA Locate certifications will both get 1%. Members will now receive double-time pay when working outside of shift between 8:00pm and 6:00am, and non-shift classifications will get double-time when working on a holiday. Additionally, all mutual aid assignments will be paid at double-time rates.

The MOU also includes annual increases to the cafeteria flex plan, and an additional hour to the rest period. In exchange for the Columbus Day holiday, the committee negotiated eight hours as a floating holiday. Effective January 1, 2020, the CTO max accumulation will be 160 hours.

The bargaining committee consisted of Tim Abbott, Mike Barton, Jimmy Bell, Gary Kidder, Shawn Murphy, and myself.

— Charley Souders, IBEW 1245 Business Rep

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**New Agreement Ratified at Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District 1**

The IBEW Local 1245 membership at the Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District 1 unanimously ratified a four-year successor agreement with the District, which was subsequently approved and adopted by the District in mid-May. The agreement will be in effect from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2023, and includes annual wage increases based on CPI (calculated using the SFO/Hayward/San Jose index), with a maximum of 3% in each year, potentially netting 12% over the term of the agreement. The members also secured an additional $100.00 to the District’s medical contribution cap, as well as a $275.00 boot/clothing credit that can roll over for three years and does not affect FR clothing or other PPE articles.

Overall, the bargaining process itself was positive and the new agreement contains no concessions. The Local 1245 Bargaining Committee consisted of Power Distribution Journeyman Jon Aronson, Construction Crew Superintendent Brian Spellman and myself. We would also like to thank Apprentice Journeyman Power Distribution James “JJ” Logan for serving as the judge for the ratification vote.

— JV Macor, IBEW 1245 Business Rep
I n 1956, when Vicente “Bobo” Pituela was nine years old, he had his first exposure to utility linework. He was out on a walk with his mother, Lolita, in Watsonville when he walked right into a down guy wire. “Watch where you are going,” his mom told him, but Bobo’s mind was focused on the wires, and the men who were working on them. He was initially mad at the pole, and yet completely fascinated by what it was holding up. He started to wonder about the wires and how they worked. Were they telephone lines, or electric? And what about the insulators? What are they? He tried to ask the linemen, who quickly warned young Bobo not to touch them, as they’re intended to protect him from electric shock.

Bobo’s interest in linework quickly transformed into a passion. His dream was to one day become a lineman himself. But unfortunately, that would never happen—because Bobo was deaf from childhood, and as his friend Lanny Martin once explained to him, linework is just too dangerous for a deaf person, because he wouldn’t be able to hear a warning if there was a problem.

But that didn’t put a damper on Bobo’s passion. He was an avid learner and collector, and when a schoolmate’s dad, who worked for the telephone company in Monterey, brought Bobo some stuff from work, he was absolutely ecstatic.

In 1959, after spending some time at a small deaf school in Watsonville, Bobo enrolled in the California School for the Deaf, which at that time was in Berkeley. While living in Berkeley, he taught himself how to climb, first by practicing on trees, and then on utility poles—even swapping out secondary insulators at night. No one noticed.

He began taking telephones apart so he could figure out to put them back together. His friend’s dad would explain some of the aspects of how the equipment worked, and the more Bobo learned, the more he wanted to learn. He voraciously studied every book and manual that he could get his hands on. The specific terminology was hard for him, but he quickly learned how to identify the marks on the poles—“high voltage” meant danger, “electric” meant don’t touch, “telephone” was no danger. He even tested some low voltage shocks on himself with a telephone, just to see what electricity felt like.

Around that time, Bobo also began making models of PG&E line trucks. He was just 13 when he built his first model truck—self-taught, of course, as was his modus operandi. He used a photo for reference and scale, and would proceed with trial and error until he got it exactly right. He was told that his models are so accurate that they could be used in the classroom as teaching tools.

In 1967, he graduated from the school for the deaf and returned to his home on the Central Coast. There, he spent hours just watching the linemen in his community as they worked. They often had to tell him to step back, which he did... but would inch closer again, always trying to get a better look.

He recalls a time when he got to see a transformer change-out on 7th St. in his town of San Juan Bautista. The equipment was heavy, and it was a hard, slow job. But what struck Bobo was the way the crew would use hot sticks—and the moment when he saw the sparks.

He followed the crew from job to job, learning the difference between 4kv, 12kv and 21kv. The linemen grew fond of young Bobo, and as a token of affection, they’d often give him old insulators. At that time, they were doing a lot of undergrounding—and as a result, Bobo would get a lot of insulators. Those insulators, along with his models, his books, and the items he got from the phone company, were the start of his one-of-a-kind utility memorabilia collection. That collection would continue to grow for the next 50-plus years, gradually transforming his home into something that more closely resembled a museum.

When he was in his early 20s, Bobo constructed his most outstanding model—a full mock-up of a nearby substation, complete with switches that work mechanically. It was challenging for him, and he used a reference book to make sure the model was true-to-life. He was living with his father in Bakersfield at the time, and spent a full six months working on the model. Once it was finally complete, it was so enormous that he struggled to get it through the door of his house in San Juan! He showed it at a number of fairs, and even took a first-place prize at the San Benito County fair.

In his later years, he became a well-known face around insulator trade shows. He would take his collection of decommissioned utility equipment to give it new life. Even though Bobo never got a chance to work in the utility industry, he cultivated so much knowledge and pride for the craft, and I wanted to do something special for him. So this spring, at the annual IBEW 1245 Service Awards in Monterey, I made Bobo an honor-ary member of IBEW 1245. I presented him with his very own union card, and an enlarged copy of a drawing of a lineman. This isn’t something I would do for just anyone—but Bobo isn’t just anyone. He’s a brilliant, remarkable mind, a highly skilled craftsman, and a kind-hearted individual who embodies all the traits we celebrate at IBEW 1245. He carries his union ticket around in his wallet and proudly shows it off to all of his lineman friends when he sees them around town.

I’m honored to call Bobo a brother. He’s an inspiration to us all.

— Tom Datzell, IBEW 1245

Business Manager

July – September 2019
I first met Bobo back in 1985 or 1986. At that time, I was a new foreman, and in accordance with General Orders 95 and 128, PG&E would send us out for compliance inspections along with a company auditor after new jobs were completed. On one of those inspections in Hollister, something caught my attention that would be the start of a wonderful friendship.

In the yard, there was a model of a utility pole inside a beautiful glass display case that struck me. The detail was incredible, and I could tell it was handmade. We had work to do, but the auditor told me he knew who made the model from his previous visits to the PG&E system, and assured me he would take me to meet him.

That night, we traveled to meet Bobo in nearby San Juan Bautista. When we got to his house, I felt like a kid in a candy store. I was blown away by all of the memorabilia he had collected. Bobo also had his creativity on display: he was making lamps out of old utility meters with hard hats for shades.

I told Bobo I could get him some more meters, and I started bringing him old equipment. At that time, we would take in meters as people were upgrading their systems. When my career started in San Francisco in the early 1970s, there was still old utility equipment all over the city from the 1920s, 30s and 40s. We were going to throw those old meters and tools away, so I would sign these things out and take them to Bobo by the bus load.

Bobo has been deaf since childhood. His mother, Lolita, told me that one day, while out for a ride with his dad, Bobo started making a big commotion in the back seat, which was unusual for him. He was fixated on something. Bobo’s dad looked out the window and saw workers going up a utility pole. He pulled the car over and learned it was a PG&E crew doing line work. He asked the foreman if he and Bobo could come back the next day to watch the crew work. They did, and Bobo brought his drawing easel. The pictures Bobo drew that day won a gold medal at the California State Fair.

Despite Bobo’s hearing impairment, communication has never been an issue between us. We had an instant connection over his utility memorabilia, and also over his love of old toy trains, an interest of mine as well. Our friendship blossomed from there.

Over the years, my wife and I would visit Bobo every two or three months and also enjoyed getting to know Lolita, who was heavily involved in the community. One of my most prized possessions is a gift from Bobo: one of his meter lamps with a hard hat shade.

— George Lindsey, 42-year IB EW 1245 member and PG&E Electric Crew Foreman

Bobo and Lindsey bonded over a shared love of model trains and linework.
I met Bobo somewhere around late 2006 or early 2007. I was an apprentice lineman, renting a town house that came with a gardener as part of the rent. This was before PG&E issued uniforms, so I didn’t wear clothes that totally gave away that I was a PG&E guy. I had seen Bobo around the neighborhood, but didn’t get a chance to talk to him for the first month or two. Then one night, as I was returning home from work, Bobo was sitting on his truck tailgate waiting for me. He motioned for me to come over to the backyard, and pointed at my wooden pin cross arm horseshoe pits. He began to write down words on his note pad, and it was at that moment when I realized he was deaf. But I couldn’t believe what he was writing down — he knew everything there was to know about that cross arm! It was a wooden pin, single light cross arm that was made before 1960. This was the start of our friendship, and from that day forward, Bobo and I have been close friends, like family.

During the next two years, we had many days writing back and forth on note pads. I remember one night when Bobo showed up late to mow the yard, and he looked through the window and saw my book of standards on the table. It was the large blue overhead book, and Bobo knew right away that I must be studying, because I didn’t come outside to meet him. He saw the pages that I was studying (it was the section on transformer connections, which I needed to learn for my upcoming wage progression test) and took off. I didn’t know what was about to happen, but out of nowhere Bobo showed back up with wooden pole models that he had built, complete with amazingly accurate transformers on them. They were perfect in size, shape, color, and even were wired correctly on both the high side and low side. I was blown away by his smarts, seeing as how he had never even taken lineman classes,
had never worked as a lineman – yet somehow knew how to wire a transformer as if he’d spent years on the job. At that point, I realized just how special and rare Bobo is. For fun, I copied extra study guides from class and would give them to Bobo as “homework” – but really, he was the one teaching me. Bobo would finish the assignments so fast, and add so much detail — like voltage, delta or wye connections — into the answers, that he was actually helping me understand transformers from a different angle.

Because of Bobo’s deafness, no one would hire him to do such a dangerous job, but if given a chance, I know he could have done the job at a very high level. Bobo is a good climber – he told me that back in the day, he would climb up to secondary level and look around, and even change out insulators, swapping new ones for old ones that he liked or didn’t already have.

That brings me to his collection. Bobo not only has the knowledge and passion, he also has the obsession with the history of the trade, just like so many of us linemen. Whether it be books, models, or old insulators, Bobo collected them all. If you didn’t personally know Bobo’s history and were to sit down with him, you would leave the conversation thinking you were just talking with an old lineman.

— Ryan Skelton, IBEW 1245 Business Rep and former PG&E Journeyman Lineman

Photos by John Storey

Skelton and Bobo share a fist-bump.

Tom Dalzell presented Bobo with a certificate, artwork and IBEW 1245 membership card at the IBEW 1245 Monterey Pin Dinner on March 29.
When IBEW 1245 founder Ron Weakley passed away several years ago, he left a box of his cufflinks to 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. At the quarterly Advisory Council meeting in Reno, Dalzell bequeathed a set of Weakley’s cufflinks to Ron Borst, president of 1245’s Reno-Sparks Retirees Club and a longtime 1245 activist who helped launch Local 1245’s organizing renaissance.

“Around 10 years ago, Nevada Energy, which had traditionally had a good collaborative relationship with 1245, had a rogue CEO named Michael Yackira, who went to extreme lengths to strip away our retirees’ medical benefits that they had earned over the years,” Dalzell told the Advisory Council. “But the retirees rose up in an amazing way, and we launched a campaign against Nevada Energy to win it back, all with the leadership of these retirees. Two things happened as a result of this campaign — one is we won. And the other thing that happened was a radical transformation of IBEW 1245.”

Dalzell went on to explain how the retirees, including Borst and several others in attendance, inspired 1245’s ground-breaking organizing steward program, which has proven to be remarkably successful and has transformed the union into the organizing, legislative and political powerhouse that it is today. He then brought Borst up, flanked by his fellow NV Energy retirees, including his wife Vicki, and presented him with the cufflinks, along with a 50-year pin.

Borst graciously accepted the thoughtful gift, but his wife had a surprise in store for Dalzell.

“Ron and I are very honored with the presentation of the memorabilia of Ron Weakley for Ron’s 50th anniversary of being in IBEW,” she told Dalzell and the rest of the union’s leadership. “Ron asked me to inform you that yes, he will wear the cufflinks, but in the very distant future, he plans to make a slate case for the set and present them back to the hall to be displayed.”

Borst in turn gifted Dalzell with an IBEW coin, which were commonly carried by IBEW members back in the days when Borst worked at the utility. He had collected several such coins to incorporate into the hand-crafted IBEW coffee table that he created and gifted to the union several years ago (which can be seen and enjoyed in the lobby of Weakley Hall), and he found it fitting to pass along the extra coin to Dalzell.

This spring, IBEW 1245’s organizing stewards helped propel our ally, Republican Lawmaker Brian Dahle, to victory in a California State Senate Special Election (see full story on page 12). At the Advisory Council meeting in Reno, Business Manager Tom Dalzell recognized the extraordinary work of the six organizing stewards who were dispatched to work on the campaign for nearly three weeks, and their fellow stewards who volunteered their evening and weekend time to help get out the vote for Dahle.

“Brian Dahle called me the day after the election and said, ‘I’d never seen anything like this! I walked into the Central Labor Council and saw 20 people...”

Local 1245 Leadership Applauds Organizing Stewards Who Helped Elect Dahle to California Senate
Three-year IBEW 1245 member Troy Steen has won the IBEW 1245 quarterly photo contest. His winning photo, shown here, depicts fellow IBEW 1245 member Walter Wroten, a climber working for Davey Tree, on a line clearance tree trimming job near Colfax, CA. Steen captured the photo from a 100ft bucket truck.

Brother Steen was unable to accept his prize in person, but his winning image was recognized during the July Advisory Council meeting in Reno, and he received his $500 prize check by mail.

Submissions are now being accepted for our next quarterly contest. All active 1245 members in good standing are eligible to enter. Photo entries should be original, job-related and in a high-resolution format. Photos must be submitted by the member who captured the image.

Send entries to RGB1@IBEW1245.com, and be sure to include your full name and member number or date of birth to confirm eligibility.
IBEW 1245’s newly elected Executive Board was sworn in on July 22 in Reno. Back row, from left: Southern Area Board Member Willy Garris, Central Area Board Member Gary Maschio, PG&E General Construction At-Large Board Member Stan Zamora, Line Clearance Tree Trimmers and Outside Construction Board member Scott Hudelson, Treasurer Tom Cornell. Front row, from left: Business Manager Tom Dalzell, Vice President James “Hammer” Hayes, President Cecelia De La Torre, North Area Board Member Steve Segale, Recording Secretary Rachel Ramirez.

Local 1245 Congratulates 22-Year Executive Board Member Anna Bayless Martinez on Her Retirement

After 39 years as a member of IBEW 1245, including a whopping 22 years serving on its Executive Board, Anna Bayless Martinez has retired from her role as one of 1245’s most dedicated union leaders.

At the Advisory Council meeting in Reno, Martinez’ longtime friend and colleague, Dorothy Fortier, presented Martinez with a commemorative plaque to honor her for her many years of service to the union.

“In 22 years, I’ve worked under three business managers. Tom is one, Perry Zimmerman was one, and Jack McNally — and there were struggles under all of them,” Martinez recalled, underscoring the challenges that union leaders face in representing their members. “With this leadership, I know you’re going to go far and take care of those struggles we’re going to be finding in the future.”

Martinez took a moment to thank the many inspirational women who mentored her and supported her over the decades, including Fortier, as well as the late Debbie Mazzanti, and union staffers Gail Varner, Tonya Alston and Karen Kiley.

“I just want you all to know that I appreciate you and I love you all,” she added.
New Contractors, Production Pressure, Bankruptcy and Bargaining

I t has been a very hectic year for every- one in this work group. 2018 ended with a lot of uncertainties and 2019 began with a lot of changes. Between new contractors, a lot of movement with members changing companies and/or locations, and the PG&E bankruptcy, there has been no shortage of issues, with new ones cropping up daily.

Some of these things may be settling down a bit, however there is still a lot to do. 2019 is the final year of our collective bargaining agreement, and we now have several new contractors added to the mix. During the last round of negoti- ations, we represented members from 15 different contractors, and as of July 1, 2019 we have added another 19 new contractors to this list (see below). We expect several more to be added, as the Project Labor Agreements we had in place at the end of 2018 expired, and these contracts will now be on the open market under that PLA and want to continue to work here will have to come in to the Master Agreement. This will add a whole other level to negotiations this year, which we expect to begin towards the end of August or early September.

Between the volume of work, the number of man-hours, and the nature of the industry that is a combination of two very high-risk types of work — logging and high voltage work — the safety of our members is a big concern. There are a lot of new contractors, a lot of production pressure, and as previously mentioned, a lot weighing on our mem- bers’ minds. We urge everyone to remain vigilant and don’t compromise yours or your co-worker’s safety for any- thing.

Newly Organized Tree Companies

The following companies have signed the routine LCTT agreement since February 2019. Many had worked under the PLA in 2018, but have now transitioned to the full Master Agreement.

- AAA Tree Service
- ABC Landscaping & Excavation, Inc.
- Arborworks, Inc.
- Caltrees Inc.
- Carlos Tree Service
- CJ Tree Care, Inc.
- Core Tree Care, Inc.
- Evergreen Arborists, Inc. – Pro Forest Division
- Family Tree
- FSEI
- Kinsborough Atlas Tree Surgery Inc.
- Pride Contracting Inc.
- R&B Quality Tree Care, Inc.
- Rapid Response Services
- Rapid Response Force LLC
- Rolling Green, Inc.
- Southern Disaster Recovery, LLC
- Wilhelm, Inc.

We recently filed grievances because some of these companies are violating the agreement by not signing up their employees or paying and reporting the monthly fringe benefits (medical, pension, etc) and dues. With all the move- ment and changes in this workgroup, some of this was difficult to track. Things have settled down and we have a better tracking mechanism in place that will allow us to do a better job of holding the employers accountable. With this new information, we expect to file more in the next few weeks.

Reports below are from the Business Representatives for each area.

Northern Area

Things are still very busy in the Northern Area. The work in Paradise fol- lowing the Camp Fire is finally wrapping up. There are still a few crews up there doing the final clean-up work, but the majority of it has been completed, and most of the crews that were working there have now moved out to different areas and are performing Enhanced Vegetation Management (EVM) work.

When they were assigned to the Camp Fire project, these members were working under the Project Labor Agree- ment, and while the total direct labor costs were the same under the PLA as they are under the Master Agreement, the benefits — such as medical, paid holidays, pension, etc. — were paid out in wages to the members (added to their basic wages is an increase in their hourly rate) instead of being put into the funds. Now that the PLA has expired and the companies are being required to sign the routine Master Agreement, the members are receiving all the paid benefits in lieu of that increased hourly rate they had under the PLA. This has caused a lot of confusion for some members. However, we’ve heard from some members who don’t want the ben- efits and would prefer to keep the higher hourly rate, but this is not an option under the Master Agreement, and it has caused a few people to walk away from the job.

All prime tree companies are behind schedule right now. Some of them are so far behind that PG&E has pulled the EVM work, and some routine work, from them and issued it to other companies just to try to get everything back on schedule. This has made a few of the members that work for the prime con- tractors think that their company is going under, and they are nervous that they might have to switch companies again. We have had to do a lot of explaining that PG&E is doing every- thing they can to get things back on schedule. The prime contractors would love to do the work themselves, but the manpower just isn’t there right now, as trained and skilled employees are very hard to come by. Some companies are even offering sign-on bonuses to try to recruit new workers. There is plenty of work out there, but we are hearing that there are not enough applicants.

Unit meeting attendance has been down slightly this past quarter com- pared to last quarter. This can mostly be attributed to the members who have switched areas where they work and now have longer commutes, and at the end of the day, they just want to get home and see their families.

Grievances have also been down this quarter. Most problems have just been due to misunderstanding and can usu- ally be solved with just a phone call or a conversation. There have been some issues in trying to get all the correct sen- iority dates figured out for the members that switched contractors. This caused members at a couple different compa- nies to not get their holiday pay for Memorial Day, and we worked hard to get those issues resolved.

We are looking forward to a very busy season with crews working lots of over- time as PG&E keeps pushing to get back on track. Hopefully there will be no big fires this year, and we can stick to our plan and finally start getting a hold on things.

Central Area

Asplundh Tree Expert (Nevada Energy) — The majority of the work continues in Reno and recently expanded to Lake Tahoe. The company’s been in a hiring mode for a while, with NVE controlling how many crews to hire, and trying to get the crews to come over. Unfortunately, the membership is interested in seeing sub- stantial changes in the upcoming negoti- ations. We expect proposals to start trickling in as we get close to the fall of 2019. We know the company’s having a hard time getting people to apply for work, even with companies such as Davey running an incentive program to get people to apply. It’s very difficult to get anyone to apply, especially in the Bay Area.

In the Sierra Division, the company is yet to lose the GRC committee in Northern Nevada, which was captured on video, and is now here. We’re still working on this matter. Unit meeting attendance has been average.

Mountain Enterprise (Liberty Energy/PGE) — The company has been ramping up crews all over the sys- tem, most notably in Placerville and Auburn, where Davey Tree shipped out 25 of its crews to assist crews in their own areas. We are sometimes left not knowing where the crews are located, and this continues to be one of the key issues we have with the company. We’ll be pushing the issue of giving the union specific headquarter work loca- tions to perform crew visits. We know there was a stand down in June due to back-to-back outages on PG&E prop- erty, and yet we have yet to receive any information from the company.

Davey Tree Surgery and Pole Test and Treatment — The GRC committee is still working on a few open griev- ances. We expect to be securing another GRC committee meeting on new mat- ters/system-wide. We have a group in the Golden Gate Division with high expectations in changing a contract con- tract with a cost of living increase. The membership is interested in seeing sub- stantial changes in the upcoming negoti- ations. We expect proposals to start trickling in as we get close to the fall of 2019. We know the company’s having a hard time getting people to apply for work, even with companies such as Davey running an incentive program to get people to apply. It’s very difficult to get anyone to apply, especially in the Bay Area.

We are getting back to back-to-back outages on PG&E property. OSHA supports our position and makes our case. We look forward to pushing this matter forward. To all members save your receipts as we fight this one!

There was a major outage in the Wal- nut Creek area that impacted a substa- tion. No injuries that we are aware of, only a bad plan in a tree removal job. Again, companies are not reporting what’s happening in their cities. Fortunately, the membership is keeping us informed of what’s going on. Unit meet- ings have been good in the Bay and weak in the Foothills.

Utility Tree Service (Roseville, and City of Palo Alto) — Work has been steady at Roseville and Palo Alto. No injuries to report. UT’s is no longer per- forming work on PG&E property.

Wright Tree (SMUD, East Bay, San Jose Transmission) — Hiring continues to take place at SMUD with crews being sent to work in the Bay Area on PG&E contracts. The company has been represented at SMUD which was captured on video, involving a General Foreman who got extremely out of hand with a crew mem- ber. We expect to meet with the com-
Nuevos contratistas, presión de producción, quiebra y negociación

Este ha sido un año muy agitado para todos en este grupo de trabajo. El año 2018 finalizó con muchas incertidumbres y 2019 comenzó con muchos cambios. Entre los hay nuevos contratistas, mucho movimiento de los miembros que cambian de compañía y/o de lugar de trabajo, y la bancarrota de PG&E, no faltan asuntos que resolver, y diariamente surgen nuevos asuntos.

Algunos de estos teman están resolviendo, pero aún hay mucho por hacer. 2019 es el último año de nuestro acuerdo de negociación colectiva, y ahora tenemos contratistas adicionales.

En la última ronda de negociaciones, representamos a miembros de 15 diferentes contrataciones, y el 1 de julio de 2019, habíamos añadido 19 nuevos contratistas a nuestra lista (ver más abajo). Esperamos añadir varios más, ya que los Acuerdos de trabajo por proyecto (PLA por sus siglas en inglés) que teníamos vigentes a finales de 2018 caducaron, y estos contratistas que habían firmado los PLA y quieren continuar trabajando aquí, tendrán que formar parte del Acuerdo Maestro. Esto agregará una faceta completamente nueva a las negociaciones de este año, las cuales esperamos que comiencen a finales de agosto o principios de septiembre.

Entre el volumen de trabajo, la canti- dad de horas-hombre, y el tipo de trabajo, que es una combinación de dos trabajos de alto riesgo: la tala y el trabajo en líneas de alta tensión, la seguridad y de nuestros miembros es un gran problema. Hay muchos de nuestros contratistas, menos presión sobre la producción, y como mencionamos anteriormente, nuestros miembros tienen muchas cosas en qué pensar. Insistimos a todos a permanecer alertas y a no comprometer para nada su seguridad, porque esta es nuestra profecía reiterada.

Compañías de poda de árboles recientemente organizadas

Las siguientes compañías han firmado el acuerdo de poda de árboles y despeje de líneas (LCCT por sus siglas en inglés) desde febrero de 2019. Muchas han trabajado bajo el PLA desde 2018, pero ahora han pasado al Acuerdo Maestro completo.

- AAA Tree Service
- ABC Landscaping & Excavation, Inc.
- Arborworks, Inc.
- Caltrees Inc.
- Carlos Tree Service
- CJ Tree Care, Inc.
- Core Tree Care, Inc.
- Evergreen Arborists, Inc. – Pro Forest Division
- Family Tree
- FSEI
- Kimberleigh Atlas Tree Surgery Inc.
- Pride Contracting Inc.
- R&B Quality Tree Care, Inc.
- Rancho Tree Service
- Rapid Response Force LLC
- Rolling Green, Inc.
- Southern Disaster Recovery, LLC
- Wilheln, Inc.

Recientemente hemos presentado reclamos porque algunas de estas compañías no están cumpliendo el acuerdo al no inscribir a sus miembros en el sindicato, o pagando e informando sobre los beneficios mensuales adicionales (seguro médico, jubilación, etc.) y las cuotas. Ha sido difícil hacerle seguimiento a todo esto debido a todos los movimientos y cambios. Las cosas se han calmado y tenemos un mejor mecanismo de seguimiento que nos permitirá hacer rendir cuentas a los empleadores de una manera más eficiente. Con esta nueva información, esperamos presentar más reclamos las próximas semanas.

Los informes de que se han presentado refieren que se ha presentado un nuevo grupo de miembros bajo el Acuerdo Maestro. Esto agregará una faceta completamente nueva a las negociaciones de este año, las cuales esperamos que comiencen a finales de agosto o principios de septiembre.

Zona norte

La zona norte continúa con mucha actividad. Finalmente están concluyendo los trabajos en Paradise después del incendio del campamento. Todavía quedan algunas cuadrillas haciendo el trabajo de limpieza final, pero la mayoría del trabajo se ha completado y la mayoría de las cuadrillas están trabajando ahora en otras zonas y están ejecutando trabajo de gestión mejorada de la vegetación (EVM por sus siglas en inglés).

Cuando fueron asignados al proyecto del incendio del campamento, estos miembros estaban trabajando bajo el Acuerdo Maestro, pero solamente ahora que el área está ahora bajo la jurisdicción de PG&E, son reclamados bajo el Acuerdo Maestro y la mayoría de los contratistas no están cumpliendo con el Acuerdo Maestro, los beneficios se pagan, jubilación, etc., se pagan como parte de los salarios a los miembros del Acuerdo Maestro y no es un acuerdo de tiempo y PG&E continúa presionando para ponerse al día. Esperamos que este año no haya grandes retos, y que podamos cumplir con el programa de trabajo en alto riesgo de los Caídos, y hemos trabajado arduamente para resolver estos asuntos.

Zona central

Asplundh Tree Expert (Nevada Energy) — La mayoría del trabajo continúa en Reno y se ha ampliado con el programa de incentivos para conseguir nuevos empleados, incluso compañías que han llegado a pensar que su compañía no está cumpliendo con el Acuerdo Maestro y la mayoría de los casos se encuentran en la etapa de revisión. Todos los asuntos se están revisando cuidadosamente, y si no se resuelven, se llevarán al comité de arbitraje previo. Según lo que resulte de allí, podrían llevarse a arbitraje para su solución definitiva.

La compañía todavía tiene cuadrillas en toda la división Golden Gate, East Bay y Sierra. Hemos recibido quejas de que no todas las horas han sido notificadas a Línea. Estamos realizando seguimiento con Línea y la compañía para abordar este asunto. La compañía ha estado haciendo hasta el momento.

Mountain Enterprise (Liberty Energy/PG&E) — La compañía ha estado aumentando el número de cuadrillas en todo el sistema, especialmente en Placerville y Auburn, donde Davey Tree envio 25 cuadrillas para ayudar a las cuadrillas de otras zonas. A veces no sabemos dónde se encuentran las cuadrillas, y este sigue siendo uno de los principales problemas que tenemos con la compañía. Seguiremos presionando con la compañía y la Asociación para abordar este asunto. La compañía ha estado en la semana.

Davy Tree Surgery y Pole Test and Treatment — El Comité de resolución de quejas continúa trabajando a pesar de algunos contratiempos. Esperamos fijar otra reunión del Comité de resolución de quejas en los próximos meses para que podamos resolver los asuntos a tiempo o después de los eventos. Hay mucho trabajo que hay que hacer. Hemos recibido muchos denuncios contra la compañía. Seguiremos presionando con la compañía y la Asociación para que todo esté al día.

La división Sierra, la compañía ha recibido el con el plan de regionalización de PG&E, y este fue presentado en febrero de 2019. Ahora la compañía está obligada a acatar todas las políticas de Mountain Enterprise (ME) en lo que se refiere a equipos de protección personal (PPE). ME entrega camisas mangas largas a todos los empleados para que usen en el trabajo. Davey dice que no cumplirán con esa política. Así que se les informó a nuestros miembros que tenían que comprar sus propias camisas. No estamos de acuerdo con la compañía y presentaremos un reclamo contra Davey Tree Surgery. OSHA apoya nuestra posición, pero necesitamos continuar presionando sobre este asunto. Mensaje a todos los miembros: guarden sus recibos mientras leemos este asunto!
Árboles, de la página 28

Hubo una interrupción de electricidad importante en la zona de Walnut Creek que afectó a una subestación Hastie. No hubo lesiones, solo un mal plan al remover un árbol. Nuevamente, las compañías no están informando sobre lo que sucede en campo, pero afortunadamente los miembros nos mantienen informados sobre lo que acontece. Las reuniones de la unidad han sido buenas en Bay Area y flojas en Fondthills.

Utility Tree Service (Roseville y Ciudad de Palo Alto) — El trabajo ha permanecido constante en Roseville y Palo Alto. No hay lesiones que reportar. UTS ya no realiza trabajos en las instalaciones de PG&E.

Wright Tree (SMUD, East Bay, San Jose Transmisión) — Continúan las contrataciones de empleados en SMUD y las cuadrillas se están enviando a Bay Area para trabajar en las líneas de transmisión de PG&E. Hubo un incidente en SMUD que fue filmado en video, donde un Capataz General perdió el control con un miembro de la cuadrilla. ¡Esperamos reunirnos pronto con la compañía para discutir cómo van a manejar este asunto! La asistencia a las reuniones de la unidad ha sido promedio.

Zona Sur

El segundo trimestre ha sido muy intenso, y todos los contratistas están retrasados debido al inicio tardío. Todos los contratistas están contratando a nuevos empleados, y la mayoría no tiene experiencia. Estamos viendo que algunos contratos contratan operadores de tierra y los asignan a catapatas, lo que hace que el capataz de la cuadrilla tenga que trabajar más, y se están cansando de no recibir la ayuda que necesitan. Se quejan de que esta no es una situación segura, porque si algo les sucede a ellos, los operadores de tierra no los podrían rescatar. Los contratistas de poda de árboles están contratando a estos empleados con clasificación de operadores de tierra para pagar menores tarifas, y esto trae como consecuencia una situación de trabajo insegura.

La mayoría de los contratistas están trabajando 10 horas diarias y los piden a sus empleados que trabajen los sábados también, para intentar ponerse al día con el programa de mantenimiento de árboles, las previsiones de aumentos y los proyectos de árboles que PG&E les está solicitando. Como consecuencia de esto, las capacitaciones se han relegado a segundo plano, lo cual puede ser un factor contribuyente en muchas de las interrupciones de electricidad y accidentes. Se ignora la capacitación y la seguridad para aumentar la producción, y pensamos que esto es consecuencia directa de los precios unitarios.

El verano llegó, y tenemos problemas de agua y hielo en la zona sur, donde ya han ocurrido tres incidentes de agotamiento por calor. Los días calurosos, no tomar suficiente agua y la preocupación de cumplir con el número de árboles que hay que reportar cada día, hace que un miembro se enferme. Tenemos problemas con muchos contratistas de poda de árboles que no informan sobre sus empleados al sindicato, o no envían toda la información necesaria, como las capacitaciones, los salarios y los nombres. Hemos presentando reclamos y estamos trabajando para corregir estos problemas.

La asistencia a las reuniones de la unidad ha disminuido porque después de trabajar 10 horas diarias, las personas están cansadas y tienen cosas que hacer en sus hogares, y quieren tiempo para estar con sus familias. Espero que el tercer trimestre tengamos noticias mejores y más seguras, a medida que nos acercamos a las negociaciones con todos los contratistas de poda de árboles en los meses venideros.

Despeje de árboles con relativa facilidad

Cuando las ramas de los árboles entran en contacto con las líneas eléctricas, puede ocurrir un corte de energía, o incluso un incendio. Y gracias a un invierno muy húmedo y lluvioso, el follaje en California este año es excepcionalmente abundante y crece muy rápido. Se acerca la temporada de incendios, y los podadores de árboles para el despeje de líneas del IBEW 1245, están trabajando incansablemente para despejar decenas de miles de árboles que han crecido y están demasiado cerca de líneas eléctricas, en un esfuerzo incesante de mantener seguras a nuestras comunidades, y ayudar a que la red eléctrica sea confiable.

Todas las compañías que prestan servicio eléctrico en el estado, están obligadas a mantener una distancia de despeje alrededor de sus líneas eléctricas. En vista del aumento en el crecimiento de los árboles y el riesgo de incendio, esto significa que hay más podadores de árboles del 1245 trabajando más horas, en condiciones difíciles, para completar el trabajo.

A principio de julio, la publicación Utility Reporter entrevistó a una cuadrilla de podadores de árboles del 1245 de Wright Tree Services, que estaban trabajando para despejar ramas de las líneas eléctricas cerca de la escuela James Marshall Elementary en Modesto.

"Estamos podando bajo las líneas de transmisión de la página 43

Clearing Trees With Relative Ease

When tree branches come into contact with power lines, it can result in an outage — or even a fire. And thanks to a very wet and rainy winter, the foliage in California is exceptionally abundant and fast-growing this year. With fire season upon us, IBEW 1245’s line clearance tree trimmers are working tirelessly to clear tens of thousands of trees that have grown too close to power lines, in a never-ending effort to keep our communities safe and our power reliable.

Every utility in the state is required to maintain a clearance around their lines — and given the increased tree growth and risk of fire, that means more 1245 tree trimmers are working longer hours in challenging conditions to get the work done.

In early July, the Utility Reporter caught up with a 1245 tree trimming crew from Wright Tree Service as they worked to clear branches from lines near James Marshall Elementary School in Modesto.

“We are trimming under 12KV, doing routine trimming on the Paradise substation line to create minimum clearance, which is 10 feet away from the power lines — that’s what MID (Modesto Irrigation District) requires," Foreman Juan Amezcua explained.

While time is always of the essence with line clearance tree work, Amezcua and his crew were facing an unusual sort of time constraint at that particular job. They needed to finish up before school let out — and it happened to be an early-dismissal day — in order to make way for the school buses that continued on page 43

Carlos de arte, de la página 37

Utility Reporter 29
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT

To the Officers and Members or the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local No. 1245
Vacaville, California

Report on the Financial Statements. We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local No. 1245 for the year then ended and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management’s Responsibility for the Financial Statements. Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with the cash basis: this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor’s Responsibility. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

As described in Note 1, these financial statements are prepared on the cash basis of accounting, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. Accordingly, the accompanying statements are not intended to present financial position and results of operations in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.

Opinion. In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the cash basis transactions of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1245 for the year ended December 31, 2018 and its financial position (cash basis) at December 31, 2018 in accordance with the basis of accounting described in Note 1 to the statements.

Report on Supplementary Information. Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The accompanying supplemental information is presented for the purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounts and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounts and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounts and other records used to prepare the financial statements.

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL NO. 1245 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS December 31, 2018

Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash equivalents</td>
<td>$10,626,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>$10,626,588</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liabilities and Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>$10,626,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL NO. 1245 STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS POLITICAL DONATION FUND Designated For the Year Ended December 31, 2018

Cash balance, December 31, 2017 | $7,574 |

Receipts: Portion of Local Union dues directly deposited to this fund | $96,335 |

Total receipts and balance | $103,909 |

Disbursements:
- Capital Web Works- filing fees | $291,795 |
- Secretary of State- annual fees | $100 |
- Refund dues | $291,795 |
- Rob Bonita for State Assembly 2018 | $3,500 |
- David Chiu Assembly 2018 | $2,000 |
- Tony Thurmond for Superintendent | $4,700 |
- Bay Area Legislative Leaders PAC | $2,500 |
- So. Bay Labor Council | $2,000 |
- Malia Vella for Alameda City Council | $3,000 |
- Jim Oddie for City Council | $3,000 |
- Newsom for CA Governor | $29,200 |
- Patterson for Assembly 2018 | $4,400 |
- Marc Berman for Assembly 2018 | $4,400 |
- Jim Casper for Assembly 2018 | $4,400 |
- Ash Kabra for Assembly 2018 | $3,000 |
- Jim Wood for Assembly 2018 | $4,400 |
- Tim Grayson for Assembly 2018 | $4,400 |
- Lorena Gonzalez for Assembly 2018 | $4,400 |
- Glazer for Senate 2020 | $2,500 |
- Chris Holden for Assembly 2018 | $8,800 |
- Jordan Cunningham for Assembly | $1,500 |
- Committee to Elect Kelvin Atkinson | $2,900 |
- Friends of Joyce Woodhouse NV | $1,000 |
- Jimmy Pudding for County Supervisor | $1,500 |
- Committee to Elect Chris Brooks NV | $2,000 |
- General Fund State of California | $3,010 |

Cash balance December 31, 2018 | $102,815 |

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL NO. 1245 STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Cash and investments balance, beginning December 31, 2017 | $12,744,573 |

Receipts:
- Local Union portion of receipts: | |
  - “K members’ dues | $1,589,740 |
  - “BA” members’ dues | $20,169,018 |
  - 2018 initiation fees | $48,543 |
  - Reimbursement fees | $7,940 |
  - Agency fees | $182,979 |
  - Working dues | $874,288 |
  - Hiring hall dues | $347,804 |
  - Retirees’ club dues | $15,789 |

Reimbursements to General Fund: | |
- Interest and investment income | ($976,270) |
- Refunds and reimbursements: | |
  - Union Shopper | $56,624 |
  - Other receipts | $67,499 |
  - Automobles sales | $22,157 |

International portion of receipts: | |
- “K members’ per capita | $1,616,927 |
- “BA” members’ per capita | $3,325,898 |
- 2018 initiation fees | $54,570 |
- D.B.A.F Fees | $3,108 |
- Reimbursement fees | $21,421 |
- Agency fees | $54,569 |
- Total receipts | $5,076,420 |
- Total balance and receipts | $48,146,340 |

Disbursements, per Page 16 of Schedule of Disbursements | $38,596,467 |

Cash and investments balance, December 31, 2018, Details in Statement of Financial Position arising from cash transactions | $9,749,693 |

July – September 2019
### Salaries Paid or Reimbursed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee/Office</th>
<th>Salaries Paid or Reimbursed</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Membership expenses

- **Supplies - Intl.**: 18,896
- **Supplies - Local**: 29,433
- **Membership fees**: 43,590
- **Labor Day Picnic**: 550
- **Union Shopper**: 77,301
- **Lineman Shoulder**: 86,839
- **Clay Shoot**: 6,726
- **Members Training/Education**: 118
- **Translation to Spanish**: 12,490
- **Golf tournament**: 2,874

**Total Disbursements**: $38,396,647

### Other Disbursements

- **Legal fees**: 629,219
- **Hall rentals**: 126,105
- **Workmen’s compensation insurance**: 141,411
- **Refunds**: 14,609
- **FDL fees**: 27,984
- **Miscellaneous taxes**: 1,523
- **Insurance-cyber security**: 2,825
- **Insurance - travel**: 2,700
- **Insurance - auto**: 58,298
- **Insurance - bonds**: 570
- **Insurance - professional liability**: 100,225
- **Audit fees**: 54,250
- **Charitable donations**: 43,700
- **Miscellaneous fees**: 386
- **Sales tax**: 10,914
- **UCC-7**: 3,753
- **Community Unit Fund**: 31,030
- **Lobbying NV**: 6,000
- **Contributions-wildfires**: 24,901
- **Website**: 100,288
- **Consulting website**: 1,065
- **Consulting fees**: 32,002
- **Injured workers**: 125
- **Payroll withholdings to be forward**: 3,004
- **Consulting fees**: 51,750

**Total Disbursements**: 1,468,626

### Payroll taxes

- **Employee portion**:
  - U.S. income tax withheld: (2,328,965)
  - FICA withheld: (838,486)
  - California income tax withheld: (955,724)
  - SDI withheld: (86,338)
  - U.S. income tax forward: 2,328,965
  - FICA forward: 838,486
  - California income tax forward: 955,724
  - SDI forward: 86,338
- **Local Union’s portion**:
  - FICA: 827,064
  - California Unemployment: 20,351
  - U.S.Unemployment: 41,301
  - Total: 865,716

### Research and Education:

- **Subscriptions and publications**: 43,667
- **Scholarship fund**: 14,500
- **Total**: 58,167

### Office salaries:

- **Administration office salaries**: 474,302
- **Bargaining unit salaries**: 1,006,922
- **Total**: 1,481,223

### Office expenses:

- **Rent**: 280,000
- **Telephone**: 88,081
- **Postage mail service and meter expense**: 116,002
- **Print room/printing**: 52,209
- **Supplies**: 23,000
- **Equipment maintenance**: 16,567
- **Data processing**: 26,929
- **Equipment rental**: 19,609
- **Utility Reporter**: 358,797
- **Bank charges**: 58,683
- **Furniture and equipment purchases**: 218,072
- **Storage**: 14,565
- **Total**: 1,293,340

### Salaries Paid or Reimbursed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Board meetings</th>
<th>45,680</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Council</td>
<td>20,436</td>
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<tr>
<td>68,905</td>
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<tr>
<td>89,341</td>
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<td>Trustee Committee</td>
<td>8,837</td>
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<tr>
<td>4,412</td>
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<tr>
<td>13,249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Committee</td>
<td>13,517</td>
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<td>15,019</td>
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<td>28,536</td>
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<td>Safety Committee</td>
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<td>8,760</td>
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<td>Shop Steward expenses</td>
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<td>101,059</td>
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<td>255,200</td>
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<td>Other conferences</td>
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<td>250,896</td>
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<td>Organizing-Steward</td>
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<tr>
<th>Grievance/FF/LIC</th>
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<td>697,423</td>
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<td>1,062,248</td>
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<th>Outstanding balances</th>
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<td>163,973</td>
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<tr>
<td>204,890</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership funds:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group life insurance:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit award drawing prize:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual drawing award:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service award dinners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers/donations/bibles:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social fund:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Payroll taxes

- **Employee portion**:
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  - FICA withheld: (838,486)
  - California income tax withheld: (955,724)
  - SDI withheld: (86,338)
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- **Local Union’s portion**:
  - FICA: 827,064
  - California Unemployment: 20,351
  - U.S.Unemployment: 41,301
  - Total: 865,716
Fifty miles north of Elko, NV, at a ranch near the tiny desert town of Tuscarora, an IBEW 1245 line crew from NV Energy was tasked with rebuilding an aging single-phase line. “This line has been out here for a long time. It’s old, and the spans are real long. Real loose, sloppy wire,” said NV Energy Lineman Willis Bland, who was part of the six-man crew assigned to the job. “So we’re going through re-spanning the line, shortening things up, and getting a little more separation between the phase and the neutral so we don’t have outages and blown fuses.”

When the Utility Reporter caught up with Bland and his crew, they were working to interset a hot single-phase pole situated on a rugged dirt road. “We’re mid-spanning it right now, so what we’ll end up doing is using this big bucket to go up, get ahold of this phase that running across the line here,” Bland explained as he gestured to the line overhead. ‘And there’s a little bucket up the hill at the existing pole that’s up there. Me and Aaron Coulson — he’s another journeyman lineman — we’ll go up there, get it untied, and then the guy in the bucket will lift that phase and get it out of the way. That will make room for us to set the new pole, and once the new pole’s in, we’ll land that wire in there, cut that pole top out, and that’ll be that.”

The work was pretty straightforward, and the quiet, scenic desert surroundings were extraordinarily peaceful — but as any lineman knows, any time you’re on a job, things can change in the blink of an eye.

As Bland was talking with the Utility Reporter, he heard a commotion a few yards down the road, and when he looked over, he saw a flat-bed farm truck that had driven off the narrow, unpaved street.

In true IBEW 1245 tradition, the crew quickly went over to check on the driver (who thankfully was ok) and then proceeded to help him get his vehicle back on the road before returning to work.

Bland and his crew take care of each other and the community they serve —
On May 22, Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak signed SB 329 (Brooks) into law. This new natural disaster bill requires the state, its regulators and its utilities to take prudent steps to reduce the frequency and intensity of wildfires by adopting new forest management practices, undertaking fuel reduction and vegetation trimming, and requiring the hardening of electric utility infrastructure.

SB 329 was strongly supported by IBEW 1245 as well as Las Vegas-based IBEW Local 396, and the law contains several key provisions that will benefit IBEW members in Nevada, as well as the customers and communities they serve. The new law requires the utility to establish a safety, reliability, and resiliency plan (known as the NV Energy Natural Disaster Protection Plan) with the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN) by 2020. Rural Electric Cooperatives will be encouraged to adopt similar plans and, on an advisory basis, file them with the PUCN.

These plans will include significant grid hardening projects, which will provide a good amount of work for IBEW members for years to come. Since the law requires NV Energy to comply — separately from the General Rate Case — it guarantees that this work will be done and is not subject to limitations in funding or other potential roadblocks. The PUCN must implement these improvements.

Additionally, SB 329 is the first law in Nevada history to establish a Qualified Electrical Worker (QEW) standard to perform work on any distribution or transmission system for safety and reliability performance obligations. This standard also applies to line clearance tree trimmers who are not employed directly by an electric utility but work under the supervision of an electric utility or the PUCN. Local 396 Assistant Business Manager Jeremy Newman deserves special recognition for his work in advocating for the inclusion of this language.

SB 329 garnered broad bipartisan support in the Nevada State Senate and Assembly. There were zero votes against the bill in the Senate, during committee votes as well as on the Senate Floor. There was also no opposition to the bill in the Assembly committees, and only two votes against it on the Assembly Floor.

"Given the increase in the frequency and severity of wildfires in Nevada and all across the west, this new law is a critical step forward to protect life and property by reducing the potential damage from these catastrophic events," said IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. "Our members are ready and willing to do the work that's needed to mitigate wildfire risk, and this law provides the means to do it. We applaud the Nevada Legislature, particularly bill sponsor Sen. Chris Brooks, for advancing this bill so quickly. We also commend Gov. Steve Sisolak for signing the measure immediately, sending a clear message that Nevada cannot afford to wait when it comes to reducing the risk of wildfire."

Advocates of SB 329, including IBEW 1245 retiree Rita Weisshaar (second from left) pose for a group photo at the bill signing ceremony on May 22.

Utility Reporter
O of all the remarkable and dedicated unionists to ever grace the halls of IBEW 1245, Senior Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas is sure to go down in history as one of the best.

Thomas learned about the value of the union from a young age. His dad, Lee Thomas Jr, was active in 1245 for many years, and even served as union president on two separate occasions, from 1963-67 and again from 71-74. As soon as the younger Thomas had an opportunity to join the workforce, he secured his very own 1245 union card.

The year was 1983, and Thomas was on a summer break from junior college when he first hired on as a climber with Asplundh Tree Expert Company, and, unsurprisingly, wasted no time becoming a shop steward and was eventually promoted to foreman. A few years later, he went to work as a utility arborist for the City of Redding Electric Utility, also a 1245-represented position. He worked there for 11 years, serving as a shop steward as well as Advisory Council member (a victory that he attributes to his father, who campaigned aggressively on his behalf).

In 1998, then-Business Manager Jack McNally brought Thomas onto the IBEW 1245 staff as an organizer. Those early days with the union will be forever etched in Thomas’ mind. “I have lots of fond memories of working at Local 1245, but one of the best is when my father drove to unit meetings with me during my new assignment in Northern Nevada, less than a year before he would unexpectedly pass away,” Thomas recalled, grateful to have had that time together with his dad.

Over the next two decades, Thomas would work with Local 1245 members in nearly every corner of the union’s jurisdiction, as an organizer, business rep, assistant business manager and senior assistant business manager. He also earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees while working for 1245, which is no small feat. He’s well-known among members and reps alike for his unparalleled knowledge and support, as well as his extremely effective approaches at the bargaining table.

“Ray is as complete a package of a unionist that I’ve ever met. He is passionate, he is tireless, he is smart, and he is prepared. If Ray isn’t the best negotiator who worked for Local 1245, he is tied for best,” said IBEW 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. “He earned his BA and a master’s degree while working with us, and is a unique combination of empathy, intelligence, and education.”

“I have never met anyone that would answer a question at 11pm on a Sunday as Ray has,” said 1245 Business Rep Jaime Tinoco. “He’s never left me waiting for an answer on anything, always acknowledging and respecting my opinions, good or bad.”

“Ray always amazed me at how quickly he would respond to questions, either returning long, thorough answers via text (if he was unable to return my phone call at that moment), or a return call,” echoed Business Rep Dominic McCurtain.

“Ray has always exhibited the best qualities of the union — intelligence, integrity, empathy and hard work,” added Assistant Business Manager Al Fortier.

After a lengthy 36-year union career, including 21 years on staff at 1245, Ray Thomas retired from the union this summer. His colleagues have nothing but warm wishes for him in his retirement. “I will always honor every moment I spent watching Ray kick ass at the bargaining table, his quick response to every long, long email I would send him, but most importantly his guidance and trust,” remarked Business Rep Cruz Serna.

“He’s been a friend over the years, never without a smile, a joke, and a laugh. I will miss him,” said Dalzell.

“People like Ray only come once every 50 years, and I’m glad that I had the opportunity to work with and learn from him,” said Tinoco.

“I will certainly miss him as a union brother and coworker, but I wish him good luck in his retirement, and feel privileged to be able to call him my friend,” said McCurtain.

“The standards that he’s set will be hard to follow, but I feel confident that the experiences that we have shared with him will carry us forward,” said Fortier, who will be filling Thomas’ big shoes on the public- and private-sector side of 1245. “Ray, it’s been a pleasure to work with you, and I wish you happiness and success in whatever lies ahead.”

While Thomas will miss working with the shop stewards and staff at the local, he is looking forward to spending more time with his family, including his son Josh and brothers Lee and Jeff.

“I want to thank to Jack McNally for hiring me and allowing me to begin studies at the former National Labor College. Thanks to Perry Zimmerman and Tom Dalzell for allowing me to finish my schooling at the NLC and then George Mason University in Virginia,” said Thomas. “Thanks to all of the business representatives I worked with over the last 21 years, and thanks to [recently retired] Senior Assistant Business Manager Dennis Seyfer for always having my back.”

— Rebecca Band, IBEW 1245 Communications Director
The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in a Retiree Club chapter in Dublin, Cotati, Merced, Sacramento/Vacaville, Reno/Sparks, Yreonga, Carson City and Winnemucca. If you don’t have a chapter nearby, call the union at 707-452-2718 and find out how you can help start one!

Ammon, Jefferson 41 years Citrus Heights, CA
Ammon, Jefferson 40 years Reno, NV
Arter, Sara 32 years Lake Havasu City, AZ
Babcock, John 32 years Chico, CA
Battle, Janet 6 years Danville, CA
Bucher, Spencer 21 years Danville, CA
Culcasi, Salvatore 8 years Brentwood, CA
Fitter, James Jr. 39 years Fresno, CA
Gonzales, Mary 6 years Hollister, CA
Holloway, John 20 years Atascadero, CA
Lavigne, Andrea 35 years Payson, AZ
Medeors, Gerroll Jr. 44 years Fresno, CA
Miller, Kevin 34 years Redding, CA
Yamamoto, Martin 39 years Watsonville, CA
Moir, Richard 29 years Fort Bragg, CA
Moore, Patricia 33 years Modesto, CA
Mowry, Scott 40 years Chico, CA
Murphy-Van Blaricom 18 years Petaluma, CA
Narango, Angelita 46 years Lodi, CA
Nazer, Greg V 30 years Pittsburg, CA
Nelson, Richard 34 years Coming, CA
Nervo, Gregory 35 years Novato, CA
Nicholson, Donald Jr. 23 years Templeton, CA
Okamura, Dale 35 years Reedley, CA
Orlando, Angelita 46 years Petaluma, CA
Porcaro, Joseph 28 years Santa Rosa, CA
Porco, Joseph 28 years Ukiah, CA
Poulo, Steven 33 years Ukiah, CA
Rector, Scott 27 years Fairfield, CA
Reeves, Mathew 6 years Oakland, CA
Redondo, Cathy 10 years Roseville, CA
Ray, Larry 39 years Redding, CA
Robinson, Donald 4 years Roseville, CA
Rodrigus, Louis 44 years Bakersfield, CA
Rutland, Jesse 39 years Fairfield, CA
Salgado, Olga Estrella 14 years Salinas, CA
Saner, Michael 34 years Hayward, CA
Sarino, Peter 26 years San Leandro, CA
See, Mario 45 years Terry, MT
Sexton, Steven 38 years Round Mountain, CA
Skallow, J 13 years Couldeas, Idaho
Smith, Robert 40 years Vallejo, CA
Soares, Robin 25 years Port Angeles, WA
Solorzano, Victor 35 years Fresno, CA
Sondersen, Garland 52 years Rodeo, CA
Steemers, Gerardus 45 years Fairfield, CA
Thomas, Phillippe 35 years Jackson, CA
Tong, Sandra 42 years Elk Grove, CA
Truitt, Roy Jr. 30 years Bakersfield, CA
Tucker, Paula 36 years Kingsburg, CA
Turner, Jane 18 years Dayton, OR
Vecchi, David 34 years Oroville, CA
Vieira, David 26 years Antioch, CA
Wallace, Vernon 13 years Benicia, CA
Ward, Terry 36 years Salinas, CA
Wilson, Debra 8 years Antioch, CA
Wilson, Claude 23 years Madera, CA
Wolverton, Harold 35 years Corning, CA
Wong, Gene 45 years San Francisco, CA
Ybarra, Frank 41 years Marysville, CA

Congratulations newly-retired members

In the Reno-Sparks, Nevada area, triple-digit temperatures in late summer aren’t uncommon. Unfortunately, many seniors simply cannot afford air conditioning, and the sweltering heat makes summertime uncomfortable and potentially life-threatening for low-income seniors.

Four years ago, IBEW Local 1245 Reno-Sparks Retirees Club President Ron Borst challenged the members of his club to take up a fun collection to address this very serious issue. The collection has become an annual tradition for the retirees, and this year, they donated 43 box fans to the Washoe County Human Services Agency, which in turn distribute them to seniors that can not afford air conditioning.

“I would like to thank you for your generous donation of forty-three box fans to our Senior Services Division,” Washoe County Human Services Coordinator Abby Badolato wrote in a letter to the Retirees Club. “We are committed to enriching the lives of our participants by providing quality services while preserving their dignity and independence.

Washoe County seniors, who have contributed so much to quality of life in our community, deserve no less. Thank you for making a difference with your gift. Everyone appreciates your generosity.”

Over the past four years, the Reno-Sparks retirees have donated a total of 163 fans to needy seniors.

Retirees Attend Briefing on PG&E Bankruptcy, Launch New Sacramento Retirees Club Chapter

On Wednesday, May 29, 19 PG&E retirees met at the IBEW 1245 union hall in Vacaville for a briefing on the PG&E bankruptcy. The meeting was the result of systematic outreach by Organizer Fred Ross as the union explores new ways to mobilize our current and former members to advocate for our membership in the context of the bankruptcy.

Senior Assistant Business Manager Bob Dean gave a comprehensive overview of the bankruptcy proceedings, the context leading to bankruptcy, and the challenges going forward. Business Reps Keith Hopp and Lou Mennell joined Ross and fellow Staff Organizers Rene Cruz Martinez and Eileen Purcell to support the event.

The attendees, who had an average tenure of 30 years with the company, also discussed jump-starting a Local 1245 Retirees Club chapter in the Vacaville/Sacramento area. The group wholeheartedly concurred that they want to start up the club. Hopp offered to staff the group, and Mennell will serve as backup.
37TH Annual Retirement Seminars-2019
I.B.E.W. Local 1245 and Gallo Group of Merrill Lynch

The collaboration of IBEW and The Gallo Group in 1982 led to a creation of retirement seminars which are open to IBEW, PG&E, Frontier Communications, and SMUD employees age 45+ and those on LTD. Family members or friends that will benefit from this presentation are also welcome to attend. These seminars are provided to you free of charge, and a meal will be served at each seminar for attendees’ enjoyment. Please contact The Gallo Group of Merrill Lynch in Walnut Creek, CA at 925-945-4838 and ask for Matt Gallo or Kindy Mann if you have any questions.

Topics:
- Medical Cost/Medicare
- Optimize Social Security
- Stock Market Uncertainty
- Pre-Retirement Preparations
- Building your Retirement Plan

**RSVP:**
Matt Gallo or Kindy Mann
Email: kulwinder_mann@ml.com
Text: 925-212-5703
Phone: 925-945-4838
www.ibew1245.com/retirementseminars

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**San Jose**
Sat Aug 24
9:00 – 10:30 AM
Hyatt Place
San Jose-Downtown
282 Almaden Blvd.

**Bakersfield**
Sat Sept 7
9:00 – 10:30 AM
Padre Hotel
1702 18th St.

**Fresno**
Sat Sep 7
1:30 – 3:00 PM
DoubleTree
2233 Ventura St.

**Redding**
Sat Sept 14
9:00 – 10:30 AM
C.R. Gibbs
2300 Hilltop Dr.

**Chico**
Sat Sept 14
1:30 – 3:00 PM
Two Twenty Restaurant
220 W. 4th St.

**Monterey**
Friday Sept 20
6:30 – 8:00 PM
Montrio Bistro
414 Calle Principal

**San Luis Obispo**
Sat Sept 21
9:00 – 10:30 AM
Madonna Inn
100 Madonna Rd.

**Sacramento**
Sat Sept 28
9:00 – 10:30 AM
Holiday Inn
300 J St.

**Stockton**
Sat Sept 28
1:30 – 3:00 PM
Hilton Stockton
2323 Grand Canal Blvd.

**Santa Rosa**
Sat Oct 5
9:00 – 10:30 AM
Hyatt Regency Sonoma
170 Railroad St.

**Foster City**
Sat Oct 5
1:30 – 3:00 PM
Crowne Plaza
1221 Chess Dr.

**Concord**
Sat Oct 19
9:00 – 10:30 AM
Hilton Concord
1970 Diamond Blvd.

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Gallo Recognized by:

“This informative program has helped many of our members over the years as they think about how to prepare for retirement. We are pleased to offer this service, which is absolutely free to members and their spouses.” Tom Dalzell, IBEW 1245 Business Manager
Congratulations on your service!

**50 Years**
Aimey, Ronald
Gonzales, Alex

**45 Years**
From left: Ronald Garnett and Wouter Scheepe. Back row, from left: IBEW President Emeritus Art Freitas and Ricardo Diaz

**40 Years**
From left: Scott Boynton and Jerry Takeuchi. Back row, from left: (Freitas), Marie Garcia and Reggie Encallado

**35 Years**
From left: Delia Gonzalez, Rufino Rangel and Roger Lopez. Back row, from left: John Schlegal, (Freitas), Mike Crivello and Mark Newman

**30 Years**
From left: Gary Bonfante and Craig Smith

**25 Years**
Garcia, Raymond
Ketchum, John Williams, John

**20 Years**
From left: Richard Carrillo and Terry Ward

**15 Years**
Front row, from left: Hugo Gonzalez and Justin Henson. Back row, from left: (Freitas) and Amber Lopez

**10 Years**
Front row, from left: Vincent Aghalog and Danielle Haukelo Mackas. Back row, from left: IBEW Business Manager Tom Dalzell and Quyen Ha

**5 Years**
Front row, from left: Francisco Molina and Clay Wesley. Back row, from left: (Dalzell), Tom Sanchez and Michael Scotti

**HONOREES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Honorees</th>
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</table>
| 50 | Aimey, Ronald
Gonzales, Alex |
| 45 | From left: Ronald Garnett and Wouter Scheepe. Back row, from left: IBEW President Emeritus Art Freitas and Ricardo Diaz |
| 40 | From left: Scott Boynton and Jerry Takeuchi. Back row, from left: (Freitas), Marie Garcia and Reggie Encallado |
| 35 | From left: Delia Gonzalez, Rufino Rangel and Roger Lopez. Back row, from left: John Schlegal, (Freitas), Mike Crivello and Mark Newman |
| 30 | From left: Gary Bonfante and Craig Smith |
| 25 | Garcia, Raymond
Ketchum, John Williams, John |
| 20 | From left: Richard Carrillo and Terry Ward |
| 15 | Front row, from left: Hugo Gonzalez and Justin Henson. Back row, from left: (Freitas) and Amber Lopez |
| 10 | Front row, from left: Vincent Aghalog and Danielle Haukelo Mackas. Back row, from left: IBEW Business Manager Tom Dalzell and Quyen Ha |
| 5 | Front row, from left: Francisco Molina and Clay Wesley. Back row, from left: (Dalzell), Tom Sanchez and Michael Scotti |

Connect with us on the web on Facebook on Instagram on Twitter
Congratulations on your service!

45 Years From left: Business Rep. Jim Brager, Dan Iwata and IBEW 1245 Treasurer (now President) Cecilia De La Torre

40 Years From left: (Brager) with Frederick Dwyer Jr.

35 Years From left: Kevin Stenroos, David Worstein and Tony Reed

30 Years From left: Miguel Tena with Business Rep. Abel Sanchez

25 Years From left: Joan Taff and Richard Trejo Jr.

15 Years From left: Tomas Bray and Peggy Rogers-Butler

10 Years From left: Raquel Ortiz with Business Rep Eddie Moreno

5 Years From left: Michael Torres and Andres Contreras

25 Years Front row, from left: Sylvia Cantu-Mohammed, Adrianne Condit and Elena Prado. Back row, from left: Teresa Ochoa, Valerie Lopez and Francine De La O

20 Years Front row, from left: Crystal Puckett, Mary Crunk and Terri Eisenbraun. Back row, from left: Jose Zavala, Robert Purnell and Jimmie Pyle

25 Years Front row, from left: Sylvia Cantu-Mohammed, Adrianne Condit and Elena Prado. Back row, from left: Teresa Ochoa, Valerie Lopez and Francine De La O

35 Years Front row, from left: Crystal Puckett, Mary Crunk and Terri Eisenbraun. Back row, from left: Jose Zavala, Robert Purnell and Jimmie Pyle

30 Years Front row, from left: Christy Jimenez, Christy Webb and Adriana Delgadillo. Back row, from left: Samuel Aspericueta, Heriberto Aviles and Michael Harbick

10 Years Front row, from left: Christy Jimenez, Christy Webb and Adriana Delgadillo. Back row, from left: Samuel Aspericueta, Heriberto Aviles and Michael Harbick

5 Years Front row, from left: Rachel Montoya, Sara Sanchez and Tammie Sullivan. Back row, from left: from left: Michael Tamayo, Kurene Turner and Rudy Salas

5 Years Front row, from left: Adriana Palacios, Yesenia Lopez and Yanet Tapia. Back row, from left: Jose Labrada, Hugo Ramirez and Steven Munoz

5 Years Front row, from left: Sandra Batres, Reyna Cardenas and Rudy Diaz. Back row, from left: Jose Catillo, Ryan Adams and Sylvia Jones
Congratulations on your service!

**HONOREES**

**40 Years**
Front row, from left: Michael Walko, Raymond Serna and Ira Barnes. Back row, from left: Charles Boyle and (de la Torre)

**35 Years**
Front row, from left: Ramon Llamas, Jayne Foster and Jimmie Forester Jr. Back row, from left: Ken Kinman, Gary Lloyd and Mauro Gasparro

**30 Years**

**25 Years**

**20 Years**

**40 Years**
Front row, from left: Peggy Daniel and Adrienne Franks. Back row, from left: Samuel Pine, Dane Moore and (Dalzell)

Photos by John Storey
SERVICE AWARDS
Lompoc
April 5, 2019

5 Years

Congratulations on your service!

HONOREES

5 Years
Front row, from left: Danielle Morgan, Diane Najera and Theresa Luna. Back row, from left: Steve Mickelson, Ernesto Lemus and Gustavo Lopez

5 Years
Front row, from left: Konang Sumaryadi Sr., Isaac Rodriguez and Tracy Tripp. Back row, from left: Robert Stricklin, Brian Stevens and Gary Silbaugh

5 Years
Front row, from left: Vasi Yiannakopoulos, Rebecca Band and John Fasig. Back row, from left: Rafael Gonzalez, Travis Sinfield and (de la Torre)

5 Years
Front row, from left: Glenn Durant, Paul Blacker and Ignacio Araquistain. Back row, from left: Lloyd Chaney, Davey Durant, William Dela Torre Lloyd and Mauro Gasparro

5 Years
Front row, from left: Burdette Traylor, Gigi Vallejos and Daniel O’Byrne. Back row, from left: (Dalzell), (de la Torre) and Carey Ray

5 Years
Front row, from left: Leo Ramirez, Theresa Ramos-Hernandez and Rickey Pepper. Back row, from left: Rafael Once, Ruth Poorbaugh and Jacob Kougli

5 Years
Front row, from left: Robert Moretti with (de la Torre)

5 Years
Front row, from left: Edwin Morataya, Deborah Walsh and Benjamin Jennings

5 Years
Front row, from left: Konang Sumaryadi Sr., Isaac Rodriguez and Tracy Tripp. Back row, from left: Robert Stricklin, Brian Stevens and Gary Silbaugh

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Front row, from left: Vasi Yiannakopoulos, Rebecca Band and John Fasig. Back row, from left: Rafael Gonzalez, Travis Sinfield and (de la Torre)

10 Years
From left: Edwin Morataya, Deborah Walsh and Benjamin Jennings

15 Years
From left: Roberta Moretti with (de la Torre)

35 Years
Front row, from left: Glenn Durant, Paul Blacker and Ignacio Araquistain. Back row, from left: Lloyd Chaney, Davey Durant, William Dela Torre Lloyd and Mauro Gasparro

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Front row, from left: Burdette Traylor, Gigi Vallejos and Daniel O’Byrne. Back row, from left: (Dalzell), (de la Torre) and Carey Ray

10 Years
From left: Edwin Morataya, Deborah Walsh and Benjamin Jennings

Utility Reporter 41
Units lend a helping hand

All of the following unit donations to various charitable organizations from April through June 2019 were approved by the IBEW 1245 Executive Board.

**Diablo Canyon Unit #1220** donated $250 to Jack’s Helping Hand of San Luis Obispo and $250 to the Mighty Oaks Warrior program.

**Oakland Physical Unit #2318** donated $250 to the free breakfast program at the Kyle Temple AME Zion Church.

**Mt. Wheeler Power Unit #3315** donated $250 to Ely Outdoor Enthusiasts and $250 to Great Basin Trails Alliance.

**Fresh Pond/SMUD Unit #3912** donated $500 to the SMUD Annual Fishing Derby.

**Reno Unit #3311** donated $500 to Washoe County Senior Services.

**Verington Retirees** donated $250 to Healthy Smiles Family Dentistry.

**Fresno Clerical Unit #1110** donated $250 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation on behalf of Kara Yang, whose mother is an IBEW Member.

**Merced Irrigation District Unit #1122** donated $500 to the Merced County Parks & Recreation department in support of their Annual Fishing Derby for individuals with special needs.

**Stockton Clerical Unit #2509** donated $250 to the Benjamin Holt College Preparatory Academy’s “Ben Talks” event.

**North Tahoe/CalPeco Unit #5232** donated $166 to Northern Nevada Soccer League, $167 to Reno American Little League and $166 to U11 Falcons Youth Soccer Club.

**Templeton Unit #1217** donated $500 to the Paso Robles Girls Softball League 10U All Stars.

**Concord Unit #2316** donated $200 to the Granada Grad Night at Granada High School in Livermore.

**City of Vallejo Unit #2376** donated $250 to the Vallejo Fireworks Fund for the July 4th celebration on Mare Island.

**Paso Robles Unit #4727** donated $500 to Paso Robles Baseball.

**South Tahoe Unit #5231** donated $250 to Moose Lodge 1632’s Kid’s Fishing Derby and $250 to Moose Lodge 1632’s Longest Day of Golf.

**Support IBEW 1245 Member Whose Son Passed Away**

A seven-year IBEW 1245 member who wishes not to be named recently lost her 26-year-old son suddenly. The family is still reeling from this tragedy, and could use our support to assist with funeral expenses. Read more about this young man and please donate what you can at gf.me/u/ukbuu4.

**Support PG&E Operating Clerk Whose Daughter Was Killed in a Car Crash**

Our hearts go out to 33-year IBEW 1245 member and PG&E Senior Operating Clerk Eltanaila “Tammy” Kinard, whose 23-year-old daughter, Taima, was tragically killed in a car accident just a few days shy of her college graduation. Sister Kinard and her family could use our support during this difficult time. A system-wide vacation sale has been set up for employees at PG&E, and donations can also be sent to the family using gf.me/u/ukbu6n.

**Support PG&E GSR As He Fights Hodgkin’s Lymphoma**

Just a few short months after landing his dream job as a gas service rep at PG&E, new IBEW 1245 member Todd Hurst was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma shortly before his 32nd birthday. As Brother Hurst undergoes treatment for his cancer over the coming months, his family, including a devoted wife and two young sons, could use support to cover the cost of basic living expenses while Hurst is off work. Please donate what you can at gf.me/u/ukbts9.

**Support IBEW Family Family Whose Six-Year-Old Son Was Killed in the Gilroy Garlic Festival Shooting**

On July 28, the six-year-old son of an IBEW 332 apprentice was killed during the Gilroy Garlic Festival shooting. The member's wife and mother were reportedly also shot. Friends have set up a GoFundMe account to support the family as they cope with this heartbreaking tragedy, and the IBEW 1245 Executive Board has approved a $5,000 donation to the Romero family. This family needs all the support they can get during this difficult time. Please contribute what you can at gf.me/u/ukbvdm.
In Memoriam

Former IBEW 1245 Business Rep Frank Hutchins: 1943-2019

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of former IBEW 1245 Business Rep Frank Hutchins, who passed away on May 6 at the age of 76.

In 1980, then-Business Manager Jack McNally brought Hutchins on staff upon the recommendation of trusted staffer Vernon Loveall (who passed away in 2017). “Frank didn’t come out of PG&E, but Vernon swore he’d make a good rep, so I hired him — and it was probably best thing I ever did as Business Manager,” said McNally. “Frank was one of best reps I had, because he was the kind of guy who never rested.”

Hutchins served the members diligently for more than two decades before retiring in 2002.

“He was extremely conscientious and extremely irreverent at the same time, the best qualities of a 1245 rep,” said Local 1245’s current Business Manager, Tom Dalzell. “He gave a lot to this local and to our members, and he made us a better organization.”

During his time on staff, Hutchins formed a close bond with colleague Ken Ball, and the two remained good friends even after Hutchins retired from the union. Ball spoke with Hutchins on the phone just weeks before his passing, and remembers him fondly.

“As a rep, he was really meticulous … the very best at keeping up with everything, like paperwork and phone calls,” Ball recalled. “Whenever a piece of paper came in to him, it was immediately dealt with, and in the time before cell phones, he would always stop on his way home to pick up his messages. He thought the greatest thing ever was when we got phones mounted in our cars, so he could answer and return calls on the way home from unit meetings.”

Hutchins’ perfectionism was something of a blessing and a curse, as he held everyone around him to his impossibly high standards. He was also quite candid and never minced words, which on occasion would land him in hot water.

“I had a lot of fun with him, and also got into some trouble with him too,” Ball said, recalling Hutchins’ tendency to pick fights. “I remember one time at a company picnic in Fresno, a new division manager who Frank had never met before came up to him and said, ‘I hear you’re a real tough guy,’ and Frank looked at him and said, ‘I hear you’re a real a**hole.’ That’s just the kind of guy he was. He didn’t take no sh*t from no one, and he used more F bombs than I did!”

Clearing Trees, from page 29

would begin lining the street.

The buses weren’t the only challenge they faced on that job. Much of the tree growth was situated in an alleyway, which comes with its own set of complications.

“In the alleys, it’s different from main streets, because you have all these secondary lines,” said Amezcua. “It’s harder working around service lines, phone lines and cable lines — as opposed to in the street, where you only have primary wires and you don’t have to worry about secondary lines.”

Alleys pose other dangers as well. They can be dirty and contain hazards that must be removed before the trimmers can get to work. It’s not unusual for crews to come across hypodermic needles and other perilous refuse. On occasion, Amezcua and his crew have had to call the city to come and remove the waste before they can enter the area with their trucks.

Navigating around energized lines is dangerous work, and even a routine job requires specific knowledge of the terrain, equipment, and the different types of trees on the property. No two jobs are the same, but the skilled and trained IBEW 1245 crews know how to complete a job safely and efficiently.

Amezcua has been a member of IBEW 1245 for 21 years, ever since he first hired on in the Modesto yard. He’s proud of the role he’s taken with the union for the last 12 years to assist his co-workers when needed.

“I’m the shop steward of our yard, so if somebody has a problem, they come in and talk to me,” he said. “I’ll talk to the supervisor and we try to fix it right here. And if we need it, the union rep is always behind us, giving support.”

“We’ve got a good group of guys here… and they know the union’s always here whenever they need it,” he added.

Despeje de árboles, de la página 29

12KV, realizando trabajo de poda rutinario en las líneas de la subestación Paraiso para lograr una distancia mínima de despeje, que significa una separación de 10 pies de las líneas eléctricas. Es lo que requiere MID (Distrito de irrigación de Modesto), explicó el capataz Juan Amezcua.

Aunque el tiempo es siempre vital en el trabajo de despeje de árboles bajo las líneas eléctricas, Amezcua y su cuadrilla enfrentaban una restricción de tiempo atípica en esta asignación específica. Tenían que terminar antes de que terminaran las clases del día (y ese era un día donde las clases terminaban temprano), para darle paso a los autobuses escolares que comenzarían a llegar.

Los autobuses no eran el único reto que enfrentaban en esta asignación. La mayor parte de las ramas que había que podar, estaban en callejones, lo cual en sí ya es complicado.

“En los callejones, es diferente de las calles principales porque están las líneas secundarias,” dijo Amezcua. “Es más difícil trabajar alrededor de líneas de servicios, líneas telefónicas, líneas de cable, comparado con la calle, donde solo hay cables primarios y no tienes que preocuparte de las líneas secundarias.”

Los callejones también presentan otros peligros. Pueden estar sucios y presentar riesgos que deben eliminarse antes de que los podadores puedan empezar a trabajar. No es extraño que las cuadrillas se encuentren agujas hipodérmicas y otros desechos peligrosos. En algunas ocasiones, Amezcua y su cuadrilla han tenido que llamar a los funcionarios de la ciudad para que vengan y retengan los desechos antes de que ellos puedan entrar a la zona con sus camiones.

Trabajar alrededor de líneas eléctricas energizadas es un trabajo peligroso, e incluso un trabajo rutinario requiere conocimientos específicos del terreno, del equipo, y los diferentes tipos de árboles en las instalaciones. No hay dos asignaciones iguales, pero las cuadrillas calificadas y capacitadas del IBEW 1245, saben cómo completar su trabajo de manera segura y eficiente.Amezcua ha sido miembro del IBEW 1245 durante 21 años, desde que lo contrataron por primera vez en el patio de Modesto. Está orgulloso de su papel en el sindicato durante los últimos 12 años, donde ayuda a sus compañeros de trabajo cuando es necesario.

“Soy el delegado de nuestro patio. Si alguien tiene algún problema, vienen y hablan conmigo,” dijo Amezcua. “Yo hablo con el supervisor y tratamos de corregirlo aquí mismo. Y si es necesario, el representante del sindicato siempre está cerca, dando apoyo.”

“Tenemos un buen grupo de compañeros aquí, y ellos saben que el sindicato siempre está aquí, para cuando lo necesiten,” agregó.
DID YOU KNOW THAT BACK BEFORE THE FOUNDERING OF THE IBEW, HALF OF ALL LINEMEN WERE DYING ON THE JOB?

DANGER
HIGH VOLTAGE

TO THINK OF HOW FAR WE'VE COME SINCE THEN. THE SAFETY LANGUAGE IN OUR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE, AND IT'S REALLY THANKS TO THE UNION.

THAT'S ACTUALLY THE MAIN REASON WHY THE IBEW STARTED BACK IN THE 1890S. OUR UNION'S FOUNDERS DIDN'T CARE ABOUT WAGES OR BENEFITS -- THEY JUST WANTED TO MAKE OUR WORK SAFER.

AND WE HAVE SO MANY DIFFERENT SAFETY PROGRAMS AT IBEW 1245. LIKE THE HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE, MADE UP OF UNION MEMBERS FROM MANY DIFFERENT WORK GROUPS, AND SUPPORTED BY THE UNION STAFFERS DEDICATED TO LOOKING OUT FOR OUR SAFETY.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR SAFETY STEWARDS AND THE PEER-TO-PEER SAFETY PROGRAM. THEY HELP US FOSTER A SAFER WORK ENVIRONMENT -- WITHOUT GETTING THE BOSSES INVOLVED.

I'M A UNION SAFETY STEWARD AND I'M ALSO INVOLVED IN THE "CONTROL THE PRESSURE" PEER PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS WORKING ON THE GAS SIDE, SO I'M ALWAYS LOOKING OUT FOR SAFETY ON THE JOB. 1245 ALSO HAS A "HOLD THE FULL" SAFETY COMMITTEE FOR ELECTRIC MEMBERS, AND "KEEP THE CLEARANCE" FOR TREE TRIMMERS.

MY COUSIN'S A 1245 TREE TRIMMER. ONE TIME HE SLIPPED AND ALMOST CUT OFF HIS LEG WITH A CHAINSAW. HE TOLD HIS SAFETY STEWARD, AND NOW HIS STORY IS ON 1245'S "CLOSE CALL" WEBPAGE, SO OTHERS CAN LEARN FROM HIS EXPERIENCE.

IN THIS JOB, ONE WRONG MOVE CAN COST YOU A LIMB -- OR EVEN YOUR LIFE. IT'S UP TO US TO LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER. WE'VE GOT TO BE OUR BROTHERS' KEEPERS.