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**Rosie the Riveter, RIP:** News briefs

Geraldine Doyle, who as a 17-year-old factory worker became the inspiration for the popular World War II recruitment poster that evoked female power and independence under the slogan "We Can Do It!," died Dec. 26, 2010 in Lansing, Mich.

**Back to the Mines.** U.S. child labor laws are unconstitutional, according to a recent YouTube rant by newly-elected Senator Mike Lee, Republican of Utah. In Lee's view, the federal government doesn't have authority to enact federal minimum wage laws, civil rights laws or to provide Medicare and Social Security. Sorry kids—pick up your shovel.

**Rage Against the Machine** has thrown its support behind South Korean workers who produce famous brands of guitars like Fender and Ibanez. Many workers were fired in 2007 "for forming a union to change their sweatshop-like conditions," the workers said in a statement.

Get answers to your union questions at: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)

# Utility Reporter

Volume 60 No.1 • Jan/Feb 2011 UNITY IS STRENGTH For up-to-the-minute news, see our website: [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)

## Regulators investigate NV Energy staffing

By Eric Wolfe

In response to a petition by IBEW Local 1245, the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada on Dec. 29 ordered an investigation into staffing levels at Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPC), a whollyowned subsidiary of NV Energy. (SPPC is the name for NV Energy's utility operations in northern Nevada.)

The union, which has represented workers at the utility since 1945, alleges that recent workforce downsizing threatens service reliability, and that the "graying" of the workforce will make the problem even worse in years ahead.

The PUCN investigation is focused on

the aging utility workforce issue. It is a problem that the Department of Labor has described as a "demographic cliff," saying that the retirement of incumbent workers is "[p]erhaps the most complex and pressing challenge facing the energy industry."

Scott Strauss, an attorney representing IBEW Local 1245 in the case, stated that several state commissions have addressed graying issues in the context of broader rate proceedings, but that in this case "the PUCN has opened a separate investigatory proceeding dedicated exclusively to the issue of workforce graying."

At the end of 2008 the SPPC hourly workforce totaled 813 employees, according to the petition filed by the union. By the end of 2009, that figure had fallen to 733, and there are even fewer hourly workers at SPPC today.

"Staffing reductions have left many localities without the manpower needed to maintain reliable service and respond to emergencies in a timely way," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Randy Osborn.

Over the last several years, SPPC has systematically removed all line crews from the Tonopah, Battle Mountain, Minden, Yerington, Lovelock, and Hawthorne districts and reduced the number of line crews in Reno, Carson City, South and North Lake Ta-

hoe, Fallon, and Elko.

"This leaves line crews in Reno, Carson City, Fallon, Winnemucca and Elko with the responsibility to cover all of NV Energy's service territory in northern Nevada," Osborn said. "If a line crew is needed to fix a power outage in Tonopah a line crew has to travel some 200 miles or more from Reno just to get to the outage location."

### Goodbye Baby Boomers

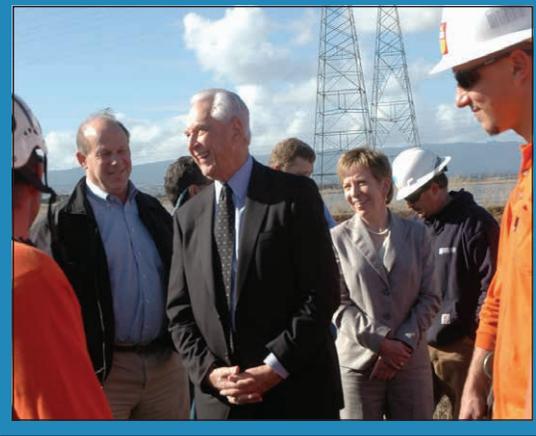
Typically it takes 3-4 years to complete a lineman apprenticeship training program, and most linemen will tell you it takes several additional years on the job to become truly proficient. In its filing, the union questions whether the utility is taking the necessary steps to recruit and train a new generation of utility workers to replace the baby boomers who will soon be headed out the door.

Based on SPPC data compiled by the IBEW, as of the end of year 2008 more than 21% of SPPC's hourly workforce was over 55 years of age and thus eligible to retire immediately. Thirty-six percent of SPPC's hourly workforce was over 50 years of age. And, in the "mission critical" areas of physical plant operations and maintenance, a significant portion of SPPC's skilled workforce is more than 50 years of age and is already at or fast approaching retirement.

The union's petition, filed in October, was opposed by SPPC, which asked the Nevada Commission to dismiss it. Instead, the PUCN explicitly affirmed its authority to act on the staffing issue, stating: "[T]he Commission finds that it has the authority to supervise and regulate the staffing of SPPC, a public utility, as is necessary to ensure that SPPC provides safe, economic, efficient, prudent, and reliable service to its customers."

The decision comes against a backdrop of declining service—and declining approval ratings for NV Energy statewide. SPPC has eliminated all of its walk-in customer service centers, and only one such center—in North Las Vegas—remains open in NV Energy's southern service territory. If you are a customer needing to meet face-to-face with a service representative to discuss a billing or service matter, such as an impending service disconnection, it is now almost impossible for you to do so.

### International President Ed Hill visits Local 1245 members. Story and photos, pages 7-10.



Representing IBEW Local 1245 at the shoot in Corona, Ca. were, from left: Anthony Cardenas, Bill Hamilton, Grady McGinley and Mark Patt.

### Sporting Clays Shoot IBEW members take third

A team of IBEW Local 1245 shooters from Bakersfield took third place in the first annual Southern California Union Sportsman's Alliance (USA) sporting clays shoot.

Local 1245 was represented by a diverse team of Bakersfield linemen: Grady McGinley, Transmission Line Crew Foreman (Midway); Mark Pratt,

Continued on page 6

Continued on page 6

## Arcing and Sparking



**Tom Dalzell**  
BUSINESS MANAGER

## Goodbye 2010, & good riddance

It's a new year, and I won't miss 2010.

Our members in the public sector have been hammered mercilessly by the public and their employers, and we have been on the defensive trying to minimize the reductions in gains and security won over decades. PG&E had its worst year in history, at least measured by operations and politics, although labor relations remain productive. Senior officers at NV Energy have a plan for the demise of the company and went a long ways towards achieving it in 2010—achieving the worst rating in customer service while charging the highest rates compared to other utilities, and dragging labor relations and employee morale to an all-time low.

Yet, the year ended on a high note.

Our International President, Ed Hill, spent a day with our members in the Bay Area in December, and he got to see Local 1245 at its finest. (See pages 7-10.)

We first met with a group of stewards and on-site volunteers in PG&E's General Office to talk about the recently negotiated Clerical Agreement. He heard about our unprecedented reach-out to clerical members and got to see first-hand the grit and passion that beat back proposals for two-tiered wages and contracting, and obtained what is one of the best contract settlements in organized labor in 2010.

We then went to the shores of the bay, where a combination of GC Tower Department members and Outside Line construction members were working on towers in the salt ponds and bay. President Hill got to see two sets of linemen take off to long-line from a helicopter, something he had never seen before. (Watch our video at [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com))

At lunch we were at the PG&E service center in San Carlos where we met with the IBEW heroes of San Bruno, our members who responded to the unbelievable tragedy that unfolded when a gas transmission line exploded on Sept. 9. The heroes don't like being called heroes, but there is nothing else to call

them. They see it as just doing their job, but they did it extraordinarily well with hell-on-earth around them.

We returned to San Francisco for the first field presentation of our lineman-to-lineman safety excellence program, with about half the PG&E San Francisco line crews in attendance. Linemen from PG&E, Truckee-Donner, Modesto Irrigation District, and Turlock Irrigation District led the presentation, which we will be rolling out to our thousands of linemen members over the coming months. It was a compelling and powerful message that was presented professionally and with personal conviction.

Finally, we visited several crews from Rosenden Electric working in San Francisco on trolley line change-outs. President Hill has a construction background and had an instant appreciation of the special qualities you find in IBEW members who works Outside Line construction.

We face a full deck of challenges in 2011, but I am confident that with our new approach of reaching out more and more to our members for their ideas and help, we will not just endure, we will prevail. Our lineman safety and young

steward programs are unprecedented, and both will grow in 2011, leading the way for similar safety programs with other departments and other groups of members. We will be upping the ante on shop steward training, and hope to have an entirely new program ready for unit officer training.

Despite the bad news that made 2010 one of our most difficult years, I am confident that we will meet the challenges coming our way. Happy New Year – let's make it a good one.

## Notice To Potential Delegates To The 2011 IBEW Convention In Vancouver

The next International Convention of the IBEW will be held in 2011 in Vancouver, Canada. A passport is required to enter Canada and return to the United States. Any Local 1245 member who plans to run as a delegate should keep this in mind and prepare accordingly. (See page 6.)

## Watch our teams at the Lineman Rodeo!

[www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com)  
Click on the Videos link.



## Unit updates

Unit 2314, Hayward/Fremont, has a new start time, effective January 2011: 4:30 p.m. The meeting place and meeting dates remain the same.

*Bernard Smallwood,*  
Business Representative

Unit 3511, Auburn, will still meet at the pizza place on Auburn-Folsom Road, but it is no longer called Round Table Pizza. The restaurant has changed its name to Pizza Express. Meeting dates and time remain the same.

*Phil Carter, Business Rep.*

## CALENDAR

- Jan 24-25:** Tree Trimmer Grievance Training, Vacaville
- Jan 24:** Organizing Training, Berkeley
- Jan 29:** Advisory Council, Vacaville
- Feb 11:** Service Awards, Sacramento
- Feb 11:** OSHA 10 ET&D Training, Vacaville
- Feb 21:** Crane Certification, Vacaville
- Mar 12:** Outside Steward Training, Vacaville
- Apr 8:** OSHA 10 ET&D Training, Vacaville
- Apr 16:** Service Awards, Reno
- Apr 22:** Service Awards, San Jose
- Apr 30:** Advisory Council, Vacaville
- May 20:** Service Awards, Salinas/Monterey

## APPOINTMENTS

### PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC

#### Clerical Ballot Committee

Ruth Bailey, Thelma Dixon  
Brian Hauptert, Kevin Krummes  
Jennifer Maldonado, Pate McKissack  
Michael Moore, Dave Ryan  
Deborah Rose-Cailan

#### Materials Labor-Management Committee

Adam Caballero

### CITY OF REDDING

#### Negotiating Committee

Mark Larsen, Sean McCall  
Thomas Sparks, Paul Snyder  
Jeff Torres

## CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS

### CLUW National Executive Board Meeting

Anna Bayless-Martinez  
Cecelia De La Torre, Chris Habecker  
Michelle Benuzzi

### National Safety Council Fall Labor Division Meeting

Dan Boschee, Michael Gomes  
Darryl Rice, Art Torres

### IBEW Nuclear Conference

Warren Brown, Jim Hayes  
Neal O'Hagan

### Electrical Workers Minority Caucus 2011 National Conference

Lorenzo Arciniega  
Cecelia De La Torre, Jennifer Gray  
Michael Patterson, Veronica Rivera



**Business Manager & Executive Editor**  
Tom Dalzell

**Communications Director & Managing Editor**  
Eric Wolfe

**President**  
Mike Davis

**Executive Board**  
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Chris Habecker  
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Anna Bayless-Martinez  
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**Treasurer**  
Cecelia De La Torre

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Our Web Site can be viewed at [www.IBEW1245.com](http://www.IBEW1245.com).

Our phone number is (707) 452-2700.

## AL SANDOVAL MEMORIAL COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

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

- The grant will be as follows:  
Five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per year, up to four (4) years, as long as a C (2.0) average is maintained and the parent maintains their membership in good standing in Local Union 1245.
- In order to be a candidate in this contest, you must be a son or daughter, natural, legally adopted or a legal ward of a member of Local Union 1245. You must also be a high school student who has graduated or is graduating in (the year of the contest). A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in 2011 must be attached to your scholarship application.
- The Scholarship Grant will be made only to that candidate who intends to enroll full-time in any college certified by their State Department of Education and accredited by the Local Accrediting Association.  
Responsibility of Scholarship Recipient: Scholarship winner must begin their studies in their next term or, at the very latest, in January of the following year.
- Applications may be secured by addressing the Recording Secretary of Local Union 1245 or by calling the Union Office or by downloading the form from [www.ibew1245.com/Scholar\\_app11.pdf](http://www.ibew1245.com/Scholar_app11.pdf)

- Checks will be paid directly to the college upon presentation of tuition bills to the Local Union.
- All applications shall be accompanied with a written essay, not to exceed five hundred (500) words, on the subject designated by the Executive Board.
- Essays should be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, on one side, preferably typed and doubled spaced with applicant's written signature at the conclusion of the essay.
- Applications and essays must be mailed to I.B.E.W., Local Union 1245, P.O. Box 2547, Vacaville, California 95696, by **registered certified mail only, and be postmarked no later than the first Monday in March of each year (March 7, 2011).**
- Each year the scholarship shall be presented at the Advisory Council meeting in May; the Judge and a guest and the recipient and parents shall be invited, at Local Union expense, to present and receive the Scholarship Award.
- A suitable trophy or plaque shall be purchased by the Local Union to be presented to the scholarship recipient.

**NOTE: The topic for the 2011 Al Sandoval Memorial Competitive Scholarship essay is: "IBEW Local 1245 celebrates its 70th Anniversary in 2011. Describe how life might be different for your family today if there had been no IBEW Local 1245."**

### APPLICATION FOR THE AL SANDOVAL MEMORIAL COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Sponsored by  
**LOCAL UNION 1245**  
**INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS, AFLCIO**  
P.O. Box 2547 • Vacaville, CA 95696 • Telephone: (707) 452-2700

I hereby make application to enter the Competitive Scholarship Contest sponsored by Local Union 1245, I.B.E.W., AFLCIO:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Initial)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Name of Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location \_\_\_\_\_

I graduated or will graduate from \_\_\_\_\_ High School

Which is located at \_\_\_\_\_

I expect to attend \_\_\_\_\_ College or School

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the above named candidate is currently enrolled as a student at \_\_\_\_\_ and has or will be graduating in \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.  
(School Name) (Month and year)

Official's signature and position \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that I am a member in good standing of Local Union 1245, I.B.E.W. and the Candidate, whose name is signed to this application is my \_\_\_\_\_ and graduated during the term ending \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.

(Parent's Signature and Card No.) \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCAL 1245 TRADE AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOL GRANT

The purpose of these grants is to provide aid to the children of members to attain a trade or technical education.

- The grants will be as follows:  
Five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per year, for up to two years for two candidates, as long as a passing grade is maintained, and a parent maintains membership in good standing in Local Union 1245.
- In order to be a candidate in this contest, you must be a daughter or son, natural, legally adopted or a legal ward of a member of Local Union 1245. You must be a high school student who has graduated or is graduating in the year of the contest. A copy of your diploma or a letter from your high school stating that you will graduate in the year of the contest must be attached to your application.  
Additionally, a letter of recommendation from your vocational teacher, department head, or school principal must accompany the application.
- Applications may be secured by addressing the Recording Secretary of Local Union 1245, by calling the Union Office, or by downloading the form from [www.ibew1245.com/Trade\\_app11.pdf](http://www.ibew1245.com/Trade_app11.pdf).
- The grant will be made only to a candidate who intends to enroll in any indus-

trial, technical or trade school, other than correspondence schools, which are accredited by the *Accrediting Commission for Career Schools and Colleges of Technology (ACCSCCT)*.

- Applications must be mailed to IBEW, Local Union 1245, P. O. Box 2547, Vacaville, California 95696, by **registered mail or certified mail only, and be postmarked no later than the first Monday of April of each year (April 4, 2011).**
- Two names will be drawn by the Judge of the Competitive Scholarship Contest from those submitting applications. These two will be recipients of the grants.
- Checks will be paid directly to the school upon presentation of tuition bills to the Local Union.
- Presentation of awards will be made to recipients at the unit meeting nearest his residence following the drawing.



APPLICATION FOR THE LOCAL 1245  
**TRADE & VOCATIONAL SCHOOL GRANT FOR MEMBERS' CHILDREN**  
**ENROLLING IN TECHNICAL, INDUSTRIAL, OR TRADE SCHOOLS**  
Sponsored by Local Union 1245 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, AFLCIO  
P.O. Box 2547 • Vacaville, CA 95696

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address of High School \_\_\_\_\_

What school do you expect to attend? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it located? \_\_\_\_\_

What Trade or Craft will you be studying? \_\_\_\_\_

Why this particular Skill? \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### STATEMENT OF MEMBER/PARENT

Name of Member/Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I am a member in good standing of I.B.E.W. Local Union 1245, that Candidate named above, \_\_\_\_\_ is my \_\_\_\_\_ and that the Candidate will graduate from high school during the term ending \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.

Signature of Member/Parent Union Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the above named candidate is currently enrolled as a student at \_\_\_\_\_ and has or will be graduating in \_\_\_\_\_, 2011.  
(School Name) (Month and year)

Official's signature and position \_\_\_\_\_

# South Feather pact extended

By Ray Thomas

Local 1245 reached an agreement with South Feather Water and Power to extend the term of this agreement to April 1, 2011 to provide ample time to receive the actuarial from Cal-PERS regarding the District's costs to purchase all employee years of service in the 3% @ 60 plan we're in. This is our only proposal for 2010.

Along with Shop Stewards John Shipman and Rick McCullough, I commenced negotiations with SFWP on Sept. 23. We proposed that the District purchase all employee years of service within the Cal-PERS 3% @ 60 plan we negotiated three years ago. The District responded on Sept. 28 that the Board's personnel panel approved the General Manager to request a Cal-PERS actuarial to determine the cost of purchasing prior years of service.

The current extension to April 2011 follows an earlier two-month extension for the same purpose.

*Ray Thomas is IBEW Local 1245 Senior Business Representative*



## Still waiting at SRT

By Sheila Lawton

Local 1245 is still waiting to schedule a date for the interest arbitration over a new collective bargaining agreement with Sacramento Regional Transit District.

The District did not like the date that was provided by the previous arbitration because they felt it was too far off, so they have requested to pull another panel in hopes of obtaining a date that would not be so far off after the District canceled the Oct. 1 date that we had.

Check the Local 1245 website at [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com) for new information as it becomes available.

## City of Santa Clara

# Members protest cuts

By Bill Brill

Over 50 of our 67 members at the City of Santa Clara showed up at a City Council meeting in mid-November. The members were dressed in orange to demonstrate their unified opposition to the City Manager's plan for reducing the workforce. It was an impressive turnout by our members. However, about midnight, the City Council voted to support the City Manager's plan.

We have been notified of nine positions being eliminated out of our 67 members there.

Thirty-four of our members showed up at the unit meeting on Nov. 17 and voted unanimously to not open up the contract in order for these cuts to take place. Seven of the nine affected members were at the unit meeting and voted to stand up to the City. I later learned that two of those affected would be interviewed on Dec. 8 (the date they are supposed to receive their layoff notices) for two new apprentice lineman positions. Go figure.

The City Manager had announced a 10% across the board staff reduction in all bargaining units, including the IBEW Local 1245 members, unless all bargaining units agree to a wage freeze in all negotiated contracts. In our case, this would be the 4.5% wage increase negotiated two years ago effective 1-1-11 for our members. In addition to the wage freeze, the City Manager also wants our members to take either 12 furlough days next year or an addi-

tional 5.11% wage cut, with the promise there will be no layoffs in 2011.

Local 1245 has argued that our members wages and benefits are paid solely out of the Electric Enterprise Fund and those funds would not help the City reduce its deficit in the General Fund. We are also arguing the City has not demonstrated that it is necessary to reduce the workforce.



Bill Brill

## AC Transit proposes takeaways

AC Transit District, through arbitration, recently concluded bargaining with ATU 192, its biggest union. The interest arbitration decision contained many millions of dollars worth of takeaways from ATU.

The district has already made proposals to IBEW that contain many of the same takeaways. Cost saving measures proposed to IBEW by AC Transit include sharing of medical premiums and pension contributions, as well as elimination of daily overtime through implementation of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime rules.

The IBEW Local 1245 contract with AC Transit has been expired since June 30, 2010.

## City of Redding

# New privatization battle looms

Ignoring the recommendation of its own appointed commission, the Redding City Council voted 3-2 in December to request proposals from private contractors to do gardening work currently performed by IBEW Local 1245 employees.

The council will seek price quotes from private firms for grass moving, leaf blowing, shrub pruning, trash collection and other basic parks maintenance tasks in three or four neighborhood parks.

"We were disappointed that the council ignored the recommendation of its own commission," said Local 1245 Assistant Business Manager Ray Thomas. But the threat to the union's current members is very slim, Thomas said, because there are two vacant Gardener positions, and plenty of work.

"The contractors on the other hand have a dilemma," Thomas said. "Their current hourly rates charged to the City for park maintenance range from \$43 per hour to over \$50. Our in-house total compensation hourly rate is \$37 for a Public Works Maintenance worker."

Thomas cited records showing that the contractors pay their employees between \$12 and \$14 per-hour with little to no benefits.

Opposing the contracting proposal were Vice Mayor Dick Dickerson and council member Francie Sullivan. Sullivan was elected to the Council last month with strong support from Local 1245 and other city unions.



Ray Thomas

Kim Niemer, community services director, had urged the council to keep basic parks maintenance in house, according to the Redding Record Searchlight. Full-time city crews working with temporary part-time employees can perform those tasks better and at less expense than private contractors, she said.

Full-time city crews working with part-time temporary employees perform basic parks maintenance at 30 percent less expense than a private contractor, which would have to pay prevailing wage and cover its own administrative costs and profit, according to parks planners.

City workers are less expensive even when the unfunded liability from their retirement benefits is factored in, planners said.

If the city did take steps to contract out work currently performed by members of the IBEW bargaining unit, it would have to meet and confer over the impact on employees.

## No layoff guarantee at TMWA

Local 1245 members at Truckee Meadows Water Authority voted on a wage re-opener package that provides a no layoff guarantee and keeps wages the same for Fiscal Year 2011-2012.

The vote, taken on Dec. 13, was 36-16. There is another wage re-opener in July, according to Business Rep. Pat Waite.

## Back at the table with MID

Local 1245 and the Modesto Irrigation District met on Dec. 21 to exchange initial bargaining proposals. The exchange had been originally scheduled for Nov. 30, but was delayed when the District was unprepared to exchange.

"The District is looking for significant increases in employee contribution to the Medical premium," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Sheila Lawton. "The District is also proposing another tier in the defined benefit plan as well as some changes to the medical for retirees."

The Local 1245 bargaining committee met on Jan. 4 to review the District's proposal thoroughly and prepare a

counter-proposal.

The parties are currently scheduled to meet again on Jan. 20 and 25, and Feb. 3 and 24.

Serving on a union subcommittee for the negotiations are Denise Miller, Dale Gumm, Tony Moore and Dave Ferreira. Serving on the union bargaining committee are Mike Gomes, Travis Weese, Richard Behler, Jeff States, Stephen Carlson, and Woody Mouw, along with Lawton and Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell.

The union is still pursuing an Unfair Labor Practice charge against the District related to previous negotiations that produced an agreement at the bargaining table that was subsequently repudiated by the District's board of directors.



Sheila Lawton

The City of Fernley, NV planned to go to a 4/10 schedule for all employees starting in January 2011. City offices will be open only 4 days a week. Local 1245 has agreed to the new work schedule.

## San Bruno explosion

# Safety Board issues "urgent recommendations"

The National Transportation Safety Board on Jan 3, 2011 issued seven safety recommendations, six of them classified as "Urgent," as a result of its investigation into the pipeline rupture and explosion that killed eight people and destroyed 37 homes in San Bruno, Calif., on Sept. 9, 2010.

The recommendations were issued to address record-keeping problems that could create conditions in which a pipeline is operated at a higher pressure than the pipe was built to withstand, although it is not known at this time if that is what happened in the San Bruno accident. The urgent recommendations call on pipeline operators and regulators to ensure that the records, surveys, and documents for all pipeline systems accurately reflect the pipeline infrastructure as built throughout the United States so that maximum safe operating pressures are accurately calculated.

Investigators found that although the records of the pipeline operator, PG&E, indicated that the pipeline in the area of the rupture was constructed of seamless pipe, it was instead, at least in part, constructed of longitudinal seam-welded pipe. In addition, some of the seams of this section of pipeline were welded from both the inside and the outside of the pipe, while others were welded only from the outside.

The NTSB is concerned that the seam-welded sections may not be as strong as the seamless pipe that was indicated in PG&E's records. Because it is critical to consider all of the characteristics of a pipeline in order to establish a safe maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP), the NTSB believes that these inaccurate records may lead to potentially unsafe MAOPs.

To address this issue, the NTSB issued three safety recommendations, two of

which were classified as urgent, to PG&E asking the utility operator to do the following: 1) Conduct an intensive records search to identify all the gas transmission lines that had not previously undergone a testing regimen designed to validate a safe operating pressure (urgent recommendation); 2) Determine the maximum operating pressure based on the weakest section of pipeline or component identified in the records search referenced above (urgent recommendation); and 3) If unable to validate a safe operating pressure through the methods described above, determine a safe operating pressure by a specified testing regimen.



## Recommendations for CPUC

The NTSB also directed three of the urgent recommendations to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), which regulates PG&E's pipeline operations as well as all intrastate pipeline operations within California.

The CPUC was asked to ensure that PG&E "aggressively and diligently" search documents and records to determine which pipeline segments had not previously gone through a testing regimen to determine a safe operating pressure and to provide oversight of any testing conducted by PG&E if the document and records search cannot be satisfactorily completed. CPUC was also asked to immediately inform California intrastate natural gas transmission operators of the circumstances of the San Bruno accident so these operators can likewise proactively implement any corrective measures for their pipeline systems.

A two-day fact-finding hearing will be held on March 1-2, 2011, at the NTSB in Washington, D.C.

safety glasses, a Buck knife and lunch.

Eighteen teams from unions throughout southern California participated. Local 1245, with headquarters in Vacaville, was the sole representative from the north.

The event was put together by the Union Sportsman's Alliance (USA). IBEW is a charter member

"If it is hunting or fishing, mountain biking or hiking, we want to support union members getting together and enjoying the outdoors," said Tim Bindl, the Pacific Flyway regional coordinator for the USA.

The Southern California shoot was held at Mike Raahauge Shooting Enterprises in Corona. Learn more about the Union Sportsman's Alliance at [www.unionsportsmen.org](http://www.unionsportsmen.org).

## Mazzanti on panel

Local 1245 has a seat on the panel investigating the San Bruno gas pipeline explosion.

Debbie Mazzanti, who began work for PG&E in 1973 and has been a Local 1245 business representative since 1996, is one of two union representatives named to serve on the panel convened by the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate the Sept. 9 explosion, which killed eight people and destroyed 37 homes.

"This is the first time we've ever been allowed at the table in this kind of investigation," noted Mazzanti. "It's a lot of responsibility. It's not a table I ever imagined I'd be sitting at."

The panel was first convened in the week following the explosion, then came together again the week of Jan. 3. The intervening months, Mazzanti said, were filled with correspondence "regarding requests for witnesses, what you're going to be covering, what you're looking for."

In addition to Mazzanti and a representative from PG&E's other major union—the Engineers and Scientists of

California—the panel includes representatives from the City of San Bruno, the San Bruno police department, PG&E, the California Public Utilities Commission, and the US Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, along with the National Transportation Safety Board, which is heading the investigation.



Debbie Mazzanti

Mazzanti said the union is a full participant in the panel's activities.

"I have as much authority to ask questions at that table as anyone else." The investigation, she said, so far has included "a lot of dialog" around issues like response time, among other issues.

She said it was exciting to be a participant on the panel, but at the same time, she's very aware of the gravity of the subject matter.

"If you're just asking questions to hear your voice, you don't need to be in that room. The questions need to be relevant," she said.

Mazzanti will travel to Washington D.C. to participate on the panel's public hearings, scheduled for March 1-2.



Serving on the Local 1245 Ballot Committee for the PG&E Clerical Ratification vote, counted Dec. 14 at Weakley Hall, are, from left: Dave Ryan, Brian Haupert, Pate McKissack, Michael Moore, Ruth Bailey (Judge), Jennifer Maldonado, Thelma Dixon, Kevin Krummes, Deborah Rose-Calilan.

## PG&E Clerical pact ratified

The hard-fought campaign for a new Clerical agreement at Pacific Gas & Electric came to a conclusion on Dec. 14 when mail ballots were counted at Weakley Hall in Vacaville. Out of 1102 ballots cast, 841 were in

favor, 258 were opposed, and 3 were void.

The ratification percentage of valid ballots was 76%, representing a strong affirmation of the year-long campaign waged by the Clerical bargaining committee and hundreds of worksite volunteers, who successfully resisted management proposals for contracting and two-tier wages.

The agreement provides for 2% annual wage increases for the next four years. An additional 1% wage increase will be paid in the first year because the contract passed on the first ballot.

Other major provisions include:

- Enhanced funeral leave
- Elimination of bonus/vacation inequities for part-time employees
- Improved bidding and demotion rights
- A new entry level classification with automatic wage progression for Service Representatives

Preparations for negotiating a new Physical Agreement and Benefits Agreement at PG&E are now getting underway.

## Sporting Clay Shoot,

from page 1

GC Line Crew Foreman (Arrow St.); Billy Hamilton, Distribution Line Crew Foreman (Wasco); and Anthony Cardenas, Lineman (Bakersfield). The event was held Dec. 11 in Corona, Ca.

"It was a very difficult course and our group was happy to take third," said Local 1245 Business Rep. Bob Dean. "Their goal is to come back next year and do even better."

Bill McGinley was the team's top shooter. The team enjoyed a day full of great shooting, good food and camaraderie with other union brothers and sisters, Dean said.

In an after-shoot lunchtime raffle, McGinley took home a range bag full of supplies. All participants received a 100 shot round of clays, including ammo,

# Election Notice: Delegates to IBEW International Convention

The election process will begin in March of this year for Local 1245 Delegates to the International Convention of the IBEW. The convention will be held Sept. 19-23, 2011 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Balloting for Local 1245 Delegates to the convention will be in June.

Complete information on nominations, elections, and qualifications are found in the Local Union Bylaws and the International Union Constitution. If you do not have copies of these documents, they may be obtained by writing to IBEW Local 1245, PO Box 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696.

To qualify as a candidate for Delegate to the International Convention, a member must have at least two years' continuous good standing in the Local Union immediately prior to March 1, 2011, and must have tendered his or her dues for January 2011.

## Nominations

Nomination of Delegates to the International Convention shall be made under "New Business" at the first meeting of the Units in March 2011. (L.U. Bylaws Article III, Section 8c). In order to be a candidate for Delegate to the International Convention, a member must be present at the Unit meeting where he or she is nominated, or notify

the Local Union Recording Secretary, Chris Habecker, in writing on or before March 1, 2011, that he or she will run for Delegate if nominated.

## Further information

In addition to the Local 1245 Bylaws and the IBEW Constitution, the conduct of labor union elections is also covered by Title IV of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA). The US Department of Labor publishes two relevant booklets: "Rights and Responsibilities Under the LMRDA and CSRA" (see [www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/rights\\_resps.htm](http://www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/rights_resps.htm)) and "Electing Union Officers" (see [www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/ElecOfficer/elecOfficer.htm](http://www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/ElecOfficer/elecOfficer.htm)).

## ShameonNVEnergy.com

The campaign website to hold NV Energy accountable has been redesigned. If you haven't already joined the Shame On NV Energy campaign, now is a great time to show which side you're on! Even if you've already been to this hard-hitting website, come on back and see what's new: [www.ShameonNVEnergy.com](http://www.ShameonNVEnergy.com)



Got something to share with your fellow union members? Send signed letters to: Utility Reporter Letters, IBEW 1245, POB 2547, Vacaville, CA 95696. Please note that we cannot print personal attacks or letters dealing with union politics. Opinions expressed in "Letters" are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IBEW Local 1245.

# Time to act as one

Local 1245 Brothers and Sisters:

Recently Letter of Agreement 10-36 with PG&E was sent out to approximately 11,000 members to be voted on. There were only 2,561 ballots returned. That's only a 23% return. Simply put folks, this is terrible. We have to do better than this. In the recent local union elections, 16,563 ballots were mailed

with only a 21% return. When 20 to 23% of the members are making the decisions for 100 percent of the members something is desperately wrong.

Webster's dictionary defines the word union as "the state of being united". We cannot call ourselves united when close to 80% of our members are not voting! Brothers and sisters, now is the time to unite. A 21% return shows weakness. It shows that we do not care about our future, our well-being. It tells management that they have the upper hand because they only have to convince 12% of us to vote the way that they want.

We will be working on a new Physical contract next year and dealing with a new administration in the upper levels of PG&E. This administration is not the same family-orientated upper-level management group that we have dealt with in the past. They are main line, corporate America and even though they have told us in the past that their employees are their "greatest asset" they will surely not back this statement up at the bargaining table. Now more than ever is the time to come together and act as one. If we cannot manage this, the term "to divide and conquer" will certainly become a reality that I'm positive none of us desires.

If we continue to get less than a 23%

# Fallen members honored

Two IBEW Local 1245 members who died in the line of work were honored by the union's Executive Board in actions taken at its December meeting.

In memory of Harold "Lynn" Lowery, the Executive Board approved a request for a \$500 donation to the Workers Memorial Fund of Mendocino County. Lowery was a PG&E General

Construction Lineman who died on the job October 7, 2009 after falling from a pole in Garberville, CA.

In memory of Aaron Dineen, the Executive Board approved the donation of \$1,000 to the Aaron Dineen Scholarship Fund. Dineen was a fifth-step apprentice in Outside Line who was fatally injured on the job in 2009 while working in San Clemente.

# Contract provides options as Cal-Peco takes over

A change in the company's ownership can have devastating impacts on employees, but having a union contract gave Local 1245 members some options when NV Energy recently sold its California operations to Cal-Peco.

The transfer of ownership, on Jan. 1 of this year, affected 35 NV Energy employees, primarily in the Lake Tahoe area. Of these, 22 accepted positions with Cal-Peco, which has recognized Local 1245 as the exclusive bargaining representative. Negotiating a new labor agreement covering their wages, benefits and working conditions will begin on Jan. 20, according to Local 1245 Business Rep. Randy Osborn.

Of the 13 remaining positions affected by the sale, seven employees have been offered comparable positions at NV Energy at either the Reno or Carson City yards. The remaining six employees were

offered non-comparable positions at NV Energy. Of these, three will retire under the enhanced retirement option of the collective bargaining agreement (Title 19.11), and three will exercise their rights under the agreement's Title 23 displacement provisions.

## NV Energy, from page 1

## Dead Last

JD Power and Associates, which surveys utility customers, last year rated NV Energy as dead last among all mountain state utilities in terms of customer satisfaction. Ten years ago, before CEO Michael Yackira came to power, the utility ranked first in this same survey.

A statewide telephone poll conducted October 8-11, 2010 found that 44 percent of Nevadans have an unfavorable view of NV Energy and that customers are deeply troubled by NV Energy's corporate conduct. The poll of 400 registered voters, conducted by Goodwin Simon Strategic Research, found that seventy-five percent of respondents are very concerned that NV Energy customers pay the highest residential utility rates of any mountain state. Sixty-four percent of respondents said they had a great deal of concern about NV Energy CEO Michael Yackira earning \$4.5 million annually.

The company's harsh attacks on worker benefits could impair the utility's ability to address its "graying" problem.

In recent contract negotiations with IBEW, the utility insisted on slashing retirement benefits in a way that especially penalizes younger workers. The utility also shifted the burden of all future increases in retiree medical premium costs onto the backs of the retirees themselves. Both of these actions will make it harder for the utility to attract new employees in an era which has seen a chronic national shortage of skilled electrical workers.

On Dec. 29 the New York Times reported that about half of electric utility employees are expected to retire in the next 5 to 10 years.

New developments in the PUCN investigation will be reported on the IBEW Local 1245 website at [www.ibew1245.com](http://www.ibew1245.com).

Laine Mason, PG&E Lineman  
Red Bluff, CA

# Work Smart. Be Safe. Stand Together.

When IBEW's International President Edwin Hill paid a call on Local 1245 last month, he wanted to see how our local was responding to the many challenges the IBEW faces today.

During a whirlwind visit on Dec. 6, he met with members of the PG&E's Clerical bargaining unit and traded views with PG&E's top brass. He watched an IBEW tower crew from PAR Electric get swept into the sky by helicopter over the salt marshes of Milpitas. He broke bread with PG&E first responders to the San Bruno gas explosion, witnessed the roll-out of Local 1245's new Lineman-to-Lineman safety program, and spent time with a Rosenden Electric crew performing pole replacement in San Francisco.

He left town with this advice for Local 1245: Keep doing what you're doing.

"I've been around some of the members today and the things they're doing are right on target," he said. "We've got a good future ahead of us. With the downturn in the economy, now is the time to ramp up the things we need to do for when the economy turns around. I think Local 1245 is right on target."

Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell and International President Ed Hill at the staging area for the PAR tower job.



## Hill lauds PG&E Clerical contract campaign

### "Two-tier is cancer"

The ballots weren't yet counted in the PG&E Clerical ratification vote, but Local 1245 Clerical members were feeling pretty good about beating back the company's contracting and two-tier wage proposals when they met with President Ed Hill at PG&E headquarters in San Francisco on Dec. 6. Hill assured Clerical members they had good reason to feel that way.

"Two-tier is cancer," he said, noting that two-tier systems give management a vehicle for repeatedly ratcheting down everyone's wages and benefits.

Helen Gan, a Senior Accounting Clerk who was initiated into the IBEW in 1962, brought along her 45-year IBEW service plaque for the meeting with Hill.

"I started in 1956," he told Gan. "The unfortunate part is, I don't look as good as you do!"

Gan said she made just \$325 a month when she first started with PG&E, but she noted that "it was better than the insurance company that was paying \$210."

Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell told Hill about the union's campaign to win a Clerical contract at PG&E, saying "We turned our Clerical negotiating committee into an organizing committee."

Local 1245 Organizer Eileen Purcell briefly described for Hill the campaign's logistics, which included joint education committees, unit meetings, special on-site meetings, flyers, IBEW-branded mugs, an organizing conference, on-site volunteers, compiling a member e-mail data base, outreach to community and women's groups, and a massive petition signed by a large majority of the bargain-

ing unit.

Hill praised the effort to beat back contracting, and noted that his office had recently protested when a bank the IBEW does business with was training people to work in call centers overseas.

"The community doesn't realize, when they take a call center with 3 or 400 people out of (the community), what it does ... to the politics, what it does to the taxes, what it does to the wages in the community, and spending in the community—they don't pay attention to that. I think now is the time we have to start telling people—you can't continue to do this," Hill said.



PG&E Clerical members joined International President Ed Hill and other IBEW representatives at PG&E offices in San Francisco to review the recent Clerical contract campaign.

## Meeting with PG&E brass

# “We feel we have something to sell”

President Ed Hill’s visit to Local 1245 included a morning meeting with some top brass at PG&E: Chairman and CEO Peter Darbee, President Chris Johns, Senior Vice President John Simon, Senior Director for Human Resources Andrew Williams, Industrial Relations Director Steve Rayburn, and Senior Vice President Greg Pruett, along with Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell.

Hill told the PG&E executives about the union’s decision to create a “code of excellence,” both to promote the union’s highly-skilled workers and to encourage union



International President Ed Hill discusses the IBEW Code of Excellence with PG&E executives. On left, from back: John Simon, Peter Darbee, Chris Johns. On right, from back: Greg Pruett, Tom Dalzell, Mike Mowery, Ed Hill and Sherilyn Wright.

members to always live up to their billing.

“We feel we have something to sell,” said Hill. “We are the best at what we do, we train our people to be the best, and quite frankly we don’t believe there are enough people in the country who know that. It’s time for us to make sure that they see it.”

## PAR Electric tower job

# It beats climbing

In a tour arranged by Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran, President Ed Hill visited a tower job in the salt ponds outside of Milpitas in the South Bay.

The PG&E project entails raising conductor about six feet for more clearance above the water, according to Kenny Bruce, VP for PAR Electrical Contractors, which is running the job.

President Hill met briefly with PAR and PG&E workers under a warm December sun, then watched as a helicopter hovering overhead lowered a line to two workers in harness and swiftly hauled them off to a tower.



President Ed Hill, left, meets with IBEW members preparing for a helicopter lift to work on towers.

Watch the video, “It Beats Climbing,” at [www.ibew1245.com/video-files/videos.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/video-files/videos.html).



From left: IBEW officers and staff with PAR and PG&E crews, from left: Art Freitas, Mike Mowrey, David Casagrande, Sherilyn Wright, Gary Garcia, Tom Dalzell, Phil Dorado, Edwin Hill, Aaric Day, Matt Miller, Stuart Rigg, Casey Green, Jeremy Fast, Brandon Gonzales, Carson Bruce, Mike Dixon, Jeff Klient, Casey Dobry, Bill Mock, Sherry Daly, Ken Fields, and Andrew Korieva.

## “It makes me damn proud”

At a ceremony in San Carlos honoring Local 1245 “first responders” to the San Bruno gas explosion, President Ed Hill compared the IBEW members to the emergency workers who responded to the 9-11 tragedy.

“It makes me damn proud that I’m able to sit here and say thanks to you,” said Hill. “How did you determine where to go?”

Mike Hickey, who was off work at the time, said he learned of the disaster when he saw TV aerial news footage shot from a helicopter.

“There’s two transmission lines that go in that area. When it panned out I knew which one it was. We’ve done air surveys before,” Hickey said. In fact, he added, “We were there when they put them in.”

Despite preliminary speculation that the explosion might have come

from an airplane crash, Ed Finger said Hickey knew immediately that it was a natural gas explosion.

“Mike recognized it right away. He knew. We just took off.”

Fighting their way through rush-hour traffic, Hickey and Finger rushed to nearest valve that could be used to cut the flow of gas to the fire.

Business Manager Tom Dalzell praised the valiant response of Hickey, Finger and others who were honored at the San Carlos ceremony.

“There’s not a single one of you who would say that they are a hero. But in our eyes, every one of you are. You saved life, you saved property, you did your jobs well and you made IBEW proud, you made PG&E proud,” Dalzell said. “Live with it: you’re heroes.”



Local 1245 members honored at a Dec. 6 ceremony for their heroism after the San Bruno explosion were, front row from left: Mike Hickey, Brian Olivolo, Craig Fazackerley, Brad Schubeck, (IBEW President Ed Hill), Sean Jalalian and Sal Culcasi; back row, from left: (IBEW Vice President Mike Mowrey), Ed Sickenger, Vern Lopes, (Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell), Larry Rochholz, and Barry Mitchell.

President Ed Hill, arriving at the ceremony to honor IBEW’s “heroes of San Bruno,” greets Executive Board members Cecelia De La Torre and Anna Bayless-Martinez.



## Rosenden Electric and Reliance

# Pole replacement on Hayes



From left: Reliance Engineering’s Stephen Wong (President), Robert Radoff, Donald Mann, and Dean Evans, with IBEW’s Mike Mowery, Ed Hill, Tom Dalzell and Ron Cochran.

Toward the end of his day-long journey through Local 1245’s jurisdiction, President Ed Hill visited an Outside Construction pole replacement job in San Francisco. With Rosenden serving as the general contractor and Reliance Engineering as a sub-contractor, the job consists of pole replacement, street lights, feeders and overhead. Hill’s Dec. 6 visit came on the first day of what is expected to be a six-month job involving about 170 poles.



From left: Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell, Executive Assistant Sherilyn Wright, President Ed Hill, Local 1245 Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran, Rosenden Senior VP Steve Foxworthy, Rosenden Area Superintendent David Kurze (in back), IBEW Vice President Mike Mowery, Rosenden General Superintendent Jeff Schaffer.

## “He wasn’t cut in...”

When Max Martinez died from an electrical contact in a vault last March, a little bit of John Kent died with him.

“I’m here today because of a promise I made to myself standing there, helping the firemen pull him out of the hole,” said Kent, a PG&E Troublemaker and 32-year IBEW member. Kent vowed he would do whatever he could to prevent other IBEW members from suffering such a senseless death.

On Dec. 6 Kent was among a group of linemen in San Francisco piloting a new peer-to-peer safety program: linemen helping linemen work safe. Those in attendance—including PG&E officials, IBEW President Ed Hill, and several local linemen—were absolutely still as Kent delivered his quiet account of why Max Martinez was dead at age 26.

“First and foremost is, he wasn’t cut in. He forgot where he was, who he was and what he was doing. Any lineman who gets into that position, no matter what rule, policy, or procedure is in place, no matter what the weather is, no matter what his wife said to him when he left, if you’re not there, if you’re not cut in....” Kent didn’t need to finish the thought. Martinez’s death spoke louder than words. “Sometimes we get away with it, maybe it’s just a body part,” Kent continued. “This time it was a whole be-

ing. I guarantee you, you don’t want to be there.”

“The IBEW was founded on brother-to-brother, watching each other,” said Business Rep. Mark Rolow, who began working with the new safety program when he was still a lineman for PG&E.

“The death rate among original IBEW members was one in two among linemen. We’ve come a long way since then but we still have a lot farther to go,” Rolow said. “It’s not the company’s responsibility, it’s our responsible to look out for one another.”

Rich Lane, who helped organize the IBEW unit at Turlock Irrigation District a decade ago, explained the meaning of the term “Hold the Pull,” which is the unofficial slogan of the new program.

“It’s a common wire stringing term. It means stop everything now, identify the problem, clear the problem. When you have a ‘hold the pull,’ everyone has to stop and focus on the problem,” said Lane. “It asks all of us to change our view of safety.”

Other linemen active in the program added their own perspectives on safety—and how linemen themselves can help each other avoid the fate that befell Max Martinez.

Mike Gomes, a lineman at Modesto Irrigation District, said no one starts the day thinking, “I’m going to go out today

and get hurt.” It’s natural for people who consider themselves safe workers to assume that “it couldn’t happen to me.”

It’s precisely those assumptions that need to be re-examined, Gomes said.

“It’s the reality of our job, this is a dangerous industry, and we have look out for everyone on the jobsite.”

“We’ve got to keep our head together, we got to talk to our pole partner, we got to stay in touch,” said Bob Springer.

Former Business Manager Jack McNally, who attended the pilot presentation, said the right habits needed to be instilled early on.

“If you have a habit of taking a shortcut, that’s what you’re going to do. The best thing we can do in an apprentice program is to start off the right way,” McNally said.

“You guys make the difference. You people are the union. You are the fabric of what the union really is,” said PG&E Foreman Willie Bouzek. “We are asking you to go above and beyond some of the things that became the norm for you, to look at and change,” whether it’s being too relaxed about following rules or using certain types of equipment.

“These are not big things for us,” said Bouzek. “I don’t need PG&E to give me another rule to be a good lineman, to be a good foreman. I feel it inside.... Don’t wait for someone else to step up to you and ask you, you be the first to make

your jobsite a little better.”

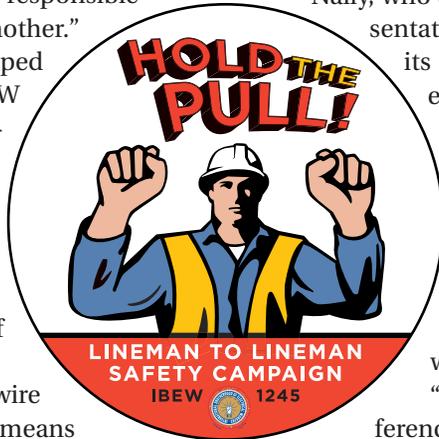
Following the presentation, President Ed Hill thanked the members for extending the IBEW’s Code of Excellence into the realm of safety.

“This is an eye-opener for me. It’s something we all knew was part of the Code of Excellence. This is something I think is really needed and I applaud you for doing it.”

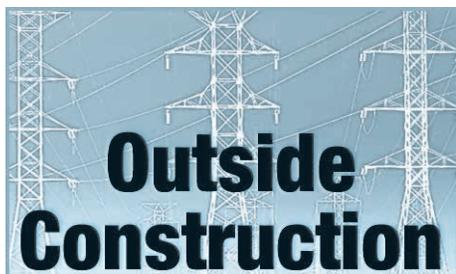
“When you swear that oath of obligation as a member of the IBEW, I think we forget what that really means, what it means to be a union brother,” said Mike Mowery, IBEW Vice President for the Ninth District. “It’s much more than just carrying a ticket and relying on your reps to negotiate your agreements, and serve you when you have a grievance. It means brotherhood, it means you care for one another.”

*“This is an eye-opener for me. It’s something we all knew was part of the Code of Excellence. This is something I think is really needed and I applaud you for doing it.”*

– IBEW International President Ed Hill



Among those attending the roll-out of the peer-to-peer program were IBEW President Edwin Hill, IBEW Ninth District Vice President Mike Mowrey, and Local 1245 Business Manager Tom Dalzell. From left: Rich Lane, Ralph Armstrong, Willie Bouzek, Dane Moore, Mark Rolow, Mike Gomes, John Kent, Bob Springer, Edwin Hill, Mike Mowrey, Tom Dalzell, and Tom Burke.



## Work Outlook: Robust

We expect transmission, substation and solar projects to be robust in 2011. The distribution work that was supposed to slow through the winter months has a little but not much. A couple winter storms in the month of December may have delayed this slow-down a little since several of our outside line crews have assisted in storm restoration work since just before Thanksgiving.

### Grievances

There are currently two grievances with one moving to Labor Management and one in Step 2 of the process. We anticipate both of the grievances to make it to labor management:

- Wrongful termination
- Improper use of the referral system and use of classification

### Jurisdictional Issues

Although we are under constant attack from other labor groups for our work, the issue that was reported last month regarding the Building Trades and the Russell Substation project has been corrected. We attended a work assignment mark-up meeting with the customer and the trades on the 15th of December with no major issues and work that has been traditionally performed by the IBEW was assigned as such.

### 2011 Training Schedule

- OSHA 10 ET&D will be held four times at the union hall from 6 pm-10 pm on Fridays and 8 am-4:30 pm on Saturdays: Feb. 11/12; April 8/9; July 8/9 and October 7/8.
- Crane Certification: February 21-25 - Vacaville
- OSL Shop Steward Training: March 12 - Vacaville

### Organizing

E.C. Smith and Abacus Construction,

both out of the Redding area, signed the PG&E construction agreement. Luchetti Grading also signed the PG&E construction agreement and they are based in the Ukiah area.

Curtis and Sons Construction Co; signed a project labor agreement for NV Energy Carson Phase of the Sierra Master Communications Plan.

### Negotiations

We have reached a tentative agreement with GoodCents: 2-year extension with a 2% wage increase in both years, everything else will remain the same.

### Injured Workers Fund

As of 11/30/10 the balance of the fund was \$178, 218.27. We made two payments in the months of November and December to the same member.

### Apprentice Report

The annual graduation party for apprentices will be held on Feb. 26, 2011 at the Ontario Airport Hilton. There will be approximately 60 apprentices graduating.

### Book Status

Linemen I .....29

Linemen II .....	75
Linemen III .....	1
Linemen IV .....	118
Equipment Man I .....	9
Equipment Man II .....	7
Equipment Man III .....	8
Cable Splicer I .....	5
Cable Splicer II .....	3
Cable Splicer III .....	2
Groundman I .....	17
Groundman II .....	19
Groundman III .....	165
Groundman IV .....	166
Fabricator Tech I .....	0
Fabricator Tech II .....	9

### Year to Date Referrals

Lineman .....	840
Apprentice Lineman .....	119
Equipment Man .....	120
Groundman .....	284
Fabricator Tech .....	125
Cable Splicer .....	18

Happy New Year from the Construction Team!

*Information for this report was supplied by Ralph Armstrong, Senior Bus. Rep.; Liz McInnis, Organizer; and Ron Cochran, Senior Assistant Business Manager.*



## Finalizing new safety campaign

By Ralph Armstrong

Meetings were held in December with PG&E and SMUD management to discuss crew availability to present the IBEW's new Lineman-to-Lineman safety campaign. These meetings came after a December 6th roll-out of the program in San Francisco with IBEW President Ed Hill in attendance. (See story, page 10)

Dates and locations for the roll-out of this Peer-to-Peer safety campaign should be finalized in January with hopes that presentations will begin in the field towards the end of January and February.

To make sure this message is deliv-

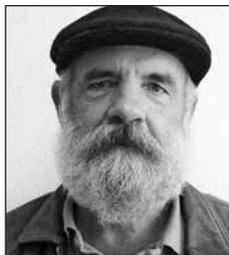
ered to the membership the Local has hired Dean Gurke, a retired Local 1245 lineman and former union Business Representative on a temporary detail to oversee the implementation and roll out of this program. This will be his primary focus which should eliminate the allocated time issue but will still be a large task to accomplish.

This program was started in the line departments because this is where we are experiencing the large and unacceptable number of fatal and serious accidents. If this campaign is successful, expect similar programs from the other work groups we represent. Stay tuned for upcoming dates and locations.

### PG&E Rain Gear Issues

Over the last couple of years the union as well as PG&E have received numerous complaints regarding the new MP3 Rain Gear and the fact that the equipment leaks.

PG&E over the last four years has spent millions working with Nasco to develop raingear that is not only water proof but breathable, which resulted in the MP3 raingear that the employees are currently using. PG&E has taken the lead in the industry with respect to R&D in this product while the rest of the industry has sat back and waited for a product to be developed that can do



Helping to get the new safety program ready for deployment to the field is former Business Rep. Dean Gurke, who has rejoined the staff on a temporary basis for the assignment.



At the program's launch in San Francisco, Safety Committee Chairman Ralph Armstrong, right, discusses plans to bring the new lineman-to-lineman safety program into the field.

what everyone wants and also meet the FR requirements.

PG&E is taking one last shot at this with a new Omega 3 raingear. They will be conducting wear trials for the remainder of 2011 with 1,100 sets being sent in the field for evaluation. If this new stuff doesn't work PG&E stated they will go back to the old stuff that has the FR qualities, doesn't leak but is not breathable.

This is an industry-wide issue with FR and PG&E says it has gone over and beyond in an effort to develop something that will work. Let's hope this new Omega 3 stuff works out. It comes at a cost of approximately \$750 a set.

### Cranes and Derricks

CalOSHA published its proposed changes to its crane standard in December. They have also met with Fed OSHA regulators and have had the proposed changes reviewed on Dec. 15. A public hearing on the proposed changes is scheduled for Jan. 20, 2011 in San Diego.

There are plenty of positives in the proposed standard for our industry.

Although the lifting capacities for crane certifications will be reduced to 2,000 lbs, the proposed changes will also keep a full exemption for certifications on the digger derrick.

### Troubleman Work Jurisdiction and Safety

A concern was raised with PG&E over the installation and testing practices on some equipment in the field, such as regulators. It appears there is some inconsistency in different areas as to who performs the testing and placing this equipment in service. There were two different issues, one of which is a work jurisdiction issue and one is a safety issue. PG&E has committed to addressing these safety concerns.

### Flag confusion at dispatch centers:

Read about it on-line in the full Local 1245 Safety Report at [www.ibew1245.com/news-Safety/Safety\\_Report\\_1-4-11.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/news-Safety/Safety_Report_1-4-11.html).

### Accident report—pole failure:

Read about it on-line in the full Local 1245 Safety Report at [www.ibew1245.com/news-Safety/Safety\\_Report\\_1-4-11.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/news-Safety/Safety_Report_1-4-11.html).



## Health care repeal: bad deal for seniors

The new Republican majority in the US House of Representatives are wasting no time trying to repeal federal health care reform.

The new Congress convened on Jan. 5 and on Jan. 6 the House Rules Committee met to report a rule to repeal the health care law. The full House may have voted on the repeal by the time the Utility Reporter gets to your mailbox.

Because of the law, many important, positive changes to Medicare—such as

free preventive screenings—went into effect on January 1. Those benefits, as well as a 50% discount for brand name drugs and 7% off generics for beneficiaries in the Part D doughnut hole, would disappear if the repeal were to become law. The doughnut hole is set to close entirely by 2020, but a repeal would change that. In addition, subsidies for early retiree health care would disappear. The 2010 law also extends the solvency of Medicare by 12 years.

The plan to repeal the health care reform law would increase the deficit by \$230 billion by 2021, according to a preliminary analysis from the Congressional Budget Office.

The Senate Democratic leadership has written House Speaker John Boehner that repeal of health care reform will not occur in the Senate. The five Senate Democratic leaders asked the Ohio Republican in the letter to preserve the health care law or risk leaving

seniors without expanded insurance coverage for prescription drugs that the law provides.

In addition, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, a coalition of 65 senior organizations, including the Alliance, sent a letter to all members of the House on Jan. 5 urging a vote against repeal.

## Retiree Club Meeting Schedule

You can find the specific dates for each month at [http://www.ibew1245.com/unit\\_meetings.html](http://www.ibew1245.com/unit_meetings.html)

**East Bay Chapter:** 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA

**San Jose Chapter:** 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose, CA.

**Vacaville/Sacramento Chapter:** 2nd Wednesday every other month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 1245, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville, CA.

**Santa Rosa Chapter:** 1st Tuesday

each month, 10 a.m., at Coco's Restaurant, 1501 Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa.

**Merced Chapter:** 1st Tuesday each month, 10 a.m., Merced Senior Community, 755 W. 15th Street., Merced.

**Reno/Sparks Chapter:** 3rd Wednesday each month, 8:30 a.m., Denny's Restaurant, 205 E. Nugget Ave., Sparks, NV.



**Reno/Sparks IBEW 1245 retirees blog**

<http://renosparksibew1245retireesclub.blogspot.com/>

**IBEW Ninth District Blog**

<http://ibewninthdistrictretirees.blogspot.com/>

## Line Clearance Tree Trimmers

### PG&E splits North Coast contract

The union has been putting in a great deal of time and effort with the North Coast tree trimming contract between Davey Tree Surgery and PG&E that was put out to bid.

Union staff attended two meetings in Ukiah and three in Eureka with our members to discuss what we know and what rights they have if a new contractor is awarded the contract. There have been countless phone calls as well.

PG&E split the North Coast contract with northern and southern parts: Humboldt County and Mendocino County. The southern part has been awarded to Family Tree Service. Currently Davey has eight two man crews working in Mendocino County.

There is successor language in all the contracts Local 1245 has with the tree companies, which will make a transition to another contractor less painful to the membership. The incumbent employees will have first hire rights and their union seniority will determine the order they are hired. The issue of vacation credit will also be based on union seniority. The successor language will protect current wage rates.

The potential bad news is with a new contractor there will be a 90-day probation period, drug screening tests and most of the companies have stricter commercial driver's license policies.

The contract award for the northern  
continued on page 13

### PG&E divide el contrato de la Costa Norte

El sindicato ha dedicado una gran cantidad de tiempo y esfuerzo al contrato de poda de árboles de la Costa Norte entre Davey Tree Surgery y PG&E que fue sometido a licitación.

El personal del sindicato asistió a dos reuniones en Ukiah y tres en Eureka con nuestros miembros para comentar sobre la información que tenemos y sobre los derechos de los miembros en caso de que el contrato sea otorgado a un nuevo contratista. También ha habido numerosas llamadas telefónicas.

PG&E dividió el contrato de la Costa

Norte en una región norte y una región sur: el Condado de Humboldt y el Condado de Mendocino. La región sur le fue otorgada a Family Tree Service. Actualmente Davey tiene ocho cuadrillas de dos hombres trabajando en el Condado de Mendocino.

En todos los contratos que Local 1245 tiene con las tres compañías existe lenguaje sobre sucesores, con lo cual la transición a otro contratista será menos dolorosa para los miembros. Los empleados actuales tendrán derechos de primera contratación y su antigüedad con el sindicato determinará en qué orden son contratados. El asunto de crédito de vacaciones también estará basado en la antigüedad sindical. El lenguaje sobre sucesores protegerá las actuales tarifas de sueldos.

La posible mala noticia es que con un nuevo contratista habrá un periodo de prueba de 90 días, pruebas de consumo

de drogas, y la mayoría de las compañías tendrán normas más estrictas sobre licencias para conductor comercial.

El otorgamiento del contrato para la región norte—Condado de Humboldt—ha sido postergado.

### Región Sur

El 16 de diciembre el sindicato sostuvo una reunión de Quejas con Asplundh Tree Expert en Sacramento. Participó el Gerente Asistente de Negocios Senior Ron Cochran, junto con los Representantes de Negocios Carl Lamers y Junior Ornelas. El sindicato y la compañía examinaron la última de las quejas pendientes en el sistema y llegamos a acuerdos satisfactorios en dos de los casos pendientes de 2010.

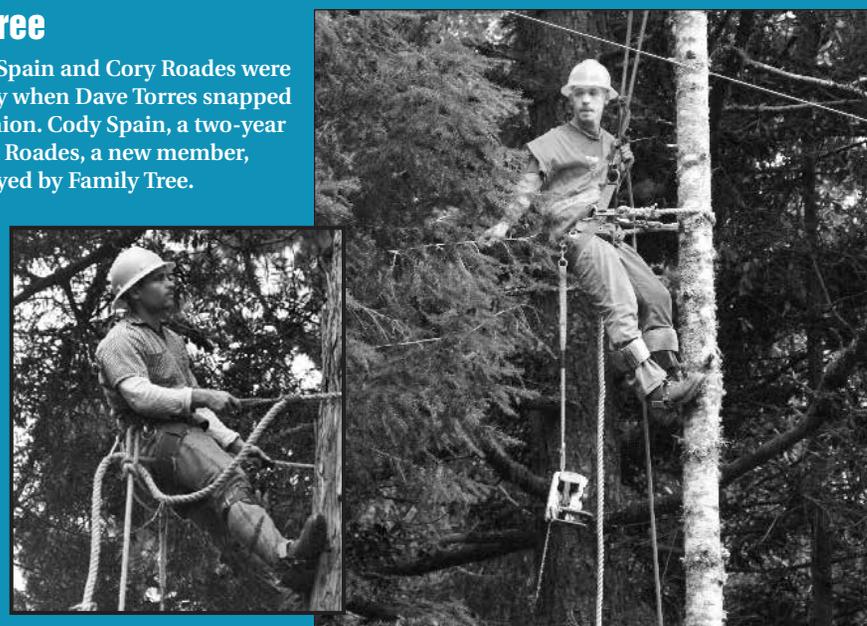
Continúan ocurriendo incidentes relacionados con seguridad a lo largo de  
continúa en la página 13

### Local 1245 members at Family Tree

Local 1245 Line Clearance Tree Trimmers Cody Spain and Cory Roades were working off Iversen Road in Gualala, Ca. recently when Dave Torres snapped these photos and made them available to the union. Cody Spain, a two-year member, works on a redwood tree (below). Cory Roades, a new member, works on a white fir tree (right). Both are employed by Family Tree.

### Miembros del Local 1245 en Family Tree

Cody Spain y Cory Roades, Podadores de Árboles para el Despeje de Líneas del Local 1245 se encontraban trabajando recientemente cerca de Iversen Road en Gualala, Ca. cuando Dave Torres tomó estas fotos y las puso a disposición del sindicato. Cody Spain, miembro desde hace dos años, está trabajando en un secoya. Cory Roades, un nuevo miembro, está trabajando en un abeto blanco. Ambos son empleados de Family Tree.





# SERVICE AWARDS

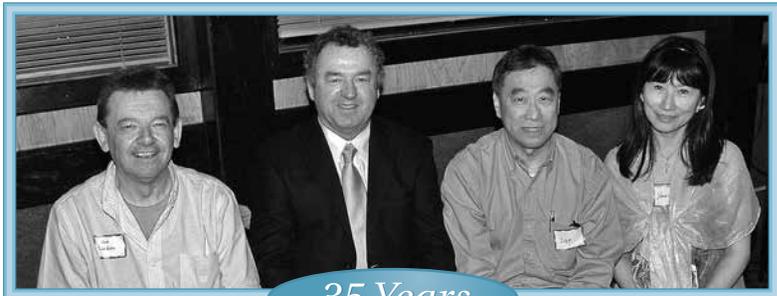
## Pacifica, CA

May 22, 2010



### 40 Years

Receiving 40-year awards, from left, are Jerry Hahn, Sharon Jeong, and Thomas Dudley.



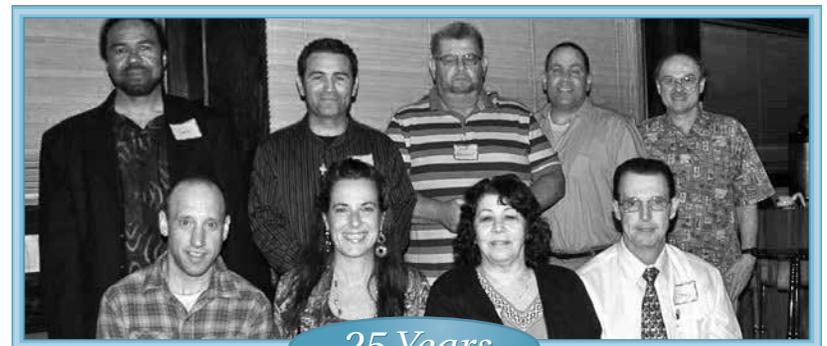
### 35 Years



### 30 Years



### 30 Years



### 25 Years

## THE HONOREES

### 40 Years

Dudley, Thomas C  
Flood, Sandra L  
Gotera, Romy A  
Hahn, Jerry W  
Jeong, Sharon  
Lott, Lance  
Moguel, Jose  
Moyer, Charles C  
Wheaton, Courtney D  
Williams III, Edward A  
Wilshusen, Ronald J

### 35 Years

Carrillo, Albert  
Davis, Paul S  
Demeo, Mary A  
Flores, Cisto E  
Galang, Cesar  
Gaylord, Laura  
Gordon, Joseph  
Goulding, Dennis T  
Hom, Robert  
Leung, Henry H  
Macdonald, Renee  
McCandless, Gene B  
Petrovitz, John  
Pon, Michael  
Rehn, David  
Tom, Denyu  
Traver, William  
Viray, Jose  
Wong, Yan  
Nevarez, Rosalie  
Vetter, Barry

### 30 Years

Agcaoili, Norverto  
Arago, Rich M  
Araquistain, Marvin E  
Arruabarrena, Paul F

Barnes, Stephen C  
Berrett, Richard F  
Buendía, Antonio J  
Carder, Robert D  
Carlile, David S  
Carr, Michael A  
Castillo, Grace G  
Chan, Celia KY  
Chin, Russell J  
Cronin, Dennis P  
Decarlo, Frank L  
Dela Calzada, Phil D  
Dela Cruz, Generoso  
Dodson, Ron L  
Durant, Danny A  
Ekberg, William M  
Fifer, Edward D  
Fong, Ana M  
Guaraglia, Denise A  
Hagberg, Robert P  
Hersom, Donna M  
Huey, Monica M  
Isaac, Josephine  
Jaber, Paul S  
Lau, Helen Y  
Lee, Alan  
Lee, Dennis M  
Lee, Raymond E  
Mahoney, John T  
Marucut, Dominador  
Maschio, Gary J  
Mott, James M  
Olague, Robert G  
Ong, Kevin  
Pena, Daniel G  
Rice, Lee T  
Rinaldi, Gino V  
Roan-Montgomery, Delena J  
Saunders, L.Kim  
Schappert, David K

### 25 Years

Anderson, Richard A  
Bauer, John H  
Beratlis, Deborah J  
Biczo, Steve D  
Chu, Agnes  
Damico, Tony D  
Delgadillo, Virginia  
Dockery Jr., William H  
Durant, Perry L  
Faugier, Edgar A  
Gerstle, Thomas E  
Grech, Rosina  
Hammons, Charles S  
Hawkes Jr., Robert E  
Holland, C R  
Karp, Paul W  
Lallian, Balbir  
Lem, Mark  
Lopez, Alonzo  
Lopez, Jose L  
Lusk Jr., Keith A  
Macdonnell, Kevin E  
Moore, Arlene M  
Nelson, Lee K  
Nieve, Allison R  
Pasion, Ernesto T  
Rosario, Margie  
Sambraillo, David M  
Scannell, Mark J  
Scramaglia, Cwetka M  
Washington, George  
Yee, Kingston

### North Coast, from page 12

part—Humboldt County—has been postponed.

### Southern Area

The union held a Grievance conference meeting with Asplundh Tree Expert in Sacramento on Dec. 16. Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran participated, along with Business Representatives Carl Lamers and Junior Ornelas. Union and company reviewed the last of the remaining open grievances in the system and reached satisfactory settlements in two of the remaining cases for 2010.

There continue to be safety-related issues throughout the entire system. Emergency work has been ramped up in the system due to all the storm activity in Yosemite and the entire Bay Area.

At Davey Tree Surgery, overtime work has picked up due to all the recent storm activity in the Diablo and Mission Divisions. Central Coast has continued to work plenty of overtime and emergency work for several weeks now. At year's end, East Bay crews were still working out of town in Silverado Division. Crews have been working their fair share of overtime in Los Padres as well. The amount of overtime worked on PG&E property for 2010 is unprecedented.

Grievance Review Committee meetings are planned for January with Trees Inc. and Wright Tree.

Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran and Business Reps. Carl Lamers and Junior Ornelas contributed to this report.

### Costa Norte, from page 12

todo el sistema. El trabajo de emergencia se ha incrementado en el sistema debido a todas las tormentas en Yosemite y toda el Área de la Bahía.

En Davey Tree Surgery, el trabajo de sobre tiempo se ha incrementado debido a todas las tormentas recientes en las Divisiones de Diablo y Mission. La Costa Central ha continuado trabajando muchas horas de sobre tiempo y en trabajos de emergencia por varias semanas. A finales de año, las cuadrillas de la Bahía Este aún estaban trabajando fuera de la ciudad en la División de Silverado. Las cuadrillas también han estado trabajando una cantidad considerable de sobre tiempo en Los Padres. La cantidad de sobre tiempo trabajado en las instalaciones de PG&E en 2010 no tiene precedentes.

Para enero se han planificado reuniones del Comité de Revisión de Quejas con Trees Inc. y Wright Tree.

Ron Cochran, Carl Lamers y Junior Ornelas contribuyeron a este informe.



# SERVICE AWARDS

# Emeryville, CA

May 15, 2010

## THE HONOREES

### 45 Years

Robertson, Ronald F  
Padgett, Wiley

### 40 Years

Alvarez, John  
Bergh, Eugene D  
Carder, George V  
Carr, Edward L  
Chan, Valerie  
Dorsey, Edward  
Dudley, John M  
Garcia Jr., Frank  
Gilson, Martin A  
Gomes, Harvey  
Hall, Jackie  
Hall, Richard  
Harrison, Dennis  
Head, Leonard L  
Lewis, Virginia  
Lillie, Don C  
Mcclendon, Lonnie L  
Meyi, Louis A  
Mozon, Herb  
Nelson, Jimmie L  
Padron, Kenneth  
Perez, Enrique J  
Price, Roy E  
Reid Jr., Edwin C  
Romo, Michael A  
Sauer, Linda F  
Warren, William L  
Wells, Ronald  
Williams, H Barron  
Williams, Maurice  
Chatman Jr., Jules

### 35 Years

Ahlers, Robert  
Annastas, Harold  
Consiglio, Elaine  
Cooley, Margaret  
Cristobal, Bernardo  
Drew, Steven E  
Fenton, Gary L  
Fernandes, S J  
Fortier, Dorothy  
Freeman, Daniel  
Hsu, George  
Hurtado, Alfred E  
Isidro, Josephine  
Magana, Sonia R  
Martinez, Maria  
Mata, Ermiline  
Medina, Edward S  
Mitosinka, Carey A  
Monroe, Edgar L  
Nicoletti, Teresa  
Nunes Jr., Frank  
Porep, Ella  
Rhodes, Judy  
Valdez, Eduardo T  
Van Noy, Richard S  
Whitefield, Mary Ann  
Willis, Sara L  
Wong, Gene  
Yokoyama, Harry  
Yuhre, Frank

### 30 Years

Abney, Pat  
Arnold Jr., William L  
Benedict, Steven L  
Bergman, Larry A

Blasquez, Steve S  
Bolf, Scotty A  
Booth, Philip B  
Brown, Shanda  
Burton, Shery L  
Butler, Ronald A  
Cano Jr., Miguel A  
Cederquist, Jerry N  
Ching, Cecilia  
Chong, Michael  
Clifton, Jerome C  
Contaxis, Mary B  
Cortez, Arthur W  
Costa, Daniel S  
Craig, Melvin L  
Crane, Kevin J  
Cravanas, Emma J  
Dea, Galen H  
Del Real, Jose  
Dolay, Lino  
Dominguez, Cornelio  
Dorricott, Matthew E  
Douglas, William E  
Drinkward, Peter C  
Eddy, John W  
Estes III, Alfonso  
Fletcher, Jane L  
Fontanilla, Rafael M  
Franck, Alan K  
Franks, Kathleen  
Garcia, Mauricio  
Garcia, Ruth E  
Gaudet, Dolores L  
Grisby, Rosalind  
Gundersen, Douglas R  
Guzman, Joseph F  
Halseide, Janice L  
Halsell-Burton, Diane  
Hansen, Matthew  
Harness, Richard G  
Harris, Michael P  
Hernandez, Benjamin  
Herrin, James  
Hines, Keith A  
Holstein, John K  
Huey, Ronald S  
Javier, Cornelio  
Johnson, William M  
Jung, William  
Kahler, Charles H  
Kimberlin, Anita I  
Kiyomura, Glenn H  
Knowlton, Monica L  
Langham, Mitchell  
Lassus, Randall E  
Lewis, Patricia  
Lindblom, Ross D  
Luer, Scott H  
Lydon, Stephen K  
Marymee, Brian E  
McGee, Joyce R  
Mendoza, Fernando  
Miller, Jeffrey K  
Montgomery, Diana  
Najera, Fred A  
Navarro Jr., Oscar  
Ng, Stella L  
Nomellini, Cynthia  
Patrick III, Gazaway A  
Peterson, Andrew J  
Pirie II, John H  
Polen, James M  
Rabello, David W  
Rayos, Karen L

Ridgway, Neil S  
Rinear, Clifford  
Rodriguez, Trinidad  
Ryles, Harry R  
Schecher, Michael  
Silva, Jeffrey M  
Smith, Loretta L  
Sonneborn, Richard T  
Sot, John S  
Stage Jr., William A  
Sullivan, John P  
Swanson, Marie  
Tambunting Jr., Ildefonso  
Tancioco, Randolph  
Tom, Linnie  
Vera, Jaime M  
Walker, Stephen R  
Wedge, James L  
Welch, Douglas G  
Wilson, Dean W  
Wilson, Linda J  
Wong, Steven D  
Zermeno, Eduardo S  
Martin, Emma J

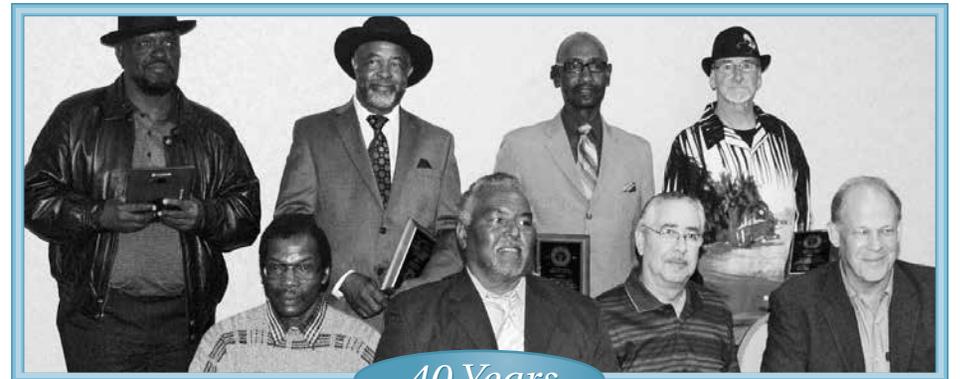
### 25 Years

Abney, Gary C  
Achterberg, Douglas K  
Baxter, Jeffrey T  
Bracamonte, Richard S  
Brown, Dwayne  
Byars, Kenneth C  
Carney, Ezzard C  
Carscadden, Todd A  
Chauvin, Kathleen  
Conley, Kevin E  
Dongallo, Fernando  
Doolan, John L  
Dunham, Vern C  
Forbes, Gregory G  
Gaffney, John C  
Gerhart, Michael A  
Greenwood, Guy  
Gritsch, Joseph R  
Gutierrez, Ronald A  
Henry, John M  
Hess, Rodney  
Kipp, Danny R  
Kolesnikov, Frantisek  
Lawrence, John C  
Leabo, Karl R  
Lehman, Jeffrey E  
Martin, Jose I  
McKenna, Patrick L  
Mitchell, Patrick L  
Munoz, Tracy A  
Nagy, George  
Nolasco, Tomas M  
Nolerth, Toni A  
Ouye, Russell S  
Pena, Richard A  
Rodriguez, Jose A  
Sanchez, Michael A  
Serrano, Jairo A  
Smallwood, Bernard R  
Stricklin, Rosemary  
Vecchi, Dave R  
Vidovich, Steve L  
Vincent, Jack D  
Wilson, Doris D  
Wright, Eric E  
Wyatt, Glen E



### 45 Years

Wiley Padgett, left, receives the 45-year service award from Business Manager Tom Dalzell.



### 40 Years



### 35 Years



### 30 Years



### 30 Years



### 25 Years

## Get Smart *continued from page 16*

After changing out the Comcast meter on the utility pole, Miramontes drives to a house a little ways down the road. “We’re going to do a dual account here—gas and electric,” he says.

The customer is already waiting at the door, having heard the truck pull into the driveway. Miramontes explains his mission, and that it will be necessary to briefly shut off electric power to the house.

Because Orlando Miramontes is a meter technician—not a journeyman wireman—he is not trained to set up temporary jumper cables to keep power on during a meter changeout. But the vast majority of PG&E electric meters are installed with “ring sockets,” which can’t be bypassed in any case, so the power has to be briefly interrupted no matter who is doing the work.

First, though, he steps through some weeds to reach the gas meter. He verifies he’s at the right address, checks the type of meter, slips on his safety glasses and checks for stray voltage and obvious gas leaks, and takes a read. Then he removes a few screws, removes the index, attaches the SmartMeter module and reattaches the index. Then he presses his hand-held against the module for about 45 seconds to program it.

The whole operation takes less than five minutes.

## Good Will Ambassadors

Miramontes, who’s been at Wellington for three years, found the job through an ad in the newspaper. “I was coming out of college looking for work. I liked the type of work it was.”

He went through the training program, which gives each employee one week of classroom training, including test board simulation training on all types of electric and gas meter installations, followed by several weeks of field supervised training before final testing and quality auditing. Because there is so much customer contact, Wellington expects its employees to be “good will ambassadors” for the project, putting a strong emphasis on standards of conduct and appearance—whether you’re dealing with hostile customers or just curious grannies in pajamas.

Now Miramontes is ready to tackle the electric meter. He lets the customer know that the power will be off for a few minutes, then moves to the other side of the house where the electric meter is located. The serial number confirms it’s the meter to be removed. He puts on his hardhat with the face shield and his work gloves.

After removing the seal he pulls the meter out, then checks for back-feed—which would be a sign that someone is illegally taking power, not to mention posing a potential electrical hazard to installers like himself. Finding none, Miramontes pops in the new meter, puts the seal back on, and checks to make sure that power is cycling through. He’s ready for a new address.

And this is how it’s done—building by building, one customer at a time. IBEW members at Wellington Energy, in partnership with PG&E, are laying the foundation for a new approach to measuring and using energy in California.

## SMART CUSTOMERS

There’s a reason they’re called SmartMeters. Yes, the device is “smart” enough to measure energy use in hourly increments and transmit this data electronically to PG&E. But the real point of the meter is to give customers more control over their energy use—and their energy bills.

SmartMeters are about creating smart customers.

Automating meters was mandated by the California Public Utilities Commission, part of a long-term project to help Californians become more efficient in the way we use energy.

Changing out the meter of every single PG&E customer is an ambitious program. No surprise: it’s also been controversial.

IBEW Local 1245 itself did not welcome the prospect of automated meter reading the first time PG&E proposed it, well over a decade ago. In those days, meter reading provided good jobs for nearly a thousand IBEW members at PG&E.

PG&E’s first pass at the new technology didn’t pan out, but when CPUC regulators started getting behind the idea the union saw the handwriting on the wall. In a forward-looking settlement negotiated in 2005, PG&E and Local 1245 agreed on a historic long-term plan to phase out regular meter reader positions through a combination of attrition and helping employees obtain other positions within the company, or find work with the contractor that would install the new meters. Going forward, any vacant positions in meter reading were filled by temporary meter readers dispatched from the union hiring hall.

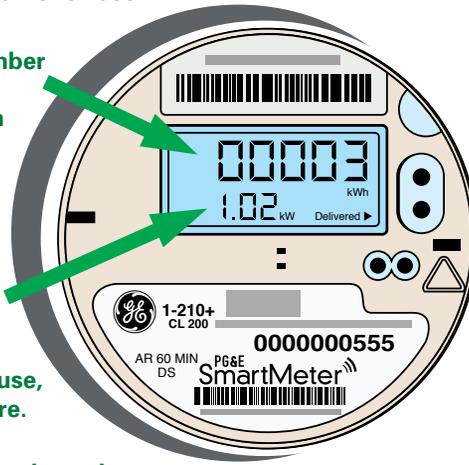
Today, only 116 regular PG&E employees work as meter readers. Their work is

**There are two brands of SmartMeter, but the basic concept is the same for both.**

**This 5-digit number tells you how much energy, in kilowatt/hours, you’ve used since the meter was installed.**

**This GE-brand SmartMeter displays your current energy use, in kilowatts, here.**

**The meter cycles through other displays that give you additional information.**



supplemented by 338 hiring hall meter readers, according to the latest available figures. After full deployment of the SmartMeters, an unknown number of workers will be needed to monitor the automated reads and to inspect and repair the meters themselves.

“Going clear back to the days of Ron Weakley, this union has tried to find ways to adapt to changing technology,” said Business Manager Tom Dalzell, who helped negotiate the meter reader agreement. “It’s better to adapt than have our members end up as roadkill.”

The union considers itself fortunate to have a company like Wellington doing the footwork in PG&E’s transition to automated meter reading.

“This company has been very conscientious about safety, something that’s very important to us,” said Senior Assistant Business Manager Ron Cochran. “We really appreciate Wellington being a fair and honest partner while working in our jurisdiction.”

## Current Protests

Current protests over SmartMeter deployment tend to focus on possible health effects from exposure to radiofrequency (RF) radiation.

RF emissions from SmartMeters are far too small to heat up human tissue, (known as a “thermal effect”). This conclusion was affirmed in a survey released Jan. 11 by the California Council on Science and Technology, which found that SmartMeters emit RF radiation “that is a very small fraction of the exposure level established as safe” by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The FCC has not set standards covering possible health effects from exposure to very low (or “non-thermal”) levels of RF. The FCC’s website notes that various scientific reports have observed some biological effects resulting from exposure to low-levels of RF energy, but “in most cases further experimental research has been unable to reproduce these effects.”

Research will—and should—continue on the health effects of the RF radiation that has become ubiquitous in modern society with the proliferation of wireless devices in our homes and places of work. But how many of us are prepared to toss our cell phones, for example, because of possible health effects that haven’t been proven?

Some of those objecting to SmartMeters claim that the radio signals from these devices have triggered headaches and nausea in people “sensitive” to electromagnetic radiation. Although there is not yet any scientific data to connect human headaches to RF exposure, legislation was introduced in December by Assemblyman Jared Huffman that would force PG&E and the state’s other utilities to offer customers a choice between receiving a wireless SmartMeter or an advanced meter that would transmit the same data through a wired connection—an option endorsed by the CCST in its report.

## Climate Change

Ironically, the best case for SmartMeters is grounded in a very real threat to health and environment: climate change.

The metering devices installed by Wellington employees like Stacy Wallace and Orlando Miramontes are intended to give electric consumers more control over their use of electricity.

Consumers will be able to see how much power they are using, and how much it is costing them, on an hour-by-hour basis. Time-of-use rate structures will give PG&E customers a financial incentive to shift certain tasks—like running their dishwasher or washing machine—to parts of the day or night when power is more available, and cheaper. This in turn will allow utilities to put off building more power plants to meet an ever-increasing “peak” demand.

As environmentalists—and these days, aren’t we all?—we can wring our hands about the carbon being belched out of coal-fired power plants, and the dangerous warming of our planet. But leveling out the peak demand for electric power is one of the quickest ways to reduce the need to build more power plants. And automated metering technology—SmartMeters—will give every PG&E customer a way to make a difference in that important fight.



Stacy Wallace: “I like to make things work.”

# Get Smart

Story and photos by Eric Wolfe

SmartMeter installers for Wellington Energy face the same issues that utility workers in the field have always faced: Vigilant dogs, not always friendly.irate customers, not always rational. Gas and electricity, inherently dangerous.

Since 2006, over 600 IBEW members at Wellington have automated over 7 million PG&E gas and electric meters, part of California's ambitious program to give customers more control over their energy use ... and their energy bills.

To Stacy Wallace, a journeyman wireman dispatched to Wellington by IBEW Local 1245, installing automated meters also means interesting work at good wages—far better than the waitressing work she did for five years before getting into the trades.

"The money is much better," she says. "I like to be outside. I like to build things. I like to make things work and make it look good."

On a sunny December morning she heads into the greening countryside south of Santa Rosa, searching for the next address listed on her hand-held. Wellington workers often visit 50 and more customers a day. But it's not like piece-work in a factory. Every meter installation comes with unique challenges.

First and foremost among them: finding the meter.

When Wallace arrives at the rural address that's first on her list, she turns into a long driveway and finds her path blocked by a metal gate. She opens it, pulls her pickup truck forward, closes the gate securely behind her, then continues driving toward a house set well back from the road. And there it is, on the side of the house next to the driveway: a PG&E electric meter.

But it's the wrong meter. The serial number doesn't match the one listed for this address on Wallace's hand-held. Time to see if anyone's home.

She's alert to the possibility of four-leggeds. Optimally, the hand-held will tell you whether a dog lives on the premises. Sometimes the sound of barking will tell you the same thing. Worst case scenario: teeth charge at you from out of nowhere, followed by a tail that's not wagging.

"A lot of customers have dogs. It's a potential problem," says Wallace, a self-confessed "dog person" who has five dogs of her own. "A lot of them are not going to get you, but there are some that can." Best idea is to try to read the dog's behavior—and to stay out of its way.

Wallace knocks on the door. No one home, neither canine nor human. She will have to figure this one out on her own.

Her eye follows the driveway that snakes around behind the house. About 50 yards distant she spies a power pole with a bank of metal boxes at its base. And bingo: she finds a PG&E meter with the right number.



Wellington Meter Technician Orlando Miramontes removed an old PG&E electric meter and shows off the new SmartMeter he's installed in its place.



Stacy Wallace, a journeyman wireman for Wellington Energy, removes the old electric meter powering a rural residence in Sonoma County.

She grabs a new meter from the back of her pickup, and scans it to confirm that she is putting in the right kind of meter for this particular application. But for some reason the scanner doesn't register anything, so Wallace enters the meter number by hand and gets the confirmation she needs. Now it's time for the show.

## Running a By-Pass

As a journeyman wireman, Wallace has the training to run a bypass at the meter, re-routing the electric current so that the customer stays "hot" during the meter change-out. First she dons her personal protective equipment (PPE): safety glasses, hardhat with protective face shield, rubber gloves (which she tested for leaks with an air pump back at the Wellington yard), then regular work gloves over the rubber gloves. Failing to wear the required gear can get you fired in a hurry at Wellington, and you're not going to get much sympathy from the union.

Now she's ready to check the voltage—to make sure that power is in fact being delivered to the customer.

"You don't ever want to lay a jumper down when you don't know if power is being distributed to them," she says. If the power has been off for some reason and suddenly goes on, a customer inside could get hurt.

Switching the meter out is almost anti-climactic. Jumpers are put in place, some screws come out, the meter comes out, the new meter goes in, the jumpers are removed, a seal is installed to make sure nobody besides a PG&E worker can take the meter off, and *voilà!*: someone has a new automated electric meter.

"All righty," says Wallace, removing her hardhat and face shield. "Off to the next one!"

## AN HOUR LATER, A FEW MILES AWAY...

The elderly woman in the blue flower-print pajamas wants to know why Orlando Miramontes has parked by her driveway on an otherwise deserted rural road in Sonoma County.

Miramontes, who is preparing to change out an electric meter on a nearby utility pole, stops what he is doing. Wellington employees know that customers come first. Especially if they seem upset.

As it happens, the meter Miramontes is preparing to work on measures power used by a Comcast device affixed to the utility pole. Miramontes identifies himself and assures the woman in pajamas that his visit is totally unrelated to her—she won't be affected in any way.

He's lucky, this time. The woman is friendly, exchanges some pleasantries, then lets him get on with his work.

It's not always so easy. Some residents view any kind of service vehicle as an invasion of their privacy. Others specifically oppose the deployment of automated meters, citing concerns about their accuracy or alleged effects on human health.

In some cases, the opposition is organized, even physical. On Dec. 14, 2010, just a week after Miramontes' encounter with the customer in pajamas, about 20 protesters demonstrated in the lobby of a PG&E office in neighboring Marin County, forcing the office to close for about two hours. And on Jan. 11 of this year, two women concerned about health issues were arrested when they tried to block SmartMeter deployment trucks in Rohnert Park—Miramontes' home base.

Wellington employees know it's not their job to sell customers on the idea of automated meters. Installation has been mandated by the California Public Utilities Commission to help customers improve their energy efficiency and lower their energy costs. If a customer doesn't want the meter, Wellington employees are trained to avoid confrontation and move on.

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