

# Brotherhood Broadcasts

## Local Union #112

February 2025

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

Brothers and Sisters,

This month we are going to talk about 'skill of the trade' and why it is important to keep learning and honing your craft.

The electrical construction trade is very competitive, and we don't compete in this industry by having the lowest cost structure. The IBEW and NECA excel by having the best apprenticeship on the planet that builds a foundation for everyone who goes through the program to learn a lifelong trade which gives us the potential to be the most well-rounded Journeyman Wiremen on a job. Let me set the record straight. Just because you have graduated from an IBEW/NECA JATC apprenticeship program doesn't mean you are a better wireman than anyone in the industry. It just means that you have more potential, and you start off on a better platform. What you do with your education learned from the classroom and on-the-job experiences is up to you. When you combine this knowledge with the commercial and industrial work scope that a union contractor normally performs, it provides the IBEW electrician with more opportunities to learn and hone their craft.

When it comes to OTJ experience, things like automation and technological advancements start out in the industrial sector before they are used in residential and light commercial work. It takes the best construction workers in the industry to build these highly efficient facilities using cutting edge technology. In turn, being the best in the electrical industry is also the competitive advantage that we need to focus on, which is what both IBEW and NECA rely on to be dominant in the electrical industry. When we start losing our advantage in the industrial and heavy commercial sectors, it allows non-represented contractors to step in and try their hand at something new. This is why it is critical that we remain to be the best skilled craftsmen out there and continue to learn in this changing industry. Unfortunately, over the years we have lost some of the industrial work that was so prevalent in training our next generation, which means we need to continue to learn the skills and proficiency that prove our worth every time our contractors land this type of work.

What is the best way to hone your skills? In my opinion, it is knowing what is happening around you, listening, and being inquisitive. People in general want to be heard and are willing to share what they know, so use that to your advantage. In our industry we work with so many different people from all over who have specific knowledge and experiences. The other cool part about being an IBEW member is the ability to travel around the country to work on different types of projects. Be willing to accept the fact there is more than one way to perform work. Be open-minded, as sometimes even the least skilled Journeyman on the job can teach you something. Most of the time it has taught me how 'not' to do something, but it also motivates me to continue learning more to become a better wireman.

We work in a very competitive industry, and we gain market share by putting the best product out there along with the most value. If we lose that cutting edge and rely strictly on representation and politics to protect our work, it will eventually come down to the price tag and every blue-collar worker loses that race to the bottom.

The bottom line is that if we work together to better our skills and hone our craft, it will benefit not only ourselves, but the Brothers and Sisters around us. The more this happens, the more the IBEW will continue to elevate to another level of competition that no one can compete with. It is you who are doing the work in the field that keep the IBEW strong and growing. Keep up the great work!

### ORGANIZING REPORT

With the strong year we had organizing last year we are hoping to follow it up with another strong year this year. Hopefully much of the planned work continues to progress unimpeded but with funding for the infrastructure act being halted, we very well could see some developers pull back and take a wait and see approach. While organizing will continue as it always does, it makes it a bit more difficult with a diminished work picture. Hopefully that doesn't come to pass, and we continue as we have for the last decade, but we are long overdue for a downturn in work picture.

Additionally, we have the dates for our organizing blitz, and it will be May 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. This year we need to hit the Yakima area more thoroughly and so it will be a big part of our blitz in addition to hitting the Tri-Cities and Oregon. The organizing blitz is the single most important tool we must use because you can talk to someone at home where they are more receptive to what you have to say as opposed to looking over their shoulder on a jobs site. We can break down the barriers and the lies they have been told about the union and simply lay out the facts that they will elevate their economic standing by joining us. Every time an IBEW local comes out of a construction boom they lose market share. And that is because if we can't supply the manpower our contractors need, they will stop bidding work which will subsequently cause them to stop hiring. So, it is vitally important that we continue to organize so we continue to grow our share of the market and don't lose it when or if there is a downturn.

*Rylan Grimes, Lead Organizer*

### COMMISSIONING TECHS

Hello my union Brothers and Sisters ! Out here at the Vit Plant we have put both melters to idle so that we can do a "Melter Shutdown". This was done so that we can perform some much needed maintenance packages to the cooling system(CHW) and the primary off-gas system (LOP) that can't be performed while the melters are active. This takes hard work and the focus of all of us on site.

We also have welcomed our new groups of Commissioning Techs. They are almost done with their fundamentals training and will soon be training on the many different systems it takes to bring waste from tank farms and turn it into glass that is poured into canisters.

*Jason Allen, Bravo Crew Steward*

### Retirees' Breakfast

FRIDAY, MARCH 7th @ the hall @ 9:00 a.m.

### MARCH MEETINGS

|                 |            |          |
|-----------------|------------|----------|
| Tri- Cities     | March 6th  | 7 :00 pm |
| Hermiston       | March 13th | 7:00 pm  |
| Yakima          | March 20th | 7:00 pm  |
| Executive Board | March 27th | 5:30 pm  |
| EWMC            | March 5th  | 6:00 pm  |
| PAC             | March 11th | 6:00 pm  |
| Veterans        | March 11th | 6:00 pm  |
| RENEW           | March 12th | 6:00 pm  |
| Women's Comm.   | March 19th | 6:30 pm  |

No Safety Committee meeting in March

# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

~~Leading The Electrical Industry~~

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**APPRENTICESHIP & JOURNEYMAN TRAINING**

We're off to a busy start for the year with 341 applicants through the month of January, and more continuing to apply in February.

Graduation has been set for July 11<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick. We have a graduating class of 48 this year. Hope to see you there supporting our newest Journeyman.

We want to congratulate Epic Snow, our 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Apprentice, who has been named Apprentice of the Month for his outstanding performance and positive attitude both on the job and in the classroom.

A very special thanks goes out to Shawn Haggin from the Training Center and apprentices. Shawn put on an Oregon State Test Prep 2-night class at the Training Center for our 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year apprentices. Shawn's prep course has helped many pass their Oregon test. If anyone in the future needs a study guide for the Oregon JW Test contact him at: oetp42@gmail.com

*Geoff Arends, Training Director*



Hello fellow members ! The New Year/ New Swag contest is still going on until March 31st! Please get your submission in before March 31st and they will be voted on at the April unit meetings.

RENEW is also doing its own coin which you can submit your design before or at the March RENEW meeting. We will discuss and vote on the RENEW coin at the March 12th meeting!

**REACH OUT AND ENGAGE NEXT-GEN ELECTRICAL WORKERS**  
*Koby Harris, Chairman*



We have our bonding activities back on our agenda this year, after taking a little break to focus on fundraising. We have 24 members attending an escape room @ Atomic's Kennewick location on Saturday, March 1st from 600 pm -8:00 pm.

Our 2nd coin has begun production! She Hulk @ the Nuke is expected to arrive in early May.

*Laura Leahy, SIS Chair*



If you have recently had a change in your life, such as marriage, new baby, divorce or death, it is important that you keep your beneficiary information current with the hall and your pensions and Health & Welfare plan. When the time comes for beneficiaries to be paid, funds are paid to the person(s) named, regardless of their current status with you.

Forms are available at the hall or on our website.



**SAFETY SPOT**

**PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH**

Thanks to the support of our membership, I had the privilege of attending the IBEW Safety Conference last year. This event not only reinforced our commitment to physical safety but also highlighted an equally critical aspect of our well-being: mental health.

During the conference, International Representative Jim Watson delivered a compelling talk on "Mental Health: The Ongoing Pandemic." His message was both urgent and enlightening, shedding light on issues that affect a significant portion of our population—and very likely, our own union members. Rep. Watson shared a striking statistic that one in five Americans grapple with mental health challenges every day, while one in three suffer from conditions like depression or anxiety.

The connection between mental health issues and substance abuse is well-documented, yet the stigma and isolation associated with these struggles often deter people from seeking the help they need. In his address, Rep. Watson reminded us, "It's okay not to be okay." This simple, yet profound, acknowledgment serves as a call to action for all of us to support one another compassionately and without judgment.

As a union, it's imperative that we break down the barriers of silence and stigma. Mental health is as critical as physical safety on the job, and our support systems must reflect this reality. Let us continue to foster an environment where everyone feels safe to speak up and seek help, knowing they are not alone.

Our strength lies in our solidarity. As we navigate these challenges, remember that our mental health is a journey, not a destination, and it's a path we don't need to walk alone. Your well-being is a priority!

Thank you once again for making my attendance at the conference possible. Let us commit to being vigilant about not only our physical safety but our mental well-being too.

*Jason Brady, Safety Committee Member.*



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BROTHERHOOD BROADCASTS