

FRONTLINE

IBEW LOCAL 21



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Flexing Their Muscle at City Hall



Comcast Workers went to Chicago City Hall on November 15th

PHOTO: KEVIN BEALLIS

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It's Been Quite a Year

By Ronald Kastner



As the year comes to a close, we have a tendency to look back and reflect on what has happened in our local Union. It has been a very busy and memorable year. With my staff and the support of the entire membership our Local has laid the ground-work for a strong, viable future for all of our present and future members.

To start with we have dealt with the most complained about issue in the Local, the **arbitration backlog**. As promised, we worked with AT&T to schedule just about all of our cases by the end of the year. All arbitrations will be heard by the end of 2008, and all future cases will be put into the process immediately. Considering we started the year with well over 230 cases and approximately a three-year wait for them to be resolved, it goes without saying this is a monumental accomplishment. Furthermore, this backlog had a negative effect on the entire membership. I am happy to report that due to the resolution of this situation, resources will be freed up to allow our staff to work on other important issues at all companies where we represent members.

As reported numerous times, we finally have **legislation that will spark job growth** for the Local and true cable competition for consumers in Illinois. I am proud to say it could not have been passed without the involvement of our membership and our COPE department. It is with great pride that I can say that we are truly recognized as a political leader both by the Illinois legislature as well as the IBEW International Office in Washington, DC.

Furthermore, we are starting to see some of the benefits of AT&T entering the video market. Premise Technicians will be joining our Union at a rapid pace, at least 230 by the end of this year with more to follow early next year. Additionally, approximately 500 term employees are now working on **Project Lightspeed**. This U-Verse product will enable our Union to recoup the nearly

3,000 jobs that have been lost since 2001. Those jobs vanished because of cable companies competing for dial-tone customers.

We represent over 200 **Comcast workers** in the Chicagoland area. I'm pleased to report that competition bodes well for all our members there. Comcast, in order to compete and retain their employees, will be forced to treat them with some dignity. Our efforts to organize more workers in the cable industry will pick up, and negotiating better contracts will continue to be a priority for our Local.

Century Telephone took control of Gallatin River. We are hoping for a good relationship with the new owners. The issues at Century, Citizens and Verizon are familiar to our members at AT&T. They are facing problems with more contracting-out and mandatory overtime.

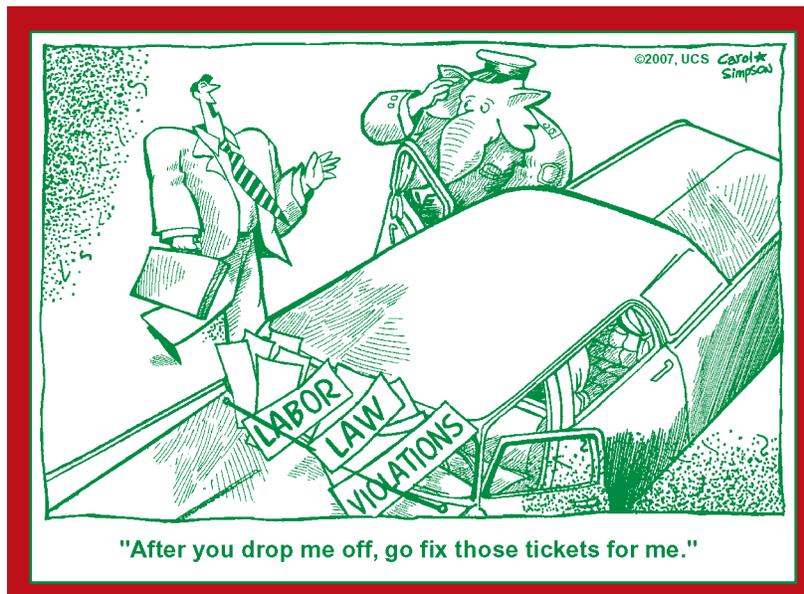
We ended the year on a good note with our sisters and brothers at **JULIE** ratifying a new five-year agreement. Every contract, no matter what the size of the bargaining unit, is extremely important to our Local. Other employers look at the contracts we settle. Our bargaining history sets the stage for the way other employers perceive our strength at their bargaining tables.

As we turn the corner into 2008, one important focus is reaching a good contract for our members in the **Office of Emergency Management Communications** (OEMC) consisting of the Chicago 911 Center and Department of Aviation employees. The extended bargaining continues as we speak. The other unions in the city obtained good contracts, and we expect the same. In February, the bargaining agreement for our members working at **AT&T Datacomm** expires. There is no rest for the weary.

Over the past year our **Internal Organizing Committee** has been hard at work developing a plan that will give our members

the tools they need to resolve work-place issues while making us a stronger Union. Internal Organizing training classes will be starting soon and will be taught by the staff from the University of Illinois.

Thanks for your support this past year. We could not have made this all happen without you. If 2008 is anything like 2007, it will be a busy year. I will need your trust and solidarity to get things done. It will be an exciting year for all of us.





International Brotherhood
Of Electrical Workers
Local 21, AFL-CIO/CLC

IBEW Local 21

1307 W. Butterfield Road
Suite 422
Downers Grove,
Illinois 60515-5606
Phone 630 960-4466
Fax 630 960-9607

Website

www.ibew21.org

Newswire hotlines

630 415-2711
866 423-9582

OFFICERS

Ronald E. Kastner,
President-Business Manager
/ Financial Secretary

Kevin Curran,
Vice-President
/ Assistant Business Manager Marketing

Jacquie Fields,
Treasurer

Linda Cox,
Recording Secretary

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Bill Lawrence	Alison Watson
Jim Sheehan	Rosetta Shinn
Jim Noble	Erik Grigg
Larry Schuler	

MANAGING EDITOR

Tom Hopper email:
thopper@ibew21.org
Phone 630 960-4466 X223
Fax 630 960-9607

EDITORS

Nancy North email:
nancy.north@comcast.net
Bob Przybylinski email:
bobp-ibew21@sbcglobal.net

Comments and articles are welcome and should be sent to the editors. Local 21 reserves the right to edit letters and articles, and to use items as space allows.

Member: Illinois State Labor Press Association, Midwest Labor Press Association, and International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO/CLC

'Supreme' Battle over PAR?

By Kevin Curran, Vice President/Assistant Business Manager Marketing



PAR Lawsuit Update –

After the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals rejected (once again) AT&T's attempt to sidestep their requirements under the contract to

arbitrate the grievance Local 21 filed over PAR (a.k.a. Consumer Performance Management Plan), AT&T is now appealing the case to the United States Supreme Court. As *Frontline* goes to print, it's unknown if the Supreme Court will hear the case. If they reject the appeal, our victory at the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals earlier this year will be confirmed. If the Supreme Court agrees to hear the case, we'll be off to Washington to fight it out with AT&T in front of the highest court in the land. Whatever it takes, our Union will see this fight through to its conclusion and will not rest until we have justice.

First PAR Arbitration Case –

All of the evidence in the arbitration over the first discharge for PAR has been submitted. Hopefully we will have a ruling from the Arbitrator early next year.

Global Markets Arbitration

The Union is awaiting the arbitration decision in the Global Markets case. That case concerns the illegal movement of work out of our jurisdiction and the subsequent surplus/layoff of 137 of our members. As soon as we get his decision, we will communicate that decision to our members by every means available to us.



"We need to improve morale around here. For starters, let's remove those screen saver photos of the Titanic."

On the Road Again

Over the past few weeks, President Ron Kastner and I have been traveling the state visiting all of the Marketing Centers in Illinois. I'd like to personally thank all members for the warm welcome we have received. This job can be a difficult one at times, but, it's always encouraging to spend time with our rank file members in the field. We'll be finishing up our visits in the next couple weeks, so, if we haven't been out to your office so far, look for us to be out shortly.

The Union Agreed to What???

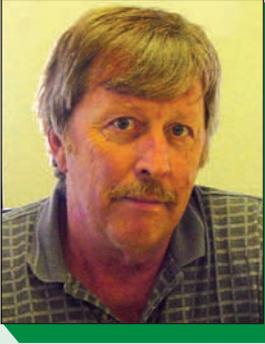
As most of you know, one of the tactics that management typically employs is to falsely claim that a practice or policy they're implementing was agreed to by the Union. Why do they do this? There are several reasons. First, they are attempting to discourage our members and break their solidarity. Management also hopes to deflect the anger of our membership away from them and toward the Union. Finally, members who believe management's claims are unlikely to challenge the practice or policy through the grievance procedure since they assume the Union allowed it.

In our travels across the state, we came across this situation a few times and unfortunately some of our newer members were duped by this company tactic. I know this will come as a shock, but, there are members of management who do not always tell the truth. For anyone who is actually surprised by the statement, let me let you in on another shocker-there's no Santa Claus either. Seriously, when you hear a manager claim that the Union agreed to something, get the facts. Ask your

steward, Chief Steward, Business Rep, about it, or give me a call at 630-960-4466 ext. 307. If we did agree, we'll tell you so *and* we'll explain why. If we didn't agree, we'll tell you that too, but, whatever you do, don't fall into the trap of accepting management's word as the gospel truth. Remember the words of Yogi Berra who once said, "At least half of the lies you hear aren't really true."

Wrapping up 2007 Issues

By Jerry Gast, Assistant Business Manager Network



As we spend time with our families this holiday season we need to remember our AT&T members working on details away

from their families. We are still trying to negotiate some type of rotation for our downstate members so they can spend some time at home. We are proposing a 3 week rotation between Construction and I&R. We are waiting for the company's response on our last proposal. The workload in Exhibit 3 is really slow. If AT&T began the Project Lightspeed build in those areas it would help our members working in that exhibit.

We need our members to call their Chief Steward or Business Representatives if they are on details and have no work

because their managers don't know what to do with the extra headcount. We have heard stories of members on details who are working on fiber jobs with nine other members because the bosses had no other work for them to perform.

Two coin tech's have been declared surplus in Hammond, Indiana. Coin technicians in Alsip and Hammond have been offered a voluntary SIPP to relieve the Hammond surplus.

The scheduling problems in Exhibit 2 central offices are still an issue. I called Randy White in labor relations to try to resolve the problems in those areas. If we don't make some progress, we will proceed with the Arbitration case scheduled in January.

The Chief Stewards are meeting on the mandatory overtime discipline cases. Some of the cases have been resolved. The unresolved cases will be moved to the 3rd step of the grievance procedure. The mandatory overtime and the start time change for premium pay grievance is already at the 3rd step. We are waiting for

the company's response.

The Union and the company settled the arbitration for the apprentice test scores that were wrong. The settlement was for \$28,000. A new test has been developed. Any apprentice who has failed an apprentice test since January 1, 2007 can re-test right away. The company will provide a study guide covering what is on the new apprentice test.

I'd like to wish all members and their families Happy Holiday's.



Benefit Report

We're Keeping an Eye on Your Money

By Linda Cox, Business Representative & Recording Secretary



Effective 11-30-07, the **AT&T Savings and Security Plan** eliminated the Asset Allocation Fund. If you have an account balance in this fund or have

elect to have future contributions deposited into this fund, your money will be transferred as follows: 60% to the Large Cap Stock Fund and 40% to the Bond Fund. If this is not what you want done with your allocations, call Fidelity at 800-416-2363 or go online and move your contributions into the fund of your choice. As of right now, there will not be a replacement fund.

On 10-2-07 **Condell Medical Center** in Libertyville terminated their contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO. As of 12-31-07, Condell Medical Center and Condell Health Care System #320 is leaving the BCBS HMO of Illinois. Participants were notified by mail to select

a new medical group and were given the option of changing medical plans during open enrollment.

Per our 2004 AT&T collective bargaining agreement, the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) as determined 6-24-07 was to be added to the 1-1-08 **pension band amounts**. We were notified the COLA increase of 0.13 was programmed the first week of October. As an example, pension band 223 would have been \$69.51 as of 1-1-08. With the COLA, it is now \$69.60. This also increases the value of the pension bands for 2009. The increase will be 2.38% rather than 2.25%.

We announced at the union meetings that members with a retirement date of 12-31-07 will receive 2008 vacation time and any remaining 2007 time. You will not receive pay for any excused work days or floating holidays for 2008. The **vacation year** begins 12-31-07 according to Article 27.03; therefore being on the payroll that date provides for vacation time for the following year. Because 12-31 is **the last calendar day of 2007**, the 2007 Treasury Rate of 4.69 will be used to determine your lump sum amount.

We have diligently pursued every **open**

enrollment error. As *Frontline* goes to press, many of the errors have been corrected and notification has been made to those affected.

Local 21's benefit department continues to pursue **errors caused by Fidelity** on both pensions and savings. While most of the pension issues have been corrected, there are still a number of outstanding savings plan issues. AT&T understands clearly that we are very disappointed with Fidelity's performance. The company assures us that Fidelity is being held financially responsible for their ineptness. Weekly meetings with Fidelity are held at the highest levels with AT&T in San Antonio. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Effective the first pay date of 2008, direct deposits will be in your checking accounts on Thursday rather than Friday with the exception of a few holidays. There will be no changes in the delivery of paychecks and pay stubs.

We've all had a tough year in 2007 and hope that 2008 brings better results. We wish every family a healthy and happy New Year.

IBEW LOCAL 21 2008 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

The Local 21 Scholarship Committee is excited to announce that applications are now being accepted for the 2008 Local 21 Scholarship Program. Ten \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to Local 21 members and their immediate family members.

Applicants must submit the application and a 250-500 word essay describing "How do unions and politics impact each other?"

Detailed information regarding the requirements of the program can be obtained on the Local 21 website:

www.ibew21.org

or call Jacquie Fields at 630-960-4466 ext. 374.

All applications need to be received in the Union office by Tuesday March 4, 2008.

Welcome to "new" Orleans.

By Bob Przybylinski, Area Steward



I recently attended the International Labor Communications Association Convention in New Orleans. This was a working convention. The delegates went out in teams to

employers to ICE agents. The workers are then deported.

The experienced union teachers who made up the middle class of New Orleans were fired. Most schools were privatized and turned into charter schools. The teaching jobs are outsourced to student teachers who have just graduated from college. When the new teachers raised concerns about their working conditions a law was almost passed limiting their ability to speak out against the new educational system. The teachers' union is fighting to rebuild its ranks by educating these teachers of their rights.

Had it not been for Labor and the fight they are waging in New Orleans things would be much worse. It was the labor movement that made our country strong. Labor will once again rise to the occasion and protect those whose voices aren't being heard.

These are just a few of the stories that have been burned in to my memory. Please visit www.neworleanslabormedia.org to learn the truth on what is happening in America. Then spread the message for the people of New Orleans by telling your friends and family. We have an obligation to tell their story.

report on the effect Hurricane Katrina had on union members and their communities. I came back numb but inspired. The message from the union members in New Orleans is, "Please get the stories of our struggles out to the rest of America."

After the storm union members flooded their halls, some with only the clothes on their backs. They were looking for work. A union contractor wanted to hire IBEW members to rebuild the Belle Chasse Naval Air Station. He called Local 130 Business Manager "Tiger" Hammond. Tiger is also president of the Greater New Orleans AFL-CIO. Ninety members began working 12 hour days, received 3 square meals, had shelter, and were able to provide for their displaced family members. A week later, the Davis-Bacon Act was suspended by President Bush. The contractor told our members "Their services were no longer needed." A Halliburton sub-contractor found workers willing to work for a lower wage. Tiger and our Labor allies fought the Administration and the Davis-Bacon Act was restored.

Affirmative Action was suspended after the storm. New Orleaners were replaced with foreigners brought to America on work visas. Employers were free to hire the cheapest and most exploitable workers. New Orleans became an immigration enforcement zone. Foreigners who question job safety or when they will be paid, are unknowingly directed by their



Residents remain locked out of the St. Bernard Housing Development. One resident asked, "When did it become criminal to be poor?"

Meet the Office Staff

By Jacquie Fields, Treasurer



Let me introduce you to Barb Kossak. She is a member of UFCW Local 881 and is one of our office clerks. Many stewards from

the other companies we represent know Barb. She processes dues payments for all employers other than our core contract AT&T members. She is responsible for processing the proper forms for our "A" pension members as well as National Electrical Benefit Fund (NEBF) & National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA).

Barb's other responsibilities include: end of month processing, printing and mailing out Union cards on a weekly basis. The Local 21 conference center is set-up by Barb with the supplies needed for steward training as well as putting together the steward bags.

Our seven Union unit meeting locations are set up by Barb. She is part of the joint effort from the office staff who answer the phones, faxes, and process the mail the staff receives. Barb assists with the mass member mailings as well as keeping the office organized and clean. I can personally tell you that Barb is our resident recycling enforcer; she will stay after work for hours to organize and take materials to be recycled.

In our next two *Frontline* issues you will meet our office confidential clerks. When they are out of the office, Barb takes over their duties. Barb loves Bon Jovi, she just returned from a weekend in Jersey for the start of their recent tour. She has a quiet, yet visible faith that I admire, she is an asset to all of us here at the Local.



Barb Kossak

Gearing Up For 2008

By Rosetta Shinn & Dennis McCaffery, Committee on Political Education



With municipal elections now behind us, it's time to set our eyes on the bigger prizes at stake in the 2008 elections. All of organized labor is gearing up for what will be the most massive Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign any of us has ever seen. Nationally, political activist recruitment and training is already underway.

Obviously, our number one priority must be electing a President who will not only sign the Employee

Free Choice Act but also appoint a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and District Court Judges who will enforce it! We have seen first hand that just having a Congressional majority is not enough. Many states, including Indiana, are at the threshold of some major changes. A loss or gain of a few Statehouse seats could determine whether or not "Right to Work" legislation will once again rear its ugly head.

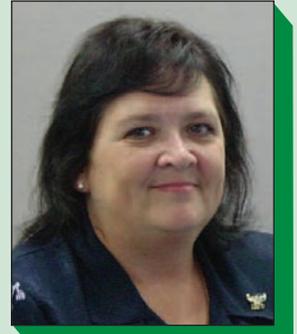
We just attended the IBEW Illinois State Conference in Springfield. President Kastner, the COPE department and all IBEW 21 members were recognized for our outstanding efforts on the passage of SB678, the Cable Video Franchise bill. Without the help of our members it would have never become law. Speaker of the House Mike Madigan gave us an overview of the politics in Springfield and recognized Local 21 for the passage of SB678.

Things seem doom and gloom in Springfield lately. However, if we are able to pass a Capitol Bill, a gaming bill and Mass Transit relief it will have all been worth it. Add these to the passage of SB678 this year and overall it will be a good session for most of labor. We will also be attending the Indiana State AFL-CIO Convention in Indianapolis in early December.

Please consider getting involved with our COPE efforts on a financial level or as a volunteer. If any of our members are running for office in the upcoming elections please let the COPE Department know. We can offer help with your election.

We can start electing pro-union candidates right away in the February 5, 2008 Illinois Primary Election. As *Frontline* went to press the Chicago Federation of Labor announced its endorsed candidates. Visit www.chicagolabor.org. The Illinois State AFL-CIO endorsements will be available December 4th on the website www.ilaf-cio.org. You can print out the list and take it with you to the polls on Election Day.

Your COPE department wishes a HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON for you and your family. Please contact Rosetta Shinn or Dennis McCafferty with any legislative issues.



Members in the News

Toni Traverso, a CA from Downtown Chicago, and her family welcomed the birth of their daughter Abigail on February 23rd.

Fred Chojnacki a CST from Orland Hills and his wife welcomed the birth of their baby girl Lauren. All are doing well.

Christina Mayen, a CA from Downtown Chicago, and her family welcomed the birth of their daughter Isabella on July 6th.

Congratulations go out to Derek Phipps. On December 7, 2007 he graduated with high honors from Malcolm X College. Derrick is a Term Cable Splicer in the Buffalo Grove Garage. His father, William works Air Pressure in Dorchester. His proud mom, Carolyn also worked for the phone company and retired in December 2003.

Anne McGinley, A TA from Downtown Chicago, and her family welcomed the birth of their son Dylan on July 17th.

GOT AN AMUSING STORY?



TELL IT TO THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR



Labor will always stand "One Day Longer"

By Dave Webster, Business Representative



From an organizing point of view, we've had great successes finding workers at **Comcast** who know forming a Union is the only way to improve the rotten working

conditions. Many are afraid to stand up for fear of losing their job. However, momentum is building towards an election at the Chicago South location where a petition for Union recognition will be filed in the coming weeks. People at this location know the company's game and see through the half-truths and blatant lies. Many new employees have been illegally advised by their employer that they shouldn't talk to union organizers. They are afraid to provide statements for unfair labor practice charges. Seasoned veterans at Chicago South and our own members from the Cortland facility reassure hesitant workers about the union advantage. We are still educating leaders and completing the structure needed to win in Chicago South.

We continue to work towards finding and organizing the locators in our jurisdiction.

We are strategizing with International Vice President, Jeff Lohman to make the campaigns at **SM&P** and **CLS** a multi-state effort. Progress is slow since their employees are all over the state and have no central location where they meet or pick up their work, no single place where we can actually talk to them. We will continue to catch them out in the field and collect names and numbers for discussions off the clock.

We've had little success with the satellite workers, both at **Direct TV** and **Dish Network**. We continue to talk to workers there and hope to see some light at the end of the tunnel next year.

We've been working on several other leads at **Verizon Business** (formerly MCI), **Verizon Wireless, Wide Open West** and some independent telephone companies downstate. The organizing department has plenty of work to take into 2008. With the help of our members and our Labor allies, new members WILL be initiated into Local 21, no matter how hard it might be.

President Kastner has appointed an organizer to assist downstate. We welcome Business Representative Rosetta Shinn to the organizing department with open arms. She will continue lobbying for working family bills in our legislature as our COPE Director. In addition she will help our

Local pull in new members from non-union employers that may have been missed without her help.

Eugene Debs, the great labor leader of the late 19th and early 20th century said, *"Ten thousand times has the labor movement stumbled and bruised itself. We have been enjoined by the courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by the militia, traduced by the press, frowned upon in public opinion, and deceived by politicians. 'But notwithstanding all this and all these, labor is today the most vital and potential power this planet has ever known, and its historic mission is as certain of ultimate realization as is the setting of the sun.'"*

Have a blessed Holiday and happy and healthy New Year!



Local 21 members rally outside of the NLRB office in Chicago.

One year closer...

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

2007 is nearing its end. It has been a decent year as far as Chicago North AT&T, Datacomm and Johnson Controls go. We've had relatively few terminations this year. Members were terminated for the usual reasons: no driver's license, not coming to work, lying on a job application or taking something from the employer that is not the employee's. We'll fight some cases, but we walked away from some because the member terminated themselves by believing they wouldn't get caught doing something they knew was wrong. Remember to be at work on time, do your job for eight hours and get your eight hours pay. Be where you're supposed to be when you're supposed to be there.

At **Datacomm**, our brothers and sisters on the CPE side, the work is steady. Nearly 30 laid-off members have returned to work on the AT&T network side as splicers and

prem techs, where their personal discipline, quality and work ethic has impressed network bosses big-time.

The company retired many of the home-garaged vehicles that they fought so hard to have us take during 2005 bargaining. The company put GPS on them, perhaps in the hopes they could fire people and they had no luck. Now management is taking vehicles away to save the money they hoped to save with lowered head counts. In December we will start bargaining on a new contract that we hope to have complete by 2-2-08.

At **Johnson Controls**, the work seems to be shrinking as the company continues to contract out. In good news, there has been some hiring and we have taken over a "Legacy T" building. In 2008 we expect to take over more of the old AT&T buildings. We bargained a new agreement earlier in the year with **JCI** and

successfully defended our health care again. With newly installed GPS units in the trucks, we anticipate problems with the learning curve of both our members and management. Again, be where you're supposed to be...

Welcome to all our new brothers and sisters in the Network contract. I was you once. I know how it feels. Please do your job safely. Our goal is a safe return to our loved ones at the end of the day. Come to a union meeting...Best of luck.

Another year closer to a new government...my retirement...our core contract negotiations...my kids' graduation from college...when Chicago is ocean-front property due to climate change... becoming grandparents...another spring...

Have a blessed and safe holiday season...Peace on Earth. And that means everyone!

• • • I'd like to welcome Chief Steward Brian Gee to his new areas **Springfield inside Network** and **Springfield Marketing** which includes BCS and Wholesale Markets.

...In **Peoria** we are transitioning Alison Watson as the new Area Steward.

...I'd like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

By Vickie Burroughs, Business Representative



• • • All stewards should meet with local managers to review the **vacation schedule**. The process includes scheduling time people still have, either in 2007 or carrying it over into 2008. This must be done so we can start on 2008 vacation picks. Try to get the vacation schedule completed before the end of 2007. Another issue is scheduling for the upcoming holidays, Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Take care of both items before the time expires.

...This is the off-peak time of year when work is a little slower so managers have more time to watch you. When you are driving a GPS equipped truck, stay off their radar and don't wander outside your route. Some garage locations have a security scan card to open the parking lot gate. Asset protection is watching and they know if you scanned out 15 minutes early to leave, so beware.

...We **won an arbitration** for a member dismissed in October 2004 in the city of Chicago. The arbitrator's decision was to bring him back and make the member whole.

Michael Cohns, Business Representative



• • • In the **Central Offices** we are still meeting with the company on an almost weekly basis to work through the problems we've had this past year, overtime distribution and scheduling. An off-hours scheduling arbitration is set for January 24, 2008 which could impact all central offices.

...In **I&R** the Stewards are doing a wonderful job keeping things in check, once we got through mandatory overtime. I applaud the excellent job they've done at the first step with grievances on discipline for mandatory overtime.

...As we move into 2008, I look forward to the challenges of all the arbitrations scheduled in the new year. I believe things will improve once these issues go to arbitration.

...I'd like to thank all the Stewards for the incredible commitment to their jobs in 2007, and wish them all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

By Mike Kunas, Business Representative



• • • We are still working toward refining weekend scheduling in **I&R**.

... We continue to meet with AT&T on the scheduling of **Central Office Technicians**. It seems like every time we get close to an agreement one area manager seems to add a new twist.

...Mandatory Overtime and Shift/Tour Grievances have been heard at the third step. We are awaiting the company's response.

...The **substance abuse awareness committee** is going well. Soon, we hope to train stewards on how to deal with members who may have a drug or alcohol problem. Remember you are not required to take a drug test when obtaining or renewing your IDOT card. Drug testing is only required if you have a CDL license.

... The Apprentice Committee has met and all areas are within ratio.

... Thanks to all of my stewards for their hard work this year. I'd like to extend best wishes for a safe and prosperous Christmas and New Year.

By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative



• • • In **Chicago** the calculations for vacation selections have been completed in all areas. Everyone should now be in the process of selecting vacations. This year, we ask that everyone schedule your reserve time. When done properly, it reduces problems later.

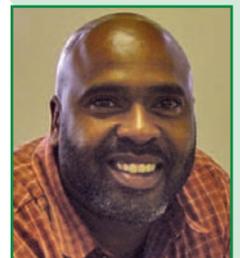
...Mandatory overtime grievances have moved through the first and second steps of the grievance process. Thank you to the stewards for moving these grievances as fast as you did. There were a couple of grievances overturned, but the vast majority will be going to the third step, and possibly arbitration. A committee has been formed to address these grievances at the third step.

...**Construction** in the city is virtually non-existent. Only ten construction technicians remain in each garage. Term techs are still trickling in, but they are only in the Chicago area for about a week before they are detailed to suburban locations. They are being trained in suburban garages. It's been difficult at times to keep up with all of the movement, the changing of the detail locations, and the distribution of the overtime in the detail areas. Thank you to all the members who called and gave us information and updates.

Those calls have been a valuable asset and have made things a little easier.

...In closing, as always, take the time to check your **driver's license**. The number is 217- 768-2720. Do your best, be safe, and see you next year.

By CJ-Cleveland Johnson, Business Representative



S T H E L O C A L . . .

• • • Looking back, this has been a good year measured by the low number of terminations in **Downtown Chicago**. There have only been two so far in 2007.

...We are still waiting for the arbitrator's ruling in the Global Arbitration case.

...In the coming year, it is my hope that members will safeguard their attendance and abide by the code of conduct as it relates to internet use. There is no expectation of privacy when using a company computer. Stay out of unwanted trouble in something you have control over. You are still held accountable to the code of conduct whether you sign it or not.

...We are pursuing the **Project Coordinator** issues regarding the 24-hour on-call pager use and managers performing craft work. We are pursuing these issues through arbitration.

...We look forward to working with the **BCS** organization that moved to 225 Randolph from Oakbrook.

...Hopefully 2008 will be a more prosperous year and I wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

By Liz Hodges, Business Representative



• • • As we all know, detailing is the largest issue facing the **outstate I&R and Construction** technicians. For quite some time the Union and AT&T has been attempting to negotiate an agreement to ease the pain being felt by our members and their families. This agreement addressed 3-week rotations, vacation, and holiday relief. Recently the company has begun detailing a much larger number of technicians from both departments; this is making these negotiations much more difficult. As the Christmas holidays approach, we are working very hard to get our members as much time at home with their families as possible.

...Beginning November 1st my coverage area has changed. I will no longer be responsible for our **Vermillion County** members. I would like to thank Doris Halls for her hard work; it was a pleasure working with her.

...My **new area includes** the network and central office technicians in Peoria, Laramie, Industrial, Moline-Rock Island, as well as the Springfield EWO and PLR centers. I will also be representing our members covered by our contracts with Century/Gallatin River, Verizon, and Citizens/Frontier. I hope to get out to my new territory in the coming weeks.

By Michael Roach, Business Representative



• • • It's been a busy year in all the areas I covered. There's been some good some bad but I couldn't have made it through without the help of all of our members out there. Keep the solidarity strong and we will go at it even harder in the New Year. Happy Holidays!

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative



• • • Local 21 sent a letter to the company requesting the start of **Datacomm** bargaining. We've also mailed bargaining surveys to the members. We will keep you posted via email and the Union hotline at 630-415-2711.

...We settled the arbitration on the **Johnson Controls** REAC closing. We negotiated a cash settlement. The whole basis of the case changed when the company produced the documents we had requested almost a year ago. All of the details are being worked out. All members should have received their contract books.

...Johnson Controls (JCI) plans to affix "*How am I driving?*" stickers to all vehicles. This is another reason we should all operate company vehicles safely and to the letter of the law. Take your time and drive safely and politely.

...The last **Coin Department** technicians have left Chicago. Steward Mike Lombardi and his crew are all working out of suburban locations, Mike remains a steward and I thank him for his leadership and commitment. Good luck to all our brothers in Coin.

...Have a safe and blessed Holiday.

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



• • • With the end of the year in sight and the Holidays upon us, please remember all of our loved ones. Do not forget those in nursing homes, hospitals, and far away at war. If your family is fortunate enough to be together, reach out to the men and women in our armed services and send them a card or note wishing them well.

...I want to thank all of my Area Stewards, Chief Stewards and Stewards for their support throughout a busy 2007. The challenges never end and the need for good staff is always there.

...Best wishes to all our members and their families. Have a safe, happy and great Union Holiday Season.

By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative



• • • While many technicians wouldn't consider this a big concern for them, it really does affect **everyone who works outside**. Many of us have never had a problem with going to the bathroom while out on a job site. Yet, I am here to tell you that if a customer calls in to complain, you can take it to the bank that AT&T will go after you, be it by suspension or dismissal. The company's position is the customer is always right and the employee is always at fault. There are no guidelines addressing this issue. There is nothing in the Code of Conduct that addresses this either. Everyone needs to understand this and do the right thing, by either going to a company facility or a nearby restroom that is clean and sanitized. Give the boss a call to tell him, that you have to go, because you wouldn't want to get in trouble for leaving the job site especially in an area where we have Asset Protection personnel driving around all the time just stalking you.



challenge. Now that the Business Representatives are doing a lot of the arbitration cases, we get to see the labor briefs that the company lawyers write. It is quite an eye-opener to see what they include in their briefs. One of the first things that I'll be involved with is researching the supporting documentation to be used in our briefs.

...With the Holiday Season here, Terry Sheehan and I would like to wish you and your families the best that the holidays have to offer and a Happy New Year.

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative

...The **Central Office** side of the house is still a major problem. We have asked for someone higher up, on the Labor side of AT&T to sit down to get all the issues resolved. Management is just imposing what they want to do at will. We have technicians falling for management's traps by volunteering for some of these management-created problems. No one should be volunteering for the off-hour shifts or doing work during off-hour shifts that isn't suppose to be done. Does anyone look at the big picture to see how it is going to affect everyone in the department down the line?

...**Details** are ongoing and more than likely by the time you read this article the details would have changed two or three times. AT&T hasn't trained the FTTN term employees they hired and now the more senior technicians are being forced onto the details. As *Frontline* goes to press this issue is being addressed by company higher-ups.

...Finally, President Kastner made some **changes within the Local**. My area has been reduced and I will be involved with the Research Department. I look at this as a very big

• • • Good news this holiday season for the technicians in **Loop electronics**. The holiday schedule has been worked out and AT&T management agreed to only schedule techs on a voluntary basis. No members in these crews will be forced to work the holidays.

... The **Palatine EWO** center moved to the Hoffman Estates Lakewood Center in mid November.

... In **DOG** a second step grievance has been filed because the company is trying to reduce overtime by scheduling members on off hour shifts.

... In **I&R** there have been issues with members being denied time off due to company work load demands. I am happy to say the issues were settled. The time off was granted as a result of existing local agreements.

... As a result of the **Arbitration** Backlog Agreement I have been able to settle 4 suspension cases before their scheduled arbitration dates. In some cases the discipline was removed from the member's record others had their suspensions reduced, all received some form of back pay.



By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative

JOBS

By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative

The year 2008 is going to bring in many new members to IBEW Local 21 with the advent of IPTV. It will create additional openings in other areas. So I want to remind all of our members once more, the importance of skills and qualifications in your individual JOBS profile. The most important item is the Desired Skills of a job requisition located in the lower left hand side of the Job Requisition Profile. Each of these Desired Skills adds additional points to the 400 points you have as an IBEW member nominating for an IBEW opening. These points along with your seniority will give the senior most qualified nominee the position. This means the candidate with

the most points and the highest seniority will get the opening. It is NOT by seniority only.

Some other key things to remember are to update your skills at the end of every year. This keeps your skills current. Many job skills are only good for a 5 year period. Show that you used them within the past year. Tests also have a 5 year limit. If you took a test and you nominate for a job, but the test date lapses prior to being selected, you WILL have to retest. It does not matter that the test was good at the time of nomination. Remember to nominate for every opening you are interested in even if there are two for the same location. You MUST nominate for both.



Finally, you must update your qualifications, skills and desired skills PRIOR to nominating for a job. If you update after nomination those changes to your qualification/skill profile will not take effect until the next job requisition for which you apply.

For more information go on the union website at www.ibew21.org and go to Home and then *Frontline* Newsletter in the dropdown. Once there click on the Archived *Frontline* Newsletters and then select the April 2007 edition. It contains a complete two page article on the JOBS process.

LOVE IT LIVE!

IBEW LOCAL 21 SOLIDARITY NIGHT
Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 7:30 PM

CHICAGO BULLS
VERSUS
ATLANTA HAWKS

\$20.00 Ticket Price Includes:
Free Meal Deal • Free Mini Poster
Family Fun for all Local 21 Members
Chance to Win Many Great Prizes!

Complete Details can be found at www.ibew21.org
or by contacting Lynn Arwood at the Union Hall at
630.960.4466 ext. 520 • Tickets are first come first serve •

- 250 Tickets Available in Sections 327 & 328
- Maximum Number of Tickets Per Order is Six (6)
- Concession Certificate good for one jumbo beef hot dog, bag of chips, and small drink included with each ticket order.

Name _____ Tickets _____
Address _____ X \$20 _____
Address Line 2 _____ Total _____
City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
Telephone _____ E-mail _____

- Tickets will be mailed to address listed above as soon as payment is received
- Payment must be by check or money order – no credit cards will be accepted
- Make Payment out to: IBEW Local Union 21
- Mail order from and payment to:

IBEW LU 21 Bulls Tickets, 1307 Butterfield RD, Ste. 422, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Something Had to be Done Local 21 Hero

On June 19, 2007, Local 21 member Jason Golf was working at a cross box located at the intersection of McCarthy Road and Wolf Road. The job started off normally, as the hundreds of others Jason completed during his career, working as an AT&T Customer Service Technician, until Jason heard a CRASH behind him. Jason turned around to see two vehicles rolling over eventually landing on their roofs. No one exited either vehicle.

Jason yelled to a homeowner to call 911. As smoke began to rise, a crowd gathered, he could hear them screaming that the cars were leaking gas and “they’re going to catch on fire!” The onlookers yelled but no one was doing anything while the lives of the occupants remained in peril.

Jason, unselfishly disregarding his

safety took matters into his own hands. He approached the pick-up truck that had smoke billowing from its engine with fuel leaking not only from its tank but also from the gas cans it was transporting. Jason broke out the passenger side window and pulled its occupant to safety. He wasn’t done yet.

Our Brother turned his attention to the other vehicle, an SUV that landed on the driver’s side door in a ditch that was filling with gasoline. Jason could hear a mother’s voice yelling out “My baby my baby!” Her young daughter frightened by the mangled metal and broken glass was hanging from her car seat. Jason gained the child’s trust and convinced the girl to let him help. Jason removed her and carried her out of harms way. He then turned his attention to rescuing her mother.

Unable to open the doors Jason refused to give up. He crawled into the vehicle through the rear window and pulled the child’s mother to safety. After all the



Left to right in the photo are Executive Board Member Larry Schuler, steward Bill Collins, Christine Golf (Jason’s wife), Jason Golf, steward Mike Pala, and President Ronald Kastner

victims were out of harm’s way emergency personnel arrived on the scene.

Jason’s foreman reported that Jason was covered in glass and reeked of gasoline. Because of Jason’s heroic actions three lives were rescued from a potentially fatal situation. It is for these reasons Brother Jason Golf was honored with IBEW Lifesaving Award at the October Unit 4 Union meeting in Lemont. When asked, Jason said he did what he did “because someone had to do something; and how you gonna live with yourself if you did nothing.”



JULIE Members Ratify New Contract!

By Melanie Probst & Kurt Schmidt, Business Representatives

The current contract with IBEW Local 21 and JULIE, Inc. expired November 15, 2007. The two parties spent many days and long hours bargaining. On November 1st we reached a tentative agreement.

The JULIE members were presented with the agreement on Thursday November 8th. By a 2 to 1 vote, the contract was ratified.

The largest hurdle for the membership to absorb is that this is the longest contract these members will be working under; all previous contracts were only 3-year agreements. The members are feeling a lot of uncertainty and as with any change we face in our lives their feelings are understandable. The contract has a wage

and benefit re-opener at the end of the 3rd year which can be initiated by either the Union or the company or it can be left as is for the 5 year term.

The members can be assured they hold the key to their future after the third year of the contract on whether or not they want to exercise their right to reopen the agreement.

We commend the Local 21 Membership at JULIE for your support, assistance and persistence in getting through these tough negotiations.

Congratulations on your contract. We wish you the happiest of Holidays this season. We know you will enjoy your Christmas Eve holiday!

CONTRACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Five year agreement
- 23% across the board wage increase for all job titles
- Expansion of summer hires with limitations
- Improved promotion language that opens “the pool” for candidates
- Increases for evening, night, split, Saturday and Floor Person differentials
- Increases in the meal allowance
- Added Christmas Eve as a paid holiday
- Clarifies intent of the Tech Change Language
- Temporary upgrade increased
- Shift differentials added for holidays
- PTO increments have been increased



Workers Shut Down Comcast with Job Action

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



Local 21 members at the Chicago Cortland Comcast facility shut it down on Thursday November 15th to show their disgust with the company. It was

great to see almost all of the 90 workers showing their solidarity by exercising their right to use a flex day and then showing up at Chicago's City Hall with picket signs in hand to thank Alderman Freddrenna Lyle, and Alderman Eugene Schuler for their support. On July 19th, Alderman Lyle introduced a resolution against Comcast for their violations of the City's franchise agreement, the 2002 franchise transfer resolution, and Comcast's own EEOC Plan on file with the City. The resolution unanimously passed in the City Council. Comcast must now defend their actions against our members before the License and Consumer Protection Committee. A tentative hearing dated has been scheduled for December 12, 2007.

Comcast refuses to listen to its workers. Our members are NOT going to accept discrimination in wages and benefits because they are Union members and have a voice in the work-place. They have wages that differ from \$3 to \$7 per hour less than non-union workers who perform the same exact work.

Since May 31st, our members have been working without a contract.

The National Labor Relation Board (NLRB) has issued three complaints against Comcast. First, the board has ruled that the company has been bargaining in bad faith, the hearing has been rescheduled for January 7, 2008. The second complaint is against Comcast management for threatening members for wearing a union hat that reads "Fair Contract Now." A third complaint has been issued against Comcast for management's harassment of the union's bargaining committee members by attempting to establish special rules and policies that only apply to these workers.

Now that AT&T has entered the market, Comcast is already feeling the impact. Over 50 workers from the non-union locations have



PHOTO: KEVIN BEALLIS

quit Comcast to work for AT&T. Comcast has bigger problems. For the last two quarters they have missed their Wall Street estimated numbers, driving their already slumping stock price even lower. Consumers now realize that they have a choice.

Greed is what drives Comcast, with no concern for its workers, their families, or its customers. Greed is the reason Comcast continues to utilize contractors. Remember, it was a Comcast contractor who was charged with the rape and murder of two women in Chicago. Always demand an in-house employee of the company.

CEO Brian Roberts' salary last year was \$27 million with a \$15 million bonus. He averages over \$16,000 per hour. In less than two hours, he earns the average yearly salary of most union workers in Chicago. Mr. Roberts has chosen to create social chaos in the community by oppressing working families.

Merry Christmas!

Shhhhh

By Nancy North, Area Steward



It's a secret. No one ever says it out loud, "Your only value as a human being is to maximize the amount of work per minute in order to satisfy the statistical desires of the

corporate overlords."

It explains their obsession with measurements and justifies making your job a grinding misery. It is used to turn one brother or sister against another. Too much work and not enough workers. There is no time to think. Divide and conquer.

Sound like science fiction? Or like a page from George Orwell's 1984?



Bargaining at City of Chicago 911 Continues

Despite the fact that the trades reached a new 10 year historical agreement with the City of Chicago, the OEMC contract negotiations with the City have not made much progress. After five sessions, the union's bargaining committee has not received any response on the majority of its economic proposals. During the last contract negotiations the City was crying broke, and they are still crying broke, but they have not made any concessionary proposals. Certainly, this does not mean that bargaining will be easy, the Union will have to persevere and fight every step of the way. The fight is made easier when you stand in solidarity with your leadership. We are only as good as our weakest link!

In other news: the Union has made great strides in addressing the backlog of grievances. We understand that grievances we settled that included back pay and/or credits to seniority time have still not been processed. We have been told that the processing of payments and previous management's flaws have caused delays in the payouts from these grievances. Current, senior management has a make-sense approach in working with the Union on your concerns. It's the Union's hope that this issue will be resolved soon.

Once again, I thank all members for their support, prayers and pray God's richest blessings for you and your families to have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In Solidarity.



"This labor contract needs more work. I'm not feeling any twinges of guilt over it."

CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

June 2005

Angela Collins

March 2007

Larry Bennett
Thaddeus Pietruska

April 2007

Dodd Jerilyn
Judith A. Jarosik

July 2007

Gwendolyn Rockingham
Richard Peterson

August 2007

Robert A. Wolt

September 2007

Richard Grodek
Kimberly Tadej
Arthur Puch
Veronica Ulatowski
Suzette Kozar
James Bohr
Thomas J. Williams
John T. Jones
James McCorkle

October 2007

James J. Casey
Michael J. Daley
Mark R. Eastman
Fred Richrath
Robert Bruce
Bill Pearson
Franklin J. Bak
Laveta McNulty
Patrick A. Hibbs

November 2007

Phillip Meyers
Beckie A. Hill-Colby
John Laman
James E. Hajek
Philip Losurdo

December 2007

Rita Fleece
Burney C. Wilkie
Theresa N. Muhammad
Gail A. Hornbaker

Information Alert

Members must be in good standing for 10 consecutive years with IBEW Local 21 immediately preceding their retirement in order to receive a retirement gift. These members must be severing their employment with the employer. Stewards can request applications by calling Nancy Kopydlowski at the union office 630 960-4466 X234.

GPS on Steroids

By Mike O'Connor, Area Steward



If you have a GPS unit in your car, or use one when hunting or hiking, you're probably pretty impressed with the abilities of that little device. Large scale farming

is even being done with GPS mapping and GPS assisted seeding and planting. Now, imagine what a billion dollar company could employ GPS to do.

@Road is the brand name of the new GPS platform that AT&T now uses for fleet monitoring. It's leaps and bounds better than the original GPS we have in our trucks. Are you used to sitting on your last job at the end of the day, maybe around the corner but still 500 feet from your customer's address? @Road knows the difference. It knows where you are almost precisely.

How many of us have that 2nd key for our vehicles? On those cold days do you ever leave the truck running and locked so when you get off the pole the vehicle is toasty warm and you can get some blood running back into your fingers? @Road knows the engine is running and the truck isn't moving. It also knows when you sat for 10 minutes; working in your IFD after a job versus sitting for 45 minutes doing who knows what. **@Road samples in almost real time**, not random pings every

7 minutes like the old system.

Information is power, Brothers and Sisters. Being forewarned is being forearmed. Don't risk your job by not being where you are supposed to be during work hours. If you need to deviate from your route for any reason, call your boss so they know about it. Yes, that means not taking a circuitous route to your next job so you can pass by the lunch place with the great chili and hot water to wash your hands.

We are 23 years past 1984. Big Brother is everywhere. Technology is efficient, cheap and bosses have a predisposition to believe everything technology says. It is too easy for this company to see what you are doing and when and where you are doing it. That includes where you drove your truck, to what you viewed via the internet on the company computer. Do not give your employer the right to fire you for violating work rules they can monitor electronically.

AT&T is at the heart of a lawsuit surrounding the government's warrantless wiretaps. Essentially, AT&T gave the FBI/CIA/NSC/DIA customer records even though the inquiring agency did not have a warrant for the information. AT&T never asked for one. It's no surprise this company would embrace the most invasive technological solution to monitor its fleet and employees. The gloves are off. Long forgotten is the company's original claim that GPS was a safety issue. Where does the panic button ring if they ripped the GPS phone out of my truck?

Remembering our Members in the Military This Holiday Season

Edward Roberts
Larry Branch
Leon Owens
Brian Kollias
Burton Breazeale
Brent Harney
David Murcio
Timothy O'Brien
Jerome Benton



The generosity of Local 21 members enables the Union to remember our brothers and sisters serving overseas. We are again selling military patches. The large patch is \$25, the small one is \$15. Please call Nancy Kopydlowski in the Union office at 630 960-4466 x234 if you are interested. The proceeds will be used to send care packages to our members serving overseas or donated to a local veteran's hospital. Purchasing a patch will double your support because the Local 21 Executive Board has pledged to match your donation dollar for dollar.

UNIT MEETINGS 2008

JANUARY

Unit 1

Thursday, January 10, 7 PM
Irish-American Heritage Center
4626 N. Knox Ave.
Chicago IL
773 282-7035

Unit 2

Tuesday January 8, 7 PM
Gaelic Park
6119 W. 147TH
Oak Forest IL
708 687-9323

Unit 3

Thursday, January 17, 7 PM
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
495 Airport Rd.
Elgin IL
847 488-9000

Unit 4

Wednesday, January 9, 7 PM
American Legion Harwood Post #5
705 S. Larkin
Joliet IL
815 725-4333

Unit 5

Wednesday, January 16, 7 PM
IBEW Local #538
1290 N. Michigan Ave.
Danville IL
217 442-0996

Unit 6

Tuesday, January 15, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr.
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

Monday, January 21, 7 PM
IBEW Local # 309
2000A Mall St. (Rte 157)
Collinsville IL
618 345-5112

FEBRUARY

Unit 1

Thursday, February 14, 7 PM
IBEW Local #21 Conference Center
1307 W. Butterfield Rd. Suite 424
Downers Grove IL
630 960-4466

Unit 2

Tuesday, February 12, 7 PM
Lansing American Legion Post #697
18255 Grant St.
Lansing IL
708 474-5906

Unit 3

Thursday, February 21, 7 PM
IBEW Local #364
6820 Mill Rd.
Rockford IL
815 398-6282

Unit 4

Wednesday, February 13, 7 PM
Lemont VFW
15780 New Ave.
Lemont IL
630 257-9859

Unit 5

Wednesday, February 20, 7 PM
IBEW Local #146
3390 N. Woodford St.
Decatur IL
217 877-4604

Unit 6

Tuesday, February 19, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr.
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

Monday, February 18, 7 PM
Alton Sports Tap
3812 College Ave.
Alton IL
618 465-2539

MARCH

Unit 1

Thursday, March 13, 6 PM
IBEW Local #134
600 W. Washington Blvd.
Chicago IL
312 474-4186

Unit 2

Tuesday, March 11, 7 PM
Slovak Club
6920 Broadway
Merrillville IN
219 756-5101

Unit 3

Thursday, March 20, 7 PM
Gurnee American Legion
749 Milwaukee Ave.
Gurnee IL
847 244-9282

Unit 4

Wednesday, March 12, 7 PM
IBEW Local #145
1700 52nd Ave, Suite A
Moline IL
309 736-4239

Unit 5

Wednesday, March 19, 7 PM
American Legion Post #979
4501 S Airport Rd.
Bartonville IL
309 697-2432

Unit 6

Tuesday, March 18, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr.
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

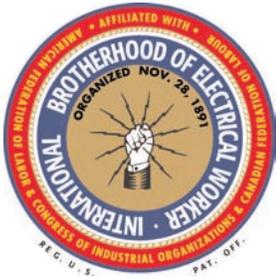
Monday, March 17, 7 PM
American Legion Post #141
916 Main St.
Mt Vernon IL
618 242-4561

IBEW LOCAL 21

1307 W. Butterfield Rd.
Suite 422
Downers Grove, IL 60515-5601

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