

# FRONTLINE

**IBEW LOCAL 21**



**Volume 11, No. 1 • February 2007**

## ***Local 21 Honors a True American Hero***



*President Ron Kastner presented the IBEW Lifesaving Award to Damaris Medina, widow of Alberto Medina, and family. Daughters Leylani Arie and Tatiana Marie, her parents Jose Gonzalez and Magdelana Montero and Bus. Rep. Jerry Rankins.*

## **INSIDE**

**Business Manager . . . .pg 2**  
**Curran's Report . . . . .pg 3**  
**Gast's Report . . . . .pg 4**  
**Lifesaving Award . . . . .pg 5**

**COPE . . . . .pg 6**  
**News Across The Local .pg 8**  
**Comcast . . . . .pg 11**

**Scholarship Info . . . . .pg 13**  
**Retirees . . . . .pg 14**  
**Meetings . . . . .pg 15**

# As the Mayoral Race Heats Up in Chicago

By Ronald Kastner



**T**he Chicago Federation of Labor is the central labor body for over 300 area Unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Local 21 stands as a proud member of this body, sending delegates to each month's meeting. As the Mayoral race heats up in Chicago, I'd like to commend Dennis Gannon, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor,

for taking a stand on holding city politicians accountable for their actions. Historically, the CFL has always endorsed the incumbent. But, this election season, things seem to be different.

Some elected officials seemingly have forgotten how they got in office, forgotten the huge number of union members who volunteer for campaigns each year, and have dismissed the collective force of union membership voting records. Working families, union members, have elected these people in the past, from the highest office all the way down to the aldermen. Now they should listen when Labor speaks and vote our way on our issues.

The Chicago Federation of Labor has been organizing all the local Unions to meet with elected officials and remind them whose side they should be on. This concept holds true for suburban elected officials also. Whether it is the Mayor, Alderman, City Council Members or Trustees you never know when **we are going to need to remind each and every one of them how they got in office.**

Frankly put, it is payback time, and we need to let them know.

I've been hearing this rumble of accountability at all levels including very high ranking Union officials, and I feel it is about time. Whether they are Democrat or Republican, the politicians who you

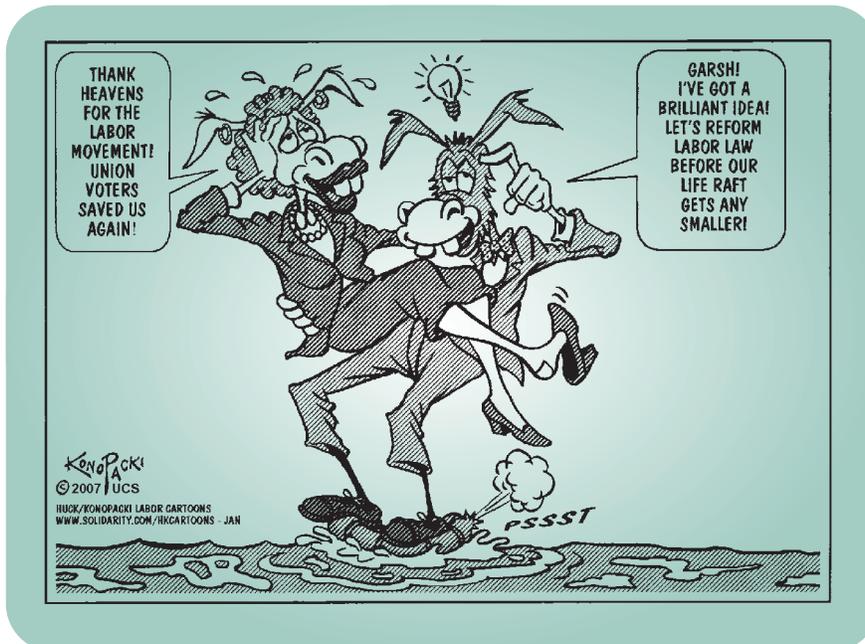
helped get elected need to listen to their constituents, the voter. Union membership is on the rise in Illinois, and it is time to remind our elected officials once again of our collective power. This concept became very evident in our most recent lobbying effort in Springfield when I was very politely told on several occasions that they were glad to see me but haven't heard anything back at home from their constituents. So when your Union asks you to get involved, please don't take it lightly because you have the power to make change. Together we can hold them accountable.

In other news, bargaining is taking place this month at **Johnson Controls** and **Vermillion County** which includes Danville, Illinois. Please remember to support your bargaining committee. Member support goes a long way toward delivering a good contract.

Also, Local 21 hopes that all members who have language in their collective bargaining agreements covering **expenses for higher education** take advantage of our newly formed relationship with The SAGE group. Many of our members have already enrolled in classes that will help them prepare for new technology along with higher education. If you'd like more information on these classes contact your Area/Chief Steward to find out how you can participate. This is a great opportunity for our members, and I hope that many take advantage of it.

I am very encouraged over **increased attendance at union meetings** the past few months. Your attendance at these meetings allows you to see how the Union works in its entirety. You see what is happening to our Labor movement, not just your work location. Why not make plans to meet with some of your co-workers at the next unit meeting and spend some time socializing with them afterwards?

In closing, remember to always work safe.



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](http://www.ibew21.org)

## Newsline hotlines

630 415-2711  
866 423-9582

## OFFICERS

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

Kevin Curran,  
*Vice-President*  
*/ Assistant Business Manager Marketing*

Jacque 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

Larry Moeller email:  
ljm336@ameritech.net  
Nancy North email:  
nancy.north@comcast.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

# 2007 Begins with Old Battles, New Bargaining

By Kevin Curran, Vice President/Assistant Business Manager Marketing



## Global Markets Arbitration

As most of you will recall, last year AT&T announced that they were moving 137 jobs from the Global

Markets Centers in Oakbrook and downtown Chicago to Pontiac, Michigan, which resulted in 137 of our members being declared surplus. The Union filed a third step grievance immediately and escalated the case to arbitration. This arbitration case began on December 18th of last year. The case continued on January 9th of this year and on that day, the Union successfully completed the presentation of its case in chief. The company now will present its rebuttal to the Arbitrator on the next hearing date which is currently scheduled for March 12th.

## Consumer

### New Title Bargaining

Early in January, the Union began intense negotiations with AT&T regarding the establishment of a new job title in Consumer. Those negotiations were finalized with the Union securing an agreement to establish a job title of "Customer Consultant" in our jurisdiction. This agreement will bring additional jobs into our jurisdiction. The new title will have a base salary and a lucrative incentive compensation program. As part of this agreement, the Union was able to guarantee

that there will be no surplus or layoff in Consumer as a result of center consolidations outside of our jurisdiction. These job security provisions will apply through December 31, 2008.

### Performance Management Court Case (a.k.a. "PAR")

Last year, the Union sued AT&T in federal court over the company's refusal to arbitrate the issue of the Consumer Performance Management plan, which is also referred to as "PAR". The Union won our lawsuit and the company appealed the court ruling. Currently, we are awaiting a ruling from the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals on this case. If the Appellate court sustains our victory on this issue, an arbitration hearing regarding the Consumer "PAR" will take place shortly thereafter.

In addition, one of the first discharges under "PAR" will be heard at arbitration beginning on February 16th. As part of his ruling in that case, the Arbitrator will be asked to determine whether or not the Consumer PAR is a reasonable policy or not.

## Local 21 Research Department

In our on-going efforts to ensure that our Union staff is armed with the knowledge and information necessary to fight the battles in the field, in January all Chief and Area Stewards received training from an Arbitrator with over thirty years experience. Our Union remains committed to ensuring that our entire staff is the best-trained and best-equipped to provide superior representation to all of our members.



"How can you say I'm out of touch with my workforce? Just last year I took my wife on a cruise through China and Southeast Asia."

## Some Arbitration Answers in Network

By Jerry Gast, Assistant Business Manager Network



It has been busy since the last issue of *Frontline*. With the signing of the Prem Tech Agreement, AT&T seems to be settling more grievances and arbitrations with the Union.

During the holidays we were able to place four provisioning specialists who were surplus and going to be off the payroll on 12-31-06 to TA jobs in the CMC centers. We were also able to settle several grievances for seven

members who passed the Engineering Assistant test. Originally they were skipped over when other members were being placed in EA jobs. Now, they were placed by seniority in open EA positions. We are still working to place four surplus FSSA members in the same centers. Due to the Prem Tech Agreement 34 laid-off DataComm techs will be offered prem tech jobs, keeping the same wages and benefits that they had when they left.

The company is rolling out their 2007 clothing plan. The Union has the same agreement as last year for no disciplinary action against a member for "out of compliance." We strongly recommend that our members get the clothing with the IBEW logo on it and wear it at work.

We are reviewing all arbitrations within the company, trying to

settle as many as possible to try and reduce the back log. The Union has received rulings back on **two recent arbitrations**. In the Arbitration on Holiday Pay Treatment regarding overtime worked on the holiday counting towards double time, the Union lost. Per article 18.17 the arbitrator ruled that no combination of overtime can be greater than two and one half times an employee's basic hourly wage rate. We also lost the arbitration on Back to Work Agreements. The arbitrator ruled that the company did not change the way they were doing these agreements. However, she did leave open two issues to be ruled on: time limits and the catch-all phrases the company tries to add like "tech expectations" when it may not apply to the case. We are reviewing this with our attorney.

We just reached a agreement on **PIP's in Network**. The company has revised its guide to performance management. It reads, "Supervisor should not DISCIPLINE employees based on failure to meet an objective." This means **they can not discipline you for your productivity only**. This is a great win for the Union, thanks to all the members in Network who filled out affidavits and sent them in to the union office. This helped win the case. We also settled the scheduling case in the DOG group. We have a letter from labor relations clarifying the language in 18.03 that the Union can live with. Your Business Reps and Chief Stewards have a copy.

## We Care

By Jacquie Fields, Treasurer



There is an organization that many of us in the office support during the year called My Joyful Heart. This charity provides

children at different schools in the Chicagoland area with seasonal gifts including clothes, toys, toiletries, etc. We asked the staff during Christmas to consider giving to this organization. Many staff members as well as members in the field responded with cash and toys to make Christmas wonderful for children who live

below the poverty level. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the people who responded in a way that demonstrated exactly what the holiday season is all about, giving. So from all of us in the office, thanks to **Ron Kastner**, the Schaumburg Construction garage, Business Reps **Jim Foster, Dan Grueneich, Kurt Schmidt, Jerry Rankins, Mike Sacco, Linda Cox**, E-board member **James Sheehan**, Chief Stewards **Jim McLauchlan, Lynn Arwood**, Area Stewards **Donna Stoner, Nancy North, Larry Moeller** Stewards **Joan Welton** Waukegan C.O., **Joe Twomey** Mundelein I&R, **John Beyer**, Schaumburg Const., **Al Frymire**, Schaumburg CO, **Joe Quagliano** Lake Villa, **Ed Bash** Elgin I&R

Thank-you, God Bless you, everyone!



# Honoring Alberto Medina – A True American Hero

By Tom Hopper, Business Representative

“**T**he greatest service to mankind is the saving of a human life. The above named member of this local union, with presence of mind, prompt action and genuine concern for a fellow man did perform this service on the date specified. All members of the IBEW join in expressing sincere gratitude.”

These are the words inscribed on the IBEW Life Saving Award recognizing Alberto Medina for the heroic actions he took while saving a 4-year old from drowning on August 13, 2006. Tragically, the little boy’s mother and uncle, along with Brother Medina, lost their lives that day in the dangerous waters of the Kankakee River. Medina and his family were preparing to leave the park, when the young boy fell in the river next to a low-head dam at South Island Park in Wilmington. The swirling waters where the river passes over the dam have been known to trap waders and boaters alike. Brother Medina ignored the warnings and jumped in trying to rescue the boy, actually pushing him into the outstretched hands of others. Then the strength of the river pulled Alberto under.

Medina, 28 years old when he died, worked as an installer in the Chicago Cortland shop at Comcast. Brother Medina was well liked and highly respected by his peers at work. He was a leader at the workplace. Brother Medina was instrumental in mobilizing his co-workers during a hard fought contract campaign in recent years and continued those efforts in 2006 knowing he could help make things better for everyone with dedication, determination and hard work.

Brother Medina graduated from Chicago’s Schurz High School. It was there he met and then later married Damaris, his high school sweetheart. Medina was completely devoted to his two daughters Tatiana Marie and Leylani Arie. Friends and family say Alberto sincerely loved helping all people, whether it was lending

money to struggling relatives or shoveling snow for his neighbors. The heroism demonstrated by those killed on September 11, 2001 impacted Alberto greatly and he had even considered becoming a firefighter. According to family and close friends, Medina could not stand to see anyone suffer. They say he was always willing to put his life on the line for anybody.

A hat was passed during unit meetings after Local 21 members heard the story of the heroic rescue and tragic report of Alberto’s passing. President Ron Kastner presented those funds along with Brother Medina’s IBEW Life Saving Award to Alberto’s wife Damaris and family at a special Solidarity gathering in December.

In a union made up of so many good and caring individuals, every now and then, something happens that completely overwhelms me with such pride and honor that I need to share it with others. Alberto Medina will always be a true American hero. He will deeply be missed.

*The greatest service to mankind is the saving of a human life. The below named member of this Local Union, with presence of mind, prompt action, and genuine concern for a fellow man did perform this service on the date specified. All members of the IBEW join in expressing sincere gratitude.*



# Why the Chicago Municipal Election is Important to Union Members

By Beth Kantor, Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL)

For much of its history, organized labor in Chicago enjoyed a strong relationship with the decision makers inside City Hall, benefiting the city's communities, its economy, and the well-being of working families. Sadly, in the last few years that relationship has deteriorated.

Today, working men and women no longer receive the support and respect they once did as they continue to make Chicago a world-class city.

Thousands of union building trades members watch from the sidelines while non-union construction projects are welcomed into neighborhoods throughout the city.

Thousands of union teachers do their best to teach children in under-funded schools while the Renaissance 2010 plan brings more and more non-union charter schools into the city.

And in 2003, 30,000 union members at the City of Chicago were forced to wait 28 months for a new contract.

There is much at stake in the upcoming election for the nearly half-million union members who live or work in Chicago: privatization of city services, pension funding, charter schools, project labor agreements, the right to organize, a living wage and benefits for retail workers, and support for striking workers, just to name a few of the major issues.

The entire organized labor community is rallying together to support pro-labor challengers and incumbents running for the Chicago City Council. With the collaboration of its affiliated local unions, the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) has endorsed candidates who will represent labor's priorities in City Hall.

"Working men and women deserve a strong, independent voice in the City

Council," said CFL President Dennis Gannon. "Labor will do everything it takes to elect those men and women who will fight for working families and the issues important to them."

The candidates endorsed by the CFL include several members from a variety of unions, along with incumbents who have strong pro-labor voting records, and challengers who will stand up for working families.

Mobilizing union members will be the key to influencing the turnout in what is traditionally a low-turnout election. **In some wards, the number of union members is greater than the number of votes the alderman received in the 2003 election,** not to mention their family members, friends, and neighbors.

The CFL has hired field directors to organize programs in some of the most highly targeted wards. These field directors will work closely with local unions whose members wish to volunteer during the weeks leading up to Election Day. The CFL will also engage in an unprecedented member-contact program through direct mail and phone calls to increase turnout in favor of labor's endorsed candidates.

And thanks to Illinois' early voting law, union members will be able to cast their ballots between February 5 until February 22, allowing them to help get their family members, friends and neighbors to the polls on Election Day.

The participation of union members is critical to making a difference in the February 27 election (and the April 17 run-off election).

To volunteer, contact Beth Kanter at the CFL at 312-222-1000 or by email at [bkantor@cflonline.org](mailto:bkantor@cflonline.org).

## Chicago Federation of Labor Endorsed Candidates – 2007 Municipal Election

Mayor	No Endorsement
City Clerk	Miguel Del Valle*
City Treasurer	No Endorsement

### Ward

1	Manuel "Manny" Flores*
2	No Endorsement
3	Pat Dowell
4	Toni Preckwinkle*
5	No Endorsement
6	Freddrenna M. Lyle*
7	Sandi Jackson
8	Michelle A. Harris*
9	Anthony A. Beale*
10	John A. Pope*
11	No Endorsement
12	Carina Sanchez
13	Frank J. Olivo*
14	Edward M. Burke*
15	Toni L. Foulkes
16	Joann Thompson
17	Latasha R. Thomas*
18	Paul Stewart
19	Virginia A. Rugai*
20	No Endorsement
21	Leroy J. Jones, Jr.
22	Ricardo Munoz*
23	Michael R. Zalewski*
24	Michael D. Chandler*
25	No Endorsement
26	Billy Ocasio*
27	Walter Burnett, Jr.*
28	Ed H. Smith*
29	No Endorsement
30	Ariel E. Reboyras*
31	Regner "Ray" Suarez*
32	Ted Matlak*
33	Richard F. Mell*
34	No Endorsement
35	Rey Colon*
36	William J.P. Banks*
37	No Endorsement
38	Thomas R. Allen*
39	Margaret Laurino*
40	Patrick J. O'Connor*
41	Brian G. Doherty*
42	Brendan Reilly
43	Michele Smith
44	No Endorsement
45	Patrick J. Levar*
46	Helen Shiller*
47	Gene Schulter*
48	Mary Ann Smith*
49	Joe Moore*
50	Greg Brewer

\* denotes incumbent

# Labor's Legislative Agenda for '07 and Beyond...

By Dennis McCafferty, Committee on Political Education



**H**ello Sisters and Brothers, I hope everyone had a great holiday season. With every New Year comes a sense of hope that maybe

this will be the year that things get better for working people like us, and for the first time in a long time, I believe that year has finally arrived. The shift in the balance of power in last November's elections is the reason for my cautious optimism.

The newly elected Democratic majority in Congress has hit the ground running with their "First 100 Hour Initiative" promising to make "meat and potato" issues such as raising the minimum wage, ethics reform, health care, and passing the Employee Free Choice Act among their top

priorities.

In Indiana, the slim 51-49 Democratic majority basically means that we should be able to fend off attacks from those who would like to do us harm for the next 2 years while trying to improve worker's compensation laws and protecting state employees from any further privatization. Hopefully in 2008, we'll be able to strengthen our House majority and send this Governor and his recklessly irresponsible anti-worker agenda packing on whatever highway he hasn't managed to sell off. Whatever the future holds, one thing we damn well better do is hold our elected officials accountable for their actions or we'll only have ourselves to blame.

With these sentiments in mind, Local 21 representatives attended a Legislative Luncheon sponsored by the Northwest Indiana Federation of Labor in Burns Harbor, IN. The purpose of the meeting was to sit down with our regional

legislative delegation to educate them on the wants and needs of working-class families in our area. Local Labor leaders from various sectors spoke on a wide range of issues including **our President Ron Kastner who gave an update on the state of telecommunications since the passage of HB 1279 last April. We are STILL waiting to see the implementation of Project Lightspeed in Lake County.** Trust me when I tell you that our concerns did not fall on deaf ears.

In the months ahead, the Officers, Staff and C.O.P.E. Department of Local 21 will be hard at work researching and tracking legislation as it's introduced to determine the possible effects on our membership and working families. Visit our Local's website @ [www.ibew21.org](http://www.ibew21.org) to stay up to date and be prepared to act if called upon! You'd be surprised how much impact a phone call or e-mail to an elected official can have! Until next time, take care and GOD Bless!

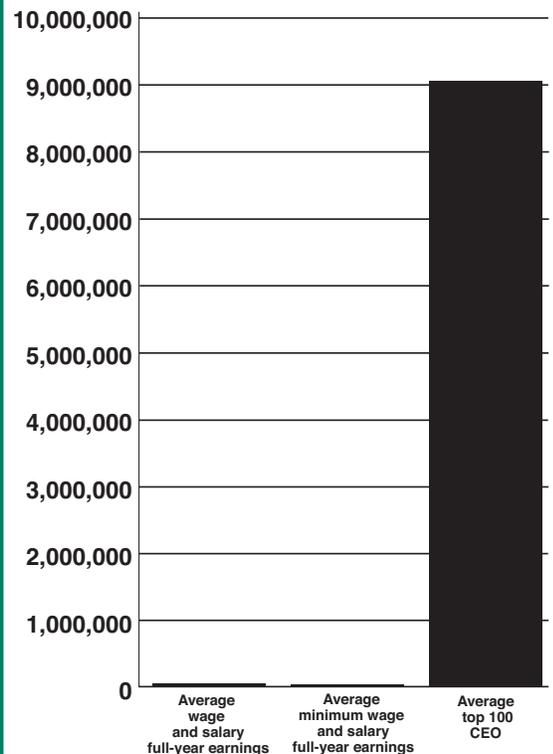


**I**n 2006 due to the generosity of Local 21 members \$1,016 was collected to send a holiday care package to our 12 members serving overseas. Unfortunately not all of their families responded to our request for their military addresses. In spite of that we were able to sponsor holiday packages to 4 of the 12 and made a \$535 dollar donation to the veteran's hospital in Manteno.

The question now is "How to honor our active duty members in the future?" The solution is the patches you see on this page. Your unit board member will be selling these at all Union meetings in 2007. Once again the proceeds will be used to send holiday care packages to our members serving overseas or donated to a veteran's hospital. By purchasing one of these patches you will in effect double your support because the Local 21 executive board has pledged to match your donation dollar for dollar.

## Where's Waldo?

Ten points if you can find the average salary on this chart.  
100 points if you can find the minimum wage worker.





# NEWS ACROSS

● ● ● It's truck **Road-ee** time again, the Local strongly encourages our members to participate. Congratulations go out to Mike Gary the I&R winner from Chicago Ridge, Tim Stacy of Alsip, Steve Leiser of Chicago Heights as well as Brian Tiemans out of Harvey.

...There is no better news for **Central Office** switching techs from my area. The second level manager has continued to schedule out-of-hour shifts without providing the supporting data requested by the Union. Meetings are scheduled with the new 3rd level manager.

...At **Chicago Heights Marketing** all is calm for now, but new objectives are expected to be announced soon.

...SSSHHHH, Indiana is quiet.

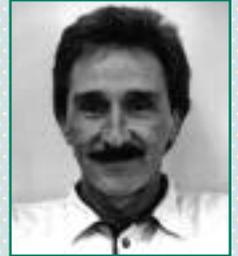
*By Steve Tengbladt, Business*



● ● ● Big brother is watching now more than ever. If you thought GPS was intrusive you haven't met **MOST** (Management One Stop Tool.) A flag will pop up on the manager's computer screen if an I&R tech leaves the garage late, overruns, works overtime, or comes back to the garage early etc. etc. The first level must provide an explanation. If the manager fails to do this, it is automatically passed on to the second level who must act on the flag. In short, it will be taken out of the first level manager's hands. Forewarned is forearmed CYA.

...Details from I&R to C&E and visa versa continue to be a problem. **AT&T** has ignored the Union's position on this so, we have to rely on the grievance procedure.

*By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative*



● ● ● In **Springfield** the PLR final porting work from California will only go to the drafters, as we were unable to negotiate an agreement for work-up for admin specialists

...In Transportation the safety issues are being addressed by the Union Safety Committee.

...Managers in the **Springfield Access Service Center** are working on introducing a new performance plan for 2007.

...The Union is preparing for the **AFRC** Arbitration scheduled for the end of February on the AOTL issue. It's a new computer system that has taken work from one department to another at a lower rate of pay.

...In some departments at AT&T employees appear to be working off the clock. You shouldn't be in a company location unless you have a business reason to be there. If something is missing or broken, you are the first person looked at by Asset Protection. In addition, it is a contract violation. Both the Union and the company are obligated to uphold the contract.

...At **Gallatin River Communications** there has been announcement of a possible stock purchase by Century Telephone. It's not final because it needs to be approved by the ICC and all regulatory agencies. The stock purchase is to our advantage because all assets and liabilities remain intact.

...Everything is quiet at the **Bel-Wood Peoria County Nursing Home**. They are in the process of looking for a new nursing home administrator, so we can see things happening down the road.

*By Vickie Burroughs, Business Representative*



● ● ● There have been two days of arbitration hearings on the **AT&T Global** Surplus Arbitration. Two more dates are scheduled, March 12th and 28th. On January 15th Downtown Global members welcomed the people who moved from the Oakbrook office. We're glad they're here. It was a surprise because in his talks Executive Director Mark Page said that moving the entire unit to one location in downtown Chicago would be too expensive a build-out.

...A preferencing in the downtown Chicago Network Special Services Center allowed Telecom Specialists to preference for 15 outside positions in the DOG group.

*By Liz Hodges, Business Representative*



● ● ● One of the benefits of the new Prem Tech deal is that it included a settlement of our arbitration for the laid-off **SBC Data Com** techs. As *Frontline* goes to press, all laid-off techs except five from Downstate have been offered Prem Tech jobs at their former wages and benefits.

...The Management One Stop Tool (**MOST**) is something all I&R techs should be aware of. It should be named spymaster for the boss because anytime you do something wrong an alarm goes off in the form of a flag on a computer screen. The boss now has a tool that allows them to sit on your shoulder and spy on you.

*By Michael Sacco, Business Representative*



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

• • • Due to the ice storms that rolled through the **Downstate** area, work for I&R and C&E techs has been steady. As workloads go down we can expect more details.

...GPS has reared its ugly head Downstate, in the last 6 months. Four I&R techs have been fired; three of them for misuse of company time. In this type of work environment techs need to be where they are supposed to be, doing what they are supposed to be doing while on the company's dime.

...We have agreed on a contract with **Vermillion County for Judicial**. The Union is waiting to see it in writing so we can proofread it. If all is in order we hope to schedule a ratification vote in early February.

...Bargaining is still going on for the **Vermillion County Non-judicial** side of the house. Progress is complicated by the new minimum wage law scheduled to take effect in July. The Union and the County are negotiating wage adjustments needed to be fair to members who earn more than the current minimum wage.

...The Union and **Vermillion County Manor Nursing Home** are in bargaining. The Union is seeking an increase in the starting pay for new hires and raises for CNA and LPN titles.

*By Jim Foster, Business Representative*



• • • On the south side of the city **AT&T** has combined cable repair crews with Installation crews. This has worked in some areas, but in other areas it has caused problems. Remember we are not each other's enemies let's all try to work together.

...In Construction, the Union is trying to end the details to I&R.

...The company has begun preferencing out of BAU to LVT (Formerly DAVAR.) Since the Project Lightspeed build is scheduled for the suburban area first, that's where the openings are. There will be limited movement in all areas by seniority, subject to company imposed head count caps.

...In the DOG group 20 new techs were added. I say, "Welcome to our area," and urge the existing DOG techs to work with them and help them get up to speed.

*By CJ-Cleveland Johnson, Business Representative*



• • • The **JULIE** contract is up in November 2007. We'll be starting the bargaining survey in the second quarter so watch your mail. January 1st of this year there were changes on the incentive plans and vacation scheduling. The company is discussing the vacation issues with Steward Shelley Miller. The incentive plan offer is so pathetic that there are no words to describe it. In the formula, members would be penalized for taking their contractual vacation.

...At Hoffman Estates **NDC** (Dispatch) the Union worked hard to get signed local agreements to put processes in place to benefit the members. NS requests now count in the weekend tally. The Flextime Memo is renewed for 2007. There is now a Vacation and EWD Request Guideline. There is a Tour Trade Guideline and a Holiday Scheduling Guideline. There is a return to work process after a disability. The company agreed to an EWD same day request trial. We have created a review process for stewards and managers to review the six week tour schedule to eliminate errors before it is posted.

There is now one control schedule instead of the former multiple schedules. This benefits the members because there are more vacation picks, an equal distribution of weekends, more volunteers so less forced holidays. It will be easier to find someone for trades and NSR's. There won't be anymore seniority violations with tours.

...At Hoffman Estates **NCSC** (Repair) there was a force adjustment. Fifty MA's moved from the NDC to the NCSC, the training is now complete and everyone is settling in. Work share training is still in progress. The company is still trying to work out the kinks with the computer system. The Union met with the company about the new computer system for scheduling. With any new system you need to watch for glitches.

...In **Safety** the I&R Road-eos are beginning. Check your location.

*By Melanie Probst, Business Representative*



• • • The Villa Park garage recently welcomed ten I&R techs from Addison and the C&E crew from Schaumburg.

...The north suburban **Central Office** world is still experiencing problems with vacation and work schedules. Meetings are scheduled to resolve the problems once and for all.

*By Chief Steward Paul Wright for Michael Cohns, Business Representative*



• • • **Gallatin River Communications** has been sold to a new company called Century Telephone, pending regulatory approval. So far we've had one meeting with the new company, more to come.

...Local 21 is starting negotiations with **Verizon** over the buried drop agreement on March 3rd. Chief Steward Bill Henne will be meeting with Verizon over the problems involved in combining work force schedules.

...**Citizens/Frontier** continued the bargaining on February 6th, 7th and 8th .

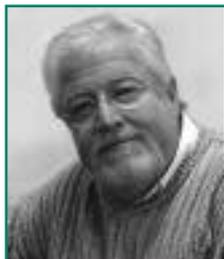
...At **Altura** the International has finally approved the contract, and it is at the printer as *Frontline* goes to press. There have been recent issues with the training program for the senior techs. Congratulations to Joel Hornbostel (our Atlanta Steward) on his recent retirement. Good luck with your new business. In December I wrote about issues in California, they have been resolved. Some health care concerns are popping up.

...In the DOG crew at **AT&T** there is a problem on how much time is allowed to report after accepting a call out.

...Meetings have started between the Union and company in I&R and C&E over detailing from one department to another. The agenda will include the issue of daily loaning back to the I&R side where overtime is being worked but C&E is not offered the opportunity to work overtime. On the I&R side these same techs are given 7 AM starts while the techs in place start at 8AM.

...In I&R and C&E the company has updated the **MOST** (Management One Stop Tool) system that includes VTS so managers can closely monitor techs in the field. These systems allow real time monitoring from the moment when a tech starts the truck at the beginning of the shift to the end of the shift. Any deviation from the many job expectations will trigger a pop up alert on the 1st levels computer screen. The supervisor has 48 hours to explain the pop up or the system will automatically escalate the alert to the 2nd level. It moves up the chain of command until the alert is answered. Some, but not all, of the things that cause a pop up alert: multiple fill ups in the same day, the screen knows the capacity of the gas tank in a techs vehicle, buying premium gas instead of regular, an unloaded sac point in the system will cause a pop up out of route alert when the tech goes there, leaving the garage 1/2 hour after the shift starts or arriving 1/2 hour too early at the garage before the shift ends. Any time a tech works overtime the system zeros in on you. Attendance is also covered by the MOST system.

The Union has requested the company present this to all techs in I&R and C&E so everyone can see how it works. **The Witch hunting has begun in certain garage locations. STAY TUNED.**



*By Mike McCormick, Business Representative*

• • • The Union and **AT&T** agreed on a preferencing plan out of C&E to LVT (The new name for DAVAR). Splicers and Linemen were eligible and by the time you read this it should be complete. This is a result of the company's decision to ramp up Project Lightspeed in exhibit 2 for 2007.

...As in other areas we have an ongoing dispute with the company over details. We continue to press the company and move the grievances along, the problem is most details end before the grievance gets too far up the pipe line.

...In I&R your manager has a new tool. It's called **MOST** (Management One Stop Tool) and requires your 1st level manager to respond anytime MOST red flags a tech. Techs can be red flagged for any one of the many job expectations I&R techs live with today. If the 1st level fails to provide an explanation for the red flag it automatically is forwarded to the 2nd level and they must respond or up the line it goes. The end result means the boss is virtually in the passenger seat of your truck.

...Two days of bargaining at **Johnson Control** began on January 24th and 25th the bargaining committee will keep the membership informed as the situation develops.



*By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative*

• • • 2007 has started off fast. Technological change is finally coming to **AT&T** Illinois. First the Union negotiated an agreement on the new Prem Tech title far better than what the company wanted to provide. Next the Union negotiated an agreement on a new Marketing title to handle evolving technology and related sales. The Marketing agreement will lead to new hiring as soon as February 2007.

...Finally the merger was completed for AT&T and BellSouth. This puts all of Cingular under one company and opens up 22 states to the AT&T presence. Yes, it is moving fast since the end of the year and it will continue. So, grab hold of your bootstraps. Just realize that the Union was able to position itself for this happening with the agreements we reached.



*By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative*

# Our Bargaining Strength is in Our Solidarity

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



One of the most famous proverbs is “a house divided can not stand.” Regardless, of how old this saying is, the fact is it’s still

very true. With any organization: church, business, or street gang, however negative or positive the organization, its success is in its solidarity. Nobody understands this truth and fears workers’ unity more than employers, especially like Comcast! Driven by the bottom-line, no amount of money is too much to pay, no tactic is too immoral to oppress the worker and prevent them from coming together.

The Comcast Cortland contract

agreement expires on May 31, 2007 and the company is up to their same old union-busting tricks. It’s expected that management would attempt to exploit the weak with their rhetoric that the employees can do better by simply doing away with the Union. What they are really saying is: give up your rights as a worker and become an “at will employee” then I can work you, fire you, give, take-away, or just simply do whatever I want to you and you can’t do anything about it.

Back on December 31, 2003 I was called in to represent a technician who had worked over 8 years at the Chicago South Pullman garage. He was also a key union organizer. He was wrongfully accused and fired for the theft of cable services. The manager was colder than ever, showing no emotion, stern, landing the blow of termination to our union brother. The company knew the tech was innocent of the charge. Someone at the company had found a criminal, a cable-subscriber who was on house arrest, to lie and say that the tech was initially paid cash by the subscriber to do an illegal connection and would later return on a different date demanding more money.

Chicago South never got a first contract and Comcast was confident that the Union and its lawyers had no hope of winning at the George Bush National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The Union tried to get justice through the Company’s so called “Code of Ethics Policy” but it was and still is a “joke.” No doubt, if a contract was in place at the time of termination, the Union would have grieved the matter and won in arbitration! Contracts provide for a “just-cause” provision that means the burden of proof is on the company. There is no way any arbitrator would have bought into the company’s lie.

That same manager is now at the Cortland garage. So, remember to be extra vigilant. In any meeting with management demand UNION REPRESENTATION.

Earlier in 2002, also at the Chicago South location, tires were slashed and a fiber optic cable was cut. Mysterious notes left behind blamed the Union. Greed, power and control over the worker– union busters will stop at nothing.

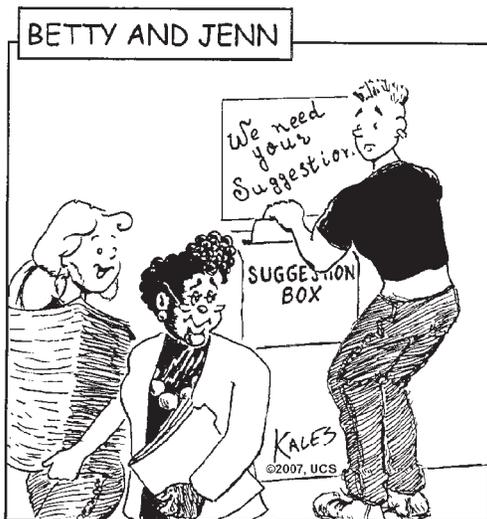
The most recent tragic deaths of two women who were found dead in their homes led to the arrest of a contractor working for Comcast. This tragedy has left the company with a major image problem nation-wide.

You have more power than ever, we will stand united, and together we will achieve a very good contract. Remember your strength is in your unity! Solidarity

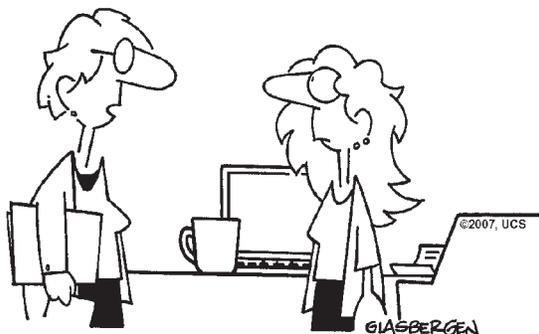
## Making Progress at The 911 OEMC

You must give credit where credit is due. The shop stewards, along with Area Steward Clarence Cooper have done a great job in the filing and processing of good grievances resulting in positive results. You, the member, also must be commended on being patient with respect to the backlog of grievances that’s currently being resolved. Finally, I must give credit to the Executive Director Mr. Andrew Velasquez. He recognizes that the problems he inherited from previous administrations and current managers have further frustrated the labor/management relationship. Some unreasonable policies and procedures resulted in very low morale at the work place. To this end Mr. Velasquez has brought in people who make sense, and respect the collective bargaining process.

As you know, the contract expires June 30, 2007. Soon you will be receiving a contract survey. Remember “Union Strength is in its Solidarity!”



"Careful, Brian, the boss just hired a handwriting analyst."



"We have to retake your employee ID photo. We accidentally made you look good."

## Beyond the Rat

By Nancy North, Area Steward



The New Yorker is an unlikely place to find articles about unions, but while skimming for the cartoons in the January 15, 2007 issue, I found an

illustration with the caption “Union cockroach.” I expected something negative, but after wading through several paragraphs about the ferocity of the insects (they bite) and their survivability (they can live for a month without their heads) the article shifted to a twelve foot standing cockroach on 83rd Street.

Yes, the familiar inflatable rat has been joined on the picket line by the giant inflatable cockroach. The rat has enjoyed a long fifteen year run on the informational picket line, often when union workers are protesting the hiring of non-union labor. Local 21 has two rats and they still command attention on a pick-up truck in front of a Comcast meeting, or in my driveway when it needed to dry off after getting soaked at work.

But familiarity may have lessened the rat’s impact, so some adaptable Locals in New York City have placed a giant cockroach on the picket line. They even brought the giant insect to the home of one business owner. Since he lives in a high rise, there were lots of neighbors to notice the message.

From an evolutionary standpoint, the cockroach is one of the most successful creatures on the planet, adapting to a wide range of conditions. Maybe that’s part of why they are so scary. We don’t have feel left behind on this new trend, the balloons are made right here in Illinois.

## How Much is Enough?

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

As my father lie in the hospital, nearly two decades ago, he recounted a talk he had with his doctor and friend about how much money is “enough” for any one person and his family.

My dad and mom started their lives together and had nothing materially between them. Unlike many, they did have education and the will to work hard. They saved every penny they could while raising five kids. They were successful and comfortable, but by no measure rich.

As people often do as they prepare themselves for death, my father was examining the things he had accomplished. He was proud that my Mother would be comfortable for many years because of their hard work and planning, but he and his doctor pondered how much was enough? When do you stop? Is there a limit? When you are dead, will any of it matter?

As I get older, I find myself asking the same questions. Perhaps I hear of a dispute over a bit of overtime or a meal allowance.

Or like today, when I hear of a member who was fired this week. Fired for stealing. This member was hired around the time when my Dad was asking how much is enough? This member was always at the top of the overtime list and now he is out of work, apparently because he couldn’t arrive at his measure of what was enough.

I have been around a lot of people who are bringing children into the world. It reminds me of the joyous time I was doing the same thing around two decades ago. When my family was starting and my Father was dying and he asked, “how much is enough?”

My kids are in college and it all happened so fast, in the wink of an eye! I wish I had known how much was enough then. I wish I knew it now. I hope all of us will take a moment to consider the question. Together, our Union has given us the opportunity to lead a comfortable life. To raise healthy and prosperous families materially, but sometimes at the price of depriving them emotionally and spiritually. Think about it. How much is enough?



**Remember the \$1,500 Success Sharing payout was negotiated in your Union Contract. Now it's a Memorandum called The Midwest Team Performance Award TPA, in Appendix A on page 157.**

## Members In The News

To have your news posted please send a short email to the editors [nancy.north@comcast.net](mailto:nancy.north@comcast.net) and [ljm336@ameritech.net](mailto:ljm336@ameritech.net) with "Frontline Members in the News" as the subject line.



We want to hear from you!

## AFL-CIO Forges Tie with Interfaith Group

The AFL-CIO and the advocacy organization Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) signed an agreement in December to allow IWJ units to affiliate with AFL-CIO state federations and central labor councils. The agreement will give IWJ a voice in federation or council affairs, but affiliations are strictly voluntary, according to the agreement.

The formal ties will help the two organizations work more closely on legislative initiatives and worker campaigns, according to the AFL-CIO. "It's time we rediscover our common bonds and bring our organizations closer together," said federation President John Sweeney.

IWJ centers already are established in Arkansas, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and elsewhere.

"All religious traditions believe that those who work should be paid for their labor and treated with dignity and respect," said IWJ director Kim Bobo. "Workers' centers put that belief into practice."

## IBEW Local 21 \* Union Made in the USA \* Apparel

By Tom Hopper, Business Representative

Check out the **NEW IBEW Local 21 Union Made in the USA** apparel on our Local's website at [www.ibew21.org/resources/shop\\_online.html](http://www.ibew21.org/resources/shop_online.html). Here, you can shop for shirts and blouses, blue jeans, jackets, and more. All items are high quality, union-made, union decorated in the USA, and are provided by the top manufacturers of Union Made in the USA apparel in the industry. You can purchase with a credit card securely via e-commerce.

Purchasing and wearing IBEW Local 21 clothing is a great way to demonstrate solidarity and pride in IBEW membership.

Take some time to look around, find something you like, and then spend your hard-earned American dollars the right way – on American-made Union-made products. This is a great way to reward unionized American workers and unionized American companies!

## Need Money for College? Apply for Union Scholarships

By Tom Hopper, Business Representative

### IBEW Local 21 Scholarship Program

Local 21 is proud to offer, on an annual basis, the IBEW Local Union 21 Scholarship Program, available to all Local 21 members and immediate family members. Each year, the Local awards ten winners scholarships of \$1,000 each. **Applications must be received by March 1, 2007** so don't delay. Complete Scholarship Program Rules and Applications are available through the union office and at [www.ibew21.org/resources/scholarships.html](http://www.ibew21.org/resources/scholarships.html).

### IBEW Founders' Scholarship

The IBEW Founders' Scholarship Offered is offered by the IBEW International, and applicants must be IBEW members. It honors the dedicated wiremen and linemen who, on November 28, 1891, organized the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. This award is for \$200 per semester credit hour at any accredited college or university toward an initial bachelor's degree in an approved field. The maximum distribution is \$24,000 over a period not to exceed eight years. The application

and all related materials must be **postmarked prior to May 1, 2007**. Complete Scholarship Program Rules and Applications are available through the Local 21 union office and at [www.ibew.org/links/ScholarshipAd.pdf](http://www.ibew.org/links/ScholarshipAd.pdf).

### William A. Lee Scholarships

The Chicago Federation of Labor is currently accepting applications for the 2007 William A. Lee Memorial Scholarship Program, available to students who graduate from a Chicago or surrounding suburban area high school in 2007. Ten awards are offered, each in the amount of \$1,500. Students must submit a **written** request for an application to the Chicago Federation of Labor, William A. Lee Memorial Scholarship Committee, 130 East Randolph Street, Suite 2600, Chicago, IL 60601. An application request form can be downloaded at [www.chicagolabor.org](http://www.chicagolabor.org). **No phone calls will be accepted for application requests.** Once completed, **the scholarship application must be returned to the Chicago Federation of Labor by March 1, 2007.**

# CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

## October 2006

Pamela Smith

## November 2006

Larry Koning  
Gregory Lott  
Terry Rahn

## December 2006

Rena Pearson

## January 2007

Robert Glines  
Mike Maddex  
Jeffrey Hansen  
Michael Laurance  
Martin Hail  
Paul Dietrich  
Dennis Benson  
Betty Coleman  
Robert Hoey  
Robert Kulik  
Harry Robertson  
Peggy Robertson  
Susan Gustafson/Helgeson

## February 2007

William Raridon  
Peter Moroz  
Sharon Randolph  
Terry Gass  
Jeanine Stading  
Kenneth Nilhas  
Alan Louderman  
Louise Ebel  
Mildred Hyde  
Gladys Villegas  
Les Meeter

### **Information Alert**

Members must be in good standing for 10 consecutive years with IBEW Local 21 (or former Locals 165, 188, 336, 383, or 399) immediately preceding their retirement in order to receive a retirement from the Local Union. These members must be severing their employment with the employer. Stewards, Area Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Business Reps can request applications by calling Nancy Kopydlowski at the union office 630 960-4466 X234.

## **Another View: Washington's Other War**

*By Jim Hightower*

**B**ehind closed doors, a top-level planning group is meeting in Washington, assessing the harsh realities of the war's changed landscape, and drafting a new battle plan.

This is not the Iraq Study Group, the bipartisan panel put together to try and figure a way out of the Iraq mess: it's the top honchos of Merck, Amgen, Eli Lilly, Pfizer, and other drug giants, readying themselves for war against the new Democratic congress. In particular, the kingpins of the drug industry are going all out to kill a Democratic proposal to stop price-gouging by the corporations.

The proposal would let Medicare use its consumer power to negotiate lower prescription prices for millions of older Americans—a plan already working in Canada, Europe, Japan, and other countries, where drug prices are far lower than here.

George W's 2003 Medicare law, which was essentially written by drug industry lobbyists, explicitly banned such negotiated prices and has led to windfall profits for the giants. Determined to keep gouging, drug makers are now amassing a lobbying army to defend their special-interest, anti-consumer provision.

But it won't be easy, since profiteering on old folks is not exactly popular with the public and since drug companies put up big bucks to oppose the very Democrats who are now in charge of congress.

So, the corporations are scrambling. "It's all hands on deck," shrieked a top official with Big Pharma's main lobbying front. Suddenly drug-company officials are hugging Democrats they wouldn't even shake hands with just a few weeks ago, and they're frantically offering seven-figure salaries to get key Democratic staffers to join their lobbying battalion.

One staffer says he got three job offers in one day from the drug lobby. The industry already spends \$100 million a year on lobbying, and that could easily double in 2007.

Correction notice : The editors of the *Frontline* would like to apologize to Enrique Araujo for misspelling his name in the recent retiree section of the December issue.

**Be Involved!  
Attend a Unit  
Meeting in 2007**

# UNIT MEETINGS 2007

## MARCH

### **Unit 1**

IBEW Local #134  
600 W. Washington  
Chicago IL  
312 474-4186

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday March 13, 7 PM  
Slovak Club  
6920 Broadway.  
Merrillville IN  
219 756-5101

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, March 15, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
495 Airport Rd.  
Elgin IL  
847 488-9000

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, March 14, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #145  
1700 52nd Ave. Suite A  
Moline IL  
309 736-4239

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, March 21, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #979  
4501 S Airport Rd.  
Bartonville IL  
309 697-2432

### **Unit 6**

Tuesday, March 20, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
3150 Wide Track Dr.  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479

### **Unit 7**

Monday, March 19, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 309  
2000A Mall St. (Rte 157)  
Collinsville IL  
618 345-5112

## APRIL

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, April 12, 7 PM  
Irish-American Heritage Center  
4626 N. Knox Ave.  
Chicago IL  
773 282-7035

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday, April 10, 7 PM  
Lansing American Legion Post #697  
18255 Grant St.  
Lansing IL  
708 474-5906

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, April 19, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 364  
6820 Mill Rd.  
Rockford IL  
815 398-6282

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, April 11, 7 PM  
Lemont VFW  
15780 New Ave.  
Lemont IL  
630 257-9859

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, April 18, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #146  
3390 N. Woodford St.  
Decatur IL  
217 877-4604

### **Unit 6**

Tuesday, April 17, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
3150 Wide Track Dr.  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479

### **Unit 7**

Monday, April 16, 7 PM  
Alton Sports Tap  
3812 College Ave.  
Alton IL  
618 465-2539

## MAY

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, May 10, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #21 Conference Center  
1307 W. Butterfield Rd. Suite 424  
Downers Grove IL  
630 960-4466

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday, May 8, 7 PM  
Slovak Club  
6920 Broadway  
Merrillville IN  
219 756-5101

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, May 17, 7 PM  
Gurnee American Legion  
749 Milwaukee Ave.  
Gurnee IL  
847 244-9282

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, May 9, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #145  
1700 52nd Ave, Suite A  
Moline IL  
309 736-4239

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, May 16, 7 PM  
VFW Post #630  
1303 E. Main St.  
Urbana IL  
217 367-4197

### **Unit 6**

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

### **Unit 7**

Monday, May 21, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #141  
916 Main St.  
Mt Vernon IL  
618 242-4561

Information on attending your closest Local 21 Union meeting can be obtained by contacting the Union office at 630-960-4466 or ask your Steward.

# **IBEW LOCAL 21**

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

©  278

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Downers Grove, IL  
Permit No. 424



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



*On Sunday March 11, 2007 IBEW Local 21 will participate in the South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade with a float. We invite all members and their families to join us and the six foot Leprechaun, because the event is a lot of fun. The Parade step off is at NOON at 103rd and Western Avenue in Chicago.*

*We won't know our float location until a few days before the Parade, so call the hotline 630 415-2711 before you leave home for our exact location. If there are any questions, please contact Chief Steward Lynn Arwood 630 960-4466 ext 445 or Business Representative Mike McCormick on ext 401.*