Working people are stressed out – as are all Americans. Working families across the country continue to be hit hard by fewer jobs, decreasing wages, and higher costs.

Between March 2001 and March 2008 the Nation lost almost 3.3 million manufacturing jobs, and only gained 5.3 million jobs overall—just slightly more than half the number of jobs needed to keep pace with the 9.8 million people added to the labor force during that period. That's why the unemployment rate is 15.7 percent higher in March 2008 than it was in March 2001.

The share of the population with jobs declined from 64.3 percent in March 2001 to 62.6 percent in March 2008. It's the first time on record that a period of "economic recovery" has been marked by an actual decline in the employment rate.

Since the late 1990's, average incomes fell by 2.5 percent for those in the bottom fifth of the income scale and rose by just 1.3 percent for those in the middle fifth. Meanwhile, incomes climbed 9 percent for those in the top fifth. At the same time, the consumer price index from March 2001 to March 2008 has increased 17.5 percent.

People in the top 1 percent of the income bracket captured about half of the overall economic growth between 1993 and 2006. To say the least, these are not good numbers.

Let's look closer to home, where since the year 2000:

The unemployment rate is up 25% in Illinois and 82% in Indiana. The amount of people without health insurance has gone up 6% in Illinois and 11% in Indiana. Public college tuition has risen 42% in Indiana and 64% in Illinois.

Bankruptcies are up 36% and 40% in Illinois and Indiana respectively; and the number of individuals living below the poverty line has increased in Illinois by 9% and in Indiana it’s even worse – a 20% increase. Gasoline prices are off the map – over 120% increase since 2001.

We need change in this country. Presidential candidates need to address the issues that are important to all working families. With the next national election right around the corner, I ask you to stay involved if you are and get involved if you’re not. Local 21’s C.O.P.E. Department can answer any questions you might have regarding the candidates. Let’s stay educated, vote, and bring real change in the months ahead. Be part of the solution and help relieve the economic stress on all in the years ahead!

Speaking of change, I want to thank the hundreds of stewards and activists who attended the Internal Organizing training sessions earlier this year. Almost every issue thrown at us by today’s employers can be more easily dealt with the support of co-workers. With a united workforce, when the union needs something done, stewards have co-workers to call on for assistance. Mobilizing co-workers involves four key steps: organizing, educating, targeting an issue and taking collective action.

Hundreds of Local 21 members were trained as Mobilization Coordinators and they are helping build a more united membership. In addition, Group Coordinators are coming on board and assisting in the plan. They will play a critical role in our union, helping to identify issues and move information faster to every member of our union, and from the membership to the leadership. Internal Organizing, the reasons for it, and more is covered in depth in this issue of Frontline. I encourage you to read the articles, ask questions, and become an even more involved union member. This is our individual and collective responsibility.
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They included the U.S. Chamber of
Commerce, the National Association
of Manufacturers, and the U.S.
Telecommunication Association.

But, guess what…

TOGETHER - We beat ‘em all.

When we talk about Internal
Organizing and mobilizing our
membership, sometimes the
response we hear is “What
can I do, I’m just one person?” Or, “Even if
everyone does get on the same page,
how can we fight corporate giants like
AT&T and Comcast that are worth
hundreds of billions of dollars?”

The reality is that rank and file
members who are unified, mobilized
and active CAN make a difference and
have a significant impact. A perfect
example of this is the lawsuit that we
filed against AT&T. The company
refused to arbitrate the grievance we
filed concerning an unjust performance
management plan in Consumer, the
PAR program. To support the lawsuit,
about 75 rank and file members took
a stand with us and did one simple
thing—they had the courage to tell
the truth. They filed affidavits with
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But, guess what…

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Remember, whether it’s on the shop
floor or in front of the highest court in
the land, when we stand together there
is no limit to what we can accomplish.

"Mr. Humboldt, I’m afraid that’s all the justice you
can afford."
In today’s union movement, the continuing shifts in labor-management relations over the last decade combined with shrinking union density means one thing - Organized Labor must change to survive, to grow, and to gain power again – the kind of power we had in our heyday.

As the 21st century approached, major International Unions, including the IBEW, recognized and planned for internal changes – facing the future head on. The roadmap was clear. Create a movement wide network of stewards, mobilization coordinators, and rank and file members to educate, organize and mobilize members around key issues.

Recognizing the continuing shifts occurring in the telecommunications industry and the labor movement as a whole, Local 21 leaders established an Internal Organizing Committee (IOC) to study how these changes would affect the entire Local 21 membership, recommend a plan for change and assist directly in the implementation of the plan.

The IOC examined in-depth how our Local operates, interviewed staff and rank and file members, surveyed current union stewards and acted on the results.

An in-depth scientific survey was developed and randomly sent to 20% of the entire membership. It used a series of questions to determine members’ attitudes toward their Union, its effectiveness in many areas, and their willingness to assist the Local in the struggles that we face. The results illustrated what we were doing well, what we could do better, which members felt the Union helped them and which didn’t. It also told us what lines of communications best reach our members.

Local 21 then formed a partnership with one of the country’s top Labor Education Programs – the University of Illinois. In June of 2007 with the help of the University of Illinois Institute of Labor & Industrial Relations Staff, results were tallied, analyzed, and shared with top leadership. Our path was clear. Internal Organizing training classes were jointly developed; the plan was shared with all officers, staff, and Executive Board members, with training set to begin in January of 2008.

In 2008, we began the transformation from a servicing local to an organizing local where Local 21 members are directly involved in solving workplace issues. Over 400 stewards and activists were trained by the University of Illinois staff as Mobilization Coordinators covering every physical work location where Local 21 has members. The Mobilization Coordinators have taken on the responsibility of recruiting Group Coordinators and will work together to increase communications between Local 21 and you. Through one-on-one communication we are confident more members will become involved in issues in their individual work locations, as well as issues affecting all Local 21 members.

These appointments are just the first step in creating a Local Union that will be more powerful and connected to our members. It will take all of us to make this a reality.
Last year the IBEW Local 21 Internal Organizing Committee conducted a random membership survey to examine how rank and file members perceive their local union, as well as worker attitudes towards their employers.

The results of the survey were tallied by the University of Illinois Labor Education Program (LEP). We feel it’s important to share the survey results with you. According to LEP Director Robert Bruno, “Most unions that conduct membership surveys never share those results with their members. Local 21 is taking a bold step forward by conducting this survey and sharing its results with its members.”

We are taking this step because to change, it is important to know where the Local is doing well and more importantly, where we need to improve.

The survey was statistically sound with 20% of our membership receiving surveys. There was a higher than anticipated return rate. Over 78% of the respondents were Caucasian, with 33% of the respondents being women. The survey was mailed to members working at every employer where Local 21 represents workers. Over 60% of the respondents were members over the age of 46, only 3% have worked for their employer for less than 3 years with 11% working at companies other than AT&T.

The survey indicated that Local 21 is doing a pretty good job in communicating with you. Most of you know where your union bulletin board is located, but we need to do a better job keeping the information current and informative. Almost 70% of you read the Frontline with almost 57% of the respondents reading over half of the newsletter.

We need to improve our website usage. Fewer members than we expected are visiting the website. Our website is www.ibew21.org. Please visit it and sign up for the automatic news updates and action alerts. You can even view the Frontline online before you get it in the mail.

Just under half of the men responding attend union meetings, but they agreed that they get important info about what’s happening. 40% of women attend union meetings, however only 28% felt they were informative. Of the male respondents, 23% attended over 3 meetings a year and 9% of female respondents attended more that 3 meetings per year. Along racial lines 22.5% of whites, 4.7% of African Americans, and 19.2% of Latinos attended over 3 union meetings per year.

Of the respondents 62% have filed a grievance but surprisingly only 35% were happy with the outcome. Conversely only 22% feel the union does not do a good job in representing their members. However, 81% of AT&T members and only 52% of workers at other companies don’t think their employer will look out for their best interests. We must enable all members to settle their disputes with their employers outside of the grievance procedure through mobilization and collective actions. These results were a huge driver behind the launch of our local union’s internal organizing program.
Mobilization Coordinators Attend Internal Organizing Training
Many IBEW Local 21 members believe their only role in our union should be the payment of dues. They feel they don’t need to personally get involved in disputes that arise at their workplaces, the bargaining table or in the legislative halls.

Some have adopted the mentality that the “Union Officials” should be solving all problems without any assistance from the membership. Some believe the “Union Officials” should be negotiating better wages, hours and working conditions without bothering Local 21 members in the process.

As a result, when these goals are not fully met, some members often respond by faulting “the Union and its leaders,” rather than becoming actively involved in the collective bargaining and grievance resolution processes. It is critically important to understand that “the Union” is not a third party. It isn’t the company, the members, and the Union. It’s the company and the Union. The Union is the people in it.

Under IBEW Local 21’s old structure, the full potential of our Union to settle disputes and make changes favorable to members’ interests at our employers could not always be met. The lack of participation of most Local 21 members in their Union has become a major issue.

Local 21 is taking a bold step forward by switching away from the traditional servicing model to a progressive organizing mobilization model of unionism.

In our new structure YOU, the member, have the power to help settle workplace issues with the assistance of your Shop, Area and Chief Stewards, Business Representative, and newly appointed Mobilization and Group Coordinators. The basic premise of internal organizing and member mobilization is returning to our roots and committing to a strategy that rests on increasing our power through member education and involvement. When members identify and understand the issues, they are more willing to participate in collective actions. The foundation of mobilization is one-on-one, worker-to-worker communication.

Newly appointed Mobilization Coordinators have already mapped out your work location in terms of job titles, management groups, shifts, demographics and seniority. They’ve asked for volunteers from each group to help them get our Union’s message out to everyone. Each Group Coordinator is responsible for communicating with 10-20 members. The goal is to insure everyone receives the same message, in a short amount of time.

Your Mobilization Coordinator will help identify individual worksite issues and report them to the Local 21 Internal Organizing Committee. They will also be responsible for communicating important messages and mobilization activities to your Group Coordinators, who in turn, will communicate the same to you.

In addition to the current system of processing grievances, with an educated, organized and active membership, many disputes and worksite issues can be resolved locally with group action and other collective, protected activities. You will have the opportunity to assist in solving issues. Every member of our local union will now take on a new role.

Together we will be more educated, better informed, and more easily mobilized when called to act. It will take all of us to make this possible. Membership involvement equals membership power.
I was appointed to join the internal organizing committee (IOC) in October 2007. The IOC committee wanted me to assist in planning the internal organizing seminars because I helped organized the 2005 stewards’ seminar. I was excited by the challenge, but a bit apprehensive about joining a committee that’s been working together for over two years. I’m glad to be on it because I really wanted to assist the committee with internal organizing.

The seminars were set up to train mobilization coordinators, who will recruit group coordinators within the rank and file membership. The goals are to improve communications, build solidarity and increase the involvement of all members. This is an educational process geared towards strength and unity.

The seminars took place across the Local starting in January with our members in Springfield and Tinley Park then ending in February in Rosemont. All the sessions were very informative. The best part was the reaction of the members participating in the training. It was great seeing them apply the knowledge they gained from the exercises and activities.

We learned that many of you aren’t involved with the local union. I feel that we need to become more aware of what being a union member means in today’s society, because corporations have invested a huge amount of money and time attempting to break the solidarity built by union members. Everything that is happening with our employers like mandatory overtime, the attendance policies, and the productivity programs are an attempt to create a division between members and the local union. The first thing management will say to you is, “The union allows this.” I ask you to talk to the mobilization coordinators in your work location and learn what your Union is all about. There are two versions to every story.

I am really excited about the role internal organizing will play in the future of Local 21. Yes, I am known as an optimist, but I know I am better off BECAUSE of Local 21.

Most days it feels like the company has added another rock to the backpack we carry. It’s not just our jobs, but the measurements of our work that weigh us down. Life has to be more than a box of rocks. This hope engaged my attention when I heard this story.

Once there was a traveler who met a man carrying stone; he asked the workman, “What are you doing?” He answered, “Carrying stone.”

The traveler walked on and met a second man carrying stone; he asked the workman, “What are you doing?” He answered, “Supporting my family, whom I love.”

The traveler kept walking and met a third man carrying stone; he asked the workman, “What are you doing?” He answered, “Building a cathedral.”

It is not useless rocks that we carry but the stone building blocks of our lives. We can chose to see only the burden of the present task, or what motivates us, the paycheck to support our families.

We are also building something together. Every small act in support of each other, our fellow brothers and sisters builds something solid. Sometimes it means standing up against injustice against one fellow worker. Sometimes it’s a large concerted action for the good of all.

As it grows, never quite finished, always in progress, it is something to strike awe into the beholder.
**Stewards Army on the March to Mobilize Union Members**

*By James Parks AFL-CIO*

Union members always have mobilized behind the goal of making life better for all of America’s working families. Now, with the nation’s middle class under attack and the freedom to form unions being curtailed at nearly every turn, workers are developing a new way to mobilize workers in workplaces and in their communities to fight for a better life—the stewards army.

The idea behind the stewards army is simple, but powerful: create a movement-wide network of stewards, mobilization coordinators, and rank and file members to educate, organize and mobilize members around key issues. Unions such as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Communications Workers of America (CWA), United Steelworkers (USW) and the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) already have put the process into motion with revamped steward and mobilization training.

CWA President Larry Cohen, who chairs the AFL-CIO Executive Council Committee on Organizing, laid out the case for the stewards army:

**Being a steward can no longer mean, as important as it is, that I know the contract, that I’ll protect the rights of my fellow workers, that I’ll handle a grievance, that I’ll help lead a contract fight. We need a stewards’ army in every union...so we’re there for each other’s fights...so we can talk to each other quickly and turn out hundreds of thousands of people. So that corporate management knows at every company in this country, in every organizing fight, in every strike, in every bargaining fight, the stewards’ army will be there.**

The stewards army will include both active union members and retirees. Its action program will be directed at an employer or workplace and at other times will be focused more broadly on an industry goal or even a national issue such as health care. Actions can range from sending an e-mail message, participating in rallies, meeting with elected officials and mobilizing thousands for mass action.

The stewards army is not only the most exciting innovation in the union movement in some time, but it can really effect major change, says Tim Waters, director of the USW Rapid Response program:

**Union members are much more likely to listen to their co-workers than anyone when it comes to union issues. They trust their co-workers and they stick together.**

The value of the stewards army is that it engages union members with union issues that they’re not going to hear about in the media. With the stewards army, members hear about an issue, mobilize and get active. There is a tremendous power there. This shows a real concern about the real grassroots members and getting them involved.

IBEW and CWA are putting the stewards army idea to work assisting workers at Verizon who want to form a union. The unions have held joint training seminars with stewards and plan to sign up thousands of members in the stewards army.

We’re imagining thousands of activists, working in their own communities sharing a common vision of how we can achieve real change for working families: real improvement in bargaining rights, jobs, health care and pension security.

That’s what the stewards army is all about. We will make change the same way generations of workers before us made change—with a movement of activists, who stand up, speak out and demand change. The major unions will create a powerful force to change the priorities of the country and refocus on an agenda for working families.

Members of the stewards army won’t all be shop stewards in the traditional sense of handling grievances and enforcing contracts at the job site. It’s really about ‘stewardship’ in a broader sense: stewardship to strengthen workers’ bargaining and organizing rights and to fight for our other major goals—jobs, health care, and retirement security.

Fred Azcarate, director of the AFL-CIO’s Voice@Work, says the stewards army will make the phrase solidarity really mean something.

**It’s not only about local workplace issues. It’s about talking to people about what’s happening with the economics in this country and not just in some theoretical way but in how it’s impacting their contracts at the bargaining table and how they can do something about it. It’s not only in the context of their contract but how they have to do something about getting national health care in this country and pass the Employee Free Choice Act. And it’s about how it’s going to make their bargaining easier if other workers can form a union and if we can take health care off the bargaining table.**
...At Vermillion County we achieved a settlement for a terminated employee prior to the arbitration date.

…We are struggling with many issues at the Bel-Wood Nursing Home in Peoria County. We are moving the personal days grievance to arbitration for those nurses working 4/10 shifts. The majority of issues at the nursing home stem from the administrator who has never worked in a union environment. He interprets the collective bargaining agreement the way he wants, not with the intent as it was bargained.

…AT&T and the Union have agreed on an incentive plan for 2008 at Peoria Credit & Collections.

...In Springfield BCS it came to our attention that work was being shipped out, without notifying the Union. We are working to resolve this issue.

...In the Springfield Wholesale Service Center, the company held substance abuse awareness seminars. AT&T advised us of their intent to eliminate the 4/10 tours.

...In Rock Island Consumer the tour preferring sheets include the new tours that the company proposed for the two-week tour schedules. The options increased from 10 to 14, but more is not necessarily better. If you want Saturday off, you need to work a late shift during the week. The only good thing is that you know what you will be working for 3 months not 2 weeks. On an interim basis until June 30th, there are 2 schedules: one for ALWB, and another one for the CN group.

...Insight Cable of Peoria-Pekin is now Comcast. Employees who would not have been terminated at Insight, have lost their jobs since Comcast took control of the operation. If you know anyone there who is interested in organizing a union, please contact Dave Webster in the Union Hall at 630-960-4466 ext. 449.

By Vickie Burroughs, Business Representative

The new U-verse and term cable splicing techs need to understand that they must ask for union representation in meetings with management when they think the meeting could lead to discipline. Make sure you exercise your Weingarten Rights. Also new employees still in their probationary period must make it to work on time every day they are scheduled. Too many people are getting terminated for attendance reasons.

...AT&T recently purchased many new vehicles which have expired temporary plates, or expired regular plates. Don’t let your manager insist that you drive a vehicle that does not have legal license plates. Several techs have been stopped & ticketed. You are protected under the Code of Conduct. If there are any issues, contact your steward or chief steward.

By Michael Cohns, Business Representative

...AT&T moved work from Crown Point Indiana to the engineering assistants in Illinois. The problem is the PEC’s are covered under the Core Agreement in regards to contractors whereas the EA’s are covered under a Carve-Out in the Core and contractors are allowed (with certain restrictions) to do their work. It is obvious the AT&T is circumventing the contract language. We are battling with the company.

...In Hoffman Estates at the NCSC (Repair Call Center) we finally won our grievance regarding the vacation composition for 2008. We achieved 15% every month, which we feel is the minimum as the company had originally offered only 15% for June, July and August.

At the NCSC management is reducing the hours of operation to 6:00am to 6:00pm Monday thru Friday. Some might think this is nice but think about the differential shifts that we’ll be losing. AT&T also advised the Union that if a customer chooses VOIP, they will be calling some other center for line trouble, resulting in a loss of work. The newest issue deals with what I call a “Robot” to assist in changing due dates for trouble ticket dispatches.

Management thinks it’s good news they’re adding 12 positions to the NCSC headcount. That is great news for any of our surplussed members. It still doesn’t give AT&T the right to keep chipping away at the work we currently perform.

...In Hoffman Estates at the NDC (Dispatch Center) the MA’s received their SIPP offers. They were included because the Chicago MA’s have been surplussed. I want to remind everyone that 188 offers were sent out but only 11 will be accepted. The SIPP’s will go to the most senior members.

I have set up a meeting with the new director to discuss the ongoing problems with the department closing the vacation schedule months out.

...“I can tell my manager anything.” How many times have you heard that from a member? Yet they won’t get a steward for representation when they go into a meeting with that so-called management “friend.” I have several instances of members telling management about an incident that turns around to bite them in the butt. The manager “friend” then contacts security to report a breach of the Code of Business Conduct (COBC). The member thought they were talking to their management “friend” but now they are being investigated about their personal issues such as not reporting an arrest, a pending court case or some other situation.

The reason you will need the steward is to protect YOUR rights later on when you find out the entire meeting was documented and put into your personnel file. Now you may be facing an investigation by Asset Management/Security, to explain what happened. You may be disciplined for an alleged violation of the COBC and suspended or even suspended pending dismissal.

Your Weingarten Rights are protected by the NLRB and Supreme Court. If you forget what to say, just turn over your IBEW Local 21 membership card and read it to your manager. Whenever you have a question go to your Steward first, they are your friend.

By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative
On the Southside of Chicago, the special services preference is over. Everyone should be in place. It was a long process and I thank everyone for their patience.

We have completed the Telecommunication Specialist preference, and it went very well. Most of the TS’s have been able to go where they wanted.

The U-verse build in the City of Chicago is still on hold, so the details in Construction will continue. Right now, all the details are from suburban to the city.

The I&R districts have been redesigned and the leadership in management has changed. Some areas have a chance to get better and of course, some areas will get worse.

In I&R, we have begun a new scheduling trial aimed at reducing the number of people scheduled on weekends. The trial is only going on in 6 garages. In our area, the Stewart garage has been chosen. If it is successful, hopefully it will be rolled out to the other garages.

Finally, we’ve been mistakenly printing the wrong telephone number for the Illinois DMV to check your drivers’ license status. The correct number is: 217-782-2720. Sorry for the mistake.

By CJ-Cleveland Johnson, Business Representative

AT&T management is taking advantage of the inexperience of the new U-verse techs. Major issues were discussed in committee.

Many managers are telling the Prem techs to use their personal cell phone for company business and they will reimburse them monthly. However, call packs make this almost impossible. You aren’t billed for the company calls, but you are charged for personal calls made after business calls burned up all your minutes. Don’t use your personal cell phones for company business.

Techs are being told to drive trucks with expired license plates. If they get ticketed, the company pays the ticket. But the problem is that you are breaking the law. If there is an accident, who is liable?

AT&T is trying to use good jobs in eight (GJI8) to determine overtime and scheduling. Everyday managers hold a 1pm conference call to determine the next day’s workload. They’ve told the Prem techs to call in at 3pm to find out if there is work for them the next day. If you are a high producer the answer is, “yes.” If not, they tell you, “no.” Prem techs are entitled to a minimum of two hours report pay if they come in to work and there is no work. There is nothing in the contract requiring members to call in at 3pm. We’ll let you know the outcome of these issues when they are resolved.

By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative
Altura cell phones, the testing process (CTP) and training process for the CCNT modules are still issues. Atlanta seems to be the only place were there is a cell phone problem. Connecticut, Boston, Illinois, and California are now dealing with the training process.

...AT&T PREMISE TECHS: When Terry Sheehan & I visited the Rockdale location, we took down the names of the prem techs who wanted us to get involved in checking their pay. The company agreed to set up a committee to look at each case. We are involved in several other issues. The selection process: When there is not enough work for the day, which techs are sent home? Is it done by seniority, or is it rotated? The company informed the Union that they would like to discuss implementation of 4/10 hour shifts, for 80% of the techs. Creation of Overtime Lists: A procedure needs to be established to track who is working overtime, how much overtime is being worked, and if overtime is being handed out fairly. This would also impact the work that is distributed at the end of the day. Qualifications List: A technician qualification list needs to be created. This would also, at first, impact the overtime distribution, until each tech is considered qualified. Vacation composition: This has to be put in place before the first set of technicians reach their six (6) months service anniversary.

...It needs to be stated that, you do not drive a truck with expired license plates. It is up to the company to make sure that all vehicles have valid plates.

...Finally, I realize that all of you are new employees and many of you have not been involved with unions before, so some things that may go on around you may seem like nothing, but they are important.

I was informed that a manager asked a prem tech to call another prem tech. The manager could not reach the employee, who was off on a couple of personal days, to inform him that his schedule changed and he was going on a detail to St. Louis. Without knowing any better, the second tech called from his cell phone. We as union members do not call fellow union members to help out the company.

...Central Office issues are moving at a snail’s pace, but they are all still on the table with the company. The six week schedule is posted and then changes are made to it on a weekly basis. The vacation selection process has not been completed and techs are being forced to cover for technicians who are off. The entire off-hour scheduling process. The DCN and MMG technicians who are being put into CO’s for frame work. Who is going to cover the existing alarms? Is training really happening out in the offices? Finally, in regards to the alarm work, the center used to be in Chicago (5ESS), then it was moved to Milwaukee, and now it is in St. Louis. They have no information on CLLI codes. They have to make phone calls to see how to handle the alarms. Once again, this wonderful company has no problem in getting rid of the qualified technicians!!!

...Construction Department: We addressed the crossover work (CE&I/R) in a meeting with Joe DeMillis. We discussed the DAVAR (LVT) department’s so-called availability list, for working on the weekends. The Loop Electronics department has been preferred into construction. AT&T is looking at combining the LEG and FWG in the near future. The Fiber and LVT department, which was under a particular director, for the State, is now going back to the construction side because of company management changes.

...Engineering Assistants: Terry and I met with Labor to discuss the contracting-out of work. We discussed the length of time that some of these contractors have been working and the use of out-of-state contractors. We discussed the movement of work

...I/R Department: We met with Cindie Bucks who took over for Derek Hamilton. We feel her appointment is an improvement. Her background has been in the I/R department in Michigan. The legislators, in Springfield, are working on the mandatory overtime bill. We should be hearing more about this in the near future. The Air-Pressure work is now back under the I/R umbrella. This work will stay the same through 2008. We are in the process of trialing a Monday through Friday scheduling procedure, at six garages around the state. If the process works, we will be looking at extending this to other garage locations.

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative

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At Century Telephone we are in the process of negotiating a new incentive plan for the service reps. The new plan will be fairer for all members.

...In the outside world, Century is using a non-union contractor to perform line work. The contractors have no idea what they are doing, and are working extremely unsafe. The Stewards, Bill Henne and I have addressed our safety concerns with management, and a grievance has been filed.

...At AT&T details continue to be a major issue Downstate. We have been successful in keeping exhibit 3 construction techs in their exhibit, but I&R techs continue to be sent to exhibits 1 and 2. In some cases, Project Lightspeed is being built in their home town. Although I&R has three-week details, a new twist has been added. If a technician has a week of vacation during a detail, they are not allowed to volunteer nor can they be forced. This is clearly a violation of article 29.01. Grievances have been filed and are moving through the steps.

...Loop Electronics and Air Pressure is being split-up and members will be sent to other departments. Loop work is going to construction, and Air work to I&R. Loop technicians going to construction will be required to change their title to splicer, but will not be forced to do so. If a technician does not want to change their title they may remain in I&R and be moved to the repair schedule. We have put the company on notice the contract is specific on scheduling in construction, splicers cannot be scheduled off-hours or on weekends. Management is aware of this will cover alarms with callouts.

By Michael Roach, Business Representative
The Johnson Controls Joint Advisory Committee convened on February 28. We met the new head of the AT&T project and hope to have a good working relationship.

We have ongoing meetings with AT&T Construction management to resolve issues. So far, this process is working well and we have been able to resolve issues before they become problems.

We met with the new AT&T Network Vice President Cindie Bucks and her new organization. The meeting was productive. We hope to have a decent working relationship with her, but only time will tell.

We are trialing a Monday to Friday schedule in five I&R garages. The company wants to increase the number of technicians covering the workload during the week. Technicians will be asked to sign up for overtime during the week so management has an idea of how many technicians would want to work overtime that weekend. The company will then decide how many 6-tours would be needed and ask for overtime based on the 6-tour list. If you didn’t sign up for overtime you will still be asked and if you did sign up you will not be required to work. Technicians would also be able to work a weekend day if they need an N/S day during the week. Hopefully this trial will be successful and eliminate the difficulties that have arisen over weekend scheduling.

The preference for the Special Service group is finally complete. We were able to get a few more techs moved to new garages in the second go around. Now we will sit back and watch the chaos we knew would happen once Special Services was broken up. Those of us with some time here have seen this done before time and time again, and it never works.

The apprentice committee met and all districts are within ratio. Some disagreements have resulted in grievances being filed.

We met with the management group for the AT&T Premise Technicians. The Union brought forward several of your concerns, pay being a key one. Management promised to work with the Union to correct all problems. The way the company is treating some of our new members is deplorable. Management seems to think that people are waiting in line for the jobs. When you work with a Prem Tech be sure to help them out any way you can.

By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative

As spring approaches and the days grow longer and the nights shorter, it’s not a welcome sight for some 120 members in the network departments. Their working days ended on May 20, 2008. The Force Distribution Date (FDD) is the end of their career with AT&T. The company declared a surplus of some of our most talented telecom specialists. Some are approaching 30 years but because of the FDD date they may not make it.

AT&T once again has created a surplus condition with no available jobs for them to transfer into. The company says they have the right to surplus folks but do not have to offer SIPP within the 35 mile radius as stated in the contract because their guidelines say they only have to offer SIPP within the VP organization. Not true; no agreement has ever been made with AT&T that allows for that. The Union has met with the company over the issue and we may have to arbitrate the case, if they don’t get off this VP organization misinterpretation.

On the Marketing side of the house, AT&T made a SIPP offer only to the CA’s in the Federal group in order to reduce their headcount by two. Two members volunteered and left the company on April 25th. Both members have over 30 years of service, and we wish them well on their retirement.

By Liz Hodges, Business Representative

Whether you work in an office or out on the street, your employer is watching! The truck, tools, computer and phones are all company property. Numerous people have been fired for misuse of company property. Employers have the ability to monitor you in your truck with GPS or on the phone or computer in real time. If they missed something, all of the real time data is archived for easy retrieval by your boss or Asset Protection/Security.

The only time when AT&T can request a blood, or urine sample is at a pre-hire physical, or if you have a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) where the law requires it. You do not have to take a drug screen for a job transfer. One exception is if you are on a substance abuse related Back to Work Agreement requiring random drug screens. Please note, if your job requires an IDOT screen for operating medium duty trucks, the urine screen is a simple diabetes test—not a drug screen. AT&T’s vendor Concentra has been running up bills by doing drug screens. Some bosses are checking off the wrong box on test requests. Ask what is tests are being requested for you. If it includes a drug screen, refuse to submit. Work safe!

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

“Don’t make me call OSHA, buddy!”

By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative
IBEW Local 21 Members Enjoy The South Side St. Patrick's Day Parade

IBEW Local 21 Members and their families relax at a Bulls Basketball Game
Come Out to the Ballpark
Join us at Union Nights

Everyone had such a great time last year that IBEW Local 21 is sponsoring baseball Solidarity Events again this summer. These will be fun events that are open to all members of Local 21 and their families. All tickets are $10.00 each and include a pre-game picnic.

Tuesday, June 24th,
Joliet Jackhammers- Joliet IL

Wednesday, July 30th
Peoria Chiefs, Peoria IL

Thursday, July 31st
Gateway Grizzlies, Sauget, IL

Tuesday, August 5th
Gary Railcats- Gary, IN

Wednesday, August 6th
Kane County Cougars-Geneva IL

Tuesday, August 19th
Quad Cities Bandits, Davenport, IA

Call 630-960-4466 ext. 520 for additional information.
Check the website www.ibew21.org for the latest information.

“Join or Die…”
By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

I enjoyed the HBO miniseries “John Adams” and its authentic look at the American Revolution against British imperialism. The producers of this series went to great lengths to make the look and feel of this film, as well as the civil and personal politics of its main characters, John and Abigail Adams, feel authentic. They had a good start by basing the film on David McCulloch’s well-researched history of Adams and his famous family.

The second episode, “Join or Die” is named after a famous slogan of the fight against the British crown, imploring American colonists to join the fight or die under the oppressive rule of the British king and his powerful military.

Join or die, the words have rung through my mind for the weeks since I’ve first heard them again, vaguely remembering them from a grammar school textbook, but feeling fresh as the spring. Not as a recruitment slogan from a distant war, but as a call for unity and solidarity among people. Joining in a community for the good of all.

On the job, we are thousands of individual workers doing millions of different tasks every day for our various employers to make them money. We are measured and judged individually by our bosses. However, we are all members of one union. But are we “joined” or do we just pay our dues and enjoy the fruit of our union contract as individuals?

At home, do we ignore our neighbors because we don’t want to be bothered? No. We are often friendly to our neighbors because we hope they will call the cops if someone is breaking into our house, or call the fire department if they see smoke, or let our kids in if they are locked out. At home we understand intimately how important it is to be a good neighbour because it’s in our best interest to join with our community.

Why is that so hard at work? We all have one thing in common. We are all members of IBEW Local 21 and our fortunes rise and fall together. This is why we all have to be involved in our union and look out for each other. We must realize that our individual actions affect everyone working in our shops and in our industry.

Many of us say or act as if “I’ve got mine and to hell with everyone else!” This is part of the popular culture of our country and I believe it is why we suffer under greedy employers, bad government and a crumbling set of social and moral values. This flies in the face of our own history—as Americans, as union members. This must change. I say, as our forebears of these United States, join or die! Solidarity!
The members at the Comcast Cortland facility voted to ratify a new three-year agreement. This new agreement gets union members very close in wage parity to the non-union workers. This includes, on average, a 17% increase for the first year. Also, we were successful in getting complete benefit parity on work boots, $200 every 2 years; a tuition reimbursement increase from $2,500 to $5,700 annually; and health-care retirement stipends, also a pension plan, should the Comcast decide to adopt one in Chicago.

Worker solidarity was the biggest factor in this huge victory for the members. The workers made this all happen. From the beginning, I preached UNITY and the workers responded. They did everything the Union asked of them! We achieved a fair contract at Cortland, despite odds that appeared to make it impossible. The workers were smart! They rejected management’s rhetoric on decertification; their attempt failed miserably. Workers having a Union contract means power; power that makes the company respect you.

There were many other key factors that enabled us to achieve success. Research done by our Union discovered that Comcast annually files an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEOC) with the City of Chicago as part of the franchise agreement. In it, the Company committed to not discriminate against their workers with respect to pay and benefits. Another factor was the constant threat of the Chicago City Council and the Cable Commissioner holding hearings regarding Comcast. The Aldermen passed a resolution charging Comcast with discrimination in violation of its franchise agreement. Also, the Union was able to exert pressure through our labor friends, the Chicago Federation of Labor.

Each month, President Kastner speaks passionately about our Union being involved in politics. Here’s a perfect example of where politics was instrumental in Local 21 achieving a fair contract while building the Union!

In other bargaining news with Comcast, the Merrillville agreement is schedule to expire September 25, 2008, contract talks started in May.

Comcast arbitrations are scheduled for several termination cases. The company cancelled the April hearing date for the CSSR’s and Warehouse layoff arbitration. We are waiting for a new date.

Remember where there’s unity, there’s strength!

The Chicago OEMC 911

In contract negotiations, the Union’s bargaining committee continues to demand fair wages and benefits. We continue to demand that the City recognize the fact that the OEMC is critical when comes to public safety. Adequate staffing of Call-Takers and Dispatchers is essential in keeping stress levels at a minimum. The City continues to reject the union proposal that would allow a member to carry a significant amount of compensatory time, if the worker chooses to. We will continue stand firm on these issues.

The Union is waiting for the arbitrator’s ruling on the Tickets Arbitration.

The Union is totally frustrated that the members have not been paid their grievance settlements. Local 21 has been informed that the process is “in budget,” and checks will be cut soon. The parties will continue meeting to address third step grievances and other workplace related issues such as overtime.

Our Solidarity makes us Strong!

IBEW Local 21 Logo Contest

The Local 21 clothing committee needs your help. We are in search of a new logo, so get your pencils sharpened and help us design a new Local 21 logo. Your logo designs can be emailed to Alison Watson at Alison1128@aol.com, or they can be faxed to her in the Union hall at 630-960-9607. The winner will receive $100.00 worth of union clothing.

Let’s see how creative you can be as you help us get a new look for Local 21. Please get your submissions into Alison by July 15th.

Congratulations!

Local 21 President Ron Kastner is being sworn in as Executive Board Member/VP of the Illinois AFL-CIO on 4/29/2008, by Joel D’Alba, the General Counsel for the IL AFL-CIO. Ron is completing the term of retiring member David Barger.
Many times in the past we’ve been questioned why our Union is involved in the political arena. Here are just a few reasons.

As workers we want good paying, secure jobs with benefits. Many years ago, we looked to the company to provide jobs with decent wages and benefits. We looked to them for health care, pensions and to keep our work place safe. What has happened? Employers are making record breaking profits. These same employers are not investing these profits back in their people, creating new jobs, nor supporting working family issues.

Every day we hear about debt and deficit! Cut, cut, cut. We are told that people are spending too much. We are told the solution is to work a second job, skip the vacation, and manage our budgets.

Our ears perk up when someone mentions tax cuts. Middle income earners think their taxes are too high. The big tax breaks now afforded to corporations shift the tax burden onto the backs of wage earners. Who gave big business these tax breaks? It’s doubtful any of you told your elected officials to take more money for taxes out of your pockets and let the corporations pay less.

We have no other recourse than political action. Let’s stand up and be counted. None of us can change the rules unless we change the rule makers. Local 21 will never dictate who you should support for political office but we will inform you who supports the interests of working families. Many Democrats and Republicans fit that bill. We need to elect people who put good paying jobs, with benefits as a top priority. Remember the days when companies hired people and their stocks went up? Today when a company downsizes their stock goes up.

If the only people at the Capitol are the lobbyists for big business, then who is watching our backs? Through political action and the support of our political allies, we will keep working people’s interests and union principles at the forefront.

We hope importance of political action is a little clearer. Who do you want controlling your destiny? Illinois has not passed a capital budget in eight years. There is a $25.4 billion capital bill for schools, roads, transit, environment and energy projects still trying to get passed. Our infrastructure is aging faster than it can be replaced. Three quarters of state highways are more than 40 years old and were only designed to last 40 years. Illinois bridges are ranked 5th safest in the country, more than 700 are rated poorly. If the capital bill passes $9 billion dollars in federal funds will also be available to us. Brothers and Sisters this means jobs. This means some work directly and some work indirectly for our members.

Please contact the COPE department with questions and concerns. Volunteer to help. We need you, your ideas, and your talents. Email us or call the union hall 630 960-4466, Rosetta at extension 327, Dennis at extension 353.
### CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November 2006</th>
<th>March 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia S. McGrath</td>
<td>Terri DeMarco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Wheeler</td>
<td>Anne B. McVey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacqueline Kowalski</td>
<td>Lois Manuele</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oya Heath</td>
<td>Joline M. Wissing</td>
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<td>Hilda Gonzalez</td>
<td>Gail L. Geary</td>
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<td>Diane A. Ray</td>
<td>John “Ted” Boomker</td>
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<td>Jacqueline Jackson</td>
<td>Rodney Jenkins</td>
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<td>Sonia I. Velez</td>
<td>Mary Jo Graham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Johnson</td>
<td>Joseph L. Perez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mayra Aguilar</td>
<td>Gustave A. Diete</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denise Stinson</td>
<td>Karen Bukowski</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fara Lynn Bingham</td>
<td>Stanley Wojewski</td>
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<td>Maria D. Hernandez</td>
<td>John Bates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lou Bergantino</td>
<td>Bill Lamorte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda M. Kriesel</td>
<td>Harry Pierce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janeine King</td>
<td>Tina Bruce</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>Munson Anderson</td>
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<td>Linda Leonard</td>
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<td>February 2007</td>
<td>April 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annette Wilkerson</td>
<td>Chester Brozell Jr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Patricia R. Dahlkamp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irma Gacsy</td>
<td>Terri Crookham</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2008</td>
<td>Jim Wick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Laurie</td>
<td>Robert L. Carothers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathyrn Synowiec</td>
<td>Geraldine Weathersky</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Brehmer</td>
<td>Maria G. Baez</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2008</td>
<td>Mary Shew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheila Townsel</td>
<td>Judi Sanchez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenda Cephus</td>
<td>Thelma Mitchell</td>
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<td>Marie Armstrong</td>
<td>Shirlene Thompson</td>
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<td>Susan Haugsness</td>
<td>Wanda Coles</td>
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<td>Martha S. Yarbrough</td>
<td>Janet Caruso</td>
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<td>Jerry L. Cutler</td>
<td>James Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Kiefer</td>
<td>Kirby Schmidt</td>
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**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.

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**Another View:**

**A Real Stimulus Program**

*By Jim Hightower*

Washington is about to mail $600 checks to you, me, and nearly everyone else (unless you’re poor – then you only get half that). The checks are to prompt us to “go shopping,” as George W so eloquently sums up our chief duty as citizens. This is Washington’s bipartisan plan to stimulate the American economy and avoid a recession.

Well, they’re a bit late for most Americans, since the working-class majority sank deeply into recession long ago. But there’s also a basic flaw in Washington’s strategy of using shopping as an economic stimulus: most of the stuff we’ll buy with our government checks is made in China or other low-wage nations. So our so-called leaders are shipping $168 billion from our public treasury for a “stimulus” program that essentially will stimulate foreign economies. Goofy, huh?

Meanwhile, back at Ranchito USA, there’s lots of stimulating that could be done, returning a huge benefit to our people and our nation for every dollar spent. Even as Bush and Congress were telling us to go shopping for foreign stuff, a federal commission issued a startling report calculating that we need to be spending $225 billion a year – for the next 50 years – just to maintain and upgrade America’s vital infrastructure of roads, bridges, and transportation systems. That doesn’t count our decaying water systems, sewage plants, dams, and schools, nor our inadequate internet and phone systems, our flickering power grid – and the exciting potential of building a new green energy infrastructure.

You want stimulation? Let’s invest our public dollars – and leverage trillions of private dollars – in a grassroots recovery program that will put millions of skilled laborers, entrepreneurs, inventors, small business people, and others to work rebuilding America’s future. A good job at good wages doing good work beats a $600 check any day.

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**Doobie’s out the garage!**

*Congratulations Robert “Doobie” Dobrawa on your retirement.*

—from your friends at the University Park Garage

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**March 2008**

- Terri DeMarco
- Anne B. McVey
- Lois Manuele
- Joline M. Wissing
- Gail L. Geary
- John “Ted” Boomker
- Rodney Jenkins
- Mary Jo Graham
- Joseph L. Perez
- Gustave A. Diete
- Karen Bukowski
- Stanley Wojewski
- John Bates
- Bill Lamorte
- Harry Pierce
- Tina Bruce
- Munson Anderson

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**April 2008**

- Chester Brozell Jr.
- Patricia R. Dahlkamp
- Terri Crookham
- Jim Wick
- Robert L. Carothers
- Geraldine Weathersky
- Maria G. Baez
- Mary Shew
- Judi Sanchez
- Thelma Mitchell
- Shirlene Thompson
- Wanda Coles
- Janet Caruso
- James Taylor
- Kirby Schmidt

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT MEETINGS 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JUNE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
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</table>
| Thursday, June 12, 6 PM  
IBEW Local #134  
600 W. Washington Blvd.  
Chicago IL  
312 474-4186 |
| **Unit 2**          |
| Tuesday, June 10, 7 PM  
Slovak Club  
6920 Broadway  
Merrillville IN  
219 756-5101 |
| **Unit 3**          |
| Thursday, June 19, 7 PM  
Gurnee American Legion  
749 Milwaukee Ave.  
Gurnee IL  
847 244-9282 |
| **Unit 4**          |
| Wednesday, June 11, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #145  
1700 52nd Ave, Suite A  
Moline IL  
309 736-2439 |
| **Unit 5**          |
| Wednesday, June 18, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #979  
4501 S. Airport Rd.  
Bartonville IL  
309 697-2432 |
| **Unit 6**          |
| Tuesday, June 17, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
315 0 Wide Track Dr.  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479 |
| **Unit 7**          |
| Monday, June 16, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #141  
916 Main St.  
Mt Vernon IL  
618 242-4561 |
| **JULY**            |
| **Unit 1**          |
| Thursday, July 10, 7 PM  
Irish-American Heritage Center  
4626 N. Knox Ave.  
Chicago IL  
773 282-7035 |
| **Unit 2**          |
| Tuesday July 8, 7 PM  
Gaelic Park  
6119 W. 147TH  
Oak Forest IL  
708 687-9323 |
| **Unit 3**          |
| Thursday, July 17, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
495 Airport Rd.  
Elgin IL  
847 488-9000 |
| **Unit 4**          |
| Wednesday, July 9, 7 PM  
American Legion Harwood Post #5  
705 S. Larkin  
Joliet IL  
815 725-4333 |
| **Unit 5**          |
| Wednesday, July 16, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #146  
3390 N. Woodford St.  
Decatur IL  
217 877-4604 |
| **Unit 6**          |
| Tuesday, July 15, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
315 0 Wide Track Dr.  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479 |
| **Unit 7**          |
| Monday, July 21, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 309  
2000A Mall St. (Rte 157)  
Collinsville IL  
618 3 45-5112 |
| **AUGUST**          |
| **Unit 1**          |
| Thursday, August 14, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #21 Conference Center  
1307 W. Butterfield Rd. Suite 424  
Downers Grove IL  
630 960-4466 |
| **Unit 2**          |
| Tuesday, August 12, 7 PM  
Lansing American Legion Post #697  
18255 Grant St.  
Lansing IL  
708 474-5906 |
| **Unit 3**          |
| Thursday, August 21, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn of Rockford  
755 0 E State St.  
Rockford IL  
815 39 8-2200 |
| **Unit 4**          |
| Wednesday, August 13, 7 PM  
Lemont VFW  
15780 New Ave.  
Lemont IL  
63 0 257 -985 9 |
| **Unit 5**          |
| Wednesday, August 20, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #146  
3390 N Woodford St.  
Decatur IL  
217 877-4604 |
| **Unit 6**          |
| Tuesday, August 19, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
315 0 Wide Track Dr.  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479 |
| **Unit 7**          |
| Monday, August 18, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #649  
501 Humbert Rd.  
Alton IL  
618 462-16217 |

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.
Welcome New Members - Rock Island Illinois