



# SURGE

For Members of IBEW Local 18 and their Families

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

### Sinkholes and Reality

By Brian D'Arcy



The rash of problems with the Los Angeles water delivery system, including a sinkhole that almost devoured a fire truck early

this month, has brought increasing scrutiny on the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Unfortunately, that scrutiny has led some of the anti-worker forces in the city to place the blame squarely in the wrong place. They claim that these breakdowns happened because Local 18 has prevented the Mayor and City Hall from focusing on badly needed maintenance of our aging water and power delivery system.

This line of thinking is so far from reality that it has hard to know where to start. But let's try. Local 18 has been trying for the past decade to warn about the vulnerabilities of our aging water and power system. In 2007, we went so far as to produce a video that detailed the aging infrastructure, the lack of a plan to do something about it, and the failure to replace key maintenance staff.

We put a lot of effort into bringing the desperate need for updating the infrastructure and the capacity to do routine maintenance to the City's attention. We held press conferences, demonstrated at a LADWP Commission meeting, and met with the Mayor and his staff on numerous occasions to get action on this critical issue. And don't forget that part of the reason for trying to pass Measure B was the fact that it took the load off our aging infrastructure by delivering power at the point of use.

The major problems that our video outlined remain largely the same as they were in 2007. The service interruptions and water delivery issues that we identified then still exist. But that doesn't stop the anti-worker element from using this as an opportunity to bash us.

Among the more bizarre claims made was that by former LADWP Commissioner and failed Controller candidate Nick Patsouras that these failures occurred because Local 18 had blocked outsourcing work on the water system. Patsouras has never been bothered by the facts, but this is outrageous. In fact, as Patsouras should know if he was paying attention at all those meetings he attended, most of the work on the water system has been performed by outside contractors because the DWP has only staffed three crews internally.

Who should we blame for the failure to maintain the system? A good start would be with the top manager of the Department. In 2007, that was Ron Deaton. Now it is David Nahai. Deaton never put the kind of energy into rebuilding and updating the infrastructure that is required to keep delivering reliable power and safe drinking water to the ratepayers of Los Angeles. And Nahai's performance has been only marginally better than Deaton's low standard.

Characteristically, Nahai's response to the sinkhole issue was to move into the operations trailer at the scene so that he could talk to reporters. One might ask what is more important to Mr. Nahai – getting in the papers or doing his job?

In Unity.

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“ Who should we blame for the failure to maintain the system? ”

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## Local 18 Safety Video Wins Emmy Award

One of our members has been honored with an Emmy award! Senior Electrical Mechanic Supervisor Matt Woodson was asked to work on a television documentary about electrical safety. The resulting 30-minute film, *Outdoor Electric Safety*, ended up being nominated for and winning in the Instructional Programming category in the 2009 Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards. Woodson reflects on his Hollywood experience:

At first I thought the nomination for an Emmy was not for a real Emmy, but for a "B" award—kind of like the Saturday Night Live version where you get the trophy made of cardboard. It was really a real Emmy award nomination!

DWP hired a small freelance Hollywood producer that contacted me though our PR Director, Walter Zeisl. I was known for giving electrical safety demonstrations to everyone from school kids to Fire and Police. Walter told me the he needed a 30-minute television documentary about electrical safety.

The Hollywood producer called me and asked me for real life scenarios that I had seen or heard about involving electricity. I sat down and wrote down



*Matt Woodson and Mark Vanvakaris showing off their Emmy Award for Outstanding Instructional Programming*

what came to my head, from little accidents to fatalities. He hired a Hollywood freelance videographer and we set a date to start. I had no idea that we were about to shoot an Emmy award-winning video, but I looked at it like a fun project and was really excited about it. I have a true passion about preventing electrical accidents and was just trying to get the point across that people need to respect electricity for its power and convenience and not abuse it.

I worked with my boss, Mark Berenbach, to find volunteers and had many come forward who were willing

to work for free. I arranged all the field shots and he handled the rest. We started shooting, and it was just like you see in the movies with the producer cupping his hands around his face looking for the right camera angles. He filmed Mark Vanvakaris and I giving a safety talk to school children as part of the film.

We ran it on the City's local channel. We heard many good reviews and the next thing we knew we were being considered for the State's Star Award for public safety and we won. Next, we heard it was up for an Emmy nomination and we said, "yeah right," but here we are with our real Emmy in hand!

Special thanks to Local 18 members who helped the film come together:

Steve Koerner, Tom Blanchfield, Scott Osborn, Justin Bush, Matt Vaughn, Dave Williams, Mike Cherrier, Chris Roberts, Scot Shiers, Gilbert Sanchez, and John Blondeel-Timmerman.

I would also like to thank the Training Center Staff that took care of everything behind the scenes.

Congratulations to Matt and the rest of the *Outdoor Electric Safety* team!

## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP

### Body Scan International

For Local 18 members enrolled in the Anthem Blue Cross plan there is NO OUT OF POCKET EXPENSE (effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008) for the BSI program. This benefit also includes one adult dependent.

The mobile unit will be at Local 18 November 30 - December 4, 2009

To schedule an appointment please call (888) 724-8439.

### Financial Town Hall Meetings

Jay Oppenheim, Vice President of Merrill Lynch, will be presenting financial town hall meetings for members of Local 18 and their families.

The meetings will be held every other month starting in October.

Topics to be covered will be:

- The Roth IRA- Big change in 2010
- A discussion of the challenges facing pensions and why they are important
- Why contribute to the Deferred Comp Plan?

The first town hall will be held on October 21, 2009, 5:00pm at Local 18.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP by calling (213) 387-8274 x0.



# CAPITOL CORNER

## Local 18 Leads Fight To Keep Green Jobs In California

by Scott Wetch

**S**acramento – The 2009 Legislative session came to a close at 4:00am on Saturday morning, September 13, 2009. The final noteworthy package of bills debated by the Senate and Assembly contained the California Coalition of Utility Employees' (CCUE) and Local 18's top legislative priority – a responsible expansion of the State's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

A little background- under existing law, all Investor Owned Utilities must procure 20% of their total energy load from renewable energy sources by 2010. Publicly Owned Utilities, such as LADWP have a statutory goal of 20%, rather than a state imposed mandate. The LADWP Board and Mayor Villaraigosa have a self-imposed goal of 40% by 2020. Unfortunately, under existing rules adopted by the California Energy Commission and LADWP, utilities are allowed to procure an unlimited amount of renewable power from outside California and count it toward their RPS goal, even if the energy is never actually delivered to California.

In many instances, the utilities engage in sham Enron-like paper transactions where they purchase clean power, such as wind or geothermal, outside California, then simultaneously resell the power to a purchaser in another state or swap it out for dirty coal fired power – all while retaining the Renewable Energy Credit. Meanwhile, ratepayers in Los Angeles and elsewhere continue paying premium energy rates thinking they are getting "Green Power," when in reality it's a lump of coal.

Senate Bill 14 by State Senator Joe Sitmitian would expand the state's RPS mandate from 20 to 33% and sweep LADWP and the state's other municipal utilities under the state mandate for the first time. This expansion would require the state's utilities to acquire close to an additional 30,000 Mega Watts of renewable energy in 10 short years! Recognizing that this

expansion had the potential to create more than 200,000 new green jobs in the energy and utility sector, Local 18, CCUE, and the State Association of Electrical Workers formed the Coalition for Green Jobs to lead the public and political fight to change the rules in order to keep these jobs in California.

Needless to say, our lobbying campaign met with fierce opposition from utilities, environmentalists, and generators who were all vested in the status quo practice of importing renewable power. The turning point in our campaign came when Local 18 Business Manager Brian D'Arcy succeeded in getting Mayor Villaraigosa and LADWP to flip their position on SB 14, and support labor's position.

Through Local 18's leadership and the Coalition for Green Jobs we were successful in getting SB 14 amended to accomplish several critical objectives:

1. Require that a substantial percentage of the RPS power be utility owned generation.
2. Cap the amount of out of state unbundled Renewable Energy Credits at 25%.
3. Require that purchased power actually be delivered to customers in California.
4. Protect ratepayers and utility workers by including a strong cost cap to prevent price gouging by energy generators.
5. Provide regulatory relief to require approval of electric transmission projects to be expedited.
6. Grandfather existing contracts entered into by municipal utilities so they are not unfairly penalized.
7. Provide off-ramps, so that utilities that miss the target deadlines are not penalized if the delays were outside their control, due to prices or lack of adequate transmission.
8. Preserve the local control and autonomy of municipal utilities to govern their own programs.



Finally, after nine months of lobbying and negotiations, our coalition succeeded in crafting a bill (SB 14) that garnered the support of an unprecedented coalition including labor unions, environmental organizations, LADWP, consumer groups, PG&E, Sempra, solar developers, and even the oil companies. Unfortunately, two days following the passage of SB 14, Governor Schwarzenegger announced that he would veto the bill, and instead signed an executive order implementing the 33% RPS without any restrictions on out of state power or protections for California workers!

Despite the Governor selling out California to out of state corporate fat cats, the fight is not over. The Governor's Executive Order is illegal and a gross abuse of authority with many dangerous precedents. The CCUE and State Association of Electrical Workers Executive Boards will be consulting with legal counsel in the coming weeks to determine if a lawsuit is warranted. Regardless, the struggle to keep good paying jobs in California underscores how crucial it is for working families to work hard to elect a worker-friendly Governor in 2010.

In Unity.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

**W**e want to put the spotlight on you, our members. What's happening in the field?

Tell us about:

- Special Events
- Innovations in the field
- Teamwork
- Announcements for fellow members
- Special projects or recognition
- Submit your photos, drawings or cartoons.\*

Please help us know "What's Happening" by sending in your announcements and photos to Jennifer Hadley by mail or email her at:

[jhadley@ibewlocal18.org](mailto:jhadley@ibewlocal18.org)

(remember not to send from your DWP email account)

Thank you for your participation!

*\* Please note that we will not be able to accept items such as grievances, complaints, or political views for this section -- save that for your union reps! We want to highlight positive happenings in your unit.*



“ I am proud to be a Local 18 member ”

**O**ur featured member this month is Shop Steward Ruben Lopez, who has been a Local 18 member for 20 years:

**Q.** *When did you become a member of IBEW Local 18?*

**A.** I became a member of IBEW in 1989.

**Q.** *Where have you worked over the years?*

**A.** I came over from General Services to DWP and was assigned to the Aerial Shop in Hollywood. From there I moved to the new Duco Shop. I have worked at different district shops and I am currently assigned to the V08 shop.

**Q.** *What is your favorite part about working for the DWP and being a member of IBEW Local 18?*

**A.** I look forward to the challenges that the Department has in its diverse fleet of equipment, old and new. Technology is changing very fast and we see new and exciting challenges daily. I am proud to be an IBEW Local 18 member and to be working together with all the brothers and sisters towards a common working relationship and strong unity.

**Q.** *If you could have dinner with any one person dead or alive who would it be and why?*

**A.** I would have dinner with Mark Twain, because I would truly enjoy hearing him tell his stories first hand. I would also like to get his thoughts on today's global events.

**Q.** *Do you have a favorite saying or motto?*

**A.** Whenever anyone asks me what I'm doing I throw my arms in the air and say, "Working!" It's a silly but fun inside joke with us at work.



## SAVE THE DATE

### **HOLIDAY PARTY**

**December 10, 2009**

5:00pm - 9:00pm

Universal Sheraton Hotel

Check upcoming issues of *Surge* for more information.

# FROM THE TRENCHES

## **Unit 3 – Electrical Testers** by Leslie Abbott

The Tester Trainee Curriculum Development Committee has really kicked into high gear. The “Noble Nine,” Senior Electrical Testers from each of the different Test Lab sections, have now been joined by the “Noble 10-18.” We now have two people from each section to develop field training modules and to be our potential pool of field trainers.

With the influx of staff resources and the support of Test Lab management to cover their day-to-day duties, the Noble 18 were able to meet their goal of completing the first draft of the field modules by August 1st. On September 9, the Noble 18 met with all of the Test Lab managers to get input on and answer questions about the training modules. That group will reconvene in early October to put the finishing touches on the revised field modules, and to go through a similar review and input session on the first six months of classroom training. The overall goal is to have a completed curriculum by January 1.

Welcome and thanks to the new members of the curriculum development team: Ed Chung, Rolando Cruz, Rom Hour, Gigi Lucero, Richard Ojeda, John Reid and Ken Thomas.

- **Next Meeting: 3rd Wednesday of the month at 4:15pm, odd months at Artesian Street and even months at Main Street**

## **Unit 15 - Pasadena by Gus Corona**

As you may be aware, the City Manager has approached all the City Unions asking for more help dealing with the city’s budget shortfall. I attended a meeting with Unit Chair Mohamed Youines, Vice Chair Victor Jaime and Assistant City Manager Julie Gutierrez to identify areas where the city could save money.

We raised the issue that the Department is hiring contractors to do our work when we know that we can do this work at a lower cost and of higher quality.

We will continue to discuss solutions to the budget shortfall with City Management. Our goal is to help the city with its budgetary problems while providing the quality service that the community expects and deserves – the service that our members provide.

It is important that you attend your unit meetings and stay informed on this and all the issues that are affecting your unit.



*Jose “Duke” Oliva from the Survey / Right of Way Section performing Survey work at the Pine Canyon Wind Generating Project*

## **Unit 17 – Field Groups** by Nancy Romero

A moratorium on cutting services has been implemented. We will need to have a full discussion on this item with Department management regarding what happens at the end of the moratorium. We ask the members for their full support on this issue. There will be more to come on this item.

Congratulations to the newly hired CFRs! Seven candidates were offered the positions, six accepted, and they reported to work this month. Congratulations also go to the three new Field Investigators. We want to wish them all the best in their new positions!

We have been working on several Special Assignment Letters of Agreement in the Training Unit, SAO and the Water Conservation Team. We have reached an agreement with CSD Management that in future, all CFR Mentors will also be selected through the Special Assignment

Letter of Agreement.

We want to send our best wishes to our sister Robin Phelps for a speedy recovery!

## **Unit 19 – Electric Station Maintenance** by Luis Lozano

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Business Representative for Unit 19 and tell you a little bit about my background.

I have been with LADWP since 1983. I started out as an ECH in underground power distribution, and after about seven years there I transferred to the electric shop in the water department where I completed a four-year electrical apprentice program. In 1994 I was hired by PD&C as an Electrical Mechanic, and in 1996 I transferred to Scattergood Generating Station. Later that year, I transferred to ESM where I became a Senior Electrical Mechanic.

I became a Business Rep for Local 18 in August, and I am looking forward to meeting all the members of Unit 19 and getting to know what is important to you.

The new class of Electrical Mechanics Trainees (12Bs) started on September 14. The class includes 22 EMTs, 12 from within DWP and 10 from outside the Department. This class is a bit different from other classes because they will be sharing classroom time with the 10 new Electrical Repair Trainees. In about three months when the classroom time is over, trainees will go to their respective fields. We wish them all the best with their training.

I would like to see more members involved as shop stewards and in the JLM committees. If you are interested, please call me at (213) 387-8274 x112. In Unity.

- **Next Meeting: October 13, 2009, 5:00pm at Truesdale**

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# FROM THE TRENCHES *(continued from page 5)*

## **Unit 19B – Shops by Martin Marrufo**

I regret to announce that I will no longer be representing Unit 19B. But I am happy to report that our new Business Representative, Mr. Luis Lozano, is a well qualified individual that has been working for the DWP for well over 20 years and is very familiar with many of the systems that our members work on. Mr. Lozano brings all of his experience as a Senior Electrical Mechanic, Electrical Mechanic and graduate of the Department's EMT program to Shops. He has a much better understanding of the work that the Electrical Repairers do in the system than I could ever hope to attain, and he will be an asset to all the membership at CR&FS, BSS, and Generating Stations.

At the time of writing there is no decision on the Superintendent position at CR&FS. Mr. David Thrasher, the Director of Integrated Support Services, has met with Luis and me to discuss some of the immediate concerns of the membership. Mr. Thrasher has agreed to help expedite resolutions to some of the outstanding problems that have been around since our last CR&FS Superintendent retired.

Please attend our next Dinner Meeting, which will be held at the Local 18 Union Hall on October 28, to meet Luis and help us resolve some of these outstanding issues.

- **Next Meeting: October 28, 2009, Dinner Meeting at Local 18**

## **Unit 25 – Gardeners by Nancy Romero**

We want to thank the members working in the Business Support Services Division who worked on preparing the second landscape audit. Through their effort we have now received an updated audit for our Joint Labor Management Investigatory Committee to use in resolving the issues surrounding the overtime grievance.

We have now received a report that more accurately reflects the amount that

is owed to the members of our unit. We estimate that the average reimbursement for our members will be about \$750.00. Some members may be reimbursed more than that amount and some less depending on whether they worked overtime on Saturdays and if they have previously been reimbursed. This audit was conducted to cover the period from January 2006 to April 2007. We still need to discuss any additional reimbursement periods.

We have had preliminary talks with the members and Management regarding setting up a committee to establish a Bid Plan for the Landscape section. We have a tentative list of members who have expressed an interest in being on the Bid Plan Committee. Anyone interested in joining us in this effort should contact the Hall at extension 113.

- **Next Meeting: October 20, 2009, 4:30 pm at the Saticoy Yard**



*The Survey Crew performing Survey work at the Pine Canyon Wind Generating Project. Left to Right: Jon Wenino, Jose "Duke" Oliva, and Matthew Summers.*

## **Unit 31 – Professional by Leslie Abbott**

The Engineering Specialist Program, which has been on hiatus since then-acting General Manager Henry Martinez unilaterally called a moratorium on appointing new Specialists in November 2004, is in the process of being revived. On September 1, Raman Raj issued the Revised Procedures memo.

The Revised Procedures are almost identical to the last version of the procedures that were issued in 2000, shortly after the consolidation of the Assistant and Associate classifications. The primary issue with the Specialist program was not the procedures themselves, but the lack of consistent administration of those procedures.

To that end, Human Resources is compiling information on the existing Specialists from each of the systems and divisions into a master list. Systems will be required to submit updated reports annually. Also, the three Specialist Evaluation & Approval Committees (the Power, Water and Joint SEACs) will initially meet together to establish consistency and methodology of administration.

- **Next Meeting: 1st Wednesday of the month at 5:15pm, odd months at Local 18 and even months in JFB Room A5A.**

## **Unit 33 – Administrative by Shawn McCloud**

We have started a Joint Labor Management Committee and I'm pleased to announce the administrative committee members are Conney Williams and Manoj Desai. They agreed to participate on the committee to help resolve some ongoing issues that affect the staff in the retirement office. I'm hopeful that by utilizing the mutual gains process in resolving issues we will be able to pull out and discard the old roots and move forward to planting new seeds. I am looking forward to our committee establishing core training, enhanced and productive communications, and improved tools, equipment and supplies as a result of our hard work. This task is a difficult challenge, but the results will be beneficial to internal and external employees and will also help retirees tremendously.

Housekeeping items: Remember to keep a watchful eye on ensuring bargaining unit work is not getting contracted

• **Continued on Page 7** •

# FROM THE TRENCHES *(continued from page 6)*

out. Especially for those of you that work outside of JFB, take the opportunity for CPR, First Aid and AED training by contacting Jaime Hernandez of Corporate Safety at (213) 367-8637 to sign up for the next class. Remember to notify your supervisor and ask for a charge number.

I am available for lunchtime meetings at your work location, which will be held on your own time. Call me at (213) 387-8274 x111 to set up an appointment.

- **Next Meeting: Dinner Meeting on November 18, 2009 - look for details in the mail.**

## **Unit 35 – Supervisory Technical by Leslie Abbott**

Super Tech Unit will be holding its annual dinner meeting on Wednesday October 14, 5:00pm at Masa Bakery & Cafe. I look forward to seeing everyone!

## **Unit 53 – Water by Ken Delgado**

Brothers and Sisters, currently we are going through some challenging times with Management looking for ways to cut back on overtime (OT). We have had many discussions regarding this OT issue with Management, but have not come to a resolution. We have filed a grievance on this issue and will be meeting about it ASAP. We believe that your work is being contracted out, therefore you should work 10% OT each pay period per our Letter of Agreement. We will take this through the grievance process until we get a resolution. More to come on this issue.

In unity.

- **Next Meeting: October 27, 2009, 5:00pm at Central District**

## **Unit 55 – Communications by Nancy Romero**

We want to encourage our members to participate in the Worker Safety Tours. We have had a slight lapse in the scheduling of the tours but we are now back

on track and scheduled to get through all of them this year!

ITSD is in the process of upgrading the Department phones systems to Voice Over IP. So far, upgrades have been completed in a portion of the Customer Service Division and several other locations. It is expected that the entire Department will ultimately be upgraded with this new technology. We want to thank our brothers in the Voice Network Services Shop, Data Shop and Inside Cable Shop for their great work and effort in making this transition as seamless as possible for everyone involved.

We also want to acknowledge our Unit members who were involved in monitoring the Department's communication systems during the Station Fires in September. Our members in the Valley Communication Shop primarily monitored the Communication Transmissions Network systems located in the direct paths of the fires. Thank you for being prepared and ready to respond to any damages that may have occurred at our transmission sites by the fires.

- **Next Meeting: October 14, 2009, 4:30 pm at the Boylston Yard**

## **Unit 63 – Power Underground Construction by Ken Delgado**

Brothers and Sisters, we are still in negotiations over contracts that are stacking up for underground work. We are asking Management to hire more Conduit Mechanics and you are currently being offered overtime work every weekend. This will stand for the duration of these contracts. More to come on this issue.

In unity.

- **Next Meeting: October 28, 2009, 5:00pm at Local 18**



## *In Memoriam*

### *Honoring our Members Who Have Passed On*

#### **James C. Buckles**

Retired Line Patrolman  
Initiated November 7, 1947  
Passed away September 3, 2009

#### **Leon Noel**

Retired Journeyman Lineman  
Initiated October 9, 1963  
Passed away August 30, 2009

#### **James T. Robinson**

Electrical Mechanic  
Initiated May 1, 1955  
Passed away June 2009

#### **Richard W. Smith**

Retired Line Patrolman  
Initiated June 14, 1948  
Passed away August 22, 2009

#### **Edgar Harrison, Jr.**

Retired M&C Helper  
Initiated August 1, 1975  
Passed away August 2, 2009

#### **Mitsuru Mihara**

Retired Electrical Repairer  
Initiated February 11, 1959  
Passed away April 16, 2009

#### **Rolland M. Ogden**

Retired Heavy Duty Truck Operator  
Initiated February 1, 1985  
Passed away November 28, 2007

#### **Baird F. Harris**

Retired Journeyman Operator  
Initiated January 1, 1972  
Passed away August 12, 2009

#### **Darryl C. O'Dell**

Retired Equipment Mechanic  
Initiated April 1, 1984  
Passed away September 30, 2008



# ***SURGE***

*For Members of IBEW Local 18 and their Families*

SEPTEMBER 2009

## **TENTATIVE AGREEMENT REACHED**

**I**BEW Local 18 has reached a tentative agreement with the City on a renegotiation of the current collective bargaining agreement.

The decision to reopen the agreement, which still had one year to run, was reached

after much deliberation.

In the end, it was decided that reopening the current agreement was the best choice for the long-term interests of the Local 18 membership.

The agreement must still

be ratified by the membership. Over the coming days, we will be providing you with full information about the agreement.

In the meantime, don't listen to rumors or speculation.

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