



IBEW LOCAL UNION 21

# FRONTLINE

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## FUN AT THE OL' BALL GAME!



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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Paul Wright – President – Business Manager – Financial Secretary



## Diversity Will Strengthen Our Local

I would like to offer a shout out to Des Plaines (IEFS) Steward Erick Rodriguez and his wife Lissette on their wedding this past September. Congratulations to you both! This is truly one of the reasons why we all come to work, Family!

Our AT&T members should now be settled into their new five year contract that was reached in April and overwhelmingly ratified by them in May. I would like to point out one significant item, the moratorium on layoffs. It doesn't allow a single AT&T employee regardless of title to leave the payroll surplus until at least March 1, 2018. I think some of the recent AT&T job cuts across the country make it clear how significant that language really is.

I am not stating that a surplus can't be announced prior to March 1st or that a surplus will be announced but no matter what happens, the language is clear, no employees will leave the payroll as surplus. You have my commitment that our staff and officers will continue to work every possible way to bring in work and keep as many of our members working as our industry continues to evolve.

I would also like to point out that we took a different approach to bargaining. Along with my traditional role in bargaining I enlisted the assistance of International Representative Kevin Curran to lead the bargaining table. Assistant Business Manager Bill Henne, all AT&T Business Representatives and Chief Steward - Premises Technician, Heather Brown were at the bargaining table. We were also joined by Chief Steward Robert Taylor who filled in for CJ when his father passed. Our Chief Stewards provided tireless research and support for issues that were evolving at the main table. I'd like to thank everyone for their hard work, long nights, and dedication.

Some of you have asked where the new contract books are, the answer is that we are still addressing some final printing edits and expect to get the final proof to the printer soon. The electronic version will be available on our website shortly thereafter.

I recently met with almost all of the Chicagoland Central Offices Stewards in our union office. We discussed the ongoing issues surrounding their work, details into their locations and some disturbing directions issued by some in management. We are continuing to talk about these items. I ask that we all be mindful of each other and don't perform work outside of your job title.

In July, we received two significant rulings from National Labor Relations Board Administrative Law judges. We won both cases. While in negotiations we filed Unfair Labor Practice Bad Faith Bargaining Charges against Altura Communications and Direct Sat. Since then it should come as no surprise that both employers are attempting to appeal their respective judgements. We will keep you informed on those appeals.

Since taking office, I continue to have periodic meetings with our members at the City of Chicago 911 OEMC Center and the more recently formed ARS Center. Tensions are high because of the City's crime rates, legal actions and the negative press that comes with it. The shuffling of department heads, staff and the creation and manning of the ARS Center created a myriad of issues. It has been frustrating getting clarity and answers to the growing list of issues created by so much change. I recognize the difficulty it presents and how it can wear a person down.

As I stated in recent visits to both centers, I requested a meeting with the new Executive Director and her staff. Jerry, Vera and I met with them and laid out a list of issues frustrating our members. We didn't fix everything but there was a refreshing sense of a true passion and a willingness from her to understand the issues and work with us. Every item won't get fixed, we are talking about the City of Chicago here but I do expect the basic issues within the Executive Director's reach to be addressed.

The Director and her staff shared a list of items that they asked for our assistance with. I think we can agree that we all need to take some ownership and we could do a much better job addressing our shortcomings as well. As Jerry Rankins discusses in his article, negotiations with the City will be opening and our members need to be involved. I will be announcing the bargaining committee soon.

(continued on next page)

## Building a Stronger Local Together

Local 21 formed The Michael A. Kunas Beneficiary Committee to select union families to be recipients of the Michael A. Kunas Memorial Fund. This fund is solely sponsored by voluntary donations. A fundraiser was held at a Gary Railcats Baseball game. The event included a 50/50 raffle. Engineering Assistant Chavonne Hodges was the big winner. We were so proud of the participation that made this event a success. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to our sister Amanda Johnson, a Lake County 911 dispatcher. In June, Amanda's husband passed suddenly, leaving their unborn son without a father.

Co-chairpersons Robert Taylor and I, along with committee members: Kevin Beallis, Byron Bonham, Dennis McCafferty, Mike Grindle, Grace Rivera, Heather Brown, and Devon Jennings, are honored to be a part of something that helps our union Brothers and Sisters.

I recently attended the IBEW 6th District Progress Meeting and was honored to speak before the delegates regarding the IBEW Women's Committee (IWC). As the District appointee for the IWC, I am excited at the response throughout the district from Sisters who are ready to launch a Women's Committee in their locals. Stay tuned for more information regarding a Local 21 committee.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2017 IBEW Local 21 scholarship awards. This year's essay topic was; "What are the pros and cons of increasing the minimum wage?"

Our students **Mary Collum, Samantha Reattoir, and Amanda Rodriguez** each received a \$1,000 scholarship. The Scholarship Committee, Mike Andel, Heather Brown, Joan Welton, and I will meet soon to discuss next year's topic. Sadly we are going to convene without Mike, who is courageously fighting a battle with brain cancer. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers. Mike is a warrior, and will be back at work with us very soon. We love you dear Brother.

Welcome DirecTV (DTV) Customer Care Associates to IBEW Local 21! President - Business Manager Paul Wright, along with Recording Secretary Bob Przybylinski and I have enjoyed meeting you. We look forward to seeing many of you at our Union meetings, where you can meet your other Local 21 Brothers and Sisters. God bless all of you in your new careers.



## Diversity Will Strengthen Our Local (continued from previous page)

RENEW (Reach Out and Engage Next Generation Electrical Workers) is something I've been working on along with Chief Steward Heather Brown, Executive Board Member Eric Slattery and several stewards across our local, for a period of time now. I will be filing the paperwork to create our local union's RENEW chapter. Heather and the stewards will be reaching out asking our Sisters and Brothers from all of our employers to get involved in this exciting young members group.

Earlier this year, Treasure Jacquie Fields was appointed by International President Stephenson to the newly developed International Women's Committee. I am very proud of Jacquie for her hard work and dedication in the fostering and development of Women's committees throughout the IBEW. This month I will be requesting Chapter status for our Local's Women's Committee as well.

I wasn't happy in our approach in the development of our Local's Electrical Workers Minority Caucus (EWMC). To get things rolling I enlisted the assistance of some boots on ground frontline stewards along with some of our local staff and Executive Board members to assist in the development of our EWMC Chapter. We are hoping to announce this group's chapter formation prior to the EWMC conference this winter.

On a final note the Executive Board approved the traditional suspension of the December unit meetings. Please have a Safe and Happy upcoming Holiday season and enjoy the time with your love ones. We look forward to seeing you at the January unit meetings.



## Can I Get a Dollar?

A big thank you to all of you who participated in our community outreach activities, fundraisers and the solidarity events we organized this year. In January, you helped reorganize the warehouse

at My Joyful Heart, you donated to the Back to School Supply Drive, The IBEW Hurricane Relief Fund and the IBEW 21 Kunas Fund. You joined us at White Sox and ILLINI Union Day games and helped to build a home for a veteran.

A special thanks goes out to our members in the **Rock Island AT&T Call Center**. I contacted Bethany Home and inquired how many back packs they needed for the kids they help. I was told they had about 60 kids in their program. Doubting we could help them all, I gave the staff my standard line, "I'll see what we can do." I figured if members donated ten we'd do ok. However, I told Sue Elder, our Unit 4 E-Board member, that we needed sixty filled backpacks again expecting only ten.

Well I'm proud to say our members at the call center proved me wrong; they exceeded everyone's expectations. They sent nearly 70 stuffed backpacks to Bethany Home. Every child was able to start the school year with the supplies they needed.

I appreciate everything you all have done to help our community outreach initiatives grow, but I know we can do more. Since our first food drive I've asked for every member to donate a minimum of just one dollar to every drive we've held. While we've done great work we still have not hit that goal.

The charities Local 21 helps have well over 1,000 children in their care. These are children who have endured things that no child should ever have to experience. These kids shouldn't have to worry if they'll have supplies for a successful school year, a toy to brighten their holidays, a coat to keep them warm, food to nourish them, or in the worst circumstance a home to live in.

We are the fortunate ones; we have good paying middle class union jobs. We may struggle at times but most are able to make ends meet. Many of us have those extras in life that others dream about.

I'm asking all of you to donate to the drives we hold, and come out and volunteer with us so Local 21 can help as many children as possible. At minimum I'm asking for you to donate just \$1. If every member donated just \$1 we'd be able to collect over \$6,000 during every drive. If you've gone to [ibew21.org](http://ibew21.org) or liked our Facebook page IBEW Twenty One, you've been able to see the good we've done. Imagine if every member donated just one dollar, how much more we could do to make a difference in the communities where we live in work.



## A Tale of Two States

Unless you've been totally tuned out, you can't turn on the TV without being bombarded with news of the President's latest tweet like we'd be cheated had he not shared every inane thought that goes thru his narcissistic little mind. Or the possibility of entering another legislative session in Springfield without a budget. Or preparing to take away health care from over 300,000 Hoosiers because while they keep insisting there's an urgency to repeal "Obamacare," they want to welch on the replacing part.

Being from the old school, I believe it's equally important to not only understand how we got here but what can be done to rectify the situation and more importantly, how to prevent it from happening again. The irony is that while the political/legislative climate in Illinois and Indiana could not possibly be more different, the reasons for it are the same. It is a direct result of gerrymandering and voter suppression.

Webster's dictionary defines gerrymandering as "the manipulation of the boundaries of an electoral constituency so as to favor one political party or class of citizen." Congressional, State Senate/ House of Representatives and other lower levels of government maps are redrawn every ten years based supposedly, on census information. The original intention was to ensure that everyone was included, thereby creating a truly representative map that best reflected its constituency by the make-up of its population. The only time logistics would play into the equation is in an effort to create diversity.

Unfortunately in most cases, it's "to the victors' go the spoils" or simply put, the party in power draws the map, and why in their right minds would politicians draw a map that would prevent them from retaining their advantage? There would be no incentive to attempt to bring fairness into the equation to avoid what Thomas Jefferson once called "the tyranny of the majority".

At the risk of sounding hypocritical, I am grateful in one state we have been able to fend off the harmful, one man wrecking crew, anti-labor agenda of one maniacal governor but in the state bordering directly to the east, it's not even possible to put up a fight because their super majority renders the opposition party virtually irrelevant. This is what is meant when we say elections have consequences.

The most glaring difference between the two states is how they have dealt with voting rights. In the past several sessions of the Illinois general assembly, they have actually made the voting process easier and more inclusive. They have increased the number of early voting sites and have expanded the hours they are open to encourage participation. Adversely in Indiana, they have made it more difficult by putting onerous regulations in place and actually removing qualified, eligible voters from the rolls in a blatantly shameful and arrogant display of consolidating their power. The most recent attempt to address this inadequacy in the last session of the general assembly went down in flames with the bill being killed in committee without as much as a hearing let alone a floor vote.

I'm bringing this all up to you now because we need to start preparing for State house elections in 2018 with the ultimate goal of leveling the playing field for when new maps will be drawn up after the elections and census of 2020. It's never too early to get engaged. With the anticipated future struggle that lies ahead and the vast sums of money we will likely be up against there's no better time than the present to prepare. Your Local's Committee on Political Education Department (COPE) is busy preparing our Get Out the Vote (GOTV) initiative. If any of you would like to be a part of that please contact me, I would be delighted to assist you in helping us help ourselves. Take care and God bless!





## I'm Coming Home

Our Local 21 members were part of a unique event this past May. We partnered with an organization, their volunteers, and assisted them in building a home for a disabled veteran and his family. The planning, coordination, and fundraising took over a year. What made this event unique was that the home was built in just nine days!

In March, as an American Legion member, I had the honor of being in the Color Guard for the Chobenov Family community kickoff event in Spring Grove, Illinois. This is where I was introduced to A Soldier's Journey Home. The organization chooses one deserving veteran and their family every year, and they build them a home from donated materials, labor, and funds. The home is mortgage free upon completion.

IBEW 21 members were on the worksite five of the nine days during the build that took place the second week of May. They were paired with volunteers who traveled across the country to be a part of this special project. Our members helped in any way they could. They were placing siding, painting and just providing a helping hand where needed. One member who owns a restaurant even provided an outstanding meal for the volunteers.

Amazing accomplishments occurred every day but Day One was the most impressive when there were over 150 volunteers on site. We began at 7 a.m. with just the foundation, and the main floor in place. In just 12 hours, the structure was up and the majority of the mechanicals, plumbing, and electric were roughed in. Sure we ran into one another and had to make changes on the fly but it was amazing how everyone worked together to get the project completed safely and on time.

Our IBEW 21 volunteers were joined by our Local's President – Business Manager Paul Wright and Recording Secretary Bob Przybylinski, Business Representative John Dolsen and Chief Steward Mike Andel. It was great to see our stewards and members from many different work locations and employers participating in this very rewarding event.

On the Ninth Day, a huge ceremony was conducted to thank everyone for their efforts, sacrifices, and extreme volunteerism. The ceremony was extremely moving when Tony, an Iraq war veteran, and his family entered their new home. Bagpipes played as they walked down the driveway that was lined with American flags, veterans, first responders, and the volunteers who gave up over a week of their time, to spend it with total strangers to construct a home for this deserving family. Tears were flowing from many of those in attendance.

At the conclusion of the event, as the volunteers said goodbye to all their new friends, gathered their tools, and prepared to travel back to wherever they came from, I witnessed many calls being made. They all seemed to say the same three words, "I'm Coming Home!"

If you have an opportunity to volunteer in your community, please do so, and take some Local 21 members with you. Share your story. It is a very rewarding experience. THANK YOU, to all the Local 21 members who volunteered.

Please visit [asoldiersjourneyhome.org](http://asoldiersjourneyhome.org) to see this build, past builds, and the upcoming build that will take place in the San Antonio, Texas area. You can also view photos of our members in action in the photo gallery on [ibew21.org](http://ibew21.org).



IBEW 21 members making a soldier's journey home possible.

## Back to My Center Roots

As many of you know Business Representative KC Battisfore retired earlier this year. I understand that she's spent much of her free time planting tulips. I'm sure we all miss her already and wish her well.

Since I have background as a Service Representative I volunteered and was assigned by President Wright to fill KC's shoes. I know it won't be an easy task, but I'm up for the challenge.

Before stepping up to represent the call centers again, my responsibility was organizing new members into our Local. Before that I was a Service Rep and Steward, then Area Steward in Arlington Heights. When I began organizing, I recommended KC to take my place as Area Steward. We've come full circle and I'm back representing our consumer call center members.

While a lot has changed in the center, there is also much that hasn't. I've heard many of the issues that concern Reps in today's environment and I'm in the process of looking into what can be done to help everyone feel a little more at ease when they come to work every day.

As we work through the current issues that have been presented as unfair or unreasonable, I ask that you continue to do your best to handle your calls as trained, and communicate with your Union Stewards. If you feel you are being treated unfairly, please let your Steward know ASAP. Many members have had discipline or contemplated discipline turned around by simply making their union stewards aware of their situation. This is your center and you ARE the Union. We are all in this together. Get involved!



I am very proud of the hard work done by our members helping the victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. People living through these disasters are in need of many things, so when they call AT&T and talk to the professional members of IBEW Local 21, there is one less thing for them to have to worry about.



I am pleased to help ramp up the new Mobility call center on the North side of Chicago. There are currently about 100 members in the office with the company planning on increasing that number. This work was previously done by a vendor, so it is good these Local 21 jobs have been brought into a Collective Bargaining Agreement. We are very happy to welcome these new members into our Local Union.

I'd be remiss if I didn't give a shout out to Chief Steward Cheryl Crooks and Area Steward Pez Whatley who are in this endeavor with me. In addition, and perhaps more importantly are your local Stewards who are on site working with you every day and doing what they can to help beat back and or avoid any discipline taken by the company.

So a big thank you to Celia Estrada, Trina Bliss and Jerry Mills on the 26th floor and Claudette Brown and Janita Tyner on the 21st. I thank you all for your dedication, hard work and patience in helping me in getting caught up on today's issues in the Consumer Call centers.



# WHAT'S NEW ACROSS THE LOCAL?

Altura ★ AT&T ★ Avaya ★ CenturyLink ★ City of Chicago OEMC- 911 Center  
Heddington Oaks Nursing Home ★ CBRE-Johnson Controls ★ JULI

Bill Henne,  
Vice-President, Assistant Business Manager



## Many Employers; Many Issues

★ At **AT&T** we are under the umbrella of a new five year contract and a reprieve from surplus announcements until at least December. No layoffs can occur before March 2018.

This has given our AT&T members some breathing room. However, you should all know that the company has not stopped suplusing employees in the Midwest. CWA members in the old Ameritech region have continued to suffer layoffs in the second, third and fourth quarters.

This just shows how important it was to negotiate a reprieve from those layoffs so employees could look to the future and be able to plan out their lives. While your leadership has no knowledge of future surpluses, you should all be aware of what is going on in the Midwest region and be prepared for what could come.

Our Local, along with Locals 51, 702 and 723, met with **Frontier's** upper management to discuss future work and resolve some long standing issues that need to be rectified. We've talked about contracting out of work, job openings, the apparel program and scheduling.

I believe the clothing program has been resolved and should be updated by the time you read this article. Management assured the Locals that future job openings should be coming and that they are doing everything they can to fill vacancies. Your representatives expressed major concerns about the company continuing to use contractors. With very little or no management oversight, these contractors do poor work resulting in excessive repair time costs after they have left. So far this has fallen on deaf ears. We recommend that you, as members, continue to report poor or inaccurate work done by contractors to your local managers so we can get them off the property. This will help fill job open recs, and help customer satisfaction.

**CenturyLink** seems to have forgotten about new technology in Illinois. They seem to want to keep their customer base while only providing the bare minimum of communication options. While management continues to downsize in Illinois, we have negotiated new job requisitions in both Pekin and Dixon. We've had some retirement issues, particularly with medical benefit payments; the company seems to be working with us to rectify those issues.

We continue to work on negotiations with **Altura** management.





Cleveland Johnson,  
Business Representative



## In The City...

★ Usually when I write an article, I advise everyone to check their drivers licenses. If you are in a driving position, please check the status of your driver's license in Illinois call (217)782-2720 if you are in Indiana call (317)233-6000.

Having done that, let me say I feel the need to expand the conversation. Simply checking your driver's license isn't all you need to consider these days. The issue I want to discuss is reporting obligations. The AT&T Code of Business Conduct requires you to self-report things that occur to you both on and off the job. If you find your license is invalid because it is suspended or revoked, you are required to report it to management. But that's not the only thing you must report. The Code says you must report "all traffic tickets, citations, arrests, charges, convictions, guilty pleas, pleas of no contest, and similar dispositions for any driving related offense, including driving while under the influence, while texting or making a call using a mobile device." This must be reported regardless of whether you were ticketed on or off the job in a company or personal vehicle. If the police give you a ticket, you must report that to management. You must also report "all accidents, whether or not there was an injury, involving a company issued vehicle or any vehicle driven by the employee, regardless of when the event occurs."

That's only part of it. The Code also states that you must report "all criminal charges, convictions, guilty pleas, pleas of no contest and similar dispositions for the following: all felonies, misdemeanors involving violence, weapons, physical assault/battery, sexual acts, sex related conduct/pornography, stalking, dishonesty, misrepresentation, fraud, perjury, forgery, theft, possession of stolen property, vandalism, or the use, possession, or distribution of a controlled substance." If you are arrested, you must notify management.

The reason I'm stressing this is because we've had a couple cases where this notification was not done. In most

cases, the employee states they didn't know they had to notify the company because it happened while they were off duty. Some felt it was embarrassing and didn't want the manager in their business. I understand the hesitation. I get it. But you MUST report it.

Here's the problem. It might have been a minor infraction or maybe it gets resolved. Then one day something happens at work, and the company does a deep dive on you, and finds that you failed to report the incident, arrest, ticket or whatever. Now you have a much bigger problem than you had originally. Now it becomes a creditability issue. In the majority of cases that I have been involved in, after you notify them of the incident, they simply monitor the proceedings. If something happens later, and the deep dive finds that you have already notified them it means nothing. Many people don't report the incidents and we have lost members because of it.

Lastly, you must report the incident as soon as possible after it occurs. The rule used to be you had to report on your next scheduled workday. Now it says as soon as possible. That means if you talk to a manager, come to the work location, etc. you must report the incident. Yes, failing to immediately report has been an issue too. If you have an incident, and you're not sure of your reporting obligation, call your steward, Chief Steward, or Business Representative immediately and get some assistance. It is better to ask and be sure than to create a problem for yourself down the road.



Mike Scime,  
Business Representative



## News from Central Illinois

★ In Central Illinois there is plenty to be pleased with. Our grievances are well below the average for the last five years and a great majority have been resolved at the first step. Despite the regular conflicts, our

members continue to perform their jobs responsibly and professionally. **Rock Island, Moline, Sterling/Rock Falls,** and **Peoria** technicians are great examples for IBEW 21.

I'm proud to represent them. I/we probably don't say that often enough. To some it may appear that we are only defending poor behaviors. I assure you, it is quite the opposite. We adamantly defend our members who come to work and perform their work efficiently and safely.

What I am most impressed with is the dedication of our members and stewards. Without reward or request many senior employees assist other members daily, largely because that is how they learned on the job. The pay it forward attitude is common in our Union and we should be proud of it. Thank you for all that you do for each other- it is noticed and appreciated.

### News from the Centers...

In June, IBEW 21 and Peoria County signed a new labor agreement for our members working at the **Heddington Oaks Elder Care Facility**. We have nearly 160 members at the facility and the contract was overwhelmingly accepted by our members. We, Mike Roach and I, secured many financial improvements through a positive collective bargaining process with the County administration.

We hope to increase our membership in the fourth quarter as the facility is slated to open a new wing. We have four union stewards who cover all three shifts. They do a great job. Thank you, Sheryl, Jacquie, Marcella and Brenda.

At the **Peoria Collection Center** we have 110 dedicated employees who rank among the top collection centers in the country. This facility is a great example of our senior employees sharing their knowledge with their co-workers.

We have three stewards in the Center who came from previous Chicago area centers. Thank you Lisa, Felicia and Valerie. Over a third of our employees are from Grace Street, Chicago Heights etc. I thank them all for their commitment daily.

Less than a year ago, the **Rock Island Center** transitioned into a retention center. We have sixty employees at the center. Since the transition, the Rock Island center has consistently ranked in the top 10 nationally. Many of the managers have been at the center for several years. They also had a shared learning curve to overcome and I believe that was a positive for our members.

Our steward in the center is Sue Elder who is also on Local 21's Executive Board and is involved with many state political appointments. Thank you and well done to Sue and our service representatives and sales consultants.

### One last note...

Take advantage of all the training opportunities that are available, share your expertise and be an example for others. That's our way, the union brotherhood way, it's our legacy at IBEW 21. Keep up the great work and as always work safe and watch out for your Sisters and Brothers.



Building the dream.

Byron Bonham,  
Business Representative



## Helping Yourself and Others Can Make All the Difference

★ Since bargaining concluded with **AT&T**, there have been a growing number of disciplinary meetings and dismissal panels. Unfortunately, many are the result of an employee being unaware of their driver's license status,

or information they became aware of as the result of an investigation. Both Illinois and Indiana have numbers drivers can call to check on the status of their license. In Illinois that number is (217) 782-2720 the Indiana number is (317) 233-6000.

If you become aware of an issue, AT&T policy requires that you notify them. When you disclose your incident to your manager, you have a right to have your Union representative present. At AT&T, your manager should direct you to a self-reporting website to document that you have correctly reported any on or off duty misconduct. It is also important to ask your steward to keep a record the discussion as well.

At both AT&T and the **Lake County Emergency Center**, your employers provide you with a list of employee expectations and policies. These policies have many different names like "Code of Business Conduct," "The Handbook," "Guidelines," and "Operating Practices (OP78)" etc.

Both collective bargaining agreements require that your employer must have "just cause" prior to administering discipline. The very first test or question in determining just cause for discipline is, "Did the employer make the employee aware of the rules?"

When you are being covered on company policies and expectations take the time to read through them and ask questions. Pay special attention to social media accounts, cell phone usage, and policies regarding them. Too often our employers can verify what was posted and/or when cell phones were used while at work. Often asking a question or knowing what your employer expects would have prevented many of the uncomfortable meetings we've been having.

On a positive note, the Lake County Emergency Center is at full staff. As a result, the number of mandated hours has decreased and should continue to improve as training continues.

At **Datacom**, Project Emerald discussions continue and there is plenty of work forecasted.

Across the area, we are seeing greater member involvement in Local 21 Renew and solidarity events. Thank you to all who attended the **Michael Kunas fundraiser** for Amanda Johnson at the Rail Cats game. It is great to see our sisters and brothers helping out and coming together.



Amanda and her son are having fun the Gary Rail Cats Game.



Jerry Rankins,  
Business Representative

## Bad Behavior by Some Hurts Us All

★ Last year the City of Chicago warned that they would be addressing high-levels of departmental paid sick-time and Family

Medical Leave Act (FMLA) absenteeism. This led to a City-wide task-force to investigate departments with high absences and recommend solutions. Currently the City's Inspector General's office launched an investigation in conjunction with the **Office Emergency Management Communications** (OEMC). For many this is welcome news to rid the work-place of perceived medical abuse by a few that's possibly condoned by management.

The Residency Ordinance "requires all OEMC members to live in the City of Chicago." If you're not in compliance and are unable to show proof that your residence is within the City then the Union's chances to save you are dimmed. Please comply with the ordinance. The City follows through with its investigation when "Rats" report that you're not living in Chicago.

We notified the City of our intent to bargain a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. The current eighteen month contract extension expires December 31, 2017. Members will be given a contract survey to complete. The majority of City contracts expired in June and no new agreements have been reached. It's important that every member supports their bargaining committee, our strength is in our unity.

Comcast now has region-wide drug policy that goes into effect for **Comcast West** on December 15, 2017. In August, management notified us of its intentions to implement its new region-wide Drug Policy on September 1st. The Union responded with a demand to "meet/confer" (CBA Article 38) to bargain the effects of the change. The

new policy provides no second chance after a positive test and no random drug testing. Members are encouraged to seek counseling through their medical plan, Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) or contact their Union Business Representative or Area Steward for confidential advice relevant to treatment assistance.

Working safe is our Union's number one concern. Last month a **Chicago Cortland** Brother was working in the area of Thomas & Madison and was held at gun-point by three thugs at 8:30 a.m. He was traumatized but thank God he escaped without any physical harm. It doesn't matter if you are working in an alley or an attic; safety is your judgement call.

If you hear sounds of gunfire get to a safe location. Any threat to your health or welfare is a good reason to refuse the work and get to safe environment. It is not insubordination. Ideally, you should contact a boss first, but in case of criminal activity first call the police then the boss and your shop steward if available, or me at (630) 222-9100 if the boss challenges your judgement. A good day is when we all go home safe to our families.

Comcast is closely watching how payroll time is being recorded after you have completed your last job of the day. Don't leave the job while still being logged onto the job. Follow the no-access process. Remember quality work is the bedrock of being Union.

Good members are not agents of management. When we complain to the boss about another member, we dwarf our efforts to grow because we're now divided. We're better than that. It's very disturbing for me to have to address such issues. You must understand the severity of division; it destroys our unity and violates the IBEW constitution. It's going to stop!



John Dolsen,  
Business Representative

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### Safety Safety Safety!

★ I recently had the opportunity to attend the IBEW Safety Caucus and the Nation Safety Council Labor Caucus in Indianapolis. What I found was interesting.

It seems a lot of unions throughout the country are complaining about not having enough safety practices in place and they are fighting to get practices implemented that we take for granted.

The first day was strictly IBEW locals and the following days were unions from all the trades. The message was the same throughout the meetings. In a lot of industries safety practices are not always in place or as strong as they need to be. I think a lot of the problem surrounds the fact that most of the trades have competition from non-union shops that have none or very few safety rules in place. While I think our company goes to extremes on discipline associated with violations we seem to be on the top when it comes to safety practices.

Continuing on the safety topic. In my area we very recently had an incident where a tech was being pushed to perform a task he felt was unsafe. The incident involved crossing a busy four lane road to hang a drop. The manager refused to call the police and said he would block traffic himself. When the tech refused and sighted safety as his concern, the manager stated that "it was now safe" and promptly suspended our member for insubordination for refusing to perform the work. I received a call from our member/steward and after a few phone calls with Labor and the department, they took care of the issue. Our member missed no time and the manager was talked to by the Second level and Labor. **Nice work Mike**, way to stick to your position.

We cannot ever let our managers control our safety. If we feel something is unsafe we should never let our managers override our position by saying "it's safe now" that is not enough. Please escalate these types of situations to your stewards immediately.

Mike Grindle,  
Business Representative

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### Good Catch!

★ It's been several months since the ratification of our new Collective Bargaining Agreement at AT&T. When the new contract took effect in late June, we discovered through the work of our steward in Naperville, that a

provision which had been won at the table for our members in Appendix C (Prem Techs and Dispatchers) was not being implemented by the company. The change that allows Personal Days and Floating Holidays to count towards 40 hours in a week to reach overtime, was not being paid properly.

We went to AT&T management, and they assured us that in early December, when the payroll system is reprogrammed to incorporate this language all instances of its occurrence will be fixed automatically and retroactively. I suggest that each of you who has taken a personal day or floating holiday double check to see if you were paid correctly, and if not, keep track individually so when it's "fixed" by AT&T, we can verify you were paid correctly.

After a few months hiatus due to the contract bargaining, and summer vacations, we will be resuming our "quarterly" stewards' meetings in October. As always, and most importantly, safety remains a concern on the job. Remember to always work safely, and encourage your Brothers and Sisters to do the same.

Altura ★ AT&T ★ Avaya ★ CenturyLink ★ City of Chicago OEMC- 911 Center ★ Comcast  
DirectSat USA ★ Frontier ★ Gardenview Manor Nursing Home  
Heddington Oaks Nursing Home ★ CBRE-Johnson Controls ★ JULIE ★ Lake County 911 Center  
State of Illinois ★ Vermilion County

Mike Roach,  
Business Representative



## New Central Illinois Contracts and New Work!

★ In the past year, we reached settlements in both **Vermilion County** contracts. These are government contracts, but we were still able to secure 3% raises each year for 3 years despite the budget turmoil.

Many thanks to Doris Halls, Lisa De Pratt, and Ophelia Williams for their hard work. Contracts have been sent to the printer, and should be distributed shortly.

Mike Scime, Doris Halls, and I are still working on the **Gardenview Manor** agreement, and hope to have something for our members to vote on very soon.

At AT&T some **Maryville Premise Technicians** have been trained on the DTV dispatch system and will start doing stand-alone DirecTV work inside and outside of the AT&T wireline footprint. The company is saying this is just the first location to do so, and it should start spreading across the state.

At the **Springfield Global Billing Center** we have brought in some Legacy-T work from Syracuse, New York. At this time, 16 Marketing Support Specialists are being trained to take these calls. It's nice to see work come into an office instead of going away. I believe this is because of the center's good attendance, and the ability to adapt in our ever-changing environment.

Kudos to our members doing an excellent job in both of those areas. I will see you in my travels.

Grace Rivera,  
Business Representative – Benefits & JULIE



## JULIE

★ The current JULIE contract expires November 15, 2017. Our members completed and returned their bargaining surveys.

We have reviewed the results and are incorporating their feedback into our proposals to the company.

Contract negotiations have started and will continue until a new agreement is reached.



IBEW 21 Members hard at work.

## Annual AT&T Benefits Enrollment 2018 for Active Employees

A correction period for the AT&T Midwest Active Employees Annual Benefit Program runs from October 23rd to November 3rd. Annual Enrollment began on October 9th and continued until 7 p.m. Central time October 20th.

As in prior years the 2018 Annual Enrollment Guide was sent electronically to your company email. There were changes to consider when electing coverage during the enrollment period.

In Medical a new high deductible health plan (HDHP) is available (Option 2). Those enrolling in Option 2 can elect to contribute to a Health Savings Account (HSA). Keep in mind that if you contribute to an HSA and an FSA, your FSA will be limited to Dental and Vision expenses. For more details on HSAs and FSAs see the Annual Enrollment Guide.

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL EMPLOYEES CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN THE BARGAINED MIDWEST PPO OR MIDWEST HCN PLANS HAVE BEEN DEFAULTED BY AT&T INTO OPTION #2. TO KEEP THE SAME COST SHARE STRUCTURE YOU HAD IN 2017 YOU MUST SELECT OPTION 1 WHEN ENROLLING IN YOUR 2018 BENEFITS IF YOU DON'T YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE OPTION #2 BENEFITS IN 2018.**

Option 1 and Option 2 are the same AT&T Midwest Medical Program with different cost sharing structures. That means you will get the same services covered but your

Monthly Contributions, Deductibles, Out-of-Pocket Maximums, and Coinsurance amounts will be different under each option.

Keep in mind that Monthly Contributions, Deductibles, Annual Out-of-Pocket Maximums, and Coinsurance amounts are changing. Deductibles now count toward your Out-of-Pocket Maximum. Also, with Option 2 the Deductibles and Annual Out-of-Pocket Maximum are integrated with the Prescription Drug plan. See the AT&T Enrolls website for cost sharing details.

It is important that you review your current coverages and make any changes necessary during the correction period. If you made no changes don't assume that you were defaulted to your current coverage. Your current plan may not be an available option!

Corrections can be completed online ([att.com/benefitscenter](http://att.com/benefitscenter)), by phone (**1-877-722-0020**) or from your mobile device. If you complete your enrollment online it is imperative that you print a copy of the final confirmation page for your records. Look it over and make sure you are enrolled in the correct options. You will not receive a confirmation of coverage in the mail if you complete your enrollment online.

Taking a moment to review your options and confirm your elections now can prevent unnecessary grief later.

\*\* Editor's note benefit enrollment was underway as Frontline was going to press.



## DirectSat Workers Vote Union Yes...AGAIN!

When DirectSat Technicians in South Holland voted to become members of IBEW Local 21, management hired union avoidance attorneys to deny workers their rights. Bargaining for a first contract hit a roadblock when the company refused our information request. Because of the denial and management's actions, we filed Bad Faith Bargaining and other Unfair Labor Practices (ULP) charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

While the company hasn't negotiated for the past year, the union busting attorneys were successful in getting a decertification election filed. These workers have been fighting back. Our members saw through the garbage the company was feeding them, and began their own internal

solidarity campaign, energizing each other to remain union and to continue the fight for their first contract. Just prior to the recent NLRB election the Board ruled that the company has been violating the National Labor Relations Act, has been bargaining in bad faith and must provide us with the documents we requested.

Congratulations to our DirectSat Brothers. Their actions are another fine example of collective action beating back an employer's divide and conquer game. After a month-long hard fought battle an overwhelming majority once again voted Union Yes! Management is not pleased and again is resorting to their union busting stall tactics by appealing the decisions made by the NLRB against them. The fight continues. One day longer one day stronger!



Congratulations scholars!



Alan Fayia a Downtown " Walker " dodges the rain as he walks from job to job in Chicago..



## Proactive Responsibility Can Save Your Job

Well, it's time again to talk about personal responsibility. Recently we've had too many people lose their job because of things they should've taken care of, namely maintaining their driving privilege. If you work at **AT&T** or **CBRE**, both work groups I represent, your career is tied to your ability to maintain a valid driver's license.

Now everyone probably will get a ticket over their lifetime. I venture anyone born after 1985, probably has a greater chance since camera tickets became prevalent in their lifetime. Many of us have driven for decades before red-light and speed cameras came on line. Camera tickets are not violations of the Illinois Vehicle Code, they are a municipal fine, equivalent to a parking ticket. If you get a camera ticket in your work vehicle, the law (in Chicago) does not allow anyone other than the owner to appeal the violation.

Not taking care of your personal business and responsibilities can make a simple situation worse. It's easy in this busy, digital world we live in to forget some things, like renewing one's license, plate sticker, emissions test, camera ticket etc. These simple things can be compounded by not changing your address of record with the Secretary of State.

I recently sat in a dismissal panel for a young member, who had a simple issue of a traffic stop for expired plates. But upon request he could not produce proof of insurance. This second charge required a court appearance, but he never appeared, so the judge suspended his license. He never got the suspension notice because his address on his license was not where he was living.

When his manager did a virtual ride-along with him and checked his license status, it was discovered it was suspended, for more than 50 days! So now we go from two tickets on personal time to a Code of Conduct violation for driving the company vehicle on a suspended license. His original situation became so much worse because he didn't pay attention to maintaining his driving privilege.

This lack of attention can spin out of control and can cost someone their job. It can happen to anyone. Years before things got so technical, I walked out of work one day and just happened to look at my license to find it had expired three months earlier. I got lucky.

Today, the company has people at the staff level who are checking driver's licenses of employees all the time. Your department will do it around your birthday. With licenses now valid for longer periods of time you may forget so it is important to keep track your expiration date.

Some members seem oblivious to the requirements in the Tech Expectations and the Code of Business Conduct (COBC) including the changes that place specific reporting obligations on people who drive for the company. AT&T created a self-reporting database that employees are to access and input all the relevant details about their ticket or arrest. Notify management if you are issued a ticket or arrested. You must report the occurrence immediately or if you are off duty before the start of your next shift and don't forget to have your union steward present.

So, to wrap up, be mindful of your employer's obligations and do the responsible things necessary to maintain your driving privilege so you remain employed. If you self-report you are treated in a much different way than if the company finds out your license is suspended or you got in trouble with the law. And even if you honestly didn't know, the fact they found out, impugns your credibility when you try to explain an honest mistake. Be proactive- your job does depend on it!





## APT College and The Sage Group Merge...and Learning Has Never Been So Convenient

The Sage Group and APT College joined forces this year to create a joint investment into the health and future of education – a union training and education company for union members. IBEW members can earn credit from an expanding, timely menu of subject areas, all geared toward completion of an academic degree or certificate, enabling them to develop skills and enhance their career growth.

Let's break that down. You can take classes toward an academic degree or professional certificate while earning valuable industry certifications including those from CompTIA, Cisco, ETA, FCC, FOA and NABCEP. If you've taken courses through The Sage Group in the past, your efforts are recognized by APTC in the form of credits that can be transferred toward the completion of a degree or certificate.

In this year's biggest development, APT pioneered Webcast courses designed specifically for students that find it physically difficult to get to a classroom, aren't comfortable completing self-study online programs, and prefer an instructor-led learning environment. Webcast courses are conveniently scheduled and delivered "live" by industry recognized subject matter experts that you access via your Internet connection. These courses cover the exact information found in a traditional classroom and you can learn from basic electricity and electronics, to networking fundamentals, to wireless technologies, to cloud essentials and much, much more; all from the comfort of your home.

But what if you have a group of IBEW members that need hands-on instruction in your local area, perhaps such a course as Fiber Optics in which you earn two industry certifications? APT College can bring our classroom to you, set up a suitably located learning environment, and provide quality instruction to you and your colleagues in a traditional learning environment.

APT College also presents complementary webinars each month on technology topics relevant to IBEW members. Recent webinars include discussions of the future of fiber optics and advances in long-term evolution.

You can find out more about services, educational programs and upcoming webinars by visiting our webpage at [www.aptc.edu](http://www.aptc.edu) or stop by our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/aptc.edu](http://www.facebook.com/aptc.edu). Additionally, if you are interested in hosting a class in your local area or in joining a webcast class, we invite you to contact me by email- [parisah@aptc.edu](mailto:parisah@aptc.edu) - or phone 312-219-1885.

This year has already proven to be remarkable and 2018 promises to be an exciting year for the industry and for us at APT College. We look forward to working with you in the months ahead as we help you reach your educational and career goals.



Get involved—attend an upcoming Union Meeting!

## NOVEMBER UNION MEETINGS

<b>UNIT 1</b>	<b>9th - 7 pm</b> Best Western Hillside 4400 Frontage Road Hillside, IL 708-544-9300
<b>UNIT 2</b>	<b>14th - 7 pm</b> Gaelic Park Banquet Hall 6119 W. 147th Oak Forest, IL 708-687-9323
<b>UNIT 3</b>	<b>16th - 7 pm</b> Red Roof Inn & Suites 1212 W. Lincoln Highway DeKalb, IL 815-758-8661
<b>UNIT 4</b>	<b>8th - 7 pm</b> IBEW Local #145 1700 52nd Ave., Suite A Moline, IL 309-736-4239
<b>UNIT 5</b>	<b>15th - 7 pm</b> IBEW Local #146 3390 N. Woodford St. Decatur, IL 217-877-4604
<b>UNIT 6</b>	<b>21st - 7 pm</b> IBEW Local #193 3150 Wide Track Dr. Springfield, IL 217-544-3479
<b>UNIT 7</b>	<b>20th - 7 pm</b> American Legion Post 365 1022 Vandalia St. Collinsville, IL 618-345-2508

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RETIREES

Linda Bostjancic-JULIE  
Gail Dozard-Heddington Oaks  
Thomas Ralph-CBRE  
AT&T  
James Madej  
Danny Cotton  
Gerald Neeley  
Janet Jenkins  
Robert Eckstrom  
Thomas O'Brien  
Ed Kaszynski  
Philip Barone  
Ronald George  
Ruthie LaFollett  
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Gary Vidal  
Jeff Kamin  
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Arletta Bronaugh  
Janene Stillson

### FRONTLINE



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#### Workers, Local 21, AFL-CIO

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## *IBEW 21 Days of Giving Toy and Coat Drive*

**November 19th – December 9th**

Start thinking about setting up a donation area in your work location and how you can get your IBEW 21 sisters and brothers involved in the collection of toys, coats and cash donations. Together we will make a difference in the communities where we live and work this holiday season.

Donate by visiting [ibew21.org](http://ibew21.org)

For more information contact Recording Secretary  
Bob P at 630-960-4466 ext. 447 or [bobp@ibew21.org](mailto:bobp@ibew21.org).