

IBEW 11, CALIFORNIA UNIONS UNITE TO DEFEAT LAW THAT WOULD HAVE DECIMATED WAGES

By Jeremy Kehoe

IBEW 11 members organized, mobilized, united, and battled alongside their California State Associate of Electrical Workers (CSAEW) Brothers and Sisters to defeat one of the most brazen assaults on prevailing wages in modern California history – Assembly Bill 130 – which would have decimated

union wages and obliterated California's nearly 100-year-old prevailing wage law.

Local 11 members joined a coalition of union members statewide who called, emailed, texted, knocked on senators and assemblymembers doors, and packed hearing rooms on

Capitol Hill in Sacramento to voice their opposition to the prevailing wage provision in AB 130, which would have set construction workers' minimum wage below the \$20 fast food wage in 44 counties.

"This was a victory for IBEW and other union members

across California who raised our collective voices to tell legislators that we would not stand for a bill that would have paid skilled tradespeople far below their value and forced each and every one of them into substandard, non-livable wages," said IBEW 11 Business Manager Robert Corona. "This was a clear effort to normalize paying skilled tradespeople far below area standards under the guise of housing production. It failed because we stood together."

“ This was a victory for IBEW and other union members across California.”

– ROBERT CORONA
IBEW 11 Business Manager

The prevailing wage language tucked inside AB 130 as part of California's behemoth budget bill would have established a second-class wage structure that devalued the training and expertise of union electricians, effectively initiating a race to the bottom for wages in the construction industry.

Instead, in the face of this union opposition, Governor Gavin Newsom stripped the prevailing wage provision language from AB 130 entirely.

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Leadership Sets Sights on Residential Work As New Funding Flows In

By Robert Fulton

There's plenty of residential electrical work on the horizon, and with billions of new dollars flowing into affordable housing projects, IBEW 11 sees its chance to claim its ground.

Local 11's success could mean thousands of union jobs, stronger construction standards, and more stable housing projects.

"We want all the electrical work in Los Angeles done by our members," said IBEW 11 Contractor Organizer Ben Frank.

Frank sees the tide turning because of a concerted effort by Local 11 leadership and a windfall of incoming funds from recent local ballot measures.

"It's the first time in history that we really have the money and we have the work, and now it's our job to get the manpower and the contractors to do that work," Frank said.

(Continued on Page 5)



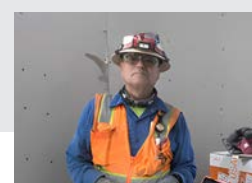
Local 11 Makes Mental Health Top Priority

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Stepping Up to Protect Members' Rights

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2nd Call Gives Varela Second Chance

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BUSINESS MANAGER'S MESSAGE



IBEW Leading Us Into the Future

I've often said that the electrical industry is the future. More than any other craft in the building trades, we will lead our members into the coming Electrical Revolution. At the Ninth District Progress Meeting in Alaska last week more than 100 IBEW leadership and staff from across the western United States gathered to address common issues confronting our members in our rapidly evolving industry.

The meeting gave us the opportunity to exchange ideas with other IBEW locals experiencing many of the same issues. We engaged in presentations on topics such as how to capture more work, exciting new technologies and renewable energy, battery storage, and for those of us in Los Angeles, the 2028 Olympics. We also heard from experts on politics and pro-labor legislation, member well-being, and how to support our IBEW veterans through programs like VEEP – all with the shared goal to become better stewards for every member.

I know the work picture is top of mind for many of you. As someone who has been in the industry for 35 years, I've seen my share of ups and downs – and the need for belt tightening for me and my family.

It's tough. I know.

Ours can be a feast or famine industry. When times are good, they're really good. And when things are leaner, like they are now for some of our members, it can be very stressful. Especially for those who have been in the business for the past 10-15 years. You've been lucky. Work had been plentiful, with cranes dotting the Southern California landscape.

But as a wise journeyman told me when I was a young pup starting out in the industry, "Save your money, put some aside, so when things get slow, you have something to fall back on." That was good advice. I encourage all of you to follow it.

Good News on the Horizon

Now for some good news. I'm excited to share some

upcoming projects that will soon improve the work picture.

- **Residential sector**
We just settled our residential negotiations last week. Congratulations to everyone involved. Residential is a growing sector for our membership. (See our Page 1 story). Both of the recently passed housing bills – ULA and HHH – will now be covered by these negotiations. Since I've become business manager, we've doubled the size of our residential crew from 20 to 45, and it will keep expanding. We also just started a new apprenticeship class focused on this growing area.

- **2028 Olympics**
This is also a very promising area for near-term work. Our own Tommy Faavae in business development is on the LA28 Sustainability Committee, so he has a front-row seat to all the venues coming online or being renovated.

- **LAX**
LAX is starting to ramp up work again. Contractors are telling us that Q3 will be the beginning of more work in preparation for the Olympics.

- **Convention Center renovation**
Discussions about renovating our aging Convention Center have been going back and forth at City Council for years. But the Olympics is forcing the question, since the Center is scheduled to host several athletic events. We're optimistic the Council will finally vote to allocate the funds, since it will bring additional money to the city.

- **Battery storage**
While the Trump administration is clamping down on any funding for renewable energy, including battery storage,

we already have projects in place. We are concentrating on the private sector to fund these projects including battery storage and offshore wind.

- **New contractors**
Our business development and contractor development divisions have been busy finding new areas of work for our members. (See Ben Frank's piece in this issue about signing several new contractors who are starting to hire our members). Next month we'll talk to Tommy Faavae about what the Olympics will mean for our future.

Robert Corona

Business Manager/Financial Secretary

**ANY
IBEW LOCAL 11
JOURNEYMAN
INTERESTED
IN SALTING?**

Please contact the Organizing Department at:

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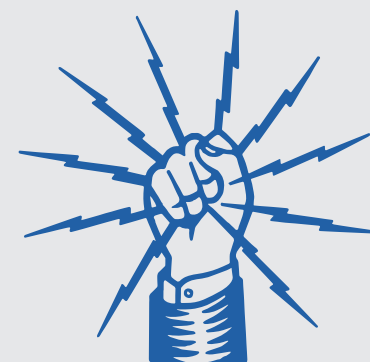
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FROM THE PRESIDENT



We Become Better When We Reflect the Communities We Serve

IBEW 11 has long recognized the need to recruit and retain more female apprentices and journey-level workers and add a new infusion of talent, strength, and innovation to our leadership ranks. Diversity has always been one of our greatest strengths.

Last year, IBEW 11 announced a goal to increase the number

of female members to 10 percent. Our construction female membership in 2024 was around 3 percent and 4.5 percent among apprentices. We're bending the arc toward realizing that goal.

We have been proactively coordinating with national

organizations like the National Association of Women in Construction, non-profits like Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER), organizing apprenticeship readiness programs with the Los Angeles and Orange County building and construction trades, partnering with employers, and awarding agencies to make sure women are better represented on the job.

Our EMPOWER (ETI Mentorship Program Offering Women Extra Resources) program continues to lead the way recruiting, retaining, and supporting female apprentices and journey-level workers.

We've come a long way but have a long way to go. Women will feel like they're more a part of this organization when they see people that look like them in leadership roles and at the apprentice levels. That includes having more women in instructor and management

roles and out on the job sites as foremen, superintendents, project managers, and owners.

From October 6 – December 5, Local 11 will be conducting an All-Women's Veteran Electrical Entry Program (VEEP) Pre-Apprenticeship class, led by Mike Kufchak, Director of Veterans Affairs. VEEP provides veterans with direct entry into the apprenticeship program, as long as they successfully complete the VEEP Program. Please help us spread the word.

Union Brotherhood and Sisterhood are not casual platitudes we use as placeholders; they have a deeper meaning that is rooted in history and a shared bond of solidarity and fraternity. We become a better union when our membership fully reflects the communities we serve. Let's keep moving forward together.

In solidarity,

Alton Wilkerson

LOCKING ARMS IN PROTEST



Left to right: Hector Navarro (E-Board Member), Jorge Hernandez, Zachary Solomon, Citlali Castillo, Yvonne Wheeler, Errol Cutley, Ruben Mendoza, Yezdan Marquez, Joe Mendiola.

IBEW 11 Stands with Labor to Defend Workers' Rights Through the Power of Non-Violent Action

A dozen IBEW 11 Brothers and Sisters stood shoulder to shoulder with an army of more than 1,000 union members, community organizers, political leaders, social justice and civic rights advocates, and ordinary citizens who showed up in force united by a common bond: resist government oppression through non-violent protest.

Across Los Angeles County masked Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are aggressively and randomly stopping and detaining anyone who looks "undocumented," regardless

of their criminal status. Using nothing more than racial profiling, rather than warrants and data, ICE is terrorizing and deporting many of our Brothers and Sisters.

New activists and social justice veterans packed the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor's three-hour Direct Action Training session at the L.A. Convention center last week to learn how to counteract the unconstitutional ICE raids, sharpen their resistance skills and unite in a collaborative space to build courage, clarity, and community.

"We learned how to react without violence," said IBEW 11 organizer Citlali Castillo. "The training showed us a different way to respond if we're approached by ICE on the jobsite or out in the community. It was very empowering, especially the role playing. It desensitized us. We did one exercise where we were at a rally and getting heckled. They showed us how to ignore the heckler or respond in a calm, and non-violent way."

Los Angeles County has become ground zero for the federal government's unprecedented and discriminatory targeting, arrest, and detainment of undocumented immigrants under the guise of "protecting Americans from criminals" – although ICE's own statistics as of June 29 revealed that 72 percent of those swept up in their raids had no criminal record.

This interactive Direct Action Training session equipped participants with the principles and practical tools for non-violent direct action. Rooted in a rich history of social change in the tradition of Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta and more, the training covered strategies, group dynamics, creative protest methods, and how to stay grounded and safe during action.

IBEW 11 Executive Board member Hector Navarro, who attended the training, knows firsthand the terror of indiscriminate ICE raids at the job site. Several weeks ago, masked agents raided a nearby construction site and hauled away seven terrified workers. It was total chaos, with unmarked cars pulling up, and workers running in all different directions, shouting "La Migra!" Navarro said. "Our foreman locked down our jobsite to keep us safe, saying no one could come in or out without going through them. They left us alone."

But he admits we are living in scary times where a certain segment of the population feels as if they have a target on their backs.

"I am born and bred here in the U.S. and 34 years in the union, but it feels like we're back in the 1950s," Navarro said. "I worry because of the way I look. I worry not only about my personal family but also my union family."

To cope, Navarro says he limits the amount of news he consumes, and he now plans to take the new knowledge he's gained and pay it forward.

"I learned what to do if I'm approached – what to say and not to say," he said. "As leaders in the union, we have to work with our members and show them what to do if they are approached."



IBEW 11 Steps Up to Put Members on a Path to Healing and Recovery

By Jeremy Kehoe

The most crowded job site can feel like the loneliest place for an IBEW 11 Brother or Sister struggling in solitude with their mental wellbeing or battling to overcome substance abuse in self-imposed isolation.

IBEW 11 understands that safety extends well beyond the physical. It has prioritized empowering members with access to resources to manage their mental well being and support to plot a path to substance abuse recovery.

IBEW 11 business agents recently completed an intensive, day-long mental health and substance abuse awareness “train the trainer” certification program created by the University of Colorado’s Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center. The national program, Vital Cog, trains business agents to recognize the signals of someone suffering mental distress or the effects of alcohol or drug addiction and act to deliver assistance and educate members on treatment options.

“What Vital Cog did was train us to recognize the signals of when somebody may be in distress and then teach us how to start a conversation where we learn how to approach someone and ask them hard, sometimes uncomfortable questions sympathetically and empathetically,” said IBEW 11 Safety Officer Mike Costigan. “My thought process had always been, ‘Don’t bring it up because you don’t want to be that person,’ but that’s the opposite of what we’re supposed to do.”

“A big part of (Train the Trainer) is about creating awareness and recognition of what some of these red flags may be and giving coworkers empowerment to say, ‘Hey, I’m a little bit concerned about this person; let me check in and ask some very direct questions,’” said Alex Yannacone, Center Director of Education and Community Programs, who led the IBEW 11 training session. “We give them the tools and verbiage to ask those questions and then have them practice facilitating

those exchanges in the training sessions with each other.”

Local 11’s newly certified business agents are now planning to take their Vital Cog knowledge out to train stewards on the job site so they can, in turn, help fellow members who may be struggling.

“Next up is to train our stewards, so if they see someone going through something they can reach out and start a conversation and stay on that path with them to make sure they get their questions answered and get them any assistance they may need,” Costigan said.

The Staggering Numbers

The need for programs like Vital Cog that train members to recognize signs of mental distress, equip them with techniques to assist fellow local Brothers and Sisters in need, and offer them access to vital treatment resources is so critical because the numbers are so staggering.

Roughly 15 percent of tradespeople struggle with substance abuse, twice the rate of the general population. The building trades make up about 7 percent of the U.S. workforce but account for 16 percent of opioid overdoses, according to the nonprofit Center for Construction Research and Training.

The construction industry has one of the highest suicide rates of any profession, with male construction workers’ suicide rate 75 percent higher than that of men in the general population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2022 alone, an estimated 6,000 construction workers died by suicide – six times the number of workers who died from job-related injuries.

The demands of union work are especially fertile soil for mental health and substance abuse struggles. Long commutes to job sites, extended time away from family, chronic pain from backbreaking work, the demands and expectations of exacting work that require perfection, and feast-or-famine job schedules that feed financial stress all contribute to a toxic combination where individual stressors can quickly snowball into overwhelming, life-encompassing events.

“Members need to know that it’s OK to ask for help. It’s OK to not be OK.”

— Mike Costigan
IBEW 11 Safety Officer

“You Are Not Alone”

One of the industry’s most-stubborn roadblocks to recovery is the implicit stigma and shame members associate with asking for help – the fear of being perceived as weak in a “tough-guy” industry (what Costigan calls a “suck-it-up-buttercup culture”) that traditionally celebrates strength and internal grit above all.

“This is especially true for men, where we think of asking for help as a sign of weakness, where we tend to bury things inside and suffer in silence,” Costigan said. “What I try and tell people is that asking for

(Continued on Page 5)

IBEW CREATES PATH TO RECOVERY (Continued from Pg. 4)

help is a sign of strength. When someone's down they should be able to rely on someone who's up, and someone who's up then should be looking out for whoever's down. That's what we're trying to do – go out and ask those hard questions, see if we can get people to open up, and then walk that path with them. Members need to know that it's OK to ask for help. It's OK to not be OK."

Treatment and recovery challenges are made more complex by the sheer diversity of IBEW's membership – Brothers and Sisters from different cultures and ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as multiple generations of veterans – all who view how to manage their mental health and cope with substance abuse through distinctly divergent lenses.

Studies reveal that construction workers suffer some of the highest rates of anxiety and depression and the lowest rates of seeking help. A study published last September by the North America's Building Trades Unions found that just 5 percent of trades workers had consulted a mental health professional,

compared to 22 percent for the general population.

While there is no single solution to help individual members pave their personal path to recovery, there is a universal message, Costigan said: "You are not alone."

"You may feel like you're all by yourself on that path, but there are people in front of you, and there are people behind you," Costigan said. "So, reach out. Just reach out."

"We're excited that IBEW 11 is invested in this training and is committed to use what they've learned to go out and build more understanding and awareness," said Yannacone. "We're really seeing a shift in people wanting to learn more, get involved, and go out and use this knowledge in a meaningful way to make a difference. In just the last three years the shift has been pretty incredible, and I think we're going to see that continue because the need is so great."



**FOLLOW US ON
INSTAGRAM**

Need Help? Reach Out.

Local 11 Recovery Group. In 2022 Costigan partnered with Inside Wireman Zac Solomon to launch the Local 11 Recovery Group, the local's first-ever, district-by-district substance abuse and mental health recovery program. In these open forums members who may be struggling with their mental health or addiction come together to share and learn from those who have overcome those same physical and psychological battles. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 5 pm at the District 4 Hall: 400 Chatsworth Drive in San Fernando.

Members Assistance Program. IBEW's MAP program is free to members and can help with a multitude of issues including family counseling, legal advice, financial advice, and more. MAP is completely confidential. Members can access MAP by calling 877/225-2267 or logging onto www.liveandworkwell.com Access code: **SCIBEW**. Members can also pick up MAP pamphlets at their local district office.

Med Expert. Med Expert is a free service dedicated to helping members improve their health and receive immediate responses from medical professionals. These include finding a doctor, understanding your prescriptions, getting help with insurance issues, and more. Call: 800.999.1989.

9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Hotline. 9-8-8 is the federal suicide and crisis lifeline that provides confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. 9-8-8 is available via call or text, and online chat.

LEADERSHIP SETS SIGHTS ON RESIDENTIAL (Continued from Pg. 1)

Ballot Measures Bring In Billions

A pair of recent local ballot measures supported by Local 11 has laid the foundation for funding a significant number of housing developments.

Measure ULA and Measure A, both backed by Local 11, have created a massive funding pipeline for affordable housing—more than \$700 million from ULA's "mansion tax" to date and an expected \$1.1 billion annually from Measure A's sales tax.

With prevailing wage and labor agreements required on many of these projects, the union is positioned to claim a larger role in residential work.

For Measure ULA, a prevailing wage is required for all construction, and a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) is in effect for any construction or rehabilitation of 40 or more units. Some projects have already broken ground, including one involving signatory contractor SBE.

PLA and prevailing wage requirements offer an additional opportunity to showcase members' skills and training.

With revenue coming from county sales taxes and city real estate transactions, the affordable housing residential building funding stream is not privy to the whims of a federal government determined to eliminate or curb various investments.

These include cuts to the Inflation Reduction Act and various green energy initiatives supported by the Biden administration. Additionally, the funding is perpetual, creating long-term job opportunities.

"We don't have to rely on federal money to get any of these things done," said Business Development Mario Barragan. "The preponderance of funds are generated here locally. So, I think it's an area of growth that some of our new contractors may start looking at."

A Vision Taking Shape

Barragan said organized labor had focused less on residential work as non-union tract homes populated suburban

sprawl. Union residential contractors slowly faded away. Now that's changing.

Local 11 is one of the few unions that maintains a specific residential rate. While the hourly rate for Inside Wireman is the gold standard, the residential rate is more competitive while maintaining union benefits and protections.

Frank said that Local leadership is working to bridge the gap between the Inside and residential rates, and added that residential work is a good option for members looking for hours or boost their medical plan.

A significant component of the Local's strategy is communication. Frank and Barragan are at the forefront of organizing new members, convincing contractors to go union, and maintaining relationships with developers. LMS is an example of a new contractor that has joined the fold.

"It's about building partnerships with contractors who didn't know that we had that workforce," Frank said. "We've been gearing

up for this for a long time. We have a few contractors who have been performing this work for years, and we need a bunch more."

One strategy Frank uses to attract contractors to hire Local 11 residential wiremen is the union advantage. With union electricians, contractors gain a skilled and safety-first workforce while avoiding common violations, such as wage theft and worker misclassification. PLAs further ensure quality work under fair conditions.

Frank credits Local 11 leadership—Business Manager Robert Corona, Political Director Antonio Sanchez, President Alton Wilkeson and Barragan—for their collaborative, forward-looking approach.

"We find out more ways to say yes to things instead of 'no,' and that's the beauty of this administration," Frank said. "They're open to everything. If there's something that we can't provide a contractor to partner up with us, we're flexible. 'How can we change this? How can we make this better?'"

BUSINESS REPORTS

DISTRICT 2



Gary Tomlin

I hope all of my Brothers and Sisters got to enjoy the July 4th weekend. The work picture has picked up, with unfilled calls daily.

Upcoming projects in the D2 area include the start of demolition of the existing Queen Mary Village buildings to make way for the planned amphitheater.

Compton Community College has two new projects starting in July. The first is the Visual & Performing Arts project that Redwave Communications & Electrical will be performing. The second is the new PE Complex, which includes a new two-story gymnasium, a pool house building, and a new pool. Taft Electric will be performing the work on this site.

Long Beach Unified has HVAC upgrades at multiple middle schools, including Carver MS, Marshall MS, and Hoover MS. Neubauer Electric is the electrical contractor for these projects. Carver MS is also conducting a HVAC upgrade with RIS Electrical doing the work.

Washington MS in Long Beach has been demolished and will be rebuilt. This project is not covered under the current PLA, but we will keep an eye on the progression to see if one of our Union Contractors is awarded the project.

DISTRICT 4



Brett Moss

Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings from District Four. I hope this report finds you and your families well.

Job calls have been picking up, and we've been going through the book almost daily. If you are

on the book, please come in and hopefully we can get you back to work.

With summer upon us, please be aware of heat-related problems. Drink plenty of water and watch out for your Brothers and Sisters. Heat illness can become very serious very quickly.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the May D4 blood drive a success. Our next drive is scheduled for August 5. Please contact me to sign up. We partner with Children's Hospital LA for our D4 drives.

As a reminder, D4 unit meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 5 pm at the D4 Hall. Please join us! The D4 Welfare Committee meets on the last Tuesday of each month at the D4 Hall. If you need assistance, please contact me.

Stay safe and be well. Always feel free to reach out via email (bmoss@ibew11.org), phone (626-379-0651), or text.

DISTRICT 6



Tommy Zielomski

Greetings from District 6, Brothers and Sisters. Summer is here and so is the heat. Be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay hydrated and avoid heat-related illnesses. If your contractor doesn't have drinking water on site call your Business Rep. Job calls have picked up over the last couple of months with many going unfilled, including jobs here in D6. Dispatch is open until 2 pm every day, so if you see any unfilled calls after dispatch ends you can still come into the hall and get that job call.

We successfully completed another JW Class here at the D6 Hall. Twenty members successfully completed the Foremanship class. We will be looking to hold more classes here in the future as long as we have members continuing to sign up for them. The District 6 Unit meeting is held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 5 pm at the Diamond Bar office. I encourage all members to attend meetings and get active in their local union.

SOUND & COMMUNICATIONS



Deon J. Mayes

Sisters and Brothers,

I hope our members and their loved ones are safe and well given the events taking place in our community.

Please join me in welcoming Brother Joe Mendiola to IBEW's staff as our newest Business Representative. With his years of field experience, most recently as a Superintendent with Taft Electric, Joe brings valuable insight and leadership to the team. I look forward to working with Joe to ensure our members' needs and concerns are sufficiently addressed.

Over the last few months, we've seen an uptick in job calls. Based on feedback from several employers, we anticipate this trend continuing. Now is the time to make sure your state license(s) and certifications (OSHA, LA QSP, First Aid, etc.) are current. With the ETI and its resources at our disposal, no member should be sidelined due to missing or expired certifications.

CECW



Jackie Waltman

I want to remind all CWs that if you need any help, please don't hesitate to call me. It's very important that you attend school regularly — missing class could put your trainee card at risk.

For those CWs who are currently working, please remember to stay hydrated and drink plenty of water.

Also, don't wait until the last minute to renew your trainee card. Renewals should be completed three months before the expiration date. And remember to make yourself available on the daybook each day you wish to take a job call.

Please don't forget to enter your worked hours on the [LAETT.com](https://laett.com) website — go to Students, then click Student Record, and you'll find the Work Hour Drop section there.

It is an honor to represent you. As always, please reach out to me if you need any assistance. Remember to look out for one another and stay safe out there.

Building Momentum: New Partnerships, More Job Calls, Continued Growth

By Benjamin Frank

This past month has been another exciting chapter in our ongoing mission to grow IBEW Local 11's presence across Los Angeles County. We've continued building strong relationships with our newly signed contractors while strengthening existing partnerships—all with the shared goal of creating more opportunities for our members.

Three newly signed contractors have already begun placing job calls across multiple classifications, including requests for foremen and supervision roles—an encouraging sign of the growth and trust being built. These job calls are more than just numbers; they're a direct reflection of the hard work our team invests in reaching out to non-union contractors, educating them on the value of partnership with Local 11, and supporting them every step of the way.

We don't just sign contractors—we guide them. From initial conversations to their first dispatch, we ensure they feel confident and equipped to succeed as signatory employers. The results speak for themselves: more job calls, more members working, and stronger industry presence.

I take great pride in helping expand our membership and supporting the contractors who believe in union labor. Our mission is clear: grow the IBEW Local 11 family, secure quality work for our members, and continue building a better future for all.

ORGANIZING REPORTS

DISTRICT 4



Ruben Mendoza

Greetings from District 4.

The organizing department has been busy organizing Residential Wireman to help newer signatory contractors who have been acquiring this work to be able to secure the workforce needed.

I have been visiting residential jobs sites. New single-family homes and multi-story residential complexes have risen all over Los Angeles County. In the Santa Clarita area, there are single-family homes going up and most recently in the Woodland Hills area.

I visited a five-story residential job site and was able to organize the entire crew along with the foreman and sent them to work with one of our signatory shops that need this specific workforce to complete the project. If you know any residential electricians, send them our way to organize them into the Local.

Summer months are coming, be sure to stay safe, stay vigilant, and stay hydrated!

DISTRICT 2



Myra Hildreth

Brothers and Sisters,

Each week, I have the privilege of meeting non-union electricians across District 2. I hear their stories, their struggles and their hopes. Every time I do, I'm reminded why organizing matters.

We don't just organize to grow our numbers.

We organize to lift every worker in our trade.

We organize to ensure that no one must settle for less than they deserve, whether it's fair pay, safe working conditions, or a voice on the job.

When I talk to non-union electricians, I don't just see potential members, I see future Brothers and Sisters. I see people who deserve the same dignity and respect that we fight for and continue to protect. In the last month, I have visited non-union job sites in Paramount, Norwalk, Carson, and Torrance. If you know someone who is working non-union, contact your district.

DISTRICT 6



Chris Rosales

Howdy, District 6 Brothers and Sisters! I hope you all had a safe July 4th with family and friends. We continue to visit non-union job sites throughout the district. In Pasadena, Berg Electric has a sizable project at Caltech, and Helix down the street is working on a ground-up MOB (Medical Office Building) for Huntington Memorial Hospital.

Berg and Helix are major competitors and every employee we can organize definitely weakens their workforce and makes Local 11 that much stronger. The ultimate goal is to unite these workers under the IBEW Local 11 banner to promote fair labor practices in the electrical industry. Key strategies include outreach to the non-union electricians to raise awareness about union advantages such as better wages, health insurance, and retirement benefits. As we know, D6 goes from Claremont to the 710 freeway and from the base of the mountains all the way down to Rosecrans, which is past the 91 freeway. So, if you see something say something.

SOUND & COMMUNICATIONS



Citlali Castillo

We're halfway through this year, and we are busy!

The Sound books have been moving for both apprentices and journeyman. Many new organized candidates have spoken to our members on these projects within our city.

This is a great reminder that someone is always looking at our work, our benefits, and our pay.

Certifications are one great benefit that all our members can obtain by taking courses at the ETI. They have made it easy by enabling registering online or in person, if needed. Staying up to date on certifications is so important when it comes to job calls. It is something I always talk about in my organizing conversations with any unrepresented worker.

We are the standard, and what a difference it can make to have a union-qualified installer for our contractors out there. Stay safe!

Local 11 Recovery Group

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.

A GROUP OF IBEW MEMBERS DEDICATED TO ASSISTING AND UPLIFTING OTHERS IN THE RECOVERY PROCESS, AS WELL AS HELPING TO REDUCE THE STIGMA SURROUNDING SEEKING HELP FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

MONTHLY MEETING TO DISCUSS OUR GOALS AND SHARE INFORMATION, FOLLOWED BY A 12 STEP MEETING FOR THOSE INTERESTED

3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH
5:00 PM
DISTRICT 4 HALL
400 CHATSWORTH DRIVE
SAN FERNANDO, CA 91340

IBEW, CSAEW UNITE TO PROTECT WAGES

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"This victory proved that when we stand together and fight for fair wages we will prevail," said IBEW 11 President Alton Wilkerson. "We couldn't have achieved this victory without our partners in the Legislature who stood by our side in this fight to protect prevailing wages."

The proposed wage scale would have set minimums as low as \$20 per hour without accounting for healthcare and forced skilled workers into substandard, non-livable wages. By excluding union workers and contractors, the bill would have favored cheap labor over quality work and disregarded the contributions of high-road contractors who provide career pathways and uphold safety standards.

The impact on CSAEW members would have been catastrophic, said Gretchen Newsom CSAEW International Representative, Government Affairs.

Newsom added while unions should celebrate this victory, they must be prepared for future wage and benefit battles.

"While this win was critical to protecting construction worker wages, development interests and their allies in the Legislature will continue to try and scapegoat 'labor costs' for California's housing affordability crisis, instead of the greed and profits of developers," Newsom said. "We must remain vigilant in our fight to protect fair wages and benefits."



2nd Call is giving Local 11's Gonzalo Varela a second chance

Hard Work, Positivity Help IBEW 11 Member Find Success After Prison

Editor's Note: This profile was originally featured on the IBEW International website.

Gonzalo Varela, a IBEW Local 11 member who recently earned his journeyman wireman ticket after spending more than half of his adult life in prison, is not afraid to share his feelings with his co-workers.

"Sometimes I say, 'I'm grateful to be here with you guys,'" Varela said. "Some guys are like, 'What's wrong with this guy?'"

"I tell them, 'If only you knew where I've been, you'd be happy every day,'" he said. "I have a second chance, and I'm taking it. I'm going with it all the way."

In 1988, Varela was sentenced to serve 15 years to life in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation system.

"I was young and went to a party, and somebody there ended up dying," he said. "I was guilty for saying nothing. I ended up getting incarcerated for keeping quiet. I feel bad about it."

During his time in prison, Varela worked hard to improve himself. "The only good thing I could say about being where I was at [was] I was able to always exercise and read," he said. "I started going to classes and then facilitating classes. I got into every program you can think of."

He also counseled others to be honest with parole boards about why they were incarcerated.

"They would always say, 'It was an accident,' or 'It wasn't me,'" he said. "I would tell them, 'Look: All they want to know is the truth, which is you're guilty for doing the crime, and you're not that same person anymore. You've got to accept responsibility for what you did.'"

Although Varela fully followed his own advice when he went before a parole board himself, he was still surprised when the board found him suitable for release in October 2016.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. "I thought I was going to be there for the rest of my life."

Getting adjusted to a world that had changed dramatically from when Varela went into prison, though, was a major challenge, especially after he decided to do it on his own. "I wasn't sure what to do or where to begin," he said.

The only identification Varela had then was from his state correctional institution, and when asked during job interviews whether he'd been incarcerated, he answered honestly. "They were like, 'We'll call you,' and I'm like, 'They're not going to,'" he said.

Varela kept busy doing volunteer work while living in

transitional housing before he was accepted into an 18-month program run by Los Angeles-based Homeboy Industries, which helps formerly gang-involved and incarcerated people find jobs.

Through Homeboy, Varela was able to get the identification documents he needed, to work a nonunion temp job installing solar panels for residents of lower-income communities and to take courses.

"They had math classes at 6 in the morning on Saturdays," he said. "I kept hearing, 'If somebody wants to get into the IBEW, they have to be sharp at math, and I'm like, 'Who is the IBEW?'"

Staffers at Homeboy told Varela that he could learn more about the union through Second Chance at Loving Life (2nd Call), a nonprofit offering life skills and trades programs.

One of 2nd Call's longtime volunteer facilitators is John Harriel — better known as Big John, chairman of Local 11's executive board and also a formerly incarcerated person.

After Varela started going to 2nd Call meetings on Thursday nights and sharing his story with Harriel and the others, "I got comfortable speaking about myself and utilizing the life skills they taught," he said. "I was surprised that there were others

just like me. That gave me the courage to speak."

Harriel also is a superintendent and diversity manager with IBEW signatory contractor Morrow Meadows. "Big John took a chance on me and got me in at Morrow Meadows as a material handler," said Varela.

By fall 2018, Varela — who had also volunteered at Local 11 in his spare time — felt ready to apply for an IBEW apprenticeship.

"When I went to my interview, I'm like, 'Oh man, they're going to say something because I'm going to put down that I've been incarcerated,'" he said. "They said, 'What we care about is who you are today.'"

Local 11 accepted Varela into its apprenticeship, and he gained broad electrical experience working on construction projects such as a new building at a college in Long Beach; a large parking structure in Los Angeles; and SoFi Stadium, home of the NFL's Chargers and Rams.

In October, Varela topped out of the apprenticeship and became a journeyman wireman.

"We have a very good union," Varela said. "I love every part of what we stand for, because we're strong. The people I surround myself with, they're positive and they believe in giving back and helping out."

“ I have a second chance, and I’m taking it. I’m going with it all the way.”

Varela is also proud of his continued work as a 2nd Call mentor. "I still go every Thursday," he said. "They need to hear that there's somebody that understands what they're going through."

He credits much of his success to his wife, Olga. "She's been my strongest supporter," he said. The couple separated amicably after Varela was incarcerated but reconnected after his release.

Meanwhile, Varela continues to stay positive. "When we mope and complain, it doesn't get us anywhere," he said. "That's not about making the best of it and being able to provide for my family."