



# IBEW LOCAL UNION 21 FRONTLINE

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## Happy New Year!



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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Paul Wright - President - Business Manager - Financial Secretary



## Be Leaders!

I hope everyone had a safe and happy Holiday Season. Looking back, 2015 was a very busy year for me professionally and in my family life, as I am sure it was for all of you. Looking ahead into 2016 I don't think that pace will slow down. Let me talk about some of the issues I see impacting our Local and our membership this coming year.

We will continue bargaining two open contracts with the terribly anti-union **Comcast** Corporation. They appear to have launched a renewed nationwide attack on union workers. I'm very proud of our Comcast members for fighting back against their employer's attempts to break their collective bargaining rights. I'd like to thank the many Sisters and Brothers employed by other companies who have come out to support these members. You truly embody union pride.

**Altura Communications** is another terribly anti-union company who is attempting to wipe out our members' collective bargaining rights in part by using the services of a law firm who specializes in "union avoidance." It is a pathetic move by a once great company that now can't seem to get out of its own way and another example of corporate greed trying to prevail over the very fiber that built the company.

There's some good news in organizing and bargaining. We organized the **Lake County Indiana 911** folks and opened their contract negotiations. We continue to bargain our **Direct Sat** member's first contract and have reached agreements with several other employers this past year.

In other staff articles, you'll learn about the various contracts being negotiated now and in 2106. Please support our Brothers and Sisters during these emotional times. We all grow stronger when we help each other, especially during bargaining.

I'd like to shift your attention to some issues at **AT&T**. During 2015 we endured some highs and some lows. The closing and downsizing of various centers is very troubling. Here again is an example of an employer seeming to turn its back on the employees who helped build this giant. Allow me to clarify that statement. Many of you know I've been outspoken about this, as well as about problems we own in some of the centers. That issue is attendance.

A lot of good union members and their families are being hurt by poor center attendance. I'm in no way letting management off the hook on this one. While some employees seem to think it is okay to take endless amounts of time off claiming to be ill, management fails to deal with attendance in a way that doesn't endanger the majority of the good members/employees who show up to do their jobs every day. The blame doesn't stop there for management.

The Directors, General Managers and Vice Presidents who hide in their offices and allow this kind of mismanagement and employee abuse, should be fired for not doing their jobs. Let's face the truth here, corporate pressures drive center consolidations but these cowards are hiding and doing nothing because it allows them to make the decision to close a center based on under-performance. The reality is their own dereliction of duty is forcing them to put good employees out on the street.

I say this with all due respect to our truly ill members and to all of the able bodied members who show up to do their jobs and who care about the customers and the future of the company. It is very sad to watch this type of incompetence being rewarded at the management levels of a corporation built with union pride. True leaders, Lead!!! They don't bury their head in the sand and wait for the storm to pass. There are literally hundreds of our members in several departments being affected by this sort of incompetence in all levels of management. They need to do their jobs and manage the business with the common sense and moral compass that God blessed them with. Only then they will realize the assets being flushed down the corporate toilet.



## Be Creative - Scholarship News

The IBEW Local 21 Scholarship committee consists of Michael Andel, Heather Brown, Devon Jennings, Joan Welton and me. We meet annually to decide the theme for each year's essay contest. This year we decided to try something new to get ideas on what Unions mean to our students. The more we discussed this new idea, the more excited we became about the entries we'd receive.

This year the subject is "An interpretation of the role union members play as a positive force in the community." Applicants have the option of writing an essay, or showing creativity through a video, photograph, poster, artwork, or music. If you opt to do this, please include a brief explanation.

The complete rules are listed on the IBEW Local 21 website. All electronic submissions should be sent to Jsullivan@ibew21.org. Any questions please call me, Jacquie Fields, at 630-960-4466, ext. 374. Have fun with this project, we are so excited to see the creative ideas you or your college student will submit.



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## Be Leaders (continued)

That said, I am happy to report on the continued training and dispatch of our **Premises Technicians** on the Direct TV product. This work is an example of the continued evolution of our industry and why it is important to all of our futures.

We also continue to work on AT&T's shift toward more fiber placement to address the always growing demand for IP and other data consumption. While it has obvious impacts on the traditional network operations, it is also creating work in the deployment and turn up of the supported product and services fiber allows the company to offer.

In closing, keep your eyes and ears open for the many different solidarity events planned for 2016. I ask you to challenge yourselves to get involved. Consider helping in organizing one of the events. Those of you who have become more involved are making a difference in the communities where we live and work. It is all about our solidarity moving forward as one regardless of employers. We will all be better for it. Thank you in advance for building a stronger Union.



Scott Brady with Paul receiving his winnings from the Kunas 50/50 Split the Pot Raffle.







## Am I Talking to You?!?!?

We all have that project we put off by saying we will get to it later when we have time. For me that time has arrived, but with your help I'm hoping this project will go quicker than I expect. For those of you who don't

know, I'm the person who sends out the text messages and those emails that occasionally have a misspelled word or wrong information. BTW as I tell Paul, those are always intentional to make sure you are reading the information.

Some of you may be saying "I don't get emails or text messages," or "I used to get them but now I don't," or "I get them at several email addresses." My favorite situation is after investigating, I see their messages are going to a CompuServe email. Which brings me back to the project I've been avoiding.

It is time for me to clean up the email and texting database I inherited. Over the next several months I will be looking at what email address we have on file for all of our members. I will also be checking cell phone information for our text messages. I want to delete all of the bad information and update it with your correct email and cell phone numbers.

I need your help! Please, fill out the form on the next page and send it back to me in the Union hall. Please print very clearly the email address and the cell phone number (you must include your provider) you want to receive IBEW 21 information. ALSO if you receive emails at multiple addresses, please indicate if I can delete any accounts you don't use and which ones they are.

As Dave mentions in his article, with your involvement our Union will become stronger. Communicating with every Local 21 member is the first step. I need your help, so after you read Dave's article grab a pen, rip out the page to the right, fill it out and get it to me.

In closing I'd like to thank all of you who have made donations and have given your time in our community outreach events this year. Our Officers and staff are proud of you and so are the organizations we help. They are extremely grateful for your generosity. I'd like to give a special shout out to our members in Peoria who helped the children served by Crittenton Centers. Our premise technicians who made the cover of this issue are amazing. They literally took over the event at Mercy Home. This was the first time I had to turn away volunteers because of their involvement. I thank you and so do the kids!

By Dave Webster, Organizing Business Representative



## Let's Get Ready!

We all know the AT&T contract expires on June 24, 2017. We can't wait until the last minute to start building our internal networks. Chief Stewards and Business Reps servicing the AT&T agreement will be out in the field talking

to stewards and members about building solidarity for 2017 negotiations.

In workplaces stewards are the face of our Union. We will need everyone to step up and support our bargaining team with visible acts of solidarity to let the company know Local 21 members are united and prepared to fight for a fair deal. AT&T has shown they have plenty of money



as evidenced by the DirecTV acquisition. Negotiations in 2017 will be the time to show the company that while we support them in their efforts to increase their profit margins, we demand our fair share!

We will continue to communicate what's happening and encourage members to share their thoughts and ideas with their Chief Stewards and Businesses Reps or contact us at the union office you can call me at 630 960-4466 Ext. 449 or you can contact Bob Przybylinski at Ext. 447.

This round of bargaining we can achieve the most if we ACT AS ONE with the realization that we are all in this together. We will win a fair contract when we show AT&T that we support our negotiators and we will NOT back down because

**Our Solidarity is Greater than Theirs!**

# IBEW Local 21 Member Communication & Volunteer Update

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: (     ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Can IBEW Local Union 21 send you text message updates?

Yes - Cell Phone Provider: \_\_\_\_\_  No

We must know who your cell phone provider is so we can send you text messages.

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Can IBEW Local Union 21 send you email updates?     Yes             No

Can we discontinue sending emails to all of your other accounts we have on file for you?

Yes             No - If no what other email addresses should we keep? \_\_\_\_\_

\* To discontinue receiving email and text updates you will need to call the IBEW Local 21 Union Hall

What is your Facebook name? \_\_\_\_\_ What is your Twitter Username? \_\_\_\_\_

If you move or change any of your contact information please call the Union Hall so we can update your membership record.

I would like to volunteer to help with:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing Campaigns   | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature Distribution       | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Visits for Organizing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Rallies         | <input type="checkbox"/> Informational Picketing       | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Banks                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Campaigns | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Activities       |

Are you registered to vote?     Yes             No

Please Mail or Fax Completed Forms to:  
IBEW Local 21, 1307 W Butterfield Road Suit 422. Downers Grove, IL 60515 Attn: Bob P. Fax 630-960-9607

# 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



## Much Negotiation

★ Let me start by saying I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In the 4th quarter **AT&T** again decided to downsize its workforce. For many it was just before the holidays.

As one surplus ended management announced another. The company is following the process outlined in Article 30. Through negotiations, your Union leadership has been able to reduce the surplus in many departments, while eliminating the surpluses in other departments by offering a general SIPP. We'll continue to negotiate with management to find positions for the at risk employees. The company will unfortunately continue to consolidate centers into locations where they have more competitive labor agreements with no regards to the employees who are effected. With these announcements comes many concerns into how much AT&T really values their core landline business.

AT&T has come to the Union again to send employees from SDA to California for a four month detail. The first group left on November 30th with a return date of April 1st. Your leaders have sought out these details over the past three years to keep as many members working during the ever changing environment in the telecommunications industry.

### In other contracts around Local 21:

Representatives from Locals 51, 702 and 21 completed a benefits reopener in the **Frontier Legacy** agreement. It allows Legacy employees to move into the NECA/IBEW medical, dental and vision plans under the MIFA 2 agreement. This will drastically reduce the cost Frontier Legacy employees have been paying for their benefits.

Frontier has been in an overtime freeze. This freeze is causing many customers' issues to go unresolved for long periods of time. Sound familiar AT&T members?

The **Frontier MIFA 2** contract (13 employees) expires in May 2016. We'll meet with our members to discuss proposals for the negotiations that will begin in March.

At **CenturyLink** the "contracting out" arbitration has been heard; legal briefs were submitted to the arbitrator in October. We hope to have the arbitrator's decision back soon.

Local 21 has been bargaining the national **Altura** agreement since early summer. Altura management is attempting to strip away all of our members' rights in these negotiations. They stated that the contract is too restrictive to run their business. Their local management has been running their business with the current contract language and are too lazy or inept to utilize the language that already exists

We have been bargaining with **DirectSat** the Direct TV contractor group we organized in January 2014. Negotiations are going slow. Management has fought us at every turn. We didn't start bargaining until September 2014 because of NLRB charges we filed to recoup money the company wouldn't pay our members. These negotiations will continue until we have a fair contract for our new members.



Your donations to the IBEW 21 Days of Giving Toys and Coat Drive fill the Union Hall!

VISIT US ON THE WEB: [IBEW21.ORG](http://IBEW21.ORG) LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Mike Scime,  
Business Representative



## Our Members are Working Hard at Doing a Great Job

★ I'm a rookie at writing a *Frontline* article, so please bear with me. In April, President Paul Wright appointed me as a Business Representative for

Central and Western Illinois. I very much appreciate the opportunity and welcome the obligation and duty. My responsibilities include the representation of: Construction, I&R, Central Office, Rock Island Consumer Sales Center, Peoria Collection Center, and Heddington Oaks Elder Care Facility in West Peoria.

I am a 28 year AT&T construction employee. For 24 of those years I have been a Steward, a Chief Steward, and now a Business Representative. I'm in my second term as the Unit 5 Executive Board Member.

First, I can't say enough about your Union Stewards who do so much work and represent our members every day. Good stewards are invaluable and I appreciate all of them. The great support from our Chief Stewards and Business Representatives make every task easier and I thank them for it. I believe we are in very capable and trustworthy hands with excellent leadership.

In Central Illinois, at **Heddington Oaks** 174 IBEW members just voted decisively in favor of a new 2-year contract. Mike Roach and I worked together in negotiations and are happy to report the contract was ratified with Peoria County on November 12, 2015. Our hardworking members include LPN'S, CNA's, Janitorial, Food Service, Laundry, Housekeeping, and Clerks. The work is demanding and our members are capable and dependable with some employed there since the early 80's. That is quite a feat considering how rare 30 years longevity is, at nursing facilities.

The **Rock Island Call Center** has 12 new employees in training. The office has 97 members, some have been there since 1991. This center has transitioned several times as the company transforms to new products, and the center continues to succeed. They are currently changing from a "Stim" center to a new Direct TV sales center. These dedicated Sisters and Brothers have continually maintained a successful center for nearly 3 decades.

The **Peoria Collection Center** is currently getting 30 displaced Customer Account Specialists predominantly from 225 Randolph in Chicago. This will be the third such transfer to Peoria in the last 3 years, including the 2013 closure of the Chicago Heights Office. It's impressive the way all of these members work together to keep this busy center a high performing facility. They are truly members to be proud of; resilient, dependable and dedicated. With the additional members who came to Peoria in December, the center will exceed 110 union employees.

In the future I hope report about the rest of the mid-state members who I have the pleasure to work with. Hope to see you at the union meetings!



Local 21 members and their families helping out at My Joyful Heart.



Karen Battisfore,  
Business Representative



## AT&T Set To Close The NCVC

★ **AT&T** closed the National Credit Verification Center. With the memories still fresh in my mind of them closing the WLACC, this news was hard to take. Lack of work is what the company

explained during the meeting. Customers are no longer setting up U-verse and POTS line service. Direct TV is the primary offer in our sales units and the process of Direct TV credit verification isn't being assigned to the NCVC to handle.

The NCVC consisted of 70 employees including CAS and TA and TS. Of these employees 31 opted to displace the least senior employees in the title group as outlined in Article 30, but thankfully no one in Peoria was displaced. The TA's and TS's also found new homes at different locations many as a SIPP match with only one least senior TA bumped out of their location. Thankfully again, that employee also landed at a new address as a SIPP match maintaining their job.

It's been difficult for some of the employees to find jobs. There aren't a lot of available positions out there anymore. The testing and interview process isn't easy, and after the confirmations there are limited commutable jobs available on the VSIPP list.

Local 21 filed a grievance against the company for its decision to close the NCVC. We will be looking into all options in an effort to prevail in the grievance process. I will update you in future a *Frontline* article.

Byron Bonham,  
Business Representative



## Progress in Lake County

★ First, I'd like to thank all the stewards who attended our after-hours stewards' meetings. It's because of their dedication that I believe all of us had fun and we'll be better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead in 2016. I'd also like to thank all the **Dispatchers in Lake County Indiana** for their continued work and support during their first contract negotiation.

In early 2015, Local 21 started a campaign to bring the Lake County 911 Dispatchers into our Union. After a very strong 68 "yes" to 4 "no" vote we welcomed our new Sisters and Brothers into the IBEW and made our request to begin bargaining. The IBEW21-LC 911 Bargaining Team is Dennis McCafferty, Heather Brown, Verlean Martin, Shelley Angeloni, Amy Petruch, and me.

Together, the team has recently made some substantial progress at the bargaining table. Issues regarding Union Recognition, Safety, Seniority, No Strike/ No Lockout, a Union Rights clause and an agreement as to how Collective Bargaining of future contracts will proceed have all been tentatively agreed to (TA). However, we still have many issues to address. We've made significant progress in less than 12 short months since the consolidation process began, and look forward to contract explanation meetings hopefully in the very near future.

AT&T announced another layoff in **Global Services** (Datacom) with the surplus announcement early in the fourth quarter. Many of the employees identified as surplus have been placed in jobs through Article 30. Unfortunately, this last surplus announcement will cause us to lose some very good Union Sisters and Brothers. The layoff in Global Services was resolved in Local 21's area with volunteers accepting other positions and volunteers accepting the layoff allowance described in Appendix D of the contract. As we enter 2016 and get closer and closer to the 2020 plan AT&T describes, we stand in solidarity in our efforts to find new opportunities and protect job security.





Mike Grindle,  
Business Representative



## Be Safe at Work and at Home

★ The Holiday Season is for many a period of reflection; a time to pause and give Thanks, to spend time with family and friends, and to reflect upon the closing of one year and the beginning

of another. My wish for all of you is that you have a safe and prosperous New Year.

With the changing of the seasons comes a change of weather, which brings with it a fresh set of concerns over safety, both at home and in the workplace. Routine tasks which we perform every day can require a little more attention to detail during the winter months. Lower temperatures mean freezing rain, snow, and ice, and the shorter days mean that many of us will sometimes be working in darkness. Please take the time to be safe, whether you are at work, or at home. If you notice someone in your life attempting to perform a task unsafely, please take the time to speak up, and help that person to do the right thing.

As reported at Unit Meetings, our members at **Johnson Controls** ratified a new three-year deal in late September, which was retro-active to August 1st.

Unfortunately for our members at **Altura**, their bargaining has not been going as smoothly; the contract expired on July 31st, and we've been working under the terms of that expired agreement since then. The Union and company remain far apart on several key issues; including company proposals to cut the pay of some members by approximately 15%, and the ability for the company to contract out work even while laying off bargaining unit members (which would mean that our members would be asked to literally vote themselves out of a job), to name a few. Though the negotiations have been contentious, we are still hopeful of achieving our goal of a fair, new contract.



After reviewing the work which the **AT&T** has shifted from the Engineering Assistants to Engineers, we are filing grievances seeking to protect their rights, as we feel that the technological change which the company announced several years ago did not give them the right to assign EA work to Engineers. There will be more to follow on this in the coming days, weeks, and months.

Many of the issues which we've been dealing with at AT&T seem the sort that have always been around. Problems with scheduling, overtime distribution, and unfair discipline are not exclusive to any one group. As always, we try to work through these issues on a case by case basis, and if we can't get it resolved through the application of a little common sense, we process a grievance. Communication remains a key component to the resolution of issues in the workplace. Please continue to keep your Steward, Paul Waters or myself informed of issues when they arise.



Christopher Jarchow and Gary Vidal deliver your backpack donations to families who lost their homes in the Coal City tornado.



Jerry Rankins,  
Business Representative

## Worker Justice at the NLRB

★ On September 17th the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) conducted a second decertification election at **Comcast's Chicago Cortland** location.

Despite management's best efforts to destroy the voice of workers through illegal practices that would have eliminated 30 years of collective bargaining rights, our members achieved victory!

The victory comes after a yearlong battle. The NLRB board found merit to sustain our Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charges that resulted in a six month bargaining order and a new election. They tossed out Comcast's tainted 2014 decertification vote.

This story is really about the workers who trusted the message of Union leadership and took the time to talk about the truth to their fellow brothers, who ultimately dismantle the dark/evil work of Comcast. I'm proud it resulted in **worker justice**. We are thankful for the victory, but much more work continues. We must not forget how we achieved justice at the NLRB. Eight years ago under a Republican administration, it would have been impossible to achieve such success at the NLRB; we simply can't afford to forget this fact when we vote.

Next February 28th it will be three years since these workers received a raise and two years since the contract expired. Greed has driven Comcast to lose their way at the expense of their workers and their families leading to the erosion of our community. Comcast CEO Brian Roberts's hourly pay is over **\$15,000** totaling over **\$31 million annually**. The corporation takes in billions each year from loyal customers but refuses to be responsible and pay a fair-living wage to its workers. This systemic problem of corporate greed and wage suppression, forces the Comcast workers and their spouses to work multiple jobs while their kids are left alone at risk from Chicago's violence.

At the **Comcast West** unit located in DuPage, Kane, and Kendal counties, the contract expired last April; we're currently working under an extension. There is nothing

complex about these negotiations, but it's the goal of evil Comcast to demolish both bargaining units. Stall tactics that frustrate workers is a nationwide Comcast practice. Workers everywhere are becoming educated to the fact that collective bargain means a voice at the work-place, provides for economic/social justice with dignity, and provides hope for a brighter future for their family. United we bargain, divided we beg.

Welcome back brother Kraig Kramer! An arbitrator ruled that he wasn't fired for just cause. Comcast was ordered to reinstate our Brother and for him to be made whole regarding his lost wages etc. Again welcome back!!

## Caring and Sharing

Special thanks to our entire Local 21 membership, for your participation and support of the Kunas Memorial Fund Bowling Outing that benefited Sister Jackie Thomas. She's currently off on disability from the **OEMC** - Office Emergency Management Communications 911 Center in Chicago.

On June 30, 2016, the Unit 2 agreement expires. We expect negotiations to be contentious, but we shall be prepared with a unified union body (YOU) to keep what the CBA currently provides, and push forward.

Simply put the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) is not for your leisure, nor your pleasure so refrain from unauthorized usage. Failure to adhere to this admonishment places you at risk for discipline. As a reminder, the Chicago Residency Ordinance requires you to live in the City, a lack of compliance on your part places your employment at risk; they're watching. Work smart and work safe! Remember "Our strength is in our unity".





CJ Cleveland Johnson,  
Business Representative

## Just Follow Their Rules

★ I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. As we move into 2016, allow me to make some observations.

In 2015, **AT&T** was disciplining heavily for OP78.

It is not a new policy. It's been in effect for about five years. I know some of our members feel it's unreasonable for the company to demand that their vehicles are locked up or otherwise secured when unattended. In the past the rule was vehicles should be left open with the keys in the ignition overnight. But their rules have changed. After being disciplined and/or watching others being disciplined for OP78, it seems the membership would have caught on and remembered to lock the vehicles. This is the same as when GPS/VTS was first introduced. We got caught by it at first but we rarely have issues with that anymore.

Occasionally there are circumstances where the violation is not the fault of the member. Some vehicles with bin doors use the same key. In those cases we can usually get the issue resolved. Usually after investigating the circumstances, we find that the member simply forgot to lock the door, or left something in cab of the vehicle. Now don't get me wrong, I think it's ridiculous that members are disciplined for leaving a print or cellphone in a locked vehicle in a locked company facility. However, it's been five years. How long are techs going to keep doing it and allow management to take their money, and in some cases their jobs for not following the rule?

The other big violation is **failure to report**. It's when an employee doesn't tell the company about arrests, traffic tickets and such. I realize that most people feel what happens during your off work time shouldn't affect your job. Whether we like it or not, these days it does. It's very important who AT&T sends into customer's homes. The public expects and demands people be vetted and trustworthy.

Traffic violations are a little different. In most cases reporting traffic violations wouldn't make a difference. For example, getting a traffic ticket (other than DUI) probably wouldn't affect your job unless you have other traffic convictions on your driving abstract. But what happens is, when management starts investigating an unrelated issue for possible discipline, they find some minor traffic violations that the member didn't report. These just get added on, making the situation worse. In some cases, what started the investigation may be cleared, but then the member is subject to discipline or termination for failing to report the ticket, arrest or whatever. The Code of Business Conduct says you must report all of these events, whether major or minor. So going forward, please follow it and report all violations that you are required to report. The job you save might be your own.

Thank you for your time. And let's have a prosperous 2016. Solidarity!



Local 21 Premise Technicians making a difference at Mercy Home.





John Dolsen,  
Business Representative

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★ The year 2015 proved to be a busy one. From new member orientations to surplus announcements, grievance meetings and dismissal panels, we've had our hands full. The majority of the members from our area test

qualified and matched VSIPP positions. Our track record for returning members to work from dismissal panels was better than fifty percent for the year.

The IBEW 21 preference agreement with Uverse management has allowed over 250 members to move to locations of their choice, closer to their homes. We are currently meeting with the company to renew the agreement.

Safety continues to improve in the Northern suburbs. On the job injuries and motor vehicle accidents continue to decrease. Please be careful out there. The IBEW was founded on safety. Remember this on and off the job, "No job is so important and no service is so urgent, that we cannot take time to perform our work safely and in an environmentally responsible manner." I look forward to an even safer 2016!

Quarterly steward's meetings in 2015 were a great success. The meetings are intended to help our new stewards while continuing to educate our veteran stewards. We will continue them in 2016 with the goal of 100% involvement from our stewards.

A new year brings new resolutions. Some people may commit to lose weight, while some want to give up a bad habit. I urge you to make getting involved with your union part of your 2016 resolution. We are only eighteen short months away from the expiration of our contract. This may seem like a long time away but 2017 will be here sooner than you know.

Get involved, attend your union meetings, volunteer, and make your voice heard. Save your money and prepare for what possibly could become the fight of our lives. Your involvement as a union member will strengthen our local, and help show the company we are united. Start thinking about what you are going to do as a proud union member.

Again I would like to recognize and thank our stewards. Their job is not an easy one. They work hard every day to make things fair and to provide a better work environment for our members. Their dedication makes me proud to be a union member. Lastly Mike Andel and I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy New Year.

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## Are You Investing in Yourself? By Parisa Homara - Manager of Client Services, The Sage Group

If there is one thing you can rely on being constant, it's change.

AT&T has made it clear that the technologies they utilize will change drastically by the year 2020. To keep up with the industrywide changes everyone will need to learn new skills to market themselves as the company changes. Simply put, knowledge is power.

The Sage Group has successfully trained union members for nearly thirty years by positioning itself at the forefront of technological innovation and sharing industry-specific expertise with eager learners nationwide.

We offer education and training solutions that focus on career advancement. Our courses can be taught by our expert instructors onsite, by distance learning technologies, or online at your own pace. Our in-demand courses include, but are not limited to: Fiber Optics & Fusion Splicing, Advanced Fiber Optics, A+ Essentials, Network +,

CCNA, Cloud Essentials, 4G LTE, Mobility +, Solar and many more. These courses can result in industry certifications, college credits and state licenses.

So to answer the big question, how can you pay for our programs? None of us have exorbitant funds just lying around. That said, as an AT&T member of IBEW Local 21, you have bargained for tuition aid and Career & Personal Development Plan (CPDP) benefits to prepare yourself with the necessary skill sets to secure your future. If you are a member who is not an AT&T employee please contact us so we can assist you with finding out about possible education benefits within your company.

Need more information? Feel free to contact The Sage Group's Parisa Homara at 312-219-1885 or [ParisaH@thesagegrp.com](mailto:ParisaH@thesagegrp.com) to find out about upcoming classes, as well as how to prepare yourself to address the changes on the horizon.



## Survival of the Fittest

Looking back over 2015 politically, it's difficult to find any reason to be thankful especially with the continuing stalemate going on in Springfield, where the Governor is actually doubling down on his misguided survival of the fittest-my way or the highway political agenda.

Make no mistake folks, that's exactly what this is... an agenda. For the last six months, this man has quite defiantly thumbed his nose at the legislative process by refusing to submit a state budget for consideration by the General Assembly as is constitutionally required by virtue of his office. This man has no intention of governing in the traditional sense of the word. He honestly believes that when he bought his way into office, he was given the green light to run state government the way he runs his businesses, unmercifully with no regard for the human condition. To him it's about two things, doing away with the social safety net and getting rid of unions. And he doesn't care who gets hurt while he's doing it. He and his inner circle of extraordinarily wealthy friends believe that government has no place in attempting to mitigate the growing disparity between the rich and the poor. Obviously the view is much better from where they're sitting...

As I reflect on the last year politically, I am truly amazed that we are where we are. It's no secret that one of the reasons this guy is even sitting in office is because more than a few Union members actually voted for him. Why people continue to vote against their own best interest in this day and age is beyond me especially since he made no secret what he was about. He walked in the door giving us all the finger and I'll be damned if some of us didn't shake his hand while he was doing it! What causes me the most heartache is the fact that almost 70% of organized labor's registered voters couldn't be bothered to cast a ballot. To put that number into perspective, keep in mind that the age old argument in politics has been that participation in the process, through voter registration and turnout has historically trumped money (no pun intended). We are approaching the 6th anniversary of the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling and while I won't say that he with

the most money wins, it does become a whole lot easier when more than two-thirds of Union members sit home and do nothing!

While we're on the subject of money, over \$65 million was spent buying a seat at the Governor's mansion. One-half of that came out of his own pocket, the other half came from just 9 other people! Ironically, a campaign finance law that was supposed to limit the influence of the wealthy by providing a level playing field had an absolute opposite effect, the more of his own money he put in, the more money his friends could give him.

Your Political Department is currently preparing for what promises to be a very interesting 2016. The Primary season is just around the corner and will be here before we know it. In Illinois, the Primary is March 15, 2016 with early voting beginning on February 4th. In Indiana, the Primary is May 3, 2016 with deadline to register April 4th.

It's not possible to overemphasize the importance of getting involved this time around. The files have been checked and the homework is done. We know who is registered and who isn't. We know who has been voting and who hasn't. We will be reaching out to ALL of you to maximize participation. We know the other side is smelling blood in the water and is going to throw un-godly sums of money against us to further their agenda. There is \$36 million sitting in a super PAC fund ready to be utilized by these people in the next election and it's going to candidates who aren't even remotely considered friends of ours. The only way we can win is if we all get involved.

Union membership is advanced citizenship Sisters and Brothers, you have to want it and you have to be willing to put up a fight to keep it; it doesn't work any other way. I would like to thank the membership for all they've done and will continue to do and extend the very best New Year greetings to you and your families, take care and GOD Bless!





## Join the Army!

It's the new year so how about some good news? We live in a world torn apart by war, threatened by terrorism, and a nation separated by inequality and lack of economic opportunity. We are part of the Organized Labor

family that many see on its knees.

There is Hope. We helped start a national conversation about economic inequality, and the role of unions, both nationally and locally. We have the example of maybe the most successful strike in modern history—the Chicago Teachers' Union.

After decades of looking the other way union workers from the automotive to service industries are starting to tell employers 'enough is enough' with contracts that whittle away the ranks of the middle class. In the UAW national auto contract, workers in the Chicago Ford plant rejected the deal that didn't eliminate the second tiering of workers and wiped out pensions for the newest hires. Carhousers, who deliver cars from the factories to dealers, also voted down a deal, rejecting more outsourcing, by an 87 percent vote.

We have a national movement for a federal minimum wage, which would lift people from the deep hole of poverty up to the margins. It's a question of morals in an economy that is evermore leaving people behind. Tipped workers haven't had their carved-out minimum wage increased since the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991. At that time \$2.13 was half the minimum wage; today it's just 29 percent.

One candidate, draped in the best legacy of real Democratic politics, is making these issues a national conversation. Please, if you hear Bernie Sanders called a Socialist, without the Democratic appellation, don't perk your ears up at that dog whistle. Search out his speeches and statements on social media. He may not win the nomination of his party, but he will move the discussion to the issues which matter to working and working poor Americans. For the first time in over 40 years, we have a voice on the political landscape who is speaking to

working men and women, about the threat of foreign trade deals, a living wage, and why college is so unaffordable for this generation of Americans!

There is a spirit building in America. Be a part of it! For more than two decades we were led to believe that America's decline, in status and economic opportunity was unavoidable. But it's not true and we can hear it for ourselves. The decline of the middle class and the economic ladder that led people to the middle class was destroyed by policy choices at the highest level. It can be restored by policy choices at the highest level. We have to be engaged and active in making that happen.

In the 11 months before this election—yes it's a long time away-- help build the movement and the message. If you prefer another candidate, make them speak about issues important to working families. Show your union pride; show your neighbors that you are part of a union AND part of your community. We are fighting a marketing battle, many people who lost what they had resent union folks for what we still have. We are not the enemy. We are the army to bring the middle class back!

### CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

#### AT&T

- Rose Powell
- John Sobieszczyk
- Ruth Griffin
- Timothy Dodge
- Steve Czyz
- James Kennedy
- Thomas Oliva
- Thomas Barry
- Wanda Moragne
- Myles O'Reilly
- Arthur Gamez
- Marsha Oatman
- Wendy Elem
- Kelli Ambrosch
- Rebecca Waechter
- Brian Chemasko
- Myles O'Reilly

#### City of Chicago 911

- Karen Martin
- Douglas Macconnell
- Joan Carroll
- Nancy Osborne

#### Heddington/Peoria

- Sandra Roberts

#### Gardenview Manor

- Anna Sykes



**Get involved—attend an upcoming Union Meeting!**

|               | <b>JAN</b>   | <b>FEB</b>  | <b>MARCH</b>   |
|---------------|--|---|--|
| <b>UNIT 1</b> | <b>14th - 7 pm</b>   | <b>11th - 7 pm</b>  | <b>10th - 6 pm</b>   |
|               | Best Western Hillside<br>4400 Frontage Rd.<br>Hillside, IL 708-544-9300      | Gideon Welles<br>4500 N. Lincoln Ave.<br>Chicago, IL 847-209-1417           | IBEW Local #134<br>600 W. Washington Blvd.<br>Chicago, IL 312-474-4186     |
| <b>UNIT 2</b> | <b>12th - 7 pm</b>   | <b>9th - 7 pm</b>   | <b>8th - 7 pm</b>  |
|               | Gaelic Park Banquet Hall<br>6119 W. 147th<br>Oak Forest, IL 708-687-9323     | Lansing American Legion #697<br>18255 Grant St.<br>Lansing, IL 708-474-5906 | Slovak Club<br>6920 Broadway<br>Merrillville, IN 219-756-5101              |
| <b>UNIT 3</b> | <b>21st - 7 pm</b>   | <b>18th - 7 pm</b>  | <b>17th - 7 pm</b>   |
|               | Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites<br>495 Airport Rd.<br>Elgin, IL 847-488-9000      | IBEW Local #364<br>6820 Mill Rd.<br>Rockford, IL 815-398-6282               | Gurnee American Legion<br>749 Milwaukee<br>Gurnee, IL 847-244-9282         |
| <b>UNIT 4</b> | <b>13th - 7 pm</b>   | <b>10th - 7 pm</b>  | <b>9th - 7 pm</b>  |
|               | IBEW Local #145<br>1700 52nd Ave. Suite A<br>Moline, IL 309-736-4239         | IBEW Local #21<br>1307 W. Butterfield Rd. #422<br>Downers Grove, IL         | Lemont VFW<br>15780 New Ave.<br>Lemont, IL 630-257-9859                    |
| <b>UNIT 5</b> | <b>20th - 6:00 pm</b>  | <b>17th - 7:00 pm</b>   | <b>16th - 5:30 pm</b>  |
|               | U.A.W. Local #974<br>3025 Springfield Rd.<br>East Peoria, IL 309-694-3151    | IBEW Local #146<br>3390 N. Woodford St.<br>Decatur, IL 217-877-4604         | IBEW Local # 538<br>1290 N. Michigan Ave.<br>Danville, IL 217-442-0996     |
| <b>UNIT 6</b> | <b>19th - 5:30 pm</b>  | <b>16th - 7:00 pm</b>   | <b>15th - 5:30 pm</b>  |
|               | IBEW Local #193<br>3150 Wide Track Dr.<br>Springfield, IL 217-544-3479       | IBEW Local #193<br>3150 Wide Track Dr.<br>Springfield, IL 217-544-3479      | IBEW Local #193<br>3150 Wide Track Dr.<br>Springfield, IL 217-544-3479     |
| <b>UNIT 7</b> | <b>18th - 7 pm</b>   | <b>15th - 7 pm</b>  | <b>21st - 7 pm</b>   |
|               | IBEW Local #309<br>2000A Mall St. (Rt. 157)<br>Collinsville, IL 618-345-5112 | IBEW Local #649<br>4051 Humbert Rd.<br>Alton, IL 618-462-1627               | Central City Lions Club<br>140 S Morrison<br>Central City, IL 618-532-9475 |

## FRONTLINE



**International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 21, AFL-CIO**  
 1307 W. Butterfield Road, Suite 422  
 Downers Grove, IL 60515-5606  
 Phone: 630.960.4466 FAX 630.960.9607  
 Newswire Hotline: 630.415.2711 ibew21.org

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**EDITORS**

Bob Przybylinski email: bobp@ibew21.org  
 Nancy North

Member: Midwest Labor Press Association, and International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO



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# IBEW LOCAL 21

1307 W. Butterfield Road  
Suite 422  
Downer's Grove, IL 60515-5601

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