

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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The Power of Working Together

As union members, we believe there is nothing more powerful than people standing arm-in-arm behind a collective cause. It's what won working people basic things like a 40-hour work week, weekends, paid holidays and sick time and an expectation of safe working conditions. It's why we are able to negotiate contracts that ensure quality health care and higher wages than nonunion counterparts.

But the idea doesn't only apply to working people standing with one another. We understand that our success is dependent on the success of our employers and that cooperative relationships built on dignity and respect aren't just a good idea—they work. Companies that respect their workers and workers that respect their companies make better choices—and both sides do better in the long run.

That's why relationships are at the heart of the Code of Excellence. But what about when the relationship between the company and its workforce isn't going well? Not every company, or worker for that matter, believes that collaboration and success go together. What then?

There might be a misunderstanding that the Code of Excellence only works where relations are already good.

For those willing to embrace it, the Code of Excellence is much more than just a list of best practices for the best workplaces. People like incoming St.

Louis Local 1439 Business Manager Jeremy Pour understand that.

Local 1439 represents nearly 700 workers at the utility company Ameren, and, in recent years, the partnership with the company was, in Pour's words, "Contentious. Litigious.

1439 to ask if their directors, the direct supervisors of our members, could attend the Code of Excellence trainings as well. A month later, 50 directors joined 50 stewards to look at how a joint commitment to excellence could transform the company.



Every dispute became a grievance. Every grievance became a fight. So, we proposed to do something different."

Local 1439 introduced the Code of Excellence and received permission from the company to begin training stewards while on the clock. The stewards then fanned out across the utility, spreading the word about what our commitment was—to ourselves, to the company and to one another. And it got the company's attention.

Soon after, Ameren came to Local

"We are seeing a difference already," Pour said. "This wasn't built on a foundation of trust. The Code is the foundation."

Read on and then send us your stories about how the Code of Excellence is building and transforming relationships between sisters and brothers, fellow unions and our partners and employers.

What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email theSPARQ@ibew.org



A Relationship 80 Years in the Making

The relationship between the IBEW and the Tennessee Valley Authority goes back eight decades, and it's only getting stronger, thanks in part to the Code of Excellence.

"I've had the chance to see the Code implemented at workplaces across the country," said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson. "I've seen how it brings employers and employees together to not only increase productivity, but to increase pride and respect."

The TVA employs about 2,500 IBEW members as permanent employees while thousands more do short-term work each year. And all of this happens at some 60 worksites spanning seven states from Virginia to Mississippi.



As many members can attest, their work is often done in concert with other trades, and it takes all of these men and women working together to ensure success. These interunion relationships can be just as important as any other on a jobsite, and they're benefiting from the Code of Excellence.

The IBEW conducted Code training over nine months for all seven unions employed at TVA worksites, an almost unprecedented level of cooperation between workers from different trades.

And the other crafts love the Code, says Brian Conner of Knoxville, Tenn., Local 760. Grievances have gone down.

"The relationship between management and bargaining unit has improved immensely since implementation," Conner said.

What's more, since adopting the Code, the TVA has agreed to hire employees from closing coal plants at alternate TVA locations close to their homes.

"Labor and management across this country will look to the TVA to see what you've built and draw inspiration," Stephenson told a TVA crowd last year. "They will see a workplace where unions and management aren't adversaries, but partners."

SPARQ GOES LOCAL

IBEW Locals 1245 and 396

Two IBEW locals and their employer have won the inaugural Edwin D. Hill Award for their expansive efforts to protect good jobs and Nevada power customers, a campaign that led to the landslide defeat last November of Question 3, a deceptive state ballot measure.

The ability to work with NV Energy was essential, Business Manager Jesse Newman said, noting that the partnership didn't originate with the campaign. "If we didn't have the relationship we have through the Code of Excellence, I don't think Question 3 would have been defeated," he said.

CEO at the Local

Building a strong partnership takes commitment. NV Energy's CEO Doug Cannon is committed to continuing the practice of meeting with members and leaders of IBEW Local Union 396 twice a year to answer questions and discuss solutions to issues on the job. No surprise, these meetings are the most well-attended of the year.

