

# The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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## Leading the Way on Quality

New York City Local 3 journeyman wireman John Murphy faced a competitive acceptance process when he applied for adventurous electrical work at Antarctica's McMurdo research station. But the contractor immediately recognized that Murphy's IBEW membership set him apart from other applicants and moved his name to the top of the pile.

"It definitely gives you a leg up," Murphy said. "It tells them that you meet a certain criterion. That streamlined it for me."

More than anything else, it's the quality of our work—embodied in the Code of Excellence—that gives employers the assurance that IBEW workers will get the job done the right way, the first time.

"It makes sense that 'quality' is the final piece of the Code's SPARQ acronym," International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. "Because when you add up all the other components—safety, professionalism, accountability and relationships—quality is the logical result."

When the Minnesota Twins wanted to build a new baseball stadium in Minneapolis a few years ago, former president Jerry Bell insisted on having union electricians work on what eventually became Target Field. "You get the best quality that way," Bell said. "You have people who are experienced. The craftsmanship in this ballpark is second to none in the major leagues."



IBEW quality comes from our first-class training and mentoring, not just during our apprenticeships but throughout our careers. It's affirmation of the hard work we've put in, and a guarantee that employers and customers get what they pay for.

You see our commitment to quality in the experienced instructors combining top-notch classroom education with hands-on guidance at our

**"Training programs affiliated with the labor movement have a combined budget of over \$1.5 billion and are the second-largest providers of workplace training in the United States, after the U.S. military."**

—Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO executive secretary and member of Portland, Ore., IBEW Local 125

NECA-IBEW training centers across North America. You see it through our investment in the National Utility Industry Training Fund, or when our telecommunications members take advantage of the latest NACTEL courses. And you witness it every day on the job, when experienced members take the time to share their skills with the next generation.

We understand that sharing our knowledge solidifies our well-earned reputation for quality, which helps us grow our market share as we gain and retain customers.

"Our customers and contractors have come to expect quality work from IBEW members, and it's easy to understand why," Stephenson said. "Our Code of Excellence is what makes all the difference."



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email [theSPARQ@ibew.org](mailto:theSPARQ@ibew.org)



## Signs of Quality

Running late, you race into the train station and pay your fare. But on the crowded platform, you can relax—an overhead electronic message sign says you have plenty of time before your train leaves.

Quality work by electricians from IBEW railroad locals in the New York City area is responsible for the installation of such modern signage in stations throughout the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Metro-North commuter network.

"They used to have these hard-wired signs that didn't provide a lot of information," New York Local 859 Business Manager John Gallagher said. "Oftentimes, it was only the date or that trains were in good service."

Using our Code of Excellence as a guide, Local 859 members—along with members of New York Local 817 and New Haven, Conn., Local 747—performed quality sign-replacement work through the first half of 2019 at dozens of stations serving MTA's New Haven, Hudson and Harlem lines.



"This upgrade was long overdue," Gallagher said. It's part of the MTA's "Way Ahead" customer service plan for a system that in 2017 carried a record 86.5 million customers. Efficient sign installation was crucial, and the MTA knew it could rely on IBEW electricians to get the job done right, the first time.

"We were able to fit it in with our other work," said Gallagher, whose fellow Local 859 members also installed hardware allowing signs to wirelessly receive and display data regarding the next three trains. "Commuters are getting a lot more relevant informa-

tion than before."

IBEW members understand that high-quality installation is crucial because commuters won't accept anything less. "When they're not happy, they're not afraid to say so," Gallagher said.

## SPARQ GOES LOCAL



NTI attendees take part in hands-on training.



Participants attend the 2019 NTI Graduation Ceremony.



NTI graduates stand proudly in front of Hill Auditorium at the University of Michigan.

Quality begins with training, and the National Training Institute (NTI) is key to making sure that IBEW apprenticeship instructors are the best. This year marked the electrical training ALLIANCE's 30th NTI, which included more than 2,100 participants.