

# The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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## We Are the Power Professionals

IBEW members do our best every day because we're professionals to the core, not because it leads to awards or accolades. But when we are recognized, it's worth celebrating. After all, it's an acknowledgment of our commitment to being the best in the business.

Every year, *Power Magazine* scours the globe to find the best, most efficient and most advanced gas power plants in the world for their annual awards issue. Last year, the editors honored the Wolverine Power Cooperative's 432-megawatt Alpine gas plant in Elmira, Mich., for a record-breaking reliability record.

The plant is not only one of the most reliable in the nation; Alpine's owners say it is the most efficient in their fleet. And IBEW members don't just run the plant—they built it. The \$166-million project began in 2015 and used only union trades. Signatory contractor Swan Electric hired members of Traverse City, Mich., Local 498 for all the substation, power line and construction work that brought the plant to life.

It nearly goes without saying that the project came in on time and on budget.

"I speak for all of us at Alpine when I say we are proud of the work we do to serve our members," said Grand Rapids, Mich., Local 876 member and Chief Plant Operator Dan Boulter. "When people come to our



plant, we take pride in our ownership of its performance and appearance. We take care of everything inside this gate, from cleaning the toilets to troubleshooting our emissions control system."

In recognition of that commitment to professionalism, Wolverine puts the names of the workers who run Alpine on a plaque out front.

Boulter said that while they do nearly all the work themselves—nearly 95 percent of the plant's work orders are for preventative/predictive maintenance—he may be proudest of what he hears from his peers in the industry, the traveling millwrights that work outages and do upgrades all

across the region and see into dozens of plants.

"We like when the millwrights come to the plant and say, 'We don't usually see a plant this clean.' Or, 'We are treated great around here,'" Boulter said. "It's good sign when they tell you, 'When you need help, we want to come back.'"

It's that kind of professionalism and pride from IBEW members—in all branches—that sets our members apart from the competition. With the Code of Excellence as our guide, it's the kind of performance that every day earns us the moniker "The Power Professionals."



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



## Professionalism in the Face of Adversity

There are many ways to define professionalism: showing up to work on time, wearing proper clothes and treating colleagues with respect, to name a few. What sets IBEW's tens of thousands of government workers apart is their ability to maintain professionalism despite near-constant attacks on the federal workforce.

Our U.S. members work for the Department of Defense on Navy and Coast Guard ships and submarines, for the General Services Administration, for the National Park Service and practically anywhere else electrical work and maintenance are needed. And they are doing so in the face of an incredibly hostile administration.

Federal employees have endured hiring freezes, pay freezes and attacks on their very right to have a voice at work. The Trump administration has issued executive orders making it harder for union representatives to do their

jobs while simultaneously increasing their workload. Most recently, the president signed a memo giving the defense

secretary the authority to exclude Department of Defense workers from the freedom to bargain collectively.

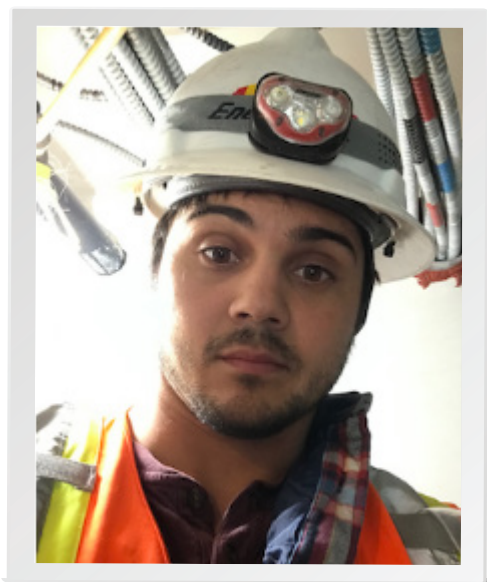
Just over a year ago, our sisters and brothers endured the longest-ever government shutdown; they were either barred from working or forced to do so without pay. For those who had to stay on the job, they did so because they knew the importance of the roles they play. It's the

work of the country, and it's bigger than any one person or administration.

For the IBEW's government employees, professionalism isn't just doing your job well. It's doing your job well because you know that your work matters, even when those in power may disagree. Politics is temporary, but professionalism lasts forever.



## SPARQ GOES LOCAL



Justin Long, Apprentice Wireman  
San Luis Obispo, Calif., Local 639

## Professionalism From Day One

“I do not believe I could have learned the necessary skills for the electrical industry without the guidance of the IBEW apprenticeship program.

Without a professional apprenticeship, working in the electrical industry is extremely dangerous and I would not feel safe on the jobsite without the supervision of a journeyman and classroom instruction.

My apprenticeship is my ticket to the middle class.”

Share your IBEW story for a chance to be included in an upcoming issue of *The Electrical Worker* (IBEW.org/MyIBEWStory).