

100 Year Anniversary

1916-2016

Chartered February 28, 1916

IBEW LOCAL 127

A Century of Powering Southeastern Wisconsin

Kenosha, Wisconsin

COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY & PROGRAM

**CONGRATULATIONS
IBEW Local Union 127
On Your "Centennial Anniversary"**

**From Your
Union Brothers & Sisters
at IBEW Local Union 494
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
"Chartered June, 1906"**



**We Wish You Continued Prosperity As
You Begin Your Next "100 Years"!**

Gold SPONSOR

**Congratulations
IBEW Local 127
On your 100th Anniversary Celebration**



*IBEW Local 613-Atlanta, Georgia
Gene O'Kelley, Business Manager
Max Mount Jr., President
David Collier, Financial Secretary*

Bronze SPONSOR



Serving: Working Families, Our Members, Our Community & Electrical Industry for 97 years.

Green Bay Electrical Workers
IBEW Local 158
(920) 432-0158

Donald C. Allen – Business Manager
Jesse A. Jacques – Business Agent
Jeremy P. Schauer – Business Agent

Bronze SPONSOR



**Kenosha Division, Wisconsin Chapter,
National Electrical Contractors Association**

**We Salute Our Partners,
I.B.E.W. Local 127, on 100 Years
of Quality Service to the
Electrical Industry of Kenosha!**

Pieper Electric, Inc.

Valiant Electric, Inc.

Great Lakes Electric

Kenosha Chapter Officers

Chairman, Todd Winters

Vice-Chairman, Darren Johnson

Secretary, Loyal O'Leary

UNIONHISTORIES

unionhistories.com

Preserving the Proud Stories of Local Unions

Union Histories hails IBEW Local 127 for
100 Years of Service to Your Members,
Contractors, Industry and Community!

We were honored to serve you in producing
this book for your anniversary celebration.



www.unionhistories.com





100th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration
of
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Local No. 127

Celebrating Our Original Charter Date, February 28, 1916

Saturday, March 12, 2016

5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Madrigano Marina Shores Event Center

302 58th Street, Kenosha, Wisconsin

Welcome & Happy Hour.....	5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Dinner	6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Pin Presentations & Awards Ceremony	7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Music & Dancing.....	8:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Thank You!

SPECIAL THANKS to Our Sponsors and Advertisers!

Gold Sponsor

I.B.E.W. Local No. 494

Bronze Sponsors

I.B.E.W. Local No. 613

I.B.E.W. Local No. 158

Advertisers

Kenosha Division, Wisconsin Chapter, NECA

I.B.E.W. International Office & Sixth District

I.B.E.W. Local No. 430

I.B.E.W. Local No. 118

Electrical Contractors, Inc./Hanson and Associates

Viking Electric Supply

Wisconsin Vision

I.B.E.W. Local No. 332

I.B.E.W. Local No. 17

I.B.E.W. Local No. 429

I.B.E.W. Local No. 890

I.B.E.W. Local No. 117

I.B.E.W. Local No. 34

I.B.E.W. Local No. 124

I.B.E.W. Local No. 47

Insulators Local No. 19

imortgage

This book was proudly produced by

UNIONHISTORIES
Preserving the Proud Stories of Local Unions
unionhistories.com

I.B.E.W. Local No. 127 and Union Histories give special thanks to the following for their contributions to this book:

Curtis Bateman, Manager and Curator, I.B.E.W. Museum
Kenosha Public Library, Southwest Branch – Reference Services
University of Wisconsin–Parkside, Archives & Area Research Center
Wisconsin Historical Society
The Kenosha History Center
Kenosha Area Chamber of Commerce, Emily Delabruce
Kenosha Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

Head Historian: Calvin Jefferson
Art Direction: Andy Taucher
Layout & Design: Steven Demanett



A Legacy of Service to Greater Kenosha

The 100-Year Story of I.B.E.W. Local 127



"Although you haven't heard much from Kenosha Local Union No. 127, the boys think we should be on the map as we have a 'go-getting' bunch when we get them all together."

Local 127 Recording Secretary W. J. Hastie, Jr.
I.B.E.W. Electrical Worker, May 1927

(c) No. 127, Kenosha, Wis.—Financial Secretary,
J. P. Josephenson, 808 Dayton St., care Josephenson & Zimmerman.

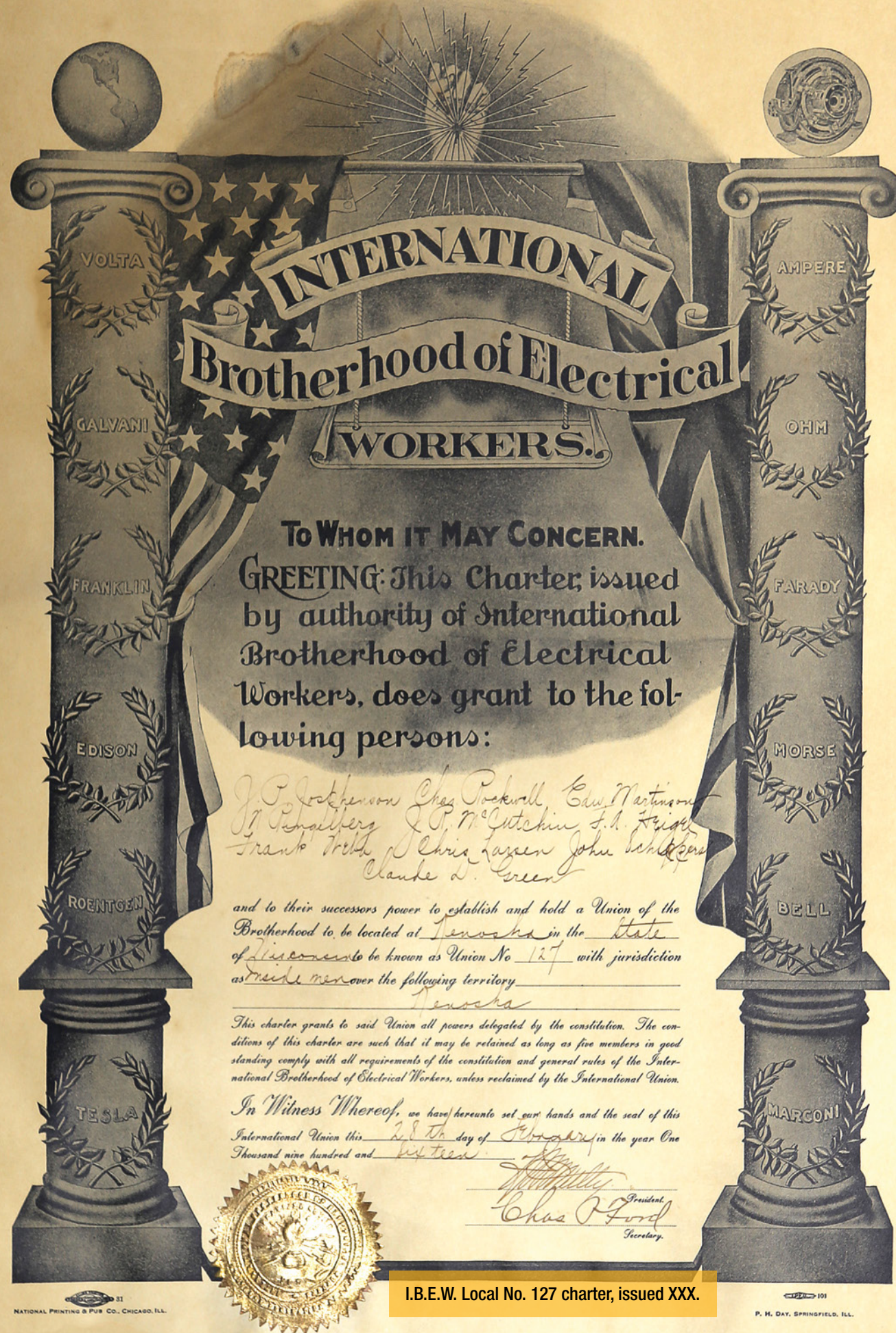
I.B.E.W. Electrical Worker, March 1916.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers chartered inside-wiremen Local No. 127 to serve Kenosha, Wisconsin, on **February 28, 1916**, after 10 electrical workers in the city fought diligently to establish the union in the city. Their names were forever chronicled on the local's charter:

Chris Larsen
Nick Ringelberg
Frank Webb
Charles Rockwell
Joseph Josephenson
John McCutchin
Claude Green
Edward Martinson
Frank Heigl
John Schippers

Fifty years later, an essay in the program of Local 127's Golden Anniversary Celebration, held February 26, 1966, pondered the existence, trials and tribulations of those very first members of the local:

"We can imagine the struggles and hours devoted to their interest, the despair and financial struggles, the opposition and supporters, their acceptance into the city and surrounding territory."



I.B.E.W. Local No. 127 charter, issued XXX.



The Danish Brotherhood Hall in Kenosha, where Local 127 held its first meeting in 1916. (Photo courtesy of Danish Brotherhood Lodge No. 14, Kenosha.)

Beginnings: 1916 through 1919

Local 127's charter members held their first organizing meeting at the **Danish Brotherhood Hall** on 63rd Street, and the local's first regular meeting was held soon after at the **Gronquist Hall** on old Park Street. Afterwards, meetings were held at various places throughout the city, including **McCoy Hall** by April 1916, and many times members would "pass the hat" to collect donations to pay for the rental of the meeting place.

Frequently, meetings were recessed because the local had forgotten to bring its charter to a new meeting venue, according to the 50th Anniversary essay. "Someone would run out, bring back the charter and put it in its rightful place before the meeting could again be restarted."

Brother Joseph P. Josephenson served as Local

127's first president; Brother C. D. Greene was its first vice president; Brother Chris Larsen its first treasurer and recording secretary; and Brother Eddie Harmer its first business agent.

As the newborn local got its feet under itself and worked to grow in those initial years, it affiliated with the **Wisconsin State Federation of Labor**, a chapter of the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.), on December 27, 1918.

During World War I, many Local 127 members worked in the city's wartime factories, including the **Nash Company**; **Arneson Foundry**, which made wheels for cannons; and **American Brass**, which made artillery shell casings. Because the government had placed an embargo on much-needed copper, it was difficult to obtain electrical wire, forcing the local's electricians who were not in the Armed Forces to find employment outside of the electrical industry.

Expansion: 1920 through 1929

Following the war, Local 127 electrical workers were making 67 cents an hour in wages in 1920; soon after, their pay increased to 80 cents. At that time, dues for the local were \$2 per month.

Out in the field beginning in 1923, the local's members were involved in building the **Kenosha County Courthouse** in the City of Kenosha. Out-of-town supervisors were assessed \$1 per day to supervise the local's journeymen working on the project, which was completed in 1925.

But the largest job on which Local 127 members would work during that time period was construction of the new **Central Senior High School** at Sheridan Road and 57th Street

in Kenosha. The cornerstone of the school (which later was renamed Mary D. Bradford High School after the first woman to serve as superintendent of a major city school system in Wisconsin) was laid on November 21, 1924, and it was dedicated in April 1926 after the local's members had wired the facility.

During 1924, the local's membership grew to the point where it held its regular meetings in the **German-American Hall** in Kenosha, which charged the local a rental fee of \$3 per month. During the mid-1920s, members were fined 50 cents for not attending the local's bi-monthly meetings, and \$1 door prizes were awarded to members present at the meetings.

The following year, Local 127 signed an

Continued after next page.



MANAGING OFFICERS OF LOCAL 127

The Financial Secretary served as the local's primary officer prior to 1930, when the position of Business Manager was created; the offices of Business Manager and Financial Secretary were combined in 1975.

Financial Secretaries

Joseph P. Josephenson

February 1916

Chris Larsen

March 1916 through July 1916

Fred H. Kramer Jr.

August 1916 through August 1917

F. J. Forbes

September 1917 through 1919

Thomas O'Connor

1920 through 1922

Ray Thornton

1923 through 1924

John Bloner

1925 through 1927

John Leickem

1928 to 1929

Business Managers

Chris Larsen

1930 to 1934

Clarence Boardman

1934 to 1943

John J. Brunner

1943 to 1947

Val Wilson

1947 to 1950

Clifford Forbes

1950 to 1951

Irving Tappa (Acting)

1951

Ward Wilton

1952 to 1954

Everett T. Gascoigne

1954 to 1958

Robert Atkins

1958 to 1960

Everett T. Gascoigne

1960 to 1965

Sam Horner

1965 to 1975

C. J. Zievers

1975 to 1980

Patrick J. McKeon

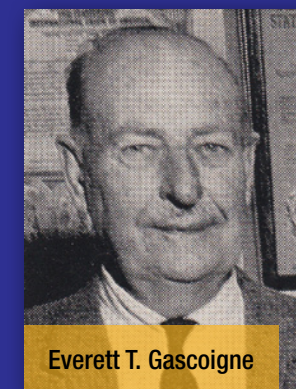
1980 to 1990

Edward Gray

1990 to 2014

Sean Frank

2014 to present



Everett T. Gascoigne



Edward Gray



PREPARING ITS WORKFORCE IS LOCAL'S ENDURING MISSION

All through its century-long existence, I.B.E.W. Local 127 has made training its membership a priority. Its apprenticeship and journeyman-upgrade education has evolved over the years into a shining example of



Local 127 members (left to right) William Wickline, Bill Colombe, (instructor Pat McKeon), Val Ondrush and Louie Mickewiez take part in an electronics class at the Kenosha vocational school during the 1960s.

construction-industry worker preparation.

As the local turns 100 years old in 2016, its Electrical Construction Apprenticeship Program is administered by the **Kenosha County Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee for the Electrical Industry**. The five-year curriculum consists of a minimum of 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and a minimum of 700 hours of classroom instruction, which are fulfilled one full day (eight hours) every week during the school year for five semesters.

agreement with its contractors for a significant increase in wages to \$1.25 per hour. The local joined the **Trades and Labor Council of Kenosha** in 1925, too, and Local 127 also worked with the City of Kenosha that year to establish the city's first full-time electrical inspector.

Recognizing its continuing growth, the local petitioned the business agent of the city's carpenters union to act as business agent for the electricians, a job for which he was paid \$10 per month. However, that arrangement only lasted for a few months before Local 127 elected its own part-time **business agent**.

Then in February 1926, the local combined its offices of treasurer and secretary into one position. The local also voted unanimously to join the Trades and Labor Council's effort to erect a **Labor Temple** in Kenosha; however, while the land was purchased, the building was never erected because of a lack of funds.

Regular membership meetings were held at the Knights of Columbus Hall later that year. In a sign of its growth and solidifying brotherhood, in June Local 127 held its first union

picnic at **Petrifying Springs Park**.

The local's membership then gained a significant new benefit in November 1926 when the local established its **Sick Fund**. With that program, members in good standing who were

laid up with an illness or injury could receive \$2 per day for a period of 13 weeks – provided a doctor's certificate was submitted to the local.

As the local continued to develop, in 1927 it raised its initiation fees from \$100 to \$200. But it was also experiencing some measure of hardship, as its contractors at that time were suffering because a “large percentage” of the carpenters in the area were non-union.

Regardless, the young local maintained its momentum as construction in the city flourished, with an eight-story bank, three theaters, a factory building and several “good-sized” apartment buildings all being planned for the immediate future.

Then in 1929, Local 127 gained a one-year contract with the electrical contractors of Kenosha that raised wages to \$1.37-1/2 cents per hour beginning September 1 for the coming year. The agreement also established **eight-hour workdays** from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 40-hour work weeks for the local's members, as well as time-and-a-half pay for work after 5 p.m. on Saturday mornings and double-time pay for any additional overtime after 7 p.m. on weekdays and noon on Saturdays.

During that time, the local petitioned City Council to appoint a journeyman electrician to represent it on the city's **Examining Board**.

Meanwhile, away from the jobsites and union business, the local's membership enjoyed summer picnics and Christmas parties in conjunction with Racine's **I.B.E.W. Local 430**. The Kenosha electrical workers were also regulars in the city's **Labor Day parades** – and those who did not participate were subjected to a fine.

Survival: 1930 through 1939

Soon after the Great Depression began when the stock market crashed in October 1929, Local 127 started to gradually feel its effects. In the July 1930 **I.B.E.W. Journal**, Local

127 **Press Secretary W. J. Hastie** even reported, “Most of the boys have had a pay envelope presented to them at the end of each five working days all winter. But now the conditions do not look so encouraging, as there is very little building in progress.”

The local attempted to protect itself in the midst of the escalating economic turmoil when in 1930 it invested \$2,000 into the **Kenosha Building and Loan Association** (which it later transferred into **Brown National Bank**). The next year, the local also benefited from a ruling by the City of Kenosha that required all electric signs within the city be installed by Local 127 electrical workers.

But by 1932, unemployment among Local 127 members had become more prevalent, so much so that dues were decreased and members voted to voluntarily reduce their pay rate to \$1 per hour. Meanwhile, the local could only pay rent for the Labor Temple, in which it was holding its meetings, if the funds were available – and its meetings contained many discussions about raising money to help pay membership dues.

As the Depression wore on, several members withdrew their membership cards from the local because of the lack of jobs, but the **I.B.E.W. International Office** allowed the local to open his charter for 90 days in an effort to reinstate all of its regular members. What's more, pay for the local's officers was reduced and all loan and dues payments for members were canceled while they sought work “wherever and whenever possible.”

As the national economic despair began to wane, the local's wages were back up to \$1.37-1/2 an hour by September 1937, when the local numbered 23 members, and in July 1939, dues for Local 127 members were raised and its officers also received a pay increase. In the meantime, the work situation had improved and would continue to do so as the local moved from the Depression years into the war years.

Local 127 graduating apprentices, 1966.



Contributing: 1940 through 1946

By the 1940s, Local 127 had organized a well-structured apprenticeship program, helping to place even more well-qualified members into its ranks – which **World War II** would necessitate throughout the first half of the 1940s.

With the war raging and the need it created for materials and manpower both home and abroad expanding, wages for Local 127 journeymen were increased to \$1.50 an hour as work opportunities grew on the home front (although the **National War Labor Board** essentially froze wages nationally during the balance of the war). Specifically, Nash Motors and American Brass required more workers to help modify their “peacetime” equipment to manufacture military supplies.

Moreover, according to the local’s 50th

Anniversary program, “Not enough men were available to carry out all of the demands which the war effort had placed upon the country.” In Kenosha, “communications were received from **San Francisco; Port Arthur, Texas; and New Orleans** asking for electricians to work in the shipyards.”

Eventually, the local’s wages were increased to \$1.85 per hour, but the federal **Wage Adjustment Board** scaled back the pay (as it did across the country) during the war to \$1.67-1/2 per hour in an effort to support the war effort and need for materials. Before the war ended, the local’s wages were raised to \$1.75.

During the early 1940s, the **Electrical Contractors Association of Kenosha** was formed, giving Local 127’s employing contractors a single body through which they could negotiate with the union and address the needs and concerns of the area’s electrical industry. At that time, the local signed a new

contract agreement with the contractors that included **workmen’s compensation** and **liability insurance** from its employers.

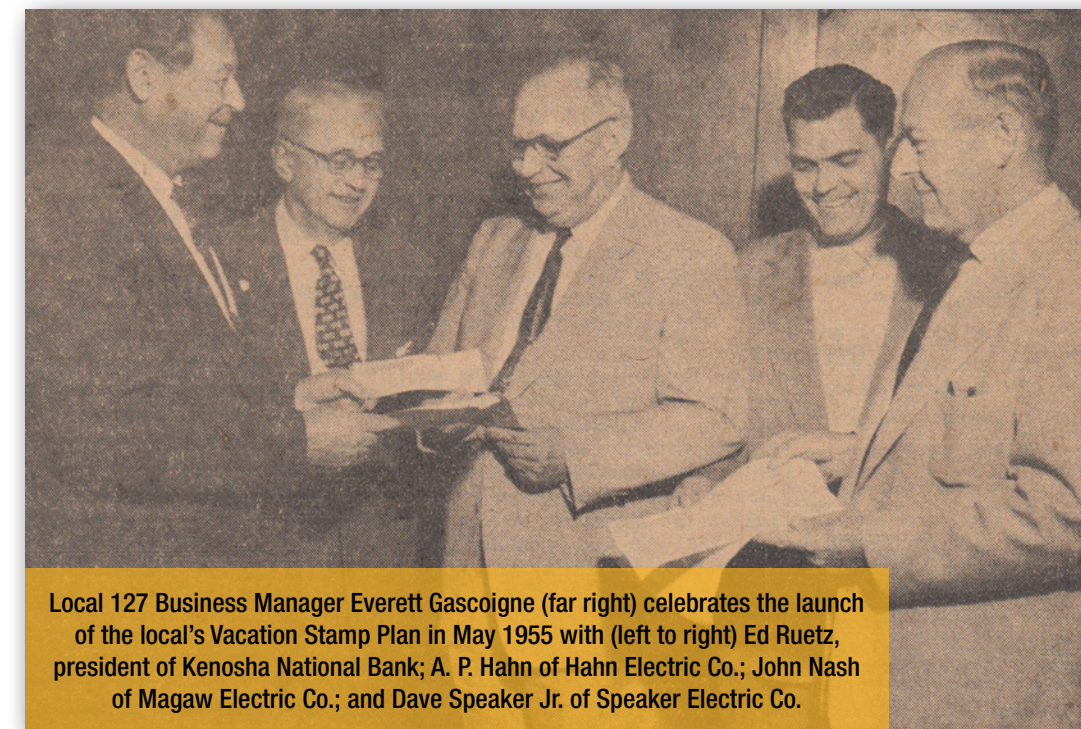
Meanwhile, several Local 127 members joined the **Armed Forces** and went to war. Never neglecting its brave brothers, the local sent \$10 Christmas gifts and cigarettes to members who were in the service, and members at home helped pay their union dues while the local purchased War Savings Bonds to help support the U.S. military.

Shortly after the war came to an end, the local protested to the Wage Adjustment Board in September 1946 to raise its wages back to \$1.85 per hour. A September 24 letter from Local 127 **Recording Secretary Ward Wilton** to the Board even stated that the raise “is agreeable with both Employers and Local Union 127,” also noting, “We are unable to get electricians into this locality for \$1.75 per hour.”

Making Gains: 1947 through 1959

A new, one-year contract between Local 127 and the Electrical Contractors Association in 1947 contained a new provision by which the contractors would contribute 1 percent of their income to a **Local Employees Benefit Board** after May 5 that year. The agreement also contained the local’s very last **double-time** pay provision for overtime hours.

However, a short time later, Local 127 and unions across the country were forced to contend with the new **Taft-Hartley Act** (officially called the **Labor Management Relations Act of 1947**



Local 127 Business Manager Everett Gascoigne (far right) celebrates the launch of the local’s Vacation Stamp Plan in May 1955 with (left to right) Ed Ruetz, president of Kenosha National Bank; A. P. Hahn of Hahn Electric Co.; John Nash of Magaw Electric Co.; and Dave Speaker Jr. of Speaker Electric Co.

and unofficially called the “slave-labor bill” by labor leaders) when it became law on June 23. A federal law restricting the activities and power of labor unions, the measure outlawed, among other things, jurisdictional strikes, certain campaign expenditures by unions and the “closed” shop.

On a more positive note at the time, the A.F.L. was working to institute **unemployment insurance** for union members, and after lengthy and intense negotiations, it gained the benefit for union workers in 1949.

Another modification to Local 127’s agreement with contractors that year raised wages again, this time to \$2.30 an hour into 1950. That year, the local appointed **shop stewards** to each of its contractor’s shops to better represent the local and its membership.

But when the local’s existing contract expired on May 31, 1950, and it had not reached agreement on a new pact with the Electrical Contractors Association, **35 members of Local 127** began a “vacation” on the morning of June 1 when they “failed to appear on construction jobs,” the *Kenosha Evening News* reported that



Local 127 members during a banquet in the 1950s, including former business managers Chris Larsen (seated, second from left) and John J. Brunner (seated, second from right).



Local 127 hosted the Wisconsin State Conference of the I.B.E.W. and its officers in July 1963, including Local 127 Brother Everett Gascoigne (standing far left), who was a trustee of the Conference.

day. During three weeks of negotiations, the two sides were at odds over a pay increase, as the local had requested an additional 20 cents per hour while the contractors were only offering a 10-cent boost.

An arbitration committee composed of representatives from the union's International Office and the **National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA)** settled the wage dispute, and the local's members returned to work on June 5 with a new contract that only provided them the 10-cent-per-hour increase.

Soon after, however, Local 127 was able to establish a **pension plan** in 1951.

In 1953, the local hired a certified public accountant to audit its books; before then, members of the local had been appointed to check the books at various times each year, according to the local's 50th Anniversary program.

Also continuing to provide additional and improving training for its membership, during the early 1950s the local offered a course in **industrial electronics** at Kenosha's vocational

school. Several of the local's members took advantage of that union-sponsored opportunity.

In 1955, for the first time in a decade, Local 127 was able to reach a contract agreement with the Electrical Contractors Association before the May 1 contract anniversary date, according to that day's *Kenosha News*.

The new, one-year agreement also added 7-1/2 cents an hour for a new **vacation-pay plan**, which was the first such agreement in Kenosha. With the ground-breaking program, members could accumulate vacation-time credit from several employers while they received "**vacation stamps**" that were redeemable for cash at the Kenosha National Bank. (*The program continued for nearly six years until a **payroll-deduction vacation plan** was put into effect for the local's members in 1961.*)

Three years later in 1958, Local 127 was over 80 members strong when it staged a "walk-away" beginning May 2, during which its men voluntarily did not show up for work while negotiations with the Electrical Contractors Association for a new contract were at a

standstill. Although two contractors, **Gray Electric** and **Westphal Electric**, had reached agreement with the union, the remaining companies would not budge on the local's appeal for a 10-cent-per-hour raise in wages and an additional 9 cents into its Vacation Fund – even though the local had reduced its original request of 25-cents-per-hour more in wages.

As the strike carried into June, Local 127 was placing its workers in jobs outside its jurisdiction. Those members returned to work in Kenosha early that month so that negotiations could continue – but talks again broke down and the union took its case before the **Labor Relations Board** in September to secure its demands.

Then after the A.F.L. and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.) merged in 1955, Local 127 officially affiliated with the **Wisconsin State AFL-CIO** on July 23, 1958.

More Prosperity: 1960 through 1965

As the City of Kenosha became a more viable seaport into the 1960s and the town subsequently grew, the beginning of the decade was very good for Local 127, and it was able to keep its members



LOCAL
127

**GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**
FEBRUARY 26, 1966
EAGLES CLUB
KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

Local 127 50th Anniversary banquet program.

and many traveling I.B.E.W. brothers from other locals busy on a steady basis throughout those first few years.

After several weeks of bargaining sessions, the local and its contractors had a new, two-year agreement on July 13, 1962, that added 10 cents to the local's hourly pay the first year and 15 cents the second year, bring the scale



Local 127 officers during the local's 50th Anniversary in 1966 were (seated, left to right) Vice President Mark Thompson, President Jim Biscardi and Recording Secretary Dick Hawes; and (standing, left to right) Business Manager Everett Gascoigne, Financial Secretary Henry Frederich, Treasurer William Nielson and Executive Board Member Val Ondrush.

to \$4.35. Members voted to apply that first 10 cents to a new **welfare fund**, as the local had adopted a **hospitalization plan**.

(Eight years later, the local reported in the December 1970 Journal, "Our Welfare Program is progressing satisfactorily, and many of our members have been saved embarrassment and financial difficulty since we started our health and welfare program.")

In the midst of those flourishing times, Local 127 **Business Manager Everett T. Gascoigne** reported in the September 1962 *Journal*, "Work has been good in this jurisdiction and our members haven't lost over two days in the last two years. We have very close relations with our Building Trades Council and, therefore, have about as close to a closed territory as it is possible to get."

Meanwhile, work remained strong in the local's jurisdiction throughout the remainder of 1962 and into 1964, thanks in large part to a \$42 million expansion of the **American Motors' Rambler automobile plant** located in Kenosha.

But with two separate contractors groups existing in Kenosha – the Electrical Contractors Association and the **Kenosha Division, Wisconsin Chapter, NECA** – in 1964, Local 127 found itself in a unique labor dispute after reaching a deal on a new, two-year contract with

the Electrical Contractors Association on June 30. The four employing contractors affiliated with NECA would not initially recognize the terms of the agreement for a 15-cent-per-hour pay hike beginning July 1 and an additional 20 cents for the second year beginning July 1, 1965.

With the issue still unresolved on July 13, several Local 127 members employed by the NECA contractors did not show up for work that day. After another round of negotiations later that month, the NECA contractors eventually signed off on the contract.

Down Times: 1966 through 1975

At 50 years old in 1966, Local 127 held a Golden Anniversary Celebration on February 26 at the **Eagles Club** in Kenosha (now the *Madrigrano Marina Shores* in 2016), complete with a concert by the Snap-On male chorus. The essay in the event's program declared:

"It is an impossibility to mention all the accomplishments of the men who supported Local 127 for the past 50 years. We can judge by all that is in effect at this time that someone was constantly striving to make the union bigger and greater."

Last Charter IBEW '127' Member Dies

The last charter member of Electrical Workers died Thursday and was buried Saturday at Green Ridge cemetery. He died at the Shady Lawn Nursing home following a long illness.

He was Chris A. Larsen, 70, 6403 Tenth ave., who was not only one of the group that organized the Kenosha IBEW local but also one who served as its president and business representative.

Flowers were sent by Local 127 to the funeral.

Larsen is survived by his widow, three sons and three daughters.

The Labor News, August 17, 1967.

Not long after the festivities were complete, the local was back at the negotiating table with its nearly 20 contractors beginning April 1. After more than a dozen meetings, the dispute over a new contract remained unresolved and the two sides were at "a complete deadlock," as Local 127 **Business Agent Sam Horner** told the July 21, 1966, *Kenosha News*, before a three-year agreement was accepted by the local's 120 members on July 28.

Beginning in early 1967, employment slowed greatly for the local, which would subsequently suffer through a work depression over the next two years. The situation became so dire during the first year that the local implemented a "one-shot" dues-increase assessment from members in order to build up the local's **Business Agent Fund**, charging \$10 each for class "A" wiremen and \$6 each for class "A" apprentices and class "BA" members (those who do not pay into certain benefits programs).

Brother Ed Gray

LONGTIME BUSINESS MANAGER EXEMPLIFIED LABOR MOVEMENT

After returning home from serving in Vietnam, Edward R. Gray signed with I.B.E.W. Local 127 in 1974 as an electrical apprentice, working in his father's shop, Gray Electric. After graduating from his apprenticeship, he worked for various employers in the Kenosha area.



Local 127 Business Manager Ed Gray with former I.B.E.W. International President Ed Hill.

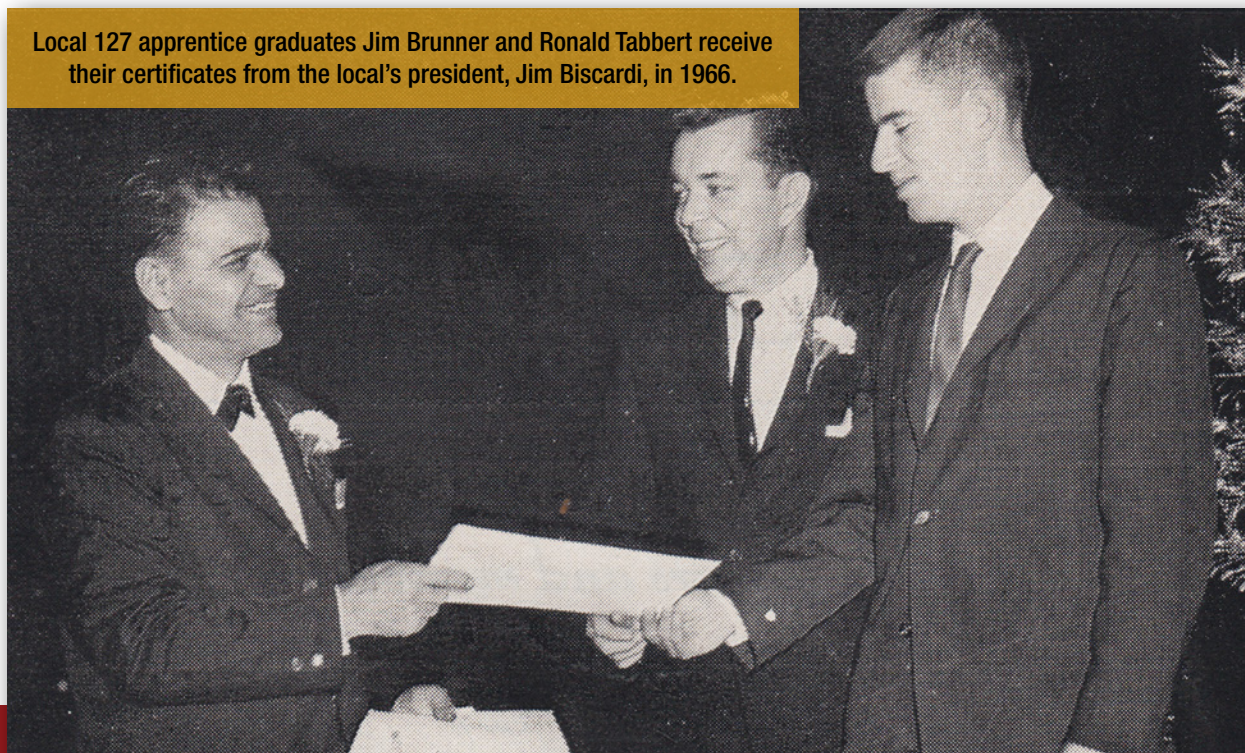
Several years later in 2001, Brother Gray was named "Labor Person of the Year" during Kenosha County's Laborfest, and County Executive Allan Kehl issued an executive order proclaiming Labor Day that year as "Edward R. Gray Day."

In between, Brother Gray was voted business manager of Local 127 in 1990, a position he would hold for nearly 24 years before retiring. During his tenure, he grew the local and worked to broaden its membership and get it to branch out so that it could shed its reputation for being exclusive, he once said, while encouraging union members to get involved in state issues and charity drives.

During that down stretch, many of Local 127's 150-plus members worked outside of the local's jurisdiction with other I.B.E.W. locals around the country.

The local did move its offices in 1967 along with other Building Trades locals (and the city's musicians local) to a new location – although it was just from the northeastern corner of the **Union Club** to separate offices in the southeastern part of the same building.

Local 127 apprentice graduates Jim Brunner and Ronald Tabbert receive their certificates from the local's president, Jim Biscardi, in 1966.



OFFICIAL BALLOT
Local 127 I.B.E.W. June 23, 1966

PRESIDENT	
James Biscardi ----- 20	<input type="radio"/>
William Nielson ----- 20	<input type="radio"/>
VICE-PRESIDENT	
Mark Thompson ----- 59	<input type="radio"/>
RECORDING SECRETARY	
Richard Hawes ----- 59	<input type="radio"/>
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	
Henry Frederick ----- 59	<input type="radio"/>
TREASURER	
Robert Atkin ----- 59	<input type="radio"/>
BUSINESS MANAGER	
E.T. Gascoigne ----- 36	<input type="radio"/>
Sam Horner ----- 54	<input type="radio"/>

EXECUTIVE BOARD (vote for two (2))	
Jack Brunner ----- 28	<input type="radio"/>
Gerald Fellows ----- 47	<input type="radio"/>
Willard Steinbach ----- 42	<input type="radio"/>
Don Warford ----- 50	<input type="radio"/>
DELEGATE TO INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION	
(vote for one (1))	
James Biscardi ----- 6	<input type="radio"/>
John Brandt ----- 23	<input type="radio"/>
E.T. Gascoigne ----- 24	<input type="radio"/>
Sam Horner ----- 29	<input type="radio"/>

Construction in the area picked up in 1969, giving Local 127 ample work opportunities during the year. Primary projects on which its members were employed included machinery installation at American Brass (by then owned by Anaconda Copper Mining Company), which lasted for more than a year and utilized 70 electricians; three buildings at the **University of Wisconsin's Kenosha Parkside Campus**; new elementary and junior high schools in Kenosha; and a \$5.5 million changeover at American Motors to produce new-model automobiles that required 120 men over the project's final three months who "received some nice fat checks."

Early that year, the local's contractors finally came together under one organization, with members of the Electrical Contractors Association of Kenosha agreeing to sign with NECA.

Then on July 4, 1969, Local 127 settled a very beneficial two-year contract with the Kenosha Division of NECA that was effective July 1.

Wages were initially raised to \$6.42 per hour, on October 1 they would increase to \$6.92 per hour and then on July 1, 1970, they would be raised to \$7.92 per hour – and the employers would also contribute an additional 18 cents per hour into the local's health and welfare benefits.

But work again slowed with the new decade, and by December 1970 several of Local 127's roughly 140 members were working out of town with little work scheduled in the Kenosha area through 1971. The dim employment conditions would persist through the mid-1970s.

The local was, however, able to sign a new agreement in June 1971 that raised total pay and benefits by 50 cents to \$8.68. (The contract first had to be approved by the **Construction Industry Stabilization Committee** in Washington, D.C., under a presidential executive order limiting percentage increases in collective bargaining agreements.)

Powered Up: 1976 through 1989

Construction of the new, \$640 million coal-fired **Pleasant Prairie electric-generating plant** for **Wisconsin Electric Power Company** beginning in 1976 helped pull Local 127 and the Kenosha area's entire Building Trades out of the continuing construction depression, even as the nation suffered through a deep economic recession in the 1970s. Over the next several years, hundreds of I.B.E.W. members, including many Local 127 and traveling brothers, would be employed on construction of the plant, putting the facility's Unit 1 in operation in late

June 1980 and its Unit 2 online in 1985.

(In 2009, Pleasant Prairie was listed as the largest generating station in Wisconsin with a net summer capacity of 1,210 MW and was generating about 13% of Wisconsin's electricity, according to owner We Energies.)

During that time and into the second half of the 1980s, there was a relatively abundant amount of work in the Local 127 jurisdiction, including retrofits at the two **Chrysler plants** in Kenosha (*the assembly plant would close in 1988 and the engine plant would close in 2010*) and several factories in the area that employed at least a few members each. With the local enjoying strong employment, its membership rose to and steadied at around 160 journeymen and apprentices during the decade.

Local 127 was also forced to defend its gains and membership several times during those moderately lucrative years – and did so with vigor.

After its existing contract expired on June 1, 1982, the local went on a four-week-long strike against the Kenosha chapter of NECA after the two sides



Pleasant Prairie Power Plant under construction in 1978 and 1979. (Primary photo courtesy of We Energies.)



could not come to a new agreement. The local and its contractors were at odds over wages and a new clause the union requested that would give preference to local electricians.

Three years later, a strike sanctioned by the local's members in a 46-to-24 vote on May 30, 1985, was avoided when Local 127 reached a new agreement on contract changes with NECA that were ratified by the membership on June 21. The accord gave journeyman members an additional 45 cents per hour in wages for the coming year, increasing pay from \$17.50 to \$17.95 per hour, while all other provisions of the standing contract remained unchanged.

In April of that next year, at which time about 35 of the local's 120 members were out of work during a lull in area construction, the local picketed the city's Municipal Building on 52nd Street in protest of two non-union contractors who were doing electrical work on renovations that included a new mayor's office. "We're here to let our members know that these workers are being paid sub-standard wages," Local 127 Business Manager Pat McKeon told the April 7, 1986, *Kenosha News*.

Then beginning March 17, 1988, the local began marching an informational picket

around the County Courthouse that would last for several days in protest of the county using a non-union electrical subcontractor to help construct a data processing center in the facility. Brother McKeon told the *Kenosha News* that the picket was being carried out to "inform the community of the union's dispute with Neal's Electric Company."

Staying Strong: 1990 through 1999

Construction in and around Kenosha remained promising into the 1990s as many projects were being planned, and Local 127 subsequently enjoyed full employment during much of 1990 – despite a recession in the region. In fact, Kenosha's growth kept many Building Trades workers, including the city's electricians, employed on industrial parks, highway projects and housing developments throughout much of the first half of the decade.

Local 127 continued to fight the good fight in several venues during the decade. In February 1992, for instance, the local lead an effort against contractors Lakeshore Electric of Kenosha and County Line Electric of Bristol



Kenosha-area union and construction leaders, including Local 127 Business Manager Edward Gray (far left), take part in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Kenosha Union Club building on October 19, 1992.

who were violating the state's Prevailing Wage Law on a project at the Southport Marina by not paying workers a high-enough wage.

Later that year, the local helped one of its contractors, Speaker Electric, win the electrical contract for the new, \$11 million *Kenosha County Government Center* in Bristol over a non-union contractor.

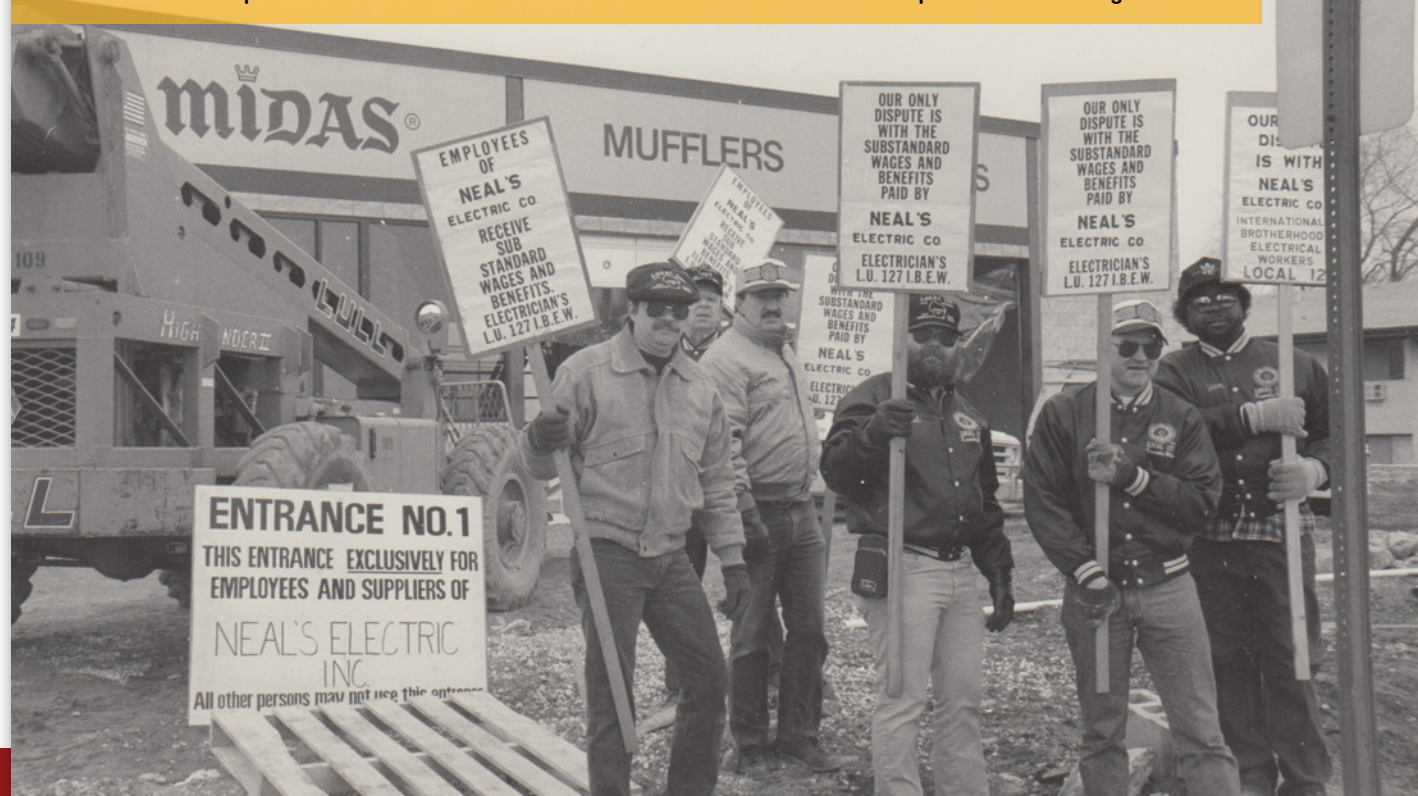
The following year, Local 127 and several other building-trades locals moved into the new, \$1 million *Union Club* office building and union hall on 39th Avenue in July 1993. The building, for which Local 127 Business Manager Edward Gray helped manage construction, was a vast improvement over

the 67-year-old structure at 5516 10th Avenue that the local had been sharing with eight other unions, The Labor Paper, the Kenosha Building & Construction Trades Welfare Fund and the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education.

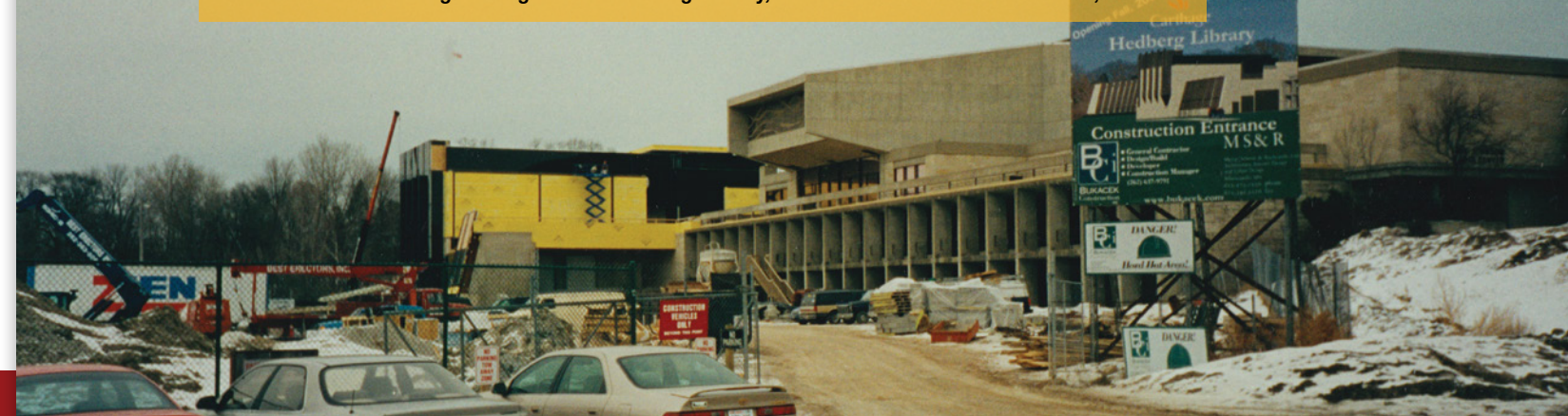
The local would continue efforts to improve its lot throughout the remainder of the millennium. By 1995, for example, it had worked to form the *Kenosha County Electrical Workers Joint Apprenticeship Committee* to better serve its training programs.

Out in the field, the next year and into early 1997 the local picketed the site of a new Aldi Foods store at the northeast corner of highways 50 and 31 that was built by a non-union contractor.

Local 127 members picket the non-union construction site of a new Midas Muffler shop in Kenosha during the 1990s.



Construction of Carthage College's new Hedberg Library, which Local 127 members wired, in 2001.



LOCAL REMAINS A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Throughout its 100-year history, I.B.E.W. Local 127 has been an active and supportive member of its community, frequently answering the call whenever someone or some organization was in need.



More recently, the local's commitment to being a good neighbor and helping those who require assistance has never been more evident. Some of the abundance of good-will work in which the local has been involved included volunteering their time to wire the **Sharing Center** building for a new walk-in freezer in October 2013 and renovate the **Shalom Center** building site in 2010, and in 2003 the local donated \$3,900 to the construction of the **Kenosha History Center's Rambler Legacy Gallery** for its electrical needs.



Members even walked an informational picket line in May 1997 in front of the First United Methodist Church on 60th Street to protest the use of a non-union contractor for a remodeling project at the church.

That year, Local 127 and its contractors teamed up to begin offering extended warranties for materials and workmanship on their work through the I.B.E.W./NECA 5 **Homeowner's Electrical Protection Plan**. The warranty plan, created to secure more residential work for the union, added five years beyond a builder's usual one-year warranty on wiring done by Local 127 in a new home.

Among its other public rally activity during that time, Local 127 conducted an informational picket at a new Hawthorn Suites hotel site in Pleasant Prairie in June 1999. The local charged that the project's electrical subcontractor, Electri-Tec Electric of Arena, Wisconsin, was paying less than half of the area's prevailing wages and benefits.

Recovering: 2000 to 100 Years

Another recession that would hit the Kenosha area by the mid-2000s was felt sooner by the Building Trades and Local 127, as construction work slowed considerably by 2002 and would remain slack for several years. During that time, the local lost about 40 members, and many others were resigned to working out of town as no major construction projects were underway in Kenosha.

The local remained vigilant, of course, and worked to gain jobs wherever and however it could. In one case in February 2006, the local



picketed the construction site of a Pick 'n Save supermarket being built on the former American Brass Co. redevelopment site because a non-union firm was contracted to do the electrical work in the building.

While work picked up in 2008 for Local 127, it again suffered through a stretch of unemployment during the following six years.

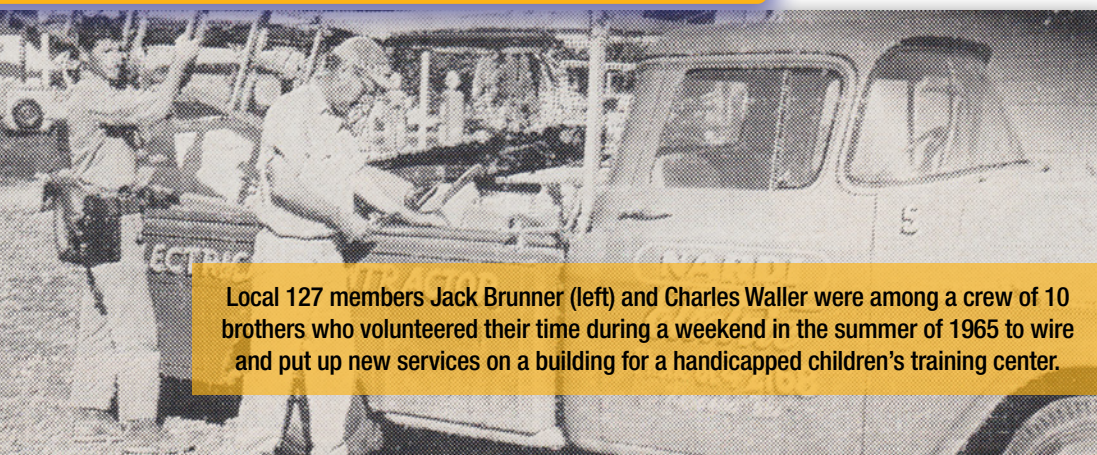
With over 60 members on layoff by 2010, the regional Bureau of Indian Affairs' denial in January 2009 to allow the construction of a nearly \$1 billion casino, hotel and convention center in Kenosha did not help the situation – and spurred the local and other area construction unions “hungry for jobs” (as the June 16, 2010, *Kenosha News* described them) into action. With a project-labor agreement for the project with the **Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin** in hand, Local 127 and the **Southeastern Wisconsin Building & Construction Trades Council** called for a Federal-level investigation into the rejection of the project. Five years later, however, Wisconsin

Governor Scott Walker issued the final death sentence for the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino and the 10,000 jobs associated with it.

By December 2011, with union dues set to be \$404.40 per year for “A” members in 2012, Local 127 had 59 of its journeymen on Book I looking for work and another 42 people on Book II. In that gloomy climate, the children's 2011 **Christmas Party** was cancelled because of a lack of participation.

In April the following year, 56 of about 130 members had signed Book I, and by February 2013, that number was at a still-challenging 48 members. In an effort to bolster its lagging finances, the local and the I.B.E.W. International Office approved a bylaw change to raise the local's working dues beginning that month.

However, construction work began returning to the area relatively suddenly and swiftly, punctuated by work at the power plant and an influx of new retail building. By June 2014, unemployment was waning and only 35 Local 127 members were on its Book I.



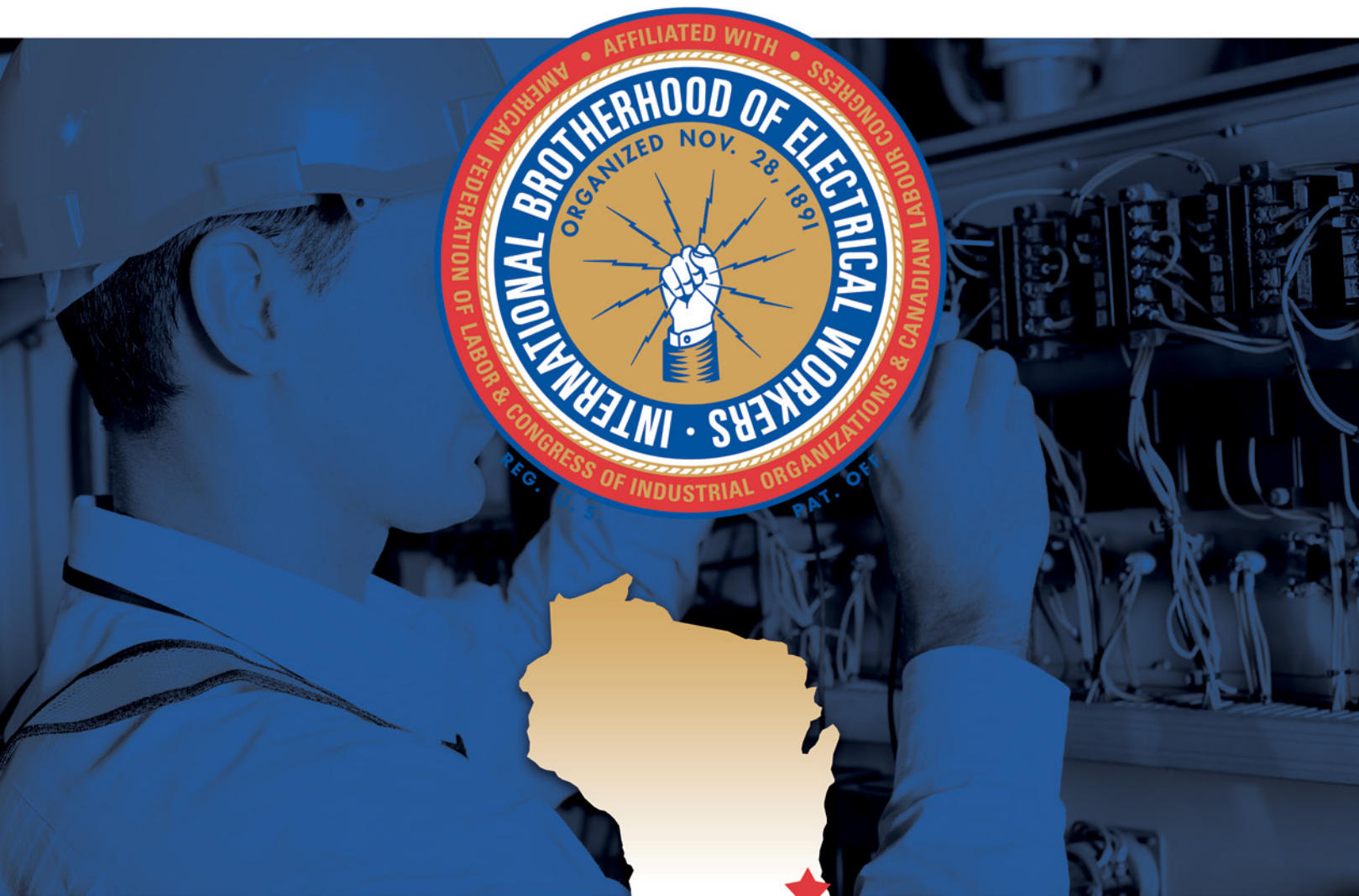
Local 127 members Jack Brunner (left) and Charles Waller were among a crew of 10 brothers who volunteered their time during a weekend in the summer of 1965 to wire and put up new services on a building for a handicapped children's training center.

The local also gained a 75-cent-per-hour raise with a new **Inside Agreement** that May, which would go into effect July 1, increasing rates to \$36.37 for base pay, \$9.52 for Health Insurance, \$8.365 for Pension contributions and \$1.09 for the **National Electrical Benefit Fund** retirement plan. What's more, with more members working, dues were decreased from 6 percent to 5 percent.

Sustaining the momentum and enjoying the growing construction in and around Kenosha, the local was very busy with work on new retail and residential, commercial renovation and warehouse and industrial projects – including the new, 1-million-square-foot **Amazon.com fulfillment center** warehouse and distribution facility that officially opened in October 2015 – into 2015 and through to its **100th anniversary** in 2016.



**We Celebrate with You,
Brothers & Sisters of Local 127,
on Your 100th Anniversary!**



I.B.E.W. LOCAL 430, RACINE

Chris Gulbrandson, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

Paul Voss, President

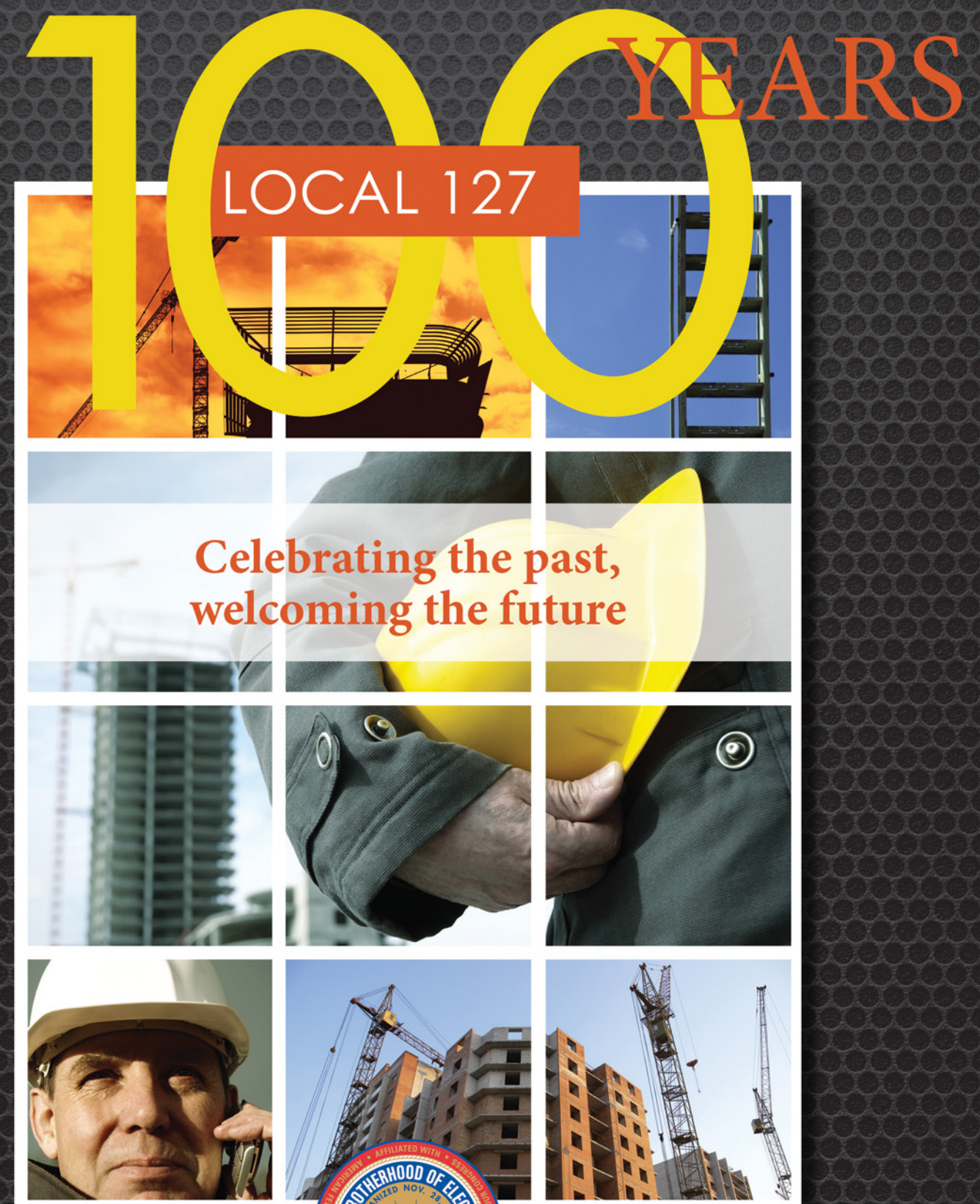
Andrew Johnson, Vice President

Kevin Barber, Membership Development Coordinator

Brian Paulick, Treasurer

Timothy Hanson, Recording Secretary

Executive Board: Michael DeHahn, Jon Hanson, Jacob Erickson, Alan Cacciotti, Timothy Walczak



Lonnie Stephenson, International President

Sam Chilia, International Secretary-Treasurer

David Ruhmkorff, International Vice President, Sixth District

Honoring Local 127 on 100 Powerful Years!



Officers, Members & Staff
of
Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 118
Kenosha, Racine, Walworth

Roger Clark, Business Manager

IBEW LOCAL 17



Congratulations
Local 127 on 100 years!

DEAN BRADLEY
BUSINESS MANAGER/FINANCIAL SECRETARY
OFFICERS & STAFF



IBEW Local 17
17000 W. 12 Mile Rd.
Southfield, MI 48076
www.ibewlocal17.org

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

FROM

IBEW LOCAL 429



Congratulations Local 127 on
Your 100th Anniversary ...
We are Proud to be Part of it!



Electrical Contractors of WI, Inc.
6402 32nd Avenue - Kenosha, Wisconsin 53142
262-658-1600

&

Hanson and Associates, Inc.
6402 32nd Avenue - Kenosha, Wisconsin 53142
262-654-2010

Congratulations Local 127 on Your 100th Anniversary

In Solidarity we celebrate!



Gerald Pfeiffer
Business Manager

Alan Wieteska
President

Daniel Rodriguez
Vice President

Mark Cosentino
Rec. Secretary

Earl Talbott
Treasurer

Executive Board
Richard Ayers Joanna Koomas Bruce Ramirez Daniel Romero Pete Reyes Jr.

Congratulations!

IBEW Local 127
on 100 years
of success in powering
Southeastern Wisconsin.

From the distributor you can depend on...

VE Viking Electric Supply
9016 58th Place Ste. 800 - Kenosha, WI 53144
www.vikingelectric.com

Viking Electric Supply is a M/F/Disabled and Vet EEO/AA employer.

WisconsinVision

*Congratulations
IBEW Local 127
on your first 100 years*

Wisconsin Vision
5725 75th St.
Kenosha
694-5553

Wisconsin Vision
6035 Durand Ave.
Racine
554-8600


Wisconsin Vision
3905 Douglas Ave.
Racine
639-5360



**Bryant "BZ" Parscale**
Financial Secretary

(816) 942-7500 Office
(816) 285-8315 Direct
(816) 797-2735 Mobile
301 East 103rd Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64114
bparscale@ibewlocal124.org

Local Union No. 124
International Brotherhood
of Electrical Workers

**IBEW
Local #47**

**CONGRATULATES LOCAL #127
ON 100 YEARS**

Patrick Lavin
Business Manager / 7th District IEC

909-860-4239 • www.ibew47.org
600 N Diamond Bar Blvd • Diamond Bar, CA 91765


**Congratulations to
IBEW Local 127
on your 100th Anniversary!**

**Members and Officers
of I.B.E.W. Local 117
765 Munshaw Lane
Crystal Lake, IL 60014**

CONGRATULATIONS ON 100 YEARS!

CINDY WAWRZYNIAK
Loan Consultant | NMLS ID 211924
O: 847.262.3253 | C: 414.254.3623
cindy.wawrzyniak@imortgage.com

418 Genesee St
Delafield, WI 53018

**imortgage**
A division of loanDepot, Inc. NMLS#174457

imortgage is licensed by the IL Department of Financial & Professional Regulation.
Illinois Residential Mortgage Licensee MB.6850061. License by WI Department of
Financial Institutions. Corporate NMLS ID 174457. 02232016-4999

**CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR
100TH ANNIVERSARY!**



IBEW Local 34
400 NE JEFFERSON
PEORIA, IL 61603
(309) 673-3691
IBEW34.ORG

***Congratulations on your
100th Anniversary Celebration!***

The Officers and Members of
Insulators Local 19 Extend Congratulations
on this Outstanding Achievement ...
Best Wishes for Another Century
of Progress and Success!

Business Manager -- Brett Large
Business Agent -- Robert Potter
President -- Frank Rodriguez





Thank You
to our
Gold Sponsor

I.B.E.W. Local 494

