

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL 242

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

POWERING MINNESOTA'S NORTHLAND FOR HALF A CENTURY

**IBEW LOCAL
242**

1976 50th Golden Anniversary 2026

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

EST. APRIL 1, 1976

**50th Anniversary
COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY**

1976 - 2026

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I.B.E.W. LOCAL 242 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & YEARS-OF-SERVICE PIN CEREMONY

Saturday, September 19, 2026
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Great Lakes Ballroom, Holiday Inn Downtown
200 West First Street, Duluth, Minnesota

Registration begins	11:00 a.m.
Lunch (Buffet)	Noon
Program and Pin Ceremony	1:45 p.m.



AT THE HEART OF LOCAL 242'S 50-YEAR CELEBRATION IS ITS PEOPLE

Brothers, Sisters, Retirees, Families and Friends of I.B.E.W. Local 242:

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Local 242, I find myself thinking less about a number and more about the people behind it.

Although Local 242 received its charter on April 1, 1976, our history reaches much further back. In 1899, electrical workers in Duluth organized as I.B.E.W. Local 31. Generations later, the construction inside wiremen received their own charter as Local 242. For 50 years, our members have carried that tradition forward.

Our story is about more than the buildings we've helped construct or the miles of conduit we've installed. It is about **people, families, sacrifice and opportunity**.

It is about the men and women who woke up before daylight, put on their work boots and went to work – often in difficult conditions – to provide a better life for their families. It is about the journeymen who taught the next generation, the apprentices who worked hard to earn their place in the trade and the retirees who dedicated a lifetime to making this Local stronger.

Every agreement negotiated, every apprentice trained, every job organized and every benefit protected was made possible because someone before us believed that **we are stronger together than we are alone**.

That is the heart of our Brotherhood.

Local 242 members have helped build and power the Twin Ports and communities throughout northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. But our legacy isn't measured only in what we've built; it is measured in the homes purchased, children raised, families supported and futures made possible through a career in the I.B.E.W.

Our members have also always understood that our responsibility extends beyond the jobsite. Through countless acts of service and community projects, we have shown that being an I.B.E.W. member means being part of something bigger than yourself.

As its president, it is an incredible honor to represent this Local. I know that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and we are grateful for the foundation they built.

To our retirees and past leaders: Thank you.

To our current members: Thank you for carrying the torch.

To our apprentices and young members: The future of Local 242 belongs to you.

Our responsibility is simple: **Leave this Local stronger than we found it.**

Fifty years from now, I hope another generation will gather together to celebrate their own anniversary and look back with the same pride we have today.

A union isn't just a charter, a building or a logo ... **A union is its people.**

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your president. It is an honor I will always be proud of.

Happy 50th Anniversary, I.B.E.W. Local 242 ... 50 years of hard work ... 50 years of sacrifice ... 50 years of Brotherhood ... And our best years are still ahead of us.

In Solidarity,

Kyle Bukovich, President
I.B.E.W. Local 242



HONORING LOCAL 242'S PAST ALLOWS US TO LOOK FORWARD TO ITS FUTURE

Dear Brothers and Sisters of I.B.E.W. Local 242:

On behalf of Local 242, it is my distinct honor and privilege to extend heartfelt congratulations, gratitude and respect to each of you as we celebrate 50 remarkable years of solidarity, hard work, dedication and union pride. This anniversary is more than a date in our history; it is a formal recognition of the generations of members who stood together, believed in one another, protected our standards and built a Local worthy of pride.

The strength of Local 242 has always rested in the hands, hearts and labor of its members. Our history is reflected in every job completed with skill and professionalism, every family supported by a strong union wage, every apprentice guided by the knowledge of a journeyman and every member who answered the call to serve our Local and our communities. Through changing times, difficult challenges, and important victories, Local 242 has remained strong because its members have remained united.

Serving as your business manager has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me throughout the years and for the opportunity to work on behalf of such an outstanding membership. I am proud of each and every one of you – not only for the quality of your workmanship, but for your loyalty, courage, professionalism and commitment to one another as brothers and sisters of Local 242.

To our retirees, I offer a very special and heartfelt “thank you.” Your wisdom, vision, sacrifice and determination helped build the path we walk today. Because of your efforts, Local 242 members and their families have benefited from strong living wages, health and welfare protections, retirement security and the dignity that comes from fair representation and a respected trade. We honor your service, celebrate your legacy and pledge to carry forward the standards you fought to establish.

As we mark this proud 50-year anniversary, let us remember what has always made Local 242 strong: solidarity, hard work, faith in one another and the belief that when working people stand together, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

The future of Local 242 is bright because of its members. Let us honor our past, celebrate this moment and move forward together with determination to make Local 242 the strongest Local it can be – now and for generations to come.

Fraternally and with sincere appreciation,

Donald J. Smith, Business Manager
I.B.E.W. Local 242



This book was proudly produced by

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unionhistories.com

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The History of I.B.E.W. Local No. 242, Duluth

POWER AND PRIDE FOR THE TWIN PORTS

Across Half A Century



The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (I.B.E.W.) chartered new **Local No. 242** in Duluth, Minnesota, on **April 1, 1976**. The union then transferred into the new local 313 members of the city's 75-year-old **I.B.E.W. Local No. 31** who were inside wiremen or working in the classifications of radio-television broadcasting, radio-television service, sound & public address and electrical manufacturing.

Local 31 had been a "mixed" local of inside electricians and utility workers as well as a number of members under the other classifications. The local continues to function in 2026 while serving and representing electrical workers employed by municipal and cooperative utilities throughout its territorial jurisdiction.

By early 1976, Local 31 inside members were actively lobbying the I.B.E.W. to issue them a

charter of their own so that they could operate separately from their fellow utility members. To further their case, as part of their campaign to secure their own local the wiremen submitted signed petition letters to the I.B.E.W. international office that read, in part:

"The group listed below are construction men in good standing from Local Union 31, IBEW. We feel that we would be better represented if we could obtain a charter from our International as an Inside Wireman's Local."

"At the present time, with wiremen paying the present rate of dues, we feel after careful study that we could support a business manager of our own."

"We feel that because we are so solidly behind this movement, we should be granted our request purely on our desire to have it, rather than to have to fight the Utility

company to get it. It is our earnest desire to make this move, and we are prepared to do what we must to see that it is done.

“We are prepared to show a workable proposed financial plan at the present rate of dues that would support such an organization as we have proposed.”

The I.B.E.W. subsequently granted the Local 31 inside members with the charter for Local 242. Meanwhile, the union also transferred the outside construction linemen of Local 31 into **Local No. 160**, the statewide outside construction local located in Minneapolis.

The fledgling Local 242 held a special meeting on April 28, 1976, to have its new charter installed by I.B.E.W. International Representative James Conway. Afterward, the local installed its first slate of officers led by **Business Manager and Financial Secretary Lawrence Caven** and **President Gerald Robison**, both of whom were serving in their respective position for Local 31 at the time of the split – while all other Local 31 officers except Assistant Business Manager Paul O’Brien Jr. also transferred into the new local.

LOCAL 31 REPRESENTED ALL DULUTH ELECTRICAL WORKERS

With largely pro-union Duluth experiencing an industrial boom driven by iron-ore mining during the late 1880s and early 1890s that transformed it from a small town into a powerhouse of shipping, manufacturing and raw material processing (and earned it the nickname “Pittsburgh of the Northwest”), the city’s inside wiremen and outside linemen formed into separate independent unions during that time with the assistance of *National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers* (N.B.E.W., predecessor of the I.B.E.W.) founder **Brother Henry Miller**. Duluth lineman **Brother J. C.**

MILLER, OTHERS FOUNDED I.B.E.W. 135 YEARS AGO

A small group of inside electricians and outside linemen, headed by founder and first president **Brother Henry Miller**, officially formed the **National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers** during a convention on November 21, 1891, in St. Louis. Brother Miller reportedly went without food and other necessities and instead used his earnings to travel the country to organize local unions in various cities into the new national union.

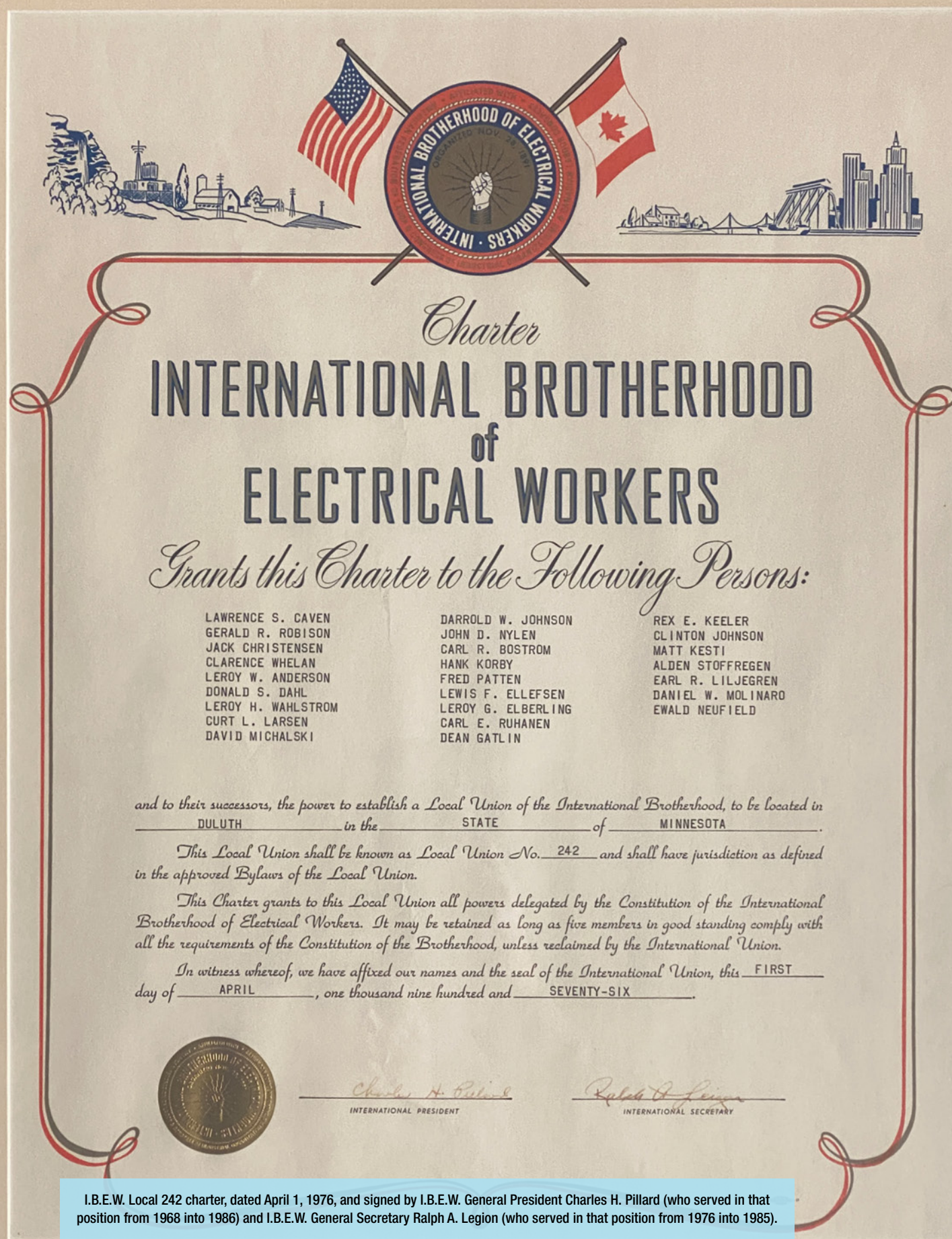
At its 1899 convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the union officially changed its name to the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers** (I.B.E.W.) after it added a local in Ottawa, Ontario. The union’s primary objectives remained improving safety, wages and working conditions for its members – just as the modern-day I.B.E.W. continues to focus on organizing, collective bargaining and advocating for workers’ rights.

Brother Miller passed away on July 10, 1896, while working as head lineman for the Potomac Electric Power Company after he was shocked, fell from a ladder and died the next morning from a concussion. He was only 38 years old.

Sutter then traveled to St. Louis to attend a convention on November 21, 1891, during which its 10 delegates officially founded the National Brotherhood that would become the I.B.E.W. in 1899.

During a meeting on May 6, 1892, at Parson’s Hall, the city’s wiremen and linemen were formed into the very first Duluth-based local of the N.B.E.W., which the union then chartered that same day as **Local No. 25**. However, in the wake of the Panic of 1893, a devastating multi-year economic depression that crippled Duluth’s industrial base and collapsed its electrical infrastructure companies, Local 25 went defunct on October 1, 1896.

As the economy stabilized during the late 1890s and the labor movement in Duluth



I.B.E.W. Local 242 charter, dated April 1, 1976, and signed by I.B.E.W. General President Charles H. Pillard (who served in that position from 1968 into 1986) and I.B.E.W. General Secretary Ralph A. Legion (who served in that position from 1976 into 1985).

LOCAL 242 CHARTER SIGNERS

On March 30, 1976, these 25 electricians, who were members of I.B.E.W. Local 31 at the time, signed the application for the charter granted to Local No. 242 by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers on April 1, 1976, and were subsequently listed on the local's charter.

Leroy W. Anderson	Earl R. Liljegren
Carl R. Bostrom	Curt L. Larsen
Lawrence S. Caven	David Michalski
Jack Christensen	Daniel W. Molinaro
Donald S. Dahl	Ewald Neufield
Leroy G. Elberling	John D. Nylén
Lewis F. Ellefsen	Fred Patten
Dean Gatlin	Carl E. Ruhanen
Clinton Johnson	Gerald R. Robison
Darold W. Johnson	Alden Stoffregen
Rex E. Keeler	Leroy H. Wahlstrom
Matt Kesti	Clarence Whelan
Hank Korby	

subsequently recovered, the city's electrical workers organized again. Soon after, the I.B.E.W. granted them another charter on **August 20, 1899**, as Local 31.

Introducing the new local to the brotherhood through a letter in the October 1899 issue of the I.B.E.W. *Journal*, the union's monthly publication, Local 31 **Press Secretary Clifford L. Higgins** explained:

"When hard times came on, the electrical trade in this city felt them, and so much so that shops which had eight or 10 men cut down to one or two, and many of our members were compelled to

leave the city and go into other work. At last the old number 25 went to pieces and we have all of us been getting along 'each by his lonesome' ever since. But this summer has been the time of an increase in all electrical work in this section and at last we have another local in operation and expect to keep it going."

Working for Bell Telephone and an independent telephone company, both of

which were rapidly expanding their lines through the region, the Duluth Light Company utility and also several electrical-construction firms that were also busy with work as the city's economy and industry again surged, the Local 31 membership made significant early advancements. Perhaps most notable, by June 1902 the local had secured an increased wage scale for its journeyman-level members of \$3 per day and reduced 8-hour-long workdays from its employers after going on strike for just three days to gain those improvements.

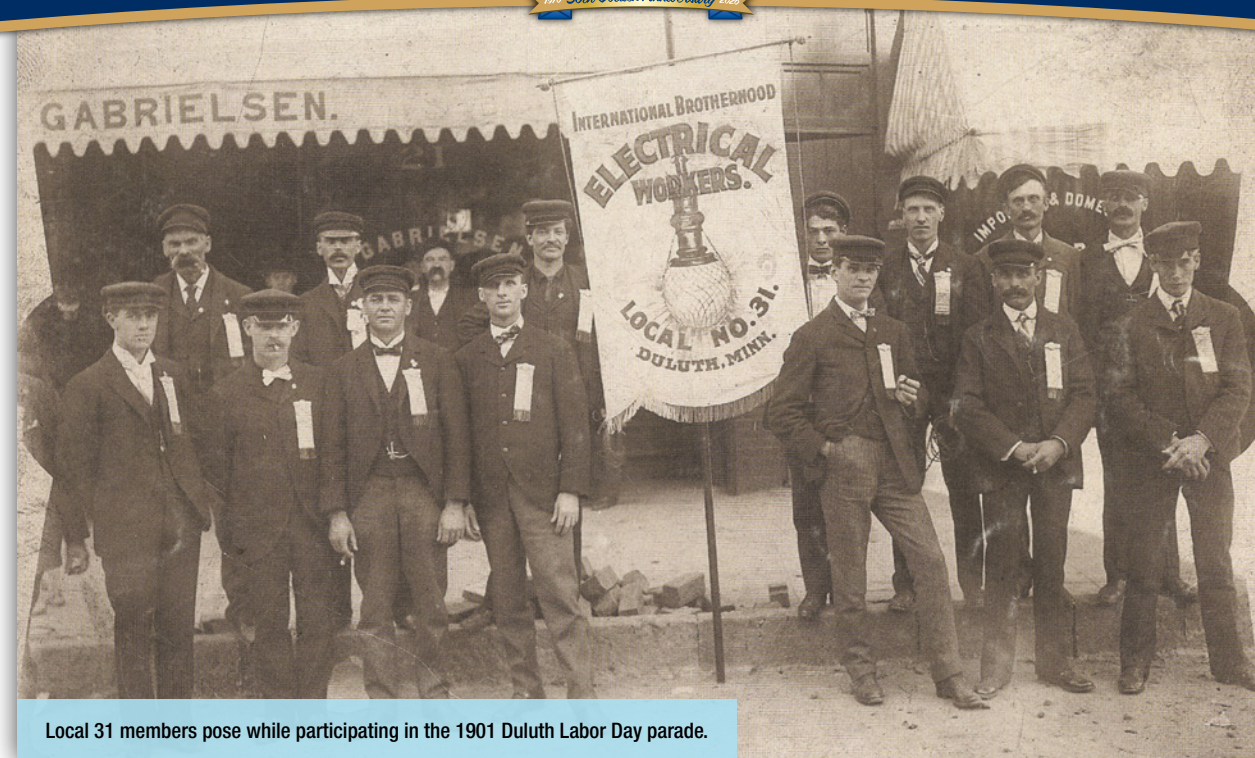
Boasting about those gains, Local 31 Press Secretary Emil A. Nelson wrote in the February 1903 issue of the *Journal*:

"While writing this letter, my mind wanders to the question, How many of us members of the Brotherhood are working but eight hours a day? As for our Local, I can say (if you will pardon me for bragging), that there is not one of us but that is working on the eight-hour day basis. Even the powerhouse employees of the Duluth General Electric Co. are working three shifts of eight hours.

"This is speaking pretty good for a city with a population of but 65-thousand. It has taken



Duluth electrical worker J. C. Sutter was a founding member of the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which would become the I.B.E.W.



Local 31 members pose while participating in the 1901 Duluth Labor Day parade.

this local about two years of fighting to gain this strong foothold of eight hours in this city. We have also bettered ourselves a great deal in our scale of wages, but the principal concession that we have insisted, first of all and last of all, has been the eight hours."

However, Local 31 was one of the last of the mostly outside-lineman locals that seceded from the original international union in 1908 and formed their own I.B.E.W., electing James J. Reid as its president and James W. Murphy as its secretary during a special convention that year while refusing to recognize original I.B.E.W. President Frank J. McNulty and Secretary Peter W. Collins as the true officers of the union. The so-called **"Reid-Murphy Split"** was primarily driven by dissension between wiremen and linemen, disappointed international office-seekers and a former grand treasurer removed from office in 1907 because of "irregularities" in the union's finances, as described in *I.B.E.W.: History & Structure*, a chronicle of the union.

After two competing conventions were held in 1911, a court decision in February 1912 declared the 1908 "Reid-Murphy"

convention was illegal and its actions void. Consequently, nearly all of the locals that had broken away attended the original I.B.E.W.'s 12th convention in Boston in 1913, including Duluth's electrical workers, who were among the last to have been reinstated back into the union before being given a duplicate charter as Local 31 on **January 11, 1913**.

After powering Greater Duluth through World War I that raged in Europe from July 1914 through November 1918, during which the city served as a vital industrial and shipping hub for the United States and its ally countries while contributing heavily to wartime manufacturing and agricultural supply lines, Local 31 continued to forge ahead. For instance, even before enjoying the enhanced employment conditions of the "Roaring Twenties," the period of historic economic prosperity and cultural transformation in the country during the 1920s, the local went on a two-week strike beginning May 1, 1920, to gain an increased wage scale from the **Twin Ports – Arrowhead Chapter, National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA)**, which represented its employing contractors, of **\$1 per hour**.



A Local 31 crew of (left to right, kneeling) Nick Zobenica and Ken Miller; and (standing) Wymer Johnson, Jim Ridgeway, Richard Payfer, William Edman, Willie Lewin and Bill Trevina pose while working on a job in Coleraine, Minnesota, in 1954.

The local then endured the Great Depression, the decade-long economic and human catastrophe that began with the U.S. stock market crash of October 29, 1929 (history's "Black Tuesday"), which caused a sharp drop in shipping and industrial activity in Duluth, leading to high unemployment and financial strain among the city's workforce and residents. As such, the depression severely affected Local 31, whose membership dropped to just 12 inside wiremen and six utility workers in 1933, while more than 50 percent of the I.B.E.W.'s total membership across North America was idled and wages for members who were able to work plummeted, according to I.B.E.W. *History & Structure*.

Following the Great Depression, which essentially ended with the increased demand for defense manufacturing after World War II began in Europe and Asia in 1939, the I.B.E.W. merged **Local No. 255** of Ashland, Wisconsin,

into Local 31. The Duluth local gained both inside and outside members from the "mixed" Local 255, which had been chartered by the union on August 17, 1903.

Local 31 again helped the United States and its allies win a global war as Duluth was once more called on to be a crucial industrial and shipbuilding hub for the Allied effort in both the Pacific and European theaters. Production and employment continued to escalate after the United States officially entered the war following the surprise attack by Imperial Japan on the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, until the war ended with the surrender of Nazi Germany on May 7, 1945, and then Japan on September 2 of that year.

The local would continue to flourish throughout much of the balance of the 1940s and the 1950s and 1960s as Duluth and the

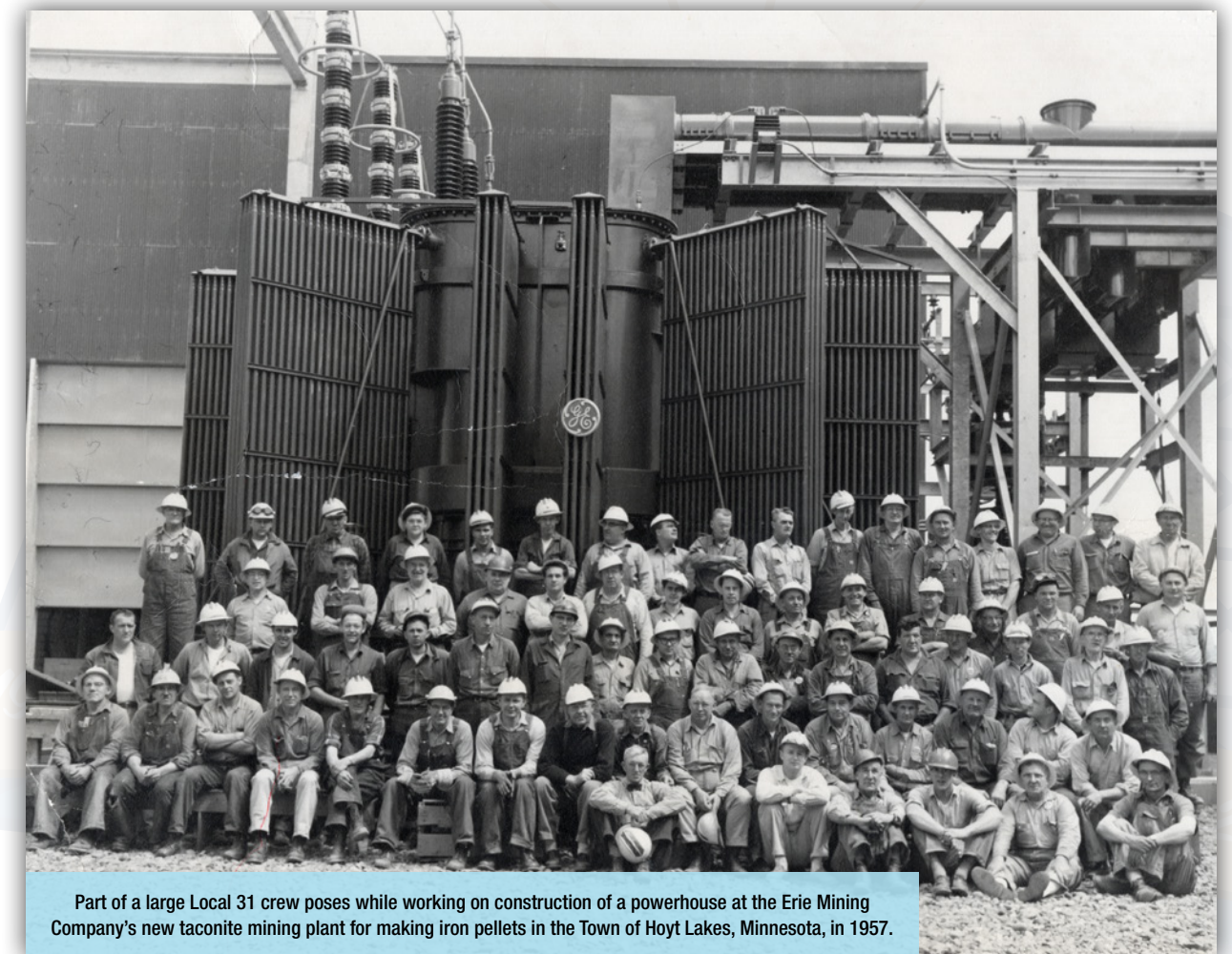
surrounding Twin Ports region, including adjacent Superior, Wisconsin, peaked industrially while pivoting from traditional mining as natural iron-ore reserves were exhausted to processing taconite, a low-grade iron-bearing rock, into iron pellets. As Duluth's population likewise expanded to more than 107,000 residents in 1960, the local itself grew through organizing efforts that included unionizing the employees of the **Aitkin Municipal Power Plant** in 1946, Two Harbors wiremen in early 1951 and the **Lake County Power Association** rural electric association later that year.

Duluth also remained a major shipping port and manufacturing hub that was heavily anchored by the **U.S. Steel Duluth Works** plant, which supplied consistent employment

for Local 31 electricians. In particular, the local's members were regularly working at the plant throughout the 1960s, during which it was the largest steel mill north of Chicago.

Also during that time, Local 31 negotiated its first employer-funded fringe benefits into its work agreement with the NECA, beginning with the **Electrical Workers Health & Welfare Fund** that was established on August 27, 1952. Initially supplemented by employer contributions of 7-1/2 cents for each hour worked by the local's electrical workers, the fund would provide healthcare insurance to members and their families.

The local then gained a **Pension Plan Fund** fringe benefit that was also subsidized by employer contributions based on hours



Part of a large Local 31 crew poses while working on construction of a powerhouse at the Erie Mining Company's new taconite mining plant for making iron pellets in the Town of Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota, in 1957.



Local 31 officers, some of whom would transfer into the new Local 242 nine years later, posing during a member service awards dinner on December 15, 1967, are (left to right) Executive Board members Leroy Anderson and Paul O'Brien; Treasurer John Nylund; Executive Board member Don Dahl; Vice-President Jerry Robison; Assistant Business Manager Larry Caven; President Fred Patten; Business Manager Rudy Johnson; Financial Secretary Gerald Spearman; I.B.E.W. Sixth District International Vice President and former Local 31 Business Manager J. W. Johnson; Sixth District International Representative James P. Conway; and Executive Board members Clarence Whelan and Jack Christianson.

worked by the local's members. The fund would provide retirement benefits for the local's members as well, after which the local also negotiated an **Annuity Plan** into its NECA work agreement in 1971 to supplement its members' pension benefits.

The labor unions of Duluth, including Local 31, reached another milestone when together they purchased the Coca-Cola plant on London Road in 1969 and transformed it into the new **Duluth Labor Temple** the following year. Local 31 and Local 242 continue to utilize the facility as their respective headquarters in 2026.

DULUTH INSIDE ELECTRICIANS AWARDED THEIR OWN LOCAL

After the I.B.E.W. established Local 242 on April 1, 1976, and reassigned Local 31's non-utility to the new organization, the inside wiremen local set up its offices in **Room 111** of the Labor Temple.

The two Duluth locals then held a meeting on June 7 during which they divided all properties held by Local 31, with the utility workers retaining 67 percent and the new local being given 33 percent.

At the time, Local 242 had an active "inside" work agreement with the Twin Ports – Arrowhead Chapter, NECA that on June 1, 1976, increased its journeyman-electrician base wage scale to \$10.16 per hour. It also set contractors' hourly fringe-benefit contributions at 4 percent of payrolls (or 41 cents per hour) for the Health & Welfare Fund, 3 percent (or 30 cents) for the Pension Fund, 2 percent (or 20 cents) for the Annuity Fund and 11 percent (or \$1.11) for a **Local 242 Vacation Fund** – giving the local's member electricians a total compensation package increased from \$11.44 the previous year to **\$12.18 per hour**.

Out in the field, the local's members remained busy throughout the second half of the 1970s on numerous commercial projects and a sizable

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The group listed below are construction men in good standing from Local Union 31, IBEW. We feel that we would be better represented if we could obtain a charter from our International as an Inside Wireman's Local.

We understand the purpose of our Brotherhood to be, as quoted from IBEW Journal, January, 1962:

"The objects of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers are: To organize all workers in the entire electrical industry, including all those in public utilities and electrical manufacturing, into local unions, to promote reasonable methods of work, to cultivate feelings of friendship among those of our industry, to settle all disputes between employers and employees by arbitration (if possible), to assist each other in sickness or distress, to secure employment, to reduce the hours of daily labor, to secure adequate pay for our work, to seek a higher and higher standard of living, to seek security for the individual, and by legal and proper means to elevate the moral, intellectual and social conditions of our members, their families and dependents, in the interest of a higher standard of citizenship."

There are _____ construction workers in Local 31. At the present time, with _____ wireman paying the present rate of dues, we feel after careful study that we could support a business manager of our own.

We propose that with _____ % of the construction workers desiring this change, it should be granted.

We feel that because we are so solidly behind this movement, we should be granted our request purely on our desire to have it, rather than to have to fight the Utility company to get it. It is our earnest desire to make this move, and we are prepared to do what we must to see that it is done.

We are prepared to show a workable proposed financial plan at the present rate of dues that would support such an organization as we have proposed.

Sign your name and card number

Harland Rowland 9001
Elliott Baerwaldt A 44869
J. W. Johnson C-2011
Donald Bailey - 968A1
Louis Duane X142414
Howard R. Smith 957940
Jim Lander 707708
J. P. Bradley X77123
Kenneth Carpenter D204640

NOTE:

This letter and signatures are purely for the purpose of obtaining help in organizing this movement. This letter will not be sent to the International office. When that time comes, the request will be submitted to you again for your signature. You are in no way breaking any IBEW Law by signing this petition.

The petition letter asking the I.B.E.W. to form a new "inside" local in Duluth from the city's "mixed" classifications Local 31, copies of which were circulated among and signed by Local 31 inside electricians in early 1976 before the union chartered "inside" Local 242 on April 1 of that year.



New Local 242 charter members posing with the local's I.B.E.W. charter after it was installed during an April 28, 1976, meeting are (left to right, seated) Clarence Whelan and Earl Liljegren; (standing, first row) Matt Kesti, Carl Ruhanen, Rex Keeler, Dan Molinaro, John Nylen and Gerald Robison; (standing, middle row) Fred Patten, Jack Christensen, LeRoy Anderson, Dean Gatlin, Darrold Johnson, Larry Caven and LeRoy Wahlstrom; and (standing, back row) Dave Michalski, Mike Chesney, Don Dahl and Lawrence Caven.

amount of residential jobs. In particular, many of its electricians were also employed erecting and maintaining many **large grain elevator systems** along the city's port, including massive facilities for Cargill Corporation and General Mills Company, as Duluth's agricultural shipping industry remained strong and required modernized grain handling and storage capacity to load bulk cargo ships and ocean-going vessels.

By April 1978, with additional projects including construction of the new **Duluth Public Library** and **St. Luke's Hospital Northland Medical Office Center** and urban restoration of the downtown **Lyric Block**,

The Local 242 and Local 31 **I.B.E.W. Head of The Lakes Retirees Club** was established in September 1986. **Brother Larry Bradley** served as its first president.

which included building the new 242-room **Normandy Inn**, underway in its jurisdiction, the local's membership was fully employed and it was hosting as many as 85 "travelers" (members from other I.B.E.W. locals who were working in the Duluth territory). The start of work on large expansions of the **North West Paper Company paper mill** in Cloquet and the **Reserve Mining Company** taconite-processing operation at Silver Bay, Minnesota, that latter of which employed more than 100 union electricians at one time, and constructing of multiple low-income downtown housing projects including the 98-unit **King Manor Apartments** even prompted Business Manager Caven to hire Local 242 member **Brother Gene Fulton** as an assistant business manager that year.

With more than 100 travelers working in the local's jurisdiction helping to handle additional projects such as a new taconite loading facility at

Two Harbors being built by the Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway, **Press Secretary Leslie Larson** was able to announce in the October 1978 *Journal*, "We are, at the present time, enjoying full employment in the jurisdiction, with both large and small jobs well under way."

Meanwhile, Local 242 negotiated a new work agreement with NECA that went into effect June 1, 1978, and provided wage increases of 65 cents per hour each year, boosting the local's wage scale to \$12.08 per hour and total benefit contributions to \$2.77 per hour, including 36 cents for the I.B.E.W./NECA **National Electrical Benefit Fund** (N.E.B.F.), before the end of the decade. The contract also eliminated the union's "no-strike clause" after two years.

By that time, the local's members and scores of travelers were also employed on several new projects in and around Duluth while existing work such as the General Mills grain elevators was ongoing or nearing completion. Those additional jobs included extensive upgrades of the **Minnesota Power & Light Headquarters Building**.

LOCALS PROVIDED AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO THEIR RETIREES

At a time when it was not uncommon for labor unions to provide affordable housing for its retired members, in 1961 and 1962 Local 242 predecessor I.B.E.W. Local No. 31 and the Twin Ports Arrowhead Chapter, National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) built the **S-Elect Home Apartments** in downtown Duluth as affordable housing for the local's retirees. After Local 242 was formed and chartered from Local 31 in 1976, the two locals shared ownership of the five-story, 66-apartment complex on East Second Street.

Acting on the results of a survey that showed the local's members who lived in Duluth wanted to remain in the city after they retired, Local 31 and NECA secured an \$864,000 (equivalent to about \$5 million in 2026) loan from the Federal Housing Administration (F.H.A.) for the land and construction of the apartments. The locals and its employing contractors also approved the use of their **Vacation Fund** to invest in the complex by financing its furnishings and appliances.

Approved by the F.H.A.'s "Housing for the Elderly" program, when completed in July 1962 the building was supplied with 13,000 volts of electricity from Minnesota Power and Light Company Utility Lines, while power was supplied to each of the five floors by prefabricated bus risers from the substation located in the lower level of the building. The complex also featured a hobby room, a large lounge and medical and laundry rooms located on the first floor and a sundeck located on the top floor.

After more than 60 years of ownership, the Duluth I.B.E.W. locals decided that managing the building had become untenable and in late 2023 donated the S-Elect Home Apartments to the non-profit **Center City Housing Corporation** for continued use as affordable senior housing. The organization has since secured more than \$15 million in investments to extensively overhaul the building, including its mechanical systems and structural components, while maintaining restricted rents for its tenants.



The S-Elect Home Apartments in downtown Duluth, which Local 242 and Local 31 maintained to offer their retirees with affordable housing, shown sometime during the late 1970s.

LOCAL 242 TRADE CLASSIFICATIONS

Local 242 was assigned jurisdiction of **Inside Wiremen, Electrical Manufacturing, Radio-Television Service, Radio-Television Broadcast** and **Sound and Public Address** when it was chartered by the I.B.E.W. on April 1, 1976.

On October 6, 1976, the I.B.E.W. added **Cable Television** to Local 242's trade jurisdiction.

On February 28, 1990, the I.B.E.W. added **Electric Signs** and **Marine** to Local 242's trade jurisdiction.

As of April 1, 2026, the 50th anniversary date of its charter, Local 242 represents the following trade classifications within its jurisdiction:

- **Inside**
- **Electrical Manufacturing**
- **Radio-Television Broadcast**
- **Radio-Television Service**
- **Sound and Public Address**
- **Cable Television**
- **Electric Signs**
- **Marine**

ENDURING DIFFICULT TIMES, LOCAL FIGHTS ITS WAY BACK

Collective-bargaining negotiations with NECA gained Local 242's electricians a new one-year work agreement for June 1, 1980, and then a new two-year contract that went into effect on June 1, 1981. The pacts ultimately increased the local's wage rate to \$15.75 per hour and total fringe benefit compensation to \$3.93 per hour as the local went into 1983.

However, a deep economic recession during the early 1980s that devastated Duluth's heavy-manufacturing and natural-resource industries and the collapse of the U.S. domestic steel industry that slowed iron-ore and taconite markets, sending unemployment in the city to nearly 20 percent, severely reduced work opportunities for the Local 242 membership. What's more, an increase in non-union activity in the local's jurisdiction further suppressed its

employment throughout the first half of the decade, leaving **Press Secretary LeRoy "Red" Anderson** to simply report in the January 1981 *Journal*, "After a period of full employment, we now have a growing out-of-work list."

Meanwhile, the local's 23 television technicians ratified a new three-year contract with the region's three television stations. The pact, retroactive to October 1, 1982, called for wage hikes of 5, 6, and 5 percent over the next three years with modifications in the workers' vacation funds.

But as a growing number of Local 242 members were forced to travel to the jurisdictions of other locals around the country for work, by February 1983 the local's membership was experiencing its worst unemployment with more than 40 percent out of work, including both journeymen and apprentices. While a modernization project at the North West paper mill in Cloquet (which was a division of the Potlatch Corporation and is now operated by Sappi as the Cloquet Mill) utilized around 40 union wiremen for about six months early that year, by May the local's unemployment had jumped to nearly 67 percent of its workforce.

In an effort to help its employing contractors gain more jobs, the local agreed to wage freezes – avoiding wage cuts by threatening to strike – throughout two consecutive new one-year work agreements with NECA that went into effect on June 1 of 1983 and 1984, respectively, while members in the local's western jurisdiction accepted cuts in their wages during that period. In addition, for the first one-year contract the local's members paid 16 cents of the 95-cent hourly contribution to their Health & Welfare Fund, while all other fringe benefit payments remained the same during the life of the contract as well.

With employment conditions remaining bleak, the I.B.E.W. dissolved inside-

construction and electrical-manufacturing **Local No. 276** of Superior and transferred its Douglas County jurisdiction, which includes the City of Superior across the St. Louis Bay from Duluth, into Local 242. The remaining portion of the Local 276 jurisdiction was assigned to I.B.E.W. **Local No. 953** of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, which at the time also represented inside electricians.

Nearly one-third of the local's membership remained unemployed at one point in early November 1986 before its work situation vastly improved with the start of construction on the new, \$400-million (equivalent to about \$1.1 billion in 2026) **Lake Superior Paper Industries Mill**, built as a joint effort between Minnesota Power and Pentair, Inc.,

LABOR TEMPLE HAS BEEN LOCAL'S HOME FOR 50 YEARS

The **Duluth Labor Temple** in which Local 242's offices have been located throughout its entire 50-year existence was a former Coca-Cola plant before the city's organized-labor unions – including Local 242 predecessor I.B.E.W. Local 31 – together acquired the building in 1969. With union leaders concerned with the lack of facilities and parking at the former Labor Temple at 320 West First Street, they formed the Labor Temple Association to purchase the Coca-Cola building at **2002 London Road** for \$290,000 under an agreement made in September of that year.

"The new site at 2002 London Road will have ample parking and plenty of available space for modern offices and meeting rooms," an article in September 4, 1969, issue of *The Labor World* reported. "Purchase of the new building has been in the talking stage for about five years and the talking has become serious within the past year."

After Coca Cola moved into its new location on July 1, 1970, the city's labor unions, including Local 31, relocated into the new Labor Temple, after which the labor groups would spend about \$100,000 to remodel the two-story facility. When Local 242 was chartered nearly six years later on **April 1, 1976**, the local also set up its headquarters in the building – where it remains in 2026 as it celebrates its 50th charter anniversary in 2026.



The Coca Cola plant on London Street before organized labor purchased the building in 1969 to become the new Duluth Labor Temple, in which Local 242's offices are still located in 2026.



The Duluth Labor Temple in a more current photograph.

LOCAL 242 LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE YEARS

After Local 242 was formed from I.B.E.W. Local 31 and then chartered on April 1, 1976, the new local's first slate of officers consisted of:

Business Manager/Financial Secretary Lawrence Caven
President Gerald Robison
Vice-President Curt Larsen
Treasurer Darrold Johnson
Recording Secretary Curt Larsen
Executive Board members Jack Christensen, Clarence Whelan, LeRoy Wahlstrom, LeRoy Anderson and Don Dahl

Business Manager/Financial Secretaries

Lawrence Caven
 1976 – 1980

Clarence Whelan
 1980 – 1994

Earl Liljegren
 1994 – 1995

James E. Brown
 1995 – 2013

Donald J. Smith
 2013 – current

on the waterfront in West Duluth. When the facility officially opened and began paper production in late 1987, it was the most efficient and technologically advanced paper mill in North America at the time.

Along with the paper mill, which had as many as 150 union electricians working on it at one point, employment for Local 242 continued to improve during the second half of the 1980s, allowing most members to return to their home jurisdiction. Notable projects such as an expansion of the **Miller Hill Mall**, which added 40 new specialty shops and a Sears anchor store to the Duluth shopping center; construction of the **City Side Convention**

Center at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center that would be completed in June 1990; and addition and remodeling projects for the majority of the **Duluth Public Schools** facilities enabled the local to reach full employment by the spring of 1987 for the first time in more than three years and also brought about 175 travelers into its jurisdiction in October 1987.

Additionally, the local's Brainerd-area members were also fully employed during that time. Jobs those electricians were staffing included projects at **Larson Boat Works**, **Crestliner Boat Works** and **Camp Ripley**, one of the largest National Guard training facilities in the nation, and several sites for the **Crosby-Ironton School District**.



I.B.E.W. International Representative Jim Conway swears in the first officers of Local 242 during a meeting on April 28, 1976, (left to right) Darrold Johnson, Jack Christensen, Lawrence Caven, LeRoy Anderson, Don Dahl, Gerald Robison and Clarence Whelan, after the local was chartered on April 1.

Then, on the very day their previous contract expired, Local 242 was able to secure a new two-year work agreement with NECA that provided the local with a total \$1.50-per-hour raise after it went into effect on June 1, 1988. Those wage and benefits increases would ultimately reach \$17.59 per hour in base pay for journeymen and \$6.16 in total fringe-benefit hourly contributions – giving the local's electricians a total compensation package of **\$23.75 per hour** as it entered the 1990s.

Local 242 Member Training PREPARING ITS HIGHLY SKILLED ELECTRICIANS

Since the time Local 242 was established on April 1, 1976, the local and the Twin Ports Arrowhead Chapter, National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), which represents the local's employing contractors, have trained and prepared prospective new union electricians for careers in the trade through the time-honored system of **apprenticeship**. Working together through the **Twin Ports Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee** (J.A.T.C.), the local and NECA provide apprentices with paid, on-the-job training while they work on jobsites alongside experienced, journeyman-level inside wiremen that is supplemented with hands-on classroom and lab curriculum and instruction.

The apprenticeship program of the J.A.T.C., which consists of three representatives each from the local and NECA, initially required four years of training that included classes held at the **Duluth Area Vocational Technical Institute**, which was administered by the Duluth School District. The technical institute was since renamed the Duluth Technical College and then was merged with the Duluth Community College Center in 1995 to form **Lake Superior College** – which continues to host the J.A.T.C. training for Local 242 apprentices and members.

The apprentice training has also advanced over the years into a five-year-long program in which J.A.T.C. students are required to complete 8,000 hours of on-the-job-training and at least 900 hours of classroom instruction before they test for a journeyman-electrician license in both the states of Minnesota and

Wisconsin. Meanwhile, the J.A.T.C. spends hundreds of thousands of dollars annually – funded through contractor and union contributions based on work hours performed by Local 242 members – to educate the Local 242 workforce so it is the most productive and safest in the electrical-construction industry.

Additionally, Local 242 apprentices located in the Brainerd, Minnesota, area of the local's jurisdiction are provided with classes held at **Central Lakes College** in Brainerd.

As the J.A.T.C. has always required over 50 years, during the course of his or her apprenticeship each Local 242 apprentice is rotated on a yearly basis to a new contractor, giving the apprentice the opportunity to receive varied experiences. Apprentices are also paid for the work they perform during the day before attending classes at night, and they receive incremental pay increases during the course of their apprenticeships based on the amount of work hours they successfully complete in the “earn while you learn” program.

Local 242 member training continues through **continuing education** offered through the J.A.T.C. as well, fulfilling state law requiring each journeyman electrician to attend at least 16 hours of certified classes every two years to keep his or her licensing up to date. The courses offer the local's members the opportunity to learn new and in-demand skills, as well as review existing knowledge, enabling the local and NECA to offer the best-trained, safest and most experienced electrical workers in the region.

But first, Local 242 and many of its members joined thousands of building tradespeople on March 11, 1989, in a mass protest against the planned hiring of an anti-union, out-of-state contractor and the use of non-union labor for the construction of a multi-million-dollar expansion of the **Boise Cascade paper mill** in International Falls, Minnesota. Reporting on the historic rally, Local 242 **Press Secretary Chris Brelie** would declare in the August 1989 issue of the *Journal*:

“Boise’s decision to hire these rats is a pertinent reason we should take an active part in our union.”

The dispute would, as a July 15, 1990, *Duluth News-Tribune* article described, “(hold) International Falls captive for one year” as union construction workers refused to work alongside non-union employees. The protests would result in a wildcat strike in July 1989; scattered violence that escalated on September 9, causing several injuries and \$1-million in property damage; and a court order limiting union pickets as the project slowly progressed.

Ultimately, the mill expansion would be fully completed by January 1991, after which the mill became International Falls’ largest

TRIO HAS MANAGED OFFICE

Only three office managers have served Local 242 since it was established and chartered on April 1, 1976, essentially handling all office administration and business when the local's officers are out while also taking care of payroll, job referrals, members inquiries, pension applications – and much more.

Joyce Price was the local's first office manager, after which she served in the position until retiring in March 1997 – although she did return to work part time in the office.

Judi Jacobson was hired in 1997 as Joyce's successor and retired in the fall of 2006.

Krista Steffer began working part time in the Local 242 office on July 21, 2004, until Judi retired in 2006 and has since been the local's fulltime office manager.

employer. But before the project was finished and the intensity of the quarrel subsided as work resumed, a small handful of strikers continued to walk a picket line at the mill, maintaining what was, according to the newspaper, “among the most famous labor battles in Minnesota in decades.”

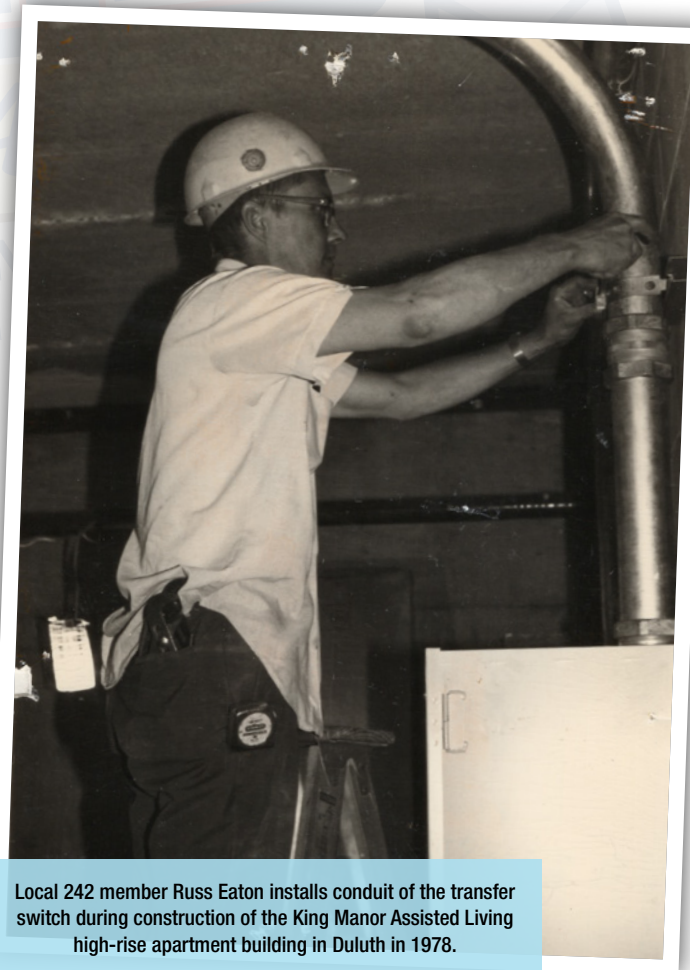
POWERING AND ORGANIZING ITS WAY INTO THE NEW Y2K

The union electrical workers of Duluth and the Twin Ports region and their Local 242 made several significant strides leading up to and moving forward from the turn of the next century and the new “Y2K” (Year 2000) millennium, while they also continued to traverse the highs and lows presented by the many influences on its industries, including the non-union sector. Early on in that period, after suffering through negotiations during much of the 1980s, the local made notable gains in its NECA work agreements, including a new three-year contract that went into effect on June 1, 1993, with annual pay increases that

would eventually boost the local's journeyman base wage to \$21.88 per hour and its total compensation package to **\$29.54 per hour** beginning June 1, 1995.

What's more, although longtime **Business Manager Clarence Whelan** retired on March 1, 1994, after leading the local through its most challenging times during his 14 years in the position, **Brother Earl Liljegren** stepped in to complete the final year of Brother Whelan's unexpired term. The local's membership then elected **Brother James Brown** as its next business manager, after which he would lead the local over the next 18 years into 2013.

Throughout the 1990s, the local also remained committed to countering the non-union intrusion into its jurisdiction, and especially in the Brainerd area, through **organizing**, with the



Local 242 member Russ Eaton installs conduit of the transfer switch during construction of the King Manor Assisted Living high-rise apartment building in Duluth in 1978.

local's officers, organizers and members in particularly point to the union's unsurpassed healthcare benefits as selling points when addressing unorganized workers. As such, while addressing the “non-union situation” in and around Brainerd in the December 1997 *Journal*, Local 242 **Press Secretary Garry Krause** implored members:

*“Each and every unit member is encouraged to become active in our union and **organize, organize, organize!**”*

Back out on jobsites, the local's members enjoyed steady when not strong employment conditions during the decade, with construction of a **Northwest Airlines Airbus facility** at the Duluth International Airport that was completed in 1996; the new **Mars Lakeview Arena** that would serve as the home ice rink for both the College of St. Scholastica Saints and the Marshall School Hilltoppers hockey teams after it opened in November 1999; and an extensive, multi-million-dollar expansion and modernization



Local 242 apprentice Gary Anderson installs pipe during construction of the North West Paper Company facility in Cloquet, Minnesota, in 1978.



Local 242 members LeRoy Wahlstrom (left) and Charlie Park participate in organized labor's Solidarity Day rally in Washington, D.C., on September 19, 1981.

A History Of Volunteerism

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN ITS COMMUNITIES

Local 242 and its members have a strong legacy of charitable engagement throughout Northeastern Minnesota, which across half a century has included volunteering to work on the construction of two houses a year for **Western Lake Superior Habitat for Humanity** – after eight of the local’s members in November 1989 rewired the very first home ever refurbished by the non-profit affordable housing agency.

Throughout the local’s first 50 years, a range of benevolent activities in which it and its members have been involved include donating thousands of dollars annually to **Duluth SHARE** food-shelves drives for needy families. In November 1984, the local even challenged all other local unions in the region to match the electricians’ financial and volunteer efforts in support of SHARE.

Perhaps one of Local 242’s most notable and internally gratifying volunteer projects among the many in which it and its members have participated was its donated financing and electrical wiring of the new **Northland Vietnam Veterans Memorial**, which was dedicated on May 30, 1992, at the Duluth downtown waterfront. The first monument honoring veterans of the Vietnam War in the State of Minnesota, the memorial features a white concrete bunker acting as a literal shelter from storms, a black granite wall engraved with 136 names and an exterior lighted tower.

Just over a decade later, the local’s members then also helped install the new **Korean War Veterans Memorial** in Duluth that was dedicated on August 21, 2003, on the



Local 242 members pose while working on a Habitat for Humanity home project in December 2017.

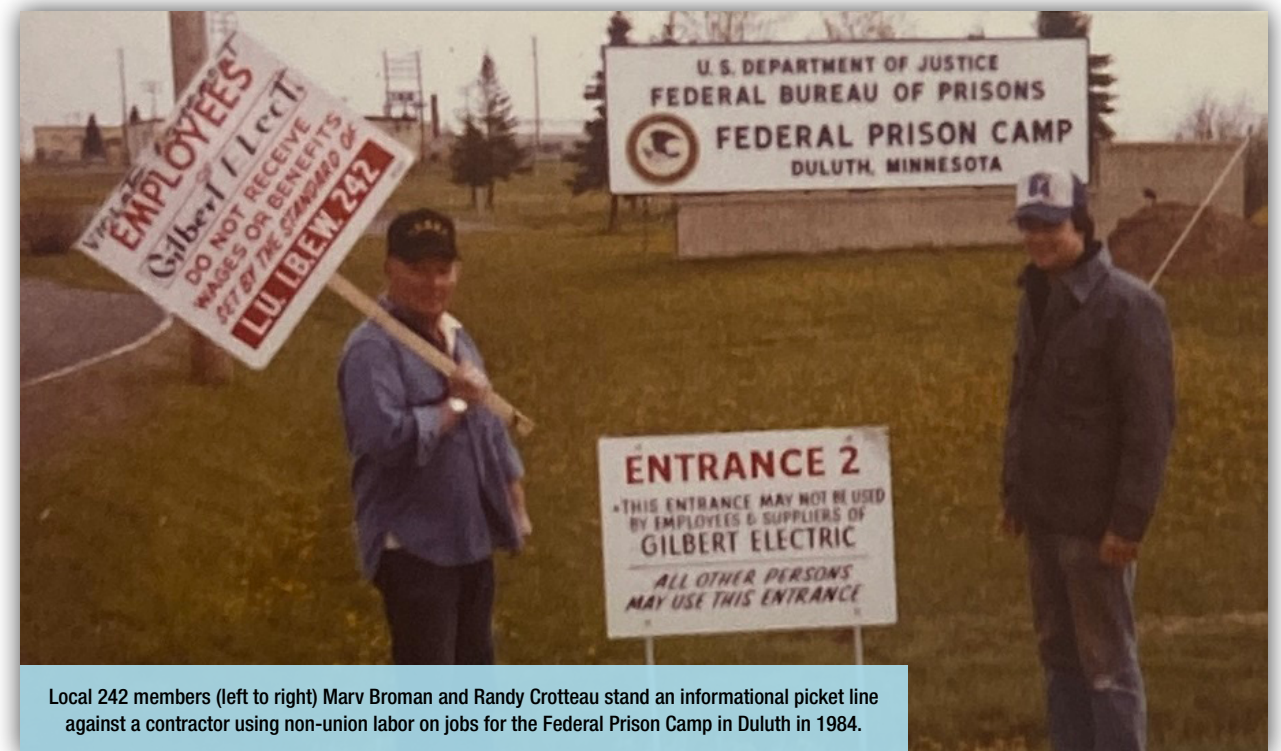
city’s Lakewalk near Gichi-Ode’ Akiing (Lake Place Park). The monument’s 16-foot-long stone wall honors area men and women who served in the Korean War, specifically focusing on Duluth’s local Marine Corps Reserve Unit, B Company, from which 10 members were killed in action during the war.

Local 242 has only deepened its volunteerism in the communities it services throughout the years. Its charitable activities have also come to include reviving the **Gary-New Duluth Recreation Center** in 2015, before which it was a neglected shelter closed in 2009, to turn it into a vibrant community hub through donated funds and assistance remodeling and wiring the facility.

“In communities like Duluth that suffer under the weight of unfair national trade policy and deindustrialization,” I.B.E.W. International President Edwin D. Hill said while discussing the Gary-New Duluth Recreation Center project at the time, “I.B.E.W. members and our allies make a real difference in the lives of our neighbors.”



Local 242 members (left to right) Bob McRae, Jim Petrich, Frank Vittorio, Ron Johnson, Jim Brown, Dave O’Connor, Bob Anderson and John Peterson pose while working on a Habitat for Humanity home project in November 1989.



Local 242 members (left to right) Marv Broman and Randy Crotteau stand an informational picket line against a contractor using non-union labor on jobs for the Federal Prison Camp in Duluth in 1984.

of the North West paper mill that was finished in late 1999 helping to provide full employment. While occasional slow periods required some members to travel for work in other I.B.E.W. locals’ jurisdictions, Local 242 was often able to provide jobs for members of sister locals, and especially in the late 1990s when employment flourished with many projects underway within the local’s territory.

To close out the decade, the local negotiated a first-ever **four-year-long work agreement** with NECA that went into effect on June 1, 1999. The contract would eventually increase the local’s journeyman wage scale to \$26.14 per hour on June 1, 2002, for its final year, while also improving percentages for employer contributions to fringe benefits.

The local’s prosperity persisted into the new Y2K millennium as well as at least 16 substantial, ongoing development projects just in the immediate Duluth area alone continued to provide an abundance of workhours for the local’s members as well as traveling union electrical workers. Those jobs

further included renovations of the Miller Hill Mall and construction of the block-long, five- and nine-story **Duluth Technology Village** office structure, which was heavily outfitted with specialized tech infrastructure, such as redundant power systems, designed to lure tech startup companies; the new **Great Lakes Aquarium** in the city’s downtown area for its grand opening on July 29, 2000; and the new **Kathryn A. Martin Library** at the **University of Minnesota – Duluth** that was opened in September 2000.

Notably, the local was the sole provider of electrical, data, voice and security installations for the Technology Village after it actively supported the city as it pursued the development and construction of a high technology center. While reviewing the successful construction of the Duluth Technology Village in the June 2000 *Journal*, Press Secretary Krause further declared:

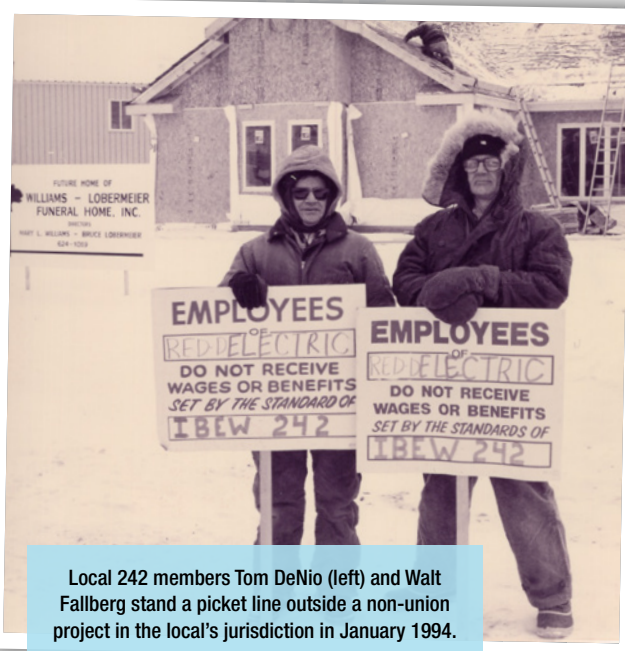
“Our members have worked long and hard to make sure that our community receives a piece of the global pie. The skills, training and



New Local 242 apprentices (left to right) Dave DeLovely, Rick Hanson, Bob McRae, Jeff Grover and Jason Bergquist are sworn into the union during the local's January 1990 general meeting.

dedication of our I.B.E.W. members prove that we are an important and vital component of this community's growth."

Following a brief slow period in the early 2000s during which Local 242 members were able to find work with other I.B.E.W. locals, as



Local 242 members Tom DeNio (left) and Walt Fallberg stand a picket line outside a non-union project in the local's jurisdiction in January 1994.

the economy of Duluth experienced a pivotal transition that shifted it away from its historical heavy reliance on industrial manufacturing and mining to become a diversified regional hub, the local and its union electricians would play a significant role in the evolution. Often described as a "renaissance" decade for the city, the 2000s saw Duluth successfully rebrand itself from a declining "Rust Belt" town into a vibrant center for healthcare, education, aviation and tourism – with healthcare becoming the city's primary economic engine by mid-decade.

For instance, throughout much of the balance of the decade, Local 242 members were employed on a massive transformational construction program on the University of Minnesota – Duluth campus that added several prominent, state-of-the-art academic buildings wired by union electricians. Elsewhere, physical expansions by major regional healthcare employers such as **Essentia Health** and St. Luke's Hospital further boosted employment.

Meanwhile, the local gained consecutive new four-year work agreements from NECA

in 2003 and 2007 that provided pay increases and enhancements to benefits that would ultimately push the local's journeyman wage scale to \$33.48 per hour and its total package to **\$53 per hour** beginning May 30, 2010, for the final year of the second contract. The agreement also called for both the local and its contractors to each contribute 2 cents per hour to their **Labor-Management Cooperative Committee** for promoting the union electrical industry and helping to stabilize relations between the local and NECA.

The so-called "Great Recession" that began in late 2007 and lingered into 2009, by which time it was the most severe national financial crisis and job loss since the Great Depression, curbed the local's momentum – but only briefly. Although Greater Duluth and the Twin Ports region endured the recession somewhat better than much of the country because of its recently found institution-based economy, for a time Local 242 members were left to essentially subsist on school projects for which the local had to make financial concessions so that its employers could secure the work, helping the local weather the historic economic downturn.

CONTINUING TO PROGRESS TO A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

With the construction industry in its jurisdiction in the midst of a massive post-recession resurgence and a historic building boom that was driven by public



Local 242 retirees (seated, left to right) Wallis Sanford, Dan Kolodzeske and Cliff Nelson pose with Business Manager Jim Brown after receiving their 50-year I.B.E.W. Service Awards in October 2001.



Local 242 retirees (left to right, front row) Bud Bush, Vern Lofdahl, Jim Hill, Lester Peterson, Fred Patten and Naylor Nord; and (back row) Dan Molinaro, Ed Liska, Carl Ruhanen, Al Wick, Matt Kesti, Clarence Whelan, Lewis Ellefsen, Marvin Anderson and Louis Sadlo pose during the local's Christmas event in 1994.

infrastructure overhauls, transformative downtown Duluth commercial developments and the public school district's aggressive, multi-million-dollar facility upgrade campaign, Local 242 flourished with strong employment conditions during much of the 2010s. Consequently, even as joblessness beyond their ranks surged during the mid-2010s, Local 242's union electricians remained fully employed as the state's government invested Minnesota's budget surplus in new infrastructure that created work.

Additionally, following catastrophic flooding in June 2012, many of the local's members worked on an extensive reconstruction and repair project for the **Thomson Dam** and its associated hydroelectric facility on the St. Louis River near Duluth, with major work extending into the mid-2010s. Restoration and upgrades to the dam included replacing heavily damaged electrical infrastructure and large transformers and performing maintenance on all six of the power station's underwater turbine generators.

A range of additional projects on which the local's members were employed at the time included construction of the new **Swenson Hall** academic building at the **University of**

Wisconsin – Superior that opened in August 2011 and the new **Lincoln Middle School** in Duluth that opened the following year. Later, among several key jobs the local's electricians also wired was the new 11-story **Maurices Headquarters building** in downtown Duluth that opened in April 2016 as the largest downtown commercial development in the city's history, and the new 1-megawatt **Fond du Lac Band Solar Array** that went online in August 2016 to power the Black Bear Casino Resort in Carlton, Minnesota.

Also throughout the decade, Local 242 made consistent gains in its negotiated NECA contracts, beginning with a three-year work agreement that went into effect on June 3, 2012, and eventually increased journeymen's base pay to \$32.54 per hour and the wage-and-benefits package to \$56.30 per hour for its last year beginning June 1, 2024. Subsequent three-year agreements in 2015 and 2019 then together provided annual wage and benefits increases that ultimately raised the local's journeymen wage scale to \$41.66 per hour and its total compensation package to **\$69.60 per hour** beginning May 30, 2021, for the final year of the contract.



Local 242 retirees (left to right, front) Darrel Granquist, Eugene Blomfelt, Edward Eliason, Christoph Brelie, <Local 242 Business Manager Donald Smith>, Thomas Selinski and Jim Whelan; and (back row) Martin LaPlante and Michael O'Rourke pose after receiving their 40-year I.B.E.W. Service Award pins from Business Manager Smith during a ceremony in 2019.

The global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that first infected the United States in early 2020, after which it would claim the lives of more than 1 million Americans over the next three years, initially curtailed the local's activities, and particularly its employment. While the local practiced recommended safety precautions such as social distancing, canceling meetings and training and closing its offices to help stop the spread of the virus, members would eventually continue work on "essential" projects.

As the pandemic slowly subsided, work surged throughout the local's jurisdiction over the ensuing years leading up to its 50th charter anniversary in April 2026. During that time, the local's membership reached 400 inside electricians while as many as 800 total union wiremen, including hundreds of I.B.E.W. travelers, worked within the local's jurisdiction.

Among the more-prominent jobs on which those electrical workers were employed was construction of the new 18-story, 344-bed, 942-square-foot **Essentia Health-St. Mary's Medical Center** in downtown Duluth that opened in July 2023. Representing the largest private investment in the city's history, the union-wired hospital and clinic feature 27 operating rooms, a full emergency department and a Level I trauma center.

The rebuild of the **Husky Energy Refinery** in Superior, Wisconsin, after a series of explosions on April 28, 2018, severely damaged the oil-processing facility provided a large number of manhours for Local 242 members as well before the project was completed in the spring of 2023. Other key jobs during that period also included the **Enbridge Line 3 Replacement Project** to install a new and expanded oil pipeline for the energy infrastructure company that runs across northern Minnesota, which was completed in October 2021.

The local also negotiated the work contract that would be in place at its half-century anniversary, gaining the new, four-year



Local 242 retiree Michael O'Rourke and third-year Local 242 apprentice Athena O'Rourke, his granddaughter, display Brother O'Rourke's 45-year I.B.E.W. Service Award pin after Sister O'Rourke presented it to him during a ceremony on September 21, 2024.

agreement with NECA that went into effect on May 29, 2022. The pact called for annual wage and benefit increases that set the local's journeyman wireman wage scale at \$48.58 per hour and total wage-and-benefits package at **\$80.10 per hour** for the final year of the agreement ending May 20, 2026.

More than 400 inside electricians and specialty members strong as it marks its golden anniversary 50 years after being chartered by the I.B.E.W., Local 242 remains busy with work and a vital contributor to the welfare of Duluth, the Twin Ports area and northeast Minnesota's Arrowhead Region. Together with the Twin Ports – Arrowhead Chapter of NECA and other employers of its members, the local will remain dedicated to promoting qualified electrical contractors, a highly skilled union workforce and positive labor relations as it enters its next half century of service to its members and industries. ♦

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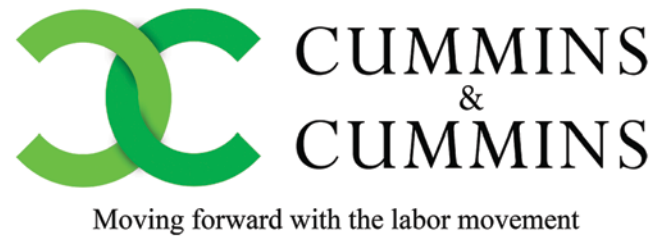
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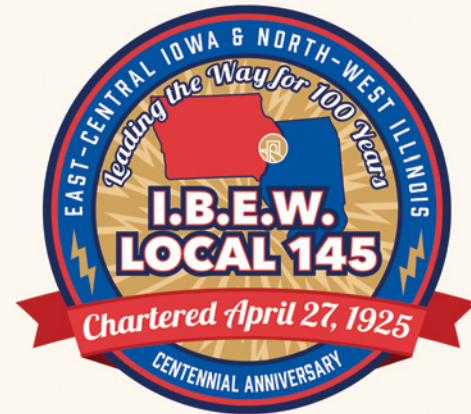
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Congratulations to our Brothers & Sisters of
IBEW Local 242 on your 50th Anniversary.

Wishing you all the best,
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Congratulations on 50 Years!

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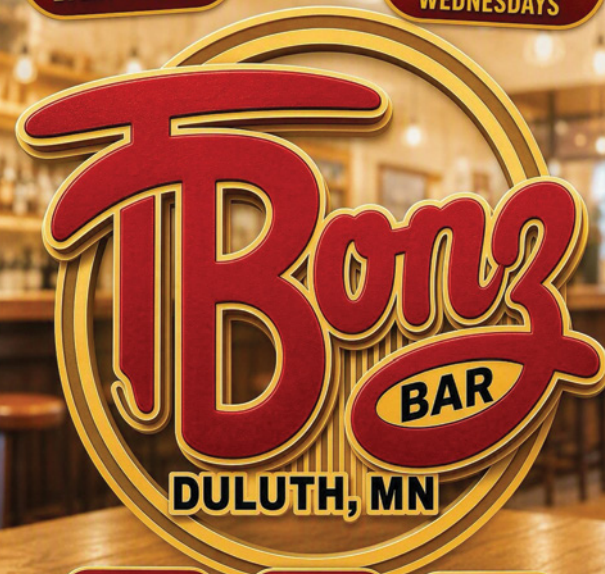
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IBEW LOCAL
242

1976 50th Golden Anniversary 2026

DULUTH, MINNESOTA
EST. APRIL 1, 1976

Grants this Charter to the Following Persons:

LAWRENCE S. CAVEN
GERALD R. ROBISON
JACK CHRISTENSEN
CLARENCE WHELAN
LEROY W. ANDERSON
DONALD S. DAHL
LEROY H. WAHLSTROM
CURT L. LARSEN
DAVID MICHALSKI

JOHN D. NYLEN
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ED PATTEN
SWIS E. ELI
LEROY G. BRULING
L. E. N

REX E. KEELER
CLINTON JOHNSON
MATT KESTI
ALDEN STOFFREGEN
EARL R. LILJEGREN
DANIEL W. MOLINARO
EWALD NEUFELD

NECA
Twin Ports Arrowhead
NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION



and to their successors, the power to elect a Local Union of the International Brotherhood, to be located in
DULUTH MINNESOTA

This Local Union shall be known as Local 242 and shall have jurisdiction as defined
in the approved Bylaws of the Local Union of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.
This Charter grants to this Local Union all powers delegated by the Constitution of the International
Brotherhood of Electrical Workers as long as five members in good standing comply with
all the requirements of the Constitution unless reclaimed by the International Union.
In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hand and the seal of the International Union, this FIRST
day of APRIL, one SEVENTY-SIX



Charles A. P...
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Ralph A. ...
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY