

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS  
**LOCAL UNION NO. 606**



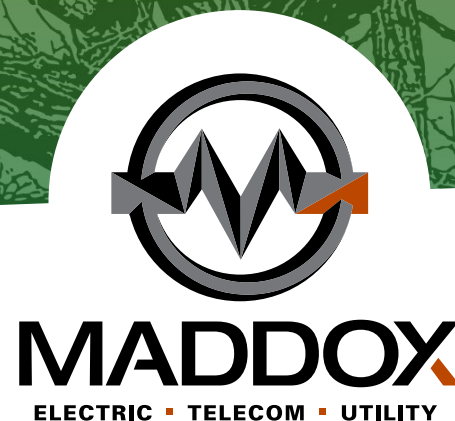
**80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY**

*2019*



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# MADDOX ELECTRIC IS PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH **LOCAL #606** FOR OVER THREE DECADES. **CONGRATULATIONS ON 80 YEARS** OF YOUR STRONG **COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP, PRIDE, AND CRAFTSMANSHIP.**



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## STRENGTH OF OUR LOCAL IS RESULT OF FIGHT WE PUT UP

I.B.E.W. Local Union No. 606 is now in its 80<sup>th</sup> year. Along the way, Local 606 has experienced a wide array of ups and downs during its history, and I am proud to report that we are now over 1,600-members strong, with about a 50/50 split between construction and Disney maintenance.

The hard work of our members has continued to make Local 606 stronger. With the largest General Fund in the history of the local and the most man-hours worked in the history of the local coming over the last 3 years, the future is bright for all the members of Local 606.

While Orlando is a low-wage package, we are continuing to fight for better pay. During the last four years, we have received a nearly 20-percent total-package increase. However, this still doesn't put us as high as we need to be.

The battles facing unions in a "right-to-work" state like Florida are never ending, but Local 606 has continued to keep up the good fight for most of our 80-year history — and we will continue to do so into the future!

On behalf of all the officers of Local 606, I wish every member and retiree who remains committed to the local and organized labor for so many years a happy 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Faternally,

Clay McNeely, Business Manager  
I.B.E.W. Local No. 606, Orlando



This book was proudly produced by

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**I.B.E.W. Local 606 and Union Histories give very special thanks to the Local 606 Retirees Club for its contributions to this book.**

**I.B.E.W. Local 606 and Union Histories also give thanks to the following for their contributions to this book:**

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Head Historian: Calvin Jefferson  
Research Assistant & Proofreader: Ann Wilkins Jefferson  
Research Assistant: Steven Nowak  
Art Direction: Andy Taucher  
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# HISTORY OF I.B.E.W. LOCAL 606, ORLANDO POWERING THE 'THEME PARK

# DO & CENTRAL FLORIDA, AT 80 YEARS K CAPITAL OF THE WORLD'



As Central Florida and the entire state reached new heights of economic prosperity during the early 1920s that was driven by mass land speculation, the City of Orlando undertook a costly improvement program to provide the infrastructure for rapid, new development. According to Frommer's *History in Orlando*, "Millions of immigrants, speculators and builders descended on the state in search of a quick buck. As land speculation reached a fever pitch and property was bought and resold almost overnight, many citrus groves gave way to urbanization."

During the initial stages of that transformation, the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers** (I.B.E.W.) organized the city's electrical workers and chartered them as **Local No. 249** on June 11, 1923. The new "mixed" local would serve the area's inside wiremen and outside linemen while they helped build up the region.

Along with the community it was serving, the local flourished, growing to a membership of about 60 electrical workers by early 1926 while taking in new members with every new meeting and expecting to reach 100 by April 1. "Local

Union No. 249 sure is coming along ... and arousing more than ordinary interest in local labor circles," Business Agent J. T. Shepherd declared in a letter in the March 1926 issue of the I.B.E.W. *Electrical Workers Journal*. "Watch our smoke!"

But the "Roaring Twenties" in Florida whimpered into its final years, as the land boom sputtered and economic growth slowed dramatically, compounded by two hurricanes in the southern portion of the state and an outbreak of the Mediterranean fruit fly in a grapefruit grove near Orlando that eventually killed off most of the state's citrus crop. The onset of the cataclysmic, decade-long **Great Depression**, which essentially began with the devastating crash of the U.S. stock market on October 29, 1929 (history's "Black Tuesday"), "added an exclamation point to Florida's ruined economy," as *History in Orlando* describes the collapse.

Ultimately, Local 249 could not survive in that shattered environment and was soon rendered defunct on February 18, 1931.



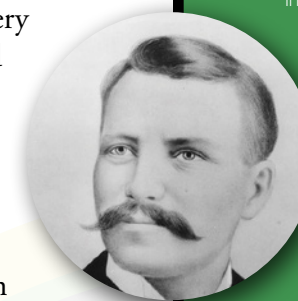


I.B.E.W. Local 606 charter, dated June 20, 1939, and signed by I.B.E.W. General President Daniel W. Tracy (who served in that position from 1933 into 1940 and again from 1947 into 1954) and I.B.E.W. Secretary Gustave M. Bugniazet (who served in that position from 1925 into 1947).



## EMERGING IN HISTORIC ADVERSITY

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" recovery programs, which included the National Recovery Act that strengthened wages and helped protect Florida's weak labor unions, put many Floridians back to work by 1936. What's more, "The gradual acceptance of labor unions in Florida improved as the Roosevelt administration encouraged union participation in Federal projects and other economic issues replaced the issue of unionism," according to *The Floridians: A Social History of Florida* by Bob Leonard, professor of history and director of the Florida History Internet Center.



I.B.E.W. founder and first president Brother Henry Miller reportedly went without food and other necessities and instead used his earnings to travel the country to organize local unions in various cities after he and a small group had officially formed the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers during a convention on November 21, 1891 in St. Louis. (At the 1899 convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the union's name was officially changed to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.) 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.

With the country finally emerging from the depression toward the end of the 1930s as **World War II** ignited half a world away, the I.B.E.W. again looked to establish a presence in Central Florida, which was beginning

to flourish again and would prove to be an epicenter of activity for wartime preparation. Subsequently, the union chartered "inside" Local No. 606 on **June 20, 1939**, to represent wiremen in Orlando and vicinity.



Local 606 charter members (standing, left to right) Clyde K. Clouser, Leslie Kilmore and John Miller, along with fellow members (seated) Edward Burney Jr. and G. X. Barker, attend the local's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration dinner-dance on April 18, 1964.





## LOCAL 606 LOCATIONS

From the time it was chartered on June 20, 1939, I.B.E.W. Local 606 met and held its union meetings at the **Fidelity Building** on Court Street in Orlando until the local purchased and moved into its current union hall at **820 Virginia Drive** in 1954.

In early 1971, the local purchased the house and property adjacent to its union hall in order to enlarge the hall and provide more parking spaces, beginning construction almost immediately afterward. However, it would not be until April 1973 that the local was able to acquire full ownership from the former tenant of the house, after which the local was able to remove the building and expand its parking lot. *(The local had sent a letter to members on April 23, 1973, asking if any of them would be interested in acquiring the house at no cost – “except for the moving cost.”)*

The local's initial by-laws established the officer positions of business manager/financial secretary and treasurer, as well as its Executive Board and Examining Board, which would examine applicants and apprentices to “determine their qualifications” for membership into the local. They also set admission fees at \$50 for inside journeyman wiremen and \$25 for outside journeyman wiremen, and they established monthly dues at \$3 for journeymen and \$2.50 for apprentices.

A workweek for Local 606 members would initially consist of 44 hours over five weekdays and a half day on Saturdays with a minimum wage rate of \$1 per hour for journeymen. Apprentices would be paid at an agreed-upon rate between the employer and any first-year

apprentices; 40 cents per hour for those in their second year; 60 cents per hour for third-year apprentices and 80 cents per hour for fourth-year apprentices.

Over the next two years, the fledgling local experienced only modest growth to 29 members by the fall of 1941. However, that October, **Business Manager Clyde K. Clouser** did attend the I.B.E.W. 21<sup>st</sup> International Convention, which was held in St. Louis.

The United States' official entry into the war following the Japanese attack on the U.S. Naval Station at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, provided a boost in work for the Local 606 membership. Its electrical workers would go on to help make Central Florida a key training area with the construction of Army bases, housing for servicemen and training facilities.

But it was not until after World War II that Local 606 began to expand significantly along with the Orlando area, which during the war saw a major boost in population and became known as “Florida's Air Capital” as major aircraft and aviation-parts manufacturers set up shop there. In order to satisfy the region's escalating need for power, in 1948 the **Orlando Utilities Commission** began building the new, modern, 25,000-kilowatt **Lake Highland Power Plant**, which employed many Local 606 members before its completion in 1949. *(The plant would be closed in 1982 when the Orlando Utilities Commission became part-owner of a new, more efficient power plant in nearby Lakeland.)*

Meanwhile, by one point in the fall of 1948, Local 606 had grown to 127 members. It also hosted additional I.B.E.W. “travelers” from other locals in Palm Beach and Tampa to work on the Lake Highland station during that year and the next.

Employment began to slow, however, as work on the power house neared completion. Regardless, Local 606 **Press Secretary John Miller** still proudly declared in the May 1949

Local 606 members employed by Satchwell & Joseph Company to build an addition to the City Of Orlando power plant in 1949 were (left to right, first row) Brother Ross, Brother McCurley (Local 108), Brother Johnson, Mr. Allen and Mr. Griffin (engineers for Robert & Company), General Foreman Art Munzer and Brother Stephens; (second row) Brother Gibson, Brother Robert Clouser, Mr. Winters (superintendent of Satchwell & Joseph Company), Brother Wallace, Brother Jack Garnett, Brother Eric Sahlberg, Brother W.A. McGill, Brother Maddox, Brother Fuller, Brother Frank Harrington and Brother Phillips; (third row) Brother Combs (Local 108), Brother Gunther, Brother Finley (Local 728), Brother Bud Abbott, Brother Davis, Brother McPherson, Brother Blasfield (Local 108), Foreman Caylor Kauffman, Brother Dencil Long and Brother Jim Harcy; (fourth row) Business Manager Clyde K. Clouser, Foreman John Miller, Brother Leon Patrick, Brother John Wilson, Brother Futch, Brother Joe Birkle, Brother Simpson (Local 108), Brother Larry Evans, Brother Jimmy Clouser, Brother Tommy Evans, Brother Bud Parcell, Brother Finch (Local 177); and (fifth row) Brother T. Hanson, Brother E. (Bud) Swackart, Brother Tanksley, Brother Boone Swackart, Brother Claudey, Brother Walters, Brother Marcum (Local 108), Foreman Bryce Fails and Brother Jones.



## LOCAL 606 BUSINESS MANAGER/ FINANCIAL SECRETARIES

**Clyde K. Clouser**  
June 1939 into 1963

**Edward Burney Jr.**  
1963 into 1969

**Joseph E. Scott**  
1969 into 1980

**James M. Riddick**  
1980 into 1983

**Douglas R. Dagley**  
1983 into July 1992

**Harry Brown**  
July 1992 to July 2010

**Robert J. “Bob” Carr**  
July 2010 to July 2016

**Clay McNeely**  
July 2016 to present



Brother Joseph E. Scott



Brother James M. Riddick



Brother Douglas R. Dagley



Brother Harry Brown



Brother Robert J. “Bob” Carr (Pictured here at the opening of the Local 606 Melbourne satellite office, Brother Carr passed away suddenly on September 22, 2016, while attending the I.B.E.W. 39<sup>th</sup> International Convention in St. Louis.)





## LOCAL 606 TRADE CLASSIFICATIONS

Local 606 was designated an **Inside Wiremen** local when it was chartered by the I.B.E.W. on June 20, 1939.

The I.B.E.W. added the **Outside Linemen** classification to the local's jurisdiction in August 1952.

On November 11, 1967, the union added **Radio and Television Broadcasting** and **Sound and Public Address** to the local's classifications.

On May 2, 1973, the I.B.E.W. added **Utility Workers** and **Electric Signs** to the classifications represented by Local 606.

The Utility designation was removed on October 18, 1979, but was added again on October 24, 1985.

The Outside designation was removed on March 1, 1990, shortly after the I.B.E.W. chartered outside line construction **Local No. 222** in Orlando on November 1, 1989.

The **Electrical Manufacturing** classification was added to Local 606 when the I.B.E.W. merged electrical-manufacturing Local No. 2174 of Orlando into it on March 1, 1997.

As of June 20, 2019, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary date of its charter, Local 606 represents the following trade classifications within its jurisdiction:

- Inside Electrical
- Utility
- Radio and Television Broadcasting
- Sound and Public Address
- Electric Signs
- Electrical Manufacturing
- Maintenance

*Journal*, “The men really have put out on the job to give the contractor the results he expected.”

Indeed, later that year, Brother Miller looked back on the local's first decade and was able to proclaim that its members were able to “blow our own horn” because “harmony has always prevailed within the local” and, subsequently, it has enjoyed amicable labor-management relations with its employers. He also trumpeted in the September 1949 *Journal*, “We have always been able to do the job no matter how small or large it has been.”

Construction of two large frozen-concentrated orange-juice plants, one for the **Minute Maid Corporation** and the other for the **Winter**

**Garden Citrus Products Cooperative**, then provided manhours for many of the local's members in late 1949 and into the 1950s. The union electricians were employed by **Wilson Brothers Electric Company** on the latter project and **Garvin Electric Company** on the former – although some members were always on the unemployed “bench” during that time.

By that time, however, the local's stepped-up political activity was beginning to have its desired effect, as nearly the entire membership had been registered to vote through the local's new “**Get Out and Vote**” campaign. It was also participating in the Labor Educational and Political League, which was chaired by **Brother Eric Sahlberg**.

Escalation of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and the resultant so-called “Space Race” and the outbreak of the Korean War brought more aerospace industry to Orlando and Central Florida industry that provided Local 606 with work. In particular, the local's members participated in a \$100-million construction program to transform the World War II-era Orlando Army Air Base, which had been closed in 1947, into **Pinecastle Air Force Base**, a frontline Strategic Air Command station, in 1951. (*Eventually renamed **McCoy Air Force Base**, the facility would be Orlando's largest employer until it closed in 1975.*)

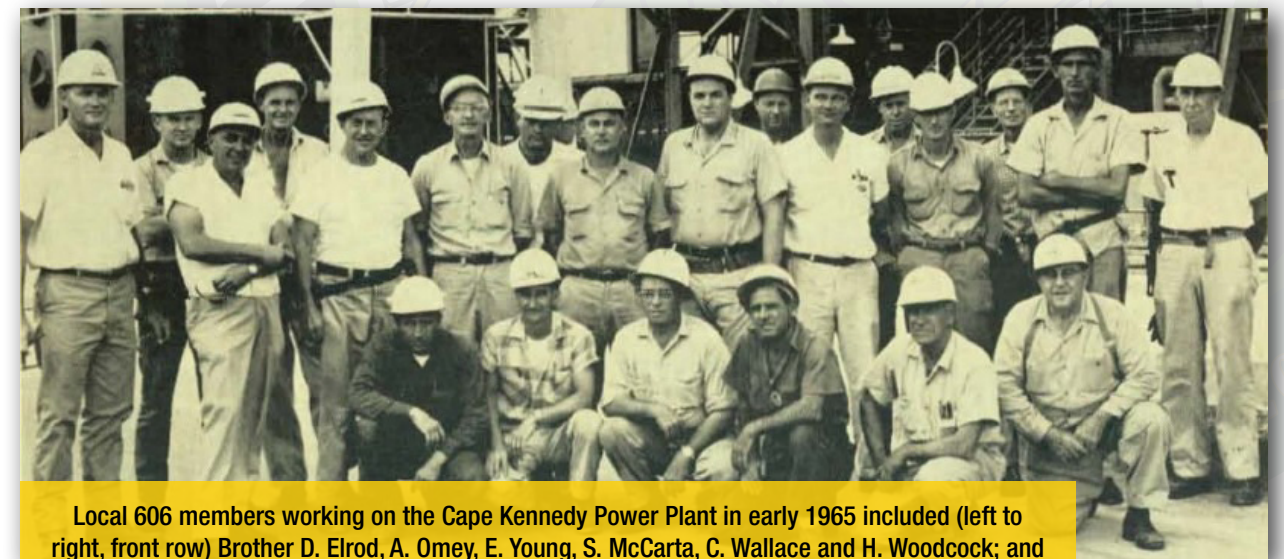
The I.B.E.W. then added the **Outside Lineman** classification to the local's jurisdiction in August 1952 and the local gained members working for the **Southeastern Utilities Company**.

As work remained steady for Local 606's roughly 250 members into and throughout the mid-1950s, the local was able to obtain a 25-cent-per-hour raise from its employing contractors for the **National Electrical Contractors Association** (NECA) in August 1955. After the new agreement was approved by the U.S. Labor Department on August 10, the journeyman electrician scale was raised from \$2.50 to \$2.75 per hour, effective July 1.

The local remained busy as the decade progressed and the Cold War and spaceflight competition continued to intensify. Notably, the **Glenn L. Martin Company** (now Lockheed Martin Corporation), which had moved into the aerospace manufacturing business following World War II, would also employ many Local 606 members when it built a rocket facility just south of Orlando that opened in late 1957 and would go on to produce Pershing, Bullpup, Lacrosse, Sprint, Patriot and Hellfire missiles for the U.S. military.

That year, the local gained another new contract on August 24 with NECA that included pay hikes from \$2.75 to \$3.15 per hour for inside wiremen and from \$3.15 to \$3.25 per hour for outside linemen. However, the wireman rate was backdated at \$3 per hour effective May 1 before being raised to the new scale retroactively on July 1, while the lineman rate would go into effect retroactively on May 1.

The local would also continue its slow but stable growth, reaching a membership of 287 wiremen, linemen and apprentices by September 1958. At that time, it had jurisdiction over all inside and outside electrical work in Orange, Osceola, Seminole and parts of Brevard, Lake and Volusia counties.



Local 606 members working on the Cape Kennedy Power Plant in early 1965 included (left to right, front row) Brother D. Elrod, A. Omey, E. Young, S. McCarta, C. Wallace and H. Woodcock; and (standing) Brother R. Weight, N. Griffith, G. Langanke, H. Reid, E. Jordan, J. Smullen, J. Griffiths, J. Davis, R. Hutchinson, B. Studstill, D. Majors, F. Harrington, G. Giles, B. Fails, K. Kerns and W. Cooke.



Local 606 was one of the founding unions of the **Building and Construction Trades Council of Brevard County** when it was chartered in July 1955. Brothers **Clyde K. Clouser**, **A. R. Williams** and **Jack Norman** were the local's first delegates to the council.

## COUNTDOWN TO NEW HEIGHTS

Construction of **Interstate 4** through Central Florida Orlando beginning in 1959 and continuing through the early 1960s provided Local 606 outside linemen with abundant work wiring the highway's lighting. Likewise, the local's inside wiremen stayed busy during the early 1960s, as commercial work, and particularly wiring new **K-Mart** stores in the area, supplied a steady source of jobs.

Then in February 1963, the start of construction on a new, 432-kilowatt, power plant to furnish electricity for the “**Gateway to the Moon**” – as Cape Canaveral and Merritt Island on the state's east coast were known – put Local 606 inside crews to work for the next two years. Located on the bank of the Indian River between Titusville and Cocoa, the steam generator rolled on schedule on April 12, 1965, and went online the following day.





The Local 606 **Women's Auxiliary** was chartered on March 25, 1964, after which the group helped organize many various social and charitable events for the local. Charter members of the auxiliary were **Patricia Stephen, Betty Frederick, Judy Marsula, Effie Lawson, Shirley Dean, Barbara Sega, Elizabeth Orcutt, Dot Durrance, Marion Ott, Carol Stuckey, Adelaide Jackson, Barbara Torrey, Ruth Byrd, Amy Rattiff, Ellen Poltras** and **Dorothy Miller**.

Following completion of the power station, employment curtailed while smaller jobs provided manhours for the local's wiremen during the balance of 1965 and into the following year. By that time, the local had grown to nearly 500 total members.

Meanwhile, line work for the local's outside men continued to "boom" into the second half of the decade, prompting **Business Manager Ed Burney Jr.** to declare during the local's June 22, 1967, regular union meeting, "The line work is good and is only going to get better." That year alone, for instance, members of the Local 606 Line Unit (also referred to as "Unit 2") worked on multiple power-line construction and installation projects that included the Malabar-Holland River Crossing, the West Palm to Cocoa line and three jobs that alone began in the month of August and employed nearly 40 linemen.

Construction of another power plant for the **Florida Power and Light Company** on U.S. Route 1 just north of Cocoa from late 1966 and into early 1969 helped keep inside work relatively stable into 1968. That year, work on the new **Florida Technological University**

Local 606, with the assistance of its Ladies Auxiliary, held its first-ever **Christmas party** for children of the local's members in December 1965, complete with a visit and gifts from Santa Claus.

(which would later be renamed University of Central Florida) campus in Orlando and its first facility, the **Learning Resources Building**, boosted employment for members employed on the project by signatory electrical contractor **The Meva Corporation**. *(Inaugural classes would be held on October 7, 1968, in the school's first academic building.)*

However, elsewhere throughout its jurisdiction, work was slow as the local struggled to organize the non-union shops within its area (as was the other I.B.E.W. locals throughout the southern portion of the United States at the time). Meanwhile, line work was also slowing down and the local was consistently hosting members on its bench.

The **Local 606 Electrical Workers Federal Credit Union** was formed on September 8, 1965, to "promote thrift among its members by affording them an opportunity to accumulate their savings; also, to create for them a source of low-cost credit for provident and productive purposes." The initial membership fee for any member and their family members was 25 cents each, and each new member was required to purchase at least one \$5 share in the credit union.

With maximum loan rates of 1 percent per month and loans of \$250 commonly made on the borrower's signature and larger loans made with collateral, by the end of July 1967, the credit union had made 120 loans and had total assets of \$23,186.95.

As the situation persisted, in October 1968, Local 606 attempted to secure more work by passing a resolution that it picket "certain key jobs in the area." Subsequently, the local's Executive Board set up a list of rules that were aimed at eliminating "any discrepancies or discrimination" in picket duty, after which Business Manager Burney stated in an October 18 letter to the membership, "They hope that each member serving his picket duty will consider this part of his obligation to his local union, and at the same time he will be



participating in a program that will strengthen the brotherhood of this local."

True to its word, on April 28, 1969, Local 606 stopped working and picketed the construction site of the new, \$2.6-million science and technology facility at Florida Technical University to protest the use of a non-union electrical contractor to extend underground utility lines to the building. The action, which also halted work on a \$1.9 million administration building, was resolved favorably the very next day.

Local 606 **Brother Robert B. Duncan** created, copyrighted and published a complete set of accurate pipe-bending charts, dubbed the **Easy Kicks and Offset Charts**, that would eliminate all figuring and guess work pertaining to bending offsets, kicks and other concentric bends. The charts furnished the exact answer for bending any offset or kick from one-quarter of an inch to 48 inches on one-quarter-inch increase on any size conduit from one-half inches to four inches.

Each set of charts was printed on heavy, enamel-coated stock and was supplied in a transparent plastic case that would fit into the pocket or toolbox. Brother Duncan initially sold the charts for \$3.95 per set.

© Robert B. Duncan 1965, All Rights Reserved. **EASY KICKS AND OFFSET CHARTS** Published By Robert B. Duncan P. O. Box 232 Christmas, Florida

These easy "Kicks and Offsets" supply you with all the information necessary to make any kick or offset from 1/4" to 48" exact without any figuring in the field in relation to the laying off of your pipe. The following information is on these charts:

1. The height of any kick or offset from 1/4" to 48" graduated on the 1/4" (Example 1/4, 1/2, 3/4, 1").
2. Gives up to twenty different spacings for each and every offset. With this variety of spacing it is possible to make small offsets or kicks in larger pipe or to match most structural objects such as pipes, or I beams, or columns, etc.
3. Tells how many total degrees to bend at each center to center measurement. When using a one shot bender.
4. For the small shoe bender, gives the number of shots necessary to make complete bend. Gives number of degrees to bend at each shot. Gives the spacing distance between shots for each size pipe from 2" to 4".
5. Kick adjustment. For bends of 30° or more in 2" to 4" pipe, it is necessary to subtract a small amount from our center to center measurement to allow for the roll of our center marks. When the bend is made, these deductions increase with higher degrees. These deductions are given in fractions for each total degree bend.

Below are some simple instructions on how to read these charts and how to lay off your pipe.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**STEP 1.** After measuring the height of your offset, pick out the card that covers the size you need. Each card is indexed on the left end. Example: "From 1/4" to 4". After selecting the right card, go down the column that is directly under the arrow of Line A. This is your height of kick or offset column. (Example: Height of kick or offset) (A)           

**STEP 2.** After locating the needed offset, follow across the columns on this line to the right. (These columns are identified on Line (B) at the top left of the chart).

(Example: Center to center between bends) (B)

↓	↓	↓
17 3/16	10 3/4	8 5/8
20 1/16	12 1/2	10 1/16

Pick out the center to center spacing needed or the one nearest to it from one of these columns. This will be the exact distance between bends, minus kick adjustments for bends of 30° or over.

**PRICE: \$3.95 4.95** (continued reverse side)

**STEP 3.** Kick adjustment if the total bend needed at each center mark is more than 30° and your pipe size is 2" or larger it is necessary to deduct a small amount from our center to center measurement. The amount of deduction depends on the radius and the degree of bend. You will find the exact deduction on one of the top 4 lines of your card. Each line is for a different size pipe and identified at the left side of card. This group of four lines is marked (F). The amount of deduction needed is directly above the C. to C. spacing used. These deductions are for each bend. So, if we are making a kick we use 1 times the deduction; but if we are making an offset, we use 2 times the deduction.

**STEP 4.** After following steps 1, 2, and 3, we can simply lay off the centers for our bends on our pipe. Now all we need to know is how many degrees to bend around each center mark. The total degree for each bend can be found on line (C). (This is the 3rd line up from the bottom of your card). The degree needed will be on line (C) in the same column used for "C. to C." measurement. If we are using a one shot bender we simply place our center mark on the center of our shoe in our bender and pull the total number of degrees needed and move to the next center and do the same thing and we will have our exact offset. But if we are using a small shoe bender, we need to go one step further to step (5).

**STEP 5.** When using a small shoe bender, it is sometimes necessary to make several bends evenly spaced on our pipe of a smaller degree to keep from flattening our pipe instead of 1 shot with a large amount of degree. Example: If we need 40° we would make 8 shots at 5°. These shots would be spaced evenly apart according to the size pipe used. Line (C) gives you the total number of degrees needed. Line (D) gives the total number of shots necessary to make the bend. Line (E) tells how many shots to make and how many degrees to put at each. Example 1: For a 45° bend we would need Line (D) 9 shots. We would need Line (E) 9 shots at 5°. Example 2: For a 33° bend we need Line (D) 7 shots. We would need Line (E) 1 shot at 3° and 6 shots at 5°.

**STEP 6.** When laying off bends to be made with a small shoe bender, if we need an even number of shots we do not put a shot on the exact center. Example: If we are bending 4" pipe our spacing is 2 1/2" and we need 4 shots. We would mark our pipe like this: Two shots on each side of center mark. The two center shots would be 1 1/4" to each side of center with 2 1/2" between the other shots. If we are making a bend with an uneven number of shots, we place the odd shot on the exact center and place an even number on each side. If we have to make 1 shot at a different degree from the others, we always place this shot on the center.

**STEP 7.** The spacing for different sizes is found on the lower left side of your chart. These charts can be used with any type of protractor or degree level.

Ferris, Orlando MEMBER I.B.E.W. — LOCAL 606





Brother John Beau and his wife, Shirley, serve donuts and coffee during the Local 606 Christmas party in 1967.



(Left to right) Brothers Jim Riddick, John Miller and Jim Smullen enjoy the Local 606 Christmas party in 1968.

But work remained consistently “slack” throughout the final year of the decade, during which 17 men were on the bench at one point in February, as the local waited for large jobs to break. While some members traveled to other locals for work within their jurisdictions, some members who remained at home were able to gain manhours from a large restoration project for the **Winter Park Mall** beginning in April 1969.

Meanwhile, the local’s new “**hiring hall**” procedure for assigning members to jobs, through which contractors had to request manpower through the local, was working “satisfactorily,” as Brother Burney reported to the membership during its regular meeting on April 10. Notably, the new system allowed members who had been forced to seek work out of town to return home when their names came to the top of the local’s out-of-work list.

## THE MAGICAL WORK AT DISNEY

The announcement by animation and film legend Walt Disney on November 15, 1965, that his company would construct the new **Walt Disney World Resort** near Orlando in Bay Lake and Lake Buena Vista also essentially served as a broadcast that the very best of times were coming for Local 606 and its membership. Indeed, the Disney theme parks would be a veritable boon for the local at that time and throughout the next five-plus decades – and it continues to employ nearly half of the local’s membership as the local celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019.

Built primarily with union labor from locals of the Orlando Building Trades Council that would work for Disney’s new **Buena Vista Construction Company** under its Walt Disney World Construction Project Agreement

with the council, the initial construction of Disney World provided extensive manhours for the Local 606 membership and I.B.E.W. travelers before the Magic Kingdom opened on October 1, 1971. Among the resort’s multiple original attractions wired by the union electricians was the **Contemporary Resort Hotel**, and the local would also help build and maintain the **Reedy Creek power plant**, which would help supply Disney with much of the electricity it would need.

Local 606 members also wired the U.S. Steel building and a cement batch plant on the Disney property during construction of the resort. Consequently, with all electrical work at the resort nearly in full swing and expected to reach its peak by mid-1970, Local 606 **Press Secretary Roger Jordan** was able to proclaim in the April 1970 *Journal*, “We wish every other local in the I.B.E.W. the same success and prosperity we are enjoying.”

As the year progressed and steady work became the norm for its inside wiremen as the result of the work at Disney World, the local’s outside linemen also enjoyed improving conditions. After a slack period during which many linemen had to travel, by July 1970,



Local 606 Brother John Miller (center) receives the George Meany Award for outstanding service as a Boy Scout assistant scoutmaster with Troop 224 of Orlando from Local 606 President Leon Patrick on September 1, 1975.





In 1976, Brother Rufus Leon Blackman (seated left at the Central Florida Electrical Joint Apprenticeship & Training Committee graduation banquet) became the first minority to graduate from the Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. apprentice training program and become a Local 606 member journeyman electrician.

employment for the local's Line Unit had stabilized as a steady supply of line work had come to the jurisdiction.

Some of the local's wiremen were also being kept busy elsewhere that year as the surrounding area continued to grow. For example, Local 606 members and even some travelers were needed to help install the new **Seminole Downs Race Track** for thoroughbred horse racing.

Despite the strong conditions the local was enjoying, it continued to make organizing new members and non-union contractors one of its priorities. As part of that "all-out effort," the local supplied fulltime pickets on certain jobs in its area during the early 1970s, for which members often donated money "from their own pockets," as Brother Jordan reported in the July 1970 *Journal*, to donate to some of the retired members who were serving on the picket lines.

But Disney World – the largest union contractor in the state – remained the windfall

for Local 606 at that time, and its impact was greatly enhanced when the local negotiated a **Maintenance Agreement** with Disney in July 1971. With that, the local also organized new maintenance members already working for the resort into the union's **Maintenance Unit**.

The local then purchased the building and property adjoining its union hall on Virginia Drive in northeast Orlando in order to enlarge the hall and provide more parking facilities for its growing membership. "We hope that these additions will enable more brothers to attend meetings," Brother Jordan announced in the March 1971 *Journal*.

As work for its inside members held strong, the local's linemen were also busy and hosting travelers, although they were facing an increasing incursion from non-union workforces that would continue throughout the decade. In particular, some outside members during the second half of 1971 installed one of the largest transformers in the

United States – which had to be transported from the rail yard to its location on a vehicle with 96 tires – in the Orlando area.

Many members and travelers continued to man work at Disney World, with electricians on the Contemporary Hotel employed by the **Robbins Electric Company**, as they raced to meet the resort's targeted fall grand opening. As work remained good throughout the jurisdiction primarily because of the Disney project, Brother Jordan reported in the September 1971 *Journal*, "The job has run very smoothly throughout the duration, with little or no labor disputes."

The end of major construction at Disney World after it opened in October 1971 slowed employment dramatically over the next several months, although the local still had a few men working there well into 1972. But the expanding presence of Disney also generated a surge in hotel construction in the area, which would take

up the slack in manhours that resulted from the completion of the theme-park resort.

Local 606 was able to negotiate a new, one-year contract with its NECA employers in 1972 for a 55-cent hourly raise. However, with the local and national economies floundering at the time, the Construction Industry Stabilization Committee only granted a 50-cent increase retroactive to June 1, 1972.

Construction during that time of another new theme park just miles from Disney World, **SeaWorld Orlando**, provided an additional boost in employment for many of the local's electricians and several travelers, who wired the park's facilities and attractions. *(After it opened on December 15, 1973, debuting with a mix of animal exhibits and shows, "SeaWorld helped establish Orlando not just as yet another town with a theme park, but as a multi-park vacation destination," according to an August 1, 2013, Theme Park Insider article.)*



Local 606 Brother Cliff Gilmore (right) stands with I.B.E.W. International President Charles Pillard during the Solidarity Day rally in Washington, D.C., in September 1981.

*Continued after next spread.*





# THE CENTRAL FLORIDA ELECTRICAL J.A.T.C. TRAINING SKILLED CRAFTSPEOPLE TO SHAPE THE LOCAL 606 REGION



Since the time Local 606 was chartered in 1939, it has trained its new members through the time-tested method of apprenticeship, whereby trainees work with experienced journeyman electrical workers to learn the craft. To enhance that system, in 1941 the local and its employing contractors of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) established the **Orlando Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Committee** (J.A.C.) to oversee its apprentice training; soon after, the J.A.C. adopted the curriculum standards of the **National Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee** (which was formed in 1947 by the I.B.E.W. and NECA and would become the **Electrical Training Alliance** in July 2014), incorporating structured classroom study into the training.

The local and the J.A.C., with the guidance of **Brother Harry O. Roebuck**, set up its first Electrical Apprenticeship Training School

Current Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. **Director Jim Sullivan Jr.** recalled that after he was interviewed for an apprenticeship in July 1970 and was accepted into the program in August, his starting salary was **\$1.90 per hour**. The starting rate for new, first-year apprentices increased to **\$3.18 per hour** in 1973.

in an **Orange County Public Schools** vocational school facility on Rosalind Avenue in downtown Orlando. (Brother Roebuck would be appointed administrator of the J.A.C. inside apprenticeship program in 1955.) With that space, the program was able to provide its apprentices with classrooms and labs in which they could augment their on-the-job training, and in October 1964, the local and J.A.C. began paying a journeyman electrician to teach as an instructor in the classes.

A new Florida law took effect March 1, 1997, requiring an electrician to be a **certified alarm-systems agent** in order to work on any part of a fire alarm or security system after conduit had been installed. The Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. had already taught several classes on alarm systems to prepare Local 606 members for the new requirement.

In 1966, the Orlando Electrical J.A.C. merged with the Brevard County J.A.C. to create the **Central Florida Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee** (J.A.T.C.), which had jurisdiction throughout the Central Florida counties of Orange, Seminole, Lake, Brevard, Volusia and Osceola. In December of that year, recognizing the quality of the union training program while being unable to establish one of their own, open-shop, non-union contractors in the Orlando area agreed to participate in the J.A.T.C.

Situated in **Union Park Elementary School** beginning in 1970 but seeking to further develop and improve its training programs, Local 606 (through its **Central Florida Electrical Workers Club**) purchased a new building and property at **2738 Forsyth Road** in Winter Park in May 1974 and rented it to the J.A.T.C. for \$1 per year to use as the **Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. Training Center**. After purchasing a second building on the five-and-a-half-acre property in 1977, the Training Center consisted of a classroom facility and a workshop facility, which contained welding booths

The Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. started its first **day school** in April 1999 with 20 first-year apprentices attending classes every Friday from 1 to 7 p.m.

The Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. graduated its **largest class** in Local 606 history to date – consisting of 35 inside electricians, 11 maintenance electricians and three teledata technicians – in July 2003.

and pipe-bending equipment, among other training apparatus.

Nearly three decades later in late 2003, the J.A.T.C. began construction on a new Training Center adjacent to its facilities on the Forsyth Road property. With the partnership of Walt Disney World, the J.A.T.C.'s new, state-of-the-art, 22,000-square-foot **Harry Brown Electrical Educational Center**, named after the former 18-year business manager of Local 606, opened in 2004.

As Local 606 celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, the Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. operates four unique programs, each of which is overseen by its own individual committee: **Inside Commercial Construction**, **Walt Disney World Maintenance**, **Residential Wireman** and **Telecommunication (VDV) Installer – Technician**. Within each tract, apprentices accumulate 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and 900 hours of classroom education in order to become skilled journeyman electricians – and as always, apprentices are paid while they learn and are provided with fringe benefits such as healthcare.

In early 2008, the Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. and **Walt Disney World** created a **joint skills enhancement training venture** to bring training to existing journeyman electricians on the Disney property. The training center was established for existing technicians to continually upgrade their skills.

Extensive classroom instruction provides education on electrical theory, history and skills while training apprentices on the newest technologies within the industry. The Department of Labor-accredited program also includes classes on reading blueprints, computer networks, energy management systems, security systems, fire alarm systems and the National Electrical Code.

The Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. completed construction of its new **motor control lab** in May 2008, with its two lead instructors, **Richard Merriam** and **Juan Santos**, assembling all the parts and mounting all the devices to complete the lab. The J.A.T.C. would use the motor control lab to enhance the skills of journeymen and apprentices, while **Walt Disney World** built an identical lab on its property for its journeyman skills-enhancement training.

In addition to being associated with the Electrical Training Alliance, the Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. is also in partnership with **Orange County Technical School**. Through that relationship, apprentices can earn college credit for their time in the apprenticeship training.



In October 2008, the I.B.E.W., Walt Disney World and the Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C. held a **Variable Frequency Drive class** designed to upgrade some of the Local 606 journeymen's skills and abilities, as Disney was planning to replace all of the maintenance-intensive mechanical drives on its properties with more cost-efficient variable frequency drives.





## ALWAYS A GOOD NEIGHBOR IN ITS COMMUNITY

On Labor Day 2005, Local 606 held its first **Labor Day in the Park** picnic at Burton Smith Park in Cocoa Beach, with I.B.E.W. brothers and sisters and their families from across the State of Florida attending to help raise money for sick and needy people. Throughout its first 80 years, the local has similarly been an active and caring participant in community activism, support and outreach efforts. That was also displayed in 1943 when it joined other building-trades locals to pay for recurring advertisements in *The Orlando Sentinel* newspaper that asked readers to "Buy Christmas Seals" to help support the **Orange County Tuberculosis and Health Association**.

Among the multitude of charitable efforts in which Local 606 has been engaged over the years and continues to support in 2019, members remodeled three office buildings for the Orlando **Cerebral Palsy Clinic** in 1962, and in 1966, members set up temporary service and provided standby crews for that year's 17-hour televised **Cerebral Palsy Telethon**. Other community-service endeavors have included annually devoting many hours to the **March of Dimes**; wiring the **Threshold House** in Orlando, which offers autistic adults a chance to live more independently, in 1992; and collecting \$2,000 for needy apprentices during Christmastime 2002 – just to name a few examples.

Growth in the Central Florida area over the previous few years, again the product of Disney's presence, further spurred a spike in the construction of shopping centers in the local's jurisdiction. Among the projects on which members labored, in 1973 electricians working for Robbins Electric helped remodel and expand the **Colonial Plaza Mall**, one of the region's oldest centers while across the street from that complex, brothers working for **Paxson Electric Company**, **Murphy Electric Company** and **State Electric Company** also helped build the new **Fashion Square** mall that year.

Meanwhile, Local 606 electricians working for **Donovan Electric Company** were wiring the **Altamonte Mall** on the other side of Orlando, which would be the largest shopping center in the Southeast when it opened on

January 1, 1974. Additional members were also employed on construction of four major department stores surrounding the mall: a Jordan Marsh under contractor **Haines City Electric**; a Sears under Robbins Electric; a Robinsons under Murphy Electric; and a Burdines under Paxson Electric.

With those projects and more, in October 1973, the local was able to report in that month's *Journal*, "Work continues to be steady, with all members working."

Disney also generated more work for the local with construction within the Magic Kingdom resort of its now-legendary, indoor, space-themed roller coaster, **Space Mountain**, which was wired by local members for its opening on January 15, 1975.

Heading into the second half of the decade, Local 606 had a new Maintenance Agreement with Disney that was signed on November 4, 1974, after being negotiated through the union's **Walt Disney World Craft Maintenance Council**. It provided an initial 7-percent wage raise and then a 7.5-percent increase on October 5, 1975, plus an additional sick day for a total of six days. Perhaps most notably, the company also agreed to pay the entire cost of the full Basic Group Insurance Plan that covered the local's maintenance electricians and their dependents.

## A ROLLER-COASTER EXISTENCE

Local 606 membership grew to 825 by the fall of 1974, with 538 "A" members (those in the construction branch and who paid into the I.B.E.W. pension fund and death benefit) and 287 "BA" members (those in public employment or working for private employers other than construction who did not pay into union benefits). But after the completion of all significant work at Disney World, many members were unemployed and had to travel for jobs.

What's more, the non-union shops were making more inroads into the local's jurisdiction and would continue to expand their influence in Central Florida throughout the second half of the 1970s. During that time, for example, the local and the building trades hand-billed two Montgomery Ward stores built in 1974 with non-union labor, and they also hand-billed all Publix locations in the state in January 1977 after the chain changed its policies to allow open-shop contractors to work on its stores.

In the interim, with few jobs breaking in the foreseeable future and non-union contractors competing for that work, **Business Manager Joseph Scott** announced in a December 6, 1974, letter to the membership, "The work picture in this area looks bleak." However, he also pleaded for members to attend an upcoming meeting at which the local would discuss methods for obtaining more work.

But it was more of the same into and throughout 1975, as the local was involved in just a "small amount" of jobs and many of its construction members continued to seek employment with locals in other jurisdictions around the state and country. **Press Secretary James R. Johnson** even noted in the June 1975 *Journal* that the local was in a "rather awkward position" at the time because it was beginning negotiations for a new contract with its contractors but had very little work – leaving him to lament, "We do not have a very strong position for bargaining."

Before the end of the year, line work and residential work remained at an absolute standstill, as they had been over the previous year and half, and inside work was only very sporadic. As such, the local's NECA contractors asked the local to place a moratorium on a 50-cent-per-hour wage increase for December 1, 1975, that the two sides had earlier negotiated in a new contract, claiming that it would "place a handicap on the contractors in their bidding for more work in the area," Business Manager



In 1981, Sister Jane Mills Donihi became the first female to graduate from the Central Florida Electrical Joint Apprenticeship & Training Committee apprentice training program and become a Local 606 member journeyman electrician, after which she worked at Walt Disney World.

Scott explained to the membership in an October 14, 1975, letter. With that, the local's new journeyman wage rate was set at \$9.45 per hour beginning December 1.

The Disney Maintenance Unit was able to secure a new, three-year contract beginning October 3, 1976, with a total wage and benefit package increase of 24 percent. Raises would be given in increments of 8 percent of the current rate for each year of the pact.

However, slack employment in the Local 606 jurisdiction persisted throughout 1977, as line work remained stifled after federal authorities

Local 606 formed a **Disaster Committee** in 1978 to work closely with the government's Civil Defense Administration to help set up field hospitals, emergency power and lighting and assist in rescue work whenever needed.





Local 606 participated in the Tangerine Bowl Parade in 1981 and the Orange Blossom Music festival in 1982 with a float replicating the space shuttle that was built by some of the local's members.



denied a rate-increase request by Florida Power & Light, and it was subsequently forced to cancel construction projects. Likewise, work was nearly non-existent in the region's collapsing union housing-construction market, and even Disney had postponed the start of the next large project it was developing, a second theme park that would center around technology and international culture, in order to reconfigure those plans.

At the same time, Local 606 and the Orlando Building Trades Council were battling the anti-union Associated Builders and Contractors (A.B.C.) as it lobbied the Greater Orlando Airport Authority to let contracts for the construction of a new airport in small bid packages. The group argued that its proposed system "would give local contractors an opportunity to bid the work rather than out-of-town contractors," although the Council rightly countered that the arrangement would drive up costs while providing smaller, non-union contractors an advantage in the bidding process.

As Central Florida waited for work on the airport to begin, several sizeable projects broke within the local's jurisdiction and provided employment to many of its members. Among those jobs, a union contractor began work



in late 1977 on a new, \$16-million hospital at the **Orlando Naval Training Center** after Local 606 and the Building Trades Council successfully lobbied U.S. Senator Richard Stone of Florida and the U.S. Navy's Bureau of Ships to have the job awarded to the local's more-qualified contractor, even though it was not the lowest bidder.

Union electricians also worked during that time and into 1978 and 1979 on a new shopping center on U.S. Highway 434, a new K-Mart in Sanford, renovation of the Martin Plant and expansion of the Howard Johnson hotel in Buena Vista.

Then, after waiting many years for construction to begin, work got off the ground in 1978 on the newly named **Orlando International Airport** at the site of the former McCoy Air Force Base (which by that time was the joint civilian-military Orlando Jetport

at McCoy). The \$300 million expansion and renovation to add the facility's Landside Terminal and airside No. 1 and No. 3 would employ Local 606 members before it was completed in 1981.

But the construction site would be the scene of union protests in June 1979 and January 1980. The first demonstration was staged to protest an Aviation Authority vote rejecting a proposed Building Trades Council agreement to use union wages and hiring practices for construction of the terminal. Business Manager Scott also told the June 30, 1979, *Orlando Sentinel*, that the rally was "an overall protest against the (Central Florida) area for negative attitudes toward unions, anything union."

The January 1980 airport protest involved about 150 pickets objecting to the use of non-union labor on the project.



Local 606 President Danny Swafford swears in new union members (left to right) Greg Bass, Kimball Walkinshaw, Janet Skipper and Chuck McAlpin in 1983. (Sister Skipper would go on to be one of the first women to serve on the National Electrical Code panel, and she currently serves as Assistant Training Director with the Central Florida Electrical J.A.T.C.)





Into that final year of the 1970s, work had been fairly good for Local 606 over the previous couple of years. By March of 1979, all members of its Line Unit were employed and their future looked strong with line work in Brevard and Orange counties and the City of Kissimmee; all of the local's residential members who were not traveling were working primarily in Brevard; and Inside Unit members were busy on several large jobs that included a \$5-million telephone company building in downtown Orlando and a \$10-million **U.S. Postal Service distribution center** at the airport.

### UNDETERRED BY ITS ADVERSARY

“The non-union element in our jurisdiction is as large as any area in the U.S.A.,” Local 606 **Business Manager James Riddick** warned in an October 10, 1980, letter to the local's membership. Indeed, the local had been “under siege,” as Brother Riddick described its situation in the July 1980 Journal, while into the following year, many members were still traveling but line work, which had been hit especially hard, was employing most of that unit's members.

The following year, the local and the Orlando Building Trades Council then had to work together to ensure a new, multi-million-dollar plant that would be constructed by the Western Electric Company in the local's jurisdiction would be built with union labor. As part of that effort to convince the contractor not to use non-union workers, the local participated in protests that involved hundreds of demonstrators during the summer of 1981 in downtown Orlando and at the proposed jobsite.

In 1983, Local 606 **Brother Emil Dufek** became the local's first retiree from its Walt Disney World Maintenance Unit.



Local 606 member Terry Busby works on a job in Alaska while traveling there on February 4, 1984, during which temperatures dropped to negative-30 degrees with wind chills of negative-180 degrees.

But work at Disney World picked up that year, highlighted by construction of the new, technology- and international-themed park, **Epcot Center**, and helped provide work for the local's entire inside membership as well as some I.B.E.W. traveling brothers. The second of Disney's themed entertainment destinations in Central Florida, Epcot and its signature “Spaceship Earth” geodesic sphere would be wired and completed by a union workforce for its grand opening on October 1, 1982.

During that time, employment picked up dramatically for the local, prompting Business Manager Riddick to announce in a letter to the membership on August 10, 1981, “Due to the multitude of calls and the demand for journeyman wireman in Local Union 606, at this time I am requesting any Local Union 606 member who feels concern for the local union jurisdiction, to get in touch with the local union about coming home to help man the work.”

The following year, during which the favorable



Local 606 members work on construction of the new Orlando World Center Marriott hotel and convention center near Orlando in 1984 for its opening in March 1986.







Local 606 Charter member John Miller (right) celebrates his 50-year I.B.E.W. service award in 1989 with member Doug Miller, his son.

conditions persisted, the local concluded “very productive” contract negotiations with its contractors on January 14, 1982, after 16 days over a several-week-long period. In the end, the local’s gains made at the bargaining table by its negotiating committee were the most in the history of its contract with NECA at the time.

However, line work remained poor and would become bleak before the end of 1982 as a large amount of the local’s traditional distribution employment continued to go non-union.

As work on Epcot continued into that year, inside employment remained good as the local went to work on the **Western Electric Orlando Works** plant, which would produce microelectronic chips for AT&T after it was completed in 1984. *(The facility would later be operated by Agere Systems.)*

Meanwhile, in order to better and more equitably assign work among its roughly 650

members, the Local 606 membership during its November 2, 1982, general meeting voted to abolish the local’s card system used in its sign-in procedure. In its place, the local moved to a **book sign-in system** beginning January 1, 1983, by which members on the out-of-work list would sign Book I for a period of 30 days, after which they were required to re-sign the book in person to stay current on the out-of-work list.

After the completion of Epcot, the steady conditions for inside members, which would continue into the second half of the 1980s, were given another shot in the arm with construction of the **Orlando World Center Marriott** near Disney World beginning in 1983. The \$150 million hotel and convention center was wired by an all-union electrical workforce, employing many Local 606 members before it was opened on March 24, 1986.

Work at the Orlando Utilities Commission’s

**Curtis H. Stanton Energy Center** in east Orange County, a diverse generating site using natural gas, landfill methane gas and coal to fire its units, would also provide manhours for Local 606 during the early and mid-1980s.

The membership would also continue to grow, and notably in July 1983 after 108 employees of the **City of St. Cloud** voted, 64 to 30, to unionize and be represented by Local 606 and the I.B.E.W. – thereby bucking a countywide trend against civic workers organizing, according to a July 29 *Sentinel* article. In particular, the newspaper reported, the St. Cloud employees unionized because they were “frustrated by ... unresponsive and inconsistent management” and the employees were seeking “a formal salary structure.” (Two years later on August 23, 1985, the employees would vote to retain Local 606 as their representative union.)

A long period of full employment marked the second half of the decade, during which Local 606 electricians wired the new **Naval Support Activity Orlando**, which opened in 1988 as the home of the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division Orlando, the Navy’s principal center for modeling, simulation and training systems technologies. A large expansion of the **Orange County Convention and Civic Center** in Orlando Central Park also employed a large number of I.B.E.W. electricians from its groundbreaking in February 1987 until its completion in January 1989.

Although work slowed after completion of larger jobs in 1989, it would remain steady for some time with construction of the **Dolphin Hotel** and **Swan Hotel** luxury resorts at Disney World.

Then on November 1, 1989, the I.B.E.W. chartered outside line **Local No. 222** in Orlando. Soon after, on March 1, 1990, the I.B.E.W. removed outside work from the electrical-trade classifications represented by Local 606.

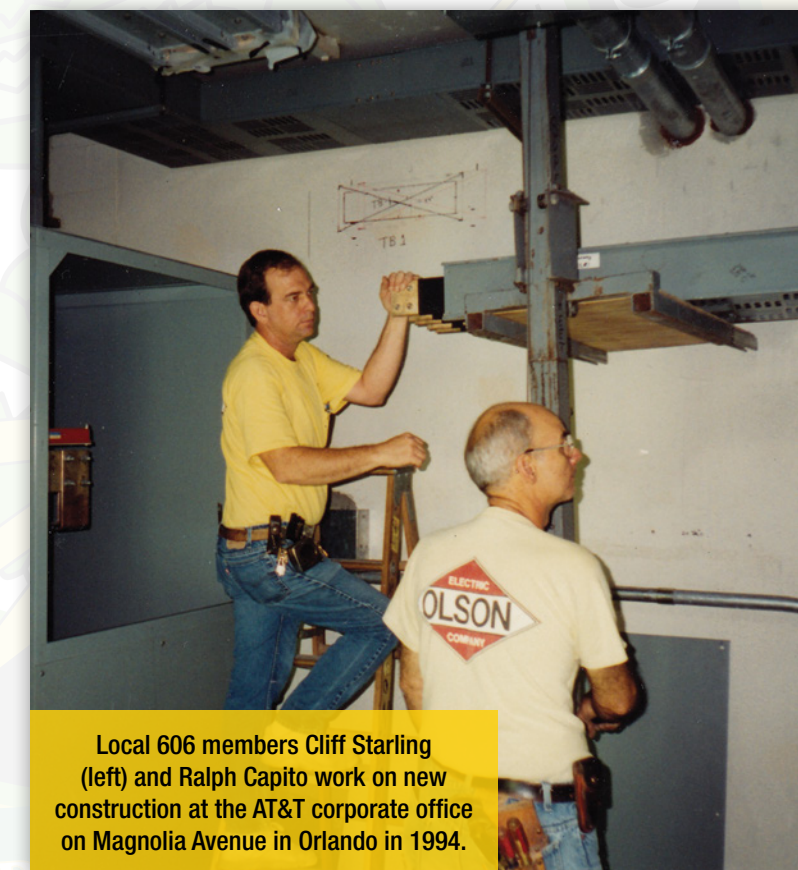


I.B.E.W. Local No. 2174 of Orlando, an electrical-maintenance and shopmen local chartered on June 1, 1965, was merged into Local 606 on March 1, 1997.

## WIRED INTO ITS NEED TO GROW

The construction of several large Disney projects got underway within the Local 606 jurisdiction in 1990 and provided a large number of manhours for the local’s membership, which numbered nearly 500 “A” electricians and about 400 “BA” members. Those included an expansion of MGM Studios, erection of the new **Dixie Landings Resort** 3,000-room hotel that would open in February 1992 and the new Disney headquarters office building.

Following the completion of that work, however, employment slowed once again in



Local 606 members Cliff Starling (left) and Ralph Capito work on new construction at the AT&T corporate office on Magnolia Avenue in Orlando in 1994.





Local 606 members work on construction at the AT&T corporate office in Orlando in 1994.



1992 and would not improve throughout the year and into the next. Conditions became so poor at one point in June 1992, in fact, that the local reported an increase in “bad” loans with its credit union because of the large number of members who lost their jobs.

As the national economy improved, Local 606’s condition stabilized and remained steady throughout the remainder of the 1990s, with the local enjoying stronger employment during the end of the decade as the area experienced another spike in hotel construction.

Meanwhile, the local continued to grow from its more than 950 members in 1995 – and particularly when the I.B.E.W. merged inside **Local No. 2174** of Orlando into Local 606 on March 1, 1997. A month later, the local added 114 more brothers and sisters when its bargaining committee negotiated a contract with the **Kissimmee Utility Authority**.

As work remained abundant and employment was strong as the trifecta end of the decade, the century and the millennium approached, the local and its contractors were also meeting through the **Orlando Labor Management Cooperative Committee**. Subsequently, as Local 606 **Press Secretary Janet Skipper** reported in the June 1998 *Journal*, “The meetings have created a lot of positive communication among labor and management.”

Into the new “Y2K” millennium, Central Florida’s union electricians were being kept busy on some of the more than \$1 billion in commercial projects going up across the region, which included the new “North/South Building” of the Orange County Convention Center.

But the strong construction industry caused a need for labor in the area that soared beyond the available supply. With the shortage of skilled workers growing well into 2001, Local 606 made the recruitment of new members one of its priorities during that time.



Consequently, “Construction companies are turning to unions more than ever to find skilled workers in the tight labor market,” Local 606 **Business Manager Harry Brown** told the July 2, 2001, *Sentinel*. At that time, the local’s 900 union construction electricians (out of a total membership of about 1,600) who were working in the Orlando area made up about 10 percent of the electrician workforce.

Work slowed again, however, in late 2002 and throughout most of 2003 after larger projects came to an end. The following year, cleaning up and restoring power in the aftermath of hurricanes Charley and Frances during the hurricane season of 2004 created some additional work for the local’s contractors.

In order to gain some of the work in the growing condominium market within its jurisdiction during the mid-2000s, Local 606 and one of the state’s oldest contractors, **Olson Electric**, took up a challenge in late 2004 to implement “innovative work changes” so they could compete against the non-union construction industry in that market. An initial

reward in early 2005 came when Olson was awarded several **Metro West condominiums**, which created more work for the local’s members.

On a national level at that time, the **Code of Excellence** program was also initiated by NECA and the I.B.E.W. A set of commitments to promote quality and best work practices for each union member, the initiative would help Local 606 regain some of the markets in which it was struggling.

Into 2005, the State of Florida was growing quickly – but it was dominated by an anti-worker governor and legislature and a weak state labor board, and organized labor was not strong. But the I.B.E.W. had launched an historic, new campaign of “unprecedented magnitude” to change that and rebuild the union’s market share in construction while also increasing its presence in every other branch of the state’s electrical industry.

“We’re reinventing a union movement in the state of Florida,” I.B.E.W. **International President Edwin D. Hill** announced in



These Local 606 retirees and members gather during a picnic and get-together in 2011: (left to right) Doug Dagley, George Wynn, Tom Phillip Sr., Terry Thompson, Ernie Tipton, Butch Cox, Richard Hutchinson, Bobby Noojin, Tom Malone, Don Ernest, Butch Rizer, Larry Grassman and Jim Sullivan.





I.B.E.W. Local No. 308 of St. Petersburg, Florida, an inside-electricians local chartered on September 4, 1917, was merged into Local 606 and Local 915 of Tampa Bay on July 26, 2005.

the November 2005 *Journal*. “We’ve never targeted a state like this before. We’re throwing everything we have into it.”

A state organizing coordinator was placed in Florida, and several organizers were transferred to the state to aid in campaigns in every branch of the I.B.E.W. Key to the program were new agreements that changed the way the I.B.E.W. operated in the state’s construction industry, and particularly in residential and small commercial



Local 606 members, with project manager David Cousins (orange vest), construct a new electric room during a massive upgrade project for the Disney Telecommunications Building in 2015.

work. The union’s new **small works agreement**, for instance, would target projects such as high-rise apartment buildings and condos, as well as shopping centers and hotels.

The program also concentrated existing resources on the strategic plan and also provided for organizers and financial support for targeted campaigns.

By November 2005, the small works agreement had already netted construction jobs for Local 606, which had 50 members working on a \$90-million, 35-story condominium project in Orlando, which was among the first large-scale residential jobs for Local 606. Subsequently, Business Manager Brown declared, “We’re enthusiastic about this step into the high-rise residential market.”

The I.B.E.W. had also merged members of the dissolved **Local No. 308** of St. Petersburg into Local 606 and **Local No. 915** of Tampa on July 26 of that year, further expanding the Orlando local’s membership.

## FOCUS SWINGS TO ORGANIZING

At 1,400 members strong by 2006, the local’s work picture looked good throughout that year and into 2008 thanks in large part to the hard work of the local’s organizers and representatives. In fact, by April of that year, the local had organized nine new contractors over the previous 12 months.

Furthermore, the Orlando Labor Management Cooperative Committee was working diligently on promoting the positive image of organized labor and union contractors. Among its tactics, the committee was staging career fairs, hosting electrical-safety related classes and participating in the union Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (J.A.T.C.) graduations.

But the I.B.E.W. took a hit in late 2010 when NASA retired its space shuttle fleet. As



Local 606 Brother Patrick Billings (back to camera) and I.B.E.W. Local 349 member Peter Keukelaar work on the upgrade project for the Disney Telecommunications Building in 2015.

a result, work was affected at **Kennedy Space Center** other NASA locations at which local unions provided construction-related labor for the space agency, including Local 606.

The nationwide **Great Recession** also struck in 2010, after which the local’s employment was bleak with more than 100 members on Book 1 and seeking work at one point. Subsequently, the local’s general fund was losing money monthly amid those tough financial times.

New **Business Manager Bob Carr** stepped in during the second half of that year and eventually made some tough decisions that were necessary to put members back to work and regain market share previously lost to the non-union sector. By the end of his first term

in June 2013, Local 606 had full employment and its general fund was healthy and solvent.

During that time, among the jobs that employed the local’s members, several worked for **Ermco Electric** (now Maddox Electric) of Florida in 2011 on the **Project CONSERV II Water Reclamation Facility** electrical system upgrade, for which members installed more than 32,000 feet of 15 KV, three-conductor cable in more than 11,000 feet of new concrete-encased duct bank. Also during that time, members even worked a refurbishment project for **Big Thunder Mountain** in Disney World.

Local 606 also continued organizing, and in the summer of 2013, its Organizing Department, led by **Brother Larry Kidd**, began a new initiative to educate and inform Central Florida non-union electricians on ways to gain better pay and working conditions. The local A.B.C. responded with an intimidation campaign, but Brother Kidd “continued to provide valuable information to unrepresented electricians in the Orlando area,” **Press Secretary Fernando Rendon** reported in the August 2013 *Electrical Worker* (the I.B.E.W.’s new monthly journal).

Throughout the second half of 2014 and all of 2015, the local enjoyed another construction boom in its jurisdiction as its NECA signatory contractors secured much

Local 606 initiated its **RENEW** (Reach out and Engage Next-gen Electrical Workers) program in 2013. Spearheaded by **Brother Clay McNeely**, RENEW aimed to ensure that a new generation of I.B.E.W. members is active and engaged in the future of the union.

In May 2015, then-President McNeely and journeyman wireman **Brother David Ramos** led the first RENEW meeting and immediately started planning how the program could impact the local. The RENEW committee’s first-ever project was volunteering for an Industry Night event the local’s organizing department held that July.





Local 606 members work on the Disney Telecommunications Building upgrade project in 2015.



of that work. Among the larger jobs in its area picked up by the union industry were the addition of the **Pandora – The World of Avatar** themed-area attraction at Disney's new **Animal Kingdom** park, for which members were employed by Ermco (now Maddox Electric) to install features such as a major ride, shops and restaurants for its public opening on May 27, 2017.

Elsewhere, a major expansion at the Orlando International Airport that would include a new people-mover tram to connect a new terminal with the existing airport was being wired by members working for **Cleveland Electric**. Signatory contractor **Miller Electric** completed work on two 200,000-square-foot research and administrative buildings for Northrop Grumman using Local 606 skilled craftspeople during that time, and members working for the Buena Vista Construction Company performed massive upgrades to the **Disney Telecommunications Building** in 2015, replacing all of the facility's switchboards and constructing a new electric room.

By that time, Orlando was growing exponentially, and with that intensive expansion came excessive construction jobs – so much so, in fact, that by mid-2015, Local 606 had too

many projects and not enough workers. So, with more major projects looming, the local and the **Central Florida Chapter** of NECA put a plan in motion to secure the electricians and apprentices they would need to compete for the work.

“All this new construction has given Local 606 an incredible opportunity to go on a major organizing drive,” **Assistant Business Manager Fernando Rendon** was able to announce in the August 2015 *Electrical Worker*. Indeed, with the help of State Organizing Coordinator Jonathon Dehmel and the Local 606 **RENEW (Reach out and Engage Next-gen Electrical Workers) committee**, the local planned a massive blitz of the Central Florida area, culminating in an **Industry Night** during which the local would organize a significant number of new members.

After four months of planning with the assistance of Fifth District Vice President Joseph S. Davis and organizers from the international office and other Florida locals, the Industry Night event was held on September 24, 2015, and drew nearly 300 non-union electricians in the region. “This is what Henry Miller was all about,” Brother Carr proclaimed that evening, “organizing everyone in the electrical industry.”



Local 606 member Cliff Starling (center) receives a pair of plaques for his retirement on August 2017 from Executive Board member Chris Harrison (left) and Business Manager Clay McNeely (right).





The additional manpower the local was securing came at just the right time, as commercial and multifamily construction in Orlando had increased 65 percent over the previous year, while the local was also staffing a couple of major airport projects. On top of that, work at Disney World was again also flourishing, including construction of the new **Toy Story** attraction in Hollywood Studios within the Magic Kingdom, and at their peak, the Disney projects alone would require more than 600 members.

“We’re just going to have to keep growing,” Brother Rendon advised in the November 2015 *Electrical Worker*. “We have to organize. If we don’t, we’re going to lose this work.” Undeniably, organizing had become a necessity for the local, as upwards of 60 percent of its members had been organized into the local at that time.

Into 2016, organizing also meant using the new I.B.E.W. **Construction Electrician and Construction Wireman** (CE/W) alternative classifications for many of its workers. By that time, in fact, the local was using the CE/CW program on every job it had recently secured.

### GOING STRONG INTO ITS 80<sup>TH</sup>

After having little work on the eastern edge of its jurisdiction, beginning in 2013 Local 606 worked over 250,000 manhours in that area during the next three years, prompting the local to expand services there and move its **satellite office in Melbourne, Florida**, to a larger location in 2016. Under the leadership of Business Manager Carr, more work was expected in that region over the coming three years as well – and at the time he stepped down after his

Seventy Local 606 RENEW Committee, fellow local members and their families participate in the City of Orlando Veteran’s Day parade in November 2018, for which RENEW members built and decorated a float for the parade, during which RENEW members handed out candy and literature highlighting the benefits of union membership.



second term ended in mid-2016, the local was achieving unprecedented success in securing work, its general fund had doubled from six years earlier and organizing new members was at an all-time high.

Employment continued to boom throughout the rest of that year, requiring travelers from other I.B.E.W. locals to help fill the calls for manpower that the local received. During that time, the Disney Animal Kingdom Avatar project peaked with 200 electricians and was on schedule to be completed in early 2017, while the long-delayed airport people-mover project had finally started with Local 606 members on the job.

Another major organizing drive was also scheduled for the eastern jurisdiction, where a large project was planned and could employ up to 200 electricians. Brother Rendon further reported in the August 2016 *Electrical Worker*, “We project that work will continue to remain steady, giving us the opportunity to not only put travelers to work, but also to organize new members into our great union.”

By that fall, the local had bloomed to a total of nearly 1,400 members, split nearly evenly between “A” and “BA” membership.

Full employment continued into and throughout 2017 and 2018, during which the local kept aggressively organizing non-union electricians to fill the manpower shortage in its area and its signatory contractors kept bidding and obtaining more work on a consistent basis. Plus, many of those contractors were breaking into markets in which the union previously had not been part, such as new construction at the University of Central Florida, opening more opportunities for travelers, too.

With the building prosperity in Orlando continuing into 2019 and Local 606 persistently picking up market share, the local was working with the **Central Florida Building Trades Council** in negotiating a

project labor agreement (P.L.A.) in its area. “All the new work has created a need for more electricians in an already tight labor market, and the organizing department is constantly adjusting to find new ways to recruit and organize new members,” Brother Rendon broadcast in the April 2019 *Electrical Worker*.

Indeed, while the local’s electrical-industry market share within its jurisdiction had been down to about 2 percent just a couple of decades before, it had grown to more than 9 percent of the market as the local celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June 2019. At this time, half of the local’s roughly 1,600 members are employed in Disney maintenance while the other half work in construction in and around Central Florida.

Moreover, although the local has been located in the middle of an anti-union, so-called “right-to-work” state, it can look back at a legacy of wiring most all of the most significant projects in its jurisdiction, including constructing, expanding and maintaining the Walt Disney World theme parks from their inception.





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**CLAY MCNEELY**  
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820 Virginia Dr  
Orlando, FL 32803  
Phone: 407-896-7271  
Fax: 407-896-7274

**DOUG FOOTE**  
Sec.-Treas.  
4510 N. Orange Blossom Trail  
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