



100-Year Anniversary

I.B.E.W. LOCAL 948



100th Anniversary



COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY

1919 - 2019



IBEW Local 58 is proud to Congratulate
the Brothers & Sisters of Local 948 on their

100th Anniversary!

We wish you continued success as you
celebrate this important milestone.

Congratulations on your achievement!

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Business Manager/Financial Secretary

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**“Labor Unions are the leading force
for democratization and progress.”**

– Noam Chomsky

***HAPPY 100th ANNIVERSARY TO
THE MEMBERS OF I.B.E.W.
LOCAL 948 FROM THE
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1919



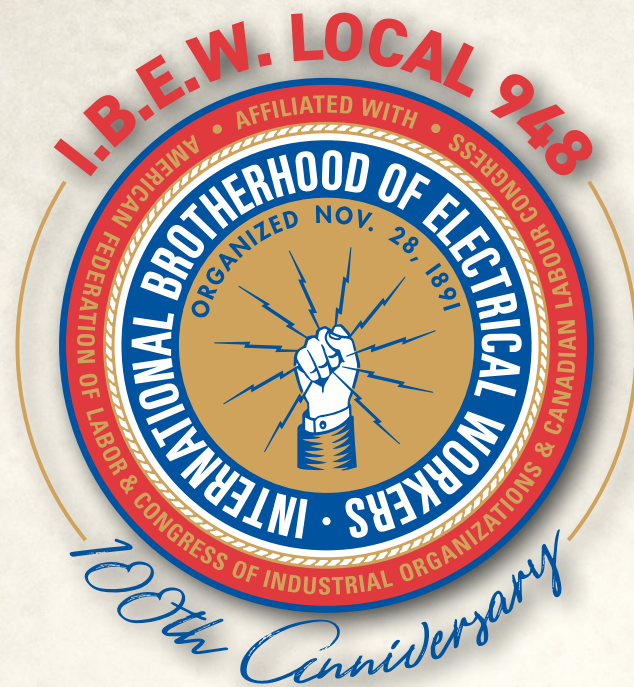
2019

**CONGRATULATIONS
on Your Centennial Anniversary!**

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Lonnie R. Stephenson, International President
Kenneth W. Cooper, International Secretary-Treasurer
David J. Ruhmkorff, International Vice President, Sixth District

www.ibew.org



I.B.E.W. Local No. 948 100-Year Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, November 23, 2019

Holiday Inn Gateway Center
5353 Gateway Center, Flint

6:00 p.m. to Midnight

Semi-Formal Catered Dinner, Music and Dancing

I.B.E.W. 948

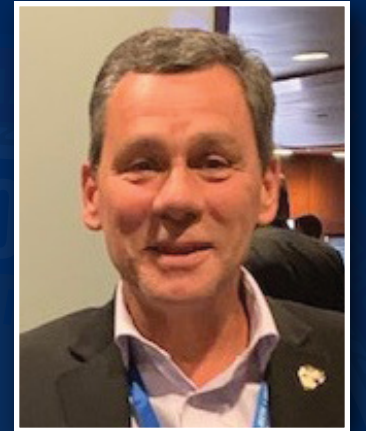


100th Anniversary

OUR CENTURY OF SOLIDARITY HAS SUSTAINED LOCAL 948 AND ALL OF FLINT

A 100-year anniversary is truly an ideal occasion to reflect back and measure the challenges and triumphs that have brought Local 948 to its century milestone. Of course, with Local 948, it is easy to gauge its history by holding it up against those of the City of Flint and its automobile industry; as their fortunes and hardships have gone, it seems that so have the fortunes and hardships of Local 948.

But looking back, it is obvious that our local has always fought and toiled to make its own prosperity, and in doing so, we have been able to be a major contributor in the times of growth and recovery of the city and automobile industry. The local has also been a champion of its members, providing them with the means to secure good wages, employment, training and vital insurance and pension benefits. So our history shows at that since Local 948 was chartered in 1919, its leaders and its membership have done what they needed to do – strike actions, organizing, training – to ensure the union is the leader in the electrical industry in the Flint region. As such, through all of the years, Local 948 has made its mark in its jurisdiction and today, at 100 years, it is as strong as ever.



Our region's most iconic tenants, including Buick City, General Motors, downtown Flint, the University of Michigan in Flint ... they existed and prospered during the past 100 years because of Local 948's dedication to its profession, to training, to its membership and to its contractors. Through that continuing commitment and devotion to our union principles, Local 948 is poised to make its mark into its next century and beyond.

Just as the local's original members surely realized as they established and grew the organization, setting ourselves up for success in the future will continue to be hard work. But through our Brotherhood, our solidarity in thoughts and actions will allow Local 948 to prepare our workforce through the Flint/Saginaw Electrical J.A.T.C. to be better than all others, and we will affect the political climate in which we work so that it protects working people everywhere and the union electrical industry.

These are fitting tributes to all of the Local 948 members who came before us and brought our local to its 100 Year anniversary, and it will be our legacy for future Local 948 generations.

As the leader of this great local at this important time in its existence, I could not be more honored and proud. Congratulations, Local 948 members, retirees and apprentices, on 100 years of powering Flint!

In Solidarity,

Gregory Remington, Business Manager/Financial Secretary
I.B.E.W. Local No. 948, Flint

This book was proudly produced by

UNION HISTORIES™
Preserving the Proud Stories of Local Unions
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I.B.E.W. Local 948 and Union Histories also give thanks to the following for their contributions to this book:

Local 948 retirees Lee Lattimore Jr. and Bill Saines
Local 948 Business Manager Greg Remington, Organizer Kellogg Dipzinski and Office Manager Jenny Wallace
J.A.T.C. Training Director Rick Mason
I.B.E.W. Museum Manager and Curator Curtis Bateman
Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Project Archivist Caitlin Moriarty

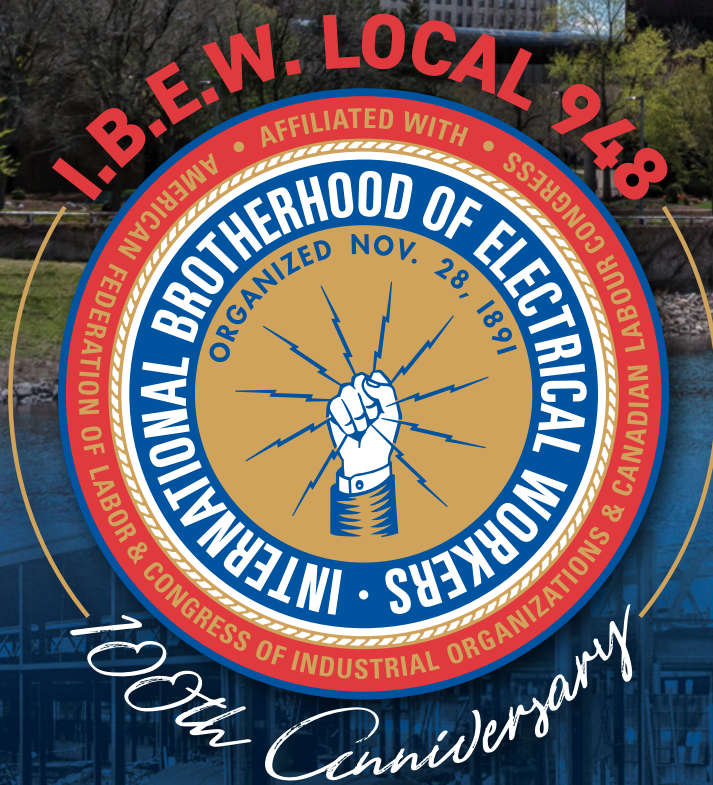
Work cited: "A Brief History of Local Union 948, I.B.E.W., 75th Anniversary, 1919 to 1994," by Local 948 member George Nichols with assistance from Slim Simmons, John Hills, Charlie Marshall Jr.

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THE 100-YEAR HISTORY OF I.B.E.W. LOCAL No. 948, FLINT

DRIVEN THROUGH A CENTURY OF POWERING 'VEHICLE CITY'



The introduction of an electrical local union in the City of Flint, Michigan, actually came about as the result of an escalating conflict within the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers** (I.B.E.W.) that developed into a bitter internal struggle beginning in 1907. Driven by discord between the union's linemen and wiremen, disgruntled international office-seekers and a former international treasurer removed from office in 1907 because of "irregularities," as *History of The I.B.E.W.* recounts, the resultant "Reid-Murphy Split" (so-called after the two elected leaders of the breakaway group) exploded that year when a dispute between International Secretary Peter Collins, an inside wireman from Boston, and International Treasurer Frank Sullivan, a lineman from Cleveland, came to blows in the International offices.

The ensuing five-year rift saw a large number of locals across the country form a competing faction of the union under James J. Reid, an I.B.E.W. District Council president and

lineman, and James W. Murphy. In their subsequent efforts to unseat current I.B.E.W. President Frank J. McNulty and Secretary Collins, the Reid-Murphy administration enlisted the support of linemen leaders across the country to protest what Reid described as the "incompetence of President McNulty."

During that time, the Reid-Murphy splinter faction organized the first-ever I.B.E.W.-related local in Flint when it issued a charter for **Local No. 647** to serve the city.

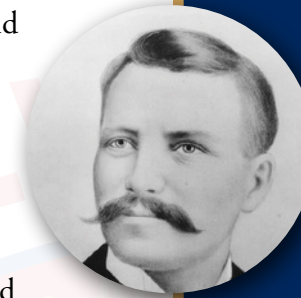
President McNulty eventually appealed to American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) President Samuel Gompers, who ruled that the McNulty-Collins administration was the duly-elected representative of the I.B.E.W. The situation was finally settled when a court decision in February 1912 declared a 1908 Reid-Murphy convention was illegal and its actions were void. Soon after on March 21, a Federal judge in Cleveland recognized the McNulty-Collins group's claim to all I.B.E.W. assets.



I.B.E.W. Local 948 charter, dated May 19, 1919, and signed by I.B.E.W. General President Frank J. McNulty (who retired that year after serving in the position since 1903) and I.B.E.W. Secretary Charles P. Ford (who served in that position from 1912 into 1925).



By the time the two sides of the I.B.E.W. split met in Des Moines, Iowa, in early 1913 to discuss the complete cessation of hostilities, the International Office had already received requests from several local unions and representatives of District Councils “connected with the seceders” asking to “re-affiliate,” President McNulty reported in the June 1914 *Journal*. During that meeting, a “Tentative Agreement” to allow the Reid-Murphy locals back into the I.B.E.W. was presented to the leaders of the splinter faction.



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.

Afterwards, nearly all of the locals that had broken away attended the I.B.E.W.'s 12th Convention in Boston later in 1913. However, Flint's Local 647 did not survive to that point and was defunct by the time that conference was held.

Three years later, the I.B.E.W. would organize and charter mixed-trades **Local No. 203** on May 5, 1916, to serve Flint's inside wiremen

and outside linemen. The local eventually lost jurisdiction over outside linemen and was designated an inside-only local, however, and it ultimately went defunct sometime in late 1918.

ORGANIZING & SUSTAINING A PERMANENT LOCAL UNION

In a May 14, 1919, letter to I.B.E.W. General Secretary Charles P. Ford asking him to issue a charter for a new local in Flint, I.B.E.W. District Council Organizer M. H. Patten made no mistake about his belief that the city was primed to sustain a branch of the union:

“I got enough members to start a local in Flint last night. There was about fifty at the meeting and all but twenty were lined up and those twenty lined up as you can see. ... I hope you'll rush this, as they want to get things going in Flint, there being a great deal of construction going on there.”

The correspondence also included a \$20 money order for a charter and supplies for a new local. Subsequently, on **May 19, 1919**, the I.B.E.W. issued a charter for mixed-trades **Local No. 948**.

LOCAL 948 CHARTER MEMBERS

Stanley Bailey
Clifford Blankenship
Harold H. Botsford
L. A. Briggs
Charles W. Burlew
Gordon Crider
S. W. Goodridge
Clayton R. Grobe
L. C. H. Grocger
C. L. Hatch
Ralph Humbert
George V. Kooms
A. Lanktree
G. L. Little
Edward H. Mann
Frank Marr
Hiram Sheppard
Edward J. Stang
Robert Toungee
Verne Tripp



FIRST 'DANCING PARTY'

Local 948 held its first-ever "dancing party" on September 17, 1919, at the Masonic Temple in Flint. One feature of the event was an exhibition of modern dancing by Professor Bernard Kay and a Mrs. Fordotte.

The new local initially met every Tuesday night at the Flint Labor Temple and its business agent, Brother H. A. Craig, held office hours every work day from Noon to 1 p.m. and 5 to 6 p.m. While taking in members on a "pretty regular" basis, Brother Craig was able to report in the June 1919 I.B.E.W. *Electrical Worker Journal*, "Flint, Michigan, is in commission and doing business once more. ... in fact, all down the line the brothers are tried and true to the I.B.E.W."

With work "fair" for the mixed electrician and lineman local, it had already drafted an agreement for its employing contractors that asked for a wage scale of 87-1/2 cents per hour for its journeyman members. What's more, Brother Craig closed his letter with a positive – and what would prove to be intuitive – message to the sister locals of the union:

"Now don't think of the old saw, "a new broom sweeps clean," for Local 948 is here to stay and keep on growing as our good city is growing and we hope to be just as crowded with good union men as our city is crowded for housing now."

By July, the local had about 140 members, which was practically every electrical worker in the city. It had also signed an agreement for the 87-1/2-cent-per-hour scale with all but one of the city's electrical contractors, allowing the local to declare that Flint was a "closed-shop" union town while it listed its employing companies in an advertisement in the July 14, 1919, *Flint Journal*: **Bastedo Electric, M&S Electric, J. E. Sills Electric, Marble Brothers,**

Flint Electric, Genesee Electric, Charles T. Hutchins and Henderson Plumbing.

As the local continued to grow, the September 17, 1919, *Flint Journal* reported that since receiving its charter, the local was "steadily growing and the membership increasing." Indeed, by that time, Local 948 had around 250 members who were working on various jobs such as a project for the DuPont Engineering Company in Flint going into the 1920s.

However, growing anti-union sentiment in the city severely stifled the fledgling local during the first half of 1920 as the five largest contractors in Flint organized themselves into the Electrical Contractors Association of Flint and collectively refused to sign an agreement with the local. Subsequently, on April 1, the local went out on strike against the contractors, who had demanded that a contract be signed under "open-shop" non-union conditions and that the local only furnish electrical workers for their Association and no other employers.

Three weeks later, Local 948 called off the strike after the two sides agreed to work under conditions that were "satisfactory to all parties concerned," the local reported in the December 1920 I.B.E.W. *Journal*. But by that time, the local was "on the verge of collapse" as it had been left in a precarious financial condition – compounded by the apparent theft of funds by the local's business agent – and its membership had been reduced to just 35 electrical workers.

What's more, the city's once-strong Building Trades Council had been weakened and essentially rendered inoperable by the actions of the Association – as well as the apparent theft of its funds by the Local 948 business agent, who was serving as the Council's president.

I.B.E.W. International Examiner E. J. "Butch" Davis rallied the local during an October 21 meeting, after which the local's 35 members raised about \$700 for the local's general fund "by loans of from \$5 to \$100 per

man, and taking as security for same a note against the local, payable within one year from date," the local announced in the December 1920 I.B.E.W. *Journal*. By that time, Local 948 was growing again and has a membership of more than 65 electrical workers.

Slow work and the resultant up-to-90-percent unemployment during 1921 and throughout much of the first half of the decade hindered further expansion of the local. While Flint was home to the Buick Motor Car Company's **Buick City** and plants for the Durant, Chevrolet, Champion Ignition, Mason Motor Truck companies and several other small concerns, little of the work was performed by the local's members during the mid-1920s, leaving a large number of those men with no option but to travel to other I.B.E.W. locals for employment.

Ultimately, the continuous setbacks reduced the local "to nothing but a name," **Recording Secretary Edward E. Scott** declared in an article in the February 1928 I.B.E.W. *Journal*.

A new slate of officers in 1928 began to turn around the fortunes of Local 948 early that year, by which time the local had secured a



LOCAL 948 UNION HALLS

Flint Labor Temple
111-1/2 Kearsley Street, Flint
1919 into 1921

Flint Labor Temple
808 South Saginaw Street, Flint
1921 into 1932

I.B.E.W. Local 948 Offices
733 South Saginaw Street
1932 into 1935

Pengelly Building
Harrison and Third Streets, Flint
1935 into 1942

I.B.E.W. Local 948 Offices
118-1/2 East Water Street, Flint
1942 into 1946

I.B.E.W. Local 948 Union Hall
3202 Detroit Street, Flint
1946 into 1977

I.B.E.W. Local 948 Union Hall
2442 East Maple Road, Flint
1977 through 1979

I.B.E.W. Local 948 Union Hall
1251 West Hill Road, Flint
January 1980 to present

Local 948 Union Hall at 1251 West Hill Road in Flint.





Local 948's graduating apprenticeship class of 1958.

fixed wage scale with contractors, and large jobs at the Flint plant for **General Motors** (which was born in the city just a decade earlier) were beginning to provide the local with improved manhours – as the automobile industry would continue to do over the next 80-some years. Additionally, as Brother Scott explained, “Some of the old-timers hung on and managed to keep the charter on the wall. It has been a long, dragged-out battle, but we are beginning to see results.”

Accordingly, by April 1928, the local was able to report in that month's I.B.E.W. *Journal* that it “succeeded ... in finally convincing the contractors of this city that our interests are mutual.” As such, the local had signed “every contractor of note” to its agreement while providing each shop's individual employees with an increase in pay of up to 30 cents per hour with their membership into the union.

That summer, the local's membership climbed to nearly 100 electrical workers, many of whom were employed on a large project for the General Motors (G.M.) Fisher Body Company in the local's jurisdiction that also worked many out-of-town I.B.E.W. traveling members. Employment remained strong throughout the prosperous year, during which the local continued to add new members.

But the contractors' refusal to again negotiate on level terms with the local, as well as their unwillingness to meet with the union “relative to bettering the electrical industry in general,” during the first half of 1929 forced the local to go out on strike. “In order to bring them to some understanding of our aims and ambitions toward a better electrical industry and likewise a more successful future for legitimate contractors,” **Press Secretary K. H. Grimes** explained in the August 1929 I.B.E.W. *Journal*, “we decided unanimously to walk out for an increase of 25 cents per hour or a scale of \$1.25.”

ENJOYING RELATIVE BLISS THROUGH A TRAGIC DECADE

Despite the onset of the **Great Depression**, which essentially began after the stock market crashed on October 29, 1929, sizeable projects for General Motors continued to employ many Local 948 members into the 1930s. While the jobs were primarily handled by Detroit-based contractors using I.B.E.W. Local No. 58 members as foremen, Local 948 furnished job stewards and manpower for the projects.

But the State of Michigan and the City of Flint fared worse than the rest of the country during the Depression, as the average unemployment rate between 1930 and 1933 in the state was



34 percent while it was 26 percent for the nation as a whole. What's more, employment in the auto industry, which had become a key employer in Flint, declined rapidly in only a few years – between 1928 and 1932, for instance, employment at General Motors was cut in half.

Regardless, into mid-1930, about 95 percent of the Local 948 membership was working. Additional key jobs on which members were employed at the time included wiring a new, 16-story bank building in downtown Flint, for which some members also pulled wire for the telephone company.

The lingering effects of the Depression were eased somewhat by the passage of several Federal laws to help workers, such as the **Davis-Bacon Act** in 1931, which requires contractors on Federal construction projects to pay workers the prevailing wages and benefits in their community. The **National Industrial Recovery Act** of 1933, which set minimum standards for working conditions and established a national Labor Board to enforce collective bargaining rights, and the **National Labor Relations Act** of 1935, which ensured that private-sector workers had the right to union representation, also provided some assistance for workers.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's **New Deal** programs, which created government-funded infrastructure construction projects

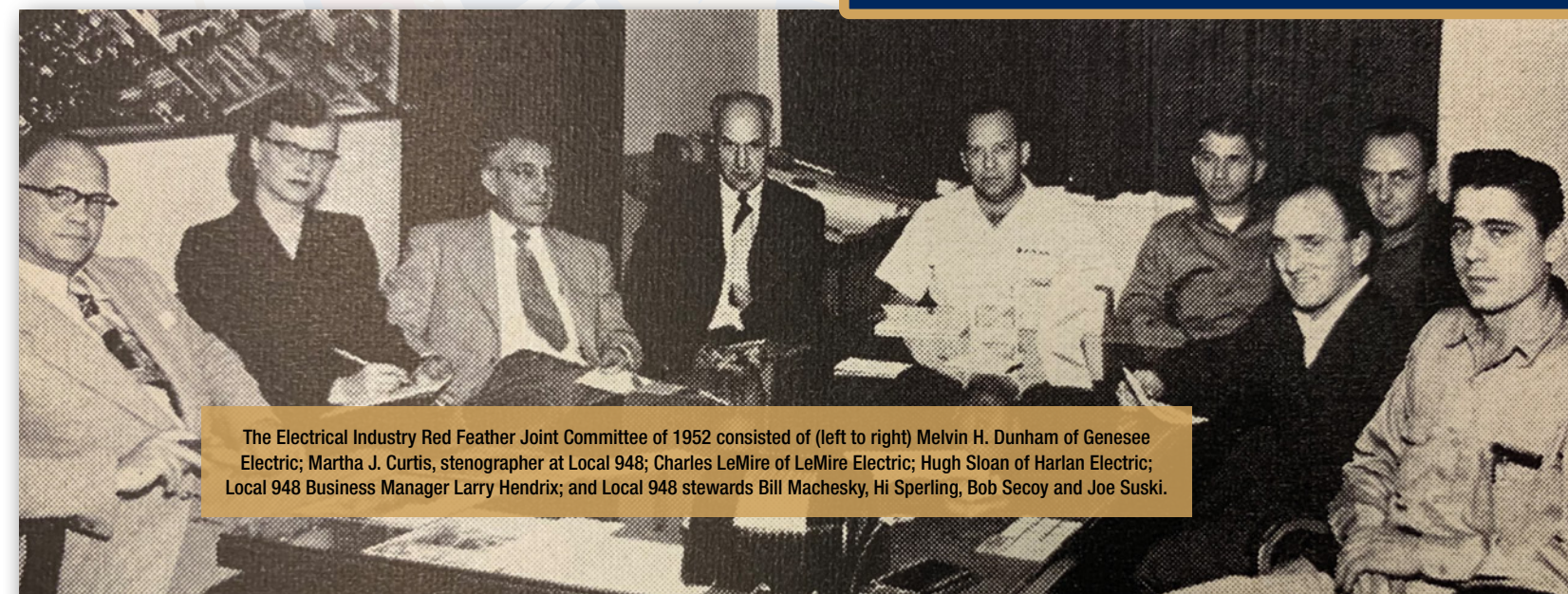
throughout the nation, were a boon to the construction industry during the historically disastrous decade as well.

Perhaps as vital to Local 948 and the union electrical-construction industry was a State of Michigan electrical licensing law that went into effect January 1, 1936, and made it unlawful to install electrical materials and equipment without a license. As such, by April of that year, several of the local's members had already been examined and all passed the test.

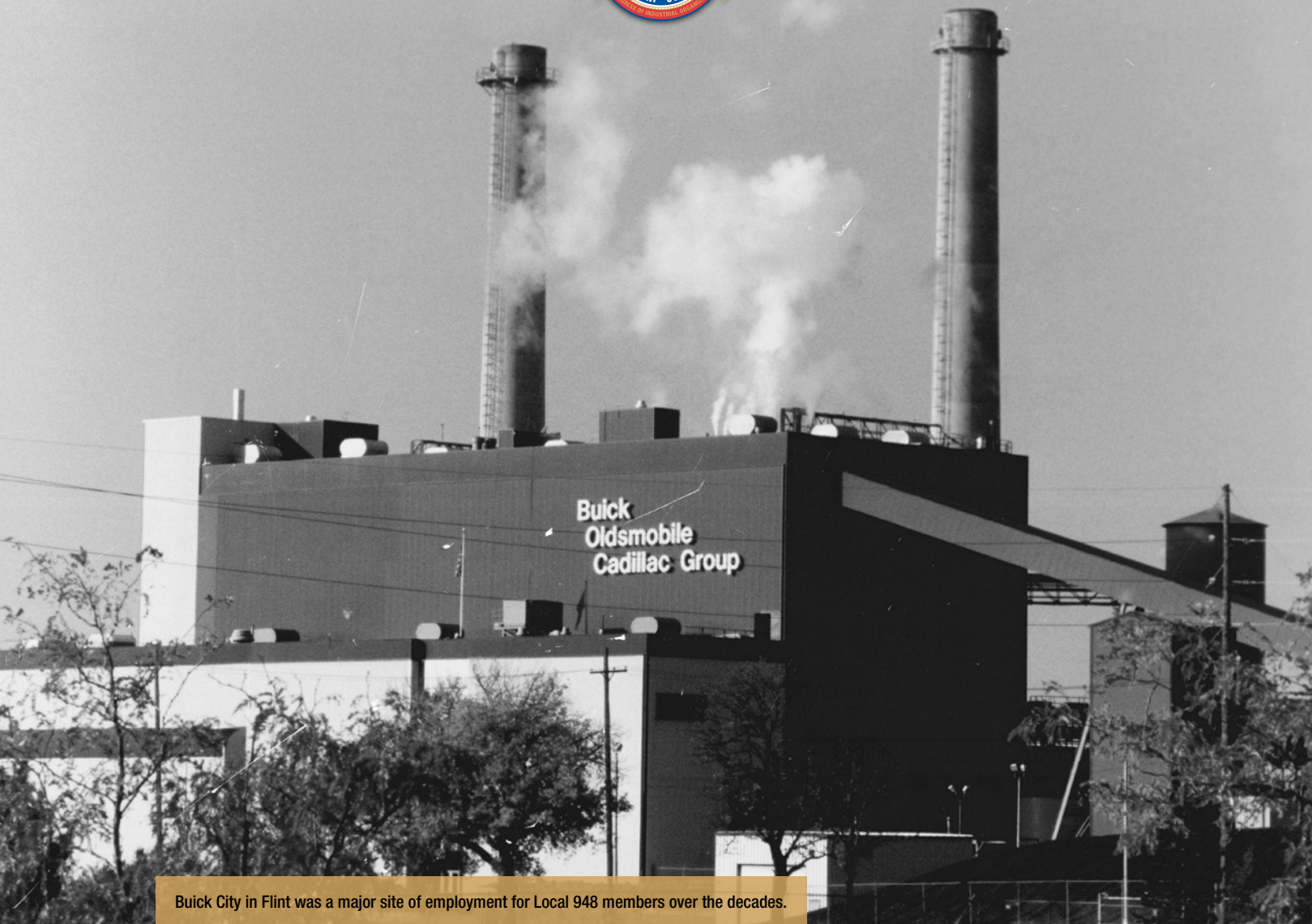
ALWAYS A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Since its inception 100 years ago, Local 948 members have consistently donated their time, skills and resources to worthwhile charitable and community causes. Along the way, for example, in 1952 the local and its contractors formed the Red Feather Joint Committee and all of the local's journeymen each contributed \$10 to support the **United Way Red-Feather Campaign**.

More recently, some of the many benevolent efforts in which the local has been involved included contributing time to the **Salvation Army** for its Christmas Kettle Collection campaign in the 1990s (which it continues to do), and the local has sponsored **The Evelynne Aimee Foundation**, which assists survivors of child, sexual and domestic abuse in Genesee and Saginaw counties. Most recently, the local during the holiday season in 2018 contributed to **Toys for Tots**, **Coats for Kids** and **Old Newsboys of Flint** (for which sponsors provide children with warm clothing, hygiene products and age-appropriate gifts).



The Electrical Industry Red Feather Joint Committee of 1952 consisted of (left to right) Melvin H. Dunham of Genesee Electric; Martha J. Curtis, stenographer at Local 948; Charles LeMire of LeMire Electric; Hugh Sloan of Harlan Electric; Local 948 Business Manager Larry Hendrix; and Local 948 stewards Bill Machesky, Hi Sperling, Bob Secoy and Joe Suski.



Buick City in Flint was a major site of employment for Local 948 members over the decades.

As the second half of the decade progressed and the Depression kept a firm grip on the economy, after a brief strike in 1936, the local and its contractors agreed in early 1938 that their current dispute over a new wage scale should be settled by an arbiter, who ruled against the union and kept its journeyman wage scale at \$1.37-1/2 cents per hour. Meanwhile, unemployment escalated after the local completed work on a new, diesel-powered electrical plant in Ubly, Michigan, for the **Rural Electrification Administration** under the New Deal in mid-1938.

Soon after, however, new jobs that year would provide some work, including a changeover

project for **Fisher Body Corporation**, a water-softener project and several New Deal-program Works Progress Administration school jobs in the area. A number of those members who could not gain employment at home were able to travel to Pittsburgh for work, among a few other locations.

But by mid-1938, the local again found itself skirmishing with contractors, who had earlier declared that the ongoing \$1.37-1/2 hourly pay was too much for certain classes of work in the local's jurisdiction. An arbitrator again ruled against the union, allowing the contractors to pay a \$1-per-hour wage scale in some areas they deemed not worthy of the regular scale.



Regardless, 1938 remained relatively prosperous in the midst of the enduring Depression, as the majority of Local 948 members were able to find work. By the end of the year, many were employed on jobs including a project installing four generator units at the massive **Buick City** automobile-manufacturing complex in northeast Flint for contractor **John Livingston Company** and a state project to expand and remodel a home for the mentally ill in Lapeer, Michigan, for contractor **Hall Electric**.

"We had several years in the past eight years that did not come up to the standard of 1938," **Press Secretary James J. Duncan** was subsequently able to announce in the January 1939 I.B.E.W. *Journal*.

BOOMING THEN SCUFFLING FROM WAR TO PEACE YEARS

More work for Local 948 came in 1939 as the Depression approached its inevitable end and **World War II** was already underway in other parts of the globe. That year, projects with Hall Electric for Fisher Body and **John Miller Electric Company** for Chrysler even provided manhours for some travelers from I.B.E.W. locals in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Additionally, with much of the world at war, in 1939 and 1940 the United States began a National Defense Program and began building war-production plants and facilities, including the Grand Blanc, Michigan, **Fisher Body Tank Plant** within the Local 948 jurisdiction, on which many members worked under Hall Electric. At the Buick plant, an aluminum foundry was also under construction during that time with Local 948 members working for **LeMire Electric**, and by mid-1940, more projects were underway for Fisher Body under Turner Engineering, Chevrolet under **Brooker Electric** and **A.C. Spark Plug** under Hall Electric – requiring the local to host several

hundred out-of-town I.B.E.W. brothers to man to work.

Among many other wartime projects on which Local 948 members worked, several were part of a 1,500-strong electrical workforce employed on construction of the **Willow Run Bomber Plant** near Ypsilanti Township, Michigan. Built beginning in 1940 by the Ford Motor Company to mass-produce B-24 Liberator heavy bombers and other aircraft after it was completed in 1942, the massive facility was located within the jurisdiction of I.B.E.W. **Local No. 252** of Ann Arbor.

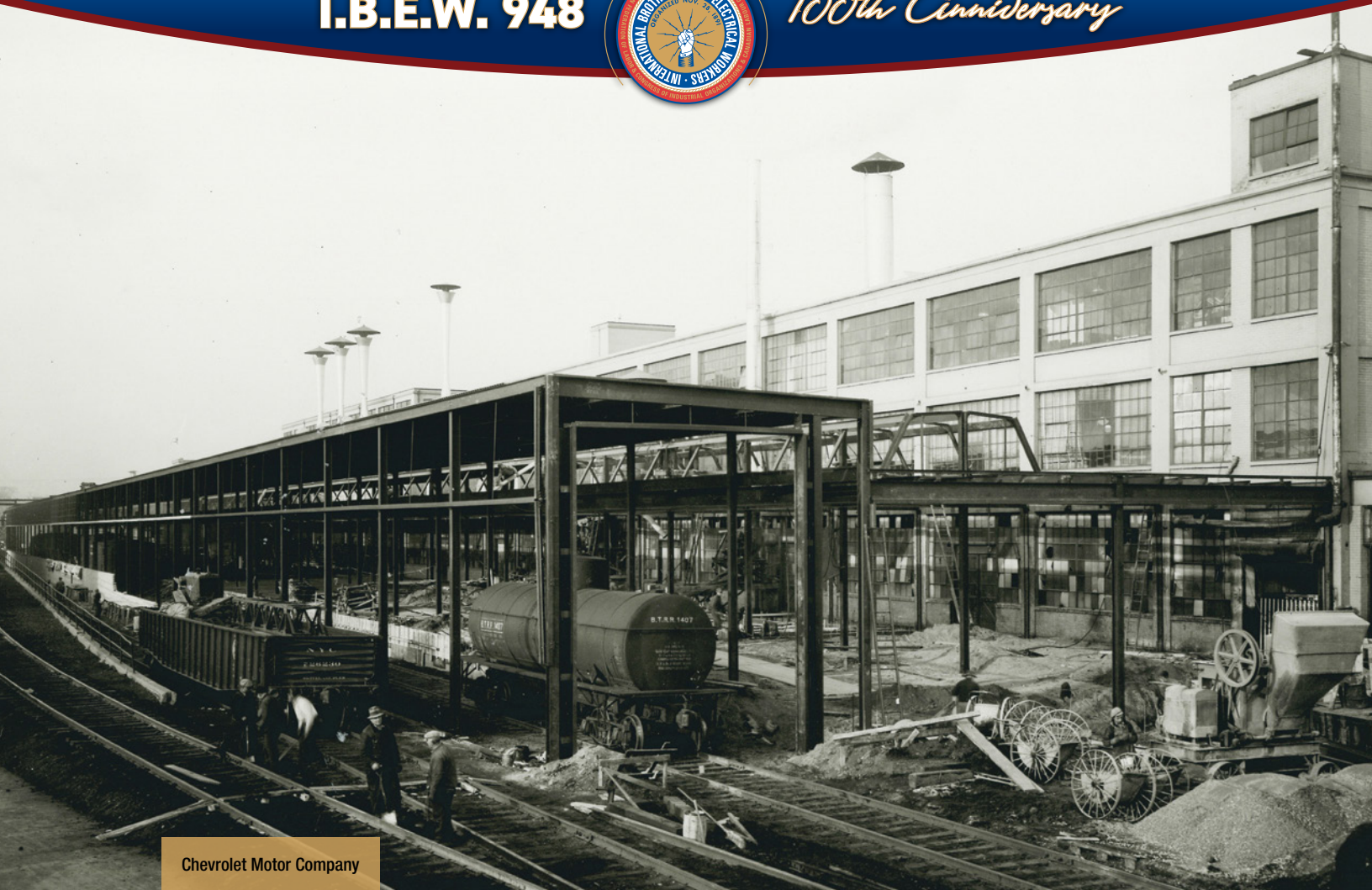
Soon after the United States officially entered the war following the Japanese attack on the U.S. Naval Station at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, most Local 948 members were working on war-related jobs while many others entered the armed services and the Navy's Construction Battalion (or Seabees). Like many other manufacturers, General Motors converted all of its automobile plants in Flint for various types of military production, generating more manhours for I.B.E.W. electrical workers.

Strong employment continued throughout the war years, bolstered by projects for the automobile manufacturers. During a regular membership meeting in July 1945, the local instructed **Business Manager George Ernest**

CITED FOR WORK DURING WAR

Local 948 brother **Gerald LeMire** earned a commendation from the U.S. Army in 1945 for his role in installing an intricate and complex communications network during military landings on an island in the South Pacific during World War II. The citation read in part, "Your knowledge, initiative and manner of performance were of invaluable aid to the communications platoon in the expeditious completion of this vital phase of the operation."

Brother LeMire was the son of Charles A. LeMire, owner and operator of Local 948 contractor LeMire Electric Company.



Chevrolet Motor Company

to tell management at Buick City that the union would do all of its new electrical work or none of it – after which, according to the 75-year account of Local 948 compiled by **Brother George Nichols** in 1994, the local did “none of it for a while.”

However, by 1945, work was too often lost to rival union electrical workers of the **Congress of Industrial Organizations** (C.I.O.), which was clashing with the **American Federation of Labor** (A.F.L.), with which the I.B.E.W. was associated. (*The two groups would not merge until 1955.*)

Work continued to boom within the local's jurisdiction after the war ended on September 2, 1945, as General Motors returned to automobile production. While the local had about 120 members at that time, more than 700 I.B.E.W. members were working within

its jurisdiction, many of whom were working for **Harlan Electric** on jobs at Buick City, John Miller at the new **Chevrolet Fisher Body** plant on Van Slyke Road just outside the city limits that was completed in 1947 (which would become Chevrolet Truck) and for Brooker Electric on jobs at Chevrolet Manufacturing.

Seemingly the only thing that slowed the local at the time was a strike by the C.I.O. unions at General Motors in early 1946. That year, the local moved into what would become its longtime union hall on Detroit Street in Flint, where it would remain headquartered for the next three decades.

But during the late 1940s, “the famine began,” as Brother Nichols described it in his 75-year biography of Local 948, when work in the local's jurisdiction disappeared. Over the following years, a large majority of members



found work in Detroit Local 58's jurisdiction on jobs such as the **Lincoln Assembly Plant**, Ford's River Rouge plants, the Pontiac Truck Plant, the Dodge Press Plant, lighting **Briggs Stadium** (later renamed Tiger Stadium) and Hudson's downtown department store. Other traveling members worked on Consumers Power plants in Essexville out of Bay City's I.B.E.W. **Local No. 692**; Edison's power plant in Marysville out of Port Huron **Local No. 539**; and the City of Lansing power house and **Michigan State University** out of Lansing **Local No. 665**.

During the beginning of what would be an extended period of challenging employment conditions for Local 948, the I.B.E.W. International Office transferred the local's jurisdiction in the northern section of Oakland County, including Holly, from Local 948 into Local 58's jurisdiction. However, some projects on which the local's members did work beginning in 1949 included construction of the new **Women's Hospital** on Ballenger Highway in Flint that would be completed in 1951 (and renamed **McLaren General Hospital**) and Genesee County's new **Tuberculosis Sanitarium** on Ballenger (which would later become Genesee Memorial Hospital).

BUSY ON LARGE FACTORIES & NEW CULTURAL FACILITIES

“Local Union No. 948 is alive, alert, awake and enthusiastic about life.”

With employment conditions much improved for Local 948 into the 1950s, Brother Duncan was able to unabashedly trumpet those words in the July 1951 I.B.E.W. *Journal*. By that time, all of the local's members were working and the local was hosting a few traveling I.B.E.W. brothers as more construction work was taking place in Flint than ever before in the city's history, according to the press secretary's September 1951 *Journal* entry.

RESPONDS IN WAKE OF TORNADO

After a devastating tornado struck north Flint in June 1953, during which several Local 948 members were injured and lost their homes, many members donated their time after work hours to rewire homes destroyed by the storm.

As such, the local had a three-to-five-year building program in place between large jobs at the major plants of A.C. Spark Plug, Chevrolet and the Fisher Body Tank Plant in Grand Blanc, which was being put back into production for the **Korean War** with the help of Local 948 electricians working for Harlan Electric. What's more, Buick City had resumed vehicle production after World War II to become the primary location where all of the company's automobile components were created before being distributed to assembly plants in other cities around the country. Beginning in the early 1950s, John Miller Electric employed many members on several jobs there, including a large addition to the foundry, new buildings No. 36 and No. 43 and a new, primary lead-cable underground system that ran the full length of Division Street.

Wages for the local's journeyman electrical workers at the time were \$2.55 per week for a 40-hour week. Later, all of the local's members went on a two-week-long strike to win a 25-cent-per-hour wage increase.

But in May 1952, the I.B.E.W. International Office took over the business affairs of Local 948 and placed the local under its supervision. The following year, International Representative Ken Favell appointed **Brother Larry Hendrix** to be the local's new business manager. (*Brother Hendrix died of a heart attack the following year and was followed by Brother William Snedden, who held the position until his death in 1962.*)

Meanwhile, strong work for the local continued, with members working for Harlan



LOCAL 948 BUSINESS MANAGERS

(The position of business manager was established in 1929; prior to that, part-time presidents and business agents handled the administrative and organizing duties of the local. The local's very first president was Brother Clayton R. Grobe, who was also a member of the previous I.B.E.W. organization in Flint, Local No. 203, and its first business agent was Brother H. A. Craig.)

A. W. "Fred" Taylor
1929 through 1934

Frank F. Allen
1935 through 1936

Harry Grimes
1937 into 1938

Bert A. Knight
1938 into 1942

Frank F. "Pop" Allen
1942 into 1945

George Ernest
1945 into 1951

A. W. Taylor
1951 into 1952

Larry Hendrix
1952 into 1954

William L. "Bill" Snedden
1954 into 1962

Alger Rutherford
1962 into 1965

Andy Suski
1965 into 1970

Raymond J. Mullaly
1970 into 1980

John E. Bond
1980 into 1992

Charles D. Marshall Jr.
1992 into 2010

Wayne A. Carlson
2010 into 2015

Jay W. Freeman
2015 into 2016

John E. Bond Jr.
2016 into 2019

Gregory Remington
2019 to present

Electric on construction of a new V-8 engine plant for Chevrolet on Van Slyke Road and for John Miller on a new Frame and Stamping Plant for Chevrolet on Bristol Road. Harlan also put members to work on a project to change the tank plant to a stamping plant for Fisher Body, while Hall Electric was wiring new buildings at A.C. Spark Plug with Local 948 men.

"Jobs required many more men to do the electrical work than they do now," Brother Nichols explained in his 1994 narrative of the local's first 75 years. "Our members made up, tagged and installed all wire harness, wired all presses, conveyors and assembly lines and did the final checkout before equipment was turned over to the owner. We cut and threaded all rods; if you needed a piece of all thread you made it. We wired most fixtures before hanging them."

Then in 1953, Local 948 signatory contractor John Miller Electric wired the new Fisher Body **Ternstedt Division Coldwater Road Plant** in Genesee Township that would manufacture body hardware. "When electric furnaces, die cast machines and palters were installed at Ternstedt, our members cut, bent, drilled or punched and plated the joints on all the copper bus bar installed," Brother Nichols further recounted. "At the time, the price of copper was so high that all copper scraps including shavings and sawdust were kept under lock and key."

When many of those projects were completed, employment slowed dramatically into 1956. During those "slack" periods, many members went to work on skilled trades in the General Motors plants, with most remaining in the plants and only a few of those keeping up their membership in the I.B.E.W., according to Brother Nichols. "Consequently, General Motors has obtained a lot of good journeyman wiremen trained by the local," he stated.

But late that year, new, good jobs began to employ members and even some travelers, including a new City Hall, some college buildings at the new **University of Michigan**



Flint Campus, and several industrial jobs. Later in the decade, as work remained strong, Local 948 members could be found wiring the new **Longway Planetarium** for Harlan Electric at the city's new Cultural Center; the new **Flint Public Library** on Court Street for John Miller that would open in 1958; and the new **Bower Theater** for **Motor City Electric**; as well as several other prominent projects.

At the time, a contract with the local's employing contractors of the **National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA)** provided the local's journeyman wiremen with a wage scale of \$3.55 per hour from mid-1956 to mid-1957. It also called for first-year apprentices to earn 50 percent of that scale; second-year apprentices 60 percent; third-year apprentices 75 percent; and fourth-year apprentices 85 percent.

ENDING A HALF-CENTURY ON SEVERAL HIGH NOTES

Another new contract raised the Local 948 journeyman wage scale to \$4.05 per hour on May 1, 1960, for the ensuing year.

But the sustained good times for the local as it entered and moved through the early 1960s were again marred by the death of a business manager when Brother Snedden passed away on March 30, 1962. The local's Executive Board appointed **Brother Alger Rutherford** to take his place for the position in which Brother Rutherford would serve into 1965. *(At the time of his death, Brother Snedden's father was a retired member of the I.B.E.W. and his son, Jim, was also a member of the union.)*

Throughout that year and well into 1965, however, all of the local's members were being put to work within the local's jurisdiction, and "quite a few" were earning overtime, the local reported in the November 1962 I.B.E.W. *Journal*. Brothers traveling from Bay City, Saginaw, Alpena, Sault Ste. Marie and various other locals across the state were also working in the local's area during the balance of the first half of the decade.

Propping up the favorable conditions was a large job under construction at the Buick plant, an addition to the Chevrolet Assembly Plant and another addition to the Fisher Body No. 2 Plant. What's more, by early 1963, construction





FIRST RETIREMENT PARTY

Local 948 held its first-ever retirement party in 1964 at the Industrial Mutual Association Auditorium Annex at 815 East 2nd Avenue in Flint. The event to celebrate the local's retirees featured a 15-piece orchestra and a buffet dinner catered by Home Dairy.

on school jobs, a new nurses' home, shopping centers and work on the Cultural Center were all underway in the Flint area.

Nearly two years later, the local was still able to report in the December 1965 I.B.E.W. *Journal*, "There are still a lot of G.M. plants expanding, along with shopping centers, schools and small commercial work, all going up at the same time." The full employment continued, for the most part, throughout 1966 and 1967 as well.

A new, two-year contract with NECA provided the local's journeymen with a base pay of \$5.20 per hour effective May 1, 1966, for the first year. The wage increased to \$5.39 per hour beginning May 1, 1967, for the second year of the pact.

The late 1960s were highlighted by more large jobs in the jurisdiction that employed Local 948 members. Those included a new primary system installed at Chevrolet Manufacturing by members working for John Miller Electric to replace the old, lead underground system; a new Buick Motor Division administration building (which required the largest electrical contract that had ever been awarded to a local electrical contracting firm) and an addition to McLaren Hospital by **Franklin Electric**; an addition on Fisher Body Plant 2 and the A.C. Plant on Longway Boulevard by **Universal Electric**; and additions to the Chevrolet Engine Plant and Metal Fabrication Plant by Harlan Electric.

Several sizeable commercial jobs completed during those years were also wired by the local's members. Union electricians working for **Daylite Electric** wired **Eastland Mall** (later the Courtland Center) and the 19-story **Genesee Towers Office Building**, the city's tallest structure when it was completed in 1970; members employed by **Newkirk Electric** wired additions to **St. Joseph Hospital**; and Local 948 electricians working for **Weinstein Electric** wired the **Genesee Valley Mall**.



Whiting Auditorium in Flint was one of the many projects Local 948 worked on in the city over the years.



In a watershed moment for the local, contract negotiations with its employing N.E.C.A. contractors in 1967 gained the Local 948 membership important new healthcare and retirement fringe benefits when the local bargained to become participants in the **Michigan Electrical Employees' Pension Fund** and the **Michigan Electrical Employees Health and Welfare Fund**. As a condition of that contract, the employers agreed to pay 15 cents per hour worked by each member into each plan.

"Over the years, the hourly contributions have been increased and both plans are very successful," Brother Nichols shared in his 75-year account of the local. "The Health and Welfare Plan has been a financial life-saver for many of our members, and members retiring under the Pension Plan today are receiving benefits second to none in the area."

With benefits finally in place and work continuing to provide abundant manhours, Local 948 celebrated its **50th anniversary** with a gala dinner-dance in spring 1969 that was attended by about 500 members and guests. "In general, a good time was had by all," **Press Secretary Richard D. Hurrell** declared in the August 1969 I.B.E.W. *Journal*. "We are now looking forward to another 50 years of progress in organized labor in Flint."

TAKING ON JOB LOSSES & THE NON-UNION INCURSION

With completion of the Buick office building, the Eastland Mall after 200,000 electrical manhours of work and Genesee Towers in 1970, coupled with a strike by G.M. workers at the company's local plants, the work outlook for Local 948 moving into the 1970s was bleak. In fact, employment would be consistently poor for the local well into the second half of the decade, during which more than 100 members would be on the out-of-work "bench" at various times.

"The situation here is very poor for new construction," **Press Secretary Hugh Rousseau** announced in the March 1971 I.B.E.W. *Journal*, and we have heavy unemployment."

To make matters worse, non-union contractors were entering the local's jurisdiction at an alarming rate. In one instance in 1971, the local engaged in a fight at state and local levels against an anti-union Associated Builders and Contractors electrical company that was paying substandard wages and benefits in the area, while members also picketed the contractor's jobsite.

The local was able to secure a new, two-year contract beginning June 1, 1970, for a \$7.12 per hour journeyman wage the first six months that was increased to \$7.57 beginning December 1 for the next six months, and for the second year beginning June 1, 1972, the scale was raised to \$8.57 per hour. Contractors would also pay an additional 15 cents per hour worked into the local's pension plan and 30

LOCAL 948 TRADE CLASSIFICATIONS

Local 948 was chartered on May 19, 1919, as a "mixed" inside wiremen and outside linemen local. Its trade classifications have changed several times throughout the years:

Inside, Outside

May 19, 1919 – May 19, 1949

Inside, Outside, Electrical Manufacturing

May 19, 1949 – September 5, 1956

Inside, Electrical Manufacturing

September 5, 1956 – 1971

Inside, Electrical Manufacturing, Sound and Public Address, Radio-Television Service

1971 – October 13, 1976

Inside, Electrical Manufacturing, Sound and Public Address, Radio-Television Service, Cable Television

October 13, 1976 – present



APPRENTICE AWARDED SILVER STAR

Local 948 apprentice Joel E. Graves received the Silver Star in 1972 for gallantry in action while serving as a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. He also received two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V" for heroic action and the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in combat.



The award citation states that Brother Graves, while a radio operator engaged in a search-and-clear operation on May 3, 1969, and under heavy enemy fire, rallied his companions and fearlessly led an aggressive attack against the enemy position, killing one of the hostile soldiers during the assault. Although seriously wounded in the arm, Brother Graves, shouting encouragement to his comrades, "boldly plunged into the jungle growth where, in a fierce firefight at close quarters, he killed a second hostile soldier and captured a third."

cents per hour into the local's insurance plan as a condition of the agreement.

But the completion of the \$7-million, three-story **Northern High School** in Flint in 1971 signaled additional cuts in manhours for the local. Conversely, a new steam plant at Buick, a \$12-million addition to McLaren Hospital and a Consumers Power Company Service Center in Fenton, which included construction of office, storage and warehouse buildings, provided needed respites from the weak work situation into mid-1972.

The **Flint Building Trades Council**, with which Local 948 was affiliated, turned a non-union, \$5-million addition project for the **Sheraton Motor Inn** in Flint late that year, which put an all-union workforce on the job.

However, into the spring of 1973, about 90 Local 948 members were out of work, and later that fall, more than 100 were on the local's bench. Members who were able

traveled to other locals in Ann Arbor and Bay City for jobs, but at home for the next three years, poor employment conditions remained – with a large addition to Hurley Hospital and construction of the University of Michigan downtown Flint campus' first building, the **Class Room Office Building**, and Central Energy Plant, which were wired under Harlan Electric and Weinstein Electric, respectively, providing some relief beginning in late 1974.

The work picture finally cleared up in the summer of 1977 with a changeover at the General Motors facility to produce new-model automobiles that even employed some travelers. But while the short-lived job was completed that August, other smaller jobs took up the slack and the local's bench remained relatively clear well into 1978.

Meanwhile, the Labor Temple Association sold the local's union hall in late 1977 – putting the local into a rented building until it could afford to purchase or build a hall of its own (which would not come about until 1980).



Local 948 Business Manager Raymond J. Mullaly (right) and the business manager of Ann Arbor I.B.E.W. Local 252 pose with the traveling winner's plaque at the annual softball game between the two locals, circa 1980.



MINORITIES, WOMEN BROKE GROUND

Local 948 brother Bill Saines was the first black member to graduate from the local's apprenticeship program and become a journeyman electrician. After returning from the Vietnam War, he joined the local in 1972 and retired in 2008, before which he served as the local's treasurer for 10 years.

Local 948 sisters Michelle Green and Renee Bracy were the first female members to "top out" when they were two of only 13 to graduate from their apprenticeship class of 21 initial apprentices.



The annual softball game between Flint and Ann Arbor I.B.E.W. locals, circa 1980.

As the difficult decade was nearing its conclusion, work picked up dramatically for Local 948 in early 1979. By that time, all of the local's members were employed thanks in large part to jobs at the G.M. plants and Hurley Hospital, a large addition to Genesee Valley mall and several smaller commercial jobs.

A NEW HALL, A FIRST STRIKE & HIGHS, LOWS OF THE '80s

Over the years leading up to the 1980s, union electricians had been losing work that was traditionally performed by I.B.E.W. members because of new technologies. "Production lines arriving at General Motors plants were coming in practically pre-wired, square duct wireways were pre-assembled, wire harnesses were cut to length and tagged. Providing power feeders to these units was our biggest job," Brother Nichols described in his Local 948 history. "Conveyors were coming in sometimes with limit switches, solenoids and motors attached. Lighting fixtures sometimes completely wired and in some cases pre-lamped. Modular building sections arrive pre-wired. Ladders, picks and scaffolds have been replaced by condors, electric and gasoline drive hoists and many cordless tools."

Consequently, the manhours that were available to the local's members for much of

that work had been greatly reduced as Local 948 entered the decade.

But the local's work situation held steady with full employment into the summer of 1980, during which time the local also fully moved into its new – and current – **I.B.E.W. Local 948** Union Hall on West Hill Road in Flint. Work at the time included projects at the G.M. facility.

However, after the local's contract with its employing NECA contractors expired on June 1, 1980, and no new agreement had been bargained as the two sides disagreed over a new wage scale and fringe-benefit contributions, **Local 948 went on its first**



Local 948 with the winner's plaque of the annual softball game between Flint and Ann Arbor I.B.E.W. locals, circa 1980.



Members of Local 948 participate in a political protest by the Building Trades in the Michigan state capital of Lansing in 1998.



and only strike against the Flint Division, Michigan Chapter, NECA on June 15, 1980, and its first sanctioned strike since 1936. The work stoppage and picketing on all union construction work in Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee counties by the local's nearly 300 members lasted more than two months before a settlement on a new, two-year contract was reached on August 19.

RETIRES CLUB FORMED

A group of Local 948 retirees formed the Local 948 Retirees Club and received its charter from the I.B.E.W. International Office in 1982. With 30 active members, the club initially held its monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month and met informally every Monday morning. Soon after organizing, the club began planning an annual picnic and Christmas Party, and for many years, the Retirees Club has provided lawn-care service for the grounds around the local's union hall.

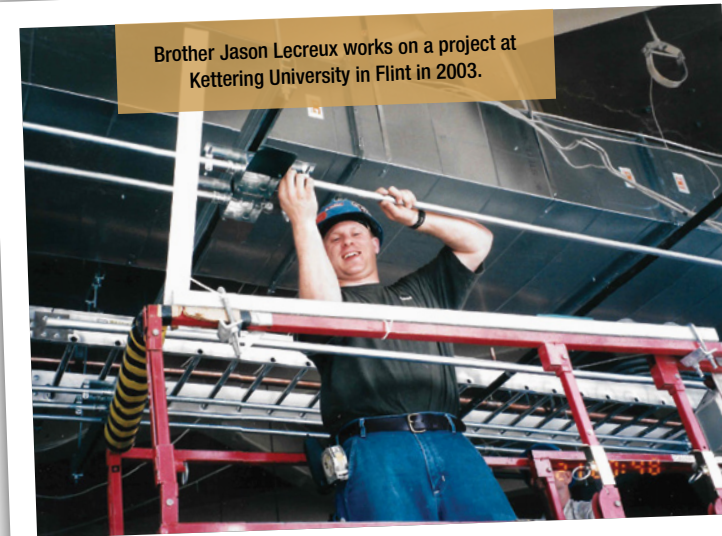
The Local 948 electrical workers that week returned to jobs that included the new **Hyatt Regency Hotel** in downtown Flint, renovation of the old **Doyle-Ryder Elementary School**, model changeovers for Suburbans and Blazers at the Chevrolet Truck Plant and construction at other G.M. plants. According to an article in the August 21 *Flint Journal*, about 3,000 truck plants were affected by the delays caused by the strike, which also "reached beyond the truck assembly plant to parts-producing plants."

As the country suffered through a recession in 1981 and 1982, the depressed national economy resulted in prolonged unemployment for a large number of Local 948 as automobile sales suffered and Flint's auto industry scaled back work on its plants. In particular, sales for G.M. were down, forcing the company to cutback construction plans – on which the local and the City of Flint, in general, were dependent for work.

By the spring of 1982, about one-third of the local was unemployed. Those who did have jobs during that time were working on the new **Owosso, Michigan, Sewage Plant** in early 1982, among some other projects in the local's jurisdiction.

The slump continued into the next year, affecting the local to the point at which its Building Committee took measures to cut expenses, such as using members for landscaping work around its new union hall. That year, members also delivered food packages to fellow members who were not working for extended periods and were having difficult times during the recession.

Groundbreaking in September 1982 of the Six Flags **AutoWorld** indoor theme park meant jobs for Local 948 in 1983 and early 1984 before the \$80 million attraction opened on July 4, 1984. Several of the local's members



Brother Jason LeCreux works on a project at Kettering University in Flint in 2003.



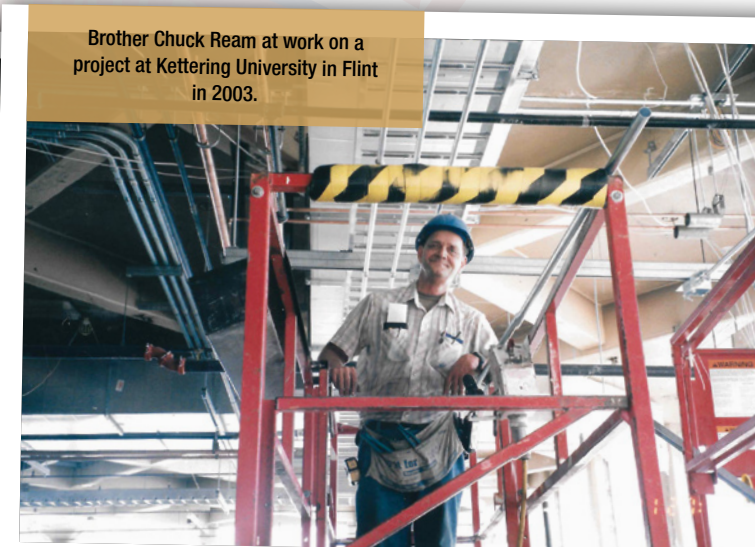
Brother Jody Jones works on a project at Kettering University in Flint in 2003.

were employed by Genesee Electric on projects at AutoWorld, which featured a variety of attractions including a gigantic model of a car engine, a Ferris wheel, an IMAX theater and "a dose of automotive and Flint history." (*AutoWorld closed down for the first time just six months later and would be permanently shuttered in 1994 because of poor attendance.*)

Additionally, construction elsewhere that put members to work included a project at McLaren Hospital under contractor Weinstein Electric in early 1983, construction of the **Memorial Healthcare Hospital** in Owosso, Michigan, that summer and a few jobs at the Chevrolet and Buick facilities. But the Building Trades were so concerned about their future and that of the work at Buick City that they staged a

MORTGAGE-BURNING PARTY

Local 948 celebrated the final mortgage payment on its then-modern union-hall building at 1251 West Hill Road with a mortgage-burning party held at its four-acre property on July 27, 1985. The picnic for members and their families and friends featured a pig roast, food, refreshments and games for children and adults.



Brother Chuck Ream at work on a project at Kettering University in Flint in 2003.

1,000-tradesmen-strong rally that summer at the company's Administration Building at which the union electricians outnumbered any other craft by a 2-to-1 margin.

Work was stable through 1984 and into 1985, during which time Local 948 also hosted some travelers on projects at Buick City that were "rolling along" with union electricians, as **Press Secretary Raymond Svejara** announced in the June 1985 I.B.E.W. *Journal* – including a large job under John Miller Electric. Other jobs providing manhours for the local included work at A.C. Delco under Universal Electric, a warehouse for A.C. under Franklin Electric, an addition to the Chevrolet V-8 engine plant and an addition to the truck plant.



Local 948's business manager, Executive Board, training director and organizer stand with the Truck and Bus Local 948 Executive Board following the assembly of the local's new truck in 2018. INSET: Business Manager John Bond Jr. looks over the new truck during assembly.



The union electricians completed the new Buick City facility in 1985 alongside many different tradesmen and in a relatively short amount of time. Afterwards, Brother Svejara boasted in the January 1986 I.B.E.W. *Journal*:

"Buick City is one of the most modern plants in the world today; and because of the new design and technology, the I.B.E.W. played a far larger role in the building of it than any other trade."

Some of the larger jobs that also employed Local 948 members during that time included a student activity and science building on the University of Michigan Flint Campus under Franklin Electric and the \$20-million **Water Street Pavilion** festival marketplace under Hammer & Smith that opened in 1985.

Regardless of the local's much-improved condition, **Business Manager John Bond** during 1985 cautioned the membership that it must "police the jurisdiction for non-union jobs" – in particular, he warned that the local should not overlook "smaller" jobs during

the time of good employment. Subsequently, commercial work and small industrial work would also help sustain the local following the completion of the Buick City project for the remainder of the decade.

Seemingly on cue, the City of Flint fell on hard times again during the late 1980s as employment dried up, sparked by massive auto-industry layoffs beginning in the mid-1980s and continuing through the next decade. During that time, General Motors alone laid off some 30,000 autoworkers in Flint and shut down several factories that had been primary employers of Local 948.

Regardless, in 1989, Local 948 was able to ratify a new, two-year agreement for its inside wiremen that would take the local into the next decade.



UTILIZING COMET, SALTING TO POWER INTO NEW MILLENNIUM

Throughout the majority of the 1990s, work for Local 948 was hit and miss. For instance, while several members were employed on a massive remodel of Imlay City's **Borland School** in 1992, the local reported in that year's December I.B.E.W. *Journal* that work in its jurisdiction "has not developed as expected this year." Then when conditions in the area improved in mid-1993 to the point where the local was enjoying full employment, it was only for a brief time as two large projects that had been going for two years, a seven-story tower addition for McLaren Hospital and a new, 94,000-square-foot terminal at **Bishop International Airport**, were completed soon after.

"Presently the work picture is spotty, but we are optimistic for the coming year," **Press Secretary Jack D. Williams** announced in the January 1994 I.B.E.W. *Journal* – a theme that would run throughout the remainder of the decade and into the new "Y2K" millennium. Nevertheless, other key projects on which the local worked during the balance of the 1990s included a large addition to the Genesee Valley Mall that featured two new anchor stores,

Montgomery Ward and Mervyn's, and a new **Thompson Library** building on the University of Michigan Flint Campus under contractor **Universal Systems**.

Local 948 members would also again find themselves traveling at times for jobs. With work slow during the last quarter of 1993, for example, sister I.B.E.W. locals such as **Local No. 13** of Burlington, Iowa, and **Local No. 183** of Lexington, Kentucky, hosted several Flint out-of-town members who were able to secure employment within those jurisdictions.

But during the early 1990s, a large portion of the local's energies turned toward **organizing** non-union workers and contractors, even though the local enjoyed a high percentage of union work within its jurisdiction at the time. As such, many of the local's members participated in the numerous **COMET (Construction Organizing Membership Education Training)** sessions it provided in 1992 and 1993, and members also joined other Building Trades unions in the area in picketing the non-union Wal-Mart and Sam's Warehouse sites in the local's jurisdiction that year.

Additionally, the local began to employ "salting" tactics at times to organize, whereby

Local 948 members join other Building Trades craftspeople in a protest picket at a non-union jobsite in 2018.





THREE BROTHERS LOST LIVES ON PROJECT

Local 948 brothers Troy Vincke, 19 years old, Mark Wickham, 37, and Harm "Archie" Gillean, 33, were killed on August 24, 1998, when they were crushed by a 30-foot cinder-block wall that collapsed at the construction site of the new auditorium for Flushing High School, on which the three electricians were working. A fourth construction worker, heat-and-cooling employee Larry Bearup, also lost his life, while two others were injured.

The three Local 948 members were employed for the project by contractor Newkirk Electric Associates. Brother Gillean, a graduate of the high school, was to be married the following Saturday, according to the August 25, 1998, *Detroit Free Press*. The following year, Brother Vincke's family began the Troy A. Vincke Scholarship for New Lothrop, Michigan, students interested in studying the construction trades.

The fatal construction site had not been inspected for structural soundness as public school construction sites were exempt from state or local structural inspections under a 1937 state law, the *Free Press* reported on August 26. A Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration regional supervisor told that day's Port Huron *Times Herald* that given the "relative newness of the project, which started in May, shorthanded inspectors had not gotten to the site."

The Department of Consumer and Industry Services later said it may never know the exact cause of the collapse "because there were so many possible factors at the site," the *Times Herald* reported on February 4, 1999. According to the newspaper, the wall was not properly braced when it fell, while "high winds, inadequate safety training and the lack of danger signs or hard hats may have also played a role in the collapse."

A plaque affixed to a rock outside of the local's union hall commemorates its three deceased brothers.



the membership also continued to aggressively organize within the local's tri-county area.

Work remained good throughout 1995 and into the second half of the decade, with members employed on G.M. jobs but scuffling to get jobs at Buick City. Other projects that employed the local's members during that time included construction of a new **Flint/Genesee Job Corps Center** that would open in 1998 and work at St. Joseph Hospital.

Before the end of the decade, the century and the millennium, work slowed during the late 1990s as the local waited on projects to begin at G.M. and a truck plant update to produce 860-line mid-size commercial trucks that did not employ members until 1999. But the local's collective-bargaining agreement with NECA raised the local's journeyman wage scale from \$26.63 to \$27.48 per hour on June 1, 1998, and with hourly fringe benefit contributions of \$2.85 for pensions, \$2.87 for annuity and \$2.60 for insurance, the local's total pay package was boosted to \$35.80 per hour for the coming year.

members would work non-union projects and attempt to recruit non-union workers on those jobs into the union.

In 1994, many of the local's more-than-300-member labor force were able to work on a new line to produce crew-cab pickup trucks at the Chevrolet plant under contractors Newkirk Electric and Universal Systems. Meanwhile,



GAINING A HEAD OF STEAM TO HELP SECURE THE FUTURE

Into Y2K, worked briefly picked back up again in Michigan before entering a period of sluggish construction activity in 2001. Employment for the local was good again in 2002 and would remain healthy through 2006, with mostly commercial and G.M. maintenance projects providing manhours, although the local occasionally had more than 100 men on its bench into 2005. Substantial jobs that employed members during that time included construction of a **Home Depot** (right across the street from the local's union hall) and work at Kettering University on its **C. S. Mott Engineering and Science Center** in 2003 and 2004.

By the end of that year, employment had continued improving and the local was benefiting from a large amount of short-term and maintenance work. By mid-2005, work on schools and the G.M. engine plant were also primary sources of employment, as were jobs in other I.B.E.W. locations such as Lansing and Ann Arbor for members who would travel.

Over the next several years into 2012, employment fluctuated as it often does in the construction industry, and especially as the region's automotive industry continued to sputter. (*Onetime reliable employment source Buick City would close its doors in 2010*). As such, work was slow for the local beginning in 2007 and through 2011, although a two-year Hemlock Semiconductor project in the jurisdiction of Saginaw I.B.E.W. **Local No. 557** put many Flint electricians to work in 2008 and 2009.

During those slow times, the local's membership dipped from 432 at one point in 2008 down to 380 in 2012.

True to form, however, the local stepped up for the benefit of its members when times were tough. In one particular instance in June 2008, when a quarter of its member electrical workers were unemployed and an out-of-town, non-union contractor was hired to wire the new Madison Academy on Torrey Road in Flint, the local's members picketed the construction site to let the public know that local workers

Continued after following spread.



Swearing in new Local 948 members in 2018.



TRAINING SKILLED ELECTRICAL

Since the time it was chartered in 1919, Local 948 has trained its new members through apprenticeships, with which the local's trainees work with experienced journeyman electrical workers to learn the trade. In an effort to improve that training system, the local established its first [Educational Committee](#) in 1928 to help established standards of apprenticeships.

To help develop its training system, in 1946 the local and its employing contractors established the [Flint Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Committee](#) (J.A.C.) to oversee its apprentice education and registered it with the U.S. Department of Labor's National Apprenticeship Program on October 9. Soon after,

FIRST SAFETY COURSE OPEN TO ALL

Local 948 hosted an inaugural [construction safety course](#) in early 1971 in a county-wide program that was organized by multiple companies and organizations. The 10-week course, for which the Flint Board of Education supplied classrooms and instructional aides, was open to all construction workers and covered the hazards of clothing, cutting and welding, fumes, excavations and shoring, scaffolds, ladders, ramps, heavy equipment, rigging, handling of material, fire-fighting, temporary power and power hand tools.



Flint/Saginaw Electrical J.A.T.C. Electrical Training Center at 5209 Exchange Drive in Flint.



WORKERS REMAINS A PRIORITY

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 National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and would become the [Electrical Training Alliance](#) in July 2014, incorporating structured classroom study into the training.

Local 948 and the J.A.C. first held its training classes in a former horse barn that was part of the Flint Community Junior College (now Charles Stewart Mott Community College) on land donated to the school by the Charles Stewart Mott Family. *(Mott was a co-founder of General Motors and a generous philanthropist to and mayor of the City of Flint).* Since then, training and classes have been held at a strip mall in Flint; the new [Flint Building Trades Educational Center](#) that opened in 1969 with funds provided by the Mott Foundation and the State of Michigan; [Baker College](#) in Flint; and at the J.A.C.'s own [Training Center](#) at 5190 Exchange Drive in Flint — where it is located as the local celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2019.

Along the way, in 2013, the Flint J.A.C. merged with its counterpart in nearby Saginaw to form the [Flint/Saginaw Electrical Joint Apprentice and Training Committee](#) (J.A.T.C.) to serve members of Local 948 and I.B.E.W. Local 557 of Saginaw. The J.A.T.C. apprenticeship has developed into a five-year program that allows apprentices to attend class twice a month at the training center and work with electrical contractors. Apprentices are required to complete 900 hours of classwork and 8,000 work hours as they earn a wage and receive benefits while working in the trade and attending classes to become a highly skilled electrical journeyman.



APPRENTICES EARN BUSINESS PLAN HONORS

In early 2019, three fourth-year electrical apprentices enrolled in the Flint/Saginaw Electrical J.A.T.C. program created a business plan for hypothetical-contractor Mid-Michigan Electrical, LLC, as part of the [2019 Business Startup Challenge](#) sponsored by ELECTRI International. Apprentices [Kyle Chappelle](#), [Jalene Ewell](#) and [Crystal Poore](#) exceeded all of the stipulations in the contest rules and then some, an article in the June 2019 [NECA Electrical Contractor](#) magazine stated.

Part of the unique plan calls for Mid-Michigan to pay a commission to other electrical contractors to provide their unwanted sales leads to the company.

Brothers Chappelle and Ewell and Sister Poore each agreed that collaborating on the business plan was a beneficial educational complement to their J.A.T.C. course work. For example, the trio learned about a wide range of realities in the contracting business while formulating the plan.

J.A.T.C. Training Director [Rick Mason](#) said he was proud of their performance and accomplishment.



Flint-Saginaw Electrical J.A.T.C. apprentices (left to right) [Jalene Ewell](#), [Crystal Poore](#) and [Kyle Chappelle](#) accept the award for ELECTRI International's 2019 Business Startup Challenge from ELECTRI Executive Director [Joey Shorter](#). *(Photo courtesy of NECA.)*



Local 948 Business Manager Greg Remington accepts the award for the local's 100-percent participation in the 2018 I.B.E.W. Political Action Committee from I.B.E.W. International General President Lonnie Stephenson (left) and International Secretary-Treasurer Kenneth Cooper (right).

needed those jobs. "We could have done this job, but we never got a shot at it," Local 948 **Business Agent Wayne Carlson** told the June 14 *Flint Journal* after the local's signatory contractors were not afforded the opportunity to bid on the project.

"We fight the same issues and it gets so frustrating when you see a non-local company come in," Local 948 **Brother James Dotson** said in the newspaper. "Flint and this county are so devastated right now."

Nearly six years later, during which time the local enjoyed gainful times but also faced several other challenges, its electricians were manning pickets outside the University of Michigan-Flint campus in February 2014 to protest the use of an electrical subcontractor from outside Genesee County on a \$22-million renovation of the **William R. Murchie Science Building**, one of the largest projects at the campus in more than a decade. The university's

general contractor for the project bypassed local companies and picked an electrical subcontractor to perform the building's electrical work, according to the February 25 *Flint Journal*.

"The Building Trades Council in this area built this campus," Local 948 **Business Agent Jay Freeman** reminded the newspaper. "We have the people that can do that and we don't need to go that far away to get people here to do our work. We're out here fighting for our jobs."

Just a few years later, I.B.E.W. signatory contractor Weinstein Electric was awarded the electrical work for a massive, \$39-million expansion of the Murchie Science Building that began in 2018 and is scheduled to be completed in 2021.

But prior to that, work and employment picked up around the state beginning in 2012, ushering in the start of a steady period of work and growth for the local's membership that would extend to the local's 100th anniversary in 2019. Members working for Goyette Mechanical helped remodel the old Michigan School for the Deaf into the new **Luke M. Powers Catholic High School** in 2012, and then in 2013, Bay City Local 692 hosted many Local 948 members for work on a large project at the **Dan E. Karn Generating Plant**.

More work came in 2014 with the start of a three-phase retool of the engine plant in Flint and a new paint shop for heavy-duty GMC/Chevrolet trucks, which ran through 2015 and peaked at more than 200 electrical workers from all over the country. That year, as employment remained steady, the local's membership climbed back up to 415 total members.

Another one of the several signature projects on which many members worked during that time was the more-than 250-acre,



200,000-panel **DTE Energy Solar Park** in Lapeer, Michigan, under electrical contractor **J. Ranck Electric** in 2016 – which the union electricians installed through good weather and bad to meet the owner's deadline. Once completed in the fall of 2017, the facility was the state's largest utility-owned solar field.

With G.M. work for upgrades to its assembly lines still going strong and construction of a new body shop underway next to the heavy-duty truck paint shop, over 600 I.B.E.W. members were working within the Local 948 jurisdiction at one point that year. During that time, several of the local's electricians also helped remodel the historic **Capitol Theater** in downtown Flint, which included installation of a 1940s-area marquee utilizing all-LED lighting and electronic attraction boards before the theater reopened in December 2017.

In 2018, work at G.M. and commercial projects – and, subsequently, employment – around the local's jurisdiction remained robust. It was further bolstered that year with construction of the **Lear Corporation** seat manufacturing plant on 30 acres of the former Buick City site with the electrical work contracted to Weinstein Electric.

Into Local 948's 100th anniversary year, its electrical workers and technicians continued to enjoy positive conditions as they worked on a multitude of projects that included a remodel of the **Sloan Museum** in downtown Flint under Newkirk Electric. Additional recent projects employing the local's members also included Magna Electronics in Grand Blanc under Weinstein Electric; the new, 1.1-million-square-foot **Project Fusion** industrial facility wired under Halligan Electric; remodel of the



The Local 948 softball team that won the 2018 Dollars Against Diabetes (D.A.D.'s) Day "Consolation Tournament" for the 29th All-Trades Softball Tournament hosted by the Michigan Building Trades in Lansing.



POLITICAL ACTIVITY EARNS AWARD

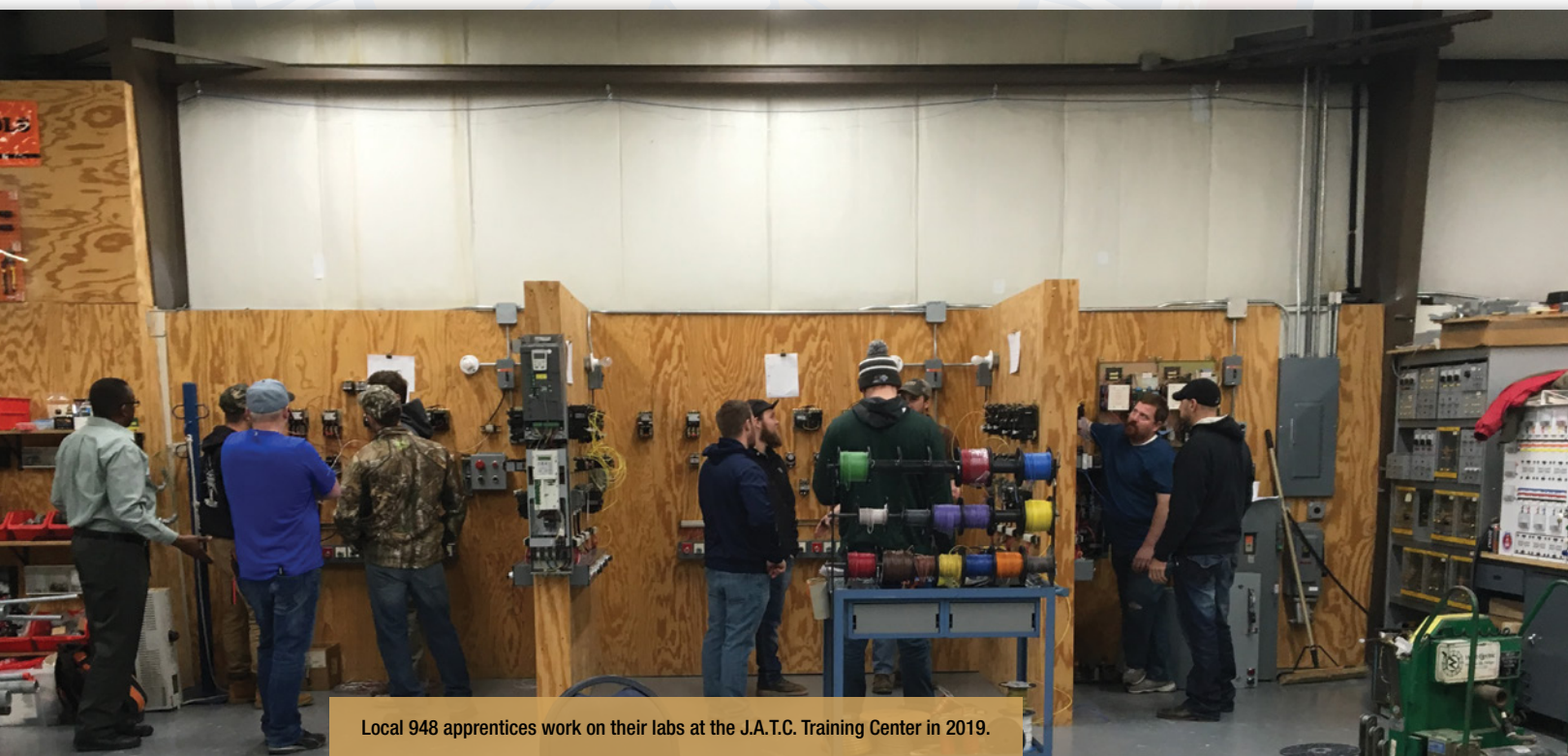
Local 948 received the 2018 I.B.E.W. Political Achievement Award in recognition of being the "most outstanding local union" for per-member political contributions in the I.B.E.W. Sixth District.

downtown Hilton under **Walker Electric**; solar installations for the **Flushing Community Schools District**; and the **Third Street Project** mixed-use development in Flint.

At the first century mark since being chartered in 1919, I.B.E.W. Local 948 represents about 485 member inside wiremen, sound & communication workers and apprentices in Michigan's Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee counties and Millington Township. At its core, the local's safety and training standards have advanced throughout the years to become the very best in the electrical-construction industry, allowing the local to keep its members up to

date on the most current and safest industry practices and procedures.

Local 948 also practices the **I.B.E.W. Code of Excellence**, a program designed to bring out the best in its construction members and demonstrate to customers that I.B.E.W. members exercise safe and productive work practices, perform the highest quality and quantity of work; and utilize their skills and abilities to their maximum potential. With those values and principles in place, the local is poised to be the industry leader into its next 100 years. ■



Local 948 apprentices work on their labs at the J.A.T.C. Training Center in 2019.



**CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 948 ON YOUR
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