

100 Years of Service and Solidarity



**COMMEMORATIVE
HISTORY**





The Officers and Members
of
Insulators Local No. 5
Southern California
Congratulate Local 28
on
100 Years of Service and Solidarity!

Best Wishes for a Prosperous Future!

Silver SPONSOR

Congratulations Local #28 ~ 100 Years ~

The International Officers and General Executive Board members of the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers extend congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of your centennial celebration. We join with you in honoring all members of Local 28, both past and present, for their hard work and dedication to the trade. Because of their commitment, working families have been ensured a better future.

We wish you the very best in your next
century of service.



JAMES P. McCOURT
General President

GREGORY T. REVARD
General Secretary-Treasurer

INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

William Mahoney
Doug Gamble
Mark Selby

Kenneth Schneider
Terry Larkin
Vince Engel
Timothy Keane

Fred DeMartino
Fred Clare
Patrick Barron

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Robert Hall

Tom Haun

John Conroy

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO, Building and Construction Trades Department,
Metal Trades Department and Canadian Labour Congress



Heat and Frost Insulators Local No. 28 100th Anniversary Celebration!

Saturday, August 26, 2017
1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

American Legion Post 161 Hall - Arvada
6230 West 60th Avenue, Arvada, Colorado

Social Time/Cocktails 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Dinner and Program 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(Sit-down meal of Chicken and Beef)
Music and Dancing 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

LASTING RELATIONSHIPS, UNMATCHED SKILLS ARE OUR 100-YEAR LEGACY

I would like to sincerely congratulate all current and past members of Heat and Frost Insulators Local No. 28 of Denver, Colorado, for 100 years of Brotherhood and Solidarity.

We all know the challenges that we and the members before us have encountered throughout the span of 100 years while fighting for workers' rights in our industry. I feel fortunate to have been a part of it and look forward to another 100 years for all of our members to come.

The quality and superior craftsmanship of the Brothers and Sisters who have stood strong throughout the years is remarkable, thanks in large part to our training programs and commitment to our industry.

What's more, the friendships I have formed throughout my time with the union are irreplaceable.

Thank you and keep standing strong, every day.

Kevin Whitesel, Business Manager
Insulators Local 28



This book was proudly produced by

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Insulators Local 28 and Union Histories give special thanks to the following for their contributions to this book:

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Research Assistant: James M. Schrufer
Art Direction: Andy Taucher
Layout & Design: Steven Demanett



The 100-Year History of Insulators Local No. 28

A CENTURY OF SERVING & PROTECTING COLORADO & WYOMING



“Denver Local No. 28, although organized but a few months, is laying a foundation for an organization which I think will prove worthy and successful.”

It had been a long time coming before International Association of Heat & Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers Local No. 28 Secretary J. A. Ahlstrom was able to express those beliefs in a letter in the January 1918 *Asbestos Worker*, the Association’s official publication. In fact, while the insulators were the only unorganized building-trades craft in the city prior to August 1917, it was only because there were not a sufficient amount of men to establish a local and “not because our hearts were not in the right place,” Brother Ahlstrom explained.

But by July 1917, the International Association was able to announce in that month’s *Asbestos Worker* that Denver was, indeed, a location for

a “prospective local.” What’s more, conditions in the trade throughout the country for May, June and July of that year “were very good and with a good prospect,” according to the Association’s Secretary-Treasurer’s Report that was published in that July journal.

Conditions in the city at that time were also prime for its asbestos workers to finally organize. According to a synopsis in the September 4, 1917, *Rocky Mountain News* following the previous day’s Labor Day parade through the city – in which the newly formed Local 28 did not participate – labor leaders believed that “the 57th birthday of Colorado unionism marked the close of the most successful year in labor circles of the world.” The article went



Heat and Frost Insulators Local 28 charter, dated August 31, 1917.

on to report that there were “no idle men in Colorado” and wages and working conditions were “better than ever before.”

In that setting, the International Association chartered Local No. 28 in Denver on August 31, 1917, with seven initial members whose names appeared on the charter:

- J. A. Ahlstrom
- H. I. Lord
- W. Olsford
- C. A. Tuttle
- F. J. Lord
- H. J. Fahringer
- F. B. Fitman

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Meeting every second and fourth Saturday of each month in Room 309 of the American Bank and Trust Building on Larimer Street in downtown Denver, Local 28 set out right away to set itself up for success. To that end, the local almost immediately affiliated with the Denver Building Trades Council, the Denver Labor and Trades Assembly and the Colorado State Federation of Labor (an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor, or A.F.L.).

Brother Ahlstrom was named the local’s first officer, serving as its secretary once it was chartered, and soon after, Brother Tuttle was elected to be the local’s first president – although he was replaced by January 1919 by Brother N. A. West.

The fledgling Local 28 was also enjoying relatively good wages and working conditions by the end of 1917, as member journeymen were earning 62-1/2 cents per hour while working eight-hour weekdays and four-hour Saturdays. Elsewhere, International Association locals in Kansas City, Baltimore, Boston and New York were being paid the same rate while the local in Minneapolis was being paid just 55 cents per hour and working eight-hour Saturdays and the local in Indianapolis was being paid just 50 cents per hour.

INTERNATIONAL ESTABLISHED 114 YEARS AGO

In 1903, Insulators Local No. 1 of St. Louis invited other trades to join it in an affiliation with the newly formed National Building Trades Council of America. The insulation locals that responded met to form a national union at their first convention on July 7, 1903.

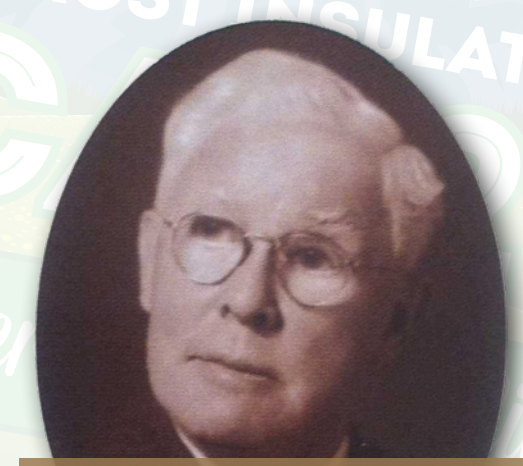
During that meeting, the insulation union’s constitution was drafted and approved, by-laws were adopted, A. J. Kennedy of Chicago was elected the first president of the organization and an assessment of \$1 per member was levied on each local union to pay expenses of the convention.

The following year, the union formally named itself the National Association of Heat, Frost and General Insulators and Asbestos Workers of America. On September 22, 1904, the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) issued a charter designating the Association as a national union. On October 31, 1910, A.F.L. President Samuel Gompers signed the charter of affiliation for the international union to also represent several Canadian locals.

The union became affiliated with the Building and Construction Trades Department of the A.F.L. on July 22, 1938.

During its 2007 Convention, the organization renamed itself the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers.

(Adapted and abridged from the International Association 100-Year History.)



Brother Joseph A. Mullaney, who signed the Local 28 charter as International President of the Association of Heat & Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers — and served in that capacity for 42 years from 1912 to 1954.



The American Bank and Trust Building on Larimer Street in downtown Denver, where Local 28 had its office and held its meetings into the 1940s (by which time the building had been renamed the American Bank Building following the banking company's transformation in the early 1920s).

Hourly wages for Local 28 member insulators rose to 75 cents by April 1919, while its helpers (or apprentices) were earning 43-3/4 cents per hour. Kansas City's union insulators were being paid the same rate, although the scale for journeymen of locals in Baltimore, New York and Philadelphia had increased to 80 cents per hour.

The initiation fee for membership in Local 28 at that time was \$50.

Before the end of the year, the insulators and all other building trades locals in Denver found themselves embroiled in a controversy with contractors over wages. While each of the trades had demanded pay increases in March 1919, the employers claimed at the time that "with business and industrial conditions in the transition stage between wartime and peacetime status (World War II having just ended), it is unreasonable for the building crafts to demand higher pay," the March 12 *Rocky Mountain News* reported.

Just after the building trades marched together in Denver's Labor Day parade on September 1, 1919 – including Local 28, which participated for the first time – the ongoing wage situation escalated that month as the trades threatened to

strike. However, the two sides on September 8 agreed to form a Conciliation Board composed of members of the Denver Building Trades Council and the Master Builders Association to mediate the dispute. Notably, the Board could call upon the Colorado Industrial Commission and an arbiter to help settle differences, and it would eliminate the requirement that either side must provide the Industrial Commission with a 30-day notice of a strike or lockout.

Eventually, Local 28's scale was boosted to 81-1/2 cents per hour. But by October 15, 1919, the insulators, along with Operative Plasterers Local 32 and Horseshoers Local 29, were again seeking wage increases, with Local 28 asking for a hike to \$1 per hour.

Then the following year in early April 1920, 14 of the city's building trades locals, including Local 28, were again demanding another raise in pay. The insulators were asking for a scale from \$7 per day to one that was "commensurate with the increase in the cost of living," according to the April 4 *Denver Post*.

The unions' demands were considered by the Conciliation Board, which decided on May 14 that increases would be awarded, including a scale of \$8 per day to the insulators. However, the Board also ruled that the new, one-year agreements would not go into effect until June 1 (a decision for which the carpenters union went out on strike in protest, prompting the Master Builders to file a lawsuit against the Building Trades Council for damages caused by the brief walkout).

Elsewhere, Insulators and Asbestos Workers locals in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Boston, Seattle and Cincinnati had also reached the \$1-per-hour scale by July 1920. The locals in New York City and Buffalo had actually attained a \$1.12-1/2-per-hour rate, while locals in Kansas City, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Baltimore were being paid below \$1.

BATTLING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

International Association of Heat & Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers General President Joseph A. Mullaney visited Local 28 in Denver in late 1920. Brother Mullaney reported in the January 1921 *Asbestos Worker* that his two meetings with the local and a conference with its employers "fully enlightened the trade to the advantages of, and necessity for, joint trade agreements, an international form of which was drafted by your president and left with the trade for near future action."

However, employment conditions throughout Denver dramatically slumped the following year, leaving upwards of 75 percent of the city's 3,500 union construction craftsmen unemployed. Subsequently on February 18, 1921, the Master Builders Association filed notice with the Industrial Commission that it would reduce the wages of all building trades crafts by 20 percent effective March 17. The

contractors claimed the cuts were necessary because of a "decline in the price of all commodities used in the building trades and a reduction in living costs," the February 19 *Rocky Mountain News* reported.

Following hearings before the Commission in mid-March, Local 28 agreed to a \$1-per-day cut from \$8 down to \$7, while all other unions also signed agreements for a reduction of approximately \$1 per day in wages – amounting to 10- to 12-percent cuts – effective April 1, the newspaper reported on March 20, 1921. During testimony to the Commission, contractors indicated that "unless wage cuts are put into effect soon, it will be necessary to establish the open shop in the building industry of Denver."

The fortunes of the construction industry in Denver turned quickly, however, as the number of building permits issued in the city increased dramatically later that year. The *Asbestos Worker* even proclaimed in its

Local 28 members stand in front of their work at a power plant in Denver in late 1923.





The Federal Correctional Institution nearing completion in 1939. (Photos courtesy of Digital Image Collection, Denver Public Library.)

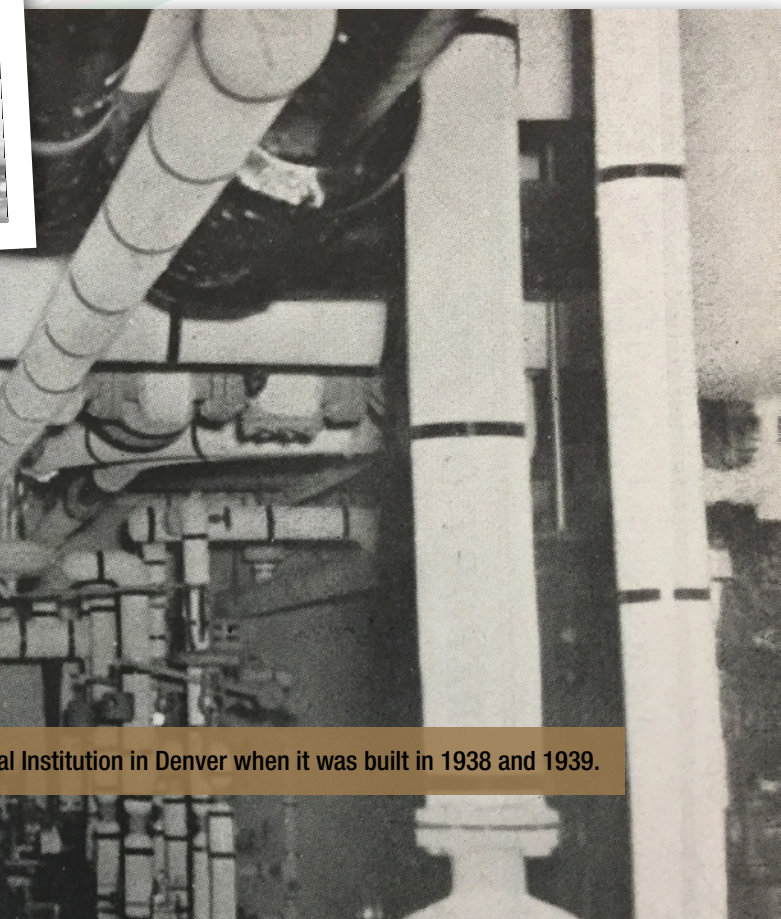
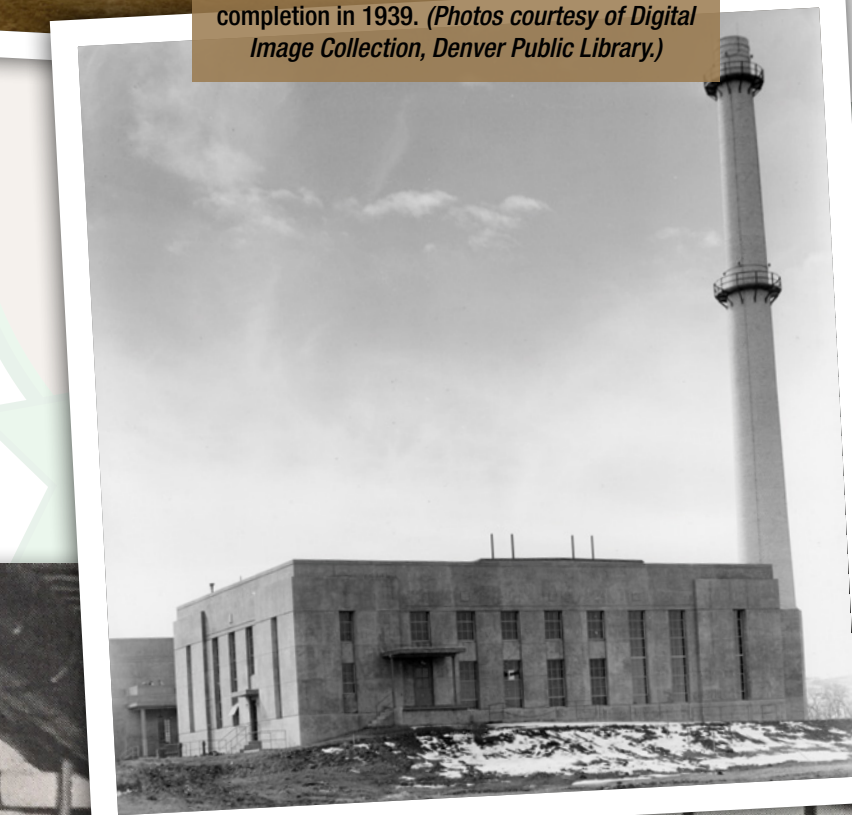
October 1921 issue, “With 453 permits issued in July, an increase of 61 percent over the same amount for 1920, and an estimated value of more than \$740,000, the return of normalcy in the building industry seems to have struck Denver.”

Subsequently, Local 28 signed a new, one-year contract for a wage increase of \$1 per hour for 1923.

Early that summer, President Mullaney paid another visit to Local 28, during which he conferred with the local’s Executive Board and helped provide decisions “on certain local issues affecting the trade.”

But the hardships encountered across the United States during the **Great Depression**, the historic, decade-long, international economic upheaval that began when the stock market crashed in October 1929, were felt nowhere more than in the construction industry.

It was then during the early 1930s that the International Association divided



Local 28 insulation work on systems in the Federal Correctional Institution in Denver when it was built in 1938 and 1939.

locals into regional conferences so that neighboring locals could better work with and assist each other. However, Local 28 did not join the **Western States Conference of Asbestos Workers** (and would not until 1960), most likely because of its relatively small size and isolated geographical location.

(In the two decades to follow, scant information is available on Local 28, as most of the reporting on International Association locals was done through the regional conferences during that time and Local 28 was not a party to the conference assigned to its jurisdiction.)

But Local 28 was active, and International Association President Mullaney even made an extended visit to Denver in mid-October 1937, during which time he attended the international conventions of the Building and Construction Trades Department and the A.F.L. He also met with and advised Local 28 “on certain existing local issues” – while being feted by the local’s entertainment committee with a dinner in Colorado Springs and a “never-to-be-forgotten” automobile ride up Cheyenne Mountain to the Will Rogers “Shrine of the Sun.”

The general president also eagerly reported that Local 28 journeymen were working under a \$1.25 wage rate and the “the seven-hour day” (work days having been shortened to help provide employment to more members during the Depression years).

However the local’s members were still earning \$1.25 per hour in wages in late 1939 and into 1940. While Local 5 of Los Angeles was also being paid that scale, most others were well above it, including New York Local 12 at \$2 per hour, Pittsburgh Local 2 at \$1.67-1/2, St. Louis Local 1 at \$1.62-1/2 and Kansas City Local 27 and Seattle Local 7 at \$1.35.

Following the decade of economic turmoil, into and throughout the 1940s the Denver local moved its meeting places and offices often into

different locations, including the Woodmen of the World Building on Champa Street early in the decade and the Fraternal Building on Glenarm Street by the mid-1940s.

But when America entered the **World War II** in 1941, the nation experienced an economic boom created by the demand to supply the country’s war needs. The construction industry was especially elevated, and asbestos workers in particular were called upon to apply their skills for the war effort. *(Notably, nearly half a world away, asbestos workers played a “crucial role” in reconstruction the U.S. Navy fleet after it was decimated by the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the International Association’s 100-year history points out.)*

Wages for the construction trades generally remained fixed by the U.S. Wage Stabilization Board during the war and immediately afterwards; however, near the war’s end in early 1945, Local 28 mechanics were making \$1.50 per hour.

According to the International Association, after World War II its overall membership reached a pinnacle of just over 23,000 as existing local unions broadened their apprenticeship programs and “opened their doors to new members.” New locals were chartered and the organization was “poised for unprecedented expansion of the nation’s infrastructure in the decades to come.”

So, too, was Local 28 – and it remained a staunch member of the Denver Building and Construction Trades Council to help attain that goal. As such, the insulators joined other building trades locals in April 1947 in a month-long wage dispute that disrupted construction throughout the city after contracts ended April 1 (although all 24 trades still signed their own contracts with individual contractors and subcontractors). Pay increases were not won until May 8, including 17-1/2-cent-per-hour raises for the insulators and most other trades.

TRAINING AT THE FOREFRONT OF LOCAL 28 PRIORITIES

Since its founding in 1917, Insulators Local 28 has focused on training its members to be the industry's best-prepared workforce. Since its earliest days, the local has provided on-the-job training to its apprentices (or "helpers" or "improvers," as they had been called over the years).

To supplement the jobsite learning, the local began a more formal and structured education program in earnest in the 1970s at about the time the local moved to its new union hall on Emerson Street in 1975. From there, a four-year year program featuring classroom and lab work was instituted, with tests given at the end of each year in order for apprentices to advance to the next year – which also came with a higher pay scale.

The local's Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (J.A.T.C.) program began in the late 1980s when contractors began contributing funds into the training curriculum. The J.A.T.C. initially worked with the Emily Griffith Technical College and Denver Public Schools to provide the classroom and lab instruction to supplement on-the-job training.

Today, the local's apprentices are educated through the J.A.T.C.-sponsored, four-year apprenticeship that includes the most current requirements of efficient installation of the latest materials. The program has seen class sizes of between 10 to 40 students per year for the last decade.

With the combination of on-the-job work and J.A.T.C. schooling, Local 28 continues to put forth a training curriculum that prepares its members to perform with the highest quality and production in the field. With the help of journeyman members working as teachers, the apprenticeship has been a success thanks to those members and contractors who understand that the better trained the local is, the stronger the local will be.



Local 28 apprentices practice their craft at the local's J.A.T.C. training facility in Arvada, Colorado, in 2016.



RECOVERING TO MAKE GAINS

Before the end of the 1940s, Local 28 was given jurisdiction over the union insulation and asbestos-working industry in the City of Laramie, Wyoming, and, correspondingly, much of that state – which the local still administers as it celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2017.

By that time, the local had moved its meeting location to the Odd Fellows Temple at 1751 Champa Street in Denver, where the local was gathering every first and third Tuesday of each month. Brother Harvey Z. Lord was president of the local and Brother Jack Tuttle was its business agent and financial secretary as the local entered the 1950s.

Wages that first year of the new decade for Local 28 journeyman insulators and asbestos workers were \$2.25 per hour – a scale that remained below most all other comparable

International Association locals around the country. (Kansas City Local No. 27 was being paid \$2.37-1/2 per hour, for example.)

Just five years later in 1955, however, the Local 28 rate was up to \$3 per hour (while Kansas City was up to \$3.05). What's more, the Denver and Laramie insulators were also receiving an additional 10 cents per hour from their employers into a new Health and Welfare benefits fund.

Around the mid-1950s, Local 28 also settled into a new union hall and meeting location at the Denver Labor Center at 360 West Acoma Street, where it would remain for the next 20 years.

Meanwhile, plans for the establishment of the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs were underway and promised an abundance of work for the local. Once construction began in 1956, Local 28 members helped build the



Local 28 members, late 1960s



Local 28 members, early 1970s

campus – but only after **Business Agent Max C. Remmick** had warned other International Association members around the country in a May 1955 letter to *The Asbestos Worker* that while insulation workers were already arriving in Colorado Springs in search of work on the military academy and many others were calling about jobs, there was not enough employment for travelers on the project or within the Local 28 territory.

Still, hundreds of workers traveled to Colorado Springs “without first making inquiries, with the result that the roads to Denver are leading directly to the already overloaded relief offices,” *The Asbestos Worker* later reported. The journal further went on to explain, “The designers and architects for the project had stated ... the job would not be rushed” and that the Department of the Air Force “is getting plenty of time to

do the job” and, therefore, “it appears that the normal workforce of the state would be sufficient to do the job.”

(Construction of the Air Force Academy was ultimately completed to receive its first “wing” of cadets in August 1958; before then, its first class of 306 cadets from the Class of 1959 were sworn in and matriculated at a temporary site at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver on July 11, 1955, where they were housed in renovated World War II barracks.)

Local 28 gained a **Pension Fund** by 1959, into which employers paid 10 cents per hour for that year and 20 cents beginning August 1, 1960, as part of a two-year contract with the local. Hourly wages were \$3.70 and would go to \$3.75 from August 1 until July 31, 1961, while 10-cent contributions were made to the Welfare Fund for the duration of the agreement.

RALLYING ONCE AGAIN

Through to the late 1950s, Local 28 had operated with a great deal of autonomy (quite likely because of its smaller size and isolated location) and still had not joined with its regional International Association conference.

But in late 1958 the Association suspended the local’s charter and placed it under “International Supervision” as the result of an unidentified investigation of the local’s operations, and **International Supervisor Leon G. Popick** took over direct administration of the local. In May 1960, and that May, the Association’s Executive Board denied a petition from Local 28 to restore its autonomy – although it did instruct the union’s president to “investigate this matter further with a view of restoring autonomy at the earliest practical date.”

At the time, Local 28 counted 127 members, 100 of whom were mechanics and 27 of whom were “improvers” (or apprentices), while only one or two travelers were working in its entire territory. Meanwhile, Brother Popick reported that work was “slow.”

After several years of invitations and recent

conversations with International officers, Local 28 in the spring of 1960 at last petitioned to join the Western States Conference of Asbestos Workers. The locals comprising the Conference subsequently voted unanimously to accept their Denver and Laramie brothers, soon after which the local was removed from its suspension and International supervision and its charter was restored.

Work stayed sluggish into the mid-1960s, while the local’s size also remained around 130 members, including about 25 apprentices. Journeyman mechanics were earning a total hourly wage-and-benefits package of \$4.74 in the first half of 1965 as part of an agreement that provided 10 cents per hour into a new **Vacation Fund**, 10 cents into Health and Welfare and 20 cents into the Pension Fund before expiring on August 1 of that year.

Before the end of the decade, construction employment picked up significantly, and insulators found themselves in demand. Accordingly, the local’s contract ballooned and for a year beginning August 1, 1969, its wages and benefits were \$6.91 an hour, while the following year they increased to \$7.71 per hour effective August 1, 1970.

Adding to the sudden glut of work in the Local 28 jurisdiction, **Eastman Kodak Company** built a large manufacturing facility in Windsor, Colorado, during the late 1960s and escalated growth of the campus in the early 1970s. The Kodak site would provide a relatively steady source of jobs for Local 28 members throughout the following decades.

REACHING NEW SUMMITS

The 1970s was a period of great prosperity and growth for the City of Denver and, concurrently, Local 28. Foremost, scores of high-rise buildings were

Local 28 Brother Chet Graham (left) works on a project at the Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado, during the late 1970s.



THE UNION TAKES ON ASBESTOS

By the 1980s, frightening new evidence had confirmed long-held suspicions that workers who were exposed to asbestos died in hugely disproportionate numbers from cancer. After many years of argument, industry and government denials and research supported by the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers, the union was finally able to gain worldwide medical acceptance of the link between asbestos and the disease.

Thanks to the union's dedication and the leadership of late General President Andrew Haas, the medical community, the industry and the government now recognize the danger and have adhered to union recommendations to establish, enact and enforce regulations to minimize exposure to asbestos-borne carcinogens in the future.

(Adapted from the International Association 100-Year History.)

constructed in the downtown area, including **Colorado State Bank Building** in 1972, which would be the first of more than a dozen such "skyscraper" projects on which the local would work during the decade and into the 1980s.

What's more, the local's members worked on a large amount of lead and asbestos abatement projects at the time and into the next decade, including such jobs at Fort Carson U.S. Army installation in Colorado's El Paso County.

Meanwhile, journeyman base wages reached \$8.91 cents per hour in 1974. An additional 38 cents and 82 cents were being placed into the Health and Welfare and Pension funds, respectively.

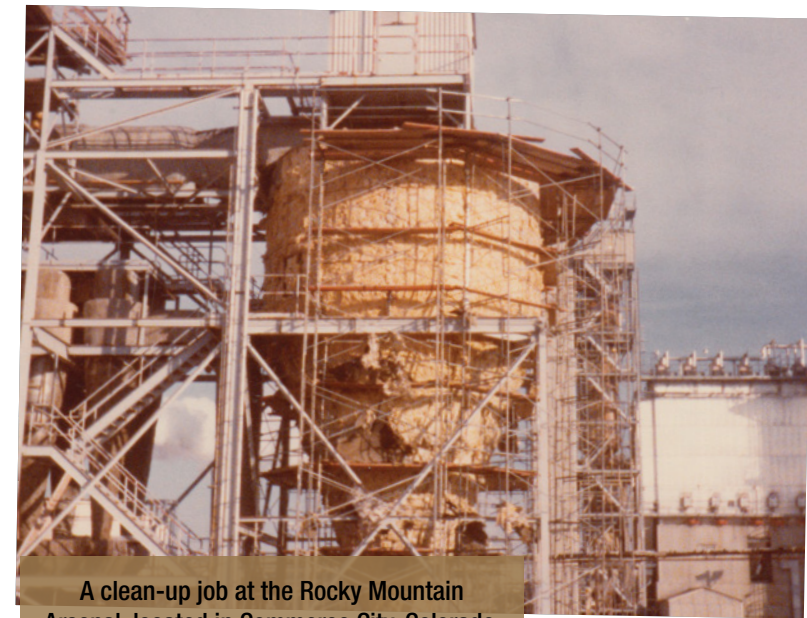
The local then moved into a new union hall at **1540 Emerson Street** in Denver in 1975 as its ranks continued to swell.

Members of Local 28 were also doing their part for energy conservation in the "mile-high city," in one such instance assuring the thermal efficiency of the new, 15-story headquarters building of **Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Colorado**. The local's craftsmen fit and installed sheet insulation to cover chiller and pump heads in the building's air conditioning system and pipe insulation on the chilled water, hot water and plumbing lines, using highly flexible elastomeric insulation to cover some 80,000 feet of pipe alone. The insulation used for the project was expected to generate as much as 20 percent in savings for the facility over

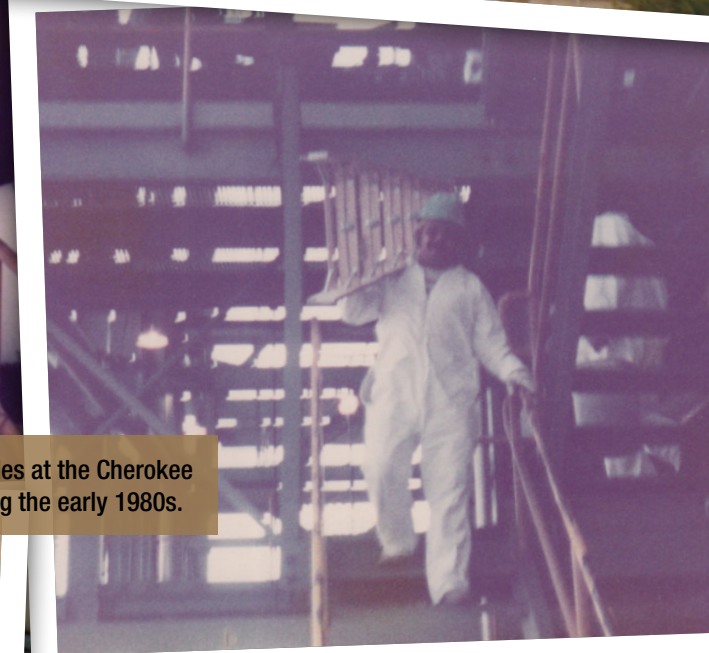
alternate materials, Local 28 **Business Manager Fletcher R. Scott** told the February 1976 *Asbestos Worker*.

Additional work came with projects at

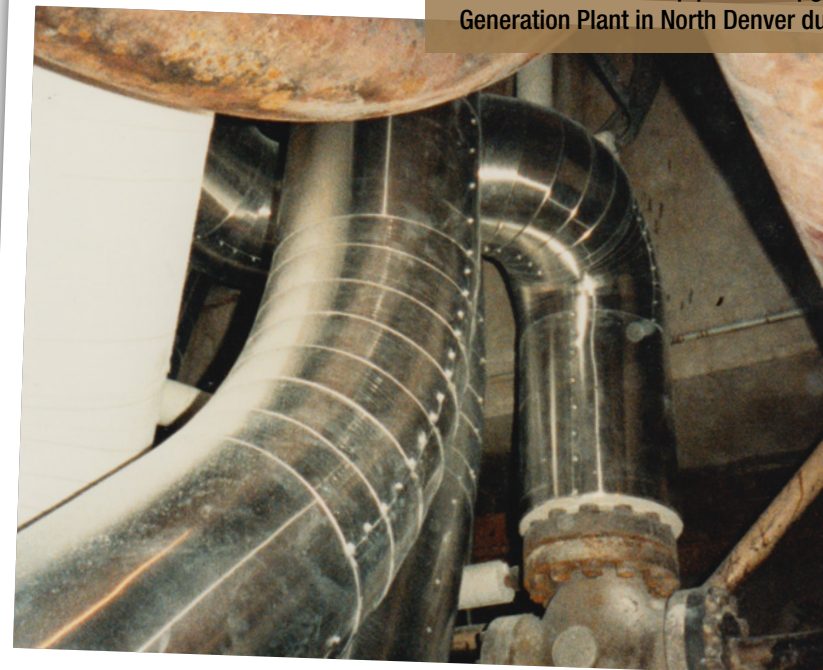
Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora; construction of the **Ray D. Nixon Power Plant** just south of Colorado Springs, whose three generating units were completed in 1980; and construction of the **Laramie River Generating Station** in Wheatland, Wyoming, one of the largest consumer-operated, regional, joint power-supply ventures in the United States, whose third and final unit was completed in 1982. Local 28 members also worked on upgrades at the **Cherokee Generating Station** power plant in North Denver.

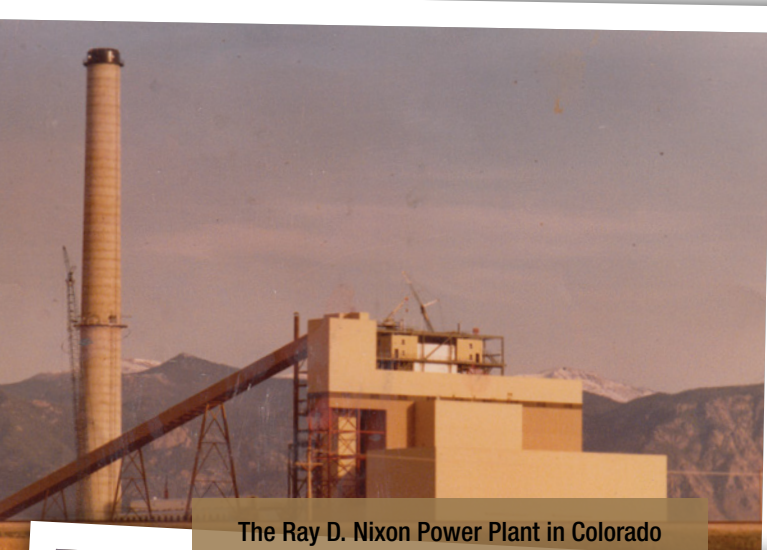


A clean-up job at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, located in Commerce City, Colorado, in which Local 28 was involved, circa 1979.

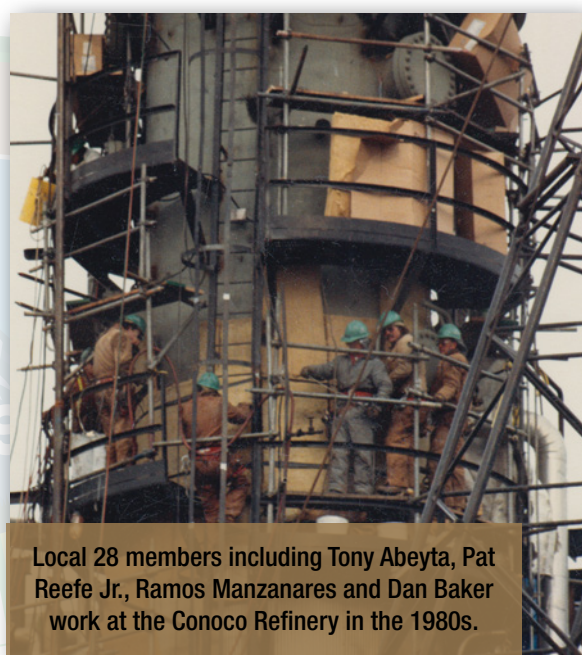
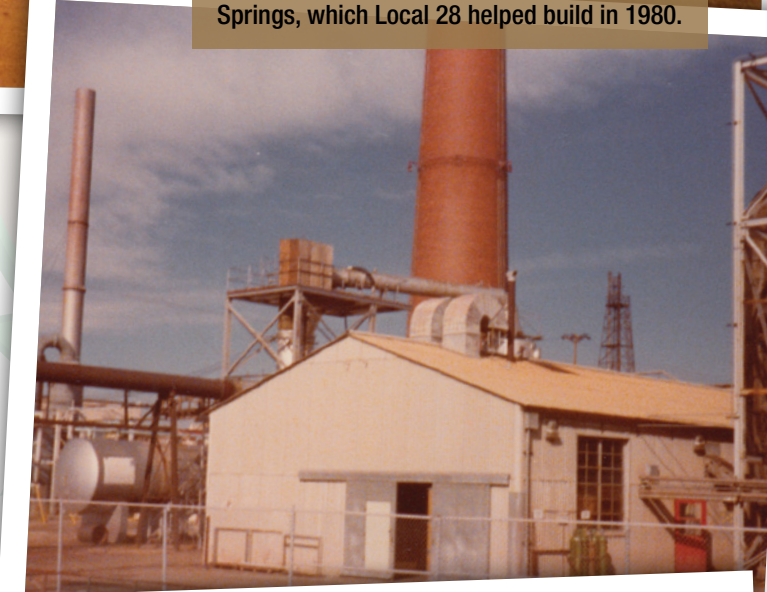


Local 28 members help perform upgrades at the Cherokee Generation Plant in North Denver during the early 1980s.





The Ray D. Nixon Power Plant in Colorado Springs, which Local 28 helped build in 1980.



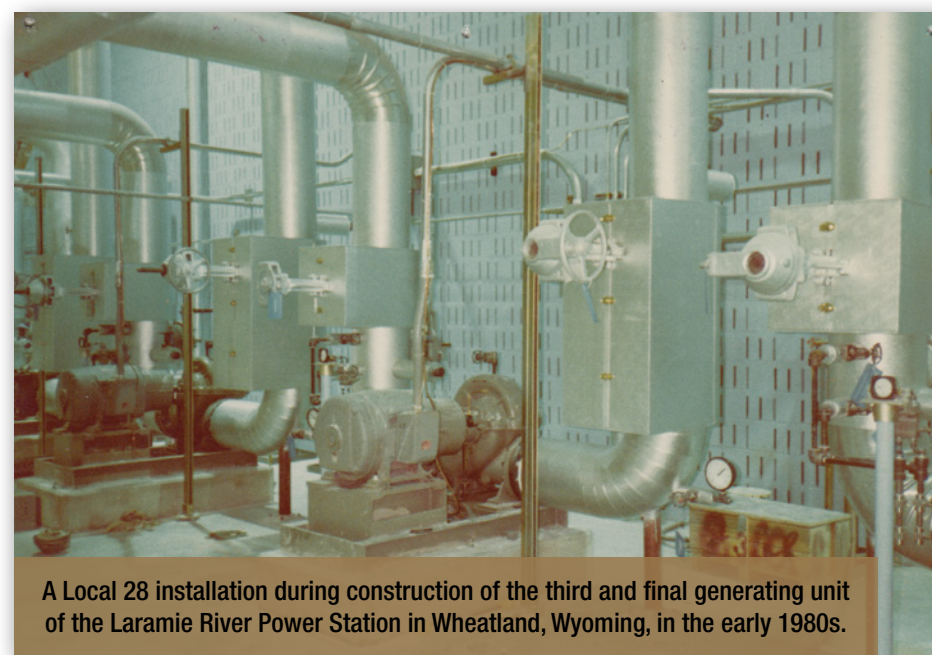
Local 28 members including Tony Abeyta, Pat Reefer Jr., Ramos Manzanara and Dan Baker work at the Conoco Refinery in the 1980s.

Numerous upgrades and expansions to the large **ConocoPhillips** oil refinery in Commerce City, Colorado, in the late 1970s and early 1980s were yet another sources of jobs for the union insulators and asbestos workers. Notably, much of the work at the facility incorporated hard-cast insulation onto the refinery's systems and piping.

With those projects and many others underway, the local remained very busy with work during the late 1970s and grew to about 300 members before the end of the decade. Wages likewise escalated so that by 1980, Local 28 journeymen were earning a total wage and benefits package of \$14.91 per hour during the first year of a two-year contract.

FACING NEW LOWS & HIGHS

While Local 28 membership peaked in the late 1970s, a crippling national economic recession during the early 1980s helped render work scarce for the local for a period of almost three years. As downtown Denver construction and overall abatement work simultaneously slowed and non-union labor moved into the area, by mid-



A Local 28 installation during construction of the third and final generating unit of the Laramie River Power Station in Wheatland, Wyoming, in the early 1980s.

decade the local had dwindled to only about 100 members – many of whom were forced to travel to other locals around the country to find employment.

However, growth of the downtown skyline would eventually continue, and Local 28 was part of it as the mid-1980s approached. Most notably, the local's members helped build the 56-story **Republic Plaza** skyscraper, the tallest building in the city and the entire Rocky Mountain region when it was completed in 1984.

Wages still increased for the local, too; beginning June 30, 1984, its journeymen were making a total package of \$20.69 per hour, which now included a 6-cent contribution into an apprenticeship training fund.

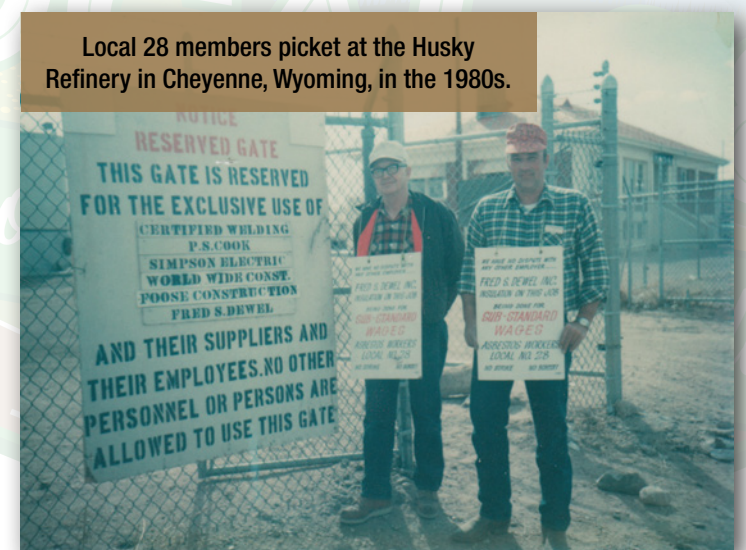
But with employment again struggling, the local did move back to the Denver Labor Temple on Acoma Street by 1985.

As Local 28 entered the second half of the 1980s, work was improving and the local even organized some

non-union shops in its jurisdiction. Ultimately, multiple commercial jobs helped keep the local busy in the late 1980s, including construction of the **Owens Corning** roofing products plant in northern metropolitan Denver; construction of the **Anheuser-Busch** Budweiser Brewery in Fort Collins, which opened its doors in 1988; and work at the nuclear-powered **Fort Saint Vrain Generating Station** in northern Colorado.

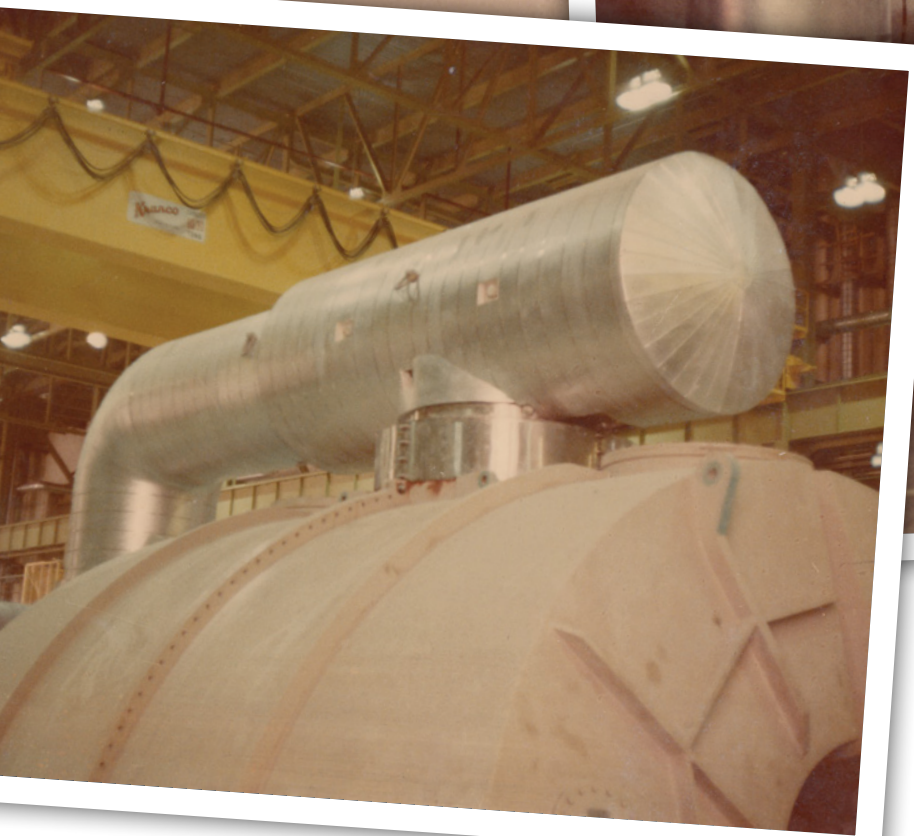
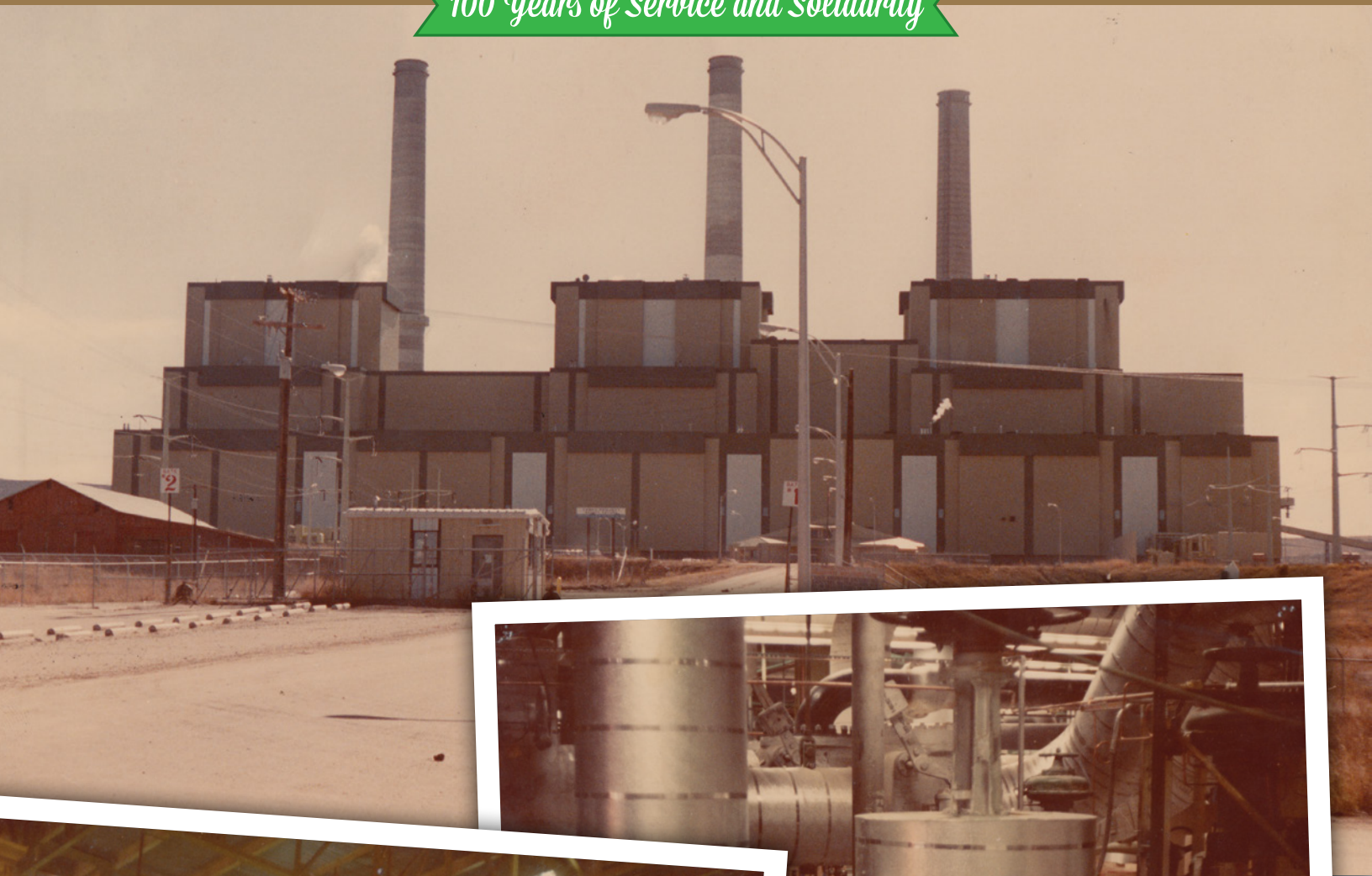
Beginning June 30, 1990, the Local 28 journeyman base wage and vacation pay was \$19 per hour for the coming year, while members were also earning \$1.65 per hour for their Health and Welfare insurance and \$1.95 for their pensions.

By that time, the local had an officially titled "business manager/financial secretary" in

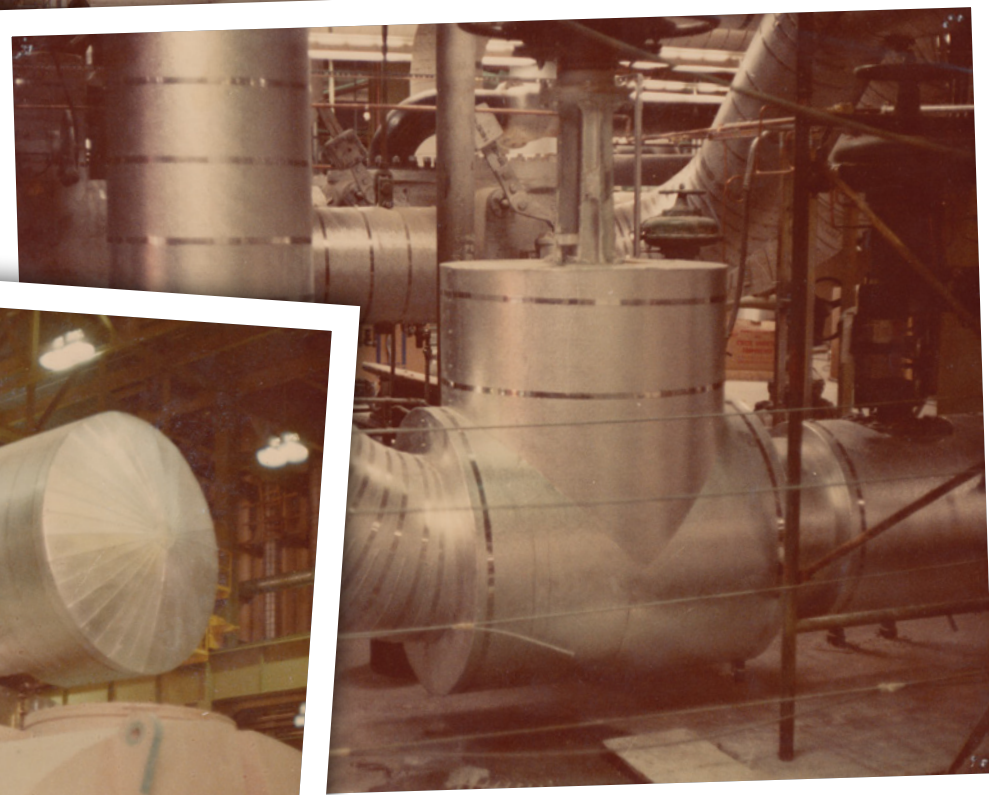


Local 28 members picket at the Husky Refinery in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in the 1980s.

100 Years of Service and Solidarity

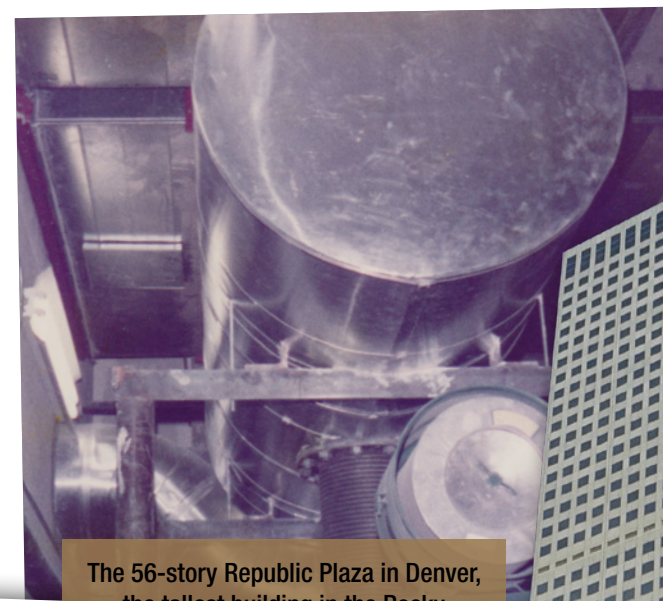
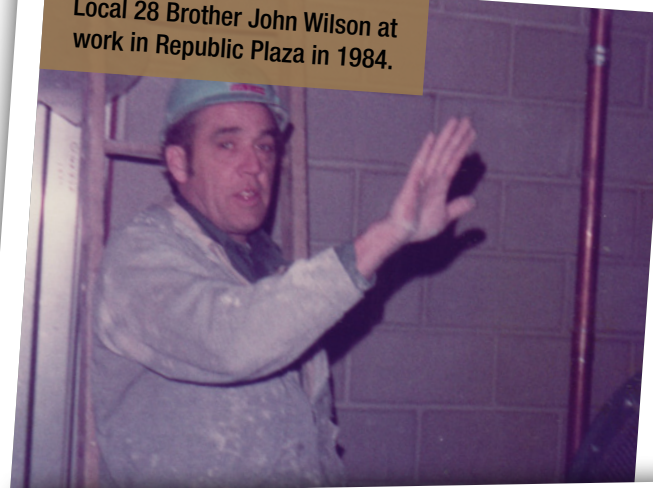


The Craig Generating Station near Craig, Colorado, which Local 28 helped build in the early 1980s; its third and final unit went online in 1983.



100 Years of Service and Solidarity

Local 28 Brother John Wilson at work in Republic Plaza in 1984.



The 56-story Republic Plaza in Denver, the tallest building in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States, is built with Local 28 labor in 1984.

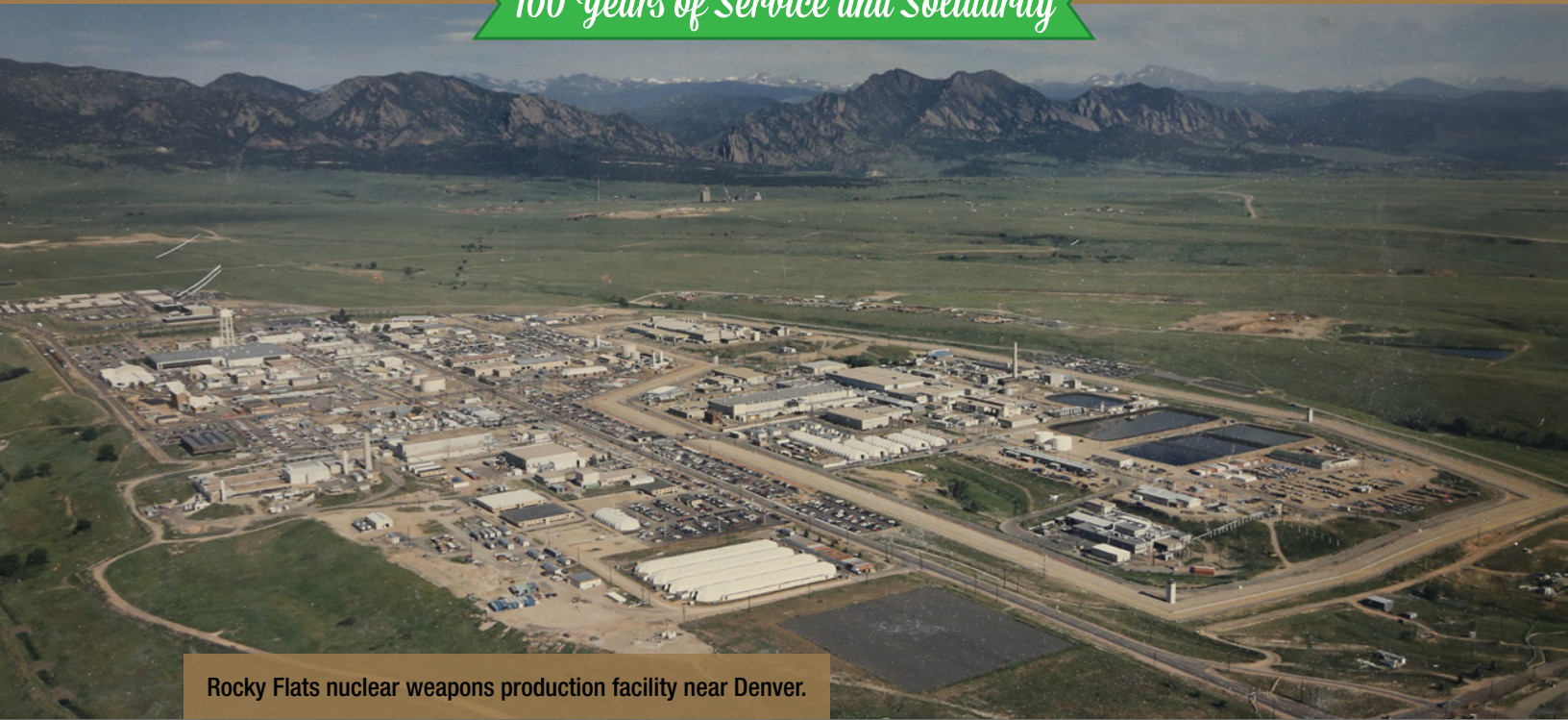


Brother Ron Hobbs, who would serve in that capacity until 2007.

Work remained steady throughout the 1990s (and would remain so into the new “Y2K” millennium) despite a decreased amount of commercial jobs, as the local found abundant employment with an influx of power plant shutdowns and upgrades in its jurisdiction.

One particularly large and unique job for the local at the time was the decommissioning, closure and cleanup of the contaminated U.S. Army **Rocky Mountain Arsenal** chemical weapons manufacturing center in Commerce City, Colorado, which had been in operation since December 1942 before being permanently shut down in 1992. Similarly, the **Rocky Flats Plant** nuclear weapons production facility near Denver was shuttered in 1992 and cleanup began soon after (and would continue until 2006) with Local 28 members on the job.

Elsewhere, the union insulators manned informational pickets at intersections leading to the construction site of Denver’s new, \$3.1 million airport on April 2, 1993, in protest of below-scale wages being paid on non-airport jobs by Mountain States Engineering. The non-union Denver company was doing insulation work on at least four of the airport’s numerous projects, but the local was protesting the “unfair treatment” of its workers on private jobs for which the company paid “substandard wages,” Business Manager Hobbs told *The Rocky Mountain News*.



Rocky Flats nuclear weapons production facility near Denver.

The next morning, the *The Denver Post* reported, “After seeing the pickets, workers of virtually every craft and trade at the airport either turned their cars around or reported to work and then departed.” However, an agreement between contractors and labor unions prohibited work stoppages on the project, and individual locals and the Colorado Building and Construction Trades Council subsequently urged union members to return to work, according to the newspapers.

The brief dispute, although unrelated to

the airport project, “marked the first union disturbance at the airport in three years,” *The Rocky Mountain News* reported on April 3. But Brother Hobbs told the newspaper, “We had no desire to cause anyone to stay off the job. We’re just exercising our rights to free speech. We feel like Mountain States is unfair to its employees.”

As the 1990s progressed, Local 28 was encouraging its membership to participate in **COMET (Construction Organizing Membership Education Training)** classes as a way of combating a still-growing non-union element in the area. Notably, while several large projects were in the works within its jurisdiction, the local was having problems with union mechanical contractors subcontracting work to non-union outfits.

Regardless, the local’s members did some work on **Coors Field** baseball park in downtown Denver, the



Local 28 member Danny Byrnes at work at the Denver Federal Center in the 1990s.

home field of the Colorado Rockies Major League Baseball team that opened in 1995. Meanwhile, the union insulators were also helping to convert the Fort Saint Vrain Generating Station (which had been Colorado’s first and only nuclear power plant) into a natural gas-powered electricity-generating facility for **Xcel Energy Company**, which was completed in 1996.

Among its steady work at the time, the local then helped build the \$187 million **Pepsi Center** multi-purpose arena in downtown Denver from 1998 to its opening on October 1, 1999. The facility would serve as home to the Denver Nuggets of the National Basketball Association and the Colorado Avalanche of the National Hockey League, among many other uses.

Local 28 Brother Craig Graham at work at the Eastman Kodak Company facility in Denver in 2002.



Local 28 members Manuel Chacon, Dwight Douthit, Gino Dicarlo, Bernie Garcia and Bill Hayes man a picket during the 1990s.



FORGING AHEAD TO 100 YEARS

By the new 2000 millennium, Local 28 had moved into its own union hall at 140 Sheridan Boulevard in Denver.

What’s more, the local also continued to focus on and intensify its organizing efforts – and launched a comprehensive organizing drive in June 2000 dubbed the **Mountain States Employees Organizing Campaign**. Irrefutably, the program initially generated a significant measure of success; in just a three-month period, more than 100 insulators were stripped from the non-union workforce; 85 workers completed union applications; one non-union contractor signed the local’s collective bargaining agreement; and the local had begun negotiations with two additional contractors.

Among the key features of the campaign, the local established an organizing committee that identified and prepared a database of information on non-union contractors, and the local hired a full-time organizer, **Brother Manuel Chacon** (who, importantly, had been employed by one of the area’s largest non-union employers and was bi-lingual). The program also replaced the local’s permit classification



Local 28 brothers Sanel Ahmetasevic (left) and Ago Muric at work on a \$4 million expansion to Building C-29C at the Eastman Kodak Company facility in Denver in late 2004.

with an “improver” classification, requiring all people working for union insulation contractors to be full-fledged members of the local union; developed a new member-orientation handout in both English and Spanish; and distributed information packets promoting the local and its union contractors to 175 mechanical contractors who subcontract insulation work in the Denver area.

The program’s positive initial achievements prompted Business Manager Hobbs to comment in the Summer 2000 issue of the *International Association Journal*: “It is particularly satisfying to note that Local 28’s response to a unique set of circumstances serves as encouragement to other local unions who, themselves, face unique issues that, with ingenuity and determination, can be solved.”

Meanwhile, Local 28 members were at work helping to build the new *Invesco Field at Mile High* (which would be renamed Sports Authority Field at Mile High) football stadium, which would primarily serve as the home for the Denver Broncos of the National Football

League. The facility opened in 2001 to replace the former Mile High Stadium.

The local was also employed in upgrading and repairing Xcel Energy’s *Zuni Generating Station* on the Platte River. Built in 1900, the steam produced by the facility was still being used for heating many of the large buildings in downtown Denver.

Into the early years of the millennium, the non-union sector of the insulation industry was very aggressive and, subsequently, very successful – severely disrupting conditions for Local 28. After a few years, however, Local 28 was able to regain its footing, helped particularly by projects such as an expansion at the *Eastman Kodak Company* facilities in Windsor during the early- and mid-2000s and an upgrade of the refinery in Commerce City in 2003 (which was purchased by *Suncor Energy* that year).

In May 2009, Local 28 moved into its current union hall at 6210 Carr Street in Arvada, in which its training facility is located, where the local still resides as it celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2017. By that time

current Business Manager Kevin Whitesel had taken over for long-serving Brother Hobbs in January 2007.

Local 28 reported to the Western Conference in 2010 that both its current work and future prospects were a relatively encouraging “fair.” Bolstering that outlook was the local’s involvement in one of the largest projects on which it had worked in some time: construction of the new, coal-fired, 750-megawatt Unit 3 generator at Xcel Energy’s *Comanche Generating Station*, the largest power plant in Colorado whose first two units were built in 1973 and 1975, respectively.

Once completed in 2010 at a cost of \$1.3 billion, the new unit was Colorado’s first advanced, highly efficient, supercritical coal unit and would generate more electricity with less fuel. Notably, *Comanche Unit 3* features advanced controls to help reduce overall emissions despite doubling the plant’s overall electric generation.

The local then went to work on installation of a new, \$530 million, natural-gas-fired unit at Xcel Energy’s 56-year-old *Cherokee Generating Station* – the biggest part of the \$1 billion Clean Air-Clean Jobs Act program approved in 2010 to cut air pollution by closing and retrofitting Xcel coal-fired plants, the July

12, 2013, *Denver Post* reported. The program was expected to cut power-plant nitrogen oxides – an ingredient in regional ozone – by 86 percent, according to the newspaper.

As that project and others were progressing, Local 28 was forced in 2013 to fight a proposal by contractors to



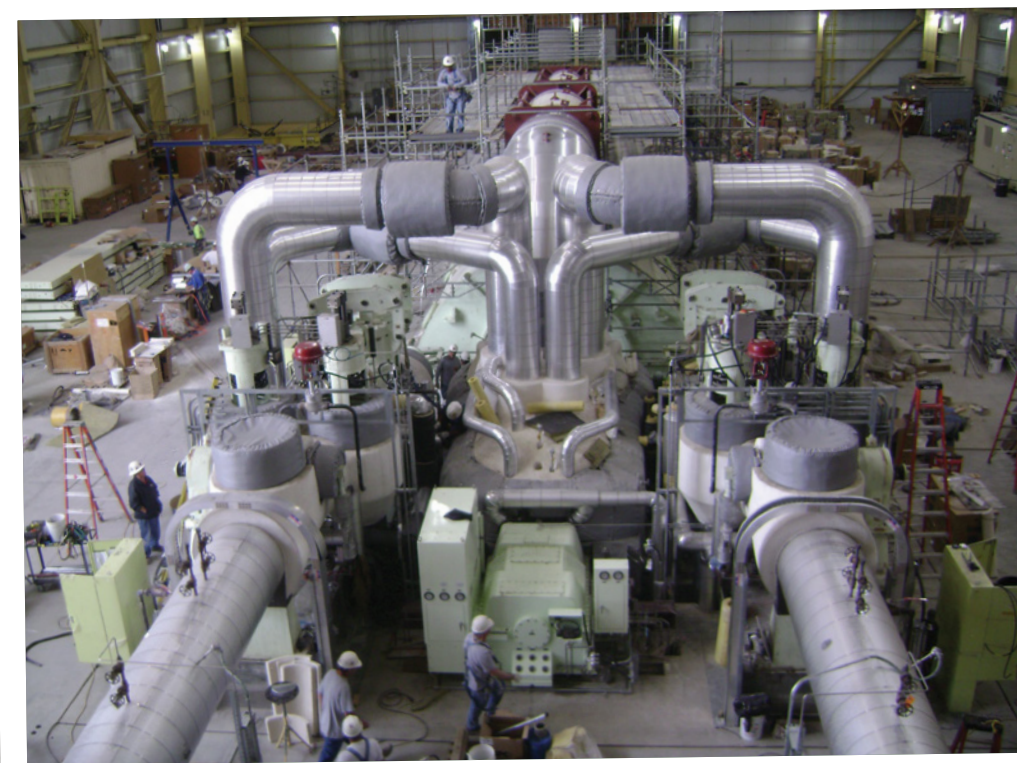
Local 28 members march in the St. Patrick’s Day parade in Denver in March 2006.



COMANCHE UNIT 3



Local 28 members work on construction of Comanche Power Station's new Unit 3 in 2010; the coal-fired electric generating unit was completed that year.



cut its members' wages. The issue event went to the National Labor Relations Board for resolution as the local continued its historic routine of never backing down when protecting its membership.

Through to early 2015, employment conditions and member workloads had remained fair for the local, as did the immediate employment outlook for its jurisdiction.

As Local 28 approached the first century since it was chartered in 1917, its membership continued to provide the City of Denver and the states of Colorado and Wyoming with well-trained and highly skilled insulation services on a multitude of projects and institutions that have helped the area progress. Recently, projects at the University of Colorado, the Air Force Academy, the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Denver, the Denver International Airport and multiple power plants and hospitals, to name a few, have all benefited from the abilities of the Local 28 workforce.

Local 28 Business Manager Kevin Whitesel and his wife, Jacque, at an event in September 2013.



Projects and maintenance at the **Cheyenne Mountain Complex** military installation and nuclear bunker in Colorado Springs and the **North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)** aerospace warning and protection facility at Peterson Air Force Base in El Paso County also recently employed Local 28 members. Many have further worked recently on the **Pueblo Chemical Depot** chemical-weapons storage site located in Pueblo County, one of the last two sites in the United States with chemical munitions and chemical material, as part of the Pueblo Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant to destroy its stockpile of chemical agent mustard.

Local 28 members have also been employed on upgrades to the Anheuser-Busch Fort Collins Brewery and insulated new systems at the Pawnee Generating Station in 2014 to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide.

Adding to the larger projects manned by Local 28 as it prepared to mark its 100th anniversary while also keeping an eye on its future, the local provided the insulation of ductwork and fire suppression piping for the **Eisenhower-Edwin C. Johnson Memorial Tunnel**, which carries Interstate 70 under the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountains. The thousands of feet of pipe that were insulated were just one piece of the tunnel's \$25 million fire suppression system on which the local worked in 2015 until the job was completed in May 2016.

At 100 years old in 2017, International Association of Insulators Local 28 has produced superior craftsmen over that time, and it will continue to do so well into the future as the local positively impacts the future of its industry and Colorado and Wyoming.



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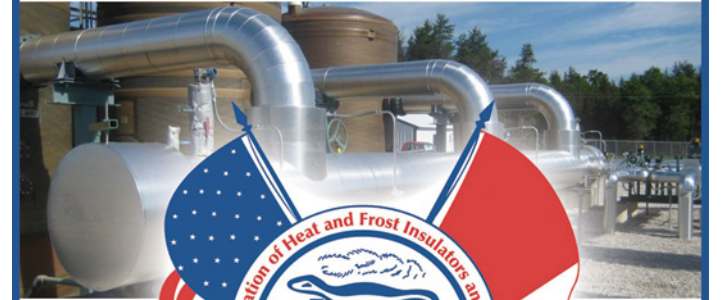
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