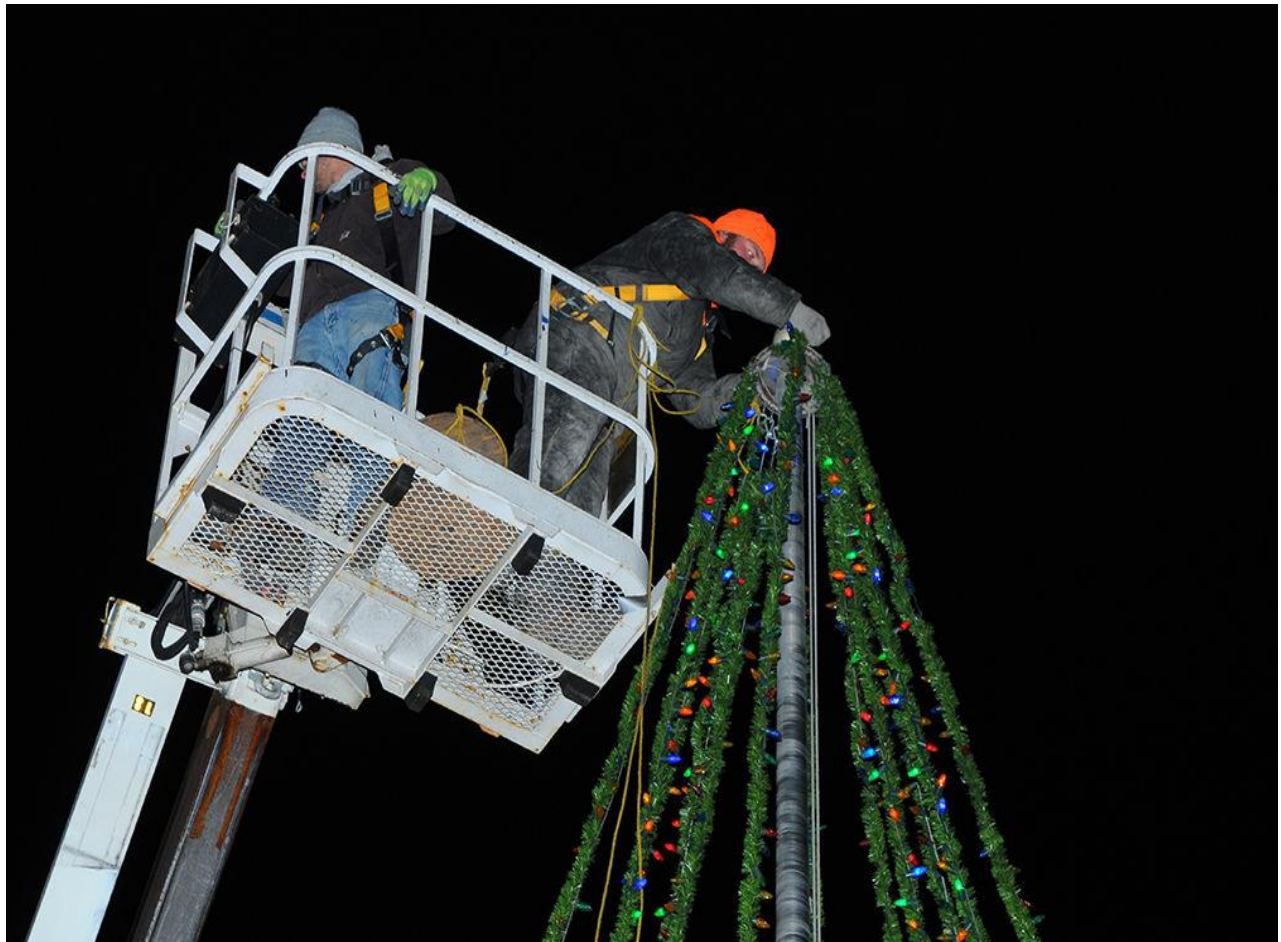


IBEW 873 throws its lot in with Gregg

*Local electricians union touts multiple proposals by
Democratic governor candidate*

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Electricians work to light up the Christmas tree on the courthouse square.
Jenn Goad

To Chuck Griffin Jr., president of IBEW 873, John Gregg represents a candidate with labor-friendly values.

It's for this reason that the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has thrown its lot in with the Democratic candidate for governor. To support such an endorsement, Griffin points to multiple proposals Gregg has made that the union president believes will benefit the union.

"With this election, it's important," said Griffin. "We feel it is important to get labor-friendly people elected in Indiana such as John Gregg. That is a major, important election right now to get John Gregg elected as governor."

Chief among Gregg's proposals, according to Griffin, is a potential overhaul of the state's bidding process.

According to the Gregg campaign, the governor hopeful intends to direct the Indiana Department of Administration to "review and update the state's Request for Proposals and Request for Quotation processes to ensure Indiana businesses, especially small businesses, have the opportunity to compete for state work."

If Gregg pulls off such a move, then the campaign hopes to offer more opportunities for more bidders to get work on state contracts. This, in turn, could allow for more work for a wider array of union-friendly contractors.

Also of great importance to the union, according to Griffin, is the eventual repeal of right-to-work. Indiana implemented the much union-opposed law, which prohibited unions from mandating non-union members pay fees to for representation, was passed in 2012 to the chagrin of labor leaders.

Gregg acknowledged, in an interview with the IndyStar earlier this year, that repealing right-to-work wouldn't be feasible right out of the gate due to the largely-Republican led state government. However, the Gregg campaign said such a move could be supported in the future should that change. It's this on which Griffin and the union bank.

“It all can’t be done overnight obviously,” said Griffin. “We have to get other people in place with that so they don’t have a super-majority in the house and senate. That will take a while. It won’t happen in a year. We can make steps towards that, but it will take a few years to back through that. It’s an ongoing process.”

Additionally, Griffin also cited Gregg’s plan to reinvigorate Indiana’s export programs as a reason for support by the union.

As touted by the Gregg campaign, the plan entails restoring the state’s network of trade offices, which has decreased from 14 to five international offices over the years.

In addition to touting the policies the Democratic candidate for governor is proposing, Griffin reminds the public that the union takes between 10 and 15 new apprentices each year.

While the application process for this year is closed already, next year it will reopen to take an as-of-yet-undetermined amount of new applicants.

The apprenticeship program lasts five years and required 8,000 hours of on-the-job training. Additionally, classes are taken through Ivy Tech, allowing applicants to graduate with an associate’s degree. The only cost, said Griffin, is book fees.

“You’re working and you’re learning while you’re getting your credits towards your journeyman’s card,” said Griffin. “You don’t have to pay tuition, room, and board, and it’s a skilled trade. We have top-of-the-line safety training, top-of-the-line teachers, equipment, and it’s something that they can’t take away from you. It’s something that you learn, and you never forget. You can go anywhere in the United States to work.”

To register for the apprenticeship program visit ibew873.com.