

IBEW graduates seven new members

Tim Turner

Apr 22, 2010



The certificates showing that the seven graduates have completed the program.

Skilled electrical workers spend five years in training before they can go to work in the local union halls, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers just graduated seven more members to join their ranks.

“Today’s construction market demands a competitive edge; IBEW Local 873 provides that edge with quality work, competitive bidding, staying on schedule, and no on-the-job problems,” said Bill Thompson, business manager for IBEW Local 873. “We have a federally approved five-year apprenticeship program, the Kokomo-Marion Joint Apprenticeship and Training program. The men and women selected for this program are pulled from the local community, thus returning a skilled productive commodity.”

Thompson was reading the mission of the training program called the IBEW Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee. Thompson explained how rigorous the program is.

“We have a five-year academic program,” said Thompson. “Along with those five years the individuals have on-the-job training for five years. In addition to that they have to take classes at Ivy Tech, like technical writing and labor history. They also have to take all the safety training. With all that training together they are highly qualified on the job. They are very good at their profession.”

He said the main reason to spend so much time in training is the danger involved with electrical work.

“Electricity, or installing electrical equipment, if not done properly can be dangerous,” said Thompson. “We know how to do it properly so it reduces the chance of anything failing due to bad workmanship. We give that training, knowledge, and professionalism back to the community.”

Thompson said there is a sense of pride that comes with being able to successfully install electrical equipment.

“It is very satisfying for me when I am driving down the road and look at a building and say I built that,” said Thompson. “You are so proud of the success that we have. It is hard to imagine how proud you can be when you build something. Training our apprentices perpetuates that and keeps that going year after year.”

He said the IBEW continues to add on to the training to make sure their workers are as qualified as they can be.

“Apprentices used to just have on-the-job training and a young man would just go work with his dad or uncle in a trade,” said Thompson. “In the 1940s, we started our apprenticeship program. We have added on every year to build that up.”

Thompsons said once these members graduate they become a part of the family, and there really is a strong sense of brotherhood.

“The very first local IBEW was in Saint Louis, Mo.,” said Thompson. “It started on Nov. 28, 1891. Our local here in Kokomo started in Jan. 15, 1919. We have been in Kokomo for a long time.”

Once the workers graduate from the program they go into the pool of electrical workers available for work in the community.

“Our union hall provides skilled, trained, manpower to a contractor to go to work,” said Thompson. “Contractors after they bid the first job they are looking at others and those members stay with them a lot. They don’t always come back here to the hall. When the job is done, if the contractor wanted to, he could send all those guys back to the hall. That is the way it works. There are some guys that get called out the very first day and 30 years later that guy retires from that contractor.”

The following is a list of new graduates:

Nicholas E. Castorena

Laura H. Dodd

Kyle D. Baker

Jeff R. Tate

Eric L. Springer

Christopher R. Groome

Jesse Daughtery