

IBEW welcomes four journeymen

*Mayor McKillip thanks Scruggs for raising standard
of education*

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The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 873 last week welcomed its latest class of graduates from the apprenticeship program it maintains with Ivy Tech State College. And even though there were only four graduates from a class that started with 12 students, the pride that everyone in attendance felt for these new journeyman electricians was unmistakable.

John Kinney, Adam Waddell, William Seals and Jason Zimmerman all completed the five-year apprenticeship program, earning their journeyman cards and an associate's degree. And they were appropriately honored with a graduation ceremony at Pastariffic.

"It is always difficult for me to get up and speak at these graduations because I am so proud of these new journeymen inside wiremen," said Local 873 Business Agent Artie Scruggs. "I get choked up. They all have put in 10,000 hours of work and study to get to where they are tonight. That's 26½ weeks of classwork, two nights a week, three hours a night."

"You can be proud of yourselves," said Ivy Tech Chancellor Steve Daily to the graduates. "You have accomplished something no one can take away from you. And you have a wonderful opportunity to continue on with your education. You should always continue to learn."

"Ivy Tech is proud of you. We are proud to have you as part of our alumni. The students of this apprenticeship program are invariably our strongest students."

Kokomo Mayor Matt McKillip and Gas City Mayor Larry Leach both were on hand to congratulate the graduates as well.

"I'd like to thank Artie Scruggs and the IBEW for raising the standard of education in our community," said McKillip. "And I'd like to thank Ivy Tech for providing this opportunity. I will be glad to tell future employers about your dedication to being a part of the best educated work force in the state. On behalf of the citizens of Kokomo, I congratulate you all."

"You may not realize it, but Artie Scruggs has taken you under his wing," said Leach. "Artie is the kind of friend you want to have. I have a son in this apprenticeship program, and next year I hope to attend this ceremony as a proud father."

"Yogi Berra once said, 'When you get to the fork in the road, take it.' That's what all of you have done. Five years ago, you made the decision to improve yourselves through education. If you go through one day of your life without learning anything, you've wasted it. I want to extend my congratulations. God bless you all, and keep plugging away."

But it was graduate William Seals who made a lasting impression on the audience as he spoke through tears about how much the apprenticeship program meant to him.

"I had to leave school at an early age to take care of my parents, and I have spent the rest of my life trying to get back to it," said Seals. "Thanks to a friend I have known for 30 years, he has given me the opportunity to do what I have done tonight. Thank you, Artie."