

# IBEW Local 245



# SPOTLIGHT

LABOR UNIONS MEAN BROTHERHOOD AND BROTHERHOOD MUST FIRST BE IN YOUR MIND AND HEART.

Ray Zychowicz ..... President  
 Bob Coffman..... Vice President  
 George Wynn, Jr. .... Rec. Secretary  
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 Phil LaCourse..... Asst. Business Manager  
 Ken Erdmann..... Asst. Business Manager  
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**Executive Board:**  
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 Chuck Modrowski, Jack Schell,  
 Duane Gottschalk, Mike Tackett,  
 Jeremy Acosta  
**Meets 2nd Thursday  
 Every Month**

*Larry's  
 Corner*

Sisters and Brothers,

I hope you are all doing well and having an enjoyable and safe spring season!! It has been extremely busy here at the office with negotiations in about everyone of our work jurisdictions. Contracts have been recently ratified at Bryan Municipal Utilities and at our ABC Disney station WTVG TV 13. We have signed new agreements with Hinkle & McCoy on Verizon and Sprint Telecommunications. Negotiations continue at our NBC station WNWO TV 24. We have been in negotiations for several months on this contract. Negotiations have been very difficult and continue to be difficult with automation, jurisdiction and job security as key issues. The committee of Jack Fried, Mike Dunbridge, and Don Ursich continue to do an excellent job. Then to complicate matters even more Raycom Media is selling the station to Barrington Broadcasting while we continue to negotiate with Raycom until the new ownership is approved by the Federal Communications Commission. On another note negotiations start at out PBS station WGTE TV 30 on May 15<sup>th</sup> with dates yet to be set for our Outside Commercial Agreement.

By now Davis Besse should be back online after completing the 14<sup>th</sup> RFO. Congratulations to all our members who helped make that happen in the safest way possible.

Bayshore power plant has been selected to be the pilot plant for the FirstEnergy Fossil Excellence program. The Fossil Excellence program is being facilitated by the McKinsey & Company out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania who was instrumental in turning Toyota and other company's around. Let me briefly explain what this means. FirstEnergy initiated its Fossil Excellence Program in large part because of its belief that radical change was necessary to position itself in a better position in the new and continuing world of Utility restructuring and competition. We have discussed deregulation, restructuring, change in the industry for at least seven years. Whether we agree with the company's position or not or whether we like it or not, it is here and has been here for some time. Union and employee engagement has been an issue that I

have tried to initiate with FirstEnergy since the merger back in 1998 on a number of issues. One example would be a healthcare cost containment committee. Some may wonder and in fact some have been critical and continue to be as to why we are participating. I believe as the Business Manger it is important for our members and it is right for our members for the following reasons: I believe that by giving myself and our members a voice, limited as it may be at times, at management's table is an opportunity to express our opinions that we normally would not have and have a better understanding of their business philosophy. Second, I believe that the more we know about managements thinking and their plans, the better off we would be in any negotiations over implementation of the whole Fossil Excellence program. Furthermore, I believe that our members are smart enough to know that they are not participating in this program as a business partner, but that they are simply fulfilling our historic approach of labor-management cooperation. For the last few months our members have made comments and recommendations to McKinsey & Company and management, some joint and some separate. Ultimately management will make business decisions. Progress so far is mixed with most employees in a wait and see mode.

Our Outside construction work continues to be good with just about full employment. Once again I am asking that we all work within our classifications and under the terms and conditions of the contract. It is all of our responsibilities to uphold the conditions of our agreements. Our jurisdictional disputes are still in the hands of the Vice President.

As I have said many times the strength and future of this Local depends on growth. I have given my commitment to continue to work toward that end and have done so. We must organize the unorganized. I am asking for your help. Our working conditions, wages and benefits depend on it.

Like most other business, we continue to look for ways to tighten the belt. There has been significant progress in reducing costs without cutting services to the members. I commit to you that we will continue to work hard in this area and that I will be calling on our officers to discuss my concerns. This has been one of the many

Brothers and Sisters,

I hope that of this writing, I find all of you well and looking forward to the Summer Season. And with this Summer Season upon us remember that the kids will be out of school soon, so, be careful when backing, watch your speed in residential neighborhoods and watch for those guys and gals on two wheelers, both bicycles and motorcycles.

Just to remind all of you again, we will be going into negotiations for our Toledo Commercial Agreement, our 71 / 245 Ohio Utility Power Agreement, and the 71 / 245 URD Agreement. Please get your contract proposals to us or any of your thoughts and ideas for upcoming negotiations. We will need them ASAP.

Our A.L.B.A.T. Line Apprentice Class has a record number of apprentices indentured and working in Local 245's jurisdiction. The Ohio Sub-committee has also stepped up interviews for new applicants and we are now interviewing approximately ever six weeks instead of quarterly. We have added another instructor for the Lineman class and we will be adding two more instructors in the fall for our new Traffic Signal and Lighting Apprenticeship and the Substation Apprenticeship. Speaking of new Apprenticeship Programs, we have also been taking applications for the Substation Apprenticeship and we will begin interviewing applicants for the Traffic Signal and Lighting, as well as, the Substation Apprenticeship in June. We have already had several applicants indentured into the Substation Program and look forward to starting our new Traffic and Lighting Apprentices in June. Anyone interested or knows any good candidates for these programs should come into the office and fill out a "Request for Application" for any of these programs. The outlook for our work looks very good for all of these areas and we continue to enjoy full employment.

As many of you know, we have asked you in the past to notify us in the case of an accident or an illness to any of our Members or their family members. We would also ask that you notify us in case of a passing of Members, Retired Members or a loved one. Once in a while, we are not notified and those needing our help, through either filing a Workers Comp Claim, receiving a Bible in the case of a passing or simply receiving a Get Well Card to wish a speedy recovery from an injury or illness. Please let us know so that we can acknowledge these people.

I get a lot of calls asking what the difference is between an "A" and a "BA" Member. An "A" Member is entitled to a Pension Benefit, an Early Option Pension Benefit, a Spouse Option Pension Benefit and a Disability Benefit. There is also a death benefit of \$6,250.00 for natural causes and a \$12,500.00 benefit for accidental death. A "BA" Member will have none of the aforementioned benefits, but, will be a Member in good standing with the I.B.E.W., the Local Union and have all of the rights and privileges of an I.B.E.W. Member. Both "A" and "BA" Members are entitled to many

Union Plus Benefits, some of which include, credit counseling, easier and more affordable mortgage and refinancing that features strike, layoff and disability assistance, home heating oil discounts, auto insurance discounts, legal services discounts, information on student loans, scholarships, preparing for college, choosing a college, entry testing and many other benefits that are offered to you. Contact our office for additional information and a total packet of information of benefits. If you have any other questions, please call the office and if you might want to change your Membership from a "BA" to an "A" Membership, simply call our office and Kelli or Lisa will assist you in doing that.

***The other very important information that I need to share with you is, ALL CONSTRUCTION MEMBERS, need to sign up for Electronic Reciprocal***

***Transfer System or (ERTS). We have had many instances where pension benefits, health care benefits and other benefits are not going into your benefit funds because you are not signed up and the dollars are floating around in limbo. Especially now with the storm season coming up, be sure to call our office and sign up for ERTS and guarantee that you will receive your benefits. They are very hard to track down and with the lag time in reporting these benefits to the various funds, we don't want them to be lost to you.***

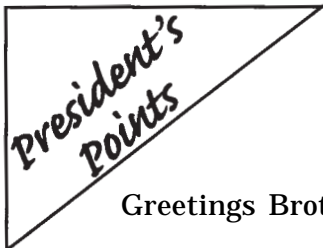
Last, but not least, I would like to recognize some of our recently Retired Members and invite them to continue their active participation in the Local 245 Retirees Club. Contact our office for name contacts and meeting times for the Retirees. Starting from January 1, 2005 to present are: Gene Belcher, Don Cullison, Paul Hardin, Ron Klein, Jim Livengood, Ed Miller, Jean Mongeau, Milt Mygatt, Brent Ritter, Bill Phyllis, Willie Battle, and my good friend Tim Bunner. Enjoy a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Brothers and Sisters, enjoy your summer, continue to work safely, continue to be active and steer your Local Union in the right direction, remember our sick and injured and those that are less fortunate than us, pray for our men and women in uniform and their safe return from troubled places outside our country, attend your Union Meetings and for those of you that have not taken the Oath of Membership, please attend the second Thursday of each month and become a true Member of the I.B.E.W. and Local 245.

Fraternally,



Philip LaCourse  
Asst. Business Manager/Treasurer



Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

The Unions are taking it on the chin lately, is it any wonder we became complacent with the way things are today. We use to have a wage that was in the top 25%, now we are probably lucky if we are at average wage for middle class. We used to have good benefits that basically were paid for by our employer but now we pay at both ends for the policy and for the services. Yet we don't have time to attend union meetings, vote or any other thing to try to change the way things are. It's time we get back to some old fashion unionism. We need to collectively get together and learn who we are, learn who are brothers and sisters are and what our needs are and what we can do about improving these things.

To that end we (IBEW Local 245) are trying to put together some things. On May 13<sup>th</sup>, starting at 1:00p.m. we are having a New Hire Party at the hall. This party is to allow new members to meet the Officers and Stewards. Also on June 17<sup>th</sup>, from 12:00 noon to 4:00p.m. the Fellowship Committee is planning a union wide picnic. Price of admission is a dish to share. We are also tentatively planning for a joint picnic on Labor Day with IBEW Local 1413 and OPEIU Local 19. These other Locals are the other unions on First Energy property.

These events are free, or least minimal cost, (Fellowship Committee picnic); your cost will be your time. The cost of not doing something is much higher. So the point I am trying to make is please come out and get involved, a Union is only as strong as its members.

Hope to see you here. Until next time, please enjoy your summer and work and play safe.

Fraternally yours,

Ray Zychowicz  
President

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

After the last presidential election many Americans are wondering what happened to the hopes and ideas that our present administration claimed would happen. The Presidents approval rating is at its lowest point, somewhere about 34% and the Vice Presidents approval rating is even lower at about 18%. America is in a crisis; most of the people polled say that they have lost the credibility of the American government now in power. How did this happen? Let me make a small list of things that took place last year that changed the way Americans think. FEMA's response to Hurricane Katrina and the excuses following that clean up. The issues with Jack Abramoff and other high-powered lobbyists, the intelligence reports pertaining to "weapons of mass destruction" prior to the war in Iraq. The declining situation of Iraq, the unbelievable amount of money being spent on the Iraq war, the increasing government debt, the problems with Medicaid and Medicare, the loss of good high paying jobs and the increase in low paying jobs, the huge issue of health care in America, and our Boarder Protection issues. This list only scratches the surface of the things taking place in our country today, many things are also taking place in the global arena such as out-sourcing of our jobs and the war on terror that we can throw into the mix. The point is this, the changes in our country are accelerating and although we can not put all the blame on our President we do need to look to his administration for direction and solid answers and if, what we are told is not accurate then the nation begins to have a problem with the administrations credibility.

We belong to one of the largest labor unions in America and we as union members have a small but equal responsibility to help do our parts to try to correct some of the problems facing us. Large American corporations are spending huge amounts of money through lobbyists to get their agendas put into law. American jobs are being sent out of our country. Many corporations opened plants in Mexico and then soon found out that they can save even more money by producing their products in other countries. The "Manufacturing Industry" is experiencing the biggest hit; you can read everyday about products being made overseas and sent here and sold here. The tariffs on many of the products are small or non-existent but the product is sold at a suggested retail price so that the retailer (middle man) can make a huge profit. Our government does not want to raise tariffs and create an even playing field for American manufacturing plants because of the lobbyists pouring money into the reelection coffers of the men in power. Most of you reading this would be considered working in the "Service Industry" because we provide a service and not a product. Many believe this is the best industry for America because it is more difficult to out-source these jobs, but don't kid yourself our jobs can be eliminated.

*Continued on page 4*

## NOTICE

Please be advised that our web site has changed to: [ibew245.com](http://ibew245.com) and our Contact emails to:

- Larry – [larry@ibew245.com](mailto:larry@ibew245.com)
- Phil – [phil@ibew245.com](mailto:phil@ibew245.com)
- Ken – [ken@ibew245.com](mailto:ken@ibew245.com)
- Kelli – [kelli@ibew245.com](mailto:kelli@ibew245.com)
- Lisa – [lisa@ibew245.com](mailto:lisa@ibew245.com)

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Our jobs can be given to lower paying contractors with little or no benefits. (Non-union) Another way American corporations in the Service Industry are attempting to save money is by bringing workers from third world countries to work in our nations power plants and nuclear plants at a fraction of the cost they pay us. This practice is now being attempted in some southern plants.

On the issue of health care for the Manufacturing Industry and the Service Industry the reasons are different for the new philosophy of pushing the rising costs onto the employees. The Manufacturing Industry claims it must pass on the rising cost of health care because they cannot compete with the overseas companies, even though they own some of the overseas companies. In order to compete they have to defer some of that health care costs to its employees. Most manufacturing companies have used this philosophy or they just don't offer any health care at all. Our government remains silent on the issue. The Service Industry has a different approach; at this time they are not competing with an overseas workforce, so the argument that works in the Manufacturing Industry does not apply so they claim, "they are following the industry trends and practices". The Service Industry claims everyone else is doing it that's why we are. (Increasing employee contributions to health care) They don't need to push the costs on to the employees; they do it because they know they can get away with it because our government won't say anything about protecting our middle class work force income. (The money for re-election does not come from the middle class) The Service Industry wants to save money in benefits to give those profits to the senior management teams and the investors.

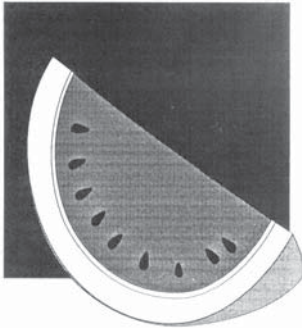
Big Corporations in our world today focuses more on short-term profits and less on its employees. If any corporation can show a profit

this month the shareholders and investors will be more attracted to that stock. This short-term thinking is also causing a major problem with our American tax base. Without tens of millions of middle-class incomes paying taxes and buying products the American system begins to weaken. The lowered buying power of millions of middle-class Americans and the lose of good paying jobs causes trouble for our economy, and the government's tax revenue continues to be reduced because of huge tax cuts to the wealthy. With this lower tax revenue and the need for our government to fund our Homeland Security, Iraq war, and the War On Terror campaigns, we have become a debtor nation. Our nation spends more money then we collect in tax revenues. Our government borrows billions to make up for the deficit. We get a large portion of that borrowed money from China, one of the reasons we don't require China to play on an even playing field as us pertaining to tariffs on goods and products. As you can see without the middle class tax base America as we knew it would not survive. America is headed toward a model that looks much like Mexico, a country with an extremely small middle-class. Mexico consists of a nation of the wealthy and the poor.

As more middle class families lose health care coverage and need health care services, that uninsured cost will be passed on to the employers who have health care coverage for their employees. Those employees in turn pay more for their health care to pay for those who lost that coverage. Our health care crisis in America can not be fixed at the bargaining table it must be addressed at the federal level of government but we do not hear anything from our members of congress or the present administration about health care because they get their money for re-election from the lobbyists of big corporations that are making huge profits right now and do not want to see a change to those huge profits.

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**Local 245 Fellowship Committee Picnic**



The Fellowship Committee would like to invite all of our Brothers and Sisters from Toledo Edison, TV Stations, Outside Construction, City of Bryan, City of Rossford, Hancock-Wood and Tri-County to join us for a family picnic.

Hamburgers, Hot Dogs and Pop will be provided. There will also be 50/50 raffles throughout the day. We are asking everyone to bring their favorite dish to share with everyone. Also it is B.Y.O.B. if you want something other than pop to drink.

Date: June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
Time: 12:00p.m to 4:00p.m.  
Place: Union Hall

Please R.S.V.P. to Kelli or Lisa at the Union office at 419-666-3350 by June 9<sup>th</sup> so that we may get a rough count for food.

Come and get to know some of your Union Brother and Sisters.

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!**



**Continued from page 1**

challenges that have been troubling me for years. With our continued determination and loyalty we will continue to stand up and face these challenges but we can't do it alone.

Always remember, safety comes first and use your safety equipment!!

Fraternally,



Larry Tscherne  
Business Manager

“In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity.”

**Albert Einstein**

**Looking for a place to  
CELEBRATE**



Have your special event at the IBEW  
Local Union 245 Hall

705 Lime City Road  
Rossford OH 43460

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Baby Showers - Birthdays  
All Occasions!

**SMALL PARTIES \* LARGE PARTIES**

200 person Capacity  
Kitchen & Bar Facilities Available  
Bartender & Clean-up included with all  
rentals

Please call IBEW Local Union 245  
(419) 666-3350

&  
speak to either Kelli or Lisa

Office Hours 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



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Brothers and Sisters the time is critical we must begin to get involved in our political process, many things can be done but choosing to do nothing is the worst thing we can do. Without a renewed insurgence of help and support for issues that pertain to the financial well being of our middle class families we are allowing the special interest lobbyists to pour money into the politicians re-election funds to make the rules and laws that only help the short term profits that are destroying our nation. Politicians know that a very small percentage of their constituents ever voice their concerns with them. If you were in their shoes would you change anything if you were not forced to? They can live the life of luxury without being questioned or any threat of loosing their job. We need to get active and make the politicians work for us. We don't have the big money to give them but we do have the votes, if we can get all of our friend, neighbors, co-workers, and family members to get out and become active we could change things within an election cycle. Doing nothing is not an option. I hope we have started a fire under you, if you would like to get more information on your politicians, the issues relevant today, or how to get involved I have some web sites you can look into. Start by becoming informed and then get active. Together we can make a difference. You can be confident that Larry, Phil, and I will be working for you and your family's best financial interest. We will be out talking with the politicians about the issues and your interests because if we don't who will. Will you help us to help you and your family?

Fraternally,



Ken Erdmann  
Asst. Business Manager

**Web Sites:  
site:**

**Description of web**

Ibew.org

Click on “Political Action” to contact your local politicians

Aflcio.org  
Action

Click on “Legislative Center”

Ohafclcio.org

Ohio's AFL-CIO

Jwj.org

Website to improve working people's standard of living.

Do a Yahoo search on:

Labor Issues  
Middle Class Issues  
Lobbyist Reform  
Health Care Reform

# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

LOCAL 245

705 Lime City Road Rossford, Ohio 43460

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U.S. Postage  
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Toledo, Ohio  
Permit No. 307

## Change of Address

Send this form to your  
local union.

**Help Us Avoid  
Costly  
Postal Charges**



Local Union \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Old Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

## Local 245 Agenda

- May 9 – Retirees Meeting @ 10:30 a.m.
- May 9 – Executive Board Meeting @ 7 p.m.
- May 11 – **Regularly scheduled Local 245 Union Meeting – 7:30 p.m.**
- May 13 – ALBAT @ 9 a.m.
- May 13 – Apprentice/New Hire Picnic @ 1 p.m.-?
- May 20 – ALBAT @ 9 a.m.
- May 23 – Executive Board Meeting @ 7 p.m.
- May 29 – **Office Closed**
- June 8 – **Regularly scheduled Local 245 Union Meeting – 7:30 p.m.**
- June 13 – Retirees Meeting @ 10:30 a.m.
- June 17 – ALBAT @ 9 a.m.
- June 17 – Fellowship Committee Picnic from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.
- June 20 – Executive Board Meeting @ 7 p.m.
- June 24 – ALBAT @ 9 a.m.
- July 4 – **Office Closed**
- July 11 – Retirees Meeting @ 10:30 a.m.
- July 13 – **Regularly scheduled Local 245 Union Meeting – 7:30 p.m.**
- July 25 – Executive Board Meeting @ 7 p.m.