

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Maine & New Hampshire

### New Owners Ready to Acquire Eversource NH Generation Assets

After waiting for more than three years to find out who will take ownership of the electric generation assets of Eversource NH (formerly PSNH), IBEW 1837 members and New Hampshire ratepayers finally have their answer. The winning bidders of an auction were announced on October 12 in an Eversource filing with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (NHPUC).

Eversource said their nine hydroelectric plants are being purchased for \$83 million by Hull Street Energy, LLC and its affiliates. Hull Street is a private equity firm based in Bethesda, Maryland, that is focused on the power generation industry. The new owners plan to retain all of their union employees.

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The three fossil fuel plants (Newington, Merrimack and Schiller Stations) are being purchased for \$175 million by a partnership of Granite Shore Power LLC, a 50-50 joint venture of Atlas Holdings of Greenwich, Connecticut, and Castleton Commodities International of Stamford, Connecticut. A half dozen or fewer union employees will be laid off as a result of the sale.

The New Hampshire PUC is expected to approve both of these transactions by year's end.

In 2014, Eversource entered into settlement talks related to the divestiture of their generating assets as the PUC responded to a new law giving them the authority to force

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# New Contracts Ratified at Eversource, CMP, Granite Ridge & WABI-TV



Union Negotiators met 16 times with Eversource management before reaching a contract agreement to bring to the membership for a vote. (Photo: Sue Ekola)

IBEW 1837 members at four of our represented companies negotiated and voted to ratify contract agreements in 2017.

In June, IBEW members employed by **Eversource NH** in the Utility Group have narrowly voted to ratify a new, 3-year contract agreement. Although the Union has a policy against publicly disclosing the exact voting tally, IBEW Local #1837 officials described the outcome as "extremely close."

The Union Negotiating Team did not offer a formal recommendation to IBEW 1837 members to approve or reject the agreement. While many members expressed satisfaction with the overall package, others were disappointed that some Company proposals remained in their last and final offer.

Members of IBEW Local #1837 employed at Eversource NH's Generation assets were affected by the ratified agreement. They voted in May of 2015 to extend their contract as the Company was moving ahead with the divestiture and sale of Merrimack Station, Newington Station and Schiller Station fossil fuel plants and their hydropower generating facilities. Those members agreed at that time to accept any general wage increases and benefit changes negotiated by the Utility Group. (See *New Owners Ready to Acquire Eversource Generation*.)

Both groups of workers are set to receive a 3% wage increase in each of the next three years. Members in the Utility Group will also receive a 60 cents per hour wage revaluation prior to the first increase in effect as of June 4, 2017.

The new contract includes changes in the employee holiday schedule with the removal of the day after Thanksgiving and the addition of the Martin Luther King Day holiday as well as an additional floating holiday under the new agreement. There are also changes in the Company vacation policy.

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### New Contracts Ratified at Eversource, CMP, Granite Ridge & WABI-TV

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A new disability plan will be put into effect during the term of the agreement. All new employees will be participating in the disability plan and incumbent members will have the one time option to opt into the new plan, or opt into the grandfathered plan during open enrollment in October 2017. Caps will be put in place for the cost of employee health insurance benefits for the next three years.

Another significant change for many of our members is the transition from a straight 8-hour work day to an 8 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-hour work day with a half-hour unpaid lunch period. The Union negotiated a delay in this Company-proposed change to June 30, 2018, to allow members to make necessary changes in their personal arrangements for childcare and other needs.

There will also be increases of 50 cents per hour for troubleshooters working the 12-hour rotating shift, stand-by pay, and shift premium pay. The Company will also have the right to establish 12 additional Troubleshooter positions in different locations throughout the state.

For the Utility Group, an agreement was reached to create a Wage Review Committee comprised of Union members and management. The committee will review and analyze the wage issues raised by the Union at the bargaining table. Upon recommendation of the committee the contract may be reopened to negotiate a wage revaluation during the next three years.

The Union and the Company also agreed to create joint safety review committees comprised of equal numbers of Union members and System Operations Center (SOC) leadership to review current practices. This includes troubleshooter inclement work practices, refusing required help when requested and "Do Not Go Out" calls between 10:00pm and 5:00am. In addition, a safety review committee comprised of equal number of Union members and Operations Supervision will review and analyze inclement weather line work as well as not supplying required help when requested.

This is the first time that Eversource employees from the Nashua Area Work Center are voting on a contract as members of IBEW Local #1837. Those 22 workers indicated their desire in April to change their representation to IBEW from a different union.

In addition, the recently-organized Credit Specialists voted separately to approve being incorporated into the Utility Group collective bargaining agreement. These seven employees, known within the company as "Collectors," also accepted a change in their job classification to Field Service Representatives.

"As always, I'm very grateful for all the work put into these negotiations by our Union team. They gave up many hours of their own personal time during the weeks leading up to this agreement and even missed most of the recent holiday weekend to help us get this contract for our members," IBEW 1837 Assistant Business Manager Tom Ryan said.

"I was especially impressed by the new members of our team," IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers said. "Although it was their first time at the bargaining table, they offered valuable, thoughtful comments and made a real contribution to this effort."

The Union Negotiating Team was Kitty Kilroy, Pat Moran, Kyle Ryan, Jake Cote, Jeff Huckins, Matt Keefe, Chris Giumarra, Mark Goodspeed, Pam Paquette, Rick Simons, Tony Sapienza, and Jay Davidson in addition to Tom Ryan, Dick Rogers and IBEW 1837 Administrative Assistant Sue Ekola.

More than 400 members of IBEW Local 1837 work for Eversource NH at the former Public Service Company of New Hampshire – approximately 275 in the Utility Group and 150 in the Generation Group. Eversource, the largest electric utility in New Hampshire, provides electricity for more than 475,000 homes and businesses.

**Central Maine Power Company** members of IBEW 1837 approved a contract extension that guarantees them annual 3% wage increases while all the terms and conditions of their current collective bargaining agreement remain the same.

The extended contract runs through April 30, 2021.

The Production Unit members will receive an advance of 1% of the 2017 Group Incentive Bonus Payout that's paid out in 2018.

Members of the smaller Administrative & Technical bargaining unit will be merged into the larger Production unit and be included in the Group Incentive Plan. All A & T members will receive the balance of the recent Group Incentive Bonus Payout to the Production unit and their existing bonus payout.

"The CMP offer came as we were discussing the A & T contract and once the offer had



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If members had rejected the Company extension offer, the Union would have moved forward with a standard contract negotiation process. In fact, IBEW had begun collecting proposals and had informal discussions with CMP about some glaring issues of concern.

"While there are already some very good proposals for the upcoming negotiations, not putting forward an offer of three years that has no takeaways and includes general wage increases of 3% each year would not be fair to the entire body and should not be decided by just myself and our Chief Stewards," Rogers said. He added that "Given the vote outcome, it's clear the right decision was made to take it to our members."



Members working at Central Maine Power comprise the largest bargaining

unit of IBEW Local 1837, with more than 600 represented members. Collectively, these union members design, build, repair and maintain the electric grid serving the largest customer base of any electric utility in Maine, and provide customer service assistance to residents and businesses in most of southern, central and western Maine. They also control the balance and flow of electricity across the grid beyond their own customer base into other parts of Maine and New England.

IBEW members working at **Granite Ridge Energy** in Londonderry, New Hampshire have ratified a new collective bargaining agreement to take them through the next three years. It's the second contract for the union local with Calpine Corporation, a Houston-based generator of electricity from natural gas and geothermal resources with more than 80 power plants.

The agreement features a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ % wage adjustment per year with the first of three raises taking effect on March 27, 2018, and the final two increases on that date in 2019 and 2020. The contract will run through September 27, 2020.

Other substantive changes include the addition of two floating holidays - one in January 2018 and the other in January 2020.

The Union Bargaining Team included Chief Steward James Golles (a Control Room Operator at Granite Ridge), IBEW 1837 Assistant

Business Manager Tom Ryan, Business Manager Dick Rogers and Administrative Assistant Sue Ekola.

"The team negotiated extremely hard to get what we got," Brother Ryan said. "It was a tough negotiation."

IBEW Local 1837 represents all 19 maintenance and operations personnel at the gas-fired plant.

Our members at **WABI-TV in Bangor** have a new 2-year contract that goes into effect in January 2018. The station was recently acquired by Gray Television, Inc., and this is their first agreement with the new owners.

The contract includes 2½% pay increases in each of the two years with additional wage adjustments for some of the members there. With a transition to a new paid time off policy, the Company agreed to a transition year during which union members could utilize vacation time earned the previous year while accruing new paid time off moving forward. Steward Dianne Berry assisted IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers and Business Representative Matt Beck in bargaining the agreement.

@IBEW1837

IBEW Local 1837

Workers at Granite Ridge Energy first voted to join

Workers at Granite Ridge Energy first voted to join IBEW Local #1837 in a National Labor Relations Board election in 2006.

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207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652 www.ibew1837.org President - Michelle Crocker

**Newsletter of IBEW Local 1837** 

The Current

Vice President - Bob McNeff Secretary & Treasurer - Pam Paquette Business Manager - Dick Rogers Assistant Business Manager - Tom Ryan Business Representative - Renee Gilman Business Rep. / Current Editor - Matt Beck

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## IBEW 1837 Members Elect New Union Officers

IBEW 1837 elected new union officers this summer. Dick Rogers was been elected to a third 3-year term as Business Manager and Financial Secretary of the Local Union. Michelle Crocker was elected to her first term as President, succeeding Bill Tarallo (see story at right).

IBEW Local Union #1837 elects officers once every three years by mail-in ballot of all members in good standing. Ballots were tallied on June 23, 2017, at the Manchester, Maine, office of IBEW Local #1837 by Election Judge Becky Rugan (Central Maine Power) and Election Teller Mark Penney (Eversource). The new officers and Executive Board are:

> **President:** Michelle Crocker

Vice President: Bob McNeff

**Recording Secretary:** Pamela Paquette

Financial Secretary-Business Manager: Dick Rogers

> **Treasurer:** Lisa Bartell

**Executive Board Unit 1 (Dover, NH):** Rebecca Johnson

**Executive Board Unit 2 (Manchester, NH):** Anthony Sapienza

**Executive Board Unit 3 (Laconia, NH):** Jeffrey Huckins

**Executive Board Unit 4 (Berlin - Lancaster, NH):** Justin McNeff

**Executive Board Unit 5 (Keene, NH):** Artie Cornelissen

**Executive Board Unit 6 (Portland, ME):** John Heald

**Executive Board Unit #7 (Lewiston, ME):** Julie Goodell

Executive Board Unit #8 (Augusta, ME): Greg Fortin

**Executive Board Unit #9 (Waterville, ME):** Anita Libby

**Executive Board Unit #10 (Bangor/Ellsworth, ME)** Aaron Gilman

**Executive Board Unit #11 (Presque Isle, ME):** Bruce Ayotte

Complete election results are posted in the Members Only section of our website: www.ibew1837.org.

### IBEW 1837's Bill Tarallo Retires After 50 Years at PSNH/Eversource



Brother Tarallo retired shortly after his final meeting as President of IBEW Local #1837, following 50 years of membership and service in the Union. Bill worked his entire career at the same company, as this vintage ID card shows.

With a career spanning five decades as a worker at Public Service Company of New Hampshire (now Eversource) and as a union activist, Bill Tarallo's retirement on June 30th was truly the end of an era for IBEW Local #1837. For five decades, Brother Tarallo served in virtually every possible elected office and staff position for his union.

"It's hard to put 50 years into thoughts or words," Brother Tarallo said. "Because of the Union, we made PSNH a better place to work."

Bill's impact went well beyond PSNH. During his tenure as IBEW Local 1837's Business Manager, he helped negotiate contracts for represented companies in Maine and New Hampshire. As President of the Union and in several other offices, he did everything he could to keep the union moving forward.

Longtime union activist Kerry Guptill fondly remembers working shoulder-to-shoulder with Brother Tarallo almost from the moment she started at PSNH and right through her own retirement last year.

"As a young 19-year-old clerical worker, I was approached by a Meter Dept. worker from our division office, asking me what I knew about unions," Sister Guptill said. "Over the next 40 plus years, I had the privilege of working with Bill on numerous functions in the Local. He always had the best interests of the people he represented, as well as their family members."

"We are in a better place to help our members than we have ever been," Tarallo added. "The IBEW is the best union and we're lucky to be part of it."

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#### Please Keep Your Union Information Up-to-Date!

It's important that IBEW 1837 members notify the Union Office when they move or change phone numbers (or eliminate landline phones). We may need to send you information by mail or contact you about important Union business. If we can't reach you in a timely manner, you may miss getting some information about important activities. Also, be sure to routinely check your paystubs to make sure that your wages are correct and that your Union dues are being correctly withheld. We hate having to send out bills for unpaid dues payments but it's only fair that every member pays what they owe in a timely manner.

#### **Donate to IBEW-PAC**

Members' union dues are never used for contributions to political candidates, but some members choose to make voluntary contributions to the **National IBEW Political Action Committee or PAC**. The IBEW-PAC in turn donates to candidates who support working people and their unions. Your voluntary member contributions can be made through payroll deduction at some of our represented companies or by writing a check made out to the IBEW-PAC and mailing it to the Union Office. Contact the Union Office for more information at 207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652.

#### **Distracted Driving Can Put You in Legal Jeopardy**

Although Maine law doesn't explicitly prohibit the use of hand-held cellular phones like New Hampshire and many other states, it does allow law enforcement to cite drivers for distracted driving. In fact, Maine's Supreme Judicial Court recently ruled that police don't even have to prove what specifically distracted a driver involved in a crash. Drivers can be cited for distracted driving based on circumstantial evidence. They can be convicted regardless of whether it can be proven that the driver was texting, eating or engaging in another activity that impaired their ability to drive safely.

#### Stewards and All Members Should Keep Written Records

Stewards have always been encouraged to keep written notes and records for their own benefit and for possible later use in arbitrations. In addition, any conversations with management that may seem to settle a workplace issue ought to be memorialized in a written agreement. "Just as stewards should protect themselves by not meeting with management alone, they need to be sure to put grievance settlements in writing," said Tom Juravich, director of the Labor Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. When in doubt, it's always best to check with your Union Business Manager or Representative. We all need to make sure that we keep good records for the Union Leaders, Union Stewards and members who come after us.

#### Steward Training Class Set for Saturday, April 28th in Hooksett

New Stewards are encouraged to attend an Introductory Steward Training on Saturday, April 28th from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the NH AFL-CIO Union Hall, 161 Londonderry Turnpike, Hooksett, NH. This training is also open to members who may not be interested in becoming Stewards but would like to learn more about how the Union functions. All educational materials are provided free of charge. Travel expenses and all meals will be reimbursed by IBEW. Contact the Union Office for more information at 207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652.

#### Your Safety is Your Responsibility

Our employers have an obligation to provide safe workplaces. Union members are reminded to carefully follow all required safety procedures. Cutting corners is never a good idea when it comes to safety. Even if you don't get hurt, you could still get disciplined. Failing to follow company safety rules is a serious matter. If you stop working on a job because of safety questions or concerns, you will be fine. If you don't know what the safety rules are, ask! At the end of the day, we want to make sure everyone avoids unnecessary discipline and, more importantly, gets home, safe and sound.

#### Weingarten Rights

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You have the right to Union representation if you are called into a meeting with management that you may reasonably expect could lead to discipline. (Non-union employees do NOT have this right.) Management is not required to inform you of this right – you need to request it. You should say the following:

"If this interview could in any way lead to my being disciplined, terminated or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer or steward be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to answer questions."

If management refuses, stay in the room, take notes, and do not answer any questions. Then, immediately contact your Steward or call the Union office at 207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652.

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### **IBEW 1837 Members Help Defeat So-called "Right to Work" in NH**



From left to right: IBEW 1837's Rick Simons, Bob McNeff, Barry Crawford (retired), Bill Tarallo, and Becky Johnson helped line the halls of the NH State House in Concord.

Members and retirees from IBEW 1837 joined with their union Brothers and Sisters throughout the Granite State and helped defeat a so-called "Right to Work" bill in the New Hampshire House of Representatives, 200 – 177. By doing so, the state's Labor Movement overcame tremendous odds in thwarting a top policy priority of new Republican Gov. Chris Sununu, who had GOP majorities in both bodies of the state legislature.

So-called "Right to Work" was narrowly approved by the Senate, 12 - 11, although its passage there was never really in doubt.

Everyone knew it would be a tougher sell in the House. Even though Republicans control that legislative chamber by a 226 - 173 margin, some of them are Union members or supporters of collective bargaining rights who recognize the true purpose of these union-busting bills. In the end, a total of 32 Republicans joined Democrats in the House and voted against "Right to Work."

Hundreds of union members packed Representatives Hall at the State House in Concord for a public hearing on the bill before the House Labor Committee. Dozens of union members and allies from faith and community groups testified in opposition to it while only a handful of people testified in favor of "Right to Work." Two IBEW 1837 members from Eversource testified in opposition: Rebecca Johnson, a Control Room Operator from Schiller Station, and Pat Moran, a Troubleshooter from the Hooksett AWC.

"To work beside someone who is enjoying the benefits I am paying for is not right and you know it," Sister Johnson said, referring to "free riders" who are protected by the contract but choose to pay nothing in "Right to Work" states. "The bottom line is this bill is really not about paying dues so much as it is about splintering workers to their own corners and to take away hard fought benefits."

## \$1 Per Month Union Dues Increase in 2018

The portion of each member's union dues that goes to IBEW International will increase by \$1 per month beginning on January 1, 2018 due to an increase approved at the IBEW 39th International Convention in 2016. This increase will affect all members in the Brotherhood.

It's important that the members of IBEW 1837 understand that the portion of the dues that go to our Local has not increased. In fact, we have taken many steps to make sure an increase will not be needed for the foreseeable future. With only a modest growth in members at the national level, the Union's leadership and delegates agreed that the increase was necessary for the International to meet its projected expenses.

Delegates approved a \$1 increase in the monthly per capita dues rate, effective January 1, 2018, and a second increase of \$1, effective January 1, 2020.

Most members of IBEW Local #1837 are known as "BA" members but a small percentage are "A" members who make monthly contributions to a pension fund. "A" members will have a \$1 monthly increase their contributions to the pension fund effective January 1, 2019. (Contact the Union Office if you would like more information about how to become an "A" member.)

The monthly per capita portion of dues for each member (sometimes referred to as a "per capita tax") will be as follows:

> 1/1/2018 1/1/2020

\$19.00 per month \$20.00 per month



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### New Owners Ready to Acquire Eversource NH Generation Assets

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Union members at fossil generation facilities including Schiller Station who are affected by the divestiture are eligible for additional benefits under the terms of the agreement reached between Eversource and the IBEW Local #1837.

the Company to sell them if it was in the "economic interest" of ratepayers. PSNH had been under pressure to sell in large part because costs associated with a state-mandated "scrubber" to reduce mercury emissions at Merrimack Station had led to substantial upward pressure on residential electric rates.

In 2015, IBEW 1837 members overwhelmingly ratified an agreement that extended their contract while providing additional employee protections if the fossil or hydro facilities were sold or closed. All prospective buyers agreed to abide by the terms of the Union contract and to continue to run the facilities for at least 18 months after the deal was finalized.

"We have already begun meeting with the new owners to ensure the continuing success of these generation assets," IBEW 1837 Assistant Manager Tom Ryan said. "We're proud of the quality work provided by our members and we're glad that all of these facilities will continue to make important contributions to their surrounding communities while providing critical electricity to the power grid."

The Union represents more than 150 members at the Merrimack Station, Newington Station and Schiller Station fossil fuel plants as well as at nine hydropower generating facilities throughout the state.

## Members Worked Power Restoration in ME, NH and FL

IBEW 1837 members working for Emera, Eversource and Unitil were pressed into service for the massive power restoration efforts in Florida following Hurricane Irma. An estimated 6.8 million people lost power in the Sunshine State as a result of the early September storm.

Emera crews from Presque Isle, Maine, assisted crews from Tampa Electric Company (TECO), another Emera-owned utility (see photo at right).

In late October, Maine and New Hampshire were blasted by a powerful windstorm that led to countless hours of overtime for our members restoring power. There were hundreds of thousands of outages in both states with Central Maine Power customers in York, Cumberland, Kennebec, and Androscoggin Counties, the hardest hit. Roughly 484,000 customers were without electricity at the height of the outages in Maine - more than during the 1998 Ice Storm. The



Emera Maine line crews helped restore power in Tampa, Florida, after Hurricane Irma. From left to right: Robert Morton-TECO 1st Class Lineworker (and bird dog for our guys on this trip), Ryan Fysh-Emera Maine Supervisor (and former 1st class Emera Lineworker), Mark King, Alex Shields, Dean Sprague, Brandon Croteau, Kirk Chase, Gerard Turgeon, Bruce Ayotte, Bruce Frost, Mike Leach, Jeremiah Fitzherbert, Steve Sager and Corey Coulombe.

storm also left 450,000 New Hampshire electricity customers without power at its peak. Many customers were without power for close to a week or even longer in spite of the tremendous efforts put forward by our members.

When CMP eliminated 142 positions in 2010 during the switch to AMI or so-called "Smart Meters" along with other positions lost through early retirements, IBEW 1837 expressed concern to the Maine PUC in public testimony about the effect those lost positions might have on power restoration after a major storm. It appears those concerns were accurate.

Rep. Seth Berry, House Chair of the Maine Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Joint Committee, while praising the lineworkers and other CMP employees, has been critical of CMP's response. Rep. Berry has begun to examine why the outages were so widespread and why it took so long to restore power to Maine customers.

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*IBEW 1837 members are welcome at any unit meeting to discuss issues affecting their jobs and their union.* 

Some meeting dates, times and locations have changed.

Units may not meet during storms or on holidays. Check with your steward, the union office, or log on to www.ibew1837.org before driving!



### Unit 1, Dover: Third Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

IBEW Local 1837 Office; 680 Central Ave., Suite 202; Dover NH 03820

**Unit 2, Manchester General:** Second Tuesday at 5:15 p.m. *Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 131 Union Hall; 161 Londonderry Turnpike; Hooksett, NH 03106* 

Unit 2, Concord Electric Sub-unit: Third Wednesday at 3:00 p.m.

West Congregational Church; 499 No. State Street; Concord, NH 03301

Unit 3, Laconia: Third Thursday at 5:15 p.m.

Laconia Elks Lodge; 17 Sugarbush Lane; Gilford, NH 03249

**Unit 4, Berlin/ Lancaster:** Fourth Wednesday at 5:15 p.m. (Call 603-470-4239 to confirm.) *Randolph Town Hall; 130 Durand Road; Randolph, NH 03593* 

**Unit 5, Keene:** First Thursday at 4:30 p.m. *NEW LOCATION: Hillsborough Fire Department, 15 Central Street, Hillsborough, NH 03244* 

**Unit 6, Portland:** First Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. *Teamsters 340 Union Hall; 144 Thadeus Street; South Portland, ME 04106* 

**Unit 7, Lewiston:** First Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. *IBEW Local 567 Union Hall; 238 Goddard Road; Lewiston, ME 04240* 

Unit 8, Augusta: Third Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. IBEW Local 1837 Office (Conference Room); 16 Old Winthrop Road; Manchester, ME 04351

**Unit 9, Waterville:** Second Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. *IBEW Local 1253 Union Hall; 176 Main Street; Fairfield, ME 04937* 

Unit 10, Bangor/Ellsworth: Third Thursday at 5:30 p.m. January, April, July and October only: Ellsworth City Hall; 1 City Hall Plaza; Ellsworth, ME 04605 All other meetings: Solidarity Center; 20 Ivers Street; Brewer, ME 04412

**Unit 11, Presque Isle:** Fourth Thursday at 6:00 p.m. *Hampton Inn; 768 Main Street; Presque Isle, ME 04769* 

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