

Circuits

Local 50 Members Raise Record Funds for United Way



Richmond, Va., Local 50 leaders are honored for record fundraising.

Even with the rocky economy as a backdrop, members of Richmond, Va., Local 50 working at Dominion Virginia Power raised nearly a quarter million dollars in donations for the United Way in 2008 — by far the local's largest amount to date.

"Our members understand that since we derive our income from the community, we need to return some of it as well," Local 50 Business Manager Jack Wells said. The local represents more than 3,500 nuclear and hydroelectric workers, linemen and other employees at Dominion across Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina. "Times are tough right now for a lot of people, and if we're able to lend a hand, that's what we'll do."

While overall community donations to the United Way dropped at least 15 percent last year, Local 50 members stepped up their level of participation in 2008. Twenty-nine percent of the membership donated, resulting in a 32 percent increase from the previous year.

Data Center Owners Among Code of Excellence Converts

When the second largest pharmaceutical company in the world announced its intention to build a data center to store its vast holdings of electronic records, GlaxoSmithKline turned to the promise of the Code of Excellence.

More than a year later, just weeks away from completion of the massive and complex electrical portion of the job completed under tight deadlines, the customer is still smiling.

"GlaxoSmithKline is very impressed," said MBR Construction Services CEO Kenny Field, the project's electrical contractor, signatory to Norristown, Pa., Local 380. "They have other projects in the territory and it will go a long way to insuring those projects are union."

The company had its pick of contractors for the \$30 million electrical job when it received a presentation from Local 380 on the advantages of a Code of Excellence project by the IBEW.

"As the job has moved forward, productivity is excellent and absenteeism is way down," said Local 380 Business Manager Dave Schaaf. "It's a nice story all the way around."

Members have installed 110,000 feet of conduit underground and 235,000 feet of conduit overhead in the suburban Philadelphia center.

The 200,000-square-foot building has two main electrical feeds, a normal and a back-up, which connect to two 35-kilovolt outdoor substations, both of which have their own back-ups. The double-ended redundant power systems are designed to prevent any possibility of data lost due to power failures.

"From an electrical standpoint, it's a significant job for a contractor," Field said. "The union supplied us with qualified people."

Field advocated the continued use of the Code of Excellence, a voluntary pledge IBEW members make to professionalism, safety and quality workmanship. "It makes everyone a little more responsible for what they're doing," Field said.

Third District Vice President Don Siegel said the secret to the success of the Code of Excellence is a good working relationship with the contractor. "MBR has been an IBEW employer and partner for over 80 years," Siegel said. "Local 380 and MBR have proven once again that the IBEW has the highest skilled and best trained electrical workers in the industry."

More than 100 members of Local 380 have been on the job over the past year, Schaaf said.

"This is by far the biggest thing we have going," Schaaf said. "It's been a significant thing for this local."

Local 380 members have been rewarded with multiple safety awards for their careful work, Field said. "It's been a very safe job."

Career: Up. Tuition: Down.

IBEW has partnered with Excelsior College to give IBEW members access to college degrees and significant savings on tuition and fees.

College is more affordable than ever for all IBEW members.

IBEW members may transfer in credits already earned at other accredited colleges and universities, credit for evaluated industry training, such as NJATC and NUAP, and ACE-evaluated military training.

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Members of Norristown, Pa., Local 380 received a safety award for their work on a new data center.