



August 15, 2025 Vol. 126, No. 16



BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

BY GARTH BACHMAN

Hello members of IBEW Local 48. I would first like to thank all of the members of Local 48 for electing me for another term as your business manager. There is still a lot to do, and I will continue to fight

to protect our work, our members, and our local.

Our summer picnic was another tremendous success. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to make it a really fun event, and special thanks to our own Angie Gross. Angie took on the duties of planning the picnic this year, and she did a phenomenal job.

The work picture is still a bit bleak, but there are some jobs that will hopefully put some members to work. The STACK data center is still growing, and the Bull Run filtration project is expected to put about 150 more electricians to work. The GOR data center in The Dalles still has calls coming up as well. I would highly encourage our members to

sign the books in Locals 112, 191, and 280. All of those locals have been putting travelers to work.

We will be discussing next year's wage allocation in the near future. I am quite sure that Harrison will need additional money, but I do not know the amount yet. We are currently in our last year of non-accruing contributions to Edison, so that will not be required for 2026.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a couple of reminders. If you see anyone doing our work that is not an electrician, please call the hall and let us know. And if you are in the position of running work, please remember that in our local union our members should be the last ones laid off.



Local 48 veterans are recognized at the 2025 summer picnic.

IBEW Local 48 Summer Picnic 2025

BY SCOTT ZADOW
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE



On a very hot July day, IBEW Local 48 members, along with their families and friends, came together for the annual summer picnic.

The 2025 picnic had a bit of everything. The hall was open with the AC blasting while folks played bingo, hoping to win one of the many prizes available. Outside, the kids had a blast with face painting, balloon twisting, and carnival rides, while the grown-ups enjoyed music, the many industry partners with information and cool swag to give away,

and good conversations.

Of course, no picnic is complete without great food, and the smell of the BBQ was hard to miss. We had chicken, burgers, hot dogs, watermelon, and ice cream that hit the sweet spot and helped keep people cool. Plus, the drinks were flowing, keeping everyone hydrated and refreshed under the hot sun. A big thanks to McKillips for catering our event!

The raffle was a huge hit again as always, but this year's highlight was getting to take a picture with Garth on the back of his Harley (keep a lookout for another chance to get a picture at this year's golf tournament)! Iykyk!

This year's picnic had around 4,000 people show up, and we're proud to see how this event continues to grow

year after year. It's always great to see so many familiar faces, with all of us taking a step away from the worksite to reconnect, unwind, and make memories.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who worked hard to make this event a success. Some even volunteered on both Saturday and Sunday to make this happen. A special thank you goes to Angie Gross for her time and vision in putting on this event. Her leadership and all our volunteers are the reason this year's picnic was successful.

We're already looking ahead to next year's picnic. If you have any ideas or suggestions on how we can make future picnics even better, don't hesitate to reach out to me at scott@ibew48.com.

Sound and Communications update

This past June, the Sound and Communication Unit held its nominations and elections for the Executive Committee. I want to sincerely thank everyone who stepped up to serve. We appreciate your commitment to the unit and to your fellow members for the upcoming three-year term.

The newly elected Executive Committee members are:

- **Chair:** Amanda Swan
- **Vice Chair:** Zack Lyon
- **Recorder:** Gabriel Rogers
- **Members at Large:** Joey Prentice, Brian Tate, Mike Englemann, and Joe Hammond

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize and thank **David Abbott** for his

dedicated service on this committee in multiple roles since 2009. I've known Dave since we were both apprentices, having first worked together back in 1997. From the beginning, he has always been someone who steps up and gives back.

Dave has been a familiar face at the Grotto and has consistently volunteered his time at Local 48 blitzes and summer picnics over the years. His passion and dedication to IBEW Local 48 have left a lasting impact.

Thank you, Dave, for your years of service and your love for our union.

2025 Political Update

BY MARSHALL MCGRADY
POLITICAL DIRECTOR



Brothers and sisters, the end of June brought the end of the 2025 long session into play, and with

it a couple of significant wins for workers here in the state. First was HB 2688, which removes the offsite fabrication exemption from prevailing wage laws. Prior to this law, prefabricated work done offsite of a prevailing wage project was not required to be paid at the prevailing wage.

This was a massive advantage to non-union contractors, as they were able to pay significantly less than union scale. We worked in conjunction with SMART Local 16 and Ironworkers Local 29 to get this important piece of legislation passed. Hopefully, this change in the law will grant an increase in market share on prevailing wage projects throughout the state.

The second major victory for workers was SB 916, Unemployment Insurance for Striking Workers, sponsored by the AFL-CIO. Starting on Jan. 1,

2026, workers on strike will be eligible for UI benefits for up to 10 weeks after a two-week waiting period. This bill was quite contentious, and a few concessions had to be made for it to make it through the legislative process. Despite the challenges, this is a significant win for represented workers across the state.

Next on the docket was funding for BOLI. While the agency did not get every dollar they asked for, they did receive the largest increase in funding to date. This will allow the hiring of over 60 new workers to help BOLI clear their substantial backlog and ensure that they are able to enforce the wage and hour civil rights laws they are entrusted with.

Finally, on a personal note, I recently accepted the position of training director of our apprenticeship program, and I began working full-time in the position on July 23. Working in politics in Oregon has been challenging, intensely rewarding, and far more complex than I ever would have imagined.

I will continue to stay involved in Oregon politics to ensure we have protections in place for apprenticeship, licensing, and the unionized electrical industry in general.

From Campaign to Contract: Building union power in Clark County

BY NICK MITCHELL
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE



Hello, brothers and sisters. I hope you're all enjoying this incredible summer weather.

The older I get, the more I appreciate the summers here in the Pacific Northwest. On the flip side, the older I get, the faster they go by.

Lately, I haven't had much good news to share, so I thought it'd be a great time to highlight something positive happening in our union. Many of you may not realize that we represent several contracts outside of the construction industry, and one of the newer contracts is Clark County facilities.

Right now, we have four or five electricians working in maintenance at Clark County, but what you may not know is that we also represent another four or five plumbers in the same capacity. A couple of years ago, when the unit first organized,

they were earning just under \$40 per hour. After a successful campaign, they secured more than \$9 per hour in raises, which was a huge win.

A year and a half later, other trades working for the county reached out to me, asking about the possibility of organizing with Local 48. Some of these workers had been told by management that if they organized and fought for raises, the county wouldn't be able to afford them and would likely lay them off. But, as it turns out, the same amount of property and equipment still needed to be maintained. No layoffs occurred, and the county was able to absorb the increased wages. Now, the workers who didn't organize are left behind, making below-market wages with no representation or contract.

With the support of Local 48 Organizer Matt Smyth and IO Organizer Ray Lister, we filed a petition to add these workers to the bargaining unit. To the county's credit, they didn't resist the petition, and we agreed it would be more efficient to add them to the existing unit rather

than starting negotiations from scratch.

We had our first bargaining session a couple of weeks ago, and I'm happy to report that we're moving forward. Soon, we'll be adding over 25 tradespeople to the unit, including HVAC technicians, carpenters, painters, electronics techs, and laborers. However, we still have a long road ahead. We need to come to an agreement on wages and scope of work, which, as we know, can be challenging.

We are committed to ensuring that these new members are compensated fairly for their skills and experience. This campaign is far from over, but this group has already shown tremendous courage and patience. It's easy for these campaigns to lose momentum, but this group is standing strong, and we're going to do everything we can to make sure they get what they deserve.

Employer-employee communication is a two-way street

BY MARK HINKLE
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE



Several years ago, I wrote an article on the high cost of low morale, and I still believe this to be a very true state-

ment. However, I now think I have identified the primary reason for the low morale among employees, and, as the title of this article states, it comes down to employer-employee communication.

Effective employer-employee communication is the backbone of any successful organization. It fosters trust, drives productivity, and creates a sense of belonging within the workforce. However, when employers fail to communicate clearly and regularly with their employees, the consequences can be far-reaching and very detrimental to both the employee and the employer.

One of the most immediate

consequences of poor communication is notably poor employee morale, particularly in companies where employees receive vague or infrequent updates. Over time, these employees may begin to question their employer and lose motivation. This may lead to increased dissatisfaction and disengagement, ultimately eroding trust in the employer.

Additionally, this uncertainty creates an environment of anxiety and confusion. Communication isn't just about giving direction; it's also about recognizing a job well done. When feedback is sparse, and employees don't hear from their managers or supervisors, they can feel overlooked and undervalued. Feeling ignored or unappreciated can lead to frustration, ultimately resulting in a decline in the employee's enthusiasm and work ethic.

Further, when employers fail to communicate their vision and expectations, employees often lack a sense of purpose that comes with understanding

how their work contributes to the employer, and without this connection, productivity will decline. Without a clear and open channel of communication, employees will begin to speculate, breeding mistrust. Anxiety and rumors can often take hold, and an unhealthy work environment will result.

A lack of communication also prevents employees from addressing problems directly, leading to interpersonal conflicts. Likewise, without open channels for feedback, employers may not fully understand their employees' struggles or concerns.

All of this can lead to higher-than-normal turnover, which is costly and disruptive to the organization. Fortunately, improving communication in the workplace doesn't have to be expensive or a daunting task; some strategies I have seen good employers implement to bridge the communication gap are:

- 1) Keeping employees informed with regular updates from the employer,

such as regular standing meetings, email updates, and real open-door policies for employees to talk to their supervisor.

- 2) Encouraging feedback from their employees.

These can foster transparency and help employees stay informed. By implementing transparent and two-way communication practices, employers can enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention. These factors contribute to a positive work environment and good morale.

As simple as it may seem, effective communication is one thing that costs very little to implement and ultimately has one of the most positive impacts on employees while contributing to the organization's success. Employers who prioritize transparent and open communication will find the investment pays off in terms of more engaged, motivated, and productive employees. Those who don't will struggle to succeed, period.

I will close with this: em-

ployers, ask yourself one question and be brutally honest: do you truly listen to and have two-way communication with your employees? If you think you do, consider these two items:

First, examine employee retention, noting whether you have very few employees with 15 years or more experience while having many employees with less than five years' experience, with few to no employees in between. This indicates a failure in communication with employees.

Second, review your discipline records over the last 10 years. If you notice a steady increase in discipline, this also indicates you have failed in your communication with employees.

If you have both of these things, I suggest looking long and hard in the mirror and asking yourself this question: "Where have we as employers gone wrong in our communication with our employees?"

New Local 48 web site launching soon

BY KEVIN CLOVER
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT



For the last several months, we have been in the process of developing a new Local 48

website. The new site will be launched soon after this article is published.

The project was initiated for two main reasons:

- 1) To create a modernized site that provides an improved user experience, both on desktops and on mobile devices.
- 2) To reorganize the content of the site, making it easier for users to navigate and find the information or function they are seeking more quickly.

Once we established our initial goals for the project, we interviewed several local web development companies to gather proposals for the development of the site. The company that we selected was Eclipse Media Solutions in Southeast Portland. We felt that they were the best fit out of all the candidates due to their capabilities and work samples, and for the fact that they clearly listened to our needs and addressed them thoroughly in their proposal for the site build.

After collaborating with Eclipse on the design and structure of the site, we are now in the final stages of building out all the individual pages. A significant portion of those pages have been built by

myself and Ben Friedle with Outlier, who has worked with Local 48 for years as a web consultant, photographer, and videographer.

Once the new site goes live, you will notice that announcements, notices, and upcoming meetings and events will be featured much more prominently on the home page. As a good portion of my time is spent building that type of content for the website and social media, I am excited to know that it will be much more visible and engaging to our members when they visit the Local 48 website.

I am confident that using the new website will be a smooth and enjoyable experience for our membership. Be on the lookout for it very soon!

Organizing When Times Are Slow

BY MATT SMYTH
MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



The IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) prioritizes organizing even during

slow economic periods for several key reasons:

- **Protecting and improving wages and working conditions:** Union membership generally translates to better wages, benefits (like health care and retirement plans), and job security compared to non-union workers. By expanding its membership and influence, the IBEW strengthens its position to advocate for these improvements for all electrical workers, particularly when economic uncertainty makes individual bargaining difficult.
- **Preventing substandard wages and benefits:** Unorganized workers accepting lower wages and fewer benefits can put downward pressure on the standards established by the union, potentially undermining its achievements over time. Management resist giving pay reductions or insufficient raises because they fear that their best workers will join the union. Organizing during slow times allows the IBEW to address this by bringing more workers into the union mindset, ensuring a fairer playing field and preventing a race to the bottom for wages and conditions.
- **Maintaining market share:** During economic downturns, there might be increased competition for available work. A strong union presence and larger market share ensure that a

greater percentage of the work goes to IBEW members and signatory contractors, which helps protect existing jobs and potentially create new ones.

- **Member Flexibility:** Being in the IBEW offers members the ability to travel and work in different locals during periods of local work slow-downs, helping to maintain employment stability.
- **Leveraging worker concerns:** Economic uncertainty can make non-union workers more receptive to the idea of unionization, as they might be seeking greater job security, better pay, and protection from layoffs or exploitation. This can create opportunities for the IBEW to organize new workers who are looking for a stronger voice in the workplace.
- **Long-term growth and stability:** Organizing, even during challenging times, is an ongoing investment in the future of the union. It helps to build the IBEW's strength and ensure its ability to continue representing and advocating for electrical workers across the industry, weathering both good and bad economic climates.

In essence, the IBEW's focus on organizing during slow times is a proactive strategy to safeguard the interests of its members, ensure a fair and equitable electrical industry, and build a stronger, more resilient union for the long term.

SW Washington Labor Day Celebrations

BY JOE BOND
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE



It is nearing the end of summer, and that means Labor Day is around the corner. There is a long and

storied history regarding the creation of Labor Day and what it means to organized labor. Our area is known for being a stronghold of organized labor throughout history, especially in Southwest Washington. This is why the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council and the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council are

jointly holding a Labor Day picnic for union members and their families at Haydu Park in Kalama, Washington.

This picnic will be attended by multiple unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO, and it's a great way to get together with fellow workers from other unions. Speaking with those workers has been an eye-opening experience, both in terms of learning about the struggles of fellow union workers and receiving thanks from them when we have shown support in their times of need.

You really start to realize that when workers stand together, regardless of which union they are affiliated with, we can make positive changes

for all workers. It is a great example of what the labor councils strive to achieve, with organized labor working together to better the workspace for everyone.

So, if you are in Southwest Washington and want to come to a great picnic full of fellow organized workers, feel free to drop by with your family. There will be food, drinks, raffles, bingo, kids' games, and great times all around. This year we will be getting together on Sept. 1, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Haydu Park, 253 Kalama River Rd., Kalama, Washington

I hope to see you there! I will be helping to cook up the burgers and hot dogs, so if you stop by come say hi!

GOLF TOURNAMENT

2025

SICK FUND BENEFIT

Sunday, September 21



HERON LAKES GOLF COURSE

Register online @ ibew48.com/golf

Questions? Please call Angie at 503-251-9681



Save the Date

2025 Holiday Banquet and Service Awards Presentation

Friday, December 5th

What happens when I am overpaid or underpaid?

BY JOSH CARTER
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE



Many of us have had a pay issue on the job. It is extremely important to know the rules, laws, contracts,

and what an employer can and cannot do when it comes to making corrections for incorrect payments. (Please note that the rules for public sector workers are often a different set of laws.)

The first thing every member should do is contact the employer via email. It is important to have a paper trail if things go south, which certainly happens on a regular basis. At the first sign of trouble, you should contact your steward or representative immediately. (If

you have a steward on the job, it is not a bad idea to notify them in the same email chain as the employer).

So, let's dive into the rules for overpayments, because most union contracts address underpayments clearly.

In Oregon, these are the things an employer can deduct from your paycheck.

ORS 652.110,120,140,150. Employers *may not* withhold, deduct, or divert any portion of your wages, *unless* they are:

- Deductions required by law, such as taxes or garnishments (or related fees).
- Deductions for your private benefit, such as health insurance premiums. For these, you must sign a written authorization, and the deductions must be recorded in the employer's books and records.
- Other deductions authorized by you in writing, provided the employer is not the ultimate recipient of the money.

(For example, charitable contributions.)

- Deductions authorized by a collective bargaining agreement.
- A deduction from a final paycheck for a cash loan to you, if you have voluntarily signed a loan agreement, and the loan was for your sole benefit (additional limitations apply).

An employer can recoup overpayments, provided the employer and employee reach an agreement on how and what is to be paid back. An employer (in Oregon) may not deduct an overpayment from a future paycheck (*Duncan v. Office Depot*, 973 F. Supp. 1171 (D. Or. 1997)).

Washington has very similar rules as above. WAC 296-126-025, and 028.

Additional Overpayment Rules:

RCW 49.48.210 and .210 (public employees) and WAC

296-126-030

Highlights of these rules are:

- The employer must provide written notice of the overpayment, which shall include the amount of overpayment, the basis for the claim, a demand for payment within 20 calendar days of the date on which the employee received the notice, and the rights of the employee under this section or collective bargaining agreement.
- The employee has a right to appeal overpayment (with associated timelines).
- The employer does have the right in Washington to deduct the overpayment from future paychecks if mutually agreed upon.
- The employer only has 90 days to detect, notify, and recoup the overpayment.

If you are underpaid on a paycheck (current employee or final paycheck), you can refer to those same state regs mentioned earlier. It is important to document this as best

possible, because there are timelines for the state laws and your contract (Inside Contract 3.04a,b; Sound and Comm 3.03a,f; Residential-3.04a; Material Handler 3.08.01) when it comes to possible penalties. Please make sure that your steward or rep is aware of the situation.

Also keep in mind that a payroll person may not know our contracts or the state laws, so it is important to have someone on your side who does. Do not just allow them to do whatever they think is best, because what may be best for the employer is often not what is best for the employee.

If any of you ever find yourself in a situation that you are unsure how to handle, please reach out and we can work through it together.

2025 COAST PICNIC Saturday, August 30th

Cullaby Lake County Park
South Shelter
Hawkins Road
Warrenton, OR 97146
12:00pm - 4:00pm



Barbecue, Games, Raffle Prizes, and More!