

2025

WORKING TOGETHER
BUILDING OUR FUTURE



THE RIGHT PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE

Brothers and Sisters,

Serving as your Business Manager for the last six years has been one of the greatest honours of my life. It has been a privilege to stand shoulder to shoulder with the exceptional women and men who make up the team here at IBEW Local 424 and I am exceptionally proud of all we have accomplished so far.

I say “so far” because our work is not done. We have made great strides and are moving in the right direction, but there is still much to do. I believe that if we work together, focused on supporting each other, we can continue to accomplish great things.

Before I get into that, however, I feel it is important to share a bit about me, especially for those Sisters and Brothers whom I have not had the chance to meet.

My name is Michael A. Reinhart. I am a father, a husband, a grandfather, and a Journeyperson Electrician.

I am a proud Albertan, born and raised in our province and have worked in the electrical trade with IBEW Local 424 since starting with a signatory contractor out of Carvel.

You will notice in this letter and throughout the report that I constantly reference the value of working together. That’s because collective coordinated action is the key to success. It’s the foundation of Union work, of course, but it’s more than that. None of us exists on our own – we are all part of a community how we participate in and contribute to that community helps determine how we live our lives.

That’s why I joined the IBEW. That’s also why I became your Business Manager six years ago, and that’s why I’m asking you to choose for me to continue the work I’m doing on your behalf, building our community so that we can all thrive in this growing and changing world.

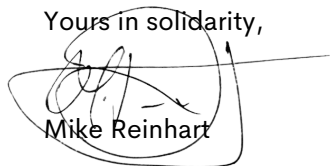
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Under my leadership, we have significantly increased transparency, communication, and engagement with the membership. Members from all corners of Alberta who didn't feel that had a voice had the opportunity to speak and be heard, and through their participation, we were able to get over 70% of the membership to participate in the voting for the most recent construction CBA. That is an incredible achievement, but it is not enough.

I have the personal and professional experience to continue to provide every member in our union an equal opportunity to succeed. It would be an honour to continue to serve you as Business Manager, continuing to build solidarity within the Alberta labour movement while fostering strong working relationships with industry partners.

Building together, we can continue to strengthen our collective voice, our bargaining power, and the legacy of IBEW Local 424.

Yours in solidarity,



Mike Reinhart

P.S. If you have any questions about what you read in this document, please reach out to me - your opinion matters.



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Introduction

The IBEW has been leading the way in Alberta since 1928. With us lighting and powering the growth of Alberta and beyond, we have seen our province become the powerhouse of Canada.

There are nearly 820,000 members and retirees of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers across North America working in a wide variety of fields, including Construction and Maintenance, Utility, Telecommunications, and Manufacturing. Over 72,000 of those members call Canada home, and here at Local 424, we are a diverse family of over 4,000 Brothers and Sisters working together, supporting each other, and building Canada.

Over the years, we have faced and overcome many challenges including recovering from the pandemic, the results of which are still reverberating across the economy. In addition to that global catastrophe, we are dealing with reduced oil sands construction, anti-labour legislation, an over-supply of skilled workers, and an aging workforce.

The work we have done over my last two terms as Business Manager has brought us forward in many meaningful ways, but this document is primarily about recognizing that there is work that still needs to be done to ensure that our members, our families, our communities, and our province continue to prosper.

As I noted in my run for my second term, we need to focus on two main things to retain our position as an industry leader and to push ourselves forward into the future. First, we need to take a bigger share of the markets we already participate in, and second, we need to expand our operations into fields that are new to us as well as fields that we can help pioneer.

When we work together to increase the impact we can have on

industry and the economy, we can build a future that is secure for generations of our Sisters and Brothers.

There is work that still needs to be done.

There are four areas of focus that we need to concentrate our efforts on:

1. **New Industries.** We cannot count on mega-projects to help sustain us like we have in the past – we need to move on from that comfort zone and embrace new opportunities. We have new opportunities in our more traditional areas of work, such as the Enmax substation in Calgary and the Valley Line West in Edmonton, working with Western Pacific Enterprises, and the Red Deer Hospital with Houle. It is also important for us to explore new industries in which we can lead, like in the green energy industry, including small modular reactors (SMRs), and wind farm projects, as well as new opportunities with Dow Chemical, working with Pathways Alliance.

2. Organizing. We need to grow not only our share of the market but also grow the size of the available market. Enhancing our organizing efforts through more effective top-down and bottom-up organizing, as well as increased training for members, such as New COMET, will produce a Local that is more prepared to take advantage of opportunities to successfully organize non-union shops.

3. Political Action. I have worked to provide training for members regarding how to more effectively get involved politically and make connections with decision-makers in the province. We need to move to the next level now and engage with all political parties, not just the one in power. Every elected representative is a voice that is an opportunity for us to have speak on our behalf and be supportive of the high-quality work that we do.

Our Union has become stronger.

4. Member Engagement. We have made great strides in my last term in enhancing member engagement. Through improved online access providing members from all corners of the province the opportunity to participate in our democratic process to hosting a number of events encouraging members and their families to gather and share their lives with each other, our Union has become stronger. Each of us has a responsibility to every other member, and by living up to this responsibility, by becoming engaged, by advocating for each other and promoting the work we do, we can build the future we want.

Achievements of Our Past Term

We should all be very proud of what we have been able to accomplish over the last three years, but the thing that makes the biggest difference to me is that we were able to reach so many more members than we have in the past. The best way to grow our Local is by being engaged with each other and with the work we are doing, and our engagement is way up.

For example, we achieved over 70% membership participation in voting on the Construction CBA, with an 80% approval rate! Participation levels that high are unheard of. I am so impressed with the innovative and dedicated efforts of my team to make that a reality.

The increased engagement yields results, and more than that, it is a virtuous cycle: the more engaged we are, the more power we have, the success we see, and the more engaged we are encouraged to be.

Below is a sample of some of the other successes we saw over the last few years:

- Negotiated significant wage increases across all units
- Ratified the first Lineworker Agreement in over 20 years, ensuring improved conditions and protections for our Lineworkers
- Extended our pension plan to include non-electrician workers in our BA units
- Secured substantial improvements for agreements set to expire in 2024 and 2025
- Developed enhanced engagement techniques and platforms to reach members via social media
- Revamped and improved member engagement events such as the golf tournament, the Labour Day Rematch football game, and others
- Introduced Grassroots Organizing Program and the New COMET training program for construction organizing
- Expanded our program with The Educational Partnership Fund (TEPF) to bring high school students into the electrical trade to include both Edmonton and Calgary
- Secured the following 14 new contractors through Top-Down Organizing:
 - Alpha Wolf Electric
 - Aptims Services
 - Ashkar Electric
 - Cam Field Solutions
 - Fuller Austin
 - Harrison Industrial
 - Michels Canada
 - Mott Electric
 - Pennecon Industrial
 - Powerline Inc.
 - Tribute Electric
 - VK Electric
 - 2472859 Alberta Ltd
 - 42 West Contractor
- Increased our working membership in Calgary ten-fold to over 100 members.

Those are just some of the highlights from my second term as your Business Manager. Details for many of them are provided later in this report, but I want to focus on the future. As proud as I am of all we have achieved, I know we still have a lot of work to do.

Goals for Our Next Term

Right out of the chute, I want to kick off the next round of bargaining in June 2025 with **enhanced member involvement**. This means leveraging our improved and expanded social media presence, including creating content for Tik Tok and Instagram and hosting live Q&A sessions online to ensure the newest cohort of electricians is engaged and ready to assume their leadership role in the local.

Beyond engaging online, I want to **engage with committees** like NextGen, Sisters of 424, and EWMC along with traditional strategies to ensure that every voice that wants to be heard in the bargaining process has the opportunity to be heard. By making the most of every avenue of communication we have, from hi-tech to grassroots, I believe we can push voting participation beyond 70% and have a membership that is fully represented.

With labour projections as they are, and if our efforts to grow bear fruit, we will have to ensure that the next generation of electricians receives the best training and support that we can provide. I want to **expand our high school TEPF program** to school districts outside of Edmonton and Calgary, creating a pipeline of skilled and union-ready electricians. Building on this, I want to partner with more contractors to offer post-graduation apprenticeships to TEPF participants.

I want to **engage with other Alberta trade unions** and enhance our alliances with them to better address common challenges like open apprentice calls and worker protections. By working together, we can have a powerful voice and advocate for legislative changes benefitting the unionized skilled trades, such as apprenticeship funding, labour standards, or the expanded practice of incorporating community benefit agreements into procurement offerings.

Next, I'll break down how our goals map onto the four areas of focus I noted at the start of this document.

New Industries

The time to expand into industries outside of the traditional in here. The days of oil sands mega-projects are gone and we need to continue to adapt if we want to be able to provide the secure future for our families that they expect. IBEW Local 424 must be prepared to pivot and take a leading role in new, emerging, and alternative projects.

The Alberta government reported¹ that the electrician and industrial electrician occupation groups experienced above average growth over the last five years, at a rate of about 2.5%. Additionally, the province predicts ongoing labour shortages for the next 10 years (see report here²). While there will be opportunities in our traditional fields, we must create opportunities outside of our regular fields if we want to grow.

We have an advantage over most of the skilled trades.

As electrical workers, we have an advantage over most of the skilled trades, in that we can quickly pivot to apply our skills and expertise to new fields. Civilization requires electricity to operate, but where the power comes from can vary widely.

Traditional coal-powered energy production is giving way to natural gas and renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. Interest in nuclear energy production has been reinvigorated too, with the advent of small modular reactors (SMRs) and greatly improved safety protocols.

There are potential opportunities in construction, such as the proposed Red Deer hospital, as well as work with companies such as Dow Chemical who are looking to expand their operations.

Finally, commuter transportation in electric vehicles is another new field for us to explore. Specifically, progress being made on light rapid transit systems in Edmonton and Calgary.

Below, I go into a bit more detail about these opportunities to highlight how important it is for us as a Union to explore new opportunities while continuing to grow our numbers in the fields in which we already participate. Through exploiting new opportunities and enhancing existing ones, we can ensure the security and stability of our Local and enable our members to continue to provide for their families.

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

SMRs are experiencing increased interest as a key tool in fighting climate change, and, in March of 2022, the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick drafted a strategic plan on SMRs to outline their faith in the technology and their hope that use of SMRs can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, reduce our total carbon footprint, provide a steadier supply of energy than other green energy typically can, and position Canada as a global SMR technology hub. If we can participate in a meaningful way on SMR technology development, our skilled members will be required all over the world.

In January of last year, Capital Power announced⁴, in partnership with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) an agreement to jointly assess the development and deployment of grid-scale small modular reactors (SMRs) to provide clean,

reliable nuclear energy for Alberta. Following that announcement, in April of 2024, the Alberta provincial government allocated \$600M to US-based private nuclear power company X-Energy Reactor Company LLC, in partnership with TransAlta Corporation, to study the feasibility of repurposing an existing fossil fuel electricity generation site for a nuclear reaction (read the news release [here](#)). Clearly interest in the future of nuclear energy is as abundant as the potential opportunities for work, and the energy to be produced.

Wind Farm Projects

There are three major wind farms in Alberta: Whitla, Forty Mile, and Rattlesnake Ridge, all located near Medicine Hat.

Whitla Wind completed construction in December of 2021 and currently produces 353MW with its 98 turbines – it is the largest wind farm in Alberta. Details about the facility can be found [here](#) .

6

Forty Mile Wind Farm is the newest of the three farms, with construction set to complete by April 2025. Upon completion it will produce 280MW of electricity. More info on this new farm is available [here](#) .

7

The Rattlesnake Ridge wind farm produces 130MW with 26 turbines, and it's entire production is under contract to RBC, Shopify, and a third corporate partner. More info is available [here](#) .

8

Wind farms have the ability to come on-line relatively quickly, and can provide an intense amount of work during construction, as well as ongoing maintenance. They could be another useful field for us to get a stronger toehold in, but unfortunately, the

future for wind farm projects looks bleak, at least in the near term.

Last May, TransAlta cancelled an upcoming wind farm project and putting three other projects on hold in response to changes in provincial legislation, citing a lack of certainty in the market for renewable energy in Alberta. (See the article [here](#)⁹). This change helps highlight the need for us to get in on the political action too, and to help determine the direction that industry – and the economy – will take.

**Help determine the direction that industry
- and the economy - will take.**

Construction

LRT expansion construction has been underway for years in Edmonton and Calgary, and there are plans to continue that growth, giving us an opportunity to develop and solidify our expertise in this field.

Over the last three years, the Valley Line Southeast¹⁰, through contractor Western Pacific, has provided jobs to about 200 members. While that extension of LRT is operational, the Valley Line West¹¹ construction, which started last year, is expected to be completed in 2028 and is headed up by Black & McDonald. There is also a plan with Chermik and Cdn Power Pac to build a Metro Line¹² that would connect Edmonton's downtown to St. Albert, via NAIT, by 2040. Phase 1 of the Metro Line (NAIT to Campbell Road) was completed in 2023.

Additionally, we have the opportunity to participate in new construction in the province, including the rebuilding of the Enmax substation in Calgary (learn more [here](#)¹³) and the construction of the Valley Line West LRT Extension in Edmonton

(have a look at the Project Agreement [here](#)¹⁴), both with our contractor Western Pacific Enterprises, and the expansion and refurbishment of the Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre, which will add 200 new in-patient beds and six new surgical theatres. Construction on this \$1.8B project is supposed to wrap up in 2031 (see more details [here](#)¹⁵), and we are participating in this project through Houle Electric.

Organizing

Amazon, America's second largest employer spent over \$4 million fighting the efforts of the Amazon Labor Union (ALU) formed by Chris Small and his team, but in 2022, their Staten Island warehouse voted to organize. To learn more, click [here](#)¹⁶. This year, it has been [reported](#)¹⁷ that Amazon-owned Whole Foods is also moving to unionize, as public opinion in the States has turned overwhelmingly positive toward unions over the last five years, rising from 48% approval in 2019 to 70% last year, according to [Gallup](#)¹⁸.

According to Chris Smalls, who will be attending the AFL convention this year, "The revolution is here."

The revolution is here.

Amazon workers in Canada are having a much different experience. After the Amazon warehouses in Quebec voted to organize, Amazon announced in January of this year that it would close all seven of its warehouses in Quebec, opting to outsource all warehouse functions in the province rather than negotiate fairly with the democratically elected union. Read more [here](#)¹⁹.

According to the Government of Canada, there are approximately 19,550 electricians in Alberta (click [here](#)²⁰ for the

report on electricians, and [here](#)²¹ for industrial electricians). The employment outlook for electricians and industrial electricians for the next three years is predicted to be “good”. Of nearly 20,000 electricians working in Alberta, only about 4000 are IBEW members, or about 20%, so there is an opportunity here to recruit new members from the existing pool of skilled workers, in addition to the efforts we are undertaking to train the next generation of electricians.

Additionally, even though we have seen huge growth in Calgary, it remains a largely untapped opportunity for IBEW 424. There are approximately 1.3 million people in the greater Calgary region (more people than in all of Saskatchewan) and our foothold in the area is currently much too small, in terms of signatory contractors located in Calgary, as well as recruiting members from our neighbours to the south.

The Alberta government, in it's [Occupational Outlook: 2023-2033](#)²², tells a similar story of the future for electricians, as can be seen in the table below:

Alberta's Occupational Outlook: 2023 - 2033											
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
72200 Electricians (except industrial and power system)											
Net Change, Job Openings	785	1,240	1,425	1,059	955	957	802	733	702	716	733
Net Change, Job Seekers	688	514	507	476	482	479	407	354	350	350	356
Annual Imbalance	-96	-726	-918	-583	-473	-478	-395	-379	-352	-366	-377
Cumulative Imbalance	-96	-823	-1,740	-2,324	-2,797	-3,275	-3,670	-4,049	-4,401	-4,767	-5,144
72201 Industrial electricians											
Net Change, Job Openings	287	329	287	240	227	254	217	202	197	200	203
Net Change, Job Seekers	209	158	155	146	146	145	125	111	110	110	112
Annual Imbalance	-78	-172	-132	-94	-81	-110	-93	-91	-88	-90	-91
Cumulative Imbalance	-78	-249	-381	-475	-556	-666	-758	-850	-937	-1,027	-1,118

While demand for electricians is expected to be relatively stable for the next eight years, the number of electricians available to meet that demand is consistently lacking, with a cumulative projected shortfall by 2033 of more than 5,000 jobs.

On the bright side, this means that there is opportunity to grow our market share, if we manage to recruit enough members to

take on the jobs that are available. However, this also presents that same opportunity to our non-union competition, and if they can fill that gap, our market share will shrink even further.

This is also why we are working with the AFL to develop a campaign to battle the Christian Labour Association of Canada, or CLAC, as they prefer to be called. For too long, they have been able to call themselves a union and benefit from the reputation that we and the other skilled trades unions have honed over the decades.

The Christian Labour Association of Canada has benefitted from the reputation that we have built.

This communications and advertising campaign will focus on differentiating CLAC from true Unions and making sure that people know where they fall short: on representing the workers, engaging the workers, and negotiating *with* instead of *for* the owners.

As noted in Mark Breslin's book "Survival of the Fittest", what would be in it for you if we had 90% market share? Below are the answers he came up with – can you think of more?

- Higher wages
- Better health and welfare benefits
- Full employment
- More political influence
- Better pension benefits
- Better working conditions
- Lower dues per month per member, but more union dues overall
- More bargaining power
- More money for training
- More community support
- Less commute travel to job sites
- More even playing field for your contractors
- Control of the marketplace
- More respect

In my first two terms as Business Manager, I implemented many important actions, but we need to press on together and enhance the good work that is already being done.

In my next term, I will implement the following three-phase organizing plan:

1. **Internal Organizing:** Reach out to the membership and identify members with an interest and desire to get more involved with internal organizing and the Volunteer Organizing Committee (VOC), engage them in Grassroots training, and from there, have members move on into New COMET and Top-Down training to ensure that we have a powerful core of skilled, dedicated, and energized members ready to mobilize and engage.
2. **External Organizing and Bottom-Up Strategy:** Working with the VOC and the IBEW research department, we will identify potential targets and work to organize them through bottom-up efforts such as salting, stripping, and frank, honest, respectful discussions with non-member electricians.
3. **External Organizing and Top-Down Strategy:** Again, working with the VOC, and making use of information gathered in Phase 2, we will implement top-down organizing on local contractors that have been identified as high-value targets.

Some examples of Top-Down organizing that have taken place here at Local 424 include:

- Our organization department launched an ambitious campaign over the last three years to meet with dozens of contractors in Lethbridge and Red Deer, successfully signing 14 new contractors, noted in the earlier *Achievements of Our Past Term* section.

- Sole-proprietor organization. Instead of just focusing on large organizations, there is an opportunity to address sole proprietors by becoming a value-add for them, in that we can be a central location for job search and advertising.
- Making strategic use of the Job Targeting Fund to address specific projects during organizing drives.
- Success encouraging Houle Electric to return to Alberta for the first time since 2005 after meeting with their leadership in Burnaby. Scott Crichton and I convinced them to pursue work at the Red Deer Hospital project.
- We also met with Mott Electric to convince them to return to Alberta as well. As a result, they have set up an office in Calgary to facilitate bidding on a variety of projects in the city.

In terms of educating the next generation of electricians, our Electrical Industry Training Centre for Alberta (EITCA) has applied to AIT to provide training to apprentices for years 2, 3, 4, allowing us to formally set the standard for what a competent electrician looks like. Since 2023, we have been able to provide year 2 apprenticeship training, picking up year 3 in 2024 and beginning this year, we are now able to provide all levels of apprenticeship training, including providing financial literacy training to our apprentices. With this enhanced focus of standard-setting apprenticeship training, we will be changing the name of the Joint Education Apprenticeship Committee (JEAC) to Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC).

We can provide all levels of apprenticeship training

Further, we have partnered with The Educational Partnership Foundation (TEPF) which is a 16-week high school trades training program. Students accepted into the program attend regular school classes in the morning, and in the afternoon, they come to the IBEW training centre for direct, hands-on

training and exposure to the electrical trade and the value of union membership. The program is running in Calgary and Edmonton.

There are approximately 4400 electrical contractors in Alberta. Of those, only about 1850 regularly employ apprentices, and only 52 of these are signatory to IBEW 424. That means that there are nearly 1800 contractors who use apprentices but are non-union. This is a large market in which we have the opportunity to gain ground, as we are currently only representing 3% of the contractors who train electricians on the job. This is also beneficial to the contractors, as gaining access to our labour pool will make it easier for them to bid on larger projects.



Of the 1850 contractors mentioned above, about 600 are members of the ECAA, and 80% of those have fewer than 10 employees. This means that there is an untapped market for us to access of 480 small- and sole-proprietor contractors which are members of the ECAA.

Volunteer Organizing Committee (VOC)

The VOC is a critical piece of our organizing infrastructure, and they have accomplished a lot, but it needs strengthening. That means inviting more members to participate. That means enhancing the COMET program (below) and with that, enhancing opportunities to train the trainer. Ensuring that members have a full understanding of the value of organizing, as well as how to participate in our Local's growth is key to the

VOC being effective. Other key elements to the ongoing effectiveness of our organizing efforts will be using the IBEW Research Department to gather information on contractors prior to organizing efforts, making use of software like ContstructConnect to learn about potential projects and who is bidding on them, training members of the value of Freedom of Information requests, or FOIP requests (the "P" stands for Protection of Privacy), and how to best navigate the government systems to get the results we want.

Additionally, the VOC will be more integral to the operation of our Local, providing reports to the Business Manager monthly, as well as releasing the report to Executive, so that their activities can be incorporated into the strategic planning that we need to undertake to grow.

The New COMET Program

The New Construction Organizing Membership Education Training (New COMET) program is a powerful tool for growing our local, but increased implementation is required if we are to grow like we need to.

The focus of the strategic plan is **education**: training members of the value and necessity of effective organizing and helping them realize that everyone has a role in keeping the Local vital through organizing.

There are five main measures of the New COMET strategic plan, and paying attention to these will help ensure our success:

1. Number of new members taken in, through stripping or other means,
2. Number of salts working for open shop contractors,
3. Number of labour charges filed against non-union contractors,
4. Number of contractors who have been targeted, and
5. Number of contractors who have been organized.

For a fuller review of COMET and what it brings to the fight, read *Lighting the Spark: COMET Program Mobilizes the Ranks for Construction Organizing* by Jeffery Grablesky²³.

Political Action

Over the past six years, my team and I have worked hard to build productive and collaborative relationships with different levels of government and other associations to represent IBEW members needs directly. Without a seat at the table, it is easy to be forgotten or overlooked, and I will not allow that.

Our members and their families are what drive me to do the work I do, and I will continue to exhaust every avenue to ensure that we have as many opportunities to grow as we possibly can. This includes working with local, provincial, and federal governments, both directly and as part of the labour coalition that here in Alberta is known as the Building Trades of Alberta (BTA). Government is only one of the stakeholders involved in the work we do, so we also must ensure we are connecting and working with contractors and industry regulators.

Government Lobbying

Government lobbying is a critical element of a successful campaign of growth and stability for a Union. Governments control labour law, legislation and economic levers, creating an environment conducive to investment, as well as being a source of opportunity directly through procurement.

Non-union outfits have known for years of the value of getting in tight with the decision-makers, and those connections have helped to shape the environment we find ourselves in. Our labour laws are outdated, and things like double-breasting are not addressed in legislation because we have not had a strong enough voice in the past. In fact, the relative silence of the

labour movement since the sixties has contributed to the rise of the open shop and the diminishment of the role of union workers in the market. Supporters of non-union labour have done a good job of branding unions as groups that are not interested in contributing, only taking – we must demonstrate that we are effective partners, and that means building positive relationships with government leaders.

We create opportunities for growth and collaboration

Regardless your political stripe, we are forced to engage with the government of the day, and to work productively with whomever is in charge. In that vein, we invited Premier Danielle Smith to the hall to talk with us about procurement and the success of our apprentice training. By showcasing our strengths and our willingness to work together, we create opportunities for growth and collaboration.



At the local level, we have worked to enhance our relationship with the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) to ensure that they have access to the best information regarding electrical work to share with their students, potentially growing a pool of apprentices in the future. Further, by having a good working relationship with EPSB, we are top of mind when it comes to procurement for schools to be built or maintained.

Municipally and provincially, we have been working to not only have access to procurement opportunities, but to also work to drive the procurement process itself by promoting Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs), which are frameworks for

procurement that requires companies participating in bidding to outline how they will support the community, beyond just building a structure. It could include minimum numbers of apprentices on site in order to ensure that there are newly-trained workers continuing in the workforce, or it could include a promise to source as much planning, labour, and materials locally as possible which provides wider benefits to the community at large and prevents money earned on the site from leaving the community.

Another important element of the CBA is a requirement to include under-represented groups in the workforce, such as women, veterans, new Canadians and indigenous peoples. An important feature of CBAs is that by adopting the framework of the CBA, the procurement defaults to supporting union work because most of the conditions in a CBA are already standard practice for unions – the CBA just weeds out the competitors who try to cut corners and reduce pay.

Labour law is a provincial domain, so being involved in the discussion at the highest level will help ensure that laws are as favourable to workers as possible, including safety, ability to organize, certify, and bargain, and potentially remove the availability of double-breasting as an option for employers to use union skill without paying union rates.

There are many projects that take place on the federal stage as well, so it is important for us to be present there as well. Additionally, the federal government manages the Union Training and Innovation Program (UTIP), so if we want to ensure that we get as much federal support with our training initiatives as we need, we must be there.

Committees and Associations

An important part of the work that Apprenticeship and Industry

Training (AIT) undertakes as a part of the provincial government's Advanced Education ministry is to engage with industry experts to ensure that training and certification of apprentices and journeymen in Alberta is effective and thorough. Contractors, owners and unions have the opportunity to participate directly in this process by participating in the Trades and Apprenticeship Community of Expertise (TACE) to provide industry-relevant feedback and direction to AIT. The more members and signatory contractors we have on these committees, the stronger the voice we will have and the more influence we will have on the direction of training in this province.

Government committees are not the only places where it is critical that we have a voice – industry associations also play a large role in determining what happens now and in the future in terms of regulations, safety, and overall strategy. By participating in the Electrical Contractors Association of Alberta, (ECAA) we can see what is happening in the industry and we can be sure that the stakeholders know who we are. This means not just paying attention to the work and discussions that are being had but increasing our attendance at the chapter meetings in Fort McMurray, Edmonton, and Calgary, to help keep us top-of-mind for contractors.

It is critical that we have a voice

Participating in committees and associations can be as simple as attending AGMs too, like in the case of the Electrical Inspectors Association of Alberta's (EIAA) annual meeting, or attending hearings with the Alberta Energy Regulator to show support for upcoming or proposed projects, much like we did for Teck's Frontier project.

Political Action Committees

While I am grateful to the efforts of the IBEW PAC Committee, we need to expand the size of our committee if we want to be truly effective. The more members we can get on board with following the political events that take place and getting involved, the better chance we have of impacting the industry at a fundamental level and helping to secure a future for our Local.

In line with that, we implemented Lobby Day, which is an annual event whereby the PAC Committee develops lobbying packages for members who then meet with MLAs. There is no greater way to influence a politician than by being directly in front of them, so the more members we can get in front of our political leaders to have meaningful discussions, the more opportunity we must take control of the direction our industry is headed.

This work can also be coordinated with the BTA and the AFL PACs, which potentially have even more influence by virtue of the fact that they represent a much larger share of the electorate than we do on our own. The AFL PAC in particular is a very powerful and active group that we do well to coordinate with.

The list above is large and involved, but it does not address all the ways in which we can be effective in dealing with the different participants of our industry. As a Union, and to a member, we need to be aware of all of the ways in which we are stakeholders and make sure our presence is felt, known, and regarded.

Member Engagement

The single most important factor in a Unions success is the level of member engagement. We all understand the value that collective action provides, and we all know that by working together, we support each other, keep each of us safe, and enhance our ability to develop our craft while providing for our families.

To facilitate engagement, I have undertaken several initiatives in my current term which I want to continue and even enhance, when re-elected.

Communication

Website

The IBEW Local 424 website was recently updated to include stewards' reports, as well as the Business Manager report and President's report. Sharing these reports will improve transparency with the membership, but it only works if members read the information and act on it. That's why, in addition to providing information on the website, we have made strides to deliver information in many other ways.

Digital Town Halls

We introduced monthly digital town halls approximately 13 months ago to provide another avenue for members to participate in our democratic process. Considering the geographically diverse nature of our membership, a digital option is a necessity for members who cannot attend meetings at the hall. Currently, attendance at these town halls is about 100 members, and we have a goal to expand that to 300-500 members regularly participating.

Previously, we had hosted these meetings on a service called Blue Jeans, but that provider unfortunately went out of business so we are negotiating with Zoom as a cost-effective replacement and plan to be able to implement this new platform this fall.

Benefits General Meeting

Our pension, health and welfare providers will be hosting an information session later in the year to share information with members and answer any questions.

We also share our progress nationally at the All Canada Progress Meetings, where we celebrate our victories, collaborate on solutions to challenges, and collectively focus our efforts to the greatest benefit of IBEW members across the country.

Additionally, with Local 424's Centenary coming up in 2028, it provides an open opportunity for interested members to participate and contribute to the preparations for this momentous celebration. As this is such an important milestone, a fund will be created to help ease the cost of this celebration.

Radio and Podcasts

We have had the opportunity to get our word out by participating in podcasts or radio interviews, such as Scott Crichton talking on CBC 740 about the TFW program from Dubai. I expect to be joining to crew of the Mac City Morning Show this spring to help spread the word to our friends and neighbours in Fort McMurray. As I've mentioned several times before, the more we can get our message out, the more we can engage with stakeholders of all types, the more opportunities we will have to grow.

Social Media

We have upgraded our methods to reach the membership – and to enable the membership to reach us. We now have a presence on Telegram, Instagram, Tik Tok, Bluesky, and WeChat to make it easier and faster to connect and to share information. Added to this we have boosted our organic engagement and outreach on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube. To ensure that we remain on top of what is happening on line and ready to connect, we have provided social media training to staff.

Local 424 App

In addition to all the previous methods of communication as our Local, we are working with IBEW Canada to develop an app for use on member phones which will provide a wide variety of services and options, including organizing information, leads on jobs, upcoming meetings, videos or other emergent information, or anything else that would be of use to members and help us all engage.

Committee Network

IBEW Local 424 is a diverse and dynamic family of skilled professionals, and members of our Local do not all have the same needs or interests. Committees are an important avenue for members to be heard and to feel represented and are in the process of being rebuilt after COVID sidelined many of the committees' priorities.

Some of the committees already active in our Local include:

- Sisters of the 424 Committee: representing the needs and interests of our Sisters in the Local, as well as working to encourage more women to enter into the trade.
- Political Action Committee: as mentioned earlier, this committee provides input and guidance regarding how our Local can be more effective at engaging with political

leaders, and how to get more members involved in the process.

- **Electrical Workers Minority Committee:** under-represented groups often have difficulty feeling heard in large group settings, so this committee provides an opportunity for our minority members to speak to their interests and concerns and plans for the Local.
- **Bylaws:** any organization requires a structure to be able to operate most effectively. By having a team dedicated to evaluating and making recommendations for the bylaws that guide our operations, we can be sure that members are treated fairly.
- **Retirees:** retirees possess a wealth of knowledge that can be shared with the Local, but also, as retirees and pension-collectors, they have an active interest in the happenings at 424 and how we take advantage of opportunities for growth.
- **Veterans:** veterans have some issues or goals that are not an exact match for the rest of the Local and they deserve to be heard. This committee offers them a chance to share their voice, and will be working with IBEW Canada to expand into a nation-wide network.

If you think that there are other groups within Local 424 that would benefit from having a committee, please let me know. Every committee is an opportunity for members to speak up, be heard, and engage.

Collective Bargaining

Traditionally, when it comes time for collective bargaining, the Local sends out a survey to all members to request feedback regarding the contract's terms. Unfortunately, this has generally resulted in a response rate of only 18-22%, or a rate of only 1 member in 5 responding. That means that 4 out of 5 members do not have the opportunity to be counted, for whatever reason.

We began using telephone town halls as a channel for communication about collective bargaining, and that proved a useful tool because it afforded members the opportunity to speak to the contract, not just vote on it.

By taking advantage of all the modes of communication that have been implemented or enhanced in my tenure as Business Manager, we were able to communicate much more effectively about the work we are doing on your behalf, and to hear your thoughts on what further needs to be done.

A major enhancement to member engagement was moving from mail-in ballots to electronic ballots. Thanks to this major upgrade, we were able to get the latest Construction CBA ratified with over 70% of members participating in the vote. With an acceptance rate of 80%, this CBA resulted in increases for all members. In addition to the Construction CBA, every single outstanding BA agreement was also presented, voted on, and ratified in this way.

Another route for leadership to get direct, valuable information from members would be through actively engaging the committees. Through this seeking out of responses to contract terms from the various special interest groups that we represent, we can help ensure that the different voices within the Local are heard and come to more complete, fulsome decisions about our contracts going forward.

Member Engagement Special Events

A union is a family, but it is not our only family. We work hard to ensure that we can provide for our families at home. And our families need the opportunity to connect with each other, participate in what we do, and celebrate our successes with us. That is why I have worked hard to ensure there is ample opportunity for members to gather and celebrate.

Whether it is a casual get-together, a large-scale gathering, or an organized, planned, and professionally executed event, opportunities to connect with each other are essential to maintaining the cohesiveness and solidarity of our extended family.

Below are a few of the events that have taken place over the last few years and which I be ensuring continue into the future, because without family, we are nothing:

- Annual Golf Tournament. The IBEW staff has worked hard to produce the premier golf tournament of the year, and by all accounts, they have succeeded. Feedback from membership and from the industry has been very positive. A day of golfing and building relationships is great for the spirit, but also great for creating opportunities to collaborate and grow together.
- Galaxyland Amusement Park at West Edmonton Mall. On the last Sunday of November of each year, the IBEW offers a members-only day at Galaxyland, giving members the opportunity to bring their families for a mini-holiday to West Edmonton Mall, enjoy the amenities, and maybe get some Christmas shopping done. This event has grown into the most-attended of all the events offered to members. This year it will be held on Sunday, December 14.
- Labour Day Rematch. Every year, we purchase 200 tickets and produce matching t-shirts for members who want to attend the annual Labour Day rematch between the Edmonton Elk and the Calgary Stampeders.
- Family Fun Day. Each summer, we open up the hall and invite families to soak up the sun and the solidarity while sharing in a delicious food truck experience. There are always games to play and bouncy houses for the little ones

to enjoy. This relaxed, joyful atmosphere is a great opportunity for members and families alike to get together and get to know each other just a little bit better. It always helps to know the faces of the people that you are working hard for.

The Future of the Local

I firmly believe that any organization's strength comes not from the leadership, but from the team that works together, day after day, implementing the leader's vision and supporting the goals of the membership.

To this end, I have worked hard to provide my team with all the support and training they need to best fulfil their important roles, including training to take advantage of the burgeoning AI revolution and enhance efficiency, Levels 1 & 2 Business Management and COMET training, and ensuring that everyone has some collective bargaining experience because when we negotiate with contractors, we negotiate for all of us.

Conclusion

As your Business Manager, I have always prioritized transparency, innovation, and member engagement. Together, we have achieved historic milestones, and together, we can continue to strengthen IBEW Local 424 as Alberta's premier electrical union.

Our Local today is more engaged, more energized, and more committed to each other and our future than at any time I can recall.

Let's build on our successes and create an even brighter future for every member of our Local.

Together is how we will move forward.

Together is how we will achieve greatness.

Together, we are stronger.

Together is how we will ensure that our families have the future we want for them.

It has been an honour and a pleasure serving the Local as Business Manager for the last six years. I enthusiastically look forward to continue working for you day in and day out.

I believe in the women and men of Local 424, and I know that we all want prosperity, stability, and safety on the worksite. By engaging at all levels and working together, using the plan I have outlined here, we can build the right future for us.



To learn more, or to contact me about this plan, please visit
www.mikereinhardt.ca.

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Many thanks to everyone who supported me and my efforts as Business Manager as I worked to enhance the lives of every member of IBEW Local 424 over the past six years and to everyone who is working so hard with me now to keep this momentum going.

None of this is possible without you.

THE RIGHT PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE