

**THE LATEST CERTIFICATION BUZZ - EN ESPAÑOL**

Good news, and sooner than expected. Electrician certification exams in Spanish are now completed and are now being administered for general electricians, residential electricians and fire/life safety technicians.

If you (or your journeymen) wish to apply to take any one of these three tests in Spanish, please do the following:

- Open the WECA-IEC Web site (www.weca-iec.org)
- In the "training and education" pull-down menu, click on "journeyman"
- Click on "quick links," "journeyman certification..."
- Under "additional information," click on "State of California Web site..."
- Look at the left-hand column for "Informacion" - click on it
- Look at the left-hand column and again click on "Informacion"

At this site you'll find the online test application. Be sure to check the box on the application that asks if you want to take it in Spanish when you fill out the form.

If you (or your journeymen) have already submitted an application to take the test in English but would rather take it in Spanish, call 1-800-894-9975.

**NEED A NOTARY? LOOK NO FURTHER!**

When you need documents notarized, that service is available to you free of charge at the WECA-IEC Sacramento Office.

Project Manager Robin Lysaght is a notary and will be glad to make an appointment for you to come in and have your documents notarized.

She can be reached toll-free at 1-877-444-9322, ext. 16.

**UNIONS CONTINUE TO LOSE MEMBERSHIP**

*By Eric Christen, Government Affairs Director*



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The percentage of construction workers represented by unions continued to decline in 2004, matching the steady erosion in overall union membership, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data released Jan. 27.

In spite of record employment in construction during 2004, BLS data showed that 14.7 percent of all construction workers were members of building trade unions in 2004, compared with 16 percent in 2003, 17.2 percent in 2002, and 18.1 percent in 2001.

Construction employment in 2004 was 7.55 million, according to the data, up 424,000 or nearly 6 percent from 7.126 million in 2003. However, membership in building trade unions fell 29,000 to 1,110,000 in 2004, down about 2.6 percent from 1,139,000 in 2003, according to the data.

Construction counts for about 6.1 percent of total private sector employment.

Building trade unions represented 15.4 percent of all construction workers in 2004, down from 16.7 percent in 2003, according to BLS.

Despite these losses, construction maintained its position in the BLS private-industry standings with a relatively high percentage of union membership, trailing only the transportation and public utility industries.

In a technical note, BLS said union membership data for 2004 "are not strictly comparable" with data for 2003 and earlier years due to introduction in January 2004 of "revised population controls" used in the Current Population Survey. "The effect of the revised population controls on the union membership estimates is unknown," BLS said.

**Reaction to BLS Report**

Robert Gasperow, executive director of the Construction Labor Research Council, said the further drop in building trade union membership in 2004 "can't be viewed as anything but troublesome by those with an interest in union construction." While the "absolute numbers" in terms of the number of members of building trade unions were "almost flat," Gasperow said they were significant in view of how much overall construction industry employment grew in 2004.

Edward C. Sullivan, president of the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO, Jan. 28 said building trade unions [have] done relatively well in holding on to market share "given the negative, anti-worker political and economic climate."

"Because unions provide over 80 percent of the skills training for tradesmen and women in this industry, whenever the percentage of union members in construction declines even by a fraction, the skill level and quality competitiveness of the entire U.S. construction industry is diminished and should be cause for national concern," Sullivan said.

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**WECA-IEC  
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TRAINING COMMITTEE  
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2005**

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Paul Celillo, Barnum & Celillo Electric (new)  
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Dina Kimble, Royal Electric Co. Inc.  
Art Munoz, Marticus Electric Inc.  
Wes Owsley, Advanced Electric Inc.  
Darryl Vasko, Vasko Electric Inc.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
Wednesday, April 6	WECA-IEC Day at the Capitol	State Capitol, Sacramento
Monday, April 18 to Wednesday, April 20	IEC Legislative Conference	Washington Court Hotel, Washington, D.C.
Monday, May 2	WECA-IEC 7th Annual Golf Tournament - Benefiting WIND (Works In New Directions) of Sacramento and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Sacramento	The Ridge, Auburn, CA

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Our own Debra Dobson, Training Director, was pictured along with Lee Bowman, Platt Electrical Supply representative, on the front page of the February IEC Connection newsletter!...**Board Member Rick Butterfield** urges members to bring their old cell phones to his Woodland office. He has established this dropoff point to aid Cell Phones for Soldiers, which was established by two Massachusetts children. The organization turns the phones in to a recycler for pay; with the money, it buys calling cards for U. S. soldiers in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan and other hot spots...**WECA-IEC Recruiter and Outreach Coordinator Shevea Myrick** has just been appointed Freedom Fund chairperson of the Sacramento Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Myrick was also active in helping the chapter organize its 2005 installation dinner on February 2; WECA-IEC had a handsome four-color ad in the dinner program. "Our involvement with the Sacramento Chapter shows our commitment to reaching out to minority communities," Myrick says. "We'll be disseminating information about our programs to NAACP event attendees throughout the year."...**In December some staff WECAnS acted in the holiday spirit** by donating much-needed warm winter clothing to Sacramento's Union Gospel Mission. Thank-yous to Rick Lawrence, Program Manager; Dennis Meade, Lead Instructor; Nancy Quint, Administrative Assistant; Malik Ahmed, 5th year Commercial Apprentice; and Jackie Thayer, Communications Manager...**By now all contractor members have received their new Member Handbooks**, which represent months of research and labor by key WECA-IEC staff. Hope you find them useful!

**WELCOME  
NEW  
MEMBERS!**

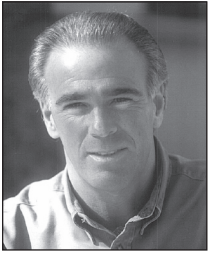
Advantage Electric Inc.  
Escondido, CA  
(760) 480-1596

Barbarine Electrical  
Contracting  
Camarillo, CA  
(805) 384-0062

Creative Electric  
Fair Oaks, CA  
(916) 967-0493

Performance Electric  
Rocklin, CA  
(916) 660-9818

Taylor Electric Co.  
Glencoe, CA  
(209) 293-7301



## WECA-IEC STUDENTS MUST PAY ANNUAL DUES

*By Bob Bartlett, Southern California Membership Manager*

Hold on! Don't get indignant. I mean the other kind of "dues"—the kind that you as a seasoned electrician know so well.

I'm often called upon to help indenture apprentices into our training program. Even though this is time-consuming, one of the most satisfying aspects of the time I spend with prospective apprentices is interviewing them, gleaning what drives them and why they want to take on this challenging occupation.

This is one of the highest-paying specialty industry fields in the world. There are two basic types of electrical work: construction work, which includes reading initial blueprints on the front end, then installing, wiring, and testing the electrical systems; and maintenance work, which includes troubleshooting (testing and fixing already-installed, improperly functioning electrical systems). But no matter in which part of the field one works, everyone who succeeds exhibits several characteristics common to good electricians; sound theoretical knowledge of electricity, familiarity with federal electrical codes and regulations, and good manual dexterity.

Becoming one of the best in any occupation isn't easy. But for those individuals looking for a fascinating, challenging career, WECA-IEC keeps the employment doors open and the lights always burning. Every applicant must realize the sacrifices he or she will be asked to make—everyone interested in this occupation must "pay their dues."

Those dues include attending at least 144 hours of classroom instruction and performing 1600 hours of OJT per year. Training can last from 3 to 5 years. Code, theory, math, safety, computers, designs, physics, and mechanical knowledge are all studied. Those who accept the challenge and do their best find little disappointment with this career decision. These well-educated workers are the future stars of this industry and are positive contributors to their communities.

Which individuals will make the "who's who" list in this field? Well, clues are usually given during our initial interview process. Successful students tend to share the following traits:

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## STUDENTS COMPETE FOR RESI APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

On February 3 seven third-year Residential apprentices competed in WECA-IEC's first Residential Apprentice of the Year competition. The students all study under Instructor Mike Moyer at the Sacramento Training Center, the site of the competition.

First the students answered a 30-question written test. Then the lab bustled as they proceeded to the wireoff portion, "mimicking wiring all the circuits and minimum electrical requirements for a house," according to Instructor Earl March. The wireoff portion took two and a half hours.

The winners are:

- First place, Juan Bermudez, H&D Electric Inc.
- Second-place (tie), Kevin O'Neill, H&D Electric Inc., and Nathan Castillo, Rayco Electric Inc.
- Third place, Robert Colbert, Jamar Electric Inc.

All four winners were awarded a Platt Electric Supply gift certificate, from \$100 to \$50, and a hammer from Rayco Electric. Other contestants received \$25 Platt gift certificates. Judges for the event were Bill Seabury of H&D Electric, RC Noreen of Platt Electric Supply, Chuck Knoble of Rayco Electric, and senior Instructors Earl March and Larry Carlyle.

## A Judge's Opinion

Congratulations on a job well done! The Residential wireoff was a real success. The lab looked great, Mike Moyer had everything well organized and the apprentices were all very into the competition. Even though the final scores were close, the winners were all deserving and represented the program and the instructors in a top-notch manner.

Dennis Meade (Lead Instructor) gave me a preview of upcoming improvements to the lab, which gets better all the time. Obviously Platt Electrical Supply deserves a lot of the credit for the materials and tools, which the WECA-IEC instructors have laid out and organized in a very professional fashion. RC Noreen and Lee Bowman of Platt make constant contributions of material and time that are of great value to WECA-IEC.

Again, thanks to Dennis, Mike and Earl March, among others, who are leading the Residential Program into the future.

*Bill Seabury  
General Superintendent  
H&D Electric Inc.*

# THE NEWS

Western Electrical Contractors Association Inc.  
9719 Lincoln Village Drive, Suite 303  
Sacramento, CA 95827



MARCH 2005

## ***WECA-IEC Students...***

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- They consider achievement important. That sense of accomplishment is evident when the job is finished.
- Working relationships are paramount. A friendly, non-combative but competitive environment relieves a lot of pressures.
- Desire for recognition. They want to have opportunities for advancement because they know how to work smart and fast. They want to lead and supervise.
- Working independently, making decisions and planning their own work without constant supervision. That's a testament to their education and mettle.
- Wanting steady employment with good pay in a safe environment is paramount to their individual goals and work preferences.
- Investigative interests. They seek environments and work activities that require ideas and thinking, searching for facts and figuring out solutions.

Yes, our students pay dues, the kind made through dedicated study and diligent work habits. We know that's a small price to pay for a career that offers such a truly rewarding lifestyle.

Yes, we interview them, but then you train them on the job. Encourage them to pay the right kind of dues. Our students are looking to you for leadership.

## ***Unions... Continued from Page 1***

Sullivan attributed the relatively small decline in building trade union membership to shifts in construction employment arising from "significant declines in commercial and industrial sectors, and significant growth in nonunion residential sector."

Looking to the future, Sullivan said the department has "new initiatives to grow our markets, increase our memberships, and strengthen the standards of living for American construction craftspeople. In doing so, we strengthen the nation's construction industry and economic future."

### **'Painful Trends' for Workers**

"We're seeing two painful trends for America's working families," said AFL-CIO spokeswoman Sarah Massey, responding to the latest figures. "Again we're seeing the loss of good jobs, but the numbers also reflect the hostile climate for workers who want to organize unions to better their economic situation."

Stewart Acuff, the AFL-CIO's director of organizing, also said the figures are "a function both of employers' opposition to organizing and the fact that labor law in the United States obstructs" efforts by unions to organize workers.

With the constant churning of the labor market, jobs in areas of higher union density such as the Northeast and Midwest are lost and replaced by jobs in the Southeast and Southwest, where unions are not as strong, according to Acuff.

Eric Christen, government affairs director for the nonunion Western Electrical Contractors Association in Sacramento, Calif., said the continued decline in union density in construction reflected the futility of "desperate" attempts by building trade unions to recapture marketshare. "They are convinced that the solution to their problems is to build a bridge to the 1930s," he said.

*(From "Erosion of Union Density in Construction Unabated in 2004: Overall Union Rolls Fall" by John Sullivan.)*