



The Current

News from IBEW Local 1837



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Maine & New Hampshire



Strong Contract Gains, Job Security Secured for Versant Members

IBEW Local 1837 members at Versant ratified a 3-year collective bargaining agreement in early July after federal mediation was brought in to help the Union and the Company bridge remaining gaps during negotiations. The contract includes significant improvements to wages, benefits, working conditions, and a key victory in protecting job security.

All classifications will see general wage increases of 4% in 2025, 3% in 2026, and 3% in 2027. In addition,

several positions will see market adjustments.

“These targeted market adjustments are crucial to remaining competitive in the labor market,” said Renee Gilman, Assistant Business Manager for IBEW Local 1837. “We’ve seen ten first-class lineworkers leave Versant in the past year due to better pay offered by outside contractors. These adjustments help retain our existing workforce, ensuring we have qualified members on the system ready to restore power to customers when needed. It also helps to attract good, new talent to Versant.”

Additionally, this agreement addresses one of the main issues for Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) who are the first point of contact for the company. They will now see an accelerated progression to the top pay scale. Previously, it took five years to reach the top level. Now, CSRs will achieve that status after three years.

“This change recognizes the expertise our CSRs are required to develop in a short period of time,” Gilman added. “A faster track to the top scale rewards their commitment and hard work and also strengthens customer service by helping us retain experienced representatives.”

Non-pension employees will also see improvements to their retirement savings, and all employees will see enhancements to time off, with a more generous vacation time schedule. In addition, the contract improves compensation and scheduling during system emergencies for various departments.

“It is our expectation that when there’s a system emergency, normal day-to-day activities will stop, and the company will have all hands on deck to make sure customers’ power is restored as quickly and safely as possible. Although the company stopped short of making that commitment to us, we were able to make gains in our system emergency language in some departments. It is the Union’s belief that those qualified to do the work should be the ones doing it,” Gilman said.



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Contracts Ratified by IBEW 1837 Members

In another big win for the Union, the company agreed to limit the use of outside contractors and safeguard the jobs of union members, including a plan to gradually reduce reliance on such contractors.

In 2025, there will be no reduction in contractors due to already approved projects. However, in 2026, the company agrees to decrease the total number of blue-sky contractors by 10%, with the intention of hiring internal resources to fill these roles. By 2027, a further reduction of 10% is planned, again with the goal of transitioning the work to internal employees. This phased approach allows time for training new hires to fill the additional positions and will actually save customers money over time.

The company agreed it will not use outside contractors to perform work regularly done by its internal employees if doing so results in any regular employee being displaced from their job, discharged, or terminated. Furthermore, staffing numbers will not be reduced due to layoffs or attrition if contractors are being utilized at that time or thereafter in the future.

“I want to extend a special thanks to our negotiation committee for the time and effort they put in throughout this process,” Gilman said. “Their dedication and commitment helped to secure improvements to wages, benefits, and working conditions for our members who all play an integral part in keeping the lights on each and every day.”

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Members at NHEC Score Double Time Pay for Storm Work

1837 members at the New Hampshire Electric Co-op (NHEC) will now be getting double time pay for storm work on a 16-8 rotation after members ratified a 4-year deal in late August. The contract also includes annual wage adjustments of 3.5% on October 1, 2024, October 1, 2025, October 1, 2026, and October 1, 2027.

Other key gains include allowing apprentices to transfer between districts after completing their probationary period, adding two new holidays—Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the last normally scheduled workday before Christmas—and extending rest time by one hour, from 11:00 PM to 6:00 AM, or to 8 hours if an employee works 8 consecutive hours before a shift. Additionally, if rest time is less than 2 hours, it will be taken at the end of the day.

“I would like to thank our new chief steward and committee member Ben Mills and the rest of the negotiating committee including Gavin Fogg, Shauna Offen and Hans Ingemundson,” said IBEW 1837 Business Manager, Tony Sapienza. “This committee worked so hard and did a great job expressing the members concerns at the bargaining table, and I appreciate their support. Because of a strong steward network and member participation, NHEC is a much better place to work.”

Upcoming Negotiations for 1837 Members

Contract negotiations between the Union and Sinclair Broadcasting Group are scheduled to kick off in late October at WGME-TV in Portland.

Among the primary concerns raised by members during pre-bargaining meetings were wages and staffing levels. The rising cost of housing in Portland and its surrounding communities has added significant pressure on the more than 40 members responsible for producing news, commercials, and other content for the CBS affiliate, as well as the local FOX station. The contract expires December 7, 2024.

Bargaining between IBEW Local 1837 and Central Maine Power (CMP) is set to begin in January, as the union prepares to present proposals on behalf of its more than 700 members. The union represents lineworkers, trouble shooters, customer service representatives, and other essential staff across CMP's service territory. The contract expires April 30, 2025.

To get negotiation updates, please make sure your personal email is up to date! You can contact the union office with any changes by calling 207-623-1030 or email: union@ibew1837.org.

ME and NH AFL-CIO's, IBEW Make Candidate Endorsements

Election Day is Tuesday, November 5th. How you vote is a personal decision, and no one can tell you how to vote. Union leaders hope you will consider the positions of the various candidates on issues that affect our ability to secure good wages, benefits, and a safe workplace.

If you're not already registered, you can register and vote at your polling place on Election Day (bring ID). Maine members are encouraged to consider voting early at their town or city hall to avoid long lines on Election Day or difficulties getting to the polls due to storms or restoration work.

In New Hampshire, unions continued the fight against anti-worker legislation in Concord in the spring of 2024. IBEW Local 1837 members and retirees were at the forefront of defeating so-called "Right to Work" bills, which are designed to weaken unions' ability to represent their members by undermining their financial stability. Thanks to the sustained efforts of labor activists and allies, we were able to minimize the damage to working people and their unions. Having pro-labor candidates in office helps create a firewall against these harmful bills.

With New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu's decision not to seek another two-year term, this November's election looms especially large. Union activists hope to elect Joyce Craig, a pro-labor candidate who can veto anti-worker bills. Craig, who has received the endorsement of the New Hampshire AFL-CIO and previously served as the mayor of Manchester, is running against candidate Kelly Ayotte, who served as a U.S. Senator for New Hampshire from 2011-2017.

In Maine, all 186 seats (151 in the House and 35 in the Senate) of the Maine Legislature are up for grabs in November.

The Maine AFL-CIO has endorsed strong pro-union candidates, including several IBEW members:

- Representative Matt Beck (IBEW 1837), running for House District 122 (South Portland)
- Kilton Webb (IBEW 567), running for House District 98 (Durham, Pownal, Bowdoin, parts of Topsham and Lisbon)
- Scott Cuddy (IBEW 1253), running for House District 37 (Winterport)

All candidates considered for endorsement by our State Labor Federations underwent a vetting process and completed a questionnaire about their views on issues affecting working people and their unions. Any candidate who declined to fill out a questionnaire was not considered for an endorsement. Candidates' voting records were also considered as part of the endorsement process.

Maine U.S. Senate:
Sen. Angus King (I)

Maine U.S. House CD 1:
Rep. Chellie Pingree (D)

Maine U.S. House CD 2:
Rep. Jared Golden (D)



View a complete list of ME AFL-CIO endorsements by scanning the QR code.

New Hampshire Governor:
Joyce Craig (D)

NH U.S. House CD 1:
Chris Pappas (D)

NH U.S. House CD 2:
Maggie Goodlander (D)



View a complete list of NH AFL-CIO endorsements by scanning the QR code.

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2024 Election Endorsements

While local legislative races are important, it's the presidential race that garners the most attention.

Vice President Kamala Harris has received a unanimous endorsement from the International Office. IBEW International President Kenneth Cooper described VP Harris as a "proven ally of the IBEW."

"Working by President Biden's side, she cast the deciding vote to save our pensions. Their administration created good union jobs through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the American Rescue Plan, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act," said Cooper. "IBEW members know Vice President Harris, and we've engaged with her over the past four years as she visited our job sites, union halls, and training facilities. She has listened to us, and we are confident that she will continue this administration's extraordinary record on behalf of working people when she is sworn into office next January."

While in office, Donald Trump appointed several pro-business, anti-union officials to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Under his administration, the NLRB made rulings that often favored employers over workers and unions. His administration also rolled back Obama-era labor protections, including policies that made it easier for workers to unionize or hold companies accountable for labor violations.

Regardless of who you support, please vote on Tuesday, November 5th.

VOTE!

Wyman Station Workers Secure 4-Year Contract Extension

Members at Wyman Station, who maintain and operate the oil-fired plant on Cousins Island in Yarmouth, voted to accept an extension in late August.

The package secures a 4-year agreement with no concessions, providing stability for union members at the plant.

The contract includes annual wage increases of 2.5%, 2.75%, 2.75%, and 3.0%. Additionally, the package offers a \$1,000 pension credit and a \$500 ratification bonus.

A revised vacation schedule, set to take effect on January 1, 2025, is also part of the deal. Employees hired or rehired are entitled to up to 120 hours (15 days) of vacation per year. After 10 years of service, members are entitled to 160 hours (20 days) per year, and after 20 years, they are entitled to 200 hours (25 days) per year.

A special thank you to Chief Steward Travis York and Dana Lancaster for their hard work tackling this challenging negotiation.



Members at Sea-3 Ratify New Two-Year Contract

IBEW 1837 members at the Sea-3 propane facility in Newington, New Hampshire, have ratified a new two-year contract agreement, which includes signing bonuses and an increased boot allowance. However, the contract did not include wage increases, reflecting the company's ongoing financial challenges and restructuring efforts.

The one-time signing bonus for Lead Operators is \$2,000, while Operators received a \$1,500 bonus. The contract also introduced a three-tier operation classification system, starting at \$30.87 per hour for "escorted operators," \$35.40 per hour for "work-alone" operators, and reaching \$41.39 per hour for fully qualified operators. Progression to the fully qualified level is expected to take between two and four years.

The agreement includes a \$200 annual boot allowance, which is a \$50 increase, as well as the creation of a new "Rail Car Unloading" classification, which will be negotiated in the coming months. Furthermore, employees will be offered supplemental life insurance if enough workers enroll, and more flexibility has been granted regarding vacation scheduling, pending management approval.

Sea-3 is currently undergoing a transition period, with new leadership committed to turning the business around over the next two years. The company aims to achieve profitability to sustain long-term operations. As part of this shift, management has pledged to implement changes that may impact how the business is run.



GET OUT THE VOTE



GENERAL
ELECTION DAY

MAINE



DEADLINES TO KNOW FOR VOTING IN MAINE



VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

October 15, 2024

21 days before an election. Same-day registration is permitted on Election Day.



ABSENTEE / MAIL-IN VOTING BALLOT DEADLINES:

Request must be received by

October 31, 2024

3 business days before the election.



BALLOT SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Must be received by the close of polls on Election Day.

Mail Receipt by Election Day



Information provided by NCSL, HeadCount, and US Vote Foundation.
Check your state's website for the most up-to-date voter information.

NEW HAMPSHIRE



DEADLINES TO KNOW FOR VOTING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

Varies between

**October 23, 2023 and
October 30, 2024**

6 to 13 days before an election, depending on local supervisors of the checklist. Same-day registration is permitted on Election Day.



ABSENTEE / MAIL-IN VOTING BALLOT DEADLINES:

Request must be received by

November 4, 2024

The day before the election at 5 p.m.



BALLOT SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Must be received by 5 p.m. on Election Day.

Mail Receipt by Election Day



Information provided by NCSL, HeadCount, and US Vote Foundation.
Check your state's website for the most up-to-date voter information.

Versant Lineman Named ‘Steward of the Year’ by Maine AFL-CIO

IBEW Local 1837 member Greg Middleton, a first-class lineworker at Versant Power, was selected as the 2024 Shop Steward of the Year by a special committee at the Maine AFL-CIO. Middleton received his award at the COPE Convention Awards Banquet in Auburn over the summer. He was nominated for the award by members of IBEW Local 1837.

“Greg embodies everything one could hope for in a union member and steward,” IBEW Local 1837 wrote in its nomination. “His proactive approach and relentless support for his co-workers make him an exemplary candidate for this recognition.”

Middleton grew up in New Jersey but now lives in Brewer. He worked for Central Maine Power for four years before starting at Versant in 2018. In 2022, he was asked to substitute in negotiations for a coworker called to overseas duty with the National Guard. A proposal by the company to extend the contract divided workers and caused tempers to flare. This experience motivated Middleton to get more involved in the union to foster better communication.

“Seeing the disaster unfold made me think that if I could get involved maybe we could avoid this,” said Middleton. “I wanted to ensure the members were informed and that everyone understood the contract, their rights, and the company’s rights to prevent such situations. I would hate to see people leave the company because they misunderstood their rights or felt misrepresented by the union.”

Middleton was instrumental in this year’s contract negotiations. His commitment to the process was evident when, fresh off a family vacation in Florida, he landed at Bangor Airport, went directly to the attached hotel, and joined ongoing negotiations with Versant Power. He was immediately ready to get back to work, having already spent months preparing proposals and meeting with the negotiation team.

“I have a lot of empathy for my members, and it makes me feel good that I can serve them,” said Middleton. “I find it really important to protect workers’ rights.”

Middleton’s devotion was recently highlighted after an executive board meeting where the topic of “Steward of the Year” was discussed. Days later, executive board member Kevin O’Connell, who has worked with Middleton for many years, submitted a handwritten note to the local titled “Steward of the Year” with Greg Middleton’s name inscribed underneath it. This note was included as part of the nomination submission on behalf of IBEW 1837. O’Connell described Middleton as an exceptional individual and a team player who looks out for both the

group and the individual. He spoke to Middleton’s efforts in designing new IBEW t-shirts and coordinating their delivery to union members, which were proudly worn on Wednesdays by members at Versant, symbolizing solidarity during negotiations with the company, as well as at Safety Days.

O’Connell also noted Middleton’s consistent involvement in the process of recognizing first-class linemen. He and others gather at a local restaurant to welcome them into first class, reinforcing camaraderie and support within the union.

In addition, Middleton serves as a unit chair for the local, and his leadership draws people to the meetings because they know he’s in charge.

“Serving as a unit chair, Middleton takes immense pride in leading the monthly meetings, consistently demonstrating his dedication to ensuring that his colleagues are well-informed and supported,” IBEW 1837 Assistant Business Manager Renee Gilman said. “Whenever challenges arise, Middleton takes it upon himself to find practical solutions and address any issues affecting his co-workers.”

“Middleton’s advocacy for the union’s betterment is significant,” added Kaitlyn Hegarty, IBEW Local 1837 Business Representative. “He approaches difficult issues with a level head and calm demeanor, displaying caution and intelligence in his words. Middleton’s huge heart and selflessness shine through in all his actions, demonstrating his genuine care for others.”



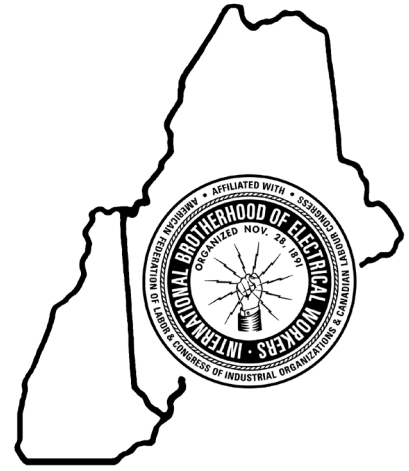
1837 Assistant Business Manager, Renee Gilman, presents Greg Middleton with the Maine AFL-CIO Steward of the Year award during the COPE Convention in Auburn.

IBEW 1837 Unit Meetings

Fall/Winter/Spring 2024-2025 Schedule

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

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



Unit 1, Dover: Fourth Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.

Comfort Inn; 10 Hotel Drive, Dover, NH 03820

Unit 2, Manchester General: Second Tuesday at 5:15 p.m.

Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 131 Union Hall; 161 Londonderry Turnpike, Hooksett, NH 03106

Unit 3, Laconia: Third Thursday at 4:00 p.m.

September, November, January, March, May: Laconia Elks Lodge; 17 Sugarbush Lane, Gilford, NH 03249
October, December, February, April: on Zoom (link to be e-mailed)

Unit 4, Berlin/Lancaster: Fourth Wednesday at 4:00 p.m.

September, November, January, March, May: on Zoom (link to be e-mailed)
October, February, April: Randolph Town Hall; 130 Durand Road, Randolph, NH 03593
*No December meeting due to holiday

Unit 5, Keene: First Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

September, December, March: Parlin Field Airport; Airport Road, Newport, NH 03773
October, January, April: Keene Parks and Recreation Building Room 14; 312 Washington St., Keene, NH 03431
November, February, May: on Zoom (link to be e-mailed)

Unit 6, Portland: First Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

Teamsters Local 340; 27 Main Street, South Portland, ME 04106 (Use rear entrance)
*No November meeting due to Election Day

Unit 7, Lewiston: First Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

Lewiston Public Library, 200 Lisbon St., Lewiston, ME 04240

Unit 8, Augusta: Third Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

IBEW Local 1837 Office (Conference Room); 16 Old Winthrop Road, Manchester, ME 04351

Unit 9, Waterville: Second Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

Best Western Plus Grand Hotel; 375 Main Street, Waterville, ME 04901

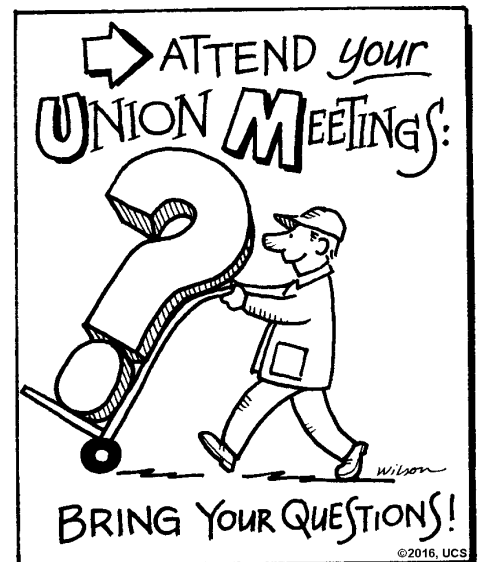
Unit 10, Bangor/Ellsworth: Third Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

Solidarity Center; 20 Ivers Street, Brewer, ME 04412

Unit 11, Presque Isle: Fourth Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

Hampton Inn; 768 Main Street, Presque Isle, ME 04769

*November meeting scheduled for 11/7, December meeting scheduled for 12/12





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The Current

Newsletter of IBEW Local 1837

207-623-1030 or 603-743-1652

Email: union@ibew1837.org

President - Michelle Crocker

Vice President - Bob McNeff

Recording Secretary - Terri MacDonald

Treasurer - Donna Raymond

Business Manager - Tony Sapienza

Assistant Business Manager - Renee Gilman

Business Representative - Kitty Kilroy

Business Rep. / Current Editor - Kaitlyn Hegarty

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