

# The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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## We Are the Power Professionals

IBEW members do our best every day because we're professionals to the core, not because it leads to awards or accolades. But when we are recognized, it's worth celebrating. After all, it's an acknowledgment of our commitment to being the best in the business.

Every year, *Power Magazine* scours the globe to find the best, most efficient and most advanced gas power plants in the world for their annual awards issue. Last year, the editors honored the Wolverine Power Cooperative's 432-megawatt Alpine gas plant in Elmira, Mich., for a record-breaking reliability record.

The plant is not only one of the most reliable in the nation; Alpine's owners say it is the most efficient in their fleet. And IBEW members don't just run the plant—they built it. The \$166-million project began in 2015 and used only union trades. Signatory contractor Swan Electric hired members of Traverse City, Mich., Local 498 for all the substation, power line and construction work that brought the plant to life.

It nearly goes without saying that the project came in on time and on budget.

"I speak for all of us at Alpine when I say we are proud of the work we do to serve our members," said Grand Rapids, Mich., Local 876 member and Chief Plant Operator Dan Boulter. "When people come to our



plant, we take pride in our ownership of its performance and appearance. We take care of everything inside this gate, from cleaning the toilets to troubleshooting our emissions control system."

In recognition of that commitment to professionalism, Wolverine puts the names of the workers who run Alpine on a plaque out front.

Boulter said that while they do nearly all the work themselves—nearly 95 percent of the plant's work orders are for preventative/predictive maintenance—he may be proudest of what he hears from his peers in the industry, the traveling millwrights that work outages and do upgrades all

across the region and see into dozens of plants.

"We like when the millwrights come to the plant and say, 'We don't usually see a plant this clean.' Or, 'We are treated great around here,'" Boulter said. "It's good sign when they tell you, 'When you need help, we want to come back.'"

It's that kind of professionalism and pride from IBEW members—in all branches—that sets our members apart from the competition. With the Code of Excellence as our guide, it's the kind of performance that every day earns us the moniker "The Power Professionals."



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email [theSPARQ@ibew.org](mailto:theSPARQ@ibew.org)



## Dedicated ACP Workers Embody Professionalism

Around the world, manufacturers of robotics, electrical motors, aerospace equipment and other high-tech products depend on the professionalism of workers who craft essential components at Advance Carbon Products Inc. in Hayward, Calif.

“At ACP, ‘Made in America’ truly means something special,” said Dale Oliveira, one of 16 members of the Vacaville Local 1245 unit. “We’ve created a culture through our work ethic and integrity that stands for quality and craftsmanship. We take pride in what we do and how we do it.”

Oliveira was featured in an article in the *Utility Reporter*, Local 1245’s own newspaper, thanks to the skill and professionalism he exhibits on the job. In the mechanical department, he runs lathes, mills, grinders and diamond saws—with margins of error imperceptible to the human eye. Precision grinding a specific part for an aircraft compressor, for example, means working within specs of 0.0002 inches—a fraction the width of a human hair.

“This product requires a specific tolerance and finish in order to warrant this type of process,” he told the *Utility Reporter*. “We take pride in our ability to do that, whereas other companies haven’t found a solution that would enable them to make this part. We’re pretty proud of the fact that we came up with the solution.”

Business representative Cruz Serna said ACP’s workers

demonstrate the IBEW’s core values every day. “These guys, they come to work on time, whenever they’re asked to stay for overtime they stay, they’re really skillful, they

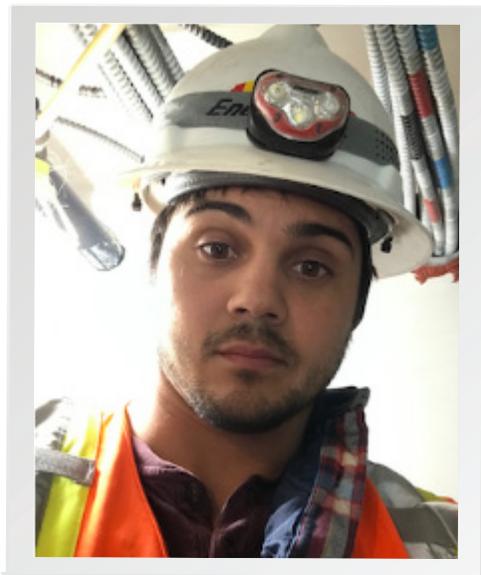


Photo credit: John Storey, Local 1245

know what they’re doing and they help each other out,” he said. “The teamwork there is great.”

The professionalism at ACP goes both ways. Managers “are very respectful toward the employees,” Cruz said. “They don’t micromanage. They don’t need to.”

## SPARQ GOES LOCAL



Justin Long, Apprentice Wireman  
San Luis Obispo, Calif., Local 639

## Professionalism From Day One

“I do not believe I could have learned the necessary skills for the electrical industry without the guidance of the IBEW apprenticeship program.

Without a professional apprenticeship, working in the electrical industry is extremely dangerous and I would not feel safe on the jobsite without the supervision of a journeyman and classroom instruction.

My apprenticeship is my ticket to the middle class.”

Share your IBEW story for a chance to be included in an upcoming issue of *The Electrical Worker* (IBEW.org/MyIBEWStory).