



IBEW 46 seeks fairness, respect in NECA talks for master contract

theStand.org/2021/04/ibew-46-seeks-fairness-respect-in-neca-talks-for-master-contract/

David Groves

April 23, 2021

KENT, Wash. (April 23, 2021) — Negotiations are under way between the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 46 and the Puget Sound Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) on a new Master Construction contract agreement, which will affect all of the union's more than 6,200 members in King, Kitsap, Jefferson and Clallam counties. These are highly skilled, professionally trained Inside Wire essential workers who perform commercial and industrial electrical work. Many have graduated from 4- or 5-year state-recognized and accredited apprenticeship programs.



This IBEW 46 workforce is part of the current and future green economy. They perform energy conservation building upgrades, install electric vehicle charging station infrastructure, light rail, and solar photovoltaics. They — and the companies they work for — are ready to go to work to “Build Back Better” under President Joe Biden’s \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan.

“These electrical workers are the best of the best in terms of the work they perform, and the families and communities they represent,” said Sean Bagsby, Business Manager / Financial Secretary for IBEW 46. “The occupation of journey-level electrician is a true CAREER, not just a job.”

With the current Master Construction agreement expiring at the end of May, the union says it isn’t looking for a fight, just a fair contract that shows respect for its highly skilled members.

“We are looking forward to a fair, equitable, productive, and mutually-beneficial bargaining process,” Bagsby said. “Negotiations don’t have to be difficult or adversarial. Our members have many concerns, and most revolve around respect for their essential work, protection of their current contract rights, improvements to family healthcare and pension, and safety on the job. But in the end, they just want a fair contract that reflects their hard work and expertise.”



Sean Bagsby



Though there are several classifications of IBEW members covered, the biggest single Master Agreement is for 4,200 Inside Wire members. These are the essential workers who specialize in connecting their commercial customers’ electrical systems to the outside power source, and then distributing that power throughout the facility. It’s demanding, technical work that requires years of training, certification, proficiency and attention to detail — for the safety of all the buildings’ occupants and for the electricians themselves.

IBEW 46 is hoping to make progress in good-faith negotiations in the coming weeks, and to reach an agreement with NECA that avoids unnecessary contention or any disruption in services. And the union says it’s comforting to know that the labor community has its back, as it did with “The 900,” IBEW 46’s Limited Energy / Sound and Communication unit that recently won a major victory with its new contract.

“NECA saw that the union movement has our backs and that helped The 900 get a contract worthy of their support,” Bagsby said. “From the Washington State Labor Council, to the Seattle Building Trades, to the Joint Council of Teamsters #28, to MLK Labor and all the many other unions that have showed their support, we know that union solidarity is how we lift up each other to win the compensation and conditions we deserve.”

IBEW Local 46 has a proud tradition of quality craftsmanship, leadership in the community, excellent wages and benefits for members, and innovation in organizing the unrepresented. Local 46 represents more than 6,200 members in 19 different craft units in King, Kitsap, Jefferson and Clallam counties. For more information, visit the union’s website at ibew46.com.



