UNPRECEDENTED

RISING TO THE
CHALLENGE
OF COVID-19

INSIDE:  ► MAKING IATSE VOICES HEARD  ► COVID-19 TESTING
The Stand Up, Fight Back campaign is a way for the IATSE to stand up to attacks on our members from anti-worker politicians. The mission of the Stand Up, Fight Back campaign is to increase IATSE-PAC contributions so that the IATSE can support those politicians who fight for working people and stand behind the policies important to our membership, while fighting politicians and policies that do not benefit our members.

The IATSE, along with every other union and guild across the country, has come under attack. Everywhere from Wisconsin to Washington, DC, anti-worker politicians are trying to silence the voices of American workers by taking away their collective bargaining rights, stripping their healthcare coverage, and doing away with defined pension plans.

Help Support Candidates Who Stand With Us!

For our collective voice to be heard, IATSE’s members must become more involved in shaping the federal legislative and administrative agenda. Our concerns and interests must be heard and considered by federal lawmakers. But labor unions (like corporations) cannot contribute to the campaigns of candidates for federal office. Most prominent labor organizations have established PAC’s which may make voluntary campaign contributions to federal candidates and seek contributions to the PAC from union members. To give you a voice in Washington, the IATSE has its own PAC, the IATSE Political Action Committee (“IATSE-PAC”), a federal political action committee designed to support candidates for federal office who promote the interests of working men and women.

The IATSE PAC is unable to accept monies from Canadian members of the IATSE.

Join The Stand Up, Fight Back Campaign!

I hereby authorize the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States Political Action Committee, hereinafter called the IATSE-PAC, to initiate a deduction from my credit card. This authorization is to remain in full force and effect until the IATSE-PAC has received written notification from me of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford the parties a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

Check one: □ President’s Club ($40.00/month) □ Leader’s Club ($20.00/month) □ Activist’s Club ($10.00/month)

Choose one: □ Or authorize a monthly contribution of $ __________ □ Mastercard □ Discover

□ Authorize a one-time contribution of $ __________ ($10.00 minimum) □ VISA □ American Express

Card #: __________________________________________ Expiration Date (MM/YY): ______/____ Card Security Code: ______

Employee Signature___________________________ Date_________ Last 4 Digits of SSN_________ Local Number__________

Print Name____________________________________ Email____________________________________ Phone Number________________________

Home Address_____________________________ City_________________ State/Zip Code____________________

Billing Address___________________________ City_________________ State/Zip Code____________________

This Authorization is voluntarily made based on my specific understanding that:

• The signing of this authorization card and the making of contributions to the IATSE-PAC are not conditions of membership in the union nor of employment with the Company and that I may refuse to do so without fear of reprisal.

• I am making a contribution to fund-raising efforts sponsored by IATSE-PAC and that the IATSE-PAC will use my contributions for political purposes, including but not limited to, the making of contributions to or expenditures on behalf of candidates for federal, and addressing political issues of public importance.

• Federal law requires the IATSE-PAC to use its best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and the name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed $200 in a calendar year.

• Contributions or gifts to the IATSE-PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

• Any contribution guideline is merely a suggestion and I may contribute more, less or nothing at all without favor or disadvantage from IATSE.

• The IATSE-PAC is unable to accept monies from Canadian members of the IATSE.

RETURN TO: IATSE PAC ~ c/o 100 Centennial Street, #2186, LaPlata, MD 20646
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FINANCIAL RELIEF AVAILABLE FOR IATSE MEMBERS AFFECTED BY RECENT NATURAL DISASTERS

IOWA TORNADOES, HURRICANE LAURA AND CALIFORNIA, OREGON AND WASHINGTON STATE WILDFIRES

IATSE members needing financial assistance should submit a written request to their local union. The local union will forward the request to the Walsh/Di Tolla/Spivak Foundation for review. For more information visit http://iatse.co/disaster-relief
Leadership and Hope

On the heels of the Presidential election and the victory of the Biden - Harris team there is much to be optimistic about. We have elected leaders with a vision toward the future that includes unions. Leaders who defer to the science and medicine in this global war against the pandemic that has caused so much hardship. Leaders who understand diversity, equity and inclusion and the plain decency and rights to all of an equal and just system. For the last four years unions and workers have been under attack and there is real reason for hope that the pendulum is swinging back our way.

There is still much to do. The numbers clearly support the Biden / Harris win, and President Trump’s failed attempts to bring into question the legitimacy of the democratic system have been wholly without merit. But there is too much division. The political lines are stark but the time is upon us to at least try to unify. We, as a union, know about unity and the power we have as a result. There is vision from the new leadership for unity, especially now when we truly face a common enemy in the coronavirus. Regardless of the results of such efforts, our work will remain focused on striving toward improving the economic and social well-being of the members and making sure they are as safe as possible.

As I write, the campaigns for the two Georgia senatorial runoff elections are in full swing. Should the Democratic Party pick up both seats, it will be in control of the House, Senate (VP Harris will be the tie breaker!) and White House, clearing the way for progressive legislation and policies. This is crucial if we are to undo and repair damage done to unions and workers by the Trump administration, and remove the gridlock toward meaningful progress. We have redoubled efforts to support these important races in Georgia and have a robust ground program there.

I am pleased that the incoming administration has reached out and expressed interest in our unique issues as well as those we share with the AFL-CIO. They are proactively seeking the participation of unions in the transition. Our activism has given us a voice on shaping future policy that affects us. More union leaders are involved in the transition and being considered for high ranking posts in the new administration than ever before. And the administration has put tremendous emphasis on diversity and inclusion at the highest levels. The expectation is that pro-worker, pro-union people will be tapped to fill the posts that are most important for us. The Department of Labor and National Labor Relations Board will be able to refocus their work back to the primary mission of HELPING workers. A new Labor Caucus has formed in the Congress already. More positive changes are on the horizon and we are well positioned through our Political and Legislative Department to be involved and integral in the matters we care about.

While the motion picture industry is recovering from the worst of the devastating unemployment caused by the pandemic, there is still a steep hill to climb before any work related to live performance will improve in a meaningful way. Live venues and Tradeshow facilities remain largely under government regulations related to attendee limits. We continue to work diligently on the safest return to work protocols possible and most venues are evaluating and formulating the best ways to keep audiences and attendees safe. Yet even once government restrictions begin to ease, audience confidence to attend crowded events will be an issue. In light of this it is critical that we continue to lobby hard for a renewal of an unemployment subsidy to help workers displaced by Coronavirus. We need to make sure that our industry and the needs of its largely freelance workforce are front and center in discussions about relief. Measures designed to ease the economic strain must come from government now.

With distribution of the approved vaccines on the horizon there is much hope. But we know there will still be difficult days ahead. We are facing challenges unlike any before, but we have proven our durability and commitment to face crisis throughout our history. We will continue to fight hard, lock arms and care for one another. We will get through this together. Be safe and be well.

In solidarity,
OFFICIAL NOTICE

As a result of the continuing spread of COVID-19, this is to advise that the regular Mid-Winter Meeting of the General Executive Board scheduled to be held at The Sheraton Puerto Rico Hotel, 200 Convention Center Blvd., San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00907 from Monday, January 25, to Saturday, January 30, 2021, has been cancelled. All reservations made by local union representatives that were planning on attending have also been cancelled. Plans are being made for a virtual meeting and Local Officers will be advised of the details of that meeting once they are finalized.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL

Earlier this year the International recognized the financial impact on our Locals and allocated $7.0 million for the waiver of all local union per capita obligations for the 2nd Quarter.

Additionally, $2.5 million was contributed to various charities to assist individual members in need.

On November 25, 2020 the General Executive Board met and discussed what further support could be offered to Locals whose members have not only been impacted dramatically in 2020 but will continue to be during the first half of 2021. A waiver of the 1st and 2nd Quarter per capita obligations for 2021 is available for those local unions and is anticipated to result in another $6.0 million of support for our local unions.

Downloadable versions of The Official Bulletin are posted on our website: www.iatse.net. Permission must be granted by the IATSE before reprinting or distributing any portions.

BULLETIN AND PHOTO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please send your Bulletin submissions to bulletin@iatse.net.

All digital photos should be taken with a camera that is at least 3 megapixels or higher, and set on the highest quality/resolution setting.

JPEG or TIFF file formats only please.

Please do not crop or otherwise modify photos - the original version usually has the highest quality.

Using a smartphone? Please turn it sideways for group shots. Get as close as possible to the subject, but avoid using your phone’s zoom function. When emailing photos from a smartphone, please be sure and send the original size or the largest available.
Historic Times

On January 20, 2021 Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr. will be sworn into office as the 46th president of the United States. It will be a historic moment because it will mark the end of a long hard-fought campaign conducted entirely during a pandemic. A pandemic that sadly continues to affect all of us every single day.

Just prior to Joe Biden becoming President, the long-awaited shattering of a glass ceiling will take place when Kamala Harris takes her oath and becomes the first female to ever hold the office of Vice President of the United States. There is obviously still one more ceiling to smash, but these election results show that the question is no longer can a woman achieve the highest office in the land, but rather when. As we continue our pursuit of eliminating barriers for all people and seeking a more inclusive society this becomes one more step in a positive direction.

After every election, whether it be local, state/provincial, or national, only one candidate is elected to office. The supporters of the winner are pleased with the result and the supporters of those that have lost are disappointed. I understand that and it is a natural human reaction. However, the election itself is only the first step in a journey towards effective governance.

That is why our work has only just begun. We asked our membership to get involved in campaigns, encourage everyone that they knew to get out and vote and then follow through on that themselves. You heard the call and responded. Now those that were elected need to be held accountable. Both those we supported and those we did not.

The one thing in politics that is certain is that politicians want to keep their jobs and they know that every few years they need to consult with the electorate and survive a job evaluation, otherwise known as an election. Even those we did not support may support our positions if they feel a growing pressure that may turn them into a one term office holder.

This presidential election saw record turnout and demonstrated to politicians that voters were highly engaged. It would be a mistake to now just walk away and assume everything is going to be fine. We need to constantly make our case and promote our priorities. This pandemic has negatively impacted so many lives and so many things. As we look forward to the other side we not only need our politicians to help get us with a bridge to the vaccine, but we also need them to support our issues once the world returns to “normal”. We need to see policies implemented that make the recovery for our membership as rapid as possible. We have taken the first step of voting and now it’s time to keep the pressure on and ensure that we receive the governance we deserve.
Historic Biden/Harris Victory and Making IATSE Voices Heard

American voters have decided, in our free and fair elections, to elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris to lead the United States as President and Vice President. With over 270 electoral votes and a total vote margin of 5.6 million and growing as every vote is counted, we the people have sent a message that we will not tolerate further attempts to divide us and we are prepared to move forward as a country.

The basis of American democracy is that we pick our leaders – our leaders do not pick their voters. Despite the worst pandemic in a century and deliberate voter suppression efforts, working people came out in record numbers to exercise our rights as citizens in the 2020 election. IATSE workers have done our job by making our voices heard at the ballot box. And now our election officials are doing theirs: counting every vote and verifying the results, as they have in every previous election.

But now that the will of the people is clear and Donald Trump knows he has lost this election, he wants to stop the count and have the courts throw out our ballots for his own gain. In America, the voters alone decide who will represent us and govern in our name. Joe Biden has received more votes than any candidate in U.S. history and is on track to win the popular vote by more than six million.

We have chosen the IATSE-endorsed Biden/Harris ticket to put our country solidly on the path to crushing this virus, providing comprehensive COVID-19 relief, and getting IATSE members back to doing what they love.

MAKING IATSE VOICES HEARD

In the 2020 election cycle, our enhanced political infrastructure allowed IATSE members to build upon previous electoral work and truly make a difference in electing pro-worker candidates who share our views.

To meet the magnitude of this election, the 2020 IATSE political program was unprecedented in its size, scale, and innovation.

This work began long before Election Day with the Political/Legislative Department partnering with the IATSE U.S. Locals to identify a Political Coordinator for every Local and bolster our political reach. Local union leadership is one of the most trusted sources of information about politics for our members, which is why appointing a Political Coordinator is vital to our political and legislative infrastructure. 292 out of 321 U.S. Locals (representing 98.5% of the total U.S. membership) have appointed a member to serve in the role. Political Coordinators were a critical conduit this year for the Political/Legislative Department to disseminate political resources, information, and calls to action to the general membership.

The Political/Legislative Department worked closely with the U.S. District Secretaries and Political Coordina-
tors on robust voter registration drives and get out the vote campaigns—to say nothing of the political programs run by individual districts, Locals, and IATSE committees which led countless other electoral mobilizations.

The IATSE once again participated as an affiliate of the AFL-CIO with their annual electoral mobilization program, Labor 2020. The International invested significant resources in sponsoring IATSE members to work with the AFL-CIO in battleground states this fall as “Labor 2020 release staff.” We brought on twenty-eight IATSE members who worked over 600 days combined as release staff for their respective AFL-CIO state federations, both record numbers for the IATSE. We commend our IATSE release staff who helped to win races up and down the ballot in AZ, FL, ME, MN, MT, NC, NV, PA, TX, and WI. Additionally, International staff members volunteered their time to make calls during weekly AFL-CIO Virtual Phone Banks in the final weeks of the election cycle.

The International also undertook an expansive direct mail program to communicate with members in thirteen battleground states in the weeks leading up to the election. In total, we reached 17,686 members and sent 35,372 mail pieces focused on voter registration, education on pandemic-related changes to state election deadlines and rules, comparing the labor records of the presidential candidates, and getting out the vote.

In partnership with the Communications Department, the 2020 IATSE political program included a peer-to-peer texting campaign for the first time, using the platform Spoke. Prior to the election, IATSE staff communicated one-on-one via text with 20,805 members, received 7,420 responses, and altogether sent 26,598 texts over the course of the program. These texts were again focused on assisting members with voter registration, election changes, ballot tracking, and how to vote. The Political/Legislative and Communications Departments similarly collaborated with regularity to communicate with the U.S. membership about the election via email and social media.

As an endorsing union, the IATSE consistently partnered with the Biden/Harris presidential campaign to mobilize our membership in support of the ticket. Most prominently, we sponsored an IATSE for Biden/Harris GOTV phone bank. IATSE International President Matthew D. Loeb was joined by U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) to kick off the phone bank comprised of a couple hundred union member volunteers.

IATSE PAC utilized over $550,000 of invaluable member contributions to support candidates in the 2020 election cycle who stand with workers and support the issues important to IATSE members.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, IATSE proudly partnered with Power the Polls, a first-of-its-kind initiative to recruit poll workers to ensure a safe, fair election for all voters. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate communities across the country, there was a sharp decrease in the number of people who were able to work the polls on Election Day. With much of the entertainment industry still shut down, this moment was a unique opportunity for IATSE members to safeguard our democracy and simultaneously supplement their income. Over three hundred members signed up to serve as poll workers in their local communities through this partnership, joining local election officials to uphold the democratic process.

We can all be proud of the role the IATSE played in organizing, investing, and mobilizing in the 2020 election cycle to win a better political environment for workers to prosper and succeed.

“I made it clear with the corporate leaders. I said, I want you to know I’m a union guy, unions are going to have increased power. They just nodded, they understand. It’s not anti-business. It’s about economic growth, creating good paying jobs.”

Joe Biden
President-Elect of the United States
COVID-19 Testing – What Is Allowed, What Isn’t Allowed, And How Does This All Work?

Now that the Return To Work Agreement is in place for film, television and streaming productions, members are returning to work with rigorous testing protocols in place. Studios and Employers have contracted with various companies and labs to provide testing, and there are a few types of tests and combinations that meet the testing requirements for each zone.

For the pre-employment test, there are three options that are acceptable. A lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR, for short) test may be used within 72 hours of employment. This is usually a nasopharyngeal swab test and is the “gold standard” of COVID-19 testing and accuracy. If there are issues with being able to obtain such a test’s results within 72 hours, a company may do a combination of a lab-based PCR test and a rapid test. The rapid test must be done within 48 hours of employment, and the PCR test as close to the start date of employment as is possible, and both tests must return a negative result for the person to become an employee. Finally, a company may opt to perform two rapid tests, with the samples collected at the same time, within 48 hours of employment. Again, both of these tests must yield a negative result prior to the start of employment. These combinations and options are the result of input by epidemiologists and experts engaged by each of the Industry Unions and Guilds during the Return To Work negotiations. The goal was to have flexibility for productions to address on-the-ground issues while returning the highest accuracy of test results.

Once you pass your COVID-19 test(s), you are considered an employee. Why is this important? Once an employee, even if you develop symptoms prior to the first day of work, or the health assessment or temperature check the morning of your first day of employment indicates

We continue to have the most robust return to work COVID-19 safety protocols in North America.
you have symptoms of COVID-19, you are now eligible for up to ten days of paid COVID-19 sick leave during your quarantine period.

There are some types of tests that are not allowed at this time; these include antigen and antibody tests. Antigen tests are not sensitive enough to the presence of minuscule amounts of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19. Antibody tests will only tell you if you’ve already had COVID-19, and the test may only be accurate for a few months after initial infection.

Once you are working on a production, your periodic testing requirements depend on the zone you’re in. Zone A is for actors who, at times, cannot wear PPE and for those crew who are in the same space as those unmasked performers. This group has the highest level of weekly testing. For most of those in Zone A, periodic testing is three times a week, with at least one of those tests being a lab-based PCR diagnostic test.

Zone B encompasses those who can remain outside the “bubble” of unmasked performers but are still part of the production crew. They are tested at least one time a week. Zone C are primarily employees who work away from set, without interaction with Zone A or Zone B employees, unless they can all wear PPE, and do not come within six feet of those people for fifteen minutes or more. Their testing is on a bi-weekly basis. For Zone B and C employees, the weekly or bi-weekly test shall be a lab-based PCR diagnostic test, with results returned within 72 hours.

What if a test result cannot be obtained within a 72 hour window? There are ways to address that, as well. The employee can be administered a rapid test and receive a negative result within the past 24 hours, or, if the person is being tested more frequently than the minimum requirements for their zone, and all tests taken within the past seven days have been negative, they can continue to work.

If traveling by plane, or having to quarantine once arriving at a location before commencing work, please refer to the Return To Work Agreement for the various requirements for testing.

Testing can be performed on- or off-site, and testing not done as part of a work day could even be an at-home test, although that technology is not widely available in most markets as of this writing.

A few other important elements should be noted. We are working with productions when an issue related to obtaining one’s tests results arises. If you are having trouble obtaining your test results, other than the production telling you to report to work because you passed, please let your Local know.

Crew members may be required to sign consent forms prior to testing and disclosure of test results. Producers must follow all applicable laws and there shall be no waivers of the Producer’s liability. If you have questions about any documents you are asked to sign, send the document to your Local for review.

Payment for testing not done as part of a work day is paid as a $250 stipend, unless it’s an at-home test, which generates a $20 stipend on a non-work, -idle or -travel day. We are currently working with the Employers and payroll companies to standardized how this money is distributed.

This comprehensive testing policy is the result of consultation with experts, many sessions of negotiations between the Unions/Guilds and the AMPTP, and the will of both sides to create as safe a work environment as possible. COVID-19 testing for a crew of any size or length of employment is expensive, and this part of the agreement, specifically frequency of testing and the timeline for results, was a battle hard fought. In the end, our research prevailed upon the companies the importance of testing, in combination with appropriate PPE, social distancing, and additional crew who can oversee these new rules.

Going forward, the Unions and Employers will have periodic meetings to address any adjustments or issues that arise from this historic agreement. We will follow the science and be nimble to change so that we continue to have the most robust return to work COVID-19 safety protocols in North America.
On September 21st, after months of negotiations between the Unions (comprised of the IATSE, DGA, SAG-AFTRA and Teamsters/Basic Crafts) and the AMPTP, an agreement to address the safety of crews working on motion pictures, streaming and television productions was reached. This contract is the culmination of dozens of meetings involving not just the unions and employers, but also epidemiologists, medical experts, and input from members regarding best practices for their specific crafts.

The result of one of the most comprehensive and pro-active set of safety protocols of any industry in North America and is a direct result of the power of unified union labor.

By building layer upon layer of safety rules and protocols, sets and places of work are able to quickly identify COVID-19 cases, perform contract tracing, and isolate anyone who may be infected. This is accomplished by adhering to distancing protocols, wearing of masks and, when required, other personal protective equipment (PPE), frequent testing for those most at risk of infection due to the requirements of their job, and timely, thorough contact tracing and containment of potentially at risk employees, with a sick leave policy that compensates them for time away from work due to potential illness or exposure.

Let’s look at some of the specifics.

A zone system was established, each with their own level of testing per week or per employment. Within each of these zones, for those working on live-action productions, employers should utilize working pods to minimize interaction between too many crew members. This helps reduce the amount of crew who may need to quarantine if one of their co-workers has, or is suspected to have, COVID-19.

There now exists the position of a COVID-19 Compliance Supervisor (CCS), who, depending on the size of the production, can oversee a number of employees in the COVID-19 Compliance Team. The CCS should be available to all employees during work hours, and have access to medical professionals or other experts when necessary. They are responsible for the implementation and execution of the Return to Work agreement, and should address any COVID-19 issues, in consultation with production, that may arise.

To help educate crew members before they go to work, CSATF or the appropriate entity, such as the IATSE Training Trust Fund, now provides a COVID-19 safety course to all employees.

COVID-19 sick leave pay was negotiated that is better than what Federal or State law provides. If someone meets one of the six “Eligible COVID-19 Events”, they may use up to ten days per employer of sick leave, at the applicable hourly wage minimum and eight hours of benefits, with a daily wage cap of $750, for each day of work they miss. There is no accrual period; this sick leave is available once a person becomes an employee.

It is important to note that a negative COVID-19 test is required to be considered an employee. Once a person is cleared to work and is employed, any eligible COVID-19 event, including symptoms or a positive test, will trigger COVID-19 sick leave pay.

Daily health screenings are required prior to the start of work each day. Answering COVID-19 related questions can be done at home or at the worksite, depending on the production. If the health screening is performed prior to reporting to work, 1/10th of an hour will be added on to that day for daily and weekly hires.

There are provisions for payment for those who are required to quarantine (either due to a Country, State or Local rule), or at request of the production. If someone has to quarantine due to an eligible COVID-19 event, they would instead be eligible for the COVID-19 sick pay.

Two additional documents were also incorporated. These include craft-specific protocols that address a variety of topics, including best practices and cleaning regimens, and the majority of the original White Paper.

Due to the ever-evolving nature of what we know about COVID-19, the Unions, Guilds and AMPTP have agreed to meet periodically to review the Agreement, current science, and address any issues as they arise.

This Agreement is in place until April 30, 2021. If, at that time, it is found that COVID-19 is still a threat to the workforce, an extension will need to be addressed.

Negotiations with the AICP to address commercial production are ongoing. We will provide an update in future Bulletins on the status of these discussions and potential outcome.
A round of applause for the talented women and men of Local 27 that set the stage for democracy at the 2020 presidential debate held on Tuesday, September 29 in Cleveland, Ohio. Great job IATSE Local 27!

Behind every great campaign is an even better crew. Local 8 members pose for a crew shot during a Biden Harris campaigning event held on October 23rd in Bristol, Pennsylvania.

IATSE kin following strict COVID-19 protocols put on one of the most memorable MTV Video Music Award performances to date in August. Pictured are members from Locals One, 4 and 600, International Cinematographers Guild (ICG).
For years, Quinten Rhea of Local 205 in Austin has worked on trade shows, events, conferences, comedy shows, concerts, opera, the ballet, the SXSW festival, you name it. He’s worked forklifts, rigging, audio/visual, sound reinforcement, venue management, “anything and everything,” as he put it.

In early March, Rhea and his sisters and brothers had just finished loading in the national touring company of a Broadway production in Austin — a multi-million dollar show with its own stage, transported by twenty-six trucks.

“I believe it was Friday, March 13th,” he recalled. “Boom — we get the word to take it all down and load it back in the trucks. All of a sudden, my schedule’s gone and a month’s worth of confirmed work is down the drain.”

Rhea had never before been in this situation. Before joining IATSE, he worked two 40-hour/week jobs at the same time.

“I don’t think humans are cut out for that kind of schedule,” he said, “so I went to school, learned the skills I needed to get on with the union, and then was trained and certified in areas like OSHA 10, forklift, scissor lift and mobile automated work platform. Training is a beautiful thing and it’s offered by my union for free.

“I just like to work,” Rhea said. “Twelve to fourteen hour days is what I’m shooting for. So when my schedule fell off a cliff, I was in panic mode. Like most people, I don’t have a lot of savings and I blew through it paying my bills. It took seven and a half long weeks before I started receiving unemployment compensation. That’s a long time to go without things.”

Rhea was grateful for the checks he eventually received — made possible because IATSE’s aggressive lobbying ensured the CARES Act passed by Congress made non-traditional workers like him eligible for unemployment compensation and included an extra $600/week in pandemic benefits. But he was nevertheless bothered by the idea of it. “I had never collected unemployment in my life before this,” he said. “None of my relatives, either. They worked in coal mines and steel mills and made it through the Great Depression. It just eats me up. But when I feel down and overwhelmed, I look toward my relatives and their resilience, resourcefulness and character for comfort and inspiration.

“Still, I did get a little relief and I got caught up on some of my payments,” Rhea said. “But then July 31st came and the assistance stopped, and you’re back to where you started.”

As IATSE members know first-hand, the $600/week supplement expired on July 31 because Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to consider the HEROES Act passed by the House in May, which would have extended the benefits through January 2021.

Rhea joined IATSE’s all-out push this summer to get the pandemic benefits extended, contacting his elected officials, participating in Town Halls, and even telling his story in Why UI Benefits are Crucial For Entertainment Families, a special publication the IA sent to Congress. He’s just as active today, continuing to call and email his senators and representatives. In September, he spoke at a virtual Town Hall organized by
Democratic Senate candidate MJ Hegar on rebuilding the Texas economy: “We need substantial and sustained support until three conditions are met: Until there’s a vaccine, until there’s a safe working environment, and until the industry returns,” he told participants.

More than four months after Rhea’s pandemic payments ended, life continues to be a struggle. He receives food deliveries from his IATSE family. And he’s grateful for the support provided by his union.

“It’s been absolutely excellent, amazing,” he said. “We have a phone tree to check on people. The union has helped me apply for the very few jobs that occasionally become available. It’s unheard of in the corporate world to have people call to see how you’re doing and bring groceries. I am greatly appreciative. I am usually the one helping others, though, and I hope to contribute soon.”

Facing the unknown and the possibility that work might not return for a long time, Rhea is considering applying for a grant from the Actors Fund — available because IATSE donated $2.5 million to that Fund, the Actors Fund of Canada and the Motion Picture and Television Fund to help members during the pandemic. “I hate asking for things, I’ve never been able to do it before this,” he said. “Still, I have to eat, and my bills have to get paid.”

Rhea is concerned about the future. “There has to be a bridge to get us to the next place and get this behind us. We can beat this, but if it takes a year, year and a half, people can’t make it that long. It’s a lot of pain. And there are a lot of peripheral issues, too, like stress, anxiety and depression affecting people, that could last even beyond the end of this. Hopefully, the election will bring us new, compassionate leadership that does the right thing, restores sanity and gets us back on course. All of us need to keep fighting together for our sisters and brothers.”

INITIAL RESPONSE

In its 127-year history, IATSE has been through two World Wars, the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, the Great Depression and other economic downturns, terrorist attacks and natural disasters. But never have members faced the industry-wide devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, Quinton Rhea’s plight has been shared in one form or another by virtually every one of the IA’s 150,000 members.

When the shutdown hit in mid-March, IATSE officials instantly recognized the singular nature of the threat and sprung into action. Among the first steps taken, the General Executive Board allocated $2.5 million to the Actors Fund, the Actors Fund of Canada and the Motion Picture and Television Fund to aid members in need, as noted previously.

The General Executive Board also provided relief to Locals for second quarter per capita obligations.

Another immediate concern was ensuring that members not working would not lose their health care coverage. So the union trustees at the Motion Picture Industry (MPI) Health Plan and the IATSE National Benefit Funds went to work to make this happen.

Acting in his capacity as Labor Chair of the MPI Health Plan, International Vice President Thomas Davis (who also serves as Business Manager of Local 80) worked with his fellow directors to have MPI provide free COVID care without payment and immediate premium relief for all participants. This has continued and most recently, MPI announced it will continue to provide no-cost COBRA coverage and waivers of dependent health care premiums through May 31st.

As union trustees of the IATSE National Health and Welfare Fund, International President Matthew D. Loeb; General Secretary-Treasurer James B. Wood; International
Vice Presidents Daniel Di Tolla, Michael F. Miller, Jr. and Joanne M. Sanders; International Trustee Patricia White; and former International Vice-President Brian Lawlor did the same. As a result, The Fund gave Plan A participants credits to maintain their eligibility, and covered shortfalls in CAPP so Plan C participants would retain their benefits, as well.

“While some employer trustees were concerned about the financial impact of doing this, 2019 was an excellent year for the Health & Welfare Fund and our consultants did an excellent job making sure we had all the financial information we needed to be assured this was a sound decision,” Sanders said. “It was a huge relief to do this. I have so much compassion for our rank and file members, and if we can't take care of them, then I don't feel like I’m doing my job.”

“Our health plans are spending a lot of money to keep people covered, while going without the normal hourly contributions that come in,” Miller said. “The fact that the reserve funds are available for this purpose is thanks to the hard work bargaining committees have done in previous negotiations and the skillful management of these plans. This is what the reserves are for and I've been impressed at how far they've gotten us to this point.”

As a result of these twin actions, an estimated 98 to 99 percent of IATSE members who work in motion picture production have been able to retain their health coverage despite the absence of work. In fact, the level of attrition has actually been less than in normal eligibility periods.

The MPI’s labor directors also acted to enable participants in its Individual Account Plan (IAP) — an employer-funded defined contribution pension plan — to make hardship withdrawals without paying a penalty. And the California IATSE Council — also chaired by Davis — persuaded the California state legislature to waive any state tax penalties for hardship withdrawals, mirroring a similar federal provision in the CARES Act passed by Congress.

Similarly, the IATSE National Benefit Funds’ trustees made sure that participants in the IATSE Annuity Fund can take penalty-free hardship withdrawals.

To provide further support for members facing hardship, the General Executive Board launched the Coronavirus Active Response and Engagement Service (IATSE CARES). Found at https://iatsecares.org, this initiative connects members and retirees who need help — especially those who are at-risk, elderly, and/or disabled — with members who are willing to help. So far thousands of members have volunteered to serve their sisters and brothers and kin.

Notably, IATSE CARES creates a buddy system where members may sign up to have a volunteer check in with them as often as they choose. And, as Quinton Rhea noted, it establishes a safe and free delivery system enabling members to request supplies, groceries, or whatever else they may need, and have it brought to their door by another IATSE member.

At the same time, IATSE underwent an unprecedented mobilization to gain relief for members through the U.S. Congress and Canadian Parliament.

Members sent a whopping 108,000 letters to Congress and thanks to their activism, the CARES Act, which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. It made IA members eligible for financial relief — including those with scheduled or offered work that had been shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic — and added an extra $600/week in pandemic unemployment benefits through July 31st. It also extended the duration of unemployment compensation by an additional thirteen weeks.

Canadian IATSE members achieved comparable success in Parliament, creating a $2,000/month Emergency Response Benefit for those who typically do not qualify for traditional unemployment insurance and winning other important relief (see page 23-25 for more information).

But the job was not done yet. “Passage of the CARES Act was just the first step — we didn’t stop, and in fact, we had to work even harder,” said IATSE Political and Legislative Director Tyler.

On September 5th 2020, Sisters, Brothers and Kin of Local 200 and surrounding Locals 82, 283, and 501 held their first ever civic action. A “Case Push” rally around the PPL Center in Allentown Pennsylvania to bring awareness to unemployed entertainment workers and urging Congress to extend pandemic unemployment assistance.
McIntosh. “Our grassroots activism spearheaded House passage of the HEROES Act on May 15th, and then we channeled our collective strength toward the Senate.”

The HEROES Act extended the $600/week pandemic unemployment benefit through January 2021; provided a 100 percent COBRA premium subsidy; made all nonprofits, including unions, eligible for Paycheck Protection Program support; provided relief to multiemployer pension plans; required OSHA to issue COVID-19 standards; and appropriated $20 million in funding for the arts. Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to consider the bill in the Senate, despite all-out pressure from IATSE and organized labor.

“The work that Locals did was awe-inspiring,” McIntosh said. “They held rallies, built grassroots momentum through their communities, generated local press, and raised awareness about the plight of entertainment workers.” Several Locals also held Case Pushes across the country, with members pushing empty road boxes emblazoned with “HEROES Act Now,” “Save the $600,” and “Extend PUA” banners.

“While we’ve kept the heat on the Senate through the fall, we’ve also focused our 2020 political program around the need to address COVID-19,” McIntosh said. “We’ve made clear where the candidates stand on the issues that, now more than ever, directly affect our members’ lives and livelihoods. And we kept our members informed on the latest voting information so they could choose how best to cast their ballots, whether by mail, through early voting or in person on Election Day.”

Beyond legislative and political action, and providing needed relief to members, each Department is working tenaciously to address the specific needs of each craft and industry, and to ensure that no member is left behind during these unprecedented times. What follows is a more detailed look at how IATSE is answering the call.

MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION

As it was for Quinton Rhea, March 13th was “Black Friday” for IATSE members working on live action motion picture and television productions.

But there were a few exceptions. “We were fortunate in some ways,” said Michael F. Miller, Jr., International Vice President and Director of Motion Picture and Television Production. “Animation continued without seeing anywhere near the downturn that the live action crews experienced. Some staff employees and many post-production employees continued working, too, with working at home an option in many cases.”

But for members unable to work from home, there was no work. Miller and Local leaders immediately urged employers to do right by IATSE members, with significant successes. “Our employers did a lot to carry our people,” he said. “Most provided between three and eight weeks of relief pay. Shows that continued in production tried to carry their entire crew even when not all crew members worked. Netflix in particular was the first to act and a model for others to follow. Overall, our employers paid hundreds of millions of dollars in relief.”

Throughout this time, motion picture and television production Locals in Southern California partnered with the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank to distribute food to members in need, operating out of the IATSE West Coast Office. “It was a very sobering experience to see lines of entertainment industry workers in need of food during this crisis,” Miller said. “We served thousands of workers in our community and are grateful that we have the facilities at the West Coast Office to serve our members.”

Though the employment outlook remained bleak in many IA crafts well into the fall, there has been a resurgence the last few months in motion picture and television production.”We’ve
been seeing exponential increases in work, particularly in pre-
production, which is a precursor to everything else,” Miller said,
noting that Georgia and New York have been busy and that Los
Angeles is in the early stages of a return to normalcy.

Of course, returning to work can only happen when
production sets are safe — that members won’t risk exposure to
COVID-19 on the job.

At IATSE’s behest, the Industry-Wide Labor Management
Safety Committee — which has existed for many years — began
meeting in March to create a list of COVID-19 safety protocols
that would serve as the minimum requirements to allow
production to resume.

While this work was going on, IATSE Locals were busy ne-
gotiating return to work protocols with employers on a case by
case basis. Miller estimated that IA staff and officers bargained
300 or more separate protocols. “Our Local staff representatives
have never worked harder or had more to do than over these
seven months,” he said. “They’ve done an incredible job.”

At the same time, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and
California Gov. Gavin Newsom asked the motion picture and
television industry — both labor and management — for help
in developing statewide standards. They charged the Labor
Management Safety Committee, co-chaired by Local 80 member
and IA Safety Committee Chairman Kent Jorgenson, with
developing an Industry-Wide Safety Committee White Paper in
consultation with other stakeholders, such as Studio Mechanics
and New York Production Locals. Working in partnership
with the Directors Guild of America (DGA), Screen Actors
Guild (SAG-AFTRA), the Teamsters and Basic Crafts, IATSE
finalized the document with the Alliance of Motion Picture and
Television Producers (AMPTP). New York and California then
issued guidelines that closely adhered to the White Paper. As a
result, the IA’s safety protocols set the standard for the industry.

Announced on September 21, the protocols’ guiding
principles include strictly enforced testing regimens, a zone-
based system, and diligent use of personal protective equipment
(PPE). To ensure workers’ livelihoods are not burdened with
added uncertainty during the pandemic, the agreement also
includes COVID-19 sick leave and quarantine pay.

“This is the first time I’m aware of when IATSE, the
Directors, SAG-AFTRA, the Teamsters and the basic crafts went
in together with the major studios and Netflix to determine what
needed to be done to protect the industry and the livelihoods of
its workers,” Miller said. “This unprecedented cooperation was
recognized by our employers. The strength to come in as one
voice was tremendous.

“Importantly, it applies to everyone,” he emphasized. “It
applies to a director the same as a grip, it applies to an actor the
same as a costumer. The virus doesn’t recognize craft lines.”

As part of this effort, IATSE worked with Contract Services
and the Training Trust Fund to conduct COVID-19 awareness
training, which must be taken by all the workers on a set to
remain eligible for work.

“The protocols enable us to come back strongly and quickly,
with unprecedented benefits like sick leave, quarantine pay, and
a testing regimen that no other industry has yet matched,” he
added. “And for other industries, it provides a good model for
joint labor-management cooperation and allowing for a safe
return to work.

“We’ve seen evidence thus far that we’ve created a robust
program that is working,” Miller said. “The reality is that
motion picture production is different now. Since no one has
done this before, there are bound to be bumps in the road. But
I think we’ve established a viable framework for now and the
foreseeable future.

“Work flows on the set are certainly changing,” he said.
“There’s a lot to unpack. It ranges from how different groups of crew members are separated from one another to how crews work with actors not wearing masks when scenes are shot. There’s also a tremendous amount of technological change that’s now enabling some crew members to work remotely from home.”

“Due to logistical issues around the new protocols and the cost of compliance, it remains to be seen whether and when production levels and work hours will match where they were pre-pandemic,” Miller noted. “On the other hand, demand for content has not subsided at all. The one consistency in all of this is uncertainty. But we are moving forward.”

STAGECRAFT

The impact of COVID-19 on members in Stagecraft has been brutal from day one. Not only on Broadway but all across the country.

“When things shut down in March, every touring company, every dance company, every opera company, symphonies, all of them immediately and completely stopped work,” said International Vice President and Director of Stagecraft Daniel E. Di Tolla. “That remained the case through most of the summer. Starting in July, local and traveling stagehands went back to load out the sets and send the equipment back into the shop and several Broadway shows loaded out, as well. But of course, that was just temporary work, not long-term.”

Stagecraft Locals also took the initiative to assist members in need. “Our Locals have been very active, ” Di Tolla said, “GETTING THE WHEELS BACK IN MOTION

Daniel McManus, a crew chief and member of Locals One and 4, and Edward Lavin, an Emmy Award winning Broadcast Technician and member of Locals 100 and 600, both had the opportunity to work on the “virtual” 2020 MTV Video Music Awards. While the work was substantially different than in the pre-COVID-19 days, both members were happy to be back on the job.

“Tiring now, while thinking about it,” McManus said of the experience. “It was amazing feeling to be working on the set of the VMAs. It was tough not being able to hug or shake hands with any of my IA family but it was great to see everybody.”

“It was amazing,” Lavin agreed. “It felt good to see good people and to see people get paid for something we all care about.”

Lavin was impressed with the safety precautions in place. “Safety first and I’m happy to see the care taken to ensure the safety of all crew members,” he said. “It’s nice to see value placed on what we do and that we matter.”

McManus echoed this sentiment. “I really appreciated the safety measures MTV/Viacom took to make sure everyone on the site was tested regularly and always wearing masks,” he said, “but it also made everyone on the job site feel safer to work during these conditions.

“I do feel this is a huge step in the right direction though and showing everyone that we took on this show and had great success going by all protocols and COVID-19 related guidelines,” McManus added. “We really showed the wheels can get back in motion!”

“If some are returning to work, we all will eventually,” Lavin said. “Do what you can with the time you have. Time with family, your friends, your church and loved ones.”

“Our Locals have been very active, conducting food drives, making masks, lobbying to extend pandemic unemployment benefits, and engaging their communities.”

Daniel E. Di Tolla
International Vice President and Director of Stagecraft

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Stagecraft Locals also took the initiative to assist members in need. “Our Locals have been very active,” Di Tolla said,
“conducting food drives, making masks, lobbying to extend pandemic unemployment benefits, and engaging their communities. It’s been a real inspiration.”

While Broadway is now shut down through May 30, 2021, and most national touring companies and regional theaters will likely remain closed for the foreseeable future, some work has started to return. “Some scene shops have gone back to work and some have gone in to do maintenance,” Di Tolla said. “Some talk shows in New York City resumed production in September without a live audience, and with social distancing and PPE for our members.

“Recently, Local 4 crewed the MTV Video Music Awards,” he noted. “Rather than taking place in the Barclay’s Center with a live audience, most of the show was shot outdoors around Brooklyn. It was good to have the work, but it was still about one-third the number who would have been working on a normal awards broadcast.”

The Stagecraft Department developed COVID-19 safety protocols for all members returning to work, submitted them to expert epidemiologists for review, and incorporated their recommendations. Locals then negotiated the protocols with employers.

“All of the protocols involve PPE, with the requirements more stringent if close interaction with artists is required,” Di Tolla said. “For example, with stagehands keeping six feet apart, masks are sufficient, while make-up requires gowns and N95 masks. There are limits on ingress and egress to avoid clusters of people, and social distancing is required during breaks and meals. Hand sanitizer is everywhere.

“For large groups, there is pre-employment testing,” he said. “There are protocols about how to handle people who may have been exposed to ensure adequate contact tracing and that people in danger of infecting others are removed from work. And we’ve made sure there are good sick leave provisions, because it’s important that all workers know they can answer the questions they’re asked about their health and possible exposures honestly without putting their income at risk. The protocols do vary a bit depending on the employer and the Local, but these are usually the broad parameters.”

He noted that, as one example, the Feld Company, which produces Disney on Ice, agreed that once they’re back to work, touring personnel who either test positive or are exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be paid for the length of their required quarantine.

“Our employers are taking COVID-19 seriously and working with us to adopt what we both agree are appropriate safety measures to reduce the dangers of infection in the workplace as much as possible,” Di Tolla said. “The only pushback we have ever gotten over safety protocols has been at Trump campaign events, where campaign advance people are not wearing masks, distancing or observing proper safety protocols. We’ve had to warn all local unions about this.”

TRADE SHOW & DISPLAY

Along with Stagecraft, Trade Show & Display Department members have been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with in-person conventions, meetings, exhibitions, concerts and a host of other events cancelled since March.

“I’d estimate that between 90 and 95 percent of our members have been out of work,” said International Vice President and Director of Trade Show & Display Joanne Sanders. “Some general service contractor warehouses have had some work but even that’s been sporadic at best.”

“Our Locals have stepped up in a big way,” Sanders said. “It’s been amazing what they’ve done for the membership.” In particular, she cited Local 720 in Las Vegas for completely renovating a room in their building to serve as a food pantry, and several Los Angeles Locals for raising more than $12,000 for area food banks.

“The number of individuals who have been stepping up and working together has been phenomenal,” she said. “As awful as this pandemic is, that has helped build solidarity and that is priceless.”

Locals were very active in lobbying to extend pandemic unemployment benefits. This included a Red Alert protest in

“AS AWFUL AS THIS PANDEMIC IS, THAT HAS HELPED BUILD SOLIDARITY AND THAT IS PRICELESS.”

Joanne Sanders
International Vice President and
Director of Trade Show & Display
which more than 2,400 buildings were lit up in red to raise awareness about the plight of entertainment and gig economy workers.

“Our members can’t go back to work because government regulations closed down their work,” Sanders said. “The notion opponents put forward that pandemic unemployment benefits would incentivize people to stay home is clueless, outrageous, and an insult to our members, and we have made that point over and over.”

Interestingly, the IA has been joined by newly formed industry groups including We Make Events (founded by the Professional Lighting and Sound Association of the U.K.), Save Our Stages (founded by the National Independent Venue Association), and Go Live Together (founded by Freeman and fourteen other trade show employers, unions and associations).

“In the past, the trade show industry hasn’t felt the need to do much lobbying,” Sanders said. “But now they’ve learned what we’ve long known — you have to be able make your case if you want to have an impact. Most people don’t realize what it takes to put together a show, whether it’s a live concert, tradeshow or a convention, and Go Live Together in particular is helping to shine a light on the critical work our members do in the live events industry.”

Throughout the course of the pandemic, Trade Show, like all IATSE Departments, has worked to develop safety protocols for its sector of the industry, in consultation with three epidemiologists hired by the union for this purpose.

“We wrote up protocols that apply to the trade show sector,” Sanders said. “After being edited by our epidemiologists, we distributed them to every Local. We covered every area of work, addressing issues like how to keep equipment disinfected, and how to handle freight coming from another country, as well as mask mandates, cleaning stations and testing.

“We’re working closely with our employers on this, and we’re on the same page when it comes to what needs to happen when work resumes,” she added.

The Department is being particularly vigilant due to the fact that many jobs involve multiple layers of oversight, including the General Service Contractor, the Show Manager and venue management. “Hopefully, we won’t run into issues, but this is one area we’re alert to,” Sanders said. “The General Service
Contractor will come into the building with its own set of protocols. The venue will have its own standards. We need to make sure the higher standards are always followed no matter the situation.

“Each state, county and municipality has its own standards as well,” Sanders noted. “This became an issue in Jacksonville this summer, where Local 115 did a WWE event, following city and venue protocols. Then the Republicans wanted to hold Convention events there, but insisted they would do whatever they wanted. The venue said, ‘No, you’re going to follow our protocols.’ The Republicans pulled out and our Local lost that work.”

Sanders noted a few indications that some work may be coming back. “One recent show was held in Orlando as a hybrid test case with events held both virtually and on site,” she said. “There was social distancing, masks were required, and booths were farther apart than normal. There is a show planned in early December in Louisville that may follow a similar mode. And there have been some meetings in Las Vegas as people explore how to bring people together while protecting everyone’s health. We’re doing everything we can to get as many members as possible back to work safely as soon as possible.”

BROADCAST

For IATSE members in broadcasting, March 11, 2020 might as well have been Woeful Wednesday. On that day, Utah Jazz Center Rudy Gobert tested positive for the coronavirus, the National Basketball Association suspended its season, and all live professional and college sports ground to a halt.

Starting in July, various sports started resuming their season under widely varying circumstances. The NBA created its own bubble in Orlando, as did the WNBA and Major League Soccer (MLS). The NHL had bubbles in Toronto and Edmonton. Later that month, Major League Baseball started a 60-game regular season playing in the teams’ empty ballparks. This fall, the National Football League, NCAA Division I football and, now, MLS are playing in their home stadiums, some without fans and others at reduced capacity.

This had widely varying impacts for IATSE members working for the RSNs. “Normally, there are two crews working the pro sports broadcasts, one from the home team’s network and one from the visiting team’s network,” Belsky said. “You might have twenty-five people working the home show with up to a dozen cameras, plus multiple replay, audio, graphics, and other technicians, while the away crew could have another fifteen or twenty people, possibly sharing cameras and other feeds with the home show.

“But the NBA bubble was bunkered, with just one crew creating a single ‘world feed,’” he noted. “So a smaller number of members were working a smaller number of games.”

For sports like baseball resuming without bubbles, crewing decisions varied. “Home team crews largely went back to work,” Belsky said, “with individual crewing decisions left to employers about who would be rehired. In some cases, away crews might...

“ABOVE ALL ELSE, WE MUST MAINTAIN UNION VALUE FOR OUR MEMBERS IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES.”

Steve Belsky
Co-Director of the Broadcast Department
get some positions on some of the games, but in others, the home team crew would do the entire show and the entire (shortened) season.

“The bottom line is that some of our members have been able to return to work, but others could be without jobs for some time,” he said. “Our Department is holding a Summit in November with all Broadcast Local leaders. Among many topics, we’ll be honing our strategies to stay ahead of technological evolution, especially in light of crewing changes caused by the pandemic in current seasons and those ahead. Above all else, we must maintain union value for our members in these uncertain times.”

Throughout this process, the Broadcast Department has been working long and hard to put in place COVID-19 safety protocols and ensure that employers abide by them.

“With no single association of broadcasters, we’ve had to bargain with more than thirty employers for the terms of our safety protocols,” Belsky said. “We’re demanding two things. The first is basic safety standards. That’s easier for a centerfield cameraperson who’s mostly socially distanced from the rest of the crew. But it’s almost impossible inside a truck with ten technicians plus producers, directors, and the rest. You can’t put up enough sneeze guards to protect them. So we’re targeting remote buildings, supplemental trailer-based systems, and air flow improvements as well as other steps.

“Our second demand is for a social responsibility pledge,” he explained. “That includes quarantine pay for crew members who feel ill, have tested positive, or have been exposed to someone with COVID. This is critical to ensure no one feels the financial pressure to report to work despite the risk of spreading the virus. Some employers argued they couldn’t afford two weeks of quarantine pay. We argued they couldn’t afford not to; that this was the cost of putting these sports back on TV. Others tried to contort the social responsibility pledge (or failing to comply with the pledge) into part of a disciplinary action. We pushed back in every instance and our employers were made to understand no part of the pledge or any other return-to-work waiver would sign away our rights to due process.

“In most cases, we’ve succeeded in getting the protections we want and need,” Belsky said. “Interestingly, the first COVID quarantine package we bargained was with Sinclair, which is historically non-union. On the flip side, we have one combative employer that loosely suggested the workers would be at fault if they got sick or were exposed to someone; that they would have had to have been careless or indifferent in light of the obvious risks. Of course, the asymptomatic transfer of COVID shows how foolish that statement is.

“So the natural battle, going forward, is still testing,” he added, “whether it’s required and how it may be compensated. As an example, despite being one of the best-funded teams in Major League Baseball, the L.A. Dodgers initially required testing but refused to pay for it. We applied pressure through their crewing company and rights holder, and they ultimately conceded that obligation. Other employer responses are mixed. Some employers required no testing and have experienced outbreaks and cancellations. But there are full-fledged success stories, as well. Major League Soccer required and paid for testing from the outset. There were a few positives along the way, and some broadcasts were rescheduled, but the displaced crews were still paid and the outbreaks were minimized because of pre-hire testing. That’s a win in these times. We need more of that.”

CANADA

While Canada has done a better job in taming the pandemic than the U.S., the impact on IATSE members has been similarly severe and the Canadian Affairs Department has been working doggedly to protect and support their well-being.

Shortly after the pandemic hit, at IATSE’s urging, the federal government instituted the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) for people who did not qualify for Employment Insurance (the equivalent of U.S. unemployment insurance) because they were self-employed.

This ensured that arts and entertainment industry workers would receive aid. Anyone who is a resident of Canada (including non-citizens), is at least fifteen years old, has stopped working because of COVID-19, had employment and/or self-
employment income of at least $5,000 in 2019 or the past twelve months, and did not quit their job voluntarily was eligible.

The CERB provided $2,000/month and allowed claimants to earn up to $1,000 in gross wages per month without losing their benefits. At first, CERB was authorized for sixteen weeks. Then IATSE succeeded in gaining an eight week extension and later another four weeks, for a total of 28 weeks. It expired on October 3rd.

Fortunately, by the time the CERB expired, the government had expanded the Employment Insurance (EI) program so that more people could be included, and rolled out a new benefit to capture those who were still ineligible for it, including many IA members. The new program is called the Canada Recovery Benefit. It was initially $400/week, but after much pressure from IATSE and the New Democratic Party (NDP), it was raised to $500, equaling the CERB. Claimants apply and are paid in two-week increments to a maximum of 26 weeks.

In addition, the federal government implemented the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). Designed to keep employees on payroll even if their employer has to temporarily close or cut its operations, the program pays employers a subsidy of 75 percent of employee wages on the first $58,700 per employee. The government “strongly encourages” employers to pay the remaining 25 percent, but there is no requirement to do so. Employers are also able to rehire laid-off workers under the program to reduce the national unemployment rate. Though originally set to expire at the end of August, the CEWS has been extended until the summer of 2021.

“From the day the lockdown started, we have been aggressive in gathering hard data, meeting with government officials and building alliances to take care of our members,” said International Vice President and Director of Canadian Affairs John Lewis. “The IATSE was one of the first groups to secure meetings with federal officials and provide hard numbers on the impact of COVID on our members.

“We made a compelling argument that since Employment Insurance didn’t help some (or all) of our members, we needed other forms of relief,” he said. “We met with anyone who would meet with us — Liberals, NDP, Conservatives and the Bloc Quebecois. We met with senior officials from seven Ministries and we testified before the Federal Finance Committee.

“In addition, we formed alliances,” Lewis noted. “We took the lead in founding the Creative Industries Coalition with Actors Equity, the CFM, and the Associated Designers of Canada, which focused on live performance, and we joined a national task force addressing issues in the film and television industry. That’s why we were able to put supports in place have been effective and appropriate for gig and entertainment industry workers.”

Beyond lobbying, the IA protected members’ health benefits under the IATSE Canada Health Plan, which covers twenty-two Locals and more than 25,000 members and dependents. “We were able to negotiate a virtual freeze on premiums,” Lewis said. “To address plan underutilization during COVID, since people weren’t going to see their doctors or dentists, our carrier provided monthly discounts to established premiums.” In April, there was a fifty percent refund of paid dental premiums and a twenty percent refund of paid health and vision premiums. May and June saw similar discounting, but it has dropped recently as usage has increased.

In addition, IATSE Canada created a new website — www.iastsecanada.net — in both French and English as a resource
for Canadian members around COVID-19. Content includes information on government benefits and how to apply, health and retirement benefits, mental health resources, domestic violence prevention, managing finances, and temporary employment options. It also provides COVID-19 information from the federal and every provincial government, describes what IATSE is doing to help members and the industry, and empowers members to take action, ranging from contacting elected officials to receiving online training.

The Canadian Affairs Department has also been directly involved in larger discussions about safe return-to-work protocols in motion picture, television, stagecraft and trade show, and has provided assistance to Locals addressing these protocols on a case-by-case basis. Canadian local unions have also taken a leading role in discussions with provincial governments and agencies throughout the country about to protect workers.

"On every front — legislative action, organizing, bargaining, safety, health care, community outreach, and member support — IATSE Canada is supporting our Locals and working aggressively to ease the burden of COVID on our members and pave the way for a safe return to work," Lewis said.

TRAINING

The IATSE Education and Training Department, the IATSE Training Trust Fund (TTF), and the IATSE Craft Advancement Program Committee (ICAP) have been centrally involved in the Alliance’s COVID-19 response efforts.

Right at the start, they had to instantly pivot from in-person to online trainings and webinars, a process that involved countless hours. “Before COVID, we would go around to every District to do education and training,” said IATSE International Trustee and Director of Education and Training Patricia White. “Transitioning to virtual was hard; it was tricky. And we had to do it while working from home. It’s something we wanted to add to our course offerings, in any case, but starting in March, we had to do it almost instantly.”

Training has long been a major focus of IATSE, but COVID-19 increased its importance in two ways. First, with members not working, it’s an optimal time to learn new skills and upgrade qualifications so they can be even more employable when work resumes. And second, the ICAP and the TTF are training members in COVID-19 safety protocols so they can protect their health and that of their sisters and brothers.

Being online has the further advantage of making training more accessible to more members, since they can log on at their convenience. “I think we had over 4,000 people take one of our courses,” White said. “We’re reaching far more people than we did in person.

“It’s really important for members to feel connected to their union, engaged with their craft and, honestly, keeping the mind alive,” White explained. “We’re in kind of a timeless period now, and if you can use it to enrich yourself as a worker, that can be really helpful. It won’t necessarily get you a job or cure the pandemic, but it expands the limits of what you can do so even as world constricts, opportunities can open up. There’s so much bad news now, and I hope education has been a bright spot for people, and a solidarity builder.”

Course options available to members include:

- 19 TTF Safety First! online courses, including C19—COVID-19 Prevention and Training, required for members working under AMPTP and other motion picture and television agreements; and Recommended Sanitation Practices for Make-up and Hair. A Wardrobe COVID-19 safety class is about to be added, as well.
- OSHA 10 Training, now a five-day distance learning workshop, covering general industry safety and health principles and OSHA policies, procedures, and standards.
- LinkedIn Learning (formerly linda.com), which offers a free online library of over 15,000 expert-led courses and video tutorials across a wide spectrum of technologies.
- AVIXA Partnership, which includes free online and live courses covering the latest developments and advances in audiovisual and other integrated technologies. The annual InfoComm show, produced by AVIXA, was held digitally in June, with IATSE trainers participating in panels and ICAP conducting a webinar on how to plan a safe show.

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Motion Picture Television Workers Online Safety, available to members performing work under the IATSE Area Standards Agreement, with online offerings covering General Safety Training, Environmental Safety, and Harassment Prevention.

White emphasized that many other course offerings are available, too. “One that I’m most proud of is on diversity and inclusion, and we now have a playlist of six courses through LinkedIn Learning that anyone can take,” she said. “We have a terrific online version of our labor and economic history course on why unions matter — one for the U.S. and two for Canada (in English and French). We offered a course for U.S. Locals leading up the election on the impact of politics on members’ lives, emphasizing the Labor Department, OSHA and the NLRB. We’re offering a labor law class in November.

“Another area that has only grown in importance during the pandemic is emotional wellness,” White noted. “The IA is partnering with Behind the Scenes to offer courses raising awareness about mental health, the resources available to help, and suicide prevention. We also held six sessions of a day long course for Local leaders about how to build emotional resilience for themselves, how to lead through this difficult time of COVID, and how to address difficult situations that come up in the industry.

“Knowledge is power,” she said. “People need knowledge to make the right decisions for themselves and to know how to go back to work safely. We’re facing a huge public health crisis, a huge economic crisis, a social justice crisis and an environmental crisis, and everyone has to navigate them. Our Department and the TTF are trying to provide the tools to do exactly that. After the pandemic, in-person training will resume, but these online tools will be there for members and leaders, as well.”

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

With nearly every single member facing the gravest threat to their livelihoods ever encountered, this is an all-hands on deck moment for IATSE. Every aspect of the IA’s operations has been focused on helping members survive this extended period without jobs and income, keep themselves safe and healthy, enhance their skill levels, and return to work safely as soon as is humanly possible.

“The moment the crisis hit, we mobilized all of the constitutional bodies of the IATSE and all of the committees to work as best we can to assist, support and empower our membership,” said International President Matthew D. Loeb.

“We have bargained as hard as we possibly can with our employers to generate severance and other compensation, and to implement state-of-the-art safety protocols when work resumes,” he said. “We acted in our capacities as Fund trustees to keep members on their health insurance and enable them to tap into their pensions in cases of hardship. We lobbied our two governments to provide assistance to our members. These and other emergency efforts are happening not only at the International, but in every Department, every Committee, every District and every Local.

“It’s been said that crisis might not build character, but it certainly reveals it,” Loeb emphasized. “I think that’s absolutely true of our great union. People have come together in ways that cannot fail to inspire. Whether it’s volunteers delivering food to their sisters and brothers, or making regular calls to members who were isolated even before COVID-19, or sewing masks, or holding socially distanced rallies to demand government action, or getting themselves trained to work safely in a pandemic, or joining Zoom union meetings, our members are showing the true meaning of solidarity. Facing threats that are existential in nature, we are standing stronger than ever and are more united than ever.

“We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keeper,” he said. “That’s what the labor movement is all about and that’s what IATSE is all about — now more than ever.

“This union has been through wars and plagues and terrorist attacks and strikes and natural disasters since 1893, and through our collective strength and our voice, and our spirit of compassion and commitment, we’ve gotten through,” Loeb said. “No matter how long it takes, no matter what hurdles we’ll have to keep overcoming, we are going to get through this — together.”

“FACING THREATS THAT ARE EXISTENTIAL IN NATURE, WE ARE STANDING STRONGER THAN EVER AND ARE MORE UNITED THAN EVER.”

Matthew D. Loeb
International President
NEW!

MONTHLY CONTRIBUTOR

PAC PINS

PRESIDENT’S CLUB
$40.00 PER MONTH

LEADER’S CLUB
$20.00 PER MONTH

ACTIVIST’S CLUB
$10.00 PER MONTH

FOR RECURRING MONTHLY CONTRIBUTIONS VIA CREDIT/DEBIT CARD IN THE AMOUNTS ABOVE.
GO TO WWW.IATSEPAC.NET TO SIGN UP.
IATSE Women Stand on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before Us And We Vote!

August 26, 2020 marked the 100th Anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, an amendment that secured the right to vote for women. That morning, the Women’s Rights Pioneers Monument was unveiled and dedicated in Central Park, New York City. It is the first statue of real women in the park’s 167-year history. In a tribute to those who came before us, IATSE Local One provided the all-women crew for the unveiling!

This monumentalwomen.org project was started six years ago and Local One was the first Union to endorse it, along with congressional leaders, city leaders and even the Girl Scouts! The Monument depicts Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton as they worked tirelessly in the fight for women’s right to vote.

Many thanks to the sculptor Meredith Bergmann for envisioning this moment in time and keeping in the tradition of the sculptures of men on Literary Walk in Central Park. Representing three aspects of activism, Sojourner Truth is shown speaking, Susan B. Anthony is represented organizing, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton is shown writing. Their combined efforts brought women a voice. Unfortunately, each of them died prior to the passage of the amendment so they were never legally able to vote. History tells us that true progress is made in small steps and sometimes these small (and huge!) steps are celebrated with big statues. Congratulations to all!

As IATSE Sisters celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the right to vote across the country, the Women’s Committee was spurred into political action as a tribute to those who came before us. In late August, the Committee developed a program to register and mobilize sisters throughout the Union to vote in the 2020 General Election. The 11 US District Coordinators from the Women’s Committee collaborated with IA District Secretaries and Local Union Political Coordinators to identify
women activists throughout their assigned Districts in an effort to enlist their help in outreach efforts to rank and file members.

The Committee’s GOTV plan included ready access to Advocacy Resources, Voter Registration and General Election Resources, as well as IATSE PAC information. On September 16, the group hosted a virtual Women’s Committee Event showcasing its political program. More than 100 women from throughout the country participated in the event and received electronic packets of all the information they would need to energize and mobilize women in their Locals. The plan culminated in a GOTV postcard campaign, providing a means to urge women to vote through personal, handwritten messages. The design of the postcard was in keeping with the Committee’s branding throughout the political season – “I Am an IATSE Woman and I Vote!” Nearly 10,000 postcards were sent out. An electronic version was also developed to broaden the outreach and others sent their messages through social media posts.

The groundswell of women’s groups throughout the country who came together to impact the 2020 General Election was nothing short of phenomenal. IATSE Women made it clear that they were in this fight for the greater good.
Tools For Organizing: Action Builder

The Stagecraft Department has adopted Action Builder into their organizing toolkit. Having the right tool for the task is important in all crafts. If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Fine work demands precision. A strategic organizing campaign is no different. Labor Organizers need tools to identify and support workers; to communicate and collaborate with allies; to move people to action.

Action Builder is a new tool, built from the ground up for organizing. Created in close partnership between Action Squared and the AFL-CIO, Action Builder focuses on one-on-one organizing. The mobile-friendly feature-set tracks leadership development, measures campaign support, and empowers activists to make a difference in their community and on the job.

Over the past decade, the labor movement has invested heavily in political and online mobilization technology. Still, several unions identified that a technology gap exists around worker organizing. Pragmatic IATSE local unions use whatever tools are available at the moment.

Repurposed office technology and a notebook have always been first in any organizer’s toolkit. The ability to quickly jot a note or reference information is important for an Organizer. But it hampers a Committee when data is tied to physical media.

Local 22 moved their data to the cloud. “We were using an Excel Sheet and a Google Doc to try to track organizing campaigns,” reports Business Agent Ryan Chavka “But with the shifting nature of the DC theatre community, and with many, different organizing committee members all trying to input information, this was getting messy.”

Without the right digital toolset, it is impossible to track individual workplace conversations and share data collected on the ground with the team. Our greatest strength is the workers. Yet we miss opportunities to achieve economies of scale. The existing tools are not cutting it.

“ActionBuilder is the first organizing tool built by and for organizers,” says Liz Rilley, Organizing Data Strategist with the AFL-CIO. “From the beginning, even before a line of code was written, organizers and data and tech staff from many AFL-CIO-affiliated unions have been providing their expertise, guidance and feedback to create what’s become ActionBuilder.”

The IATSE is part of this collaborative process. Numerous one-on-one meetings with the development team and regular workgroups have helped build a program geared towards organizing our IATSE crafts and issues.

“We built an organizing tool rooted in enhancing, not replacing, the critical deep conversations and relationship-
building that real organizing takes to be successful,” continues Rilley. “Action Builder will track member engagement through an interface that puts the ladder of engagement front and center; visualize strength geographically, across jobs and worksites; easily leverage worker leaders to have and track conversations at scale; comprehensively track relationships between people; include a robust tagging system to flexibly organize and search data.”

Organizers cannot be tethered to their laptops. An organizer is a leader who does not lead but gets behind the people and pushes. The work is where the people are. From the field to the jobsite, Organizers are on-the-go. Action Builder is mobile-first, with the ability to empower a team with concrete actions and timelines to create an optimal environment for executing organizing strategies.

When staff carpenters at Signature Theatre in northern Virginia approached IATSE for representation, Local 22 was able to quickly deploy the digital toolset in the field. The employees are the best source of information about an employer organizing target. “Action Builder definitely allowed workers at Signature, to input information, fast, clearly and concisely,” says Chavka. “The assessment system was easy for everyone to see, and instantly know how we were doing and tell us who still needed to be contacted. Once we got to the card phase, we already knew the union support was well over 80% with the crew.”

In May 2020 stagehands at Signature Theatre voted Yes for a union with Local 22. “Nothing will ever replace the one-on-one, in-person conversation in terms of forging connections,” Chavka notes, “but these online tools are easy to use, and promote a lot of engagement in the process.”

In Columbus, Ohio Local 12 used the toolset to manage a city-wide campaign organizing stagehand employees of Promowest, an AEG subsidiary. The Organizing Committee used Action Builder to map workers, assess campaign support, and track important questions.

“Promowest operates four venues in Columbus: Express Live, the Newport Music Hall, the Basement and the A & R Bar,” says Brian Thomas, Local 12 Business Agent. Pre-pandemic. The goal was to collect authorization cards for 75% of the workers and file a petition on April 1, 2020. At the end of February, Local 12 was two-thirds of the way to the goal. Then COVID-19 hit.

“We held to re-evaluate our strategy and timeline,” Thomas says, “but because we were using Action Builder, our organizers were able to continue their work.” Organizers were able to assign tasks and Activists were able to work asynchronously. The task management features in Action Builder let Organizers know when committee members had completed an assignment and how to best support them.

Local 12 filed a recognition petition with the NLRB at the end of May 2020. By August, Promowest stagehands won the right to collectively bargain for the terms and conditions of their employment.

“Conducting this campaign during a pandemic was different and challenging but it can be done!” adds Thomas. “Tools like Action Builder made communication easier and contributed to the success.”

Action Builder is being used now for various internal and external organizing campaigns across our Alliance. The toolset has been supporting Local Union Mutual Aid efforts, Get-Out-the-Vote initiatives, contract campaigns, and new worker organizing drives.

The crush of the pandemic has made it plain. Workers need unions. The IATSE stands ready to organize all entertainment workers. Action Builder can be the tool to help workers win their power.
Continuous Education Continues Despite COVID-19

The pandemic may stop us from meeting together around the U.S. and Canada. But even COVID-19 cannot stop our IATSE culture of continuous education. Our Four Pillars of Success: Leadership Development, Craft and Safety Training, Communications and Activism continue to inform the work of the Education and Training Department even during the pandemic, which has made in-person courses impossible.

The Education and Training Department has brought classes online, with tremendous response from IATSE leaders and members alike. Some of these are revised, digital versions of favorite in-person courses and some are brand new.

Look at each Pillar in action:

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The Leadership Development classes kicked off with two thought provoking presentations for current officers of local unions. Both have been led by Patrick Scott, Director of the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute. Transitions to Transformations – Building Strong IATSE Local Union on September 25, focused on how leaders take the work of the union and mindfully ensure that they consider ways to bring higher engagement and long-term impact. The October 16 Situational Leadership class built on that knowledge using assessment questions to evaluate adaptations leaders could consider to better serve the members and continue to grow and strengthen the local union, even in the most challenging of times.

**Stress, Mental Health, Bulling Hazard Awareness Workshop**

Even in normal times IATSE workers are faced with stressors at work that threaten to erode mental health and emotional wellbeing. IATSE local leaders need to be aware of these and recognize situations in workplaces and local unions that may affect the mental health and overall emotional wellbeing. The current health and economic concerns compound stressors. The workshop was designed to raise awareness of psychological hazards that workers in the entertainment industry may face like the emotional impacts of COVID-19, quarantine and insecure work, and psychological safety on the job. Tools were provided to help local leaders better respond to their workers while also taking care of themselves. The class was offered six times in the late summer and fall. It was presented By Dominic Housiaux, Principal of Lanekey & Limey LTD, and a lot of local leaders attended.

**Secretary-Treasurer and Trustee Best Practices**

This training reminded local officers about issues of Finan-
cial Record Keeping, IATSE procedures, Fiduciary Responsibility, Fraud Prevention, Auditing the books and records of local unions, and more. It provided a good basic training for new leaders and served as a useful brush-up for veteran officers. Content applied to both Canadian and U.S. local leaders both those who hold office as Secretaries and Treasurers or Trustees in their local unions and other officers and union officials who are responsible for stewardship of their local’s resources. The virtual class was led by General Secretary-Treasurer James B. Wood and James Heinzman, CPA.

**Labor Law 101**

This workshop has been specially designed to introduce local leaders to the laws governing the operation of labor unions, covering relationships with workers and employers, the duty of fair representation, contract negotiations, organizing, internal union procedures, and more. At its core is the practical day-to-day application of the law to help students gain confidence in running their locals, creating organizing strategy, and negotiating and interpreting their contracts. This course ran on November 18 and serves as a good introduction to Labor Law for new officers, and a review for more experienced officers of U.S. Locals. The instructor James M. Cooney, Esq., is an Assistant Teaching Professor at the Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations.

**IATSE Road Show – Why Unions Matter (US, Canadian and French Canadian)**

Our most popular training seen in person by thousands of IATSE workers, is now digital in three different versions. This class is designed to be shared broadly and is especially for IATSE members, future members, their families, communities and allies. Both the U.S. and Canadian versions of the Road Show were presented. Each recorded class teaches about Labor history and IATSE history and connects important moments from the past to how we organize, plan and build strength now to take us into the future.

**The IATSE Road Show: Why Unions Matter for U.S. locals, taught by Diane Thomas-Holladay:**
http://iatse.co/WhyUnionsMatterUS

**The IATSE Road Show: Why Unions Matter for Canadian locals (English), taught by Wayne Lewchuk**
https://iatse.co/WhyUnionsMatterCanada

**The IATSE Road Show: Why Unions Still Matter for Canadian locals (French), taught by Thomas Collombat**
https://iatse.co/PorquoiLesSyndicats

**CRAFT AND SAFETY TRAINING**

Craft and Safety Training is a foundation for every member. The pandemic brings increased focus to safety and returning to work. The Education and Training Department works with the ICAP and the IATSE Training Trust Fund – whose mission is teaching craft and safety to IATSE members and all who work under IA agreements. At the outset of the quarantine the TTF moved quickly to offer robust, accessible and relevant online classes and their full complement of courses can be accessed at https://www.iatsetrainingtrust.org/ Members are highly encouraged to check out all of the Training Trust Fund offerings.

The Education and Training Department have offered additional safety awareness curricula:
Ergonomics – September 18, Valerie Hunter, Physical Therapist, Providence St. Joseph Medical Center

Regardless of your job and craft, IATSE workers can be susceptible to injuries as a result of poor ergonomic practices. The class provided IATSE workers with a general overview of ergonomics and raised awareness of the lasting impact that certain positions, postures, and movements have on our bodies and ultimately our ability to perform work.

Planning a Safe Show – Parts 1 and 2 – On August 11, in partnership with AVIXA, the ICAP (IATSE Craft Advancement Program) led a workshop called “Planning a Safe Show.” By popular demand, that course (seen by over 900 people) was expanded into two parts which were presented on October 6 and 8. This expanded class teaches how to plan and have a safe show as return to work protocols are being negotiated and work is coming back in some areas.

Emotional Wellness and Suicide Prevention. Two sessions of this webinar were led by Lori Rubenstein and Taryn Longo as part of the Behind the Scenes Emotional Wellness Program. Early in 2020, as many people became increasingly concerned about the rising number of suicides and the prevalence of alcohol/substance misuse within the entertainment industry, Behind the Scenes and other individuals and organizations created the Emotional Wellness and Suicide Prevention Initiative including resources, therapist matching and self-assessment.

This course informs members about available resources and how to spot and address mental health issues.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Communication Cornerstones – October 22, 2020

Good communication is a vital Leadership skill. The webinar featured four cornerstones: Listening, Knowing Your Audience, Crafting Persuasive Messages and Getting Your Message Out. On October 22, Patricia Westwater, Labor Educator, com-
bined lecture and individual work to guide attendees to adopt best practices and strategic considerations of effective communications to build solidarity with their workers as well as with allies and community.

**ACTIVISM – FOR MEMBERS AND UNION LEADERS ALIKE:**

**Impact of Elections on Local Unions – June 12, 2020 and October 19, 2020**

Just in time for the U.S. election, this very popular presentation was presented twice by James Heinzman, CPA giving a fact-filled and critical look at the stakes for labor as we elect a President whose administration will set the course for the next four years. The agencies and appointees who make and enforce labor policies and rules for unions, safety and worker rights, all are controlled from the top, and this course makes clear that unions and members must be vigilant in electing a labor friendly President.

**District Convention Training “Winning for Workers” and Education Resources to Access Now**

This year, the Education Department and the Political Department joined forces for a virtual training that discussed the political landscape and the many ways that IATSE members could engage in activism at every step of the process: voter registration, voter outreach, Political Action Committee support and joining with local labor bodies to add strong IATSE effort into the critical elections up and down the ballot. The session gave a springboard for local union action during the critical U.S. election season.

Linked in Learning https://www.iatsetrainingtrust.org/lil offers a plethora of online courses on currently relevant topics including curated lists called “Collections” for our work and for personal and leadership development. New Collections on Self-Care and Racial Justice (search Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging for All). There is truly something for everyone and the subscriptions are free to IATSE members and those who work under IA contracts. If you haven’t explored the offerings, search it for things you know well or are curious to learn. Applications for free subscriptions are on the Training Trust Fund web page: https://iatse.co/linkedinlearningapplication

In all courses – whether in person or virtual - the Education and Training Department is a partner to local unions and IATSE members to maintain high standards of expertise, engagement to be nimble in meeting the needs of this moment. New courses are being planned all the time and will be announced on the IA website and on social media. We are hopeful that 2021 will bring the return to some in-person learning but no matter what, virtual learning will remain as another tool for IATSE Growth and Strength.

“Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the only thing for you. Look what a lot of things there are to learn.”

*T.H. White, The Once and Future King*
Self-Care Tips to Maintain Emotional Resilience During COVID-19

The sudden stress and uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has weighed particularly heavy on IATSE workers and the entertainment industry as a whole. The IATSE has teamed up with the Behind the Scenes Foundation to ensure that IATSE workers have access to mental health resources during this time (see “Resources” section at the end of this document for more information.)

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<tr>
<th>CULTIVATE FLEXIBILITY</th>
<th>STAY INFORMED, BUT TRY TO SET HEALTHY LIMITS.</th>
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<td>The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unexpected disruption to your normal routine may have left you feeling as if you have lost control. Make plans and do the things that are within your control. Do your best to accept the realities and restrictions of this situation.</td>
<td>Avoid people &amp; news outlets that encourage catastrophic thinking. Taking breaks from the news, designating certain times of day to check news updates, and limiting your news outlets to one or two reliable sources can help you stay informed while maintaining your emotional wellness.</td>
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<th>CONNECT WITH OTHERS.</th>
<th>DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.</th>
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<td>During this time of “physical distance” it is important that you continue to maintain healthy relationships with friends and family. If you cannot meet with your loved ones in person, utilizing communication technology like social media, phone/video calls, &amp; email is a good alternative. The CDC recommends talking with people you trust about your concerns &amp; how you are feeling. Doing so will enable you to build a strong support system to lean on during this incredibly isolating time.</td>
<td>Asking for help may seem hard, but you do not have to go through this crisis alone. The CDC recommends talking to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor if distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks. (See the “Resources” section at the end of this document for more information.)</td>
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<th>TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF</th>
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<td>Your physical health &amp; mental health are connected. To maintain emotional resilience, take care of both your mind &amp; your body. Some ways you can do this include:</td>
<td>It is hard not to be judgmental about coping mechanisms. Remember, everyone reacts to stress and crises differently. Focus on healthy strategies and activities. Try to refrain from criticizing yourself and others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Eat healthy meals</td>
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<td>✓ Prioritize sleep: avoid anxiety triggers at least two hours before bedtime</td>
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<td>✓ Have an exercise routine</td>
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This document was created by the IATSE Education & Training Department in collaboration with Lankey & Limey, LTD to provide IATSE workers with self-care tips for maintaining emotional resilience in the time of COVID-19. Please note that this document was not created by a Mental Health Professional and it should not be used as medical advice.
Self-Care Resources

CRISIS HELPLINES
For US & Canada: text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor.

United States
- SAMHSA’s National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) and TTY 1-800-487-4889
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish

Canada
- Canada Suicide Prevention Service at 1-833-456-4566.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

CITATIONS
- CDC, Taking Care of Your Emotional Health: https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp
Are you planning any safety or craft skills trainings for January 1 - March 31? It's not too late to apply for funding. Submit your application with a course description, outline, and instructor biography as soon as possible. We'll email approvals by December 18.

Past courses have included: Fall Protection; Basic Camera; Arena Rigging; Portable Power Distribution; Lighting Control Systems; MIG Welding; Pinning for Menswear Alterations; Mold Making; Basic Sewing for Props & Set Deck; OSHA 10/GES, and many more!

Get the information, tools, and resources you need to recognize potential workplace hazards and minimize risks in these 19 courses:

- Introduction to Basic Entertainment Safety
- Biological Hazards
- Hazard Communication: Workplace Chemicals
- Chemical Protection
- Electrical Safety
- Fall Prevention and Protection
- Elevated Work Platforms & Aerial Lifts
- Scaffold Safety
- Ergonomics
- Noise Exposure
- Confined Space/Small Space Awareness
- Firearms Safety
- Hand and Portable Power Tools
- Compressed Gases
- Rigging Safety
- Welding and Cutting
- Hazard Identification and Safety in the Work Environment
- COVID-19: Recommended Guidelines for Preventing Exposure in the Workplace
- Recommended Sanitation Practices for Make-up and Hair

NEW TTF SAFETY FIRST! ONLINE COURSES

- COVID-19: Recommended Guidelines for Preventing Exposure in the Workplace
- Recommended Sanitation Practices for Make-up and Hair

Get the information, tools, and resources you need to recognize potential workplace hazards and minimize risks in these 19 courses:

Introduction to Basic Entertainment Safety; Biological Hazards; Hazard Communication: Workplace Chemicals; Chemical Protection; Electrical Safety; Fall Prevention and Protection; Elevated Work Platforms & Aerial Lifts; Scaffold Safety; Ergonomics; Noise Exposure; Confined Space/Small Space Awareness; Firearms Safety; Hand and Portable Power Tools; Compressed Gases; Rigging Safety; Welding and Cutting; Hazard Identification and Safety in the Work Environment; COVID-19: Recommended Guidelines for Preventing Exposure in the Workplace; and Recommended Sanitation Practices for Make-up and Hair.

www.iatsetrainingtrust.org/course-reimbursement

www.iatsetrainingtrust.org/lil

www.iatsetrainingtrust.org/safetyfirst
What’s the Difference?

Cleaning • Disinfecting • Sanitizing

Cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing are three terms that have become commonplace in our new COVID-19 vocabulary. The problem is that while these terms are often used interchangeably, their meanings are quite different. Understanding the difference between cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing is an important part of promoting safe return to work practices. This handout was developed using information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Public Health Agency of Canada and is intended for use by IATSE workers. The information in this handout is not exhaustive and entire trainings can and should be done to ensure that safe cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing practices are being implemented at work.

- **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces.
  
  The CDC recommends cleaning a surface using soap and water prior to using disinfectant.

- **Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting refers to killing nearly 100 percent of germs on surfaces or objects, according to the CDC. This works by using chemicals to kill germs. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.
  
  Before using disinfectant, the CDC recommends that you always read and follow the directions on the label to ensure safe and effective use.

- **Sanitizing** lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level by either cleaning or disinfecting.
  
  Please note that while sanitizing methods are thought to lower the risk of spreading infection, the proper combination of cleaning and disinfecting is recommended for preventing the spread of infectious disease on objects and surfaces. Workers always should refer to manufacturer instructions on how to properly clean and disinfect equipment.

  Surface disinfecting products are more effective at killing germs than surface sanitizing products, according to the United States EPA and the Government of Canada. In addition, Hand ‘sanitizers' are not disinfectants and not as effective as proper handwashing with soap and water.

  For more information on cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing procedures and approved-surface-disinfecting products that may be effective against the SAR-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19), please visit the resources below.

**Resources**

- CDC, Cleaning & Disinfecting Schools: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm)
Reinventing Convention Centers and Arenas: Convening the Unconventional

Like most other sectors of our industry, those who are employed by tradeshows and conventions have suffered what amounts to a total loss of work brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic. In both the U.S. and Canada, this unprecedented downturn has resulted in extreme hardship for IA members relying on this once vibrant sector.

With most major tradeshows and conventions being cancelled or postponed well into the new year and beyond, venue managers have had to get creative and look for alternative uses and revenue streams for their facilities. When it comes to competing for new business, the one advantage many of these venues have is space - large amounts of much needed space now required to meet social distancing mandates and ventilation requirements for keeping people safe.

In Victoria, British Columbia The Save on Foods Memorial Centre, a hockey arena serviced by Local 168, has been used as housing for former residents of a tent city as the authorities work to find them permanent housing. Similarly, the Edmonton Convention Centre in Edmonton, Alberta is being used as a homeless shelter that the City and the Province hope will help to transition people into having a home.

In Regina, Saskatchewan EVRAZ Place is home to many facilities all operating under a Local 295 collective agreement. The Cooperators Centre, AffinityPlex, The Queensbury Convention Centre, the Brandt Centre all remain virtually dark. As does Mosaic Stadium, home to the Saskatchewan Roughriders of the Canadian Football League. The entire CFL season was cancelled. There would also typically be one or two large scale music concerts which in normal times provide significant income to Local 295 members during the summer months.

The International Trade Centre remains the hub for the Saskatchewan Health Authority with Hall A remaining the emergency center for a COVID-19 field hospital. Thankfully it remains a precautionary measure and has not yet been pressed into service. The Sask Milk Hall was activated as a community Flu Shot clinic for the weeks ahead, and Hall C is the home to the Regina COVID-19 Drive-Thru Testing Site. Also in Regina, the Conexus Arts Centre has been booked.
as a venue for Jury selection. The Court system is taking advantage of the large amount of square footage available to provide for ample social distancing during the registration and selection process.

Moving east. The RBC Convention Centre, a Local 63 venue in Winnipeg, Manitoba was home to an art installation entitled “Imagine Van Gogh”, a multi-media presentation of the work of the artist Vincent Van Gogh. The Exhibit began a five day setup on September 9th, and is scheduled to run until mid-December. Hall A of the RBC has been used for what amounts to a television studio for “Indigenous Day Live 2020”. Typically, this event takes place outdoors every year on the Summer Solstice with an audience of between eight to ten thousand people. Due to the pandemic, that show was cancelled. Now being called the Winter Solstice, the virtual show was recorded for the Aboriginal Peoples’ Television Network (APTN-TV) and will be aired on December 21.

In Toronto, a section of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre has also been used as a venue for Jury Selection which provided work for AV technicians represented by Local 58.

Currently being used as sound stages, the one million square foot Enercare Centre in Toronto operates under the Local 58 contract with the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place. Producers including Amazon, Sony Pictures, and CBS are using over 70,000 square feet of Halls A, D and C for shoots that are either in progress or scheduled for the coming months. There is also a scene shop on the premises employing upwards of 100 carpenters and scenic workers at peak times. This unique situation and this creative use of a convention centre has brought together workers represented by Locals 58, 411, 667 and 873.

In the U.S., the rush to convert convention centers to COVID-19 treatment facilities has cooled off. Many converted facilities have yet to see the first patient, but with no demand for the space by traditional users, they remain on standby for the anticipated surge in infections during the cooler months. While the municipalities that own these facilities are glad to have the income these field hospitals provide, we understand it is also a deterrent for meeting and event planners to book any part of a venue that may be called into service treating a contagious disease.

We are also seeing convention centers as venues for television production, specifically the Country Music Association Awards, which will broadcast live from Music City Center on November 11 with plans for a limited audience. The expanse of an exhibit hall offers unlimited configurations for performance areas and more room to work in a socially distanced manner for health and safety reasons. With everchanging restrictions on the amount of people who can gather indoors, portable seating may be adjusted or removed to fit the circumstances.

With the increased interest in US elections and the need for social distancing, traditional entertainment and meeting venues were converted to polling places to meet the demand. While many of these facilities are publicly owned, they are managed by the sports franchises that are their anchor tenants. Several NBA and NFL facilities were used as polling places on election day or early voting centers prior to November 3. Some examples include:

**NBA FACILITIES**
- American Airlines Center, Comerica - Dallas
- Amway Center - Orlando
- AT&T Center - San Antonio
- Bankers Life Fieldhouse – Indianapolis
- Capitol One Arena - Washington DC
- Chesapeake Arena - Oklahoma City
- Golden One Center - Sacramento
- Madison Square Garden - NYC
- Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse - Cleveland
- Spectrum Fieldhouse – Charlotte
- Veterans Memorial Coliseum - Phoenix

**NFL FACILITIES**
- Arrowhead Stadium – Kansas City
- Bank of America Stadium - Charlotte
- FedEx Field - Maryland
- Ford Field – Detroit
- Lambeau Field – Green Bay
- Lincoln Financial Field - Philadelphia
- Lucas Oil Stadium - Indianapolis
- Mercedes Benz Stadium – Atlanta
- NRG Arena - Houston
- Raymond James Stadium – Tampa Bay
- SoFi Stadium – Los Angeles

Designating these facilities as voting sites was a result of negotiations between the Players’ Associations and team owners following protests of the many racial injustices witnessed across the country this past year. In cooperation with the owners, the teams committed to mount voter registration efforts and open their facilities for voting. In addition to promoting voter participation, these efforts kept an otherwise shuttered venue active helped to combat some of the more egregious efforts to supress the vote.
Testing 1, 2... IATSE Audio Techs Bring the Sounds of Sports Home

Do you remember when sports broadcasts emerged from the pandemic? Those baseball, basketball, and hockey games looked the same, but something was amiss. Without fans providing a base of ambient sounds and reactions, the first games sounded hollow and empty. Venues and networks quickly adapted, piping recorded crowd noise into the empty arenas. They realized early that sounds, cheers, and boos make sports broadcasts feel complete.

The audio department is one of three that can be found on every sports broadcast: audio, video, production. Audio delivers sounds. Video delivers images. Production delivers information. Together they deliver the stories of sport in the here and now, on the fly. Live. IATSE broadcast technicians rely on skill, preparation, quick reaction, knowledge, experience, and teamwork. It is not easy, but the best make it sound so. Lend me an ear: let’s hear how IATSE brothers and sisters bring the sounds of the game home.

Dennis Lamb, an Audio Assistant (A2) for nearly forty years, and a charter member of IATSE Local 748 in Arizona, is finely tuned to the sounds of sports. In 1990 he found himself working the Goodwill Games in Seattle, setting mics and troubleshooting at the boxing venue (among others), while watching (and hearing) 17-year-old Oscar De la Hoya punch his way to gold. A decade later he found himself on the outskirts of Sidney, Australia, assigned as an A2 in the baseball venue of the 2000 Olympic Games. In 2020, Lamb, who calls the Phoenix area home, “just finished my 39th Phoenix Suns season.”

You can call Lamb a sports fan. By his own conservative estimate, he has witnessed 1,600 NBA games, 1,500 MLB games, 800 NHL games, and another 200 NFL contests. “In all, with other sports included, I’ve done about 8,000 National Anthems.” says Lamb. “There were only 40-50 sports jobs when I started. So I did other part time work for many years.” That has changed. After thirty-nine years as an A2, he had been averaging over two-hundred jobs per year pre-pandemic. To be successful, according to Lamb, A2’s need to be “a team player, able to work nights, weekends, and holidays… Be quick but don’t hurry. Pay attention to the details.”

When Lamb arrives to work, he usually reports to someone like Allan Williams, an Audio Mixer (A1) by trade and leader for the day of a broadcast’s audio department. Williams has been an IATSE member of Wisconsin’s Local 414 since their inception in 2015. A talented guitarist and songwriter, 52-year-old Williams “started my audio career in 1991 after my band, Rhythm Trik, broke up…I started working with a PA company…I got my first house gig at the Stone Toad in downtown Milwaukee.”

Lavalier, shotgun, parabolic, boom, stick, headset, mixers, xlr cables, radio frequencies (RF), Internet protocol (IP); these are just some of the tools at the disposal of audio technicians on today’s broadcast jobsite. Wirelessly or connected by cable, A2’s and Utilities strategically install microphones to collect sounds from throughout the venue to contribute to the A1’s mix. Lavalier mics are installed on NBA backboards and pinned to lapels so that you can hear the swish of the net and the grumblings of the coach. At MLB games, shotgun mics are aimed at home plate so that you can hear the crack of the bat. Sometimes mics require an operator. Enter the Specialty Mic Operator (A3). You will often see them on football sidelines, aiming parabolic microphones toward the action and adeptly avoiding large men running their way.

Of obvious importance is making sure all of this gear is set up correctly
and works the way it should for the day’s broadcast. That is done during various facilities checks throughout the day, known to the sports broadcast world as “faxing.”

Audio technicians arrive at work about six hours before airtime. “While A2’s set up booth and sideline, I build the show…” says Williams, who does his A1 work primarily in the broadcast truck. “I load their music, fax with A2’s, and do pre-production before lunch. After lunch I fax transmission and mix pregame…” Thirty minutes before air, A2 Lamb is on a headset, ready to head to any spot in the venue to “fix problems that may arise on the fly. It’s live TV, there are no take twos.”

During the broadcast digitized music playlists, replay machines, and sound effects that accompany visual transitions are added to the mix at just the right level by the A1. Williams, like many other skilled IATSE audio mixers, is tasked with aurally sorting and sifting through the cacophony, creating a blend - like a conductor in front of a symphony: fader bars, buttons, and blinking lights replacing the baton.

But mixing the sounds you hear at home is only part the job for the Audio Department. Team audio also supplies all internal communications. For example, before every pitch in baseball, a Director will say something like…”Ready Camera 4. Take Camera 4.” The audio department makes sure Camera 4 hears that direction by setting out headsets and routing the various channels of communications. Producers need to talk to replay specialists and graphics operators via headset. Chaos ensues if they cannot. And, the audio department makes sure technicians hear the announcers, a critical component called “program audio.” This helps cameras find and frame the right pictures at the right time, helps coordinate stories through sights and sounds.

Williams is a sports fan too. He routinely roots for the home team and, as a Milwaukee resident, has mixed audio for countless Brewers and Bucks broadcasts and a variety of other events. His favorite shows to work are Brewers baseball games, because of the crew comradery, where he will typically blend at least twenty-eight audio sources into a soundtrack, telling the sports’ stories through sound. “I mixed my first NBA visitor show on December 26th, 2011; Atlanta Hawks at Milwaukee Bucks. Since then I’ve been slowly expanding my comfort zone, doing Big Ten college shows, Big Fox college hoops, and anything else that comes my way.”

The challenges, according to Williams, are “technical glitches, ‘oh-by-the-ways’, grumpy truck engineers, radio frequency (RF) issues, and two-way radios that don’t work…” Alternately, “when mixing shows like the Dodgers or Knicks that are huge shows in huge markets, there is always a sense of accomplishment.”

For Lamb, it is a challenge to make sure the crew is “all working together,” but this might be easier for him than most. His wife Toni is also an A2 and “the daughter does video and the son is a scoreboard operator… Now there are four little Lambs in the Phoenix market.” And four Lambs in IATSE Local 748. This Lamb family is part of the IATSE family. Sounds sweet.

One last note. When you travel to Milwaukee you might find the band 1000 Umbrellas playing at the Stone Toad, or another local venue, but not if the Brewers are playing a home game. That’s because their guitar player, IATSE Brother Allan Williams, is jamming at the ballyard instead. And that sounds sweet too.
IATSE MEMBER STORIES
FROM CRUISIN’ THE COAST TO BECOMING A FOUR-TIME NATIONAL WINNER

In 1975, Local 21 President Mike Stas purchased a Firethorn red 1976 Cadillac Coupe De Ville.

Forty-five years later, this vintage Cadillac that was originally purchased for vacation purposes, is now a four-time National winner and has been featured in several car shows and editorials.

“When I purchased the car in 1975, I had no intentions of using it for car shows,” Mike says. “You know it’s just something you hold on to and don’t sell, if you can afford not to. My wife and I have only driven it to Key West, Florida two or three times and it has just 19,800 miles to date. Time just flies by.”

Stas is also the Head Flyman at Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, NJ and has served as the President for Local 21 for thirty-seven years and a union member for forty-eight years.

He says his ’76 Coupe De Ville model was the last biggest Cadillac edition produced.

“This model is 19 ½ feet long,” he added. “In 1977, they stopped making Cadillac’s this big.”

Mike says winning first place in the 2020 CLC Gran National Car Show was more special because instead of the traditional way of voting done by judges, this year the people’s vote determined the winner.

The competition was a virtual three-week process. During the process, Mike sent out emails to friends and family asking for their vote; by the fourth week he was notified that the Cadillac had won first place.

For members who have never been to a car show, here’s a little insight:

- Cars are rated on a point scale of 1 to 100. So, for any car to rank in the high 90 percental, is exceptional!
- A part of the judging process includes a detailed inspection of going into the glove compartment to ensure contestants have the correct light bulbs and additional interior components.
- In other words, the judges really go through the cars with a fine-tooth comb.

“My Cadillac rated at a 97.7 on the scale as the original car,” Mike says. “That’s very rare! The color is unique too, a bright Firethorn red Cadillac stands out next to other models of its kind.”

“I still have the original tires on the Cadillac. The tires are by Uniroyal. However, I only put the original tires on it for car shows,” he added.

Mike has won over fifty plaques and trophies for his ’76 Cadillac Coupe De Ville and has been featured on the National Cadillac Club calendar.

“It’s always great attending these competitions because it’s like a comradery and an all-around appreciation for people who love cars,” he expressed. “1,200 cars entered the competition and of 180 car models from 1970-1979, I was thrilled when my car ranked first place.”

He says he has no future plans for what competition he’ll enter next, but he’s enjoying all the recognition the Cadillac has received thus far.

“I’m just going with the flow as for now,” he replied. “The car is at the top of its class; I’m just accumulating first place awards and enjoying this moment as the CLC #1 winner.”
Local 868 Protest Strathmore’s Illegal Layoffs

Pictured here are members of Local 868 protesting against the Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, Maryland; for illegally laying off employees and violating an agreement reached with the union on April 15, 2020. Proud to see our members fight back and continue to make their voices heard, while management chooses not to honor their agreements with dedicated employees. #UnionStrong
We Ain’t Scene Nothin’ Yet

Scene Shops are Open – And That’s Important for Film AND Stage Locals!

Scenic and prop fabrication shops (aka scene shops) are COVID-19 success stories, largely managing to escape the closures plaguing other sectors of the entertainment industry. In Canada, four of these shops are under IATSE agreement – one in Alberta, and three in Ontario.

F&D Scene Changes in Calgary has meant work for Local 212 members, in a time when there hasn’t been a lot. F&D was started in 1982 by two theatre carpenters. They soon brought on other like-minded and talented artists and now have a 60,000 sq ft fabrication shop with proud IATSE members in management. They regularly build scenery locally and throughout the world for theatres, museums, shopping malls, and communities, and that work hasn’t stopped in the pandemic.

The story in Burlington, Ontario, less than an hour’s drive from Toronto, is much the same. Great Lakes Scenic Studios is a sister company to F&D, and depending on workload, proudly employs 30-50 members of Locals 129 and 828. The members of these theatre locals are seeing work because of those agreements. For over twenty years, Great Lakes has worked with clients in the entertainment, retail and residential sectors to custom fabricate unique projects. Due to COVID, they’re also now using their 40,000 sq ft fabrication shop to assist businesses in slowly reopening by creating protective barriers, contactless pickup solutions, and mobile pop up shops.

As the name would suggest, Hamilton Scenic Specialty, Inc. is located in Hamilton, Ontario. This fabrication shop has been around over fifteen years and also has agreements with Locals 129 and 828. Their products include TV, film and theatre sets, museum displays, dioramas, electronic and mechanical interactive displays, replicas, reproductions, custom signage, and public art. After an initial COVID-19 closure, IATSE members have been back at work for months, creating projects for the community and around the globe.

Paragon Innovation Group, located in Oakville, Ontario, is the only one of the four that is exclusively a prop building shop. They have an agreement with Local 828, which represents scenic artists and prop builders. Their work continues throughout the pandemic, and also encompasses film, TV, theatre, and events. Their specialties are making creations using carbon fiber, clear cast resin, LED lighting, SpectraChrome, and 3D printing, and of course, building puppets.

Why Scene Shops are Important: Shops that do this kind of work exist all across North America, and their staff are WORKING. Many of these workers are already our members. Use the relationships you have or try and build new ones to organize. Not only should these workers have the security and protection of working under IATSE agreements, but scenic shops under agreement will provide additional opportunities for your members down the road. The work is also often global in nature, and some of the above shops are doing jobs in Manila, Tokyo, France, China, etc. For this work, the contracts in Hamilton and Calgary have strong protections for travel and per diem. The four shops listed are great employers with strong IATSE relationships, which shows this can be done. Contact an IATSE International Representative to help you get things rolling.
GIVING BACK, GIVING TOGETHER

In August, the Local 126 training committee donated their earnings to the Tarrant Area Food Bank for those in need in Ft. Worth, Texas. Even in these dark times, we’re proud to see our IA sisters and brothers restoring their communities.

Pictured here is Stephen Smith (middle) and Tom Perrin (far right) donating a total of $2,306.25, which was accepted by Megan Smock (far left) of the Tarrant Area Food Bank.

ANIMATION WORKERS AT TITMOUSE VANCOUVER
VOTE OVERWHELMINGLY IN SUPPORT OF JOINING IATSE

What is 98? The average height of a three-year-old is 98 centimetres. The average body temperature of a human is about 98 degrees Fahrenheit. The distance from Vancouver to Victoria, BC is 98 kilometres. It’s also the percentage of animation workers at Titmouse Vancouver that voted in favour of joining The Animation Guild, IATSE Local 938!

In a historic vote on October 8-9, 87% of the over 165 animation workers at Titmouse Vancouver voted 98% in favour of joining the IATSE to become the first unionized animation studio in Canada. Focused on issues such as overtime pay, fair wages, portable health benefits, and strong representation, these animation workers showed that the only path to improving their working conditions was through working together and forming a union.

In July of 2019, IATSE formed a strategic alliance with the Art Babbit Appreciation Society, a worker-led advocacy group providing supports for animation workers in Vancouver. Following a strategic planning session to identify organizing targets, IATSE, with a core group of dedicated workers, began transitioning their efforts from community to union organizing. In April, Local 938 was chartered by the International, ultimately leading to this resounding organizing victory.

While workers at Titmouse Vancouver – the animators behind shows such as Star Trek: Lower Decks - may be the first to join IATSE 938, animation organizing efforts continue across Canada, so they will not be the last. Growth equals strength, and this new Local is only going to get stronger.
Drive-ins Become “Live”-ins

As the pandemic continues, we are seeing innovations so that people can safely gather. One of the most successful has been the remaking of the drive-in for live events. These drive-in shows have often meant work for members across North America. Juno Award winning country artist Brett Kissel modified his touring schedule and has utilized IATSE crews along the way.

He took the stage on the grounds of Evraz Place in Regina, SK on June 20, providing work to the members of Local 295. Kissel’s popularity has been very high in the region, due in part to an August 2019 concert with Garth Brooks. The June concert sold out in 11 minutes, prompting the addition of two more shows – welcome news for Local 295. Local health authority restrictions required the construction of a plexiglass barrier between Kissel and his band, and members also felt safe with additional protocols in place.

Kissel had another IATSE-crewed tour stop in London, ON, where he played on the Western Fairgrounds. The Western Fair Association brings in an annual $114 million to the City of London and its largest event is the annual Western Fair, which began in 1868. The cancellation of this year’s Fair was a blow to the community. The Fair eventually moved online, and the drive-in Brett Kissel concert served as a real morale booster to the entire region. The September 26 show was certainly appreciated by the members of Local 105, who also went on to work the Country Music Association of Ontario Awards on October 4. Safety was a priority for both events, during which Local 105 members ensured that local health authority requirements were in place.

While these drive-in events aren’t as widespread or as frequent as we’d like to see, they are work for us and they’re valuable in keeping the public engaged in live entertainment. Sometimes there are also additional benefits - like the Kissel shows at Evraz Place, which donated a portion of proceeds to the Regina Food Bank. And who can’t get behind that?

“All Politics is Local”

As the International continues to work hard at the national level in both Canada and the United States, many of our Locals are carrying the torch at state, provincial, and municipal levels, and the importance of that work cannot be overstated. We must continue to build alliances with leaders at all levels of government to ensure that we are being heard and that the unique challenges facing our industries are met with appropriate actions that support the working people in entertainment. Many state and provincial governments, and even municipalities, have brought in financial supports for the cultural sector that bolster federal programs, and, in many cases, these supports do a better job of addressing our members’ needs. As House Speaker Tip O’Neill famously said, “All politics is local,” and we applaud the ongoing efforts of our Local leaders in beating the drum for our members and fighting for the support that they need to get through this unprecedented disruption of the entertainment industry.
ASSOCIATED DESIGNERS OF CANADA VOTE TO JOIN THE IATSE

The Associated Designers of Canada was formed in 1965 and represents the set, costume, lighting, projection, and sound designers in live performance throughout English Canada. For decades, members of the IATSE and the ADC have worked side by side in venues all across the country. As part of the newly-struck Creative Industries Coalition – which also includes Canadian Actors’ Equity Association and the Canadian Federation of Musicians – the two organizations began working even more closely together to lobby the federal government around income supports for entertainment industry workers facing mass unemployment due to COVID-19. With so much overlap in workplace issues and required supports for their members, the benefits of formally joining together became even more apparent. Merger discussions began in the spring, after the ADC reached out with some general queries concerning the IATSE’s structure and benefits, and what a potential merger might look like.

In a multi-day, online vote culminating on October 1st, members of the Associated Designers of Canada (ADC) voted 95% in favour of joining the IATSE. ADC President Ken MacKenzie stated, “This affiliation with IATSE marks a significant turning point for the ADC and our member artists. In choosing to more closely align with our IATSE colleagues, we look to promote more fair and equitable workplaces. The alliance will help support designers’ lives and careers long into the future. Through our work together in the Creative Industries Coalition, lobbying on behalf of independent arts workers, we have built a strong relationship with the IATSE, and recognize one another’s commitment to advocating on behalf of our memberships.”

The ADC will form its own IATSE local union, called IATSE Local ADC 659, which will become active on January 1, 2021. The new Local, consisting of the ADC’s 250 designers, has been granted a national charter – a first for the IATSE in Canada.

GOT GUMBO? CONNECTING FAMILIES IN LAKE CHARLES

Local 478 cooked along with AFL-CIO volunteers and Baton Rouge/Lake Charles Local Union 198, served over 300 union families in Lake Charles, Louisiana gumbo and red beans and rice for dinner on Monday, October 19, 2020. After getting hit with two major hurricanes back to back, Local 478 decided a hot meal cooked with extra love would be most appreciated. Thanks to the Local 478 Response Team members: Dawn Huertas Arevalo, Cecile Burr, Kyle Salzman, Andre’e Fortier, Jo Williams, Alex Williams, Jorge Fernandez, and Cameron Holmes, the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union in Lake Charles and IATSE District 7 for making this a successful feast. Bon Appétit!

BUILDING A BRIDGE FOR YOUNG FILMMAKERS

The Bridgebuilder Cinematic Arts Program (BCAP), a nonprofit founded by Local 600 Director of Photography Hollis Meminger in 2016, introduces young women and men of color to careers in film and television. This summer, Hollis virtually led more than twenty of his Local 600 colleagues in guiding fifty Boston high school students to becoming first-time filmmakers. Pictured is Hollis Meminger (center) with a pre-COVID-19 cohort from his Bridgebuilder program.
Pacific Northwest and West Coast Locals Feel the Heat

The challenges arising from the pandemic have been tragic, often unbearable, and at times inspiring. But for IATSE Locals across the west coast, it appears that wasn’t enough. They joke about the 2020 bingo card: “...who guessed the next series of unexpected events?” Imagine those members already in need due to the pandemic - out of work, running out of unemployment compensation, struggling to pay bills, struggling to keep food on the table.

Suddenly, fire season hits the Pacific Northwest and West with a vengeance. Members living in the worst hit areas were inundated with emergency alerts on their cell phones, warnings to evacuate, and few resources to support them in an evacuation.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

In Ashland, Oregon Local 154 members woke up to early morning reports of fires on Tuesday, September 8. The Almeda, South Obenchain, Archie Creek and Slater fires made way through Jackson, Josephine and Douglas counties. Roughly four hours later, the first Almeda fire evacuations were issued, and as it spread north into the city of Talent, the South Obenchain fire was reported. Families were trying to escape from one fire only to find road closures due to another. The scope of devastation and loss quickly became unimaginable.

Union members from across all sectors came together to help their communities during and after the fires. Local 154 members helped defend their neighbors’ properties as flames started to spread out. Phone and text trees were implemented as evacuation orders were issued and updates from real-time experiences were shared. All hands were on deck to help get friends and families out of danger. As the fires raged through the evening, Local 154 officers, stewards and members kept checking in with one another and fellow colleagues from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF).

Many folks opened their homes and widened their COVID-19 pods for those who needed a place to land indefinitely.

The following morning a few members did what stagehands do best - solve the problem before management. A head count of members, an account of which homes were still standing, who was temporarily displaced and where, and organizing relief work were some of the tasks members took on. Within hours, a downtown Ashland donation center was opened. Volunteers and donations descended upon the campus of the OSF. Rank-and-file members and leaders of represented and non-represented workers at OSF began creating COVID-19 safe practices to sort and wash clothing, arrange food and necessities, and gener-
ate spreadsheets for what was needed and how to provide it. It wasn’t about union affiliation. It was about true worker solidarity. It was about showing up when no one else did.

There are not enough words to express the gratitude for the IAFF represented, non-represented, and volunteer firefighters. Many of them lost their own homes, property, and some lost their lives to protect our communities.

As the fires made their way across Oregon, officers of Local 28, (SW Washington, and Portland to Salem Oregon) had no experience with large scale evacuations due to wildfires or with toxic air in the midst of a pandemic. They were contacted by members from across the state facing multiple levels of crises. The Local’s Activism Committee along with Officers of Local 488 put together a donation site at the office. With COVID-19 restrictions and safety in place, members set up a drive up/drop off site. Volunteers disinfected, sorted and boxed items for delivery to various members from Portland to Ashland. Reports continued to come in about members who had lost everything in the fires to the south and others who were evacuated in various locations, all of whom had multiple levels of need. Southern Oregon was hit the hardest.

In the midst of the fires, there was a Golf Channel event in Portland. Local 28 provided IATSE International Representative Rachel McClendon with all the real time available information to keep the IATSE crew working safely at the course on the days when the tournament was not cancelled. Local 28 worked to refresh emergency kits for crew members, who were sleeping in their cars. They also provided contact information for the IATSE’s Walsh/Di Tolla/Spivak Foundation to apply for help. Local 28 also started a food pantry during the pandemic which quickly transitioned to assist members evacuated from their homes.

Studio Mechanics Local 488 (Pacific Northwest) thankfully had very few members who were forced to evacuate or experience permanent loss. They turned their attention to helping those in Locals 28, 154, and 675. Several productions covered by the Locals were forced to shut down to the toxic air quality. Producers of active projects took the appropriate actions to keep their crews safe. In Washington, members were not affected other than air quality in their homes. The Locals gathered donations of toiletries and other items requested by affected Locals and worked with Local 28 to ensure the delivery to those affected by the fires. Members were encouraged to donate to the Local Hardship funds as well as the Walsh Di Tolla Spivak Foundation.

In Oregon, wildfire management is playing out as a big issue on the National level. As a state whose residents live amongst and around some of the most beautiful natural areas in the country, Oregonians care deeply for the forests. State and Local leaders focus heavily on the protection of forests. The Federal Government owns sixty percent of the public land but doesn’t provide proper management.

In Washington, state and federal representatives and senators play a large role in lobbying for federal funds for forest management and wildfire mitigation. The Feds seldom give enough funding to the west coast states to address this issue.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The California wildfires, which remained a danger for the state through late fall adversely affected Locals throughout the state. Locals 119 (San Francisco bay area), 611 (Watsonville, Santa Cruz, et al) reported that members had been affected. Some were evacuated from their homes as fires raged near them. Fortunately, Local 119 and 611 members were able to return to their homes as evacuation orders lifted in their areas.

Many Local 611 members stepped up and volunteered to cut fire lines. Others signed up to assist with the make-shift shelters which were set up to help evacuees. There was a major response from the entire community - more volunteers than were needed by a long shot. Some members of the Locals offered up their homes to house members if needed. One member of Local 611 received aid from the International through the IA Fire Victim Relief Fund that was set up. He was able to recoup the expense of moving his family out of his home during the evacuation. The Business Representative of Local 611 expressed his gratitude, stating that “we are ecstatic about the response and outpouring of support our members stepped up with for fellow members, and the community.”
IATSE LOCAL MEMBERS OF 493 AND 600 PROUDLY STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH U.S. SENATE DICK DURBIN

Durbin supports and is committed to the issues of our IA Sisters and Brothers. From left to right are: AC (600) Anne Frievogel, COVID Officer Donna Shryock, Electrician Richard Speed, HMU Breezy Brezany, Gaffer Adam Reisz, US Senator Dick Dubin, Grip / Local 493 Business Representative Gordon Hayman, Key Grip Dave Kube, AC (600) Mary Anne Janke, DP (600) Jeff Saunders, kneeling in foreground Craft Services Lauren Acree, Audio Mixer Matthew Gettemeer. All except those listed as 600 are represented by IATSE Local 493.

LOCAL ORGANIZING ACTIVITY

LOCAL
LOCAL 18
LOCAL 3, 489, 787

EMPLOYER
MILWAUKEE REPERTORY THEATER
PITTSBURGH PLAYHOUSE AT POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

UNIT
STAGEHANDS
STAGEHANDS, WARDROBE, SCENIC ARTISTS

SIGN UP FOR IATSE TEXT ALERTS
STAY UP-TO-DATE AND IN-THE-KNOW

TEXT IATSE TO 21333
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GO MOBILE!

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admin.iatse-intl.org/Bulletin.aspx
IN MEMORIAM

LOCAL 478 REMEMBERS GILBERT CHARBONNET

Gilly was born on an Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Georgia, he was a true New Orleanian. With the uptown university area as his stomping ground, Gilly was happiest spending time with his family and friends. Some of his fondest childhood memories were his summers spent at Camp La Salle in New Mexico run by the Christian Brothers. Always having an affinity with animals, there he learned about the care of horses and developed a special love for them. He was a graduate of De La Salle Catholic High School and obtained his degree at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

In the late 1980’s, Gilly began work in the early days of the Louisiana Film Industry and quickly worked his way up and established himself as a Key Grip. Over the years, he worked on hundreds of feature films, television series, commercials, and music videos. Although humble and regarding himself as having no particular talent, his best boy once described Gilly as, “knowing what the DP wants even before the DP knows”. He was known for his professional integrity and honest work ethic. Another gift of Gilly’s was his way with people. He got along with just about everyone, had a great memory for remembering names, and was a joy to work with. He mentored and taught hundreds of members in the grip profession and today, several of the New Orleans’ key grips and best boys can boast of having their start with Gilly. He was known to have a generous heart and in 2016, during the great flood, he was a part of the Local 478 Response Team and made several donation runs. As one of the earliest grips in the Louisiana Film Industry, Gilly’s skills, personality, and artistic eye established a high standard for the grip profession and helped build the foundation for today’s reputable movie business in Louisiana.

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IN MEMORIAM

Pictured here are the IA Strikers, in front: Tony DePaulo (Team Captain), Alex Tomais, Cathy Wiggins and Matthew Cain. In back, Wesley Vega, Jennifer Triplett, Jimmy Rainey and Davel Hamue.

THANK YOU

The Trustees of the Richard F. Walsh/Alfred W. Di Tolla/ Harold P. Spivak Foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank all the friends, colleagues, members and officers that have made donations in memory of their dearly departed.

For those who would like to make a donation, please send your check to the IATSE General Office to the attention of the Richard F. Walsh/Alfred W. Di Tolla/ Harold P. Spivak Foundation.

Contributor

Local 488 Studio Mechanics of the Pacific Northwest for Wildfire Relief
DIP Productions, LLC
LOCAL SECRETARIES AND BUSINESS AGENTS

Reference Letters:
AAE Amusement Area Employees
ADG Art Directors Guild (inclusive of Scenic, Title and Graphic Artists, Set Designers, Model Makers, and Studio Arts Craftspersons)
AE Arena Employees
AFE Arena Facility Employees
AGAAE&AGA Animation Guild and Affiliated Optical Electronic and Graphic Arts
AMTS Admissions, Mutual Ticket Sellers
APC Affiliated Property Craftspersons
ATPAM Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers
BPTS Ball Park Ticket Sellers
CDG Costume Designers Guild
CHE Casino Hotel Employees
EE Exhibition Employees
EE/BPBD Exhibition Employees/Bill Posters, Billers and Distributors
ICG International Cinematographers Guild (inclusive of Publicists)
M Mixed
MAHS Make-Up Artists & Hair Stylists
MAHSG Make-Up Artists & Hair Stylists Guild
MPC Motion Picture Custumers
MEPG Motion Picture Editors Guild (North America) Inc. (inclusive of Story Analysts, Motion Picture Laboratory Film/Video Technicians and Cinetecnicos)
MPP,AVE&CT Motion Picture Projectionists, Audio Visual Engineers and Computer Technicians
MPPP&MT Motion Picture Projectionists, Operators and Video Technicians
MPPP,VT&AC Motion Picture Projectionists, Operators, Video Technicians & Allied Crafts
MPPV&CT Motion Picture Projectionists, Video and Computer Technicians
MPSELT Motion Picture Studio Electrical Lighting Technicians
MPSG Motion Picture Studio Grips (inclusive of Motion Picture Crafts Service and Motion Picture First Aid Artists)
MPSP&SW Motion Picture Set Painters & Sign Writers
MPSP Motion Picture Studio Production Technicians
MPST Motion Picture Studio Teachers and Welfare Workers
MPVTLY/AC&GE Motion Picture Videotape Technicians/Laboratory Technicians/Allied Crafts and Government Employees
MT MT Phone Telephone Order Clerks
O Operators
PC,CP&HO Production Coordinators, Craftservice Providers and Honeywagon Operators
PST,T,EMA&SSP Production Sound Technicians, Television Engineers, Video Assist Technicians and Studio Projectionists
S Stage Employees
S&FMT Sound & Figure Maintenance Technicians
S&PA Scenic Artists and Propmakers
SM Studio Mechanics
SM&B Studio Mechanics & Broadcast Technicians
SS,C&A&ASPG Script Supervisors, Continuity Coordinators, Accountants and Allied Production Specialists Guild

SS,PC,CC&PA Script Supervisors, Production Coordinators, Continuity Coordinators and Production Accountants
T Theatre Employees
T&T Treasurers & Ticket Sellers
TBRASE Television Broadcasting Remote & Studio Employees
TBS Television Broadcasting Studio Employees
TSA Ticket Sales Agents
TW,M,MAHS Theatrical Wardrobe, Make-Up Artists & Hair Stylists
TWU Theatrical Wardrobe Union
USA United Scenic Artists (inclusive of Theatrical Sound Designers)

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ICG 671 PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR—Dave Ruml, c/o 229 Wallace Avenue, Toronto, ON M6H 1N5 (416-368-0072). Bus. Rep.: David Ruml

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"Labor unions are under assault, with politicians across the country undermining workers’ collective bargaining rights and making harmful budget cuts that directly strip union workers of the wages, benefits, and retirement security they deserve. We need to stand up to fight against these attacks before they get even worse."

—Matthew D. Loeb, IATSE International President

IATSE PAC is a non-partisan, federal political action committee created in order for our union and its members to have a greater voice in the political and legislative process.

The IATSE PAC supports policy makers that fight to:

- Protect and expand collective bargaining rights
- Defend our pension funds and health care benefits
- Eliminate so-called "Right-to-work" laws that enable free-riders
- Enforce strong copyright protections
- Protect funding for the arts
- Ensure equality for all and oppose all forms of discrimination

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE:

- Visit IATSEPAC.net to contribute online and access additional resources
- Fill out and submit the IATSE PAC contribution form
- Contact iatsepac@iatse.net to inquire about payroll deduction options

IATSEPAC.net