

PLUMBERS AND STEAMFITTERS LOCAL NO. 157, TERRE HAUTE



125th Anniversary
COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY

2021



**Congratulations to Plumbers and Steamfitters
Local No. 157
On Your 125th Anniversary!**

From your Friends at Steamfitters Local No. 353

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Best wishes from the officers, members and staff of
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Congratulations!

From the Officers and Members of
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and
Allied Workers Local No. 18, Indianapolis, Indiana



PLUMBERS AND STEAMFITTERS LOCAL NO. 157
125th Anniversary Celebration Event

Saturday, October 16, 2021

6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Local 157 Main Campus

8801 East Milner Avenue, Terre Haute, Indiana

Hors d'Oeuvres and Dinner 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Program, Entertainment & Dancing 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

U.A. 157



125th Anniversary

**Cherish Our Past and Present as
We Prepare for Our Future**

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends:

It is with great pride that I congratulate our membership on the accomplishment of 125 years of solidarity. As business manager of U.A. Local No. 157, it is truly an honor and privilege to serve the membership and to celebrate this momentous occasion with all of you. Reaching 125 years is quite an achievement, and our members should be proud of it.



From the start, our leaders, staff and members have persevered and helped this union to continue to be successful in the industry. We must not forget our local's founding fathers, we must respect the foundation that they built for us today, and we must continue to build on that foundation as one.

There is a certain sense of pride our members should feel every day as they pass by all the facilities we have built and continue to maintain. We can see the evidence of our labor that has and continues to provide comfort, stability and security to our families and the businesses of our communities.

Many charities around the area have also been on the receiving end of our members' generosity.

We have not done this all alone; without the genuine relationships we have with our contractor and owner partners, we would not be where we are today.

Along the way, co-workers and friends have become family – brothers and sisters who will forever be part of our lives. As we celebrate this accomplishment, let us remember those who came before us and those who stand beside us, working diligently to lead the path for future generations to continue our great tradition.

Faternally,

Mark W. Swaner, Business Manager
U.A. Local No. 157

This book was proudly produced by

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 Preserving the Proud Stories of Local Unions
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Special Thanks Section:

United Association Local 157 and Union Histories give very special thanks to Local 157 retiree and historian **Brother Mitchell Poynter** for his invaluable and devoted contributions to preserving the local's history and the production of this book, which have included countless hours spent collecting and organizing the local's archives.

Special thanks also goes to member and designer Brother Mac Collins.

Head Historian: Calvin Jefferson
 Research Assistant & Proofreader: Ann Wilkins Jefferson
 Art Direction: Andy Taucher
 Layout & Design: Steven Demanett



The History of U.A. Local No. 157, Terre Haute Service & Solidarity

Through 125 Years

In West-Central Indiana & East-Central Illinois



The United Association of Journeyman Plumbers, Gas Fitters, Steam Fitters and Steam Fitters' Helpers of the United States and Canada (U.A.) chartered Local No. 157 in Terre Haute, Indiana, on **September 1, 1896**, to represent and serve the pipefitting industry and its tradesmen in the city and seven surrounding counties in Indiana. One-hundred-and-twenty-five years later in 2021, Local 157 has grown to a membership of more than 1,700 craftspeople in its building-trades, metal-trades and gas-distribution divisions, and its jurisdiction has grown to cover the building trades in all or portions of 16 counties in Indiana and six counties in Illinois and gas distribution over most of the State of Indiana and all of the State of Kentucky.

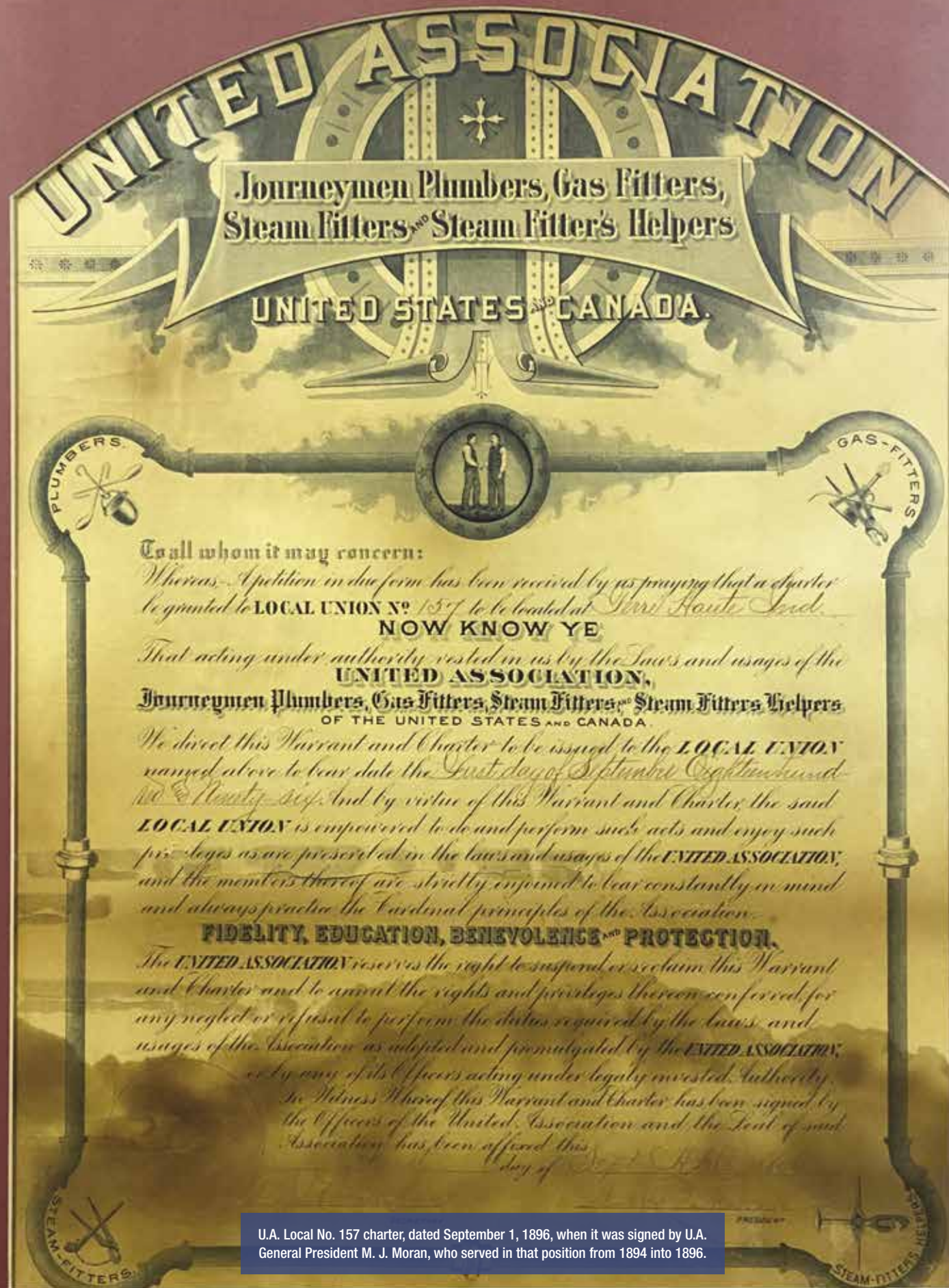
Throughout its history, the local's progress and development have been direct results of the commitment of and sacrifices made by officers and members. That enduring dynamic is

highlighted in a booklet that Local 157 and the Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association jointly produced in 1980 to "enlighten all affiliates and friends as to how management and labor can work together," entitled Working Together ... Union & Management in The Piping Industry in The Indiana-Illinois Wabash Valley Area, which proclaims:

"New programs covering many benefits of various kinds have been proposed by the officers and adopted by the (Local 157) membership. The unity and the willingness of the members to unite behind and support elected and paid officers made these outstanding accomplishments possible."

The booklet further emphasizes the ability of Local 157 and its employing contractors to work together as a vital factor in the local's growth and advancement:

"The fine labor-management relationship that exists between the contractors and the local union should also be considered as an accomplishment of the officers of Local 157 and the officers of the Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association (now the Wabash Valley Mechanical Contractors Association). The 'open and above-board' approach of all parties to the collective bargaining agreements has cultivated this fine relationship and has fostered and promoted the image of our industry in the Wabash Valley Area."



U.A. Local No. 157 charter, dated September 1, 1896, when it was signed by U.A. General President M. J. Moran, who served in that position from 1894 into 1896.

Enduring Growing Pains to Sustain a New Local

Plumbers and steamfitters in Terre Haute first organized and were subsequently issued a charter for a local union by the U.A. in 1894. However, the international union revoked the charter soon after when the local's membership dropped below seven dues-paying members.

Two years later, a group of the city's plumbers, steamfitters and gasfitters met on July 22, 1896, and organized again with the intention of obtaining another charter from the U.A. – and even elected officers that evening for their potential local, including **President Benjamin F. Herr**. Eight days later during another meeting on July 30, the group voted to have its secretary, **Brother James C. Thompson**, write a letter to each plumber and steamfitter in the City of Terre Haute “inviting them to our next meeting.” The plumbers and fitters further elected to have their charter “left open” for 30 days for new members to join at a \$1 initiation fee.

After 10 members of the group signed and submitted a charter application to the U.A., the international union issued a charter on September 1, 1896, designating the plumbers and steamfitters of Terre Haute as Local No. 157. The group was officially installed as a local union during a meeting on September 30 when U.A. special organizer **Brother James L. Kenney** of Local No. 73 of Indianapolis formally inducted the local and its members into the union.

Meanwhile, Local 157 officers and members had been gathering regularly to conduct business and build their organization. For instance, during a meeting on September 6,

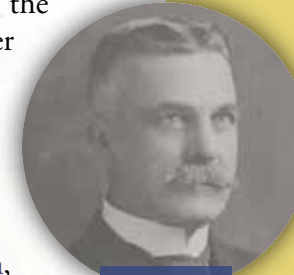
U.A. ORGANIZED OVER 130 YEARS AGO



Patrick J. Quinlan

With a general lack of stable, national organizations to represent steamfitters and plumbers at the time, Patrick J. Quinlan, a plumber from Boston, sent a letter to R. A. O'Brien, a plumber in Washington, D.C., on April 25, 1889, proposing the formation of a new, national pipe-trades union. Subsequently, on October 7, 1889, 40 delegates from 23 piping-trades locals in 10 states and the District of Columbia assembled in Washington for a convention.

Four days later, the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Gas Fitters, Steam Fitters and Steam Fitters' Helpers of the United States and Canada (U.A.) was born on October 11, 1889. The U.A. selected Brother Quinlan as its president, Brother Henry Collins of New York City as its vice president and Brother O'Brien as its secretary-treasurer.



Richard A. O'Brien

Meanwhile, most steamfitters were attempting to sustain their own national union, the National Association of Steam, Hot Water and Power Piping Fitters and Helpers, that they had formed in 1888, soon after which it would become the International Association (I.A.). For two decades, however, the two piping unions clashed regularly over jurisdiction – before the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) ordered the I.A. to amalgamate into the U.A. in 1912.

The union endured through two world wars and the Great Depression, after which on January 1, 1947, it changed its name to the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada.

the local “made arrangements to turn out as a body” for Labor Day festivities in the city the following day, according to meeting minutes – although members working for D. W. Watson and Company were excused because “the firm had so much work that they would not allow their employees to lay off that day.”

Having been inaugurated into the U.A., the local's members voted 10 days later during a meeting on October 10, 1896, that its monthly



LOCAL 157 CHARTER MEMBERS

These 10 men signed the United Association application for Local 157's initial charter, which the union granted to them on September 1, 1896.

Fred A. "Fritz" Arleth

Marley Boyer

Harry Coppage

Phillip Dinges

Louis Jentz

John Lusner

Johnathan O'Donnell

Frank Rinnington

George Schaeffer

James C. Thompson

membership dues would be 50 cents per month or \$1.50 per quarter to be paid in advance. Members also elected to have the local's charter members pay a reduced \$1.05 in dues for the first three upcoming months.

However, the final few years of the 1890s and the 19th Century were a very unstable period financially for the building and construction industry in the Greater Terre Haute region and across the nation. As a result, very little work was available for Local 157 members, many of whom could not afford to pay dues, and for some time between 1896 and 1898 the local was inactive.

As the local worked to get back on its feet, sometime in 1898 it consisted of seven plumbers, six steamfitters

and a single gasfitter and the wage scale for its journeyman members was 22-1/2 cents per hour for 10-hour workdays, six days per week. The local's "helpers" (apprentices) were paid \$2.50 for 60 hours, with no premium pay for working additional hours.

But the following year, Local 157 continued to struggle to the point at which its number of dues-paying members dropped below seven, the minimum required to maintain a U.A. charter. **Brother Louis Jentz**, who was serving as the local's treasurer at the time, personally paid the per-capita dues of 15 cents per week for three delinquent members for a few weeks in 1899 so that the local could retain its charter in Terre Haute.

The local continued to experience growing pains, having to wage several strikes that lasted from three to as long as eight months during the late 1890s and early 1900s in attempts to improve its conditions and wages. (Labor legend and Terre Haute resident **Eugene V. Debs**, who at the time was a union organizer and leader before becoming a four-time Socialist Party of America candidate for U.S. president and



Local 157 charter member Louis C. Jentz (third from left) is shown in this undated photo during a ceremony at the local's union hall.



co-founder of the Industrial Workers of the World union in 1905, acted as the arbitrator for one of the strikes in 1901, for which he "rendered a decision that was acceptable to both the employers and to Local No. 157," according to a report in that year's July issue of the U.A. *Official Journal*.) Moreover, after Secretary Thompson resigned after serving in that position during the first four-and-a-quarter years of the local's existence, over the following two years beginning in January 1901, that office changed hands a total of nine times.

Regardless, Local 157 and its employing contractors reached a new, one-year working agreement that went into effect on May 1, 1900. Among other provisions, the contract set the local's journeyman plumber and steamfitter wage rate at 30 cents per hour; set overtime at time-and-a-half pay after 10 hours per day and double-time on Sundays; provided that railroad fare be paid when members were sent to jobs outside the City of Terre Haute; established that members would be "held responsible for overcharge in time in inferior workmanship of any kind;" and decreed that contractors could

LOCAL 157 UNION HALLS AND MEETING LOCATIONS

Places in which Local 157 held its meetings and conducted its business, all of which are located in Terre Haute.

Washington Hall

Wabash Avenue
1896 - 1897

Central Labor Union Hall

802-1/2 Wabash Avenue
1897

Central Labor Union Hall/ Building Trades Council Hall

626-1/2 Wabash Avenue
1897 - 1914

Bartenders' Union Hall

503-1/2 Wabash Avenue
1914 - 1915

Germania Hall

18-20 South Ninth Street
1915 - 1917

Central Labor Union Hall

624-1/2 Wabash Avenue
1917 - 1922

Terre Haute Labor Temple

201-203 South Fifth Street
1922 - 1952

Arcade Building

116 South Sixth Street
1952

Local 157 Union Hall

610 North 13th Street
1952 - 1974

Local 157 Union Hall

Local 157 Campus
8801 East Milner Avenue
1974 - present

SATELLITE OFFICE

North/Lafayette Office

2555 South 30th Street
Lafayette, Indiana

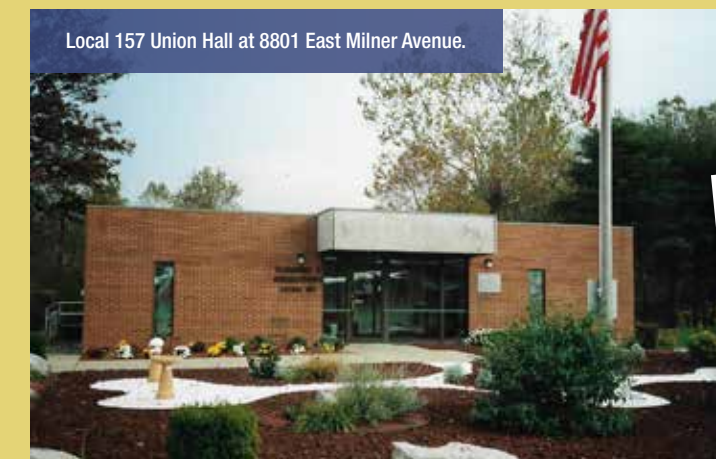
TRAINING CENTERS

Danville Training Center

2100 Oakwood Avenue
Danville, Illinois

Hutsonville Training Center

601 North Rose Street
Hutsonville, Illinois



Local 157 Union Hall at 8801 East Milner Avenue.



Terre Haute Labor Temple at 201-203 South Fifth Street.



Local 157 Union Hall at 610 North 13th Street.



not employ any plumber or steamfitter who did not have a “clear (union) card or provision made for one.”

Progress Aided by Strikes, Boom after First World War

Conditions for Local 157 slowly improved as the initial years of the new 20th Century progressed, and into 1904 work in its jurisdiction had picked up substantially. That year, the local grew to 29 members, and during 1905 its membership increased to 37 plumbers, steamfitters, gasfitters and apprentices.

But in an effort to better its working conditions, the local waged a nine-month-long strike that year, during which much of its membership left the union for lack of work as the walkout continued. U.A. **General Organizer Thomas Dooley**, having visited the local that April to find “the local in the same condition that I had left it in” after a visit the previous month, succeeded in convincing all former members to accept a proposition through which they “buried the hatchet and resolved to work in harmony and strive to put Local No. 157 where it was a year ago,” he reported in the May 1905 *Journal*.

By November 1907 following another strike, after which several non-union plumbers and fitters and former Local 157 members had arranged to be taken into the local, all of the



Local 157 members gather for the Terre Haute Labor Day parade in 1908.



LOCAL 157 LEADERSHIP

Before Local 157 was chartered by the United Association of Journeyman Plumbers, Gas Fitters and Steam Fitters (U.A.) on September 1, 1896, plumbers and steamfitters in Terre Haute met and organized on July 22, 1896, and during that meeting elected these men to serve as the local's first officers:

Benjamin F. Herr, President

Fred A. “Fritz” Arleth, Vice President

Joseph G. Graf, Treasurer

A. Burgess, Financial Secretary

James C. Thompson, Secretary

After receiving its charter from the U.A., Local 157 was governed by part-time presidents, secretaries and business agents over the next 55 years until 1951, when the local installed its first business manager.

LOCAL 157 OFFICERS, 2021

President Jon Wooten

Vice President Todd Boland

Business Manager Mark W. Swaner

Financial Secretary/Treasurer Paul “PA” Atterson

Business Agent Wilbur E. Crouch III

Field Representative Stephen A. Snyder

Gas Distribution Organizer Thomas Gofourth

Recording Secretary Tim Wright

Door Guard Charlie Risley

Finance Committee: James R.F. Giffel, Aaron Atterson, Mitchell Swaner

Executive Board: Justin Weger, Matt Melin, Steve Shaffer, Jimmy Lawrence

Examining Board: Josh Pine, Gabe Rennie, Jeff Lindley, Jeff Ehrlich

LOCAL 157 BUSINESS MANAGERS

Grover C. Osborn

January 1951 – August 1983

William L. Fenton

August 1983 – December 1998

Joseph F. Melin

January 1999 – December 2001

Joseph F. Osborn

January 2002 – December 2004

Michael A. Pleasant

January 2005 – July 2009

Donnie Ritter

July 2009 – December 2013

Greg A. Thoennes

January 2013 – December 2016

Mark W. Swaner

January 2017 – present



Grover C. Osborn



Joseph F. Melin



Michael A. Pleasant



Donnie Ritter



Greg A. Thoennes



Mark W. Swaner



men working at the trade in Terre Haute were either in the local or were planning to become members, U.A. **General Organizer John M. Love** announced in that month's *Journal*. He went on to praise the local's membership for its steady, new-found progress:

"Local Union No. 157 deserves to be congratulated on their success, and it only goes to prove my assertions made to them on my first visit that by getting together they could accomplish much."



Local 157 apprentice Henry Zimmerman (left) watches as journeyman plumber Herman Holthaus makes connections on sections of lead pipe during a job in 1909.

Contract and labor disputes resulting in strikes by the local and its employers locking out members from job sites continued, however, in 1908 and at various times throughout the next five years. But among the progress made during that period, the local adopted a set of "Working Rules" that went into effect on April 1, 1909, and declared, among other things, that the local's journeyman wage scale would be 50 cents per hour "and no member of this local shall work for less." Other clauses stipulated that overtime pay would be time-and-a-half



Members of Local No. 293 in Danville, Illinois, march in a Labor Day Parade sometime during the 1980s.

U.A. LOCAL MERGERS INTO LOCAL 157

United Association Local No. 156 of Crawfordsville, Indiana, which was chartered by the union on May 21, 1938, was merged into Local 157 on June 1, 1952, giving Local 157 jurisdiction over Montgomery County, Indiana.

United Association Local No. 240 of Lafayette, Indiana, which was chartered by the union on April 6, 1901, was merged into Local 157 on May 1, 1975, giving Local 157 jurisdiction over Lafayette, West Lafayette and Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Tippecanoe and White counties in Indiana. (U.A. Local No. 798 of Frankfort, Indiana, which was chartered by the union on September 13, 1919, had been merged into Local 240 on October 27, 1947.)

United Association Local No. 293 of Danville, Illinois, which was chartered by the union on August 24, 1907, was merged into Local 157 on May 1, 1994, giving Local 157 jurisdiction over Vermillion County, Illinois.



(Left to right) Local No. 240, Lafayette, apprenticeship Instructor Hugh McGonigle, apprenticeship committee member Brother "Curly" Kiser, Vice President Lewis Claxton, Business Agent Thomas M. Byrns and President Ryan Logan and (back to camera) Financial Secretary Vernon Wright congratulate Brother Kenneth Nunan (far right), the first annual State of Indiana U.A. Apprentice Competition plumbing champion, at the local's office in July 1954.



Members of Local 157 enjoy the local's summer picnic in 1913.

the wage rate; pay for work on Saturday nights, Sundays and six holidays would be double the rate; members missing four consecutive union meetings would be fined \$1; plumbers could not perform steamfitting work if a steamfitter were unemployed; and steamfitters could not perform plumbing work if a plumber were unemployed.

What's more, by 1914, the Terre Haute plumbing and fitting crafts were completely and thoroughly organized into Local 157. That year, projects on which the local's members were employed included construction of the eight-story **Hotel Deming** at Sixth and Cherry streets in downtown Terre Haute, which was hailed as being 10 years ahead of its time when it opened that year, according to an article in the January 18, 2014, *Terre Haute Tribune-Star* newspaper. (*The hotel would later become Indiana State University student housing in the early 1960s and The Deming Center low-income senior-citizen housing operated by the Terre Haute Housing Authority in the late 1970s, before it was converted into The Deming luxury apartment complex in summer 2015.*)

Two years later, U.A. **General Organizer William Lynn** was able to report in the June 1916 *Journal* that the "members of Local 157 are making excellent progress." At that time, the local was also working on a new city plumbing ordinance that would tighten restrictions on plumbing

installations and those performing the work.

Then in 1918, the local went on strike beginning May 1 after its request for an increase of \$1 per day in its journeyman wage was rejected by contractors, who countered with an offer to pay the local's members 70-cent-per-hour. After about two weeks, the strike was settled for a 72-1/2-cent-per-hour scale, which amounted to a raise of 80 cents per day.

Later that year following the end of **World War I**, in which the United States was militarily involved from April 6, 1917, until the cessation of combat on November 11, 1918, stability and expansion returned to the nation's economy, resulting in a sustained period of growth and expansion in building-trades jobs throughout the country and the Terre Haute area – and for



Local 157 members march in the 1940 Terre Haute Labor Day parade.

HEARTS OF CHAMPIONS

Throughout its history, Local 157 members have competed together in athletic competitions ranging from bowling leagues to softball tournaments to golf outings.



The Local 157 team that won the Viquesney Stationers Bowling League of Terre Haute in 1957 consisted of (left to right, front row) Bob Dennany and Lou Bartenbach; (back row) Don Vaughn, Ed Hodson and Harry Von Eute Jr.; and (missing from photo) Dave Finney.



Local 157, whose membership would nearly double by 1920. In fact, over the three decades following the war, the Terre Haute region grew rapidly, providing Local 157 craftsmen with employment opportunities that came with the construction, expansion and maintenance of manufacturing facilities, oil wells, railroads, glass factories, distilleries and gas companies, as well as various businesses, hospitals, schools and homes throughout the local's seven-county jurisdiction.

Highs and Lows Through The '20s, Depression, War

"Conditions are very good in Terre Haute. All of our members are working under excellent working conditions."

A year and a half after Organizer Lynn included that announcement in his report in the November 1921 *Journal*, he was able to declare in the June 1923 issue of the magazine that Local 157 was in "excellent condition," having just signed a new contract that included a 15-cent hourly wage increase that raised its journeyman scale to \$9.20 per day.

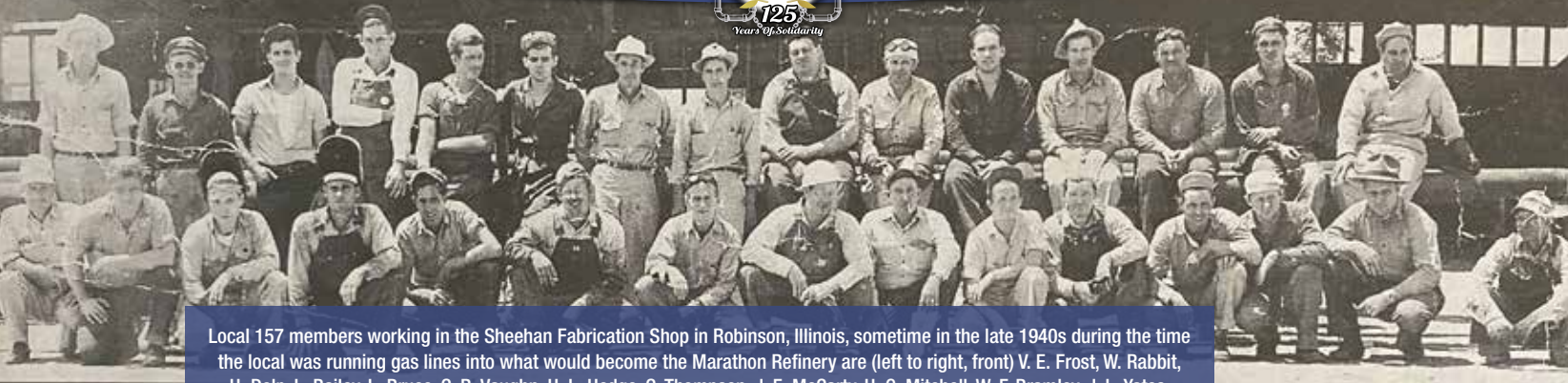
By that time, both the amount of work in the local's jurisdiction and its membership numbers were increasing steadily, and in 1922 the local had moved its twice-monthly general meetings to the newly constructed **Terre Haute Labor Temple** at 5th and Walnut streets. What's more, the local's members were about to begin working for the Stone Webster Company on a large, new powerhouse that was being erected by the **Central Indiana Power Company**.

Other projects that provided steady employment for Local 157 plumbers and steamfitters during the decade included construction of the **Terre Haute House** on the corner of Seventh Street and Wabash Avenue in the city's downtown section beginning in the spring of 1927. Opened on July 2, 1928, the Renaissance Revival-style, 10-story, upscale hotel hosted many wealthy and famous guests before it was closed in July 1970 and eventually demolished in 2005 (after which a Hilton Garden Inn replaced it in 2007).

But the **Great Depression**, the worldwide economic and human catastrophe that was essentially instigated by the U.S. stock market crash of October 29, 1929 (history's "Black Tuesday") and persisted throughout the 1930s, effectively stalled the local throughout much of the decade. Indeed, the devastating financial collapse hit U.A. members across the country,



Local 157 members working at the Commercial Solvents antifreeze plant in south Terre Haute in 1946 included (left to right, front) "Slim" Leonard, Fritz Von Eute, Joe Ward, Bob Bartenbach, "Croppie" Laughner, Jim Crowley, John Burget and George Elrod Jr.; and (back) Jim McCoskey, "Mack" McGinnis, Joe Riley, John Bailey, "Fuzzy" Bailey, Roger Mansard, Eddie Obst, George Pauley, Ed Walters, "Pop" Obst, Al Crowley Sr., Earl Roby, Bob Pfleging, Bob Austin and Frank Burget. (Also pictured are two engineers for Commercial Solvents.)



Local 157 members working in the Sheehan Fabrication Shop in Robinson, Illinois, sometime in the late 1940s during the time the local was running gas lines into what would become the Marathon Refinery are (left to right, front) V. E. Frost, W. Rabbit, H. Delp, L. Bailey, L. Bruce, C. R. Vaughn, H. L. Hedge, C. Thompson, J. E. McCarty, H. G. Mitchell, W. F. Bramley, J. L. Yates, C. Boyd, B. Strange and C. Hosmer; and (back) F. Dunlap, H. Fitts, G. J. Childers, C. Hendrix, L. E. Smith, C. F. Brinkley, C. F. Hightshoe, G. C. Osborn, R. E. Garrard, A. J. St. Laurent, C. Ramsey, R. E. Brinkley, L. Weger, R. E. Osborn and C. W. Wright.

including those of Local 157, particularly hard as unemployment among their ranks soared.

The union's official international history even notes that the *Journal* ran several issues during the early 1930s that offered advice on how members could stretch their wages as far as possible, although much of the focus of the articles was either on calling on the government to take action to help people or on trying to offer some hope and encouragement to the U.A. membership. "Construction all but stopped, and this led to a significant decline in manufacturing," the U.A. history recounts. "The economies of both (the United States and Canada) spiraled ever downward, until unemployment reached extremely

altogether." Meanwhile, as its overall international membership declined and the U.A. held no conventions between 1928 and 1938, "the union held it together," the U.A. history declares.

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's federal "New Deal" legislation to create jobs and combat the destructive effects of the depression provided a measure of relief to the country and the U.A. membership. As part of the program, in June 1933 the U.S. Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act, which in part protected collective-bargaining rights for unions and set parameters to regulate industry for fair wages and prices (although the act would be declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1935 and permanently suspended).

The New Deal also established the Public Works Administration, an employment program for federally funded projects, and the Roosevelt government in November 1933 also created the Civil Works Administration, whose mission was to rapidly create mostly manual-labor construction jobs. The subsequent influx of new federally funded projects in the Terre Haute area that put union labor to work included construction of the **Federal Building** that would house the U.S. Post Office and Court House when completed in 1935; the new, \$3-million **U.S. Federal Penitentiary** beginning in early 1939; and many other general construction jobs.



Local 157 members Byrl Strange (left) and Buck Weger on site of an expansion project at the Central Illinois Public Service Company power plant in Hutsonville, Illinois, in 1952.



Regardless, Local 157 experienced slow and at-times labored growth during the second half of the 1930s as the Great Depression lingered.

But beginning in 1939 and into the 1940s, the local grew rapidly as both private- and public-funded construction work proliferated. That year and into 1941, for instance, jobs on which union craftspeople were employed included installation of Terre Haute's new, \$1-million, storm-water drainage system that provided the city with one of the most modern storm-water sewers in the nation when it was completed.

With the local's manhours increasing and, subsequently, its membership steadily growing, in 1939 the local elected its first-ever paid officer, **Brother Frank Himmichhoeffer**, who served as business agent for the next two years. He would be succeeded by **Brother Leslie Dilg** from 1941 into 1944 and then by **Brother William Bartenbach** from 1944 until 1951.

An influx of work came for U.A. locals nationwide with the outbreak of **World War II** in Asia and Europe during the late 1930s, after which the United States officially entered the global conflict following the Japanese attack on the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. The following day, the United States declared war on Japan, after which Germany and the United States declared war on each other on December 11. As the busy wartime economy pulled the nation and unions completely and finally out of the Great Depression, U.A. membership across North America swelled from 81,000 in 1941 to 210,000 members, many of whom worked in shipyards, weapons plants, aircraft factories and other facilities to support the war.

As the nation dramatically stepped-up efforts to supply the war effort with materiel,

EVERYONE LOVES A LABOR DAY PARADE

The Terre Haute Labor Day Parade was resurrected in 1982 after a 10-year absence, largely through the efforts of Local 157. In the parade, Business Manager Grover Osborn successfully persuaded enough of the area's local unions to commit their members and resources to a parade. Business Agent Bill Fenton and Financial Secretary/Treasurer Jimmie Strange headed the Parade Committee, made the arrangements, contacted the appropriate authorities and solicited participants.

One of the features incorporated into the parade was a float contest. The Local 157 entry was selected by a panel of judges as the first-place winner in the 1982 parade, and the local went on to win the top prize in every Labor Day parade for the next 25 years.



The Local 157 float in the 1958 Terre Haute Labor Day Parade featured (left to right) first-year apprentice Benny Selvia, second-year apprentice William Lobbia, third-year apprentice Benton Caldwell, fourth-year apprentice Robert Moreland, fifth-year apprentice Bill Thompson and journeyman member William Chance.





CAMPUS IS CENTER OF LOCAL'S FUNCTIONS

With plans to establish a recreation area for its membership, in 1970, Local 157 purchased 75 acres of land just south of Seelyville, Indiana, and then bought an additional 250 adjoining acres in 1971. In addition to the lakes and woods for fishing and hunting on the 325-acre tract, there was plenty of room for training and office facilities, as well as space for the local's annual picnic.

Numerous members donated their time to help construct a 50-by-250-foot picnic shelter and several of the other structures on the property in 1971. The following year, a large slide that stood as a local area landmark for nearly 20 years was installed on the new Local 157 campus.

Meanwhile, the local also bought a 76-acre tract and a 139-acre tract across Milner Avenue from the 325-acre area, all of which contained a lake house, two single-family homes and a duplex. In 1978, the local had another duplex apartment constructed, giving it a total of seven rental units from which it collected rental income. The local also leased farmland to farmers, and the income from crops averaged approximately \$8,000 per year early on.

The local soon constructed a training center, with the Local 157 Educational Trust Fund completing a welding shop, a classroom building and storage facilities. Additionally, a clay-pigeon trap range, a clubhouse, as well as several other smaller projects were built, and a meeting hall was later completed on the property.

Ultimately, the local's recreational area provided fishing, hunting, camping, picnicking, hiking and many more outdoor activities for the enjoyment of its membership.

In 1974, Local 157 constructed its new headquarters office building on the campus, and soon after the local built a Family Center, where members and their families could enjoy a meal, across the road from the union hall (although it was discontinued after the 1980s). In 1980 a new State Health and Welfare Office was built next to the Family Center, thereby bringing all of the local's offices together in one location.

"The purchasing of real estate and many fine improvements on the 525-acre local union recreational area ... is a wise and progressive move," Local 157 Financial Secretary/Treasurer James L. "Tiny" Taylor wrote in 1981.

Overview of the Local 157 annual family picnic in 1976 at its campus on Milner Road in Terre Haute.



the massive national-defense building and construction program extended into the Terre Haute region and provided a large amount of employment to union tradespeople. Among the primary defense-related jobs built by union labor in Local 157's jurisdiction were the massive **Wabash River Ordnance Works** (later renamed the Newport Chemical Depot) near Newport, Indiana, beginning in January 1942 to produce the explosive RDX; the **Vigo Ordnance Plant** in Honey Creek Township, which began producing conventional explosives and munitions in February 1942; and the **Terre Haute Ordnance Depot** from June to December 1942, which served primarily as a warehouse complex.

New Leadership Guides Local into New Directions

Following the conclusion of World War II in September 1945 with the surrender of Japan after Germany had capitulated that May, Local 157's progress largely leveled-off during the remainder of the decade and into 1950. Throughout that period, the local continued to operate with only one paid business agent, who also served as its financial secretary/treasurer. Meanwhile, the local transacted its business from a small, rented room in the **Arcade Building** on South Sixth Street with no secretarial assistance, little office equipment and total assets of less than \$30,000.

What's more, through 1950 the local had no health-and-welfare plan or insurance program, no pension plan, no vacation fund and no training fund. The local was also limited in its jurisdiction to the building-trades branch of the plumbing and steamfitting industry, and it had fewer than 265 members entering 1951, at which time its journeyman wage scale was \$2.25 per hour.

But in January that year, the Local 157 membership elected **Brother Grover Osborn** to replace Brother Bartenbach as its business agent. Almost immediately, the new administration ushered in the beginning of what would be a new, progressive era for the local that was marked by rapid growth and development.

The United Association awarded most Gas Distribution work in the entire State of Indiana (except for a few small areas) to Local 157 on July 15, 1968, for the local to organize the industry's workers and provide its member craftspeople to all related projects throughout the state.

Key to those advancements was the expansion of the local's jurisdiction, as well as its taking control over jobs and territory whose jurisdiction was in dispute with other locals of the U.A. (which had changed its name in 1947 to United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada). In January 1951, for instance, Local 157 applied for and was granted jurisdiction by the U.A. over expansion of the **Central Illinois Public Service Company** power plant at Hutsonville, Illinois, after which the three members of a sister local working on the project to add third and fourth generators to the facility, which would be completed in 1954, were replaced by Local 157 members.

Then on March 13, 1951, the local and the **Plumbing and Steamfitting Contractors of Terre Haute** reached agreement on a new contract that immediately increased the journeyman wage rate to \$2.50 per hour. The scale would increase to \$2.62-1/2 per hour by October.

Meanwhile, the major projects on which the local's members were working included construction of a \$50-million **Atomic Energy Commission** plant at the Wabash River Ordnance factory. However, about



750 union plumbers and fitters working on the job went on strike beginning May 2 for five days before a dispute over travel expenses was settled.

Later that year, some 1,500 plumbers and steamfitters from Local 157 and other U.A. locals around the country struck the atomic-energy project again for three weeks beginning September 15 in an effort to gain travel expenses they were owed from March 19 at the rate of \$2.80 each per day, or a total of \$350 each, according to a report in the October 10 *Terre Haute Tribune*. After a U.S. Wage Stabilization Board decision had granted the workers the retroactive expenses only from August 21, the plumbers and steamfitters returned to work October 10 when the union and employer reached a settlement.

During what proved to be a watershed year for Local 157, in 1952 more significant additions were made to its jurisdiction, first when the U.A. granted the local control



Local 157 members gather around the Indianapolis race car purchased by 94 members before its driver, Bill Boyd, took it for a test ride around the track at the Vigo County Fairgrounds on April 6, 1952.

over construction of a new **Olin-Matheson cellophane plant** in Covington, Indiana. The union then merged **U.A. Local No. 156** of Crawfordsville, Indiana, into Local 157 in June 1952, adding Montgomery, Owen and part of Putnam counties into the Terre Haute-based local after Local 156's membership voted to join Local 157 over **Local No. 240** of Lafayette, Indiana; and plumbers' Local 73 and steamfitters' **Local No. 440** of Indianapolis.

Also that June, the U.A. gave Local 157 jurisdiction of a new **I.B.M. plant** being constructed near Greencastle, Indiana, as well as a five-mile radius around that town and a section of western Putnam County. Previously, Putnam County had a unique setup by which jurisdiction was assigned based on the area in which the contractor working on a project was located, leading to a dispute between locals 157, 73 and 440 over the I.B.M. project.

As part of their working agreement, Local 157 and its contractors formulated a new, first-ever **Plumbing and Pipefitting Health and Welfare Plan** in March 1952 to provide healthcare benefits to the local's membership. When the plan was put into operation that July, the employers deducted 1 percent from the gross pay for each employee to contribute



Local 157 members (left to right) Pete Farmer, Harley McDonald and Fritz Dreher on a job at Rose Polytechnic Institute in Terre Haute in 1953. (It was Brother Farmer's first day working for contractor Freitag-Weinhardt, which he would later own.)



on behalf of the local and the employers matched those deducted amounts. In the beginning, the plan paid \$10 per day for hospital room and board.

That same year, Local 157 also moved into a new office building and union hall at **610 North 13th Street**.

Shortly after the merger of Local 156, Brother Osborn's title was changed from business agent to business manager (making him the first member to hold that office) to reflect the increased demands of administering the local's additional jurisdiction, property, membership and resources. In addition, a second paid officer was added to the staff when **Brother James "Tiny" Taylor** became Local 157's first full-time financial secretary/treasurer, replacing Brother Bartenbach, who had held the office in a part-time, unsalaried role.

Development Continues With Accelerated Growth

Another new contract between Local 157 and the Terre Haute Master Plumbers that went into effect on April 1, 1953, raised the local's journeyman pay scale to \$2.80 per hour. With the agreement, contractors began paying the full, 2 percent of gross wages into the Health and Welfare Plan, while deductions for the fund that were being taken from the pay of the local's nearly 1,000 members were discontinued.

But when the local and contractors could not initially negotiate a new agreement the following year before that



Local 157 Business Manager Grover C. Osborn stands with driver Gary Burnell and the 1955 Terre Haute Soap Box Derby car sponsored by the local that year.

contract expired, about 800 members went on strike beginning May 1, 1954, to gain a 10-cent hourly raise in wages and an additional 1-percent-of-pay contribution to the healthcare fund. The strike ended nine days later after the two sides reached a deal giving the local its requested increases in a new, two-year contract that was retroactive to April 1 and brought the journeymen wage scale to \$2.90 per hour while boosting the health-and-welfare contribution to 3 percent of gross wages in 1955.

Local 157 was also given jurisdiction over its largest project to date in 1954 when the U.A. assigned it the new **U.S. Industrial (U.S.I.) Chemicals plant** being built in



Local 157 members shown on a job in 1957 are (left to right, front) B. Fipps, H. Rumble, B. Scott, A. Wright, R. Richards, S. Black, M. Sydnor, D. Knozillas and R. Bruce; and (back) B. Beard, C. Shaffer, L. Johnson, J. Lawrence, H. McDannials, D. Sanders, C. McCord and T. Phillips.



PIPING INDUSTRY NEWS

NEWSPAPER SET
COMMUNICATION
STANDARD

In 1981, Local 157 started its own local newspaper, the *Piping Industry News*. At the time, while internal publications were fairly common with industrial unions, there were only a handful in the entire United Association and less than 50 in all of the building-trades unions combined.

The publication was designed to keep all Local 157 members informed on the local's activities, as well as provide information on the unionized construction industry and related events. Since it was founded, the newspaper has won several national awards and has served as a model for other labor organizations who desired a better way to communicate with their members on a regular basis.



Tuscola, Illinois, which would be the world's largest anhydrous alcohol factory when it was completed. Jurisdiction over the facility was taken from **U.A. Local No. 65** of Decatur, Illinois, because the U.A. felt that Local 157 could better represent and control the members working on the large job.

However, a bitter fight between the locals developed over the project, as well as the Texas Panhandle and Trunk Line Pumping Station project and other related jobs in the area, and Local 157 later temporarily lost jurisdiction of the U.S.I. plant. After a hearing before the U.A. General Executive Board and the filing of briefs and oral arguments by Business Manager Osborn, the jobs were recovered by Local 157, and over the next few decades, the U.S.I. project and its associated surrounding gas-booster stations created thousands of manhours for the local's membership.

Continuing to grow and expand, Local 157 added significant additional territory to its jurisdictional area in 1955 when, following

meetings in Washington, D.C., with U.A. general officers and representatives of U.A. locals in east-central Illinois, the Terre Haute-based local was awarded Warren County in Indiana and Clark, Crawford and Edgar counties in Illinois. Local 157 was also given "spot jurisdiction" for all of the petrochemical plants in Tuscola.

Later that same year, the local received authority over the area of Knox County, Indiana, north of the City of Vincennes and U.S. Route 50 following a dispute over the dividing line in the county between **Local No. 136** of Evansville and Local 157. The U.A. international representatives in the area at that time established the border between the two locals at Edwardsport, which placed an expansion of a power plant for **Public Service Indiana** (which would evolve into Cinergy and then Duke Energy Indiana) into the jurisdiction of Local 136, but after a meeting with Brother Osborn, U.A. **President Martin P. Durkin** established the line at Route 50, giving the power plant to Local 157.

The local's membership surpassed 1,000 members in late 1955, after which it added **Brother Roger Mansard** to its staff as a paid business agent in 1956 to help oversee and police all of the territory now under the local's control. Soon after, the local also hired **Brother Robert Walker** as its first full-time, paid field representative.

Beginning at that time and throughout the next 10 years, Local 157 also developed a thorough and rigorous **training program** to ensure its members possessed the most up-to-date skills and abilities to meet the needs of its employing contractors. To achieve that goal, the local utilized facilities at its new office complex and at **Gerstmeyer Technical High School** in Terre Haute to provide classroom and

laboratory space in which it could augment on-the-job training of its apprentices with theoretical and hands-on learning.

To close out its landmark decade, Local 157 came to terms on a new, first-ever three-year contract with the Terre Haute Master Plumbers Association that was in effect from May 1, 1957, through April 30, 1960. The pact immediately increased the local's journeyman pay to \$3.25 per hour for the first year and eventually raised it to \$3.45 per hour for the last five months of the deal.

New Retirement
Benefits Highlight
More Milestones

With 10 counties in Indiana and Crawford, Clark and Edgar counties and the Tuscola area in Illinois under its authority and a membership of over 1,000 plumbers, steamfitters and apprentices, Local 157 reached agreement on a new, one-year contract with the Master



Officers of Local 157 and U.A. Local 293 of Danville, Illinois, (which would be merged into Local 157 in May 1994) gathered at a dinner meeting are (left to right, standing) Pat Murphy, Ed Hill, Jim Call, Harlan Swearingen, Jess Grimes, Bob Dennany, Ivan Clark, Louis Mayer, V. J. Hughes, Roger Mansard and Bill Wakley; (seated, back row) Jim Warbritton, George Junkerman, Bob Walker, Howard Moore, Grover Osborn, "Tiny" Taylor, Joe Ward and John Sasso; and (seated, front row) Charles Lane, Steve Yeager and Joe Decker.

Plumbers Association on April 22, 1960, that would go into effect on May 1. The pact provided a total 30-cent hourly raise to the local's journeyman wage scale as well as a 10-cent-per-hour contribution by contractors into the local's health-and-welfare insurance plan.

In yet another endeavor that would have far-reaching implications, the very next year Local



The Local 157 Ladies Auxiliary No. 84, pictured here in 1958, organized and carried out numerous social and fund-raising activities, from hosting St. Patrick's Day parties to participating in the Terre Haute Labor Day Parade to gathering and delivering Christmas baskets to needy families, during the auxiliary's existence from the 1950s into the 1970s.



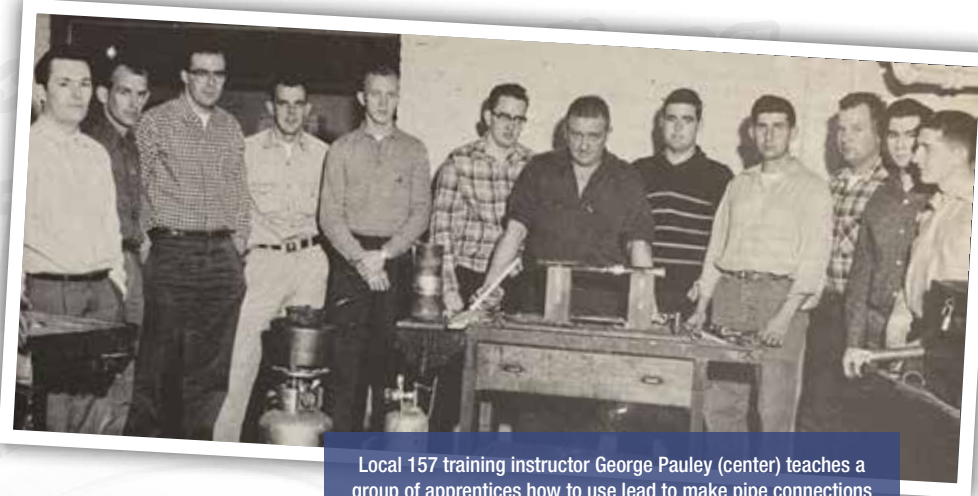
157 was at the center of the formation of the **Statewide Pipe Trades Industry Health and Welfare Plan** to cover U.A. members in the plumbing and pipefitting industry throughout Indiana when it hosted a meeting with U.A. **Local No. 330** of Kokomo and their employers on July 19, 1961.

The locals and their contractors subsequently entered into an Agreement and Declaration of Trust to provide healthcare coverage for U.A. members and their dependents across the state, with employers initially contributing 10 cents per hour worked by members of participating locals into the plan's fund. *(Gradually, the number of plan participants eventually grew to 16 Indiana-based U.A. locals.)*

New working contracts during the first half of the decade were proceeded by a three-year pact that went into effect on May 1, 1965, with an initial journeyman wage boost to \$4.45 per hour for one year. That hourly scale went to \$4.60 for the second year and then to \$4.85 for the third and final year, which ended April 30, 1968, while contributions to the Health and Welfare Plan remained at 10 cents per hour worked during the first year and were raised to 15 cents per hour for the final two years.

Notably, the agreement also established the new **Pipe Trades Industry Pension Fund**, a first-ever retirement benefit for Local 157 members. As part of the deal, contractors would contribute 20 cents per hour into the fund during the first year and then 25 cents per hour for the final two years of the pact.

Additionally, the local and the contractors' association further agreed to set up a vacation plan for Local 157 members, through which employing contractors would deduct from the pay of each U.A. employee 15 cents per



Local 157 training instructor George Pauley (center) teaches a group of apprentices how to use lead to make pipe connections during a class sometime in the early 1960s.

hour worked during the second year of the contract and submit those withholdings to the new **Plumbers and Pipefitters Vacation Fund**. During the third year of the agreement, the deductions would increase to 25 cents per hour. Local 157 members could then use those saved funds for "paid" vacation time off.

While the local's membership slipped below 850 in November 1965 and remained around that level into 1966, in March the following year the U.A. awarded jurisdiction of Richland County in Illinois to Local 157 since U.A. **Local No. 653** of Centralia had excessive travel-pay provisions in its working agreement. Also that year, Local 157 was assigned "spot jurisdiction" for construction of the new Central Illinois Public Service's **Newton Power Station** in Jasper County, Illinois.

In 1967, the trustees of the Indiana Pipe Trades Health and Welfare Plan, along with the trustees of U.A. healthcare funds of neighboring states, began reciprocating contributions to each other's funds for members of any particular U.A. local, including Local 157, traveling to the jurisdictions of other locals for work. As such, traveling U.A. members could maintain eligibility in their home locals' funds without having to make self-contributions.

During that time, among the jobs employing Local 157 members within its jurisdiction was



installation of a sixth and final generating unit to the **Wabash River Generating Station** in Vigo County, Indiana. As many as 140 of the local's plumbers and steamfitters worked on the project before it was completed in 1968.

Elsewhere during the late 1960s, Local 157 members were helping to build Public Service Indiana's Cayuga Generating Station in Eugene Township of Vermillion County, near the City of Cayuga, although before the power plant's two units were put into service in 1970 and 1972, respectively, the roughly 125 union plumbers and fitters on the job did not report to work for several days in 1969 while the boilermakers' union picketed the project. The local's members were also working on construction of Hoosier Energy's **Frank E. Ratts Generating Station** on the White River near Petersburg in Pike County, Indiana, which when completed in 1970 was Indiana's first electric-cooperative power plant.

Another one-year agreement with the re-named **Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association** set wages for Local 157 journeymen at \$5.55 per hour from May 1, 1968, through April 20, 1969. The employers

Local 157 members lay roof drains and storm sewers on the side of the new Physical Education Building at Indiana State University on August 8, 1961.



also agreed to pay 15 cents per hour into the Pipe Trades Industry Health and Welfare Plan and 30 cents per hour into the Pipe Trades Industry Pension Fund, and to deduct 25 cents per hour from each employees' wages and submit those monies to the Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Vacation Fund for the local's approximately 900 members.

Continued after the following spread.



Local 157 retirees who received the first-ever pension checks paid by the local, which amounted to \$20 per month, during a ceremony at its union hall on May 7, 1965, are (left to right, first row) Cecil Royer, Joseph Voto, John O. Wright, Raymond Day, James Scott, Earl Doane, Louis Giffel, Guy S. Woods and Clarence Himmichhoeffer; (second row) Roy Taylor, James F. Buckallew, Vernon Trueblood, Cyrus Yates, Clarence Johnson, Ross Sargent, Sam Hudgins and Ralph Goodrich; (third row) Edward Walters, Asa Shirley, Fay Wilson, Ollie Butcher, Eli Adams and John Thomas; and (fourth row) Harry Von Eute Sr., John West, Robert Goodrich, James Nolan, Bill Patt, Herschell Spore Sr. and Tommy Jacques. Retirees who were not present but received pension checks were William E. Abel, Otis Brinkley, Harold Canine, Umberto Casagrande, Gaston Duval, Lucian Hammond, Thomas Haverty, Lawrence E. Johnson, Clyde Lindley, Ernest Mahanay, William B. Montgomery, Ernest Smith and Henry Zimmerman.

APPRENTICE AND MEMBER TRAINING

COMMITTED TO PREPARING THE SKILLED WORKFORCE

Since its founding in 1896, U.A. Local No. 157 has trained potential members through a system of apprenticeship, through which apprentices work side-by-side with experienced journeyman members on the job to learn the trade while also earning wages. Meanwhile, the local has long provided its journeyman plumbers, fitters and technicians with opportunities to upgrade their skills through training.

As early as 1900, the local's "juniors" or "helpers" would serve apprenticeships of at least four years. That year, an apprentice was paid 15 cents per hour while working with a veteran plumber or steamfitter out in the field.



Local 157 plumbing apprentice 17-year-old Louis Giffel (left) works with journeyman plumber Albert Barns on a project for the Fred Arlith Plumbing Shop in Terre Haute in 1908.

By 1909, recognizing the need to better-prepare its newest members, the Local 157 apprenticeship had been extended to six years. Apprentices were still paid for their work while training, but their wages were based on a sliding scale based on experience, from 30 percent of the journeyman wage as a "first-period" apprentice to 75 percent of the wage as a "tenth-period" apprentice (the final period before graduating to journeyman status).

The working contract between Local 157 and its employers of the Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association that went into effect on May 1, 1956, included a first-time Educational Trust Fund for the training of the local's apprentices and journeyman members. With the benefit, contractors initially contributed 1 percent of their gross earnings to finance the fund, which would be used by the local for training facilities, equipment and instructors.

By that time, the local's classroom training, which supplemented on-the-job work experience, was being held at Gerstmeyer Technical High School in Terre Haute, which provided a classroom two nights a week. The apprenticeship program, which by then consisted of five years of training, only had a single instructor at the time, as well.

To enhance its ability to teach apprentices and journeymen, during the late 1960s the local built a training center behind its union hall on North 13th Street to use for classes and laboratory training.

(During the U.A. International convention in 1976, the number of years of training an apprentice was required to complete before becoming eligible for journeyman status was reduced from five years to four years. However, at the next convention five years later in 1981, the number of mandatory apprentice training years was restored back to five.)

The Educational Trust Fund financed a Training Center with a classroom building, welding shop and storage facilities on the new Local 157 campus in Terre Haute in 1974. The shop and classrooms were well-equipped to service the continuous training programs conducted by the local and its contractors.

By 1980, the local's training program, which was being (and continues to be) operated under a labor-management Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee, was educating more than 150 apprentices each year, as well as dozens of journeymen seeking to upgrade their skills. By that time, competition to enter the program was rigorous, with only 30 finalists selected that year out of more than 350 applicants for the program.



Local 157 apprentices attending a training class at Gerstmeyer Technical High School in Terre Haute in 1948 include (left to right from top to bottom) Dan Pfleging, Bob Pfleging, Louis Meeks, Forrest Allen, Tom Patrick, Bob Giffel, Bill Richardson, Darrell Johnson, Bill Heckelsburg, Bob Jacobs, Fred Reese, Leroy Hicks, John Fuson, Bill Holthaus, Dan Bell and (names unknown).

INDUSTRY'S MOST HIGHLY



Local 157 members attending a journeyman welding class in the local's new Seelyville Training Center in 1975 are: (left to right) Dennis Cummins, Ron Burke, Ron Ehrlich, Ken Taylor, Howard Maurer, Darrell Shepard, Louis Wiggins, Business Manager Grover Osborn, Clyde Carter, Al Miller and Instructor Mike Porter.

Also that year, the local's Welding Program was being operated on a 40-hour-per-week basis to accommodate the more than 100 applicants on the waiting list for the program, which in some cases was training welders for particular jobs outside the geographical jurisdiction of Local 157. In fact, the program was actually geared for supplying welders to areas where large projects exist and where there is a shortage of welders, such as the Palo Verde Nuclear Power House project near Phoenix, Arizona, during that time.

As the local's training program has continued to advance with the demands of the plumbing and piping industry, special testing procedures were instituted in 2006 to improve the objectivity of the locals' apprenticeship selection process. A unique "Keys Test" created specifically to meet the needs of Local 157 was developed and administered to program applicants by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

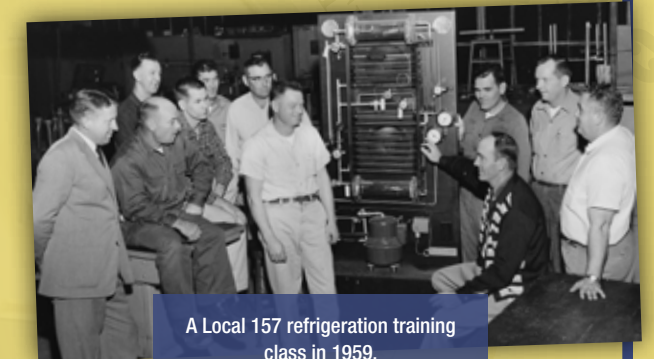
To better service its apprentices and journeymen, Local 157 established another training facility in Hutsonville, Illinois, in 2009. The local also operates a satellite training facility in Lafayette.

At its 125th anniversary in 2021, the Local 157 training program, administered by instructors who are experienced journeyman plumbers and pipefitters, has developed into a world-class educational curriculum. Among the qualifications now required for an apprentice to graduate the five-year program and move on to journeyman status, he or she must complete 8,500 hours of on-the-job-training as well as all related classroom and laboratory work. What's more, in addition to top-level welding skills, the Local 157 training program prepares its apprentices to understand what is required of them by the piping industry and provides them with the proper mental tools to implement what they have learned in the field.

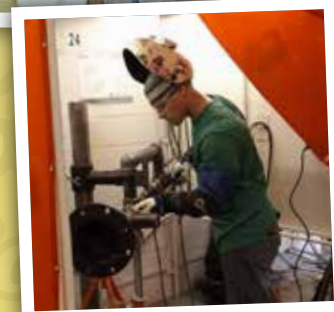
The local's affiliation with Ivy Tech Community College further allows the training program to utilize the school's instructors, while also allowing trainees to meet the requirements of an associate degree.



Local 157 instructor James Botner (far left) leads a journeyman upgrade welding class at Gerstmeyer Technical High School during the fall of 1959.



A Local 157 refrigeration training class in 1959.





Local Further Boosted by New Campus and Merger

Into the 1970s, the Local 157 charter permitted it to cover employees in several branches of the piping industry, including building trades, metal trades, residential housing and gas distribution. At that time, the local's territorial jurisdiction included 10 counties in Indiana and five counties in Illinois.

Additionally, almost immediately after the U.A. established the **Plumbers and Pipefitters National Pension Plan** in 1968 to better serve its members throughout North America, and especially those who traveled to the jurisdictions of other U.A. locals for employment, the locals of Indiana began looking into the possibility of joining the national program. Negotiations for a merger of the Pipe Trades Industry Pension Fund into the National Pension Fund were completed in 1970 and all assets of the state program were turned over

first year and then \$7.60 the second year ending April 30, 1972. Employer fringe-benefit hourly contributions were 20 cents the first year and 25 cents the second year for healthcare and 40 cents the first year and 45 cents the second year for pensions. Contractors also began paying 5 cents per hour worked during the second year into a new **Educational-Promotional Fund** for the local's training and marketing.

Meanwhile, in 1970 Local 157 purchased more than 300 acres of land just east of Terre Haute and south of Seelyville to establish a recreational area for its members and their families and a future union hall and training facility. Numerous members donated their time to help construct a new picnic shelter and training center on the property in 1971 – and the local's new union hall and main office would be completed in 1974, after which the local officially moved its offices from its building on 13th Street to the new complex.

With a membership that had grown to 1,122 plumbers, steamfitters and apprentices by January 1, 1971, and total assets of an estimated \$1 million, including the recreational area, real estate and investments, that year the local employed four full-time officers and two stenographers at its union hall. Additional employees were those working for the local's fringe-benefit funds, including the Health and Welfare Plan and the Educational-Promotional Fund; a full-time apprenticeship coordinator and three part-time instructors in the local's training program; and a janitor.

Then on April 27, 1972, the local's growth continued when employees of the **Terre Haute Water Company** voted, 27 to 1, in a National Labor Relations Board election to have Local 157 represent them as their bargaining agency. The utility's 30 employees were previously represented by the Allied Technical Workers Union, District 50, which was in the process of merging with the United Steel Workers of America, according to an article in the next day's *Tribune*.

to the national plan – after which members of Local 157 could work in the jurisdiction of any U.A. local in the Midwest and receive pension credits toward his or her retirement.

Also that year, Local 157 negotiated a new, two-year contract with the contractors association that began May 1, 1970, and raised the journeyman hourly pay rate to \$6.90 the



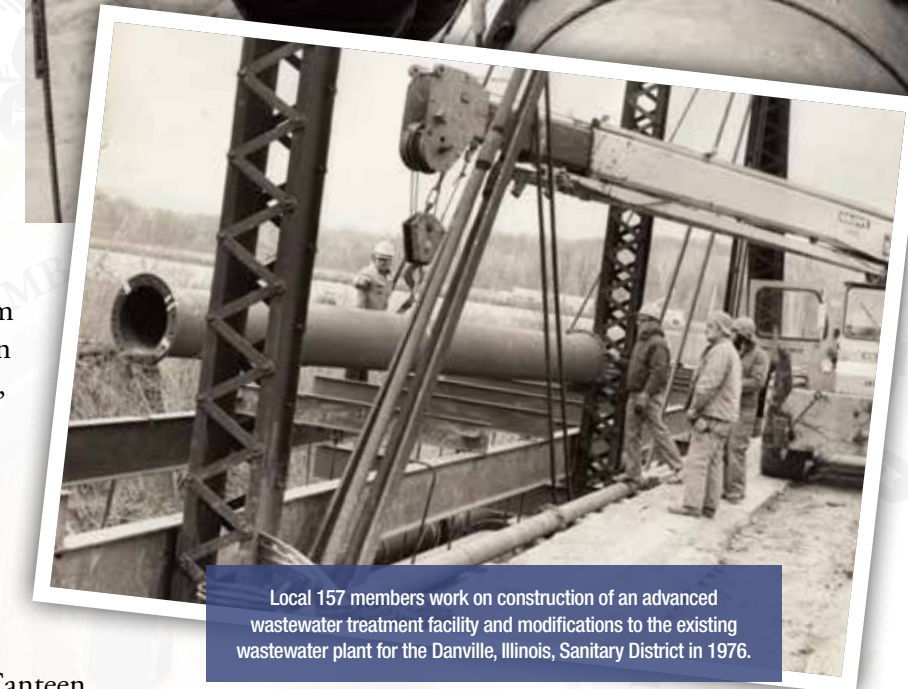
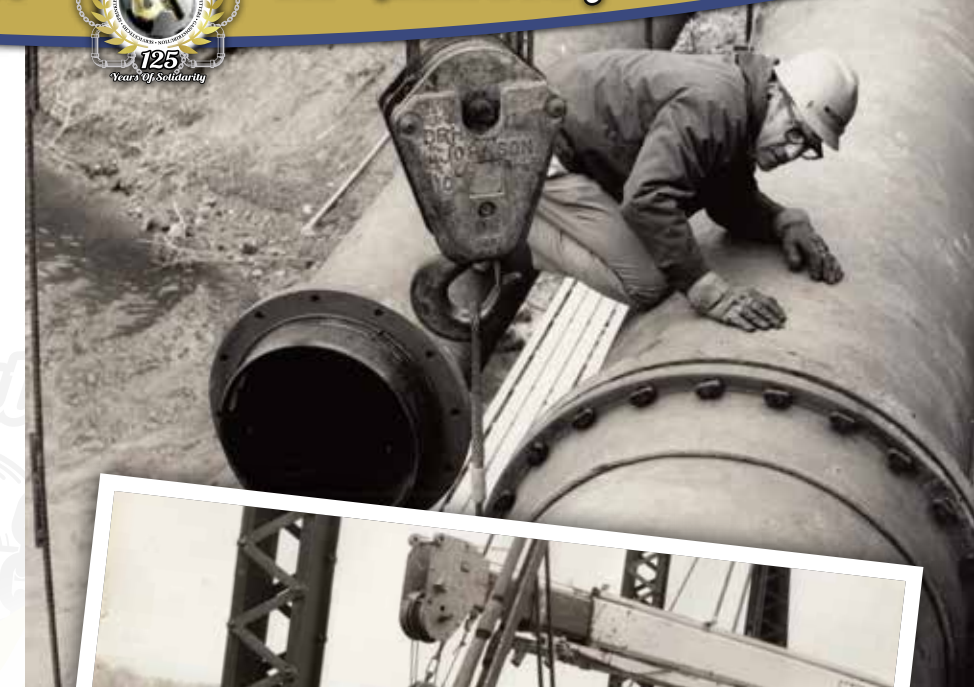
Local 157 member Leslie E. Dilg, who in 1943 was appointed a U.A. general organizer before he was selected as assistant general secretary/treasurer of the international union in 1966, a position in which he served until his retirement in 1969. A member since 1925, Brother Dilg was the son of member John Dilg Sr., who joined Local 157 on December 29, 1899.



Local 157 was also given job jurisdiction of the Petersburg Hoosier Energy Co-op Power Plant in April 1973. In June of that year, the Central Illinois Public Service power plant at Newton was awarded to U.A. **Local No. 553** of Wood River, Illinois, but after filing briefs and meeting with U.A. **General President Martin J. Ward**, Business Manager Osborn successfully gained back control of the facility for Local 157.

After having settled into its new main office and moving its operations to its new complex earlier in 1974, by year's end the local had a total membership of 1,254, of whom 904 were Building Trades journeymen (including the local's Gas Distribution, Residential and Heating/Refrigeration Service divisions), 118 were Building Trades apprentices and 232 were Metal Trades journeymen. The local's Metal Trades Division included workers from various signatory plumbing and piping supply houses, the Terre Haute Water Company, the Canteen Service Company, maintenance workers at the Newport Army Ammunition Plant and others covered by collective-bargaining agreements with the union.

The next significant step in the ongoing expansion of Local 157 came in 1975, when U.A. plumbers and steamfitters Local 240 was merged into the Terre Haute local, adding the City of Lafayette and Indiana's Tippecanoe, Benton, White, Fountain, Carroll and Clinton counties to the Local 157 jurisdictional area. Former Local 240 business manager **Brother Charles Runyon** was appointed a field representative for Local 157 and assigned to cover the area that had previously belonged to his former local and to work out of its former office building. The additional territory and membership that came with the amalgamation would play a key part



Local 157 members work on construction of an advanced wastewater treatment facility and modifications to the existing wastewater plant for the Danville, Illinois, Sanitary District in 1976.

in Local 157's ability to continue to grow and develop in the years to come.

Local 157 was officially recognized as the collective bargaining unit for employees of the **Terre Haute Wastewater Treatment Plant** and its approximately 45 employees on September 18, 1975. Mayor William J. Brighton announced that morning that the primary purpose of the unionization was "job security," the *Tribune* reported later that day.

By year's end, the recent additions of new territory and employers into the Local 157 jurisdiction, and the subsequent jobs they generated, bolstered the local's membership to more than 1,500 journeymen and apprentices.

Business Manager Osborn petitioned the



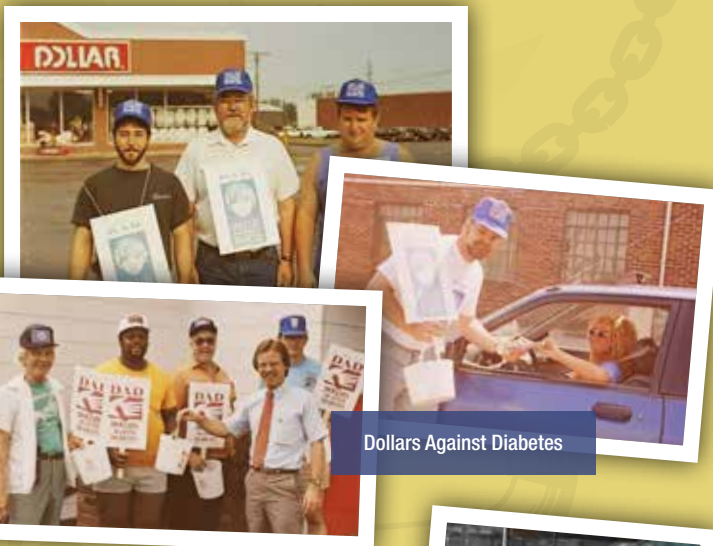
DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITIES IT SERVES

Throughout its 125-year history, Local 157 and its membership have been involved in countless charitable and civic efforts. Those benefactors have ranged from donating \$200 to the Girls Scouts building-fund campaign for the construction of living quarters at a campsite near Poland, Indiana, in Clay County in 1953 to remodeling a Humane Society shelter in 1992 to annually supporting the yearly March of Dimes Walk America walk-a-thon in Terre Haute. Other community-service work regularly supported by the local has also ranged from members donating their time on Saturdays before Father's Day to help collect money for diabetes research in the annual Dollars Against Diabetes (DAD's Day) fundraiser sponsored by the National Building and Construction Trades Council, to Service Division members teaming with local contractors and supply houses to participate in the annual HEATS-ON program, which provides free heating system inspections, adjustments and repairs for elderly, needy and handicapped residents of the Terre Haute area.

In 1993 alone, for example, Local 157 was represented with both workers and walkers who helped raise money to fight birth defects in that May's March of Dimes walk-a-thon. Throughout the year, in fact, members donated their time, energy and money to a range of activities, including Habitat for Humanity, which builds affordable housing for needy families; rebuilding parks and playgrounds; and coaching little-league teams. What's more, during November and December that year, Local 157 members donated over \$1,600 to help provide Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for needy people in their jurisdiction.

More recently, the local's members have been involved in a myriad of large-scale community-involvement activities, such as the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life in 2005. Also that year, Local 157 again played an important role in the success of the March of Dimes' Walk America walk-a-thon, while several members volunteered the Saturday before Father's Day to raise money at roadblocks in Lafayette, Crawfordsville and Monticello for DAD's Day.

Along with those and a host of other benevolent efforts that the local continues to support, in 2020 members volunteers their time and skills to help build picnic shelters at Abby & Libby Park in Delphi, Indiana – continuing a tradition of community service, civic pride and self-sacrifice that has made Local 157 one of the most widely recognized and highly respected labor organizations in the region.



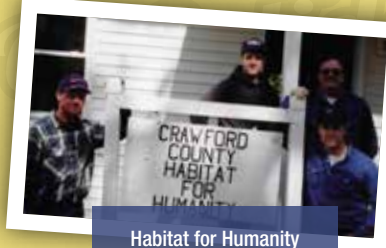
Dollars Against Diabetes



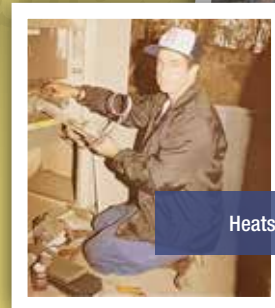
Christmas in April



March of Dimes



Habitat for Humanity



Heats On



U.A. General Office in 1977 for jurisdiction of the proposed **Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant** that was to be built by Public Service Indiana along the Ohio River in Saluda Township near the City of Hanover. The request was approved and the project was awarded to Local 157, after which **Brother John Dilg** was added to the local's staff as a field representative assigned to oversee the preliminary planning for the Marble Hill job, which would begin that year and continue until late 1983, as well as handle the local's Gas Distribution Division.

The year 1977 also saw Brother Taylor, the only full-time, paid financial secretary/treasurer in the history of Local 157, retire from the office he had continuously occupied for 25 years. The local's Executive Board appointed **Brother Jimmie L. Strange** to replace Brother Taylor and serve out the remainder of his term.

Following a hearing and presentation of briefs before a special officer appointed by the U.A., Local 157 was granted jurisdiction of all of Douglas County in Illinois in 1978, settling a long-standing controversy between Local 157 and U.A. **Local No. 149** of Champaign. Disputes over new projects in the county continued for years, but Local 157 successfully recovered or retained jurisdiction over jobs there in all instances.

A new agreement with the contractors association to close the decade and carry Local 157 into the 1980s was put into place on May 1, 1979, for a period of two years ending April 30, 1981. The contract increased the local's journeyman base wage to \$13.85 per hour and its total pay package including fringe benefits to \$15.60 per hour for the first year, and \$14.85 per hour and \$16.70 per



The Local 157 apprenticeship graduating class of 1979.

hour, respectively, for the second year. As part of the benefits contained in the agreement, both annual packages included contributions from contractors of 10 cents per hour into an **Educational Trust Fund** and 5 cents per hour into an **Industry Promotional Fund**.

Spurning National Trends Before Employment Drops

By the 1980s, Local 157 had a large number of members employed by plumbing and piping contractors engaged in many types of construction and contract-maintenance work. Yet more than 360 Metal Trades members were also employed by contractors engaged in a variety of non-traditional operations, such as those working for three plumbing suppliers, the City of Terre Haute's sewage plant, water companies and a gas company. However, while the local's employers varied in many respects from those of other U.A. locals, the main source of employment for Local 157 members remained its construction contractors.

Construction of the Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant continued to provide abundant manhours to scores of the local's members

and U.A. travelers from other locals into the new decade as it became the largest single construction project in the State of Indiana during the early 1980s. The project had become so large, in fact, that Local 157 added an additional field representative, **Brother Marshall Sydnor**, to deal specifically with the nearly 1,000 union welders and pipefitters working at the facility.

With that project and others employing U.A. members across the local's jurisdiction, by January 1, 1981, Local 157 membership had swelled to more than 1,900 craftspeople.

The local then struck a new, two-year working contract with its construction contractors that went into effect on May 1, 1981, that called for a total \$4-per-hour wage increase in four increments. Ratified by the membership on March 6, the agreement raised the journeyman hourly wage rate to \$16.20 on May 1, \$16.80 on November 1, \$18.20 on May 1, 1982, and \$18.60 on November 1, 1982. Other features included time-and-one-half pay for overtime for the first two hours after an eight-hour workday and double-time pay for work on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays; and an increase of 5 percent for foremen, who would therefore receive 10 percent pay over the journeyman scale.



Local 157 members (left to right, front) Ralph Lewis, Paul Martin, Charles Campbell and Floyd Lasley; and (back) Grover C. Osborn, Kenneth Nolan and William Kendall receive their 35-year U.A. service awards in 1981.

Also that year, Local 157 reached agreements with several of its other smaller employers, including a three-year contract for the 70 members working for the Uniroyal Corporation, maintenance contractor for the U.S. Army at the Newport Army Ammunition Plant, that gave them a total average wage increase of 9.5-1/4 percent for all trade classifications. The local and the Robinson Gas Company signed a new, two-year agreement retroactive to April 11 that provided 90-cent hourly increases in pay each year to ultimately bring the average wage of Local 157 members employed at the **Gas Utility Plant** in Terre Haute to \$11.03 per hour.

Despite a lackluster national economy that had curbed construction elsewhere, by mid-1981 nearly every Local 157 member was employed within its jurisdiction, where construction work was relatively strong and escalating. As a result, by June 1981 the local was working several hundred travelers while jobs covered by the local included construction of Unit 1 and Unit 2 generators at Hosier Energy's coal-fired **Merom Generating Station** power plant and a second unit for the Newton Power Station, each of which would begin operation the following year after union fitters installed many miles of various-sized pipe.

More employment was also being provided on jobs such as a Maintenance and Engineering Building expansion and construction of the C-13 Chemical Building at Eli Lilly in Clinton, Indiana, and a new production facility for the **Hercules** company's polypropylene-film manufacturing plant in Terre Haute. In Lafayette, construction on a new **Caterpillar** plant that began in October of 1980 involved more than 100 Local 157 members working for U.S. Engineering Company, Sauer and Freitag-Weinhardt to install air-handling units and underground and above-ground plumbing, heating, cooling and process piping – about

LOCAL 157 JURISDICTION TIMELINE

September 1, 1896

Local 157 was chartered with jurisdiction over the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry in Vigo, Clay, Parke, Owen, Vermillion, Greene and Sullivan counties of Indiana.

January 1951

Jurisdiction over the Central Illinois Public Service Company power station in Hutsonville, Illinois, was awarded to Local 157.

1952

On June 1, U.A. Local No. 156 of Crawfordsville, Indiana, was merged into Local 157, which took over jurisdiction of Montgomery County, Indiana.

In June, Local 157 was given jurisdiction of the new I.B.M. plant near Greencastle, Indiana, and a five-mile radius around that city and all of Putnam County west of State Route 43 and/or Route 231.

Later that year, the City of Greencastle and all of Putnam County, Indiana, west of U.S. Highway 231 and the Olin Mathieson Cellophane plant near Covington, Indiana, were added to the Local 157 territory.

1955

Jurisdiction over Warren County, Indiana; Crawford, Clark and Edgar counties in Illinois; Knox County, Indiana, north of Vincennes at U.S. Highway 50; and U.S. Industrial (U.S.I.) Chemicals plant in Tuscola, Illinois, were awarded to Local 157

March 1967

Jurisdiction over Richland County, Illinois, was awarded to Local 157.

1968

Local 157 received jurisdiction over all gas-distribution work throughout the State of Indiana, with the exception of a few counties in Chicago and Cincinnati.

May 1, 1975

U.A. Local No. 240 of Lafayette, Indiana, was merged into Local 157, which took over jurisdiction of Tippecanoe, Fountain, Clinton, Benton, White and Carroll counties.

1977

Jurisdiction over the Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant was awarded to Local 157.

1978

Jurisdiction over Douglas County, Illinois, was awarded to Local 157.

May 1, 1994

U.A. Local No. 293 of Danville, Illinois, was merged into Local 157, which took over jurisdiction of Vermillion County.

In 2021 as it celebrates the quasiquicentennial anniversary of its charter, Local 157 represents union plumbers, pipefitters, service technicians and apprentices in its **Building Trades, Metal Trades and Gas Distribution** divisions in these areas:

Indiana Counties of Benton, Carroll, Clay, Clinton, Fountain, Greene, Montgomery, Parke, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Vermillion, Vigo, Warren, White and parts of Knox and Putnam

Illinois Counties of Clark, Crawford, Douglas, Edgar, Richland, Vermilion

Indiana and Kentucky statewide gas distribution and off-site sewer and water mains



which officials for Caterpillar told the local's *Piping Industry News* publication that workers from the local were "doing a good job" and were "running a little ahead of schedule."

At **Purdue University** in West Lafayette, a consistent source of work for the local's members, four new buildings under construction were also employing members. Local 157 contractor E. E. Johnson Plumbing Company was installing the plumbing at the school's **Agricultural Research Building** while Grunau Company was handling the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC); Slutsky-Peltz was mechanical contractor for the **Athletic Administration Building** and the **Hicks Undergraduate Library**; and Freitag-Weinhardt was mechanical contractor for an addition to the school's **Co-Recreational Gym**.

The poor economy caught up with Local 157 in 1982 after many of the larger construction jobs within its jurisdiction were completed. However, while most construction-trades workers in the area experienced major unemployment, Local 157 members were able to find work at the Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant site.

The following year, Brother Osborn, the only business manager in the local's history to that time and the driving force behind Local 157's growth and development, retired on June 30, 1983, after 31 years in office. The



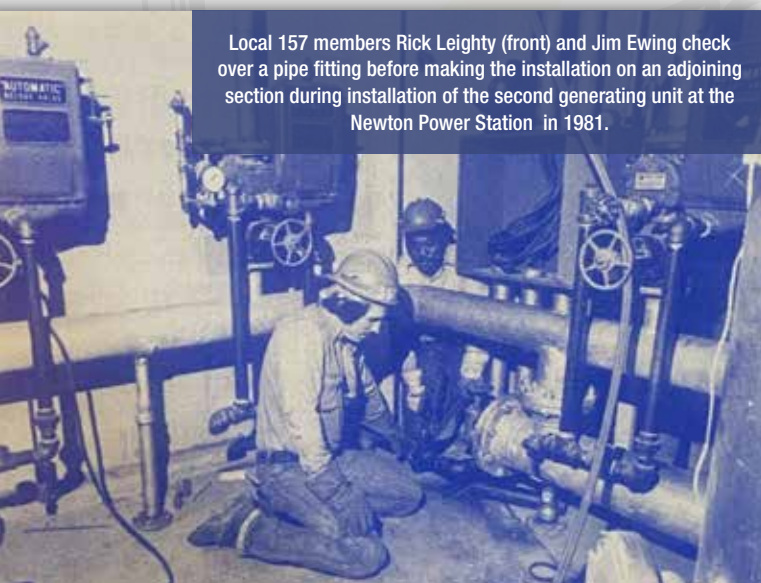
Local 157 members John Boyer (left) and Bill Noblitt fabricate a 3-inch section of pipe for installation at the Cabot Corporation's Tuscola, Illinois, plant in 1981.

local's Executive Board subsequently named **Brother William L. Fenton** to complete Brother Osborn's term until the end of the year, before which the membership that December elected Brother Fenton to continue as business manager, while also reelecting Brother Strange as financial secretary/treasurer.

But on December 31, 1983, the Public Service Company of Indiana stopped construction of its Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant and abandoned the half-finished facility, eliminating a large number of jobs for Local 157 members. Having already spent \$2.5 billion on the generating station, the company announced it had to shutter the project because of "an overwhelming increase in costs and a shortage of funds to finish construction," according to a report in the January 17, 1984, *New York Times*.

Unmatched Tough Times Countered by a Comeback

"It would sure be nice to be able to start one of these reports by telling everyone that all of our unemployment problems were behind us and that we had plenty of work for everyone. Unfortunately, this just isn't the way things are."



Local 157 members Rick Leighty (front) and Jim Ewing check over a pipe fitting before making the installation on an adjoining section during installation of the second generating unit at the Newton Power Station in 1981.

After Business Manager Fenton began his article in the March 1985 issue of the *Piping Industry News* with those somber words, he further noted that while a few smaller jobs were starting up in the Local 157 jurisdiction, none were large enough to provide any significant relief to the local's poor employment conditions.

That April 26, however, the local's construction members voted to accept the provisions of a new, two-year agreement that would take effect May 1 and called for 35-cent hourly wage increases for each year, which eventually raised the total journeyman pay package to \$22.03 per hour for the second year before the contract expired on April 30, 1987. The membership on April 12 had rejected a previous contract proposal from contractors that offered a 12-cent hourly increase and included changes in current working procedures.

However, as high unemployment persisted and opportunities to travel for work with other U.A. locals likewise diminished, the local passed a resolution during its June 1985 meeting "designed to help our local union to survive during this period of high unemployment," that month's Local 157 newsletter stated. The measure authorized an increase in working assessments in the event the local's total funds and securities in its General Fund should fall below \$200,000 and remain there for three consecutive months. "I hope we never have to implement this new provision," Business Manager Fenton declared afterwards, "but it is gratifying to know that our members will stand together and do what is necessary to preserve our local union."

Although 1986 started out as one of the worst economic years in the history of Local 157 – and the U.A. in general – by year's end conditions had improved dramatically. Whereas throughout January, February, March and April jobs in the local's area were hard to find and many members were relying heavily



Local 157 officers who were sworn in during the local's general meeting on January 3, 1981, are (left to right, front row) David Frost, Ferrel Youngblood, Michael W. Thomas, Jim Bays and William Hightshoe; (second row) Gary Smith, Bob McQueary, Grover C. Osborn, Robert L. King, Russell King, Charles A. Runyon and Arlo Richey; (third row) John Lattin, Richard Bennett, Marshall Sydnor, Albert E. Fisher and William L. Fenton; and (fourth row) Caleb Brinkley, Joseph F. Osborn and Jimmie L. Strange.

on the union's food banks, in the spring and summer work picked up. Furthermore, in November 1986, following several months of negotiating by union, community and state officials, **Fuji Heavy Industries** and **Isuzu Motors** announced a joint venture to build a \$500 million automobile assembly plant near Lafayette beginning the following year and that union labor would be used for its construction.

While consistent employment continued to elude Local 157 into 1987, its work situation that year was much improved over the two previous years in large part because of a pair of sizable jobs at the **Marathon**

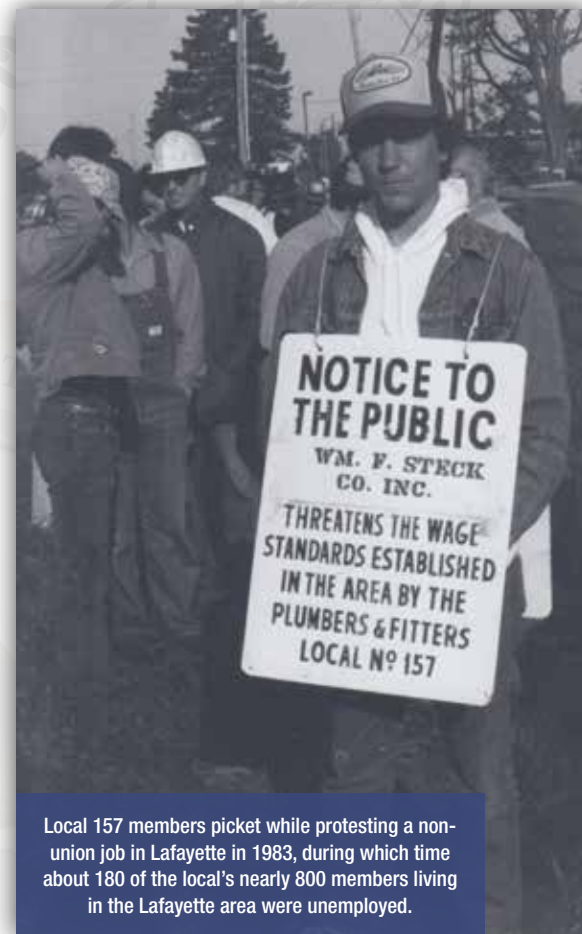


Oil Refinery in Robinson, Illinois; several school-construction projects; some industrial remodeling jobs; and work at Purdue and Indiana State universities. Additionally, construction had started on the new **Subaru-Isuzu Automotive Plant** (later renamed Subaru of Indiana Automotive) in Lafayette.

Because there was some improvement in its employment conditions that year, the local's financial situation also stabilized. As a result, the local returned its working assessments on members to 2 percent of wages after it had been increased to help preserve the local's funds during the recent period of low employment.

Additionally, after the local helped several labor-friendly candidates get elected to state and federal legislative offices the year before, in 1987 those politicians stood by the local and labor with their votes and support. As such, at the state level, attempts to eliminate prevailing wage protections in Indiana were defeated.

The local also negotiated a new, two-year collective-bargaining agreement for its Building Trades Division members in 1987. While many other locals in the building trades



Local 157 members picket while protesting a non-union job in Lafayette in 1983, during which time about 180 of the local's nearly 800 members living in the Lafayette area were unemployed.

were experiencing wage freezes and cuts during that time, the contract between Local 157 and the **Wabash Valley Mechanical Contractors Association** called for an increase of 27 cents per hour in 1987 and an additional 25 cents per hour beginning on May 1, 1988.

Again that year, the local helped political allies of labor, in particular with the election of Indiana's first-term Governor Evan Bayh, the state's first labor-friendly chief executive in 20 years. (He would be reelected in 1992 by the largest margin of any governor in modern state history.) Labor likewise made gains in both the U.S. House and Senate as well as other in state-legislature elections, giving organized labor the best position it had in the Indiana General Assembly in decades.

Out in the field in 1988, Local 157 members were involved in a turn-around at the Marathon



Local 157 members Max Harrison (left) and Doug Blue hook up lines for a cutting torch during construction of the Subaru-Isuzu Automotive Plant in Lafayette in 1987.



Refinery, construction at the Nucor Steel Mill near Crawfordsville and ongoing work on the automotive plant in Lafayette. With those projects and an increase in smaller and mid-sized jobs in its jurisdiction, the local was able to complete the year with nearly full employment of its membership.

The final year of a decade that began in relative turmoil was another year of increasingly stronger employment for the Local 157 membership. Additionally, members turned out in force to support economic growth and industrial development in the area, endorsing plans for a new BASF automobile-paint plant and incinerator in Vigo County (which the company eventually withdrew); boycotting non-union businesses such as Walmart supercenters and department stores; and backing political candidates who supported working people.

What's more, the membership ratified another new, two-year contract in April 1989 that was in effect from May 1, 1989, to April 30, 1991. The pact called for 65-cent-per-hour total increases each year, with 50 cents going onto paychecks each year and the remaining 15 cents going into the local's pension fund to increase retirement benefits.

At Centennial Benchmark, Local Maintains Momentum

The 1990s started off well and remained relatively positive for Local 157 and its members, despite setbacks such as the decision by BASF to abandon its proposed paint plant and incinerator. Economically, 1990 was a year of full employment for the local's members, for the most part, while politically, months of hard work and fundraising activities on behalf of our political friends paid off at

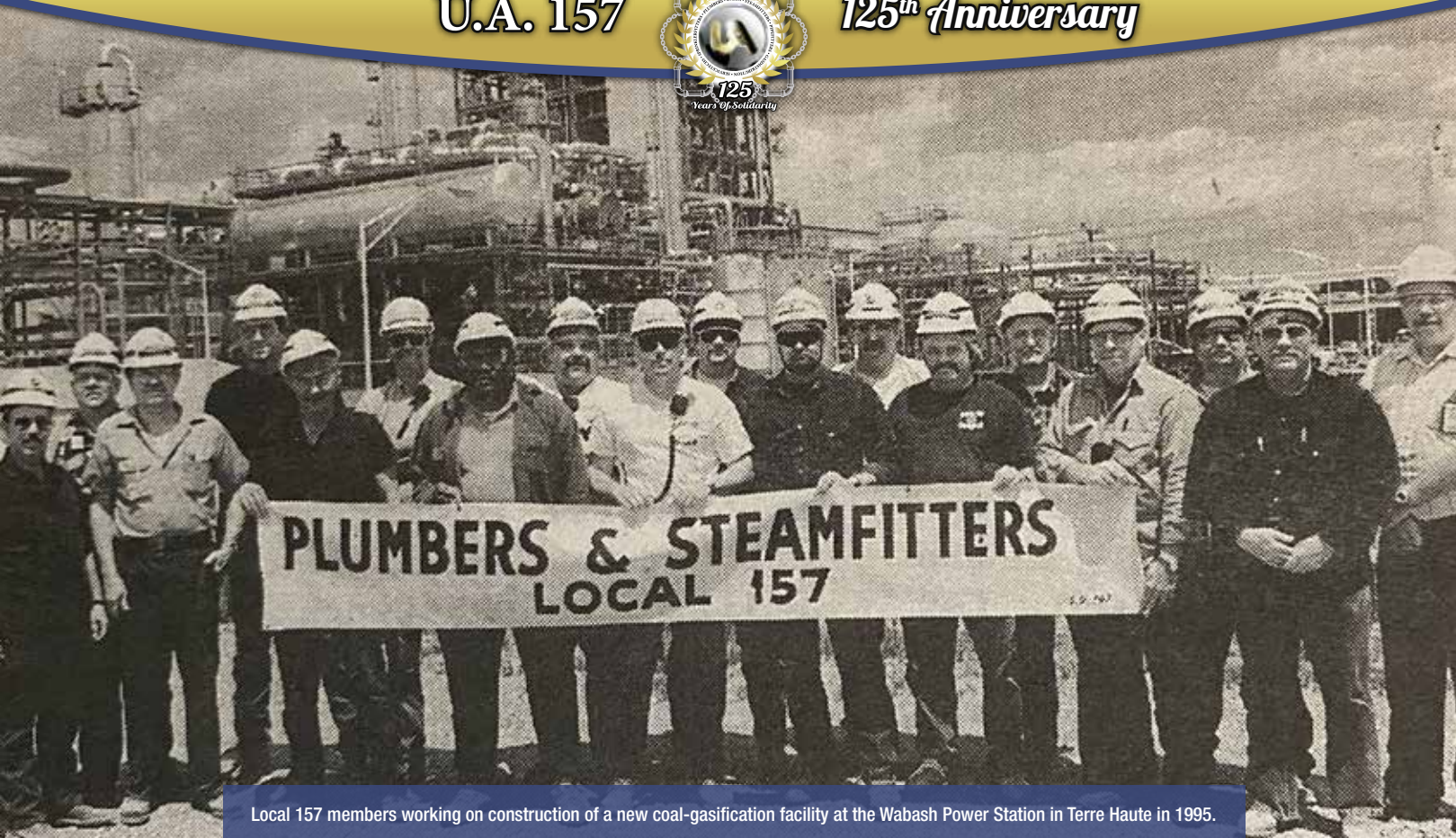
the ballot boxes in Illinois and Indiana, where for the first time in 14 years Democrats took control of the state's House of Representatives.

Work on the local's new **Office and Training Center** in Lafayette that had begun in 1991 was completed in early 1992, adding much-needed space for apprentice and journeyman training programs in that area of the local's jurisdiction. Replacing the outdated facility that had been the home of Local 240 before its merger into Local 157, the new satellite office also featured a meeting room for both union and community activities.

The local enjoyed good years in 1992 and 1993, during which although there was not a large number of jobs employing members, there were enough larger and long-term projects in the local's area to employ most of its members. Also in 1993, the local successfully negotiated a



Local 157 members Kenny Brunner (left) and Stacy Atkinson fabricate stainless steel pump headers during construction of a new, 220-ton oxygen generating plant at the Nucor Steel facility in Crawfordsville, Indiana.



Local 157 members working on construction of a new coal-gasification facility at the Wabash Power Station in Terre Haute in 1995.

new, two-year contract with the Wabash Valley Mechanical Contractors Association that went into effect May 1 and provided an additional 75 cents in 1993 and 85 cents in 1994 to the total journeyman wage-and-benefits pay package.

Although the work situation in the local's jurisdictional area started off slowly in 1994, by spring and afterwards the local experienced mostly full employment for the remainder of the year. Construction of a new **coal-gasification facility** at Public Service Indiana's Wabash River Generating Station provided a sizable number of manhours for many members, while several other larger jobs in Lafayette, Robinson and Terre Haute also contributed significant employment during that period.

Perhaps most significantly, the U.A. merged **Local No. 293** of Danville, Illinois, into Local 157, effective May 1, 1994, further increasing the latter's territorial jurisdiction to include Vermillion County and its membership. Local 293's business manager, **Brother Albert "Bud" Royce**, was added to the Local 157 staff as a

field representative and was assigned to cover the northern Illinois portion of its area.

Stable employment in its jurisdiction, another two-year building-trades contract and political highs and lows highlighted much of 1995 for the local, which joined other building trades locals and industrial, service and professional unions in March for a massive rally at the State Capitol in Indianapolis to protest efforts by the Republican-controlled House and Senate to repeal Indiana's Prevailing Wage Law. Although the law was repealed, because of the rally – the largest single union protest ever in the state – language creating an even stronger "Common Wage Law" was inserted into new legislation during conference committee hearings and signed by Governor Bayh.

With more than 2,000 members and jurisdiction over 24 counties in Indiana and Illinois, in 1996 as Local 157 celebrated its **100th anniversary** since being chartered by the U.A. By that time, the local was recognized by political, labor and community leaders as



an outstanding organization and was respected by contractors and users alike for the skills, dedication and productivity of its workforce.

Late that year, the local completed an expansion and overhaul of its **Danville satellite office and training center** that had begun in 1995. The project more than doubled the size of the building and provided members in that area with expanded meeting and training facilities.

A three-year contract with the Wabash Valley Mechanical Contractors Association that covered the remainder of the decade and continued until April 30, 2000, was put into effect on May 1, 1997. The agreement ultimately raised the local's journeyman basic wage to \$24.22 per hour and its total fringe-benefits contributions from employers to \$7.68 per hour during its final year, for a total pay package of \$31.90 per hour for a year beginning May 1, 1999.

During that time, Brother Fenton retired as business manager at the

end of his term in 1998 after serving in the position for 15 years. That December, the local's membership overwhelmingly elected **Brother Joseph E. Melin** as its new business manager and reelected incumbent **Financial Secretary/Treasurer Bill Hightshoe**.

The final year of the decade, the century and the millennium, 1999 was one of the most eventful periods in the history of Local 157. Perhaps most significant, the local secured a revised, first-ever five-year collective-bargaining contact package with its building-trades contractors that year that would carry it into 2004.

Following the voting for new officers the year before, a protest was filed with the National Labor Relations Board, which conducted a costly series of meetings and a second election for the office of business manager over a nearly five-month period. In the end, Brother Melin won the election again by an 18-to-1 margin.

Meanwhile, employment for Local 157 continued to improve, as it was able to place many of its members on several larger local jobs including construction of the **Heartland Steel** plant in the Vigo County Industrial Park, the natural gas-fired **Tilton Energy Center** power plant for Illinois Power (which would be sold to Dynegy two years later) and ENRON Corporation's **Wheatland (Indiana) Power Plant** that would be completed in 2000. Additional projects employing the local's craftspeople included expansion of the Cayuga Generating Station and several Purdue University, Indiana State University and primary- and secondary-level school jobs throughout west-central Indiana and east-central Illinois.



Local 157 members (left to right) Mark Swaner, Mike Bolin and Kenny Thompson work on installation of a cooling line during construction of a new, \$200-million power-peaking power plant near Cayuga, Indiana, in 1999.

Internal, External Issues Make for Challenging Era

Incumbent Local 157 business managers were defeated in elections for the first time ever in 2001 and again in 2004, respectively, with the ballot-box victories of **Brother Joseph F. Osborn** (son of the local's first business manager, Brother Grover Osborn) and then **Brother Mike Pleasant** for three-year terms. In fact, balloting for officers in 2004, during which nearly 750 votes were cast, resulted in a complete reshuffling of Local 157's top administration. In addition to business manager, the positions of business agent, financial secretary/treasurer, president, vice president and recording secretary all changed hands.

Meanwhile, among several significant accomplishments and new procedures the local instituted, in 2003 it began providing members with individual options for their Pipe Trades Defined Contribution Pension Plan from Putnam Investments. The move allowed plan participants to pick and choose the type of investments in which they wished to place their money.



Local 157 members Jeff Wilson (left) and Randy Austin install lines for interior compressors during a project to expand refrigeration and storage facilities at Hanson Cold Storage in Lafayette in 1999.

But Local 157 continued to struggle financially into the second half of the decade, which its new officers attempted to counter by focusing on the local's precarious financial situation. Subsequently, beginning in 2005 they made necessary cuts in spending and personnel to help rein in the local's expenses, including canceling the local's annual family picnic that summer, selling a portion of its property to pay off a lawsuit settlement and taking no new apprentices into its training program that year. Additionally, the local began publishing a detailed report on its finances every month in the *Piping Industry News* in order to keep the entire membership informed of its finances.

That February, the local also appointed a new **Contract Advisory Committee** for the first time in its history to provide members with an opportunity to express their ideas and give feedback on a new contract to the local's Negotiating Committee. In April, the committee secured a new, two-year building-trades contract that was approved by the membership during a special meeting on May 29, two days before the current agreement expired.

On the heels of a challenging 2005, Local 157 enjoyed a relative measure of success in 2006, during which its financial condition improved dramatically. As such, during its March quarterly general membership meeting, the local passed a resolution that changed members' working assessment rates paid to the union from a fluctuating scale – either 5 percent or 3 percent depending on the local's financial situation – to a fixed 4-percent rate.

At that same meeting, the local also instituted a new target fund to help its signatory contractors secure jobs when bidding against open-shop, non-union firms. Once approved and up and running the following year, the **Market Recovery Fund** would help reduce contractors' bids by subsidizing members' wages, while also containing other provisions to put unemployed members to work and keep contractors



Local 157 members Tom Maroney (left) and Chris Blume attach a chemical feed unit to a water line in the newly constructed Computer Science Building at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.

requesting funds anonymous through the Indiana Mechanical Contractors Association.

As the year progressed and its finances continued to stabilize, that summer the local reinstituted its family picnic after a one-year absence. To help reduce costs, instead of having its meals catered, the event featured food prepared by union members.

Although work in the local's jurisdiction slowed considerably in early 2007, maintenance shutdowns at the Merom Generating Station and the coal-fired **Vermilion Power Plant** in Oakwood, Illinois, helped put members back to work. Construction on three of a large

number of ethanol and bio-fuel projects both underway and projected in the local's area likewise was providing employment for the local's membership.

However, a new ethanol plant being erected in Linden, Indiana, was initially being built with non-union labor. In an effort to turn that job, the Indiana State Pipe Trades, of which Local 157 was a part, was systematically stripping key workers from the contractor and moving them into union construction jobs through various U.A. locals throughout the United States – and by mid-2007 the tactic started to produce results when a union contractor, W. Soule, took over a small portion of the project.

That June 29, the local also overwhelmingly ratified a new, three-year contract by a vote of 299 to 131 for wage and benefit increases that would take effect on July 1. The major changes involved in the new pact included total hourly wage increases in six-month increments of \$2.30 the first year, \$1.75 the second year and \$1.75 the third year, which ultimately raised the journeyman base hourly wage to \$33.31 and fringe-benefit hourly contributions to \$12.30 – bringing the total journeyman pay package for the final six months of the agreement beginning January 1, 2010, to \$45.70 per hour.

Maintenance and upgrade outages at plants throughout its jurisdiction, including the Marathon refinery, the Newton Power



Local 157 members working on a job at the Marathon Refinery in Robinson, Illinois, in 2007.



Local 157 apprentices receive rigging training during Joint Field Day with Operating Engineers Local No. 841 on May 11, 2007, at the Local 841 training complex in Shirkieville, Indiana. The program included both classroom instruction and actual on-site experience rigging pipe for movement and placement.

Station and Merom, again bolstered the local's improving employment situation in 2008. Elsewhere, more work was being provided by construction projects at **Union Hospital** in Terre Haute and Purdue, as well as several smaller jobs.

The beginning of construction that June on Duke Energy's **Edwardsport Power Station**, a 618-megawatt, integrated gasification combined cycle (I.G.C.C.) power plant in Vigo Township, Indiana, would prove to be a boon for Local 157. Moreover, when a poor national economy caused many construction projects to be scaled back or canceled and again stunted the local's employment in late 2008 and much of 2009, during which at one point the local was dealing with more than 40 percent unemployment among its members, the Edwardsport project provided work for most of the membership.

In the local's Lafayette area that covers the northern Indiana region of its jurisdiction, where work was also slow, members were still being employed on jobs that included projects at Purdue and construction of the new **St. Elizabeth Central Hospital**, which would be completed in December 2009.

As the difficult final year of the decade continued throughout the local's territory, Merom postponed its spring outage until October. Then on July 6, 2009, Business Manager Pleasant moved to a new position with the U.A. international office as assistant director of jurisdiction, and **Brother Donnie Ritter** took over as the local's top administrator.

With dreadful employment conditions persisting, at one point in November of that year, 469 of the local's members were unemployed while another 74 members were travelling to the jurisdictions of sister U.A. locals for work. What's more, by that time, working-hour contributions paid into the local's Health and Welfare Plan Fund over the year were more than 500,000 hours less than the previous year.

Recovery Out in The Field Helps to Rejuvenate Local

Local 157's work situation slowly started to rebound in early 2010 and continued to improve as the year progressed, with members being hired weekly to help build the Edwardsport Power Station. Union plumbers and fitters in the Lafayette area likewise saw increased demand for their services for jobs including the **Lafayette City Hall Annex**, various projects for most of the area school corporations and several smaller projects at Purdue, where the local had nearly 100 members working by July – more than were there at that time the previous year.

Employment at Marathon increased as well after its Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT)



Local 157 retiree Howard Kiser, along with his wife, Virginia, displays his 70-year U.A. service certificate and watch during a ceremony in 2013. Initiated into U.A. Local No. 65 on April 23, 1943, Brother Kiser transferred into Local 157 on July 18, 1946, and retired on March 1, 1982.

project to control emissions of air pollutants from its Robinson plant got underway in 2010. Signatory contractor Freitag-Weinhardt was awarded the first mechanical package on the job after Local 157 aggressively targeted it and maintained good working relationships with Marathon management. Reflecting on the victory, **Field Representative Darrek Davis** declared in the January 13, 2010, *Piping Industry News*:

"It is very good to see the membership's money successfully secure work away from non-union contractors."

That year, a new, two-year contract beginning on July 1, 2010, provided monthly increases every six months of 75 cents, \$1, 80 cents and 80 cents per hour. For the final six months of the agreement beginning July 1, 2011, the journeyman total wage and benefits package would reach \$48.27 per hour.

The local's employment conditions remained strong in 2011 and 2012, especially

compared to those of other U.A. locals around the rest of the country, as Marathon and Edwardsport continued to hire and projects at Purdue University continued to be a primary employer in the Lafayette area. What's more, the local successfully targeted a job at Merom for work on methane gas wells in the coal beds there and the construction of new dormitories at the **Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology** university in Terre Haute.

Work again slowed substantially in 2013 and remained stagnant through much of 2014, as few long-term employment opportunities existed outside of Lafayette and the Marathon Refinery, while travel opportunities for work with other locals had also dramatically decreased. What's more, in 2013 the Edwardsport Power Station was completed and began commercial operations that June, and the Marathon plant was made a National Maintenance Agreement



Local 157 participates in the 2019 Labor Day Parade in Terre Haute.



site for union building trades, which decreased wages to 95 percent of negotiated rates while securing the work for union tradespeople.

During that time, Business Manager Ritter retired at the end of 2013 and **Brother Greg Thoennes** was elected to replace him beginning in 2014.

Employment for the local steadily increased later that year and into 2015, with projects at Marathon, the Cayuga Generating Station and the **Subaru Industrial Automotive** plant in Lafayette and many smaller jobs keeping most of the local's members busy. With several powerhouse upgrade outages, more work at Marathon and several projects at Purdue, including the 525-room Honors College Dormitory, Local 157 saw an improvement in its total manhours worked in 2015 over 2014.

Work remained steady in 2016, during which the primary employers of the local's members included the **Renewable Energy Group Bio-Diesel Plant** in Danville. The local's craftspeople helped upgrade the production facility, which had been put into operation eight years earlier, with logistics enhancement and distillation capabilities.

Facing a Global Pandemic While Reaching 125 Years

Brother Mark W. Swaner, Local 157's business manager as it celebrates its 125th anniversary in September 2021, was sworn into office on January 7, 2017, after winning election for the position the previous month.



Local 157 retirees Jim Ketterer (left), 70 years, and Don Jacobs, 65 years, receive their U.A. service awards during a ceremony in 2019.

Although work was slow throughout 2017 in most of its jurisdiction, the local kept its collective head above water with help from sister U.A. locals that provided much-needed employment opportunities for members who were able to travel. However, jobs were abundant for the third quarter of the year in the local's northern area, with an upgrade outage at the Subaru Industrial Automotive that was a huge success thanks in part to

Local 157 members; schoolwork in full swing; and jobs at Purdue that included construction of the new **Animal Science Building** that would open that year and HVAC remodels of its **Matthews Hall**, **Purdue Memorial Union** and **Brown Laboratory of Chemistry**.

The local ratified a new, three-year contract with the Wabash Valley Mechanical Contractors Association on June 29 the following year, gaining an increase of \$4.30 per hour in the total wages and benefits and language to accommodate the monthly assessment for the local's new **Health Reimbursement Account** program, which accumulates monies that



Local 157 members (left to right), Shane Hoagland, Derek Oldham and Foreman Rob Robbins use the Trimble System to install underground plumbing on construction of new dorms at Purdue University in 2019.



Local 157 graduating apprentices in 2020 (left to right) Webb Crouch, Donald Julbert, P. A. Atterson, Zeberiah Bickett, Nick Edington, Monty Nester and Daniel Norris, along with Business Manager Mark Swaner, did not have a formal celebration ceremony because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they were honored and received their diplomas during the local's July meeting that year.

members can use for healthcare-bill deductibles, co-pays and self-pays. The incremental raises during the life of the contract would put the local's journeyman wage scale at \$38.68 per hour and its total pay package to \$58.18 per hour for the final six months beginning January 1, 2021.

As the northern part of the local's jurisdiction boomed in 2019 with many of the high-profile projects at Purdue in full construct mode, the area was actually in need of journeyman pipefitters, licensed plumbers and apprentices to cover the work. Among those jobs employing members at the university were its new \$65-million **Chaney-Hale Hall of Science**, a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) teaching lab; the new \$80-million **Agricultural & Biological Engineering Building**; and new dormitory buildings worth more than \$100 million.

Lackluster employment persisted elsewhere across the local's area into 2020, although jobs at Marathon in Robinson provided some needed manhours. Fortunately, ample work across the country in areas such as Pittsburgh and Lima, Ohio, continued to allow the local

to dispatch many of its craftspeople to work with other U.A. locals.

Like much of the country, Local 157 and its membership were adversely affected when the global, lethal **coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic** struck the United States beginning in February 2020. Statewide and national responses to the outbreak included prohibition and cancelation of large-scale gatherings, stay-at-home orders and school closures. The local worked to comply with CDC and state guidelines for its training and all local union business, including canceling meetings throughout the year, ending apprenticeships early and canceling the annual picnic. Reaching out to the membership as the epidemic persisted, Business Manager Swaner wrote in the July/August 2020 issue of the *Piping Industry News*:

"This pandemic has affected all of our everyday lives and the manner in which we do business. ... All of this is new and uncharted territory, and the U.A. and all local unions are still writing our new pandemic guidelines to best serve our membership."



The economic downturn and massive unemployment thrust upon the nation by the pandemic continued throughout the year and into 2021, but Local 157 managed to sustain itself. Some of the significant jobs that did move forward during that time and supplied the local with manhours included the new **Vigo County Jail** in Terre Haute, which began in December 2019 but was delayed by the pandemic, and the new, 42,000-square-foot **Terre Haute Convention Center** – although much of the jail project was shipped in modules and much of the Convention Center equipment was electrical instead of mechanical, both of which drastically reduced the need for manpower. Additionally, construction of the new, \$40-million **Veterans Administration Clinic** in Terre Haute, scheduled to open in the fall of 2021, was underway with Local 157 members on site.

Capital work for the City of Lafayette remained a consistent provider of employment during that time, while several other construction projects continuing across the Purdue campus kept dozens of the local's skilled members busy. Also in that area, construction of the \$17 million, minor-league baseball **Loeb Stadium** in Lafayette restarted with Local 157 members after a brief shutdown because of COVID-19 and was on schedule, and the local's institutional work remained robust with members working at Jefferson High, West Lafayette High, Wea Ridge Middle, Crawfordsville High, Covington, Frontier, Harrison and Monticello schools.

Conversely, notable projects that would have worked the local's members but instead were put on hold or canceled because of effects of the pandemic included the \$40-million Data Science Building at Purdue. However, into late 2020, the local continued to rely on its sister U.A. locals around the country for manhours.

With the pandemic lingering as Local 157 entered its 125th year since being chartered



Local 157 member Justin Ashby works on top of minor-league baseball Loeb Stadium in Lafayette checking refrigerant pressures for startup of walk-in coolers in 2021.

by the U.A. in 1896, in 2021 the job market remained unstable many of the projects on which the local's members would have been working were on hold because of the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and construction industry. There were several projects at Purdue University, however, that were still progressing with Local 157 craftspeople.

Low cost-of-living indicators and the absence of consistent construction work over the previous two years were underlying factors in negotiations for a new working contract between Local 157 and the Wabash Valley Mechanical Contractors Association being halted in July 2021 without an agreement. As contractors countered with offers for a raise in wages well below those being sought by the local, the two sides went to the Industrial Relations Council on August 9 to settle the contract – and avoid a strike or lockout.

In laying out the local's options and its decision to seek contract arbitration through the Industrial Relations Council, Business Manager Swaner explained in the July *Piping Industry News*, "Taking the offered minuscule raise was not an option, going out on strike



Local 157 Lafayette training center second-year apprentices (left to right, front) Logan Freed, Andrew Melin IV, Logan Kidwell, Ray Sorba, Ashley Thompson; and (back) Zach Fuller, Hunter Hicks, Garrick Robbins, Stephen Beam, George Novosel, Holden Billings and Michael Grider stand in front of the copper-piping wall project they sketched, built and pressure-tested in 2021.

right now knowing only jobs under our current collective-bargaining agreement are affected with looming non-union standing at the gates makes a strike very risky."

During the August 9 meeting in Denver between Business Manager Swaner and **Business Agent Wilbur E. "Webb" Crouch III**, the contractors and the council, the two sides settled a new contract with a total wage-and-benefits pay package increase of \$4 per hour over a three-year period, with retroactive pay back to August 2. The raises in hourly wages were to be distributed by \$1 in July 2021; 30 cents in January 2022; \$1 in July 2022; 35 cents in January 2023; \$1 in July 2023; and 35 cents in January 2024. The initial increase brought the local's journeyman scale as of August 2, 2021, to \$39.43 per hour with a total package of \$59.18 per hour, while journeyman wages and benefits will eventually be raised to a total of \$62.18 per hour for the final months of the pact beginning January 2024.

A new contract in hand, its training programs among the best trade-education systems in the country and construction work spiking as the effects of the pandemic eased, Local 157 has

positioned itself to enter its next 125 years well-prepared to serve the contractors, customers and communities throughout a jurisdiction that encompasses 16 counties in west-central Indiana, six counties in east-central Illinois and all gas-distribution and off-site sewer and water-main work throughout most of Indiana and all of Kentucky.

As such, Local 157 will continue to follow the U.A.'s mission to help members build a better life for themselves and their families, and follow U.A. core values of providing the highest standards in training, looking out for members' safety and health, fighting for fair wages and benefits, and building industry relations.



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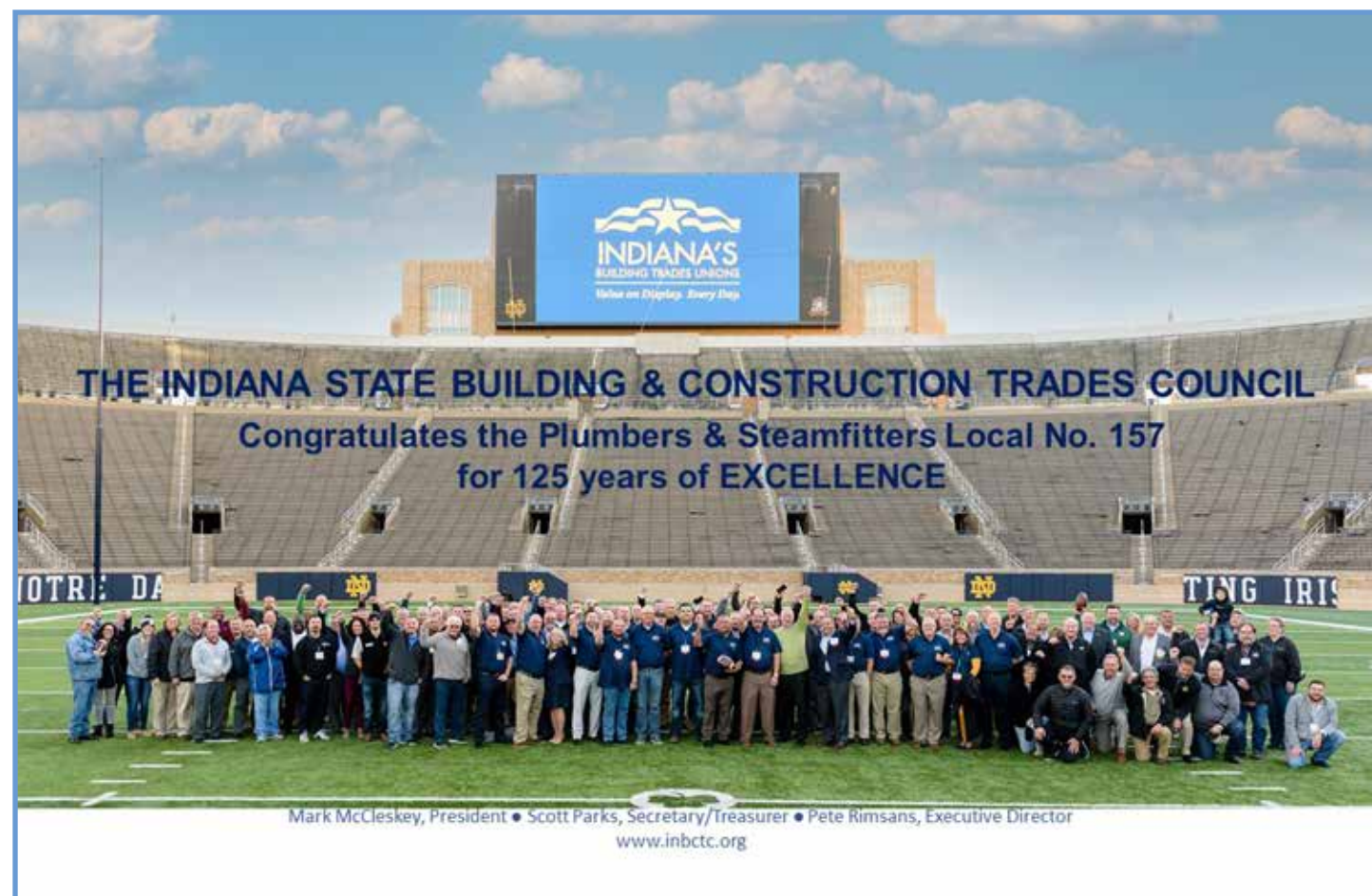
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