

# Up to the challenge

**T**he logic of an electric cooperative is apparent in a community like Wells, Nevada. The member-owned non-profit cooperative known as Wells REC was established in 1958 to obtain central station power for this ruggedly beautiful but remote part of Nevada. (While Wells shares a Nevada birthright with Reno and Carson to the west, Wells sits much closer to Salt Lake City, Utah to the east and Twin Falls, Idaho to the north.)

Rural areas like Wells have traditionally faced a tougher challenge obtaining electricity than their urban counterparts. When they've been overlooked or underserved by large utilities based in urban areas, many American communities have turned to the cooperative approach.

Wells REC began service to 583 customers in 1960.

With the acquisition of Wendover Power Co., the purchase of Carlin's municipal power plant, and the addition of Pine Valley residents, Wells REC customer/member base has grown to around 3,800, according to the cooperative's website.

Serving these customers is the job of members of IBEW Local 1245, who successfully organized Wells REC in the

late 1970s. Local 1245 members provide the line, meter and engineering skills needed to keep the power on.

But union members' contribution to the community doesn't stop there, according to Local 1245 Business Rep. Sal Salazar.

"Everyone at Wells REC at one time or another is contributing to the town by their involvement in soccer or wrestling or other community sports," said Salazar. And when they saw the need, Local 1245 members got together and organized a Little League baseball league.

Commitment to community athletics extends all the way to the top at Wells REC. General Manager Clay Fitch has been varsity basketball coach for over a decade, according to Salazar.

If Wells REC is a part of the wider community's success, Local 1245 is a part of the success of Wells REC. Recently the union worked with the company to establish contractually-based job descriptions, something that had been missing from the contract previously. Issues of common interest are addressed in the labor-management committee.

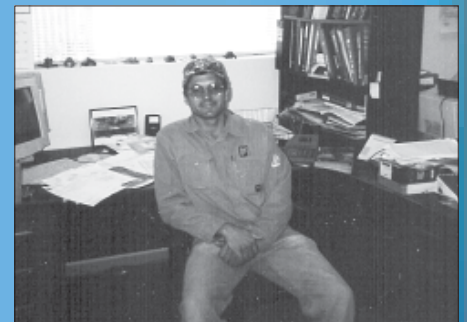
Wells REC provides electric service to over 10,000 square miles in northeastern Nevada and part of Tooele County in Utah. The IBEW workforce, barely two dozen people, have been demonstrating for years they're up to the challenge.



Union members on the Labor Management Committee are, from left: Steve Enos, Engineering Tech, Ryan Brodsho, App. Lineman, Torrey Leach, Lineman.



Adela Morrison, Engineering Tech (left) and Allen Hess, General Foreman (right)



Shawn Kelley, Meter Tech Electric and Negotiating Committee member.

# Wells REC



Chad Swett, Foreman Substation/Metering



Line Department, from left: Ryan Brodsho, Ron Agnew, Pete Battenfield, Torrey Leach, and Negotiating Committee member Rick Carner.

Photos: Santiago Salazar