

# Clif Davis, new IBEW Local 48 business manager, outlines his goals and priorities

Portland-headquartered International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48 swore in a new business manager July 25.

Clif Davis, 50, took the oath of office after finishing first in a field of seven candidates when mail ballots were counted June 25. Incumbent business manager Barry Mitchell came in second. Business manager is the 3,800-member local's top elected position and has a term of three years.

Davis said his top priorities will be to establish a harmonious relationship with employers, set a tone for friendlier union meetings, and increase union market share in residential construction. "We have a lot in common with our employers — we both want to grow," Davis said. "We need to put aside our differences and find a way to do that."



CLIF DAVIS

A Portland native and 1974 graduate of Benson High School, Davis got his start in the labor movement as a Fred Meyer cashier and member of Grocery Clerks Local 1092. After six years as a cashier, and six as a Fred Meyer manager, he worked three years at Frito-Lay as a member of the Teamsters Union.

Davis became an IBEW apprentice in 1988 and later attended Portland Community College, earning an associates degree in applied science in 1993 — the same day he became a journeyman electrician. He worked as a general foreman, but also started teaching as soon as he graduated, at PCC and at the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center (NIETC).

Davis was highly regarded as an instructor, said NIETC Director Ken Fry, earning praise for listening skills, managerial ability and intelligence. Davis had the chance to go full-time as an instructor, but wanted to help build the local instead.

In 1996, he came on as a union organizer for Local 48 — visiting job sites and recruiting licensed electricians who were working for the non-

union competition. Five years later, he switched to the job of business representative, negotiating for some of Local 48's non-construction contracts, including local radio and television stations and schools.

As business manager, Davis said he will retain all office support staff, plus attorney Norm Malbin, dispatcher Frank Crane, and business representatives Lee Duncan, Steve Vidito and Bob Carroll. Former Local 48 rep Joe Esmonde was rehired as political liaison and political action committee (PAC) chair, and will serve as the local's representative to the Oregon Energy Trust. New hires include Tim Foster as assistant business manager; Nancy Cary and Dave Johnston as business representatives; Larry Warren as lead organizer; and Terry "Tater" Riegle as organizer.

Local 48's jurisdiction covers Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, Tillamook, Clatsop, Columbia counties, the northern part of Yamhill county, and Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties in Washington. It includes inside wiremen, plus sound and communication specialists, marine electricians and electricians working for government agencies.

# Industrial Carpenters Union president and Iraq war veteran skeptical of U.S. presence there

LaGRANDE, Ore. (PAI) — A Carpenters local president from rural Oregon, who served 13 months as a platoon leader of U.S. troops in Iraq, has returned skeptical of why the U.S. is there.

In a long interview with the Union Register newspaper published by the Carpenters Industrial Council, Local 2851 President Todd Gorham said he came to that conclusion after seeing bitter relations between groups of Iraqis, specifically between Kurds and Shiites.

Gorham joined the Oregon National Guard in 1985. His unit trained for six months in Texas and Louisiana in 2004 before being sent to Iraq that October. He called the training "maybe 20 percent useful, because the insurgents kept adapting and changing their tactics..."

His 13-month tour of duty included only one break: A two-week leave to come home for his son's high school graduation. Gorham's son enlisted in the guard, too, as a combat medic.

In Iraq, Gorham, by then a sergeant first class, commanded a platoon of 44 soldiers just south of Kirkuk. They patrolled an area where four main roads met, clearing it of insurgents' home-made bombs, called improvised explo-

sive devices (IEDs). "We were very fortunate. We didn't lose any one, but we had two close calls," he said.

One of the incidents that left Gorham wondering about the mission in Iraq involved his platoon's two interpreters, both Kurds from northern Iraq.

"I recall one time I entered the chow hall with one of our interpreters and all the other Iraqi nationals — mostly Shiites — moved to the opposite side.

"They hated Kurds and refused to eat near us," he told the Union Register.

"I asked the interpreter about this extreme level of hatred and he really didn't understand. He accepted it as part of everyday life. That left me with little hope that this country could come together under any democratic system and govern themselves. I feel like we don't need to be there when it's a fight over which group controls the country," among the Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis, Gorham added.

After returning to LaGrande, Gorham, a former shop steward and a 21-year veteran of the Boise Cascade particleboard mill, was elected Local 2851 vice president. He moved up to the top job when his predecessor left the mill.

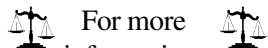
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