

A 30-YEAR TRADITION

Union electricians light up the Grotto festival of lights

Nearly 40 volunteers from IBEW Local 48 spent Saturday, Oct. 28, helping set up the temporary power for The Grotto's Christmas Festival of Lights. Located in Northeast Portland, The Grotto is a Catholic shrine and botanical garden meant to provide spiritual inspiration.

Local 48 and their employers at the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) have been involved with the distribution of power for the Festival of Lights since its inception in 1988. That first year the festival ran for just 10 nights with approximately

60,000 lights. It later ramped up to more than 500,000 lights, and last year, the festival switched to LEDs, boosting the light count to more than 1 million.

The festival now runs from the day after Thanksgiving through Dec. 30.

The Grotto says its Festival of Lights is the largest Christmas choral festival in the world. It features nearly 160 indoor holiday concerts performed by school, church and civic choirs. The festival also has a petting zoo for children, and holiday foods and

beverages.

More than 55,000 people visit the festival each year. The festival runs nightly from 5 to 9:30 p.m. through Dec. 30 (closed Christmas Day). General admission is \$11 for adults, \$10 for seniors 65 and over, and military personnel, \$6 for kids ages 3 to 12, and free for children 2 and under. Visitors are encouraged to bring a donation of canned or dry food benefitting Snow-Cap, the East county's affiliate of the Oregon Food Bank. Parking is free.



Members of IBEW Local 48 spent Saturday, Oct. 28, setting up power for The Grotto's Christmas Festival of Lights. Among them were David Mullett and Kevin Miller (below), and Dan Rhein and Sara Wynn (left). This is the 30th year that union members and their families have helped out.



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