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**UNION ORGANIZING**

**Business owners call the union: We want in**

Hamer Electric determined there were undeniable advantages to signing up with IBEW Local 48

It's not every day an employer calls a union to talk about signing up. But that's what happened at Hamer Electric in Longview, Washington, and both the company owners and the union officers of IBEW Local 48 are celebrating a combination they believe will make both sides stronger.

Brothers Kyle and Cory Cole have been co-owners since 2017, when they bought the business their grandfather founded in 1971 from their father and uncles.

Kyle Cole, company president, told the Labor Press becoming a union-signatory contractor makes good business sense. Access to the union hiring hall means Hamer can scale up and take on larger projects. And being union gives Hamer opportunities to bid on big upcoming projects where developers have signed project labor agreements, such as NW Innovation Works' proposed \$2 billion methanol plant in Kalama. "We also



**SEALING THE DEAL:** Hamer Electric co-owner Kyle Cole (right) brought his employees into the union and signed on with IBEW Local 48 Business Manager Garth Bachman (left) after talking it over with Bachman and IBEW reps Randy Davis, Mike Bridges, Scott Zadow, and Tim Gauthier of the union electrical employer group NECA.

wanted to offer our guys the best there was in benefits," Cole said. "And we felt like the union's training center was state of the art."

Hamer specializes in electrical work for heavy industry like pulp and paper mills, water treatment plants, and manufacturing facilities, but has also done commercial and health care industry work.

"They're in a strategic location that will really help increase union market share in industrial work in the Longview-Kalama area," said Local 48 Business Manager Garth Bachman. "We're excited to have them on board and help them grow."


Mike Bridges, Local 48's representative in Longview, said Hamer already had a reputation as a good employer, with com-

pensation close to the union scale.

Twenty Hamer employees — over three-fourths of the existing workforce — made the transition and are now Local 48 members.

The owners signed on Oct. 18, employees signed up Oct. 25, and terms and conditions took effect Nov. 1.


Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family



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