

State Certification Required for all VDV Technicians by 2009

INSIDE:

Special Report From
COCKSHAW'S

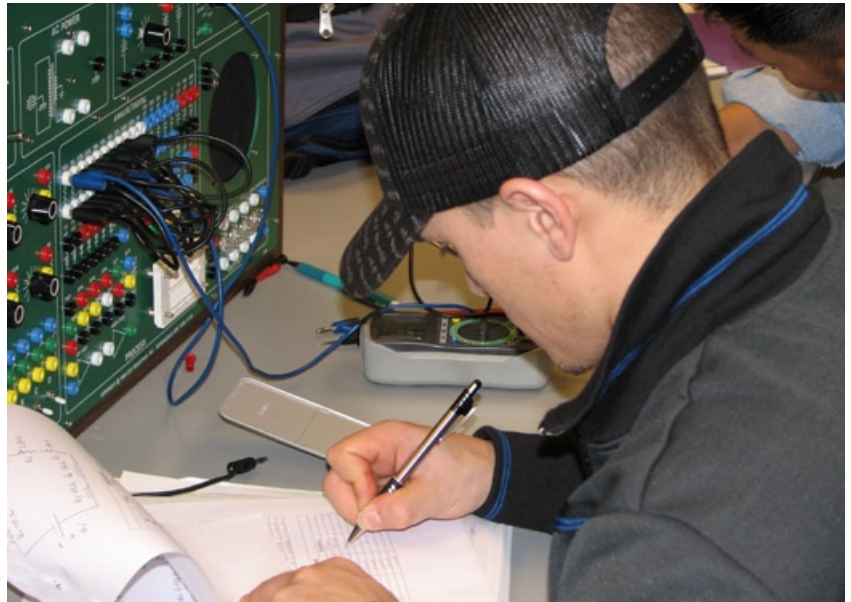
VDV Golf Tournament

Access Your Retirement
Information

Voice/Data/Video technicians working for C-10 Contractors will need to be certified by the State of California by January 1, 2009. To become certified, all installers, technicians, and senior technicians must take and pass the VDV test. To qualify for the test, electricians must be enrolled in a state approved apprenticeship program, or have met on-the-job requirements.

Scott Stephan, Assistant Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union 302, sat on the committee that developed the test. The committee worked with Comira Subcontractors, who are subject matter experts. "We put together questions based on our own experience in the field," Stephan said.

The test is offered at 24 test sites throughout the state. There are 50 multiple choice questions on the technician exam, with a two hour time limit to complete the test. A short practice



There will be 50 multiple choice questions on the installers, technicians, and senior technicians exam, with a two hour time limit to complete the test.

lesson is given prior to the test.

The test is administered on a computer, with questions randomly chosen out of hundreds. A minimum score of 70 percent correct is required to pass the exam. Technicians will receive their score results immediately upon completion of the exam.

The certification test covers the following topics: preparation; installation; termination; testing; security and access control systems; telecommunications; sound systems; audio/visual systems, and safety.

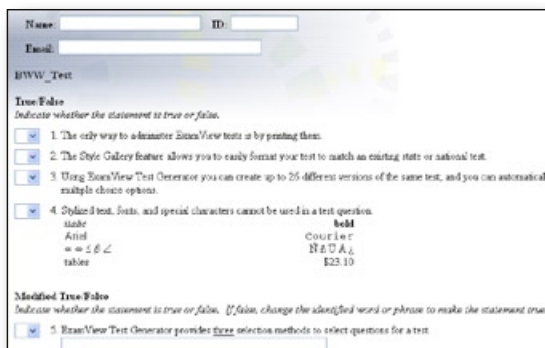
Technicians who pass the test will be issued a state certification card, meant to be carried on all job sites. Certification is valid for three years. If VDV technicians don't pass the first time, they can take the certification again 60 days from the date of the last exam. The fee is \$100 per exam.

The state exam appointments can be made by calling Thomson Prometric at (800) 805-9123. It is advisable to register well before the deadline, using the Application for Electrician examination and Certification form.

For more information on the test and its requirements, as well as sample test questions, please go to: norcalvdv.org and click on "VDV Certification Test."



A publication of the National Electrical Contractors Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers of Northern California.



How a Model NECA-IBEW Partnership Turned Market Share Around

Editor's note, final article in the series:

A little over a year ago, Publisher

Peter A. Cockshaw, Editor of the influential COCKSHAW'S Construction Labor News + Opinion, ran a series of articles outlining issues and challenges that the IBEW faces today. The articles created a stir in the labor movement and were so popular that the issues are now out-of-print. This final article outlines how several IBEW locals moved from a dismal 13% market share to a majority share within a few years. They may be the most important labor reports you ever read.

Why is labor continuing to lose market share—despite the existence of countless labor-management groups dedicated to market recovery? What can be done to regain market share?

Peter Cockshaw says the model market recovery program is one in western New York State, coordinated by the NY State Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and IBEW Locals 41 (Buffalo) and 237 (Niagara Falls).

In the early 1980s, these players were not cooperating and “non-union contractors were grabbing a sizeable portion of the jobs,” according to NECA Chapter manager David Roll.

“Union-contractor relations were so bad that the

13% Market Share

Among other findings, the study revealed that the union electricals' piece of the market pie had shrunk to an anemic 13%.

“Faced with the hard numbers,” says NECA's Roll, “we made up our minds that we had to turn it around or we would soon be out of business.”

And turn it around they did. From 1986 through 2004, union electricals have regained—and held onto—a majority market share that topped out at 60% in 2004.

So how did the NECA and IBEW affiliates in Western New York make the turnaround?

A first step in the initial NECA-IBEW market recovery effort was an “inspection” of the many large job sites where work had gone to non-union labor.

For that exercise, NECA and IBEW hired four big buses to take loads of local union members and many contractors to see the projects firsthand on which non-signatories were working.

“It was a real eye-opener for the union members and some of our contractors,” Roll recounts.

“Sobered by the stark market data and jobsite tour, most union members became convinced that crucial changes were necessary.”

Partnering Sessions

The realization led to a series of meetings to

president was instrumental in helping push the partnering concept,” Roll related. “At the time, he was the International Vice President for our region.

“Previously, all our LMCC meetings were internally driven and internally facilitated. But the partnering session used an outside facilitator



Peter Cockshaw, National Labor Analyst and Publisher, COCKSHAW'S Construction Labor News + Opinion

who helped keep the dialogue open, positive, and directed.”

Although many of the goals set out by NECA and the two IBEW locals were similar, the sessions were held separately because the jurisdictions are different with different emphases and targets.

Key Steps to Recovery

But both groups jointly agreed on the crucial recovery steps toward marketing themselves to the public, potential customers, and to non-union electricians and contractors.

The keys to success were:

- Sales calls to industry decision makers
- A marketing campaign
- Promoting the IBEW-NECA partnership to business organizations, schools, government agencies, and the public.

Roll says the key to winning work is the “sales calls” he and his two business manager partners from IBEW Local 237 and Local 41 personally make to industry decision makers.

“Every month we call on general contractors and various businesses to ask ‘how can we get on your bid lists and what do we have to do to get your business?’ Nine out of ten times that approach gets us on the bid list, and six out of ten times a signatory electrical gets the bid.”

Regardless of the union vs. non-union market measurement you choose, we are on the short end of the stick.”

**— Edward D. Hill, International President
IBEW, Washington, D.C.**

two sides had a hard time being in the same room together,” he added. Roll and the business managers from the two IBEW locals decided it was high time to do something, so they agreed to commission an independent study to assess the situation.

find ways to recover the market.

A critical outgrowth of those discussions was the development of partnering sessions, now aggressively promoted by NECA national and the international union.

“Ed Hill who is currently IBEW's general

Additional evidence that sales calls get results is NECA data showing that 72% of union electrical work is done with open shop generals who command an estimated 75% of the construction market.

Sales Calls Work

"We do everything we can to be business friendly," Roll emphasizes. "This includes offering assurances that workers who are poor performers will be removed from the project.

"When businesses see contractor representatives and top union officials working hand-in-hand, it really makes a very positive impression."

The group also uses a marketing campaign to promote the industry to a wide variety of area decision-makers.

"We don't have a marketing 'war chest' to spend frivolously on anything that comes down the road," said Roll. "But once agreement is reached on a strategy to capture another market sector, the money comes out of our general funds—with labor and management splitting the costs."

Roll and his two union partners also go to every area construction user meeting and try to belong to every business organization in Western New York.

The employer-union team also promotes their industry to schools, government agencies, and the



public—while actively seeking invitations to address employer associations and engineering groups.

"We technically are a labor-management group," Roll stresses, "but, in reality, our relationship is a business partnership."

To contact Peter Cockshaw:

COCKSHAW's, PO Box 427
Newtown Square, PA 19073
610-436-7553, cockshaws@comcast.net

How to Download and Use the VDV Logo

The VDV brand is now available for use on your marketing and communications materials. Visit www.norcalvdv.org and click on "The VDV Brand" to download the logo. Your use of the VDV brand will help it grow in recognition and identify you as a qualified member of the Sound and Communications industry.

Sixth Annual VDV Golf Tournament



The Annual VDV Golf Tournament was held on July 26 at Cinnabar Hills Golf Club in San Jose.



Your Trust Fund Important Phone Numbers

Questions about eligibility for coverage, premiums, reserve accounts, and info booklets, call:

United Administrative Services
408-288-4400
Toll-Free 800-748-6417

**Trust Self-Funded Medical Plan
Trust Dental Plan**
Questions about claim payment, claim forms and benefit info:
408-288-4481
Toll-Free 800-541-8059

Blue Cross PPO
www.bluecrossca.com
To locate a participating preferred provider physician, clinic, or hospital:
408-288-4452 or 800-541-8059
Refer to Group # 170016M001

Interplan/DentInex Dental PPO
www.interplancorp.com
To locate a participating preferred provider dentist:
Toll-Free 800-444-4036

Kaiser Permanente
www.kaiserpermanente.org
Questions about benefit info and ID Cards:
Toll-Free 800-464-4000
Refer to Group # 919

Health Net www.health.net
Questions about benefit info and ID Cards:
Toll-Free 800-522-0088
Refer to Group # 57845A

PacificCare
www.pacificare.com
Questions about benefit info and ID Cards:
Toll-Free 800-624-8822
Refer to Group # 402457

PacificCare Behavioral Health
www.unitedbehavioralhealth.com
Questions about mental health benefits or the member assistance program: 800-888-2998
Group # 10000824-0001, 0002

Vision Service Plan
www.vsp.com
Questions about vision benefits and vision claims or to request a Vision Plan Provider Directory:
Toll-Free 800-877-7195

To order additional copies
of The Data contact
ben@ahcommunications.com

Do you want access to your pension account value? Do you want to know how your retirement plan money is invested? Do you want to learn about investment options under your plan? Your retirement information is available to you 24 hours a day.

To contact your Retirement Service Center via Internet:

The retirement service center website offers updates on your pension. You can view your daily account values, personalized rates of return, investment performance information, and rebalance your investment mix online.

- Go to www.principal.com
- Click on the Login button
- Choose Personal Login from the list of options
- Enter your ID and PIN number

To contact your Retirement Service Center via telephone:

You can obtain the same information by telephone. The toll-free, interactive voice response system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Call 1-800-547-7754
- Select the desired option
- Follow the prompts. Have your Social Security Number and PIN number ready
- If you need assistance, please enter "0" to speak to a retirement specialist

To contact a retirement specialist at the center:

If you have questions or need additional information about your investment options, you can speak with a retirement specialist at the center. A retirement specialist can provide information (not advice) about general retirement planning and investment education.

- Call 1-800-547-7754
- Press "0" to speak to a retirement specialist. Have your Social Security Number ready
- The Client Contact Center is open Mon.-Fri., 7 am – 9 pm (CST), Sat. 8 am – 2 pm (CST)

Pension Account Member Services:

- 24/7 account access via internet and/or telephone
- View or hear your daily account values
- Obtain investment performance information
- Learn about investment options under the plan
- View or hear the latest investment news
- Transfer funds between investments
- Change where future contributions are invested
- Reinvest maturing funds
- Establish/change your PIN
- Rebalance your investment mix
- Calculate retirement needs

norcalvdv.org



SOUND AND
COMMUNICATIONS
of Northern California