

IEC Emerging Leaders Program Takes Electrical Training on the Road

BY IEC STAFF

Some might say there are two basic types of people – those who let things happen and those who make things happen. When attendees see the 2022 Emerging Leaders industry impact project unveiled at SPARK in Louisville, they'll know immediately what category Rebecca Barnes, Tyler Hadden, Karsen Kredit, Elizabeth McGoldrick, John O'Mara, and James Sharkey fall into. These six talented individuals form the IEC Emerging Leaders Program 2022 cohort.



What is the Program?

The IEC Emerging Leaders Program is a six-month leadership development experience for professionals in the electrical and systems contracting industry. You might say it's where IEC makes things happen as they seek to develop the next generation of leaders who will see to it that IEC remains the premier workforce development organization for merit shop electrical contractors and combats the workforce shortages experienced by our electrical contractor members these past years.

Individuals selected for the Emerging Leaders Program participate in skills development workshops, networking opportunities, leadership exercises, and project development experiences.





Matt Parkin, Emerging Leaders Committee co-chair, Access Electrical, LLC, Beaverton, OR, says this 2022 cohort is amazing. The committee works hard to get the right fit of people, and they keep it small so each member is active and can really get to know their fellow members. They want only the best and applicants must be recommended by another contractor or chapter leader.

“Not only must the applicant want to be a part of the Emerging Leaders Program, but they have to have buy-in from their company, their owner, their team,” Matt says. “It’s a time commitment so we want everyone on the same page. We tell them upfront what we’re expecting – in-person and Zoom meetings, additional time to work on the project leading up to SPARK, and so on. Can you handle that, and do you have the support of your team back home? It’s very important from the get-go to make sure everybody knows what they are getting into.”

Matt shares co-chair duties with Justin Martin, Bret’s Electric, LLC, Frederick, CO, who feels it’s absolutely imperative for IEC to be active in developing the next generation of leaders who are going to step up within their companies and within IEC.



“We take them through modules in our education sessions, show differences between leadership and management for example, and how they can grab the reins and have their people follow their vision. We want people who are willing to step out of their comfort zones, people who are willing to take a risk, and people who are willing to put in the extra effort for a bigger reason.”

Justin says it’s not only the “book stuff” like how to do A to get to B and then to C.

“It’s about creating a network of people and knowing that you have this cohort of six people that you’re going to trust for the rest of your career,” Justin says. “Having time together in this national level program is absolutely imperative for team cohesion that leads into our industry impact project.”

Industry Impact Project

Classwork is put into action through the industry impact project. And, this group is going big with their project. In fact, their project is a 3,500 pound, 20-foot long, 8-foot tall, 9-foot wide workforce development trailer!

The 2022 IEC Emerging Leaders Cohort



Rebecca Barnes
IEC of the Bluegrass, Inc.



Tyler Hadden
Weifield Group Contracting



Karsen Kredit
Kredit Electric



Elizabeth McGoldrick
E.C.S.I.



John O'Mara
Revolution Electrical Contractors



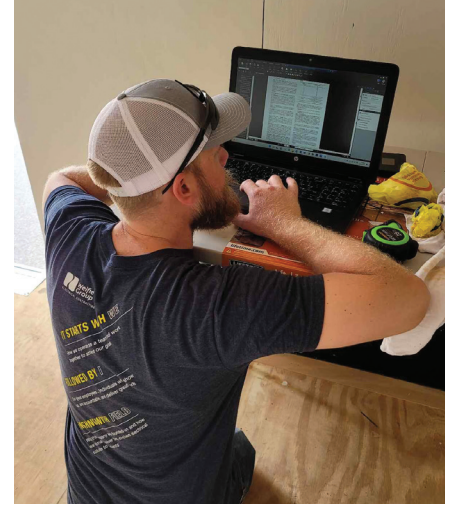
James Sharkey
Current Connections Inc.

“According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we’re looking to fill a 9% gap in labor from now until 2030,” says Elizabeth McGoldrick, Electrical Consulting Services, Inc., West Palm Beach, FL, 2022 Emerging Leaders cohort member. “This gap could put the electrical industry in serious trouble.”

The workforce development trailer the cohort is building as their industry impact project is a herculean effort to get the word out about IEC and the benefits of a career in the electrical industry. The trailer is a mobile marketing unit, complete with hands-on and virtual reality activities to help potential electricians understand this valuable career option.

“The trailer will be a showstopper, flashy, attention grabbing, and ultimately pique the interest of all who see it,” says IEC of the Bluegrass Executive Director Rebecca Barnes, who is the industry impact project lead. “At the end of the day, our goal is to recruit and retain the next generation of electricians throughout the country.”

The cohort is targeting a younger generation seeking to plan their futures



with interactive boards and a virtual reality display that replicates typical early electrical work.

“The VR display allows someone to pop on a pair of goggles and experience what it’s like to wire up a panel or wire a switch to turn on a light,” Elizabeth says. “One of the boards explains different types of conduit, while another has connectors and couplings. Each board allows trailer visitors to put their hands on it and give it a try. They get to see and feel what they’re going to be doing in this trade.”

And, of course, information is plentiful about how to enter the trade through the IEC Apprenticeship Program and the robust chapter network that allows candidates to ‘earn while you learn’ a trade en route to a satisfying career.

Nicknamed the IEC Volt Wagon, this road ready trailer goes home with the grand prize winner of a sweepstakes raffle, to be announced during the SPARK Amped Up Luncheon on Friday, October 7. Tickets are \$100 each with all proceeds contributed to the IEC Foundation, and you need not be present to win. To purchase raffle tickets, login to IECI.org with your IEC member credentials. Once logged in, go to Member Management in the top navigation menu and select ‘2022 Emerging Leaders: Volt Wagon Raffle’ in the My Events table. You can purchase tickets using credit card or ACH transfer.

“For those not fortunate to win the IEC Volt Wagon, do not despair,” chimes Rebecca. “We’re providing blueprints, resource lists, and lessons learned so that more chapters can build their own mobile training lab.”

“This project addresses the workforce shortage and it’s all about workforce development,” Matt notes. “To get apprentices, we have to get people interested in our field. Any career right now has a workforce shortage, and we want to set the electrical industry apart at trade shows and high school events to show how diverse our industry is and all the different job possibilities. You can go low voltage, high voltage, you can go into solar, fire, drawing, estimating. There are so many career options, and the Volt Wagon puts the story out there.”

Other Program Benefits

Elizabeth and Rebecca had nothing but praise for the training they’ve received during this six-month Emerging Leaders Program on broad-ranging topics such as public speaking, human capital management, time management, inspiration, IEC resources, leadership development, diversity and inclusion, communications, and marketing and public relations. Rebecca’s favorite was on leadership style, while Elizabeth most enjoyed the fierce conversation topic.

Both were pleased at the priority cohort members placed on working their schedules to find time for weekly Zoom calls, multiple in-person meetings, and seemingly unlimited texts to ready the industry impact project to showcase in Louisville.

“I think the biggest struggle when you’re doing a group project is that we are all in different parts of the country in different time zones,” Rebecca adds. “We’re all working full time, and we all have other responsibilities, but everyone found the time to not only meet but to accomplish their action items.”

The Committee Behind the Program

Matt and Justin were asked to form the committee about five years ago, when then IEC President Gary Golka gave them free reign to develop a way to find, help, and grow the next generation of leaders for IEC and for the industry. In 2021, they offered the first IEC Emerging Leaders cohort.

“Our key committee members have been with us since the very beginning, and I’m so thankful for that,” says Matt. “There are always struggles, there are always hurdles to jump, but that’s life. If it’s easy, what’s the fun of it? I’m proud of the whole committee, all our leaders present and past and that IEC has allowed Justin and I to do what we see needs to be done. That showed us they had faith in us and gave us the opportunity to put our passion out there to grow the industry.”

Is the Emerging Leaders Program Calling Your Name?

“The future leaders of tomorrow are buried in our companies, and we need to get them involved and help them step out of their comfort zones,” says Justin.

He encourages IEC leaders-to-be to check out the details by scanning the QR code below. Applications for the 2023 Emerging Leaders Program are available beginning October 1, 2022. ⚡

