

Local 33 celebrated its **100th Anniversary** in 1991 with a gala banquet and dinner dance that was attended by 1,000 people, including Des Moines Mayor and Local 33 member John "Pat" Dorrian and U.S. Congressman Neal Smith.



The Local 33 float takes part in a parade in 1994.

Organizing Membership Education Training) program beginning in 1994.

By the end of the decade, Local 33 would have three full-time organizers funded entirely by the local. What's more, each organizer and the local's business representatives were COMET trainers who could provide continual education on organizing to their membership.

During what became a very active period of time for the local, the 1990s also saw it become the first construction-craft local in Des Moines with **paid holidays** for its members. Soon after, the local realized another first in the entire state when it established a **collectively bargained drug-testing program** for members with its contractors.

However, the devastating **Great Flood of 1993**, one of the most costly in U.S. history during which the Des Moines and the Raccoon rivers overran their levees, hit the City of Des Moines, including Local 33, particularly hard beginning July 9. Brother Dorrian, by that time the local's business manager,



A tug-of-war contest during the Local 33 family picnic in 1994.



Santa Claus listens to children during the Local 33 Christmas party in 1994.



Local 33 members march in a parade in 1996.

United Association Local 405 of Mason City, Iowa, was consolidated with Local 33 on October 1, 1997.

reflected in the July 12 *Register* on the extensive flood damage to the local:

"We're wiped out. All of our records and files are lost. We set things up on desks, but it came up higher than that. There was no chance of getting things out, it came so fast. ... When you have 100 years of records in the daily business portion lost, it's kind of devastating. It gives you a sick feeling in the pit of the stomach. ... But we have to keep going forward and can't look back."

While getting cleaned up and back on track, Local 33's members continued to work on projects that included the new, \$16 million Iowa National Guard headquarters building at Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa. The 27-month job was completed in October 1994.

Soon after, the local won a relatively small but hugely important victory in January 1995 when the U.S. Department of Labor ruled that Proctor Mechanical Company of Des Moines owed more than \$13,000 in back wages to Local 33 employees who had worked on the National Guard headquarters. In reaching its decision, the Labor Department found that Proctor had not paid the proper prevailing wages on the federally funded project.

By the end of the decade, the century and the millennium, Local 33 had nearly 1,100 members in 57 counties in central Iowa and other parts of the state. However, for much of the last years of the 1990s, the local only controlled just over 25-percent of the piping construction market throughout its jurisdiction.

United Association Local 18 of Sioux City, Iowa, was merged into Local 33 on May 1, 1998.

POWERING INTO ANOTHER NEW ERA

While most all of the Building Trades unions in Des Moines were strapped by poor employment levels to begin the new "Y2K" millennium, including Local 33 throughout much of its jurisdiction, on January 3, 2002, the unions secured a labor-friendly Project Labor Agreement for construction of the new, \$208 million **Iowa Events Center** in the city. The contract included standard pay rates for union and non-union workers, as well as a promise by the unions not to strike for the duration of the 2-1/2-year construction schedule.

But while labor leaders had hoped the project would begin by early spring that year, it was delayed by challenges to the P.L.A. by the Master Builders of Iowa. However, on November 14, 2002, the Iowa Supreme Court upheld the implementation of the agreement – which would then become the first public P.L.A. ever utilized in the state.

When work began soon after, a substantial number of Local 33 members would work for Waldinger Corporation, which was awarded the \$23 million mechanical contract, on what was the largest publicly funded project in Iowa history. When completed, the Events Center consisted of the remodeled **Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center** (formerly Veterans Memorial Auditorium), the existing Polk County Convention Complex, the new **Hy-Vee Hall** and the new **Wells Fargo Arena**.

Two major energy-producing projects, which would help power the Iowa Events Center, were also built at that time under P.L.A.s with the help of Local 33 skilled tradespeople. The \$400 million, 565-megawatt **Emory Generating Station** in Mason City, completed two weeks ahead of schedule in May 2004, was the first plant built by Alliant Energy under its Power



Local 33 retirees gathered on December 4, 2002: (seated, left to right) Warren Yakish, John Knauer, Merritt Lutter, Jim Eaton and Don Boller; and (standing) Business Representative Jeff Turner, Elmore Titus, Walt Mettler, John Merkel, Jerry Holland, Charles Knauer, Dan Horrigan, Clifford Ellington, Richard Anderson, John Thompson and Business Manager Tom Gillespie.

Iowa plan – of which Local 33 members were an essential part to help ensure a safe, secure and efficient source of power in America’s heartland. Almost simultaneously, the \$357 million **Greater Des Moines Energy Center** was developed by MidAmerican Energy Company with its U.A. team working for Kiewit Industrial.

With the boost provided by the P.L.A. projects, Local 33 had 900 working members and 53 contractors controlling 47 percent of the construction market by the end of 2002, as well as over 200 retirees. What’s more, there were 30 fewer non-union contractors in its

jurisdiction than there had been just six years earlier, at which time the local was only doing about 28 percent of the plumbing and piping construction in its area.

As 2003 broke, unemployment nationwide was high and over 17 percent of all U.A. members were out of work; however, Local 33’s condition had markedly improved from just a year earlier, when poor employment blotted most sectors of its jurisdiction and over 100 members were on its unemployed bench. In sharp contrast, by year’s end, work was booming in Central Iowa and the local was hosting over 300 working U.A. travelers, thanks in large part to the construction of the Events Center and the two power plants.

The local’s good fortune gave Local 33 **Business Manager Tom Gillespie**, who helped lead the charge for the Events Center P.L.A., occasion to reflect on the significance of the project in the September 2004 *Journal*:

“Despite the fact that Iowa is a right-to-work state and a non-prevailing wage state, Local 33 and all the building

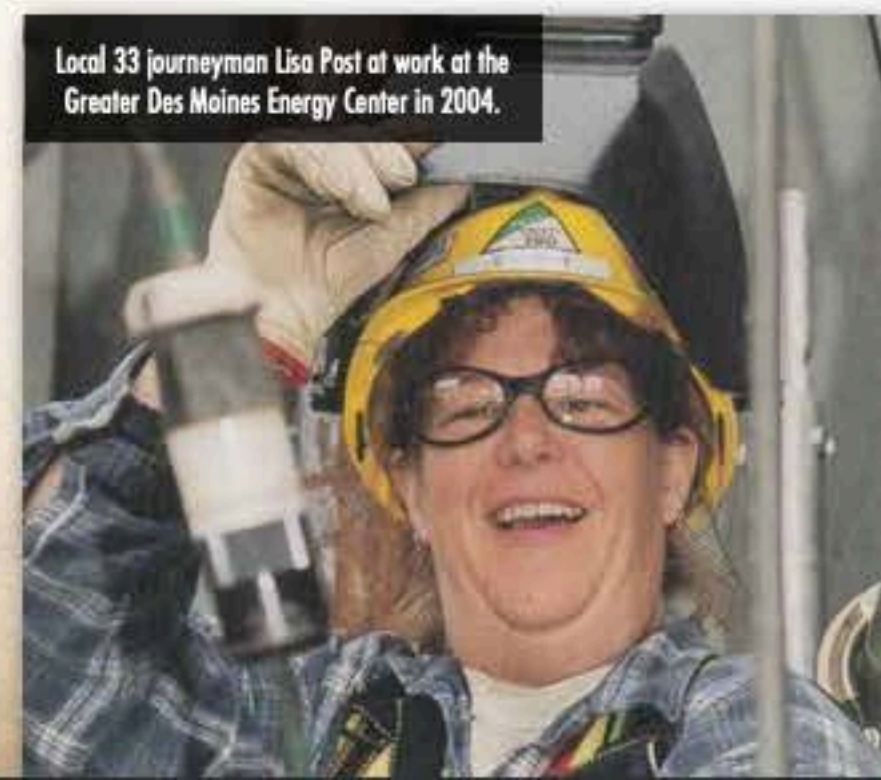
trades were determined to protect taxpayer investment in the project and their own jobs by making certain the Project Labor Agreement covering the center was not destroyed by anti-labor forces.”

“We’re very proud that we succeeded in keeping this Project Labor Agreement in place. It’s in the best interest of taxpayers because they now have a guarantee of quality construction, and it’s in the best interest of Local 33 members who are the most qualified to do the work.”

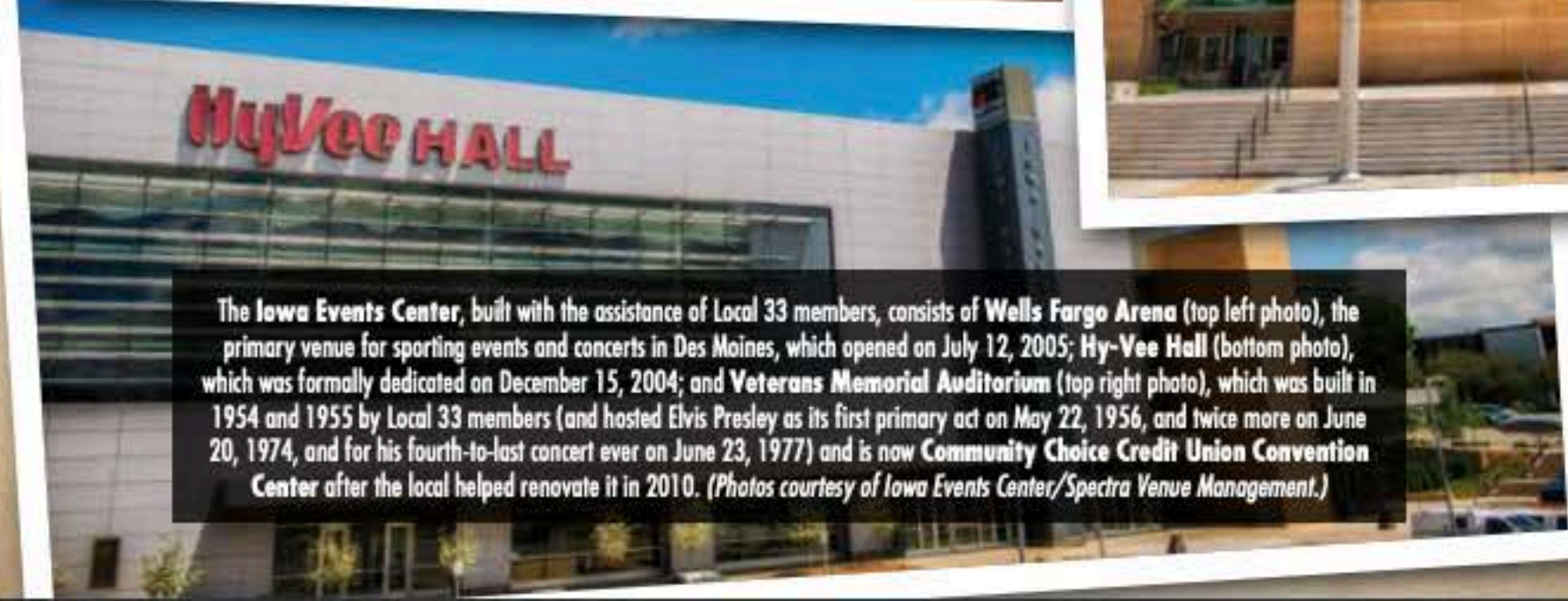
While work was underway on the center and the power facilities in Des Moines, plans were being laid for construction of the 92,000-square-foot

Bridge View Center expo hall and conference center in Ottumwa under the terms of a P.L.A. That project would be completed in 2007, and with the local and national economies sluggish in the second half of the 1990s and Alliant Energy delaying plans to construct a new powerhouse in Marshalltown, Local 33 again experienced a period of unemployment with about 100 of its 1,000 members out of work at times during late 2008 and early 2009.

The local pressed forward, however, and in one key indication of its determination and focus on the future, the local began an intensive, \$200,000 apprentice-recruitment



Local 33 journeyman Lisa Post at work at the Greater Des Moines Energy Center in 2004.



The Iowa Events Center, built with the assistance of Local 33 members, consists of **Wells Fargo Arena** (top left photo), the primary venue for sporting events and concerts in Des Moines, which opened on July 12, 2005; **Hy-Vee Hall** (bottom photo), which was formally dedicated on December 15, 2004; and **Veterans Memorial Auditorium** (top right photo), which was built in 1954 and 1955 by Local 33 members (and hosted Elvis Presley as its first primary act on May 22, 1956, and twice more on June 20, 1974, and for his fourth-to-last concert ever on June 23, 1977) and is now **Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center** after the local helped renovate it in 2010. (Photos courtesy of Iowa Events Center/Spectra Venue Management.)

Longtime Local 33 member Brother John Knauer receives his 75-year membership pin during a ceremony on July 15, 2016. A World War II veteran who is still very active with the local, Brother Knauer said after the presentation, "The local has been very good to me."



campaign in the fall of 2008. Complete with a mobile training facility the local purchased earlier in the year, the effort was targeted to attract young people into the trade, as the local was concerned about an expected shortage of up to 1,500 skilled workers in the state over the coming years.

The results were promising, as the Local 33 apprenticeship program's enrollment increased by about 8 percent in 2008, indicating that the local's contractors were also anticipating a need for more skilled workers in the future. But without the Alliant Energy project starting, projections for the needed manpower in the piping trades and elsewhere proved to be over-estimated.

After an ensuing lull, work picked up exponentially over the next several years and into 2016, the year of Local 33's 125th anniversary, and by January 2010 the local had grown to over 1,300 members.

Among several jobs that kept many of those journeymen and apprentices busy were two

Central Iowa data center projects in 2014 – **Facebook** in Altoona and **Microsoft** at Grand Avenue and South 88th Street in West Des Moines – that provided a large amount of work for Local 33, especially with the required installations of complex cooling equipment. Consequently, as its workload significantly increased, the local took in 75 new apprentices that year after having admitted only 15 over each of the previous few years.

(The local's training program, as well as those of Building Trades around the state, were further assisted in 2014 when Governor Terry Branstad signed legislation on May 27 that gave \$6 million to state workforce training programs, half of which was dedicated to apprenticeship programs.)

Additional recent employment for Local 33 came from **Port Neal Powerhouse** and **Ottumwa Generating Station** projects, as well as an influx of other jobs throughout Des Moines and the local's jurisdiction, including construction for Barilla Pasta, the U.S.D.A., World Food Prize, Nationwide Insurance,

Wellmark/BlueCross BlueShield, Cargill, the Poet Cellulose Plant, Cambrex Pharmaceutical, the Des Moines Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Mitchellville women's prison.

Into and during its 125th anniversary year of 2016, many of the local's members are at work on the new **Marshalltown Generating Station**, which was finally started under a National Maintenance Agreement contract requiring the job is done with 100-percent union labor. Construction of the 650-megawatt, combined-cycle, natural gas-fired facility that will power more than 500,000 homes when it is completed in 2017 is yet another victory for Local 33 in its long and storied history ... and for the over 1,460 members it serves as the local turns 125 years old.

LOCAL 33 UNION HALLS/OFFICES/ MEETING LOCATIONS

(Locations prior to 1904 were not documented in United Association records.)

Trades and Labor Assembly Hall, 106 Sixth Avenue
November 1904 through December 1930

216 Locust Street
January 1931 through June 1936

1220-1/2 West Grand Avenue
July 1936 through September 1947

Iron Workers Hall, 204 Seventh Street
October 1947 to 1950

408 Fourth Street
1950 to August 31, 1959

124 Washington Street
September 1, 1959, to October 31, 1986

2501 Bell Avenue
November 1, 1986, to present

