

Local One commits to supporting their members in becoming ETCP Certified

RECENTLY, I WAS ASKED about the importance of Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP) certification to Local One and its members. Personally, I think this is easy to describe due to the environment we work in. A show is imagined and drawn by designers before it is put into production by technical directors. Ultimately, stagehands and technicians are responsible for the installation of all the equipment involved.

“Local One has recognized the importance of having as many of its members certified as possible.”

It is difficult to imagine a modern production that does not involve some or all of the following: overhead lifting and movement, automated scenery, high voltage and current, as well as an ever-changing array of technologically advanced control

equipment and networks. To that end, it becomes extremely obvious that the only way to provide a safe working environment, as well as an efficient means of production, is to codify a standard of practices. This is exactly what the ETCP does.

As ETCP certification becomes established as the industry standard for ensuring a safe working environment, how an individual achieves that goal has changed. As the training coordinator for Local One, IATSE, I have seen this first hand. Specifically, Local One has recognized the importance of having as many of its members certified as possible. To that end, we have made the direct involvement and support of the Local in the certification process our focus.

We can see how our members embrace this effort by noting the results. This year alone, Local One's members have added 58 certifications to their credentials. This is through no small effort of those seeking

certification, but the Local has tried to assist with the challenges involved in the process. Local One reimburses each member who passes the initial examination as well as recertification costs.

Last year we began offering courses to help our members prepare for the Entertainment Electrician and Theatrical Rigging tests. The course for electricians was taught by ETCP-recognized trainer Richard Cadena and the rigging course, which included a day of hands-on training in a counterweight equipped facility at one of New York's Broadway theatres, was given by ETCP-recognized trainer Jay O. Glerum. The members who took these classes all had well more than the 3,000 hours of experience in their field required of candidates. In fact, some had more than 30,000 hours. Despite that difference, nearly all shared one common trait; it had been a good deal of time since they had taken any type of exam like the ETCP test. So, putting everyone in



an environment conducive to test-taking was the obvious choice. Both of these courses were followed by a paper and pencil exam on the last day, which allowed them to test while the training was still fresh. The testing was held midmorning, which allowed time for a study group and last minute questions before sitting for the exam. We felt that providing the candidates with preparation and an environment to take the exam would encourage them to remain focused while instilling a sense of camaraderie within the membership. The passing rates we saw were proof our efforts were effective. Another benefit of providing this training is that members who are already certified can use these opportunities to gain the necessary renewal credits to recertify.

An encouraging side effect of this process has been a change in the membership's approach to certification. In the past, it was common for members to be skeptical about the idea of ETCP certification. Now, what we are seeing is networking within the membership about becoming certified. We found some of our members were intimidated by the application process, so we set up days at our office when we had two of our certified members (Joe Mooneyham, Certified Theatre Rigger and Subject Matter Expert, and Pete Donovan, Certified Entertainment Electrician) sit with potential candidates to talk them through the employment history section of the application. In this process, we found a couple of those interested in testing did not yet meet the requirements, so we asked them to come back the following year. On the job, we see potential candidates seek out the advice of members with certification. Also, we find our members are using each other as a resource to continue education as a means to maintain their certification.

One of the questions I get from potential candidates is, "What are the benefits of having ETCP certification?" There are multiple answers to this question. I like to point out that recently I spoke to an insurance adjustor who works for one of the Broadway theatre organizations here in New York, and he expressed his awareness of the



ETCP Certification Program. We discussed at length about how the presence of certified technicians would lead to lowered insurance rates for employers. While this may not seem like a direct benefit to employees,

lowered production costs are to everyone's benefit. We are encountering instances where an employer or vendor requires an ETCP-certified technician to fill certain positions or work with certain equipment. Also, when contracts are being drawn up, certification (specifically, the guarantee of certain experience, skills, and familiarity with equipment) allows for the ability to negotiate added compensation for certain

positions. Taking all this into account, it's easy to see why a member of any local would see ETCP certification as a benefit.

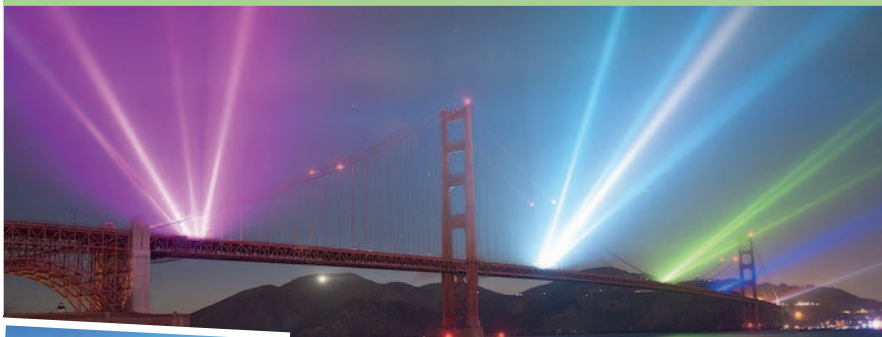
Our ETCP-certified members include technicians who work on Broadway shows; concerts at Radio City Music Hall, Madison Square Garden, and Carnegie Hall; The Metropolitan Opera and throughout Lincoln Center; and the many entertainment and news broadcast networks such as CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox, and PBS.

Local One technicians work behind the scenes at numerous cable TV studios, major corporate industrials, and special events. We were especially pleased when asked to help ETCP with their ad campaigns in 2010 and 2012. The 2010 ad featured Mike Martinez, ETCP-Certified Rigger Arena and Theatre who served as head carpenter on Broadway's *Shrek The Musical*. In 2012, the show *Billy Elliot's* moving lights technician, Pete Donovan, and production electrician, Kevin Barry were highlighted.

Going forward, it is our intent to certify as many members of Local One who meet the ETCP requirements as possible. It is also extremely important for us to help members who have passed the test to maintain their certification. The technology used in live production is constantly changing; therefore the certified technician must continue his education if his or her skills are to remain in demand. ■

“... certification ... allows for the ability to negotiate added compensation for certain positions.”

How do you safely manage 20,000 effects and 35 miles of cable to celebrate a world-famous bridge?



Ask this team of ETCP Certified Entertainment Electricians.

ETCP Certified Entertainment Electricians (left to right) David R. Hatch, Scott Houghton, Mike Starobin, Patrick Ryan, John Lacey, and Jinx Kidd.

The 75th Anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge culminated with a light and effects display that spanned six square miles and bathed San Francisco Bay in color. A team of eight ETCP Certified Entertainment Electricians and two ETCP Certified Riggers led the 75-person crew.

ETCP Certified Entertainment Riggers and Electricians are our industry's most qualified, up-to-date entertainment technicians. Hire them when you need effects that soar — but are firmly grounded in safety.



Paul F. Dean, Jr. is a fifth generation Local One stagehand who was initiated 1987. He was elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees in 2009. Paul was also appointed as the Chairman of the Local One Education Committee and is the newly appointed Training Coordinator for The Training, Education, and Technology Fund of Local One (TET Fund.) He can be reached at pdean@iatse-local1.org.



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ETCP paper and pencil examinations are scheduled for USITT 2013 in Milwaukee, WI. All three exams will be given on March 23, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. Application deadline is March 1, 2013. For more information visit <http://etcp.plasa.org/usitt2013.html>.