



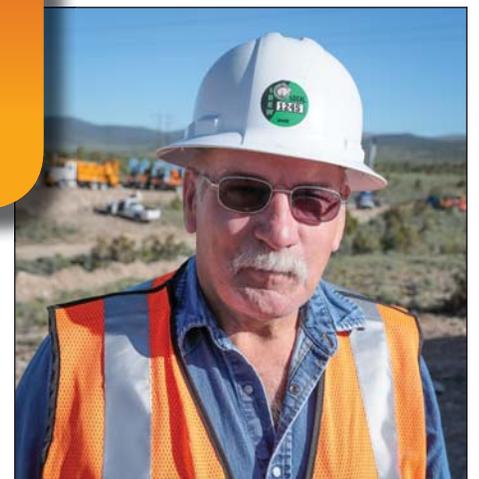
Aaron Harsy and Kevin Kamakani Jr. work from the bucket for Summit Line Construction.

## It's the life!

*“You can't do anything more enjoyable than this.”*



John Durham works from the bucket for NV Energy.



Local 1245 Business Rep Richard Ingle



Lineman Jeff Utz, Summit Line

**I**BEW hands for Summit Line Construction were putting in 12-hour days, seven days a

week in June, racing to meet a deadline for folding the existing Falcon-Gonder 345 kV transmission line into Robinson Substation, about 20 miles west of Ely, Nevada.

The Summit crews were stringing wire on newly-built H-frame steel monopoles, while a short distance away NV Energy transmission crews were working on another part of the 345 kV line, which will be stepped up to 500 kV at the Robinson Sub for a journey south to the Las Vegas area.

The project is part of the Southwest

By Eric Wolfe  
Photos by John Storey

Intertie Project (SWIP), an effort to increase grid reliability by providing access to a larger pool of load and resources.

The long hours can cramp your social life. A shirt worn by one crew member sums it up like this: “Eat, sleep, work, repeat.” But the overtime looks good on the paycheck.

“They’re going to have enough money to burn a wet mule,” says IBEW Local 1245 Business Rep Richard Ingle, who visited the Summit crews in early June.

### Red Book

The work may be hard, but at the end of the day the IBEW agreement makes

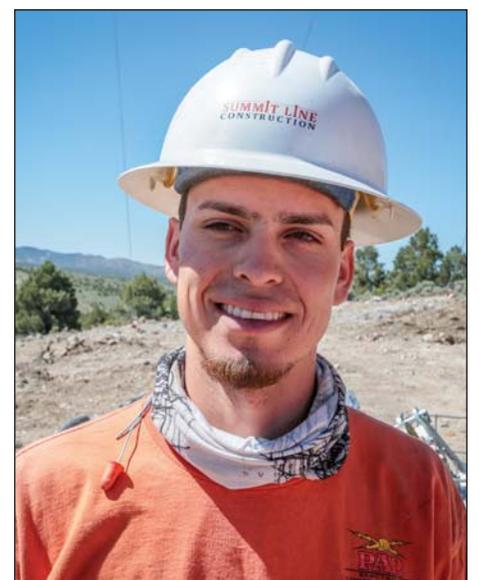
sure you get what was agreed to.

“We’ve got a red book that we go by,” says Jeff Utz, a Summit journeymen lineman. “That is our safety rules. We’ve got our breaks, we’ve got our lunches, our overtime, our double time.”

Utz has worked the other side of the fence.

“On the non-union side of the business, you have no say. They can fire you when they want to fire you for any reason they want to.” Utz, a third generation lineman, doesn’t mince words when he talks about the role of the IBEW in his life.

“It is my whole life, IBEW. Our benefits, our insurance—it’s my job. It supports my family.”



Kevin Kamakani Jr., Summit Line

**Summit Line and NV Energy crews boost transmission capacity**



Not everyone made it into this shot, but IBEW members on the Summit Line Construction job included Dutch Werbel, Gene Lee and Robert Stephenson, Operators; Jeromy Wyllis, Kevin Kamakani Jr. and Brandon Spackman, Apprentice Linemen; Eddie Iboa and Rene Alcaraz, Groundmen; Kyle Seaward, Jeff Utz and Aaron Harsy, Journeyman Linemen; Tim Laursen, HEO; Jim Padgett, Superintendent.



NV Energy crew, from left, Aron Huntington, Lineman; J. B. Wines, Transmission Line Foreman; Steve Emis, Lineman; John Durham, Lineman; Bob Callahan, Equipment Operator; Leonard Massie, Crane Operator (IUOE Local 3); and Dan Mondragon, Mechanic.



Jeff Utz and Brandon Spackman working for Summit Line.

You hear much the same thing from Aaron Harsy, a journeyman with 16 years in the IBEW.

“The union provides safety in the workplace, provides us the benefits and pay we deserve, and backs you up if a contractor tries to manipulate the contract. The union provides us with our insurance and our retirement.”

Harsy, who got lineman training in the Navy, says he’s doing exactly what he wants to be doing. “You can’t do anything more enjoyable than this.”

Apprentice Kevin Kamakani, Jr., who hails from Ontario, CA, says being on the road so much can be a little stressful. “I may well not be home for the last three years of my apprenticeship,” he says. But

he’s not about ready to turn his back on the line-man’s life.

“I love it—this is a dream come true for me,” he says. Older linemen may get used to the spectacular vistas that come with line work, but Kamakani still appreciates the view up there.

“When the sun’s setting you see the flames all across the desert,” he says.

Kamakani’s been in the trade for just three years, but that’s plenty long enough to understand the role of the IBEW.

“The union is for protection of workers—for safety, to make sure you have a life-long career, and protecting your rights.”



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Utility Reporter



Aron Huntington works from the bucket for NV Energy.