

# NCharge

3rd Quarter 2023  
Volume 16, No. 2



## Cherry Lane Has Paved a Path in Northern Virginia



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## For the Kids

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## OFFICERS

Joe Dabbs, Business Manager  
Tom Myers, President  
Rich Wilkinson, Vice President  
Chris Cash, Financial Secretary  
Rich Murphy, Recording Secretary  
Paulo Henriques, Treasurer

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Tom Clark  
John Collins  
Gary Hall  
Nondas Mouhanis  
Lorne Seay

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Robert Fritz  
Kyle McMillan  
Mark Pontello

[www.ibewlocal26.org](http://www.ibewlocal26.org)

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Business Office, Finance Office,  
& JW/RW/RE/TD Referrals  
301-459-2900

Apprenticeship & Training  
301-429-2575

EWTF (Health & Welfare) Office  
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IBEW 26 Federal Credit Union  
301-306-0610

## FEATURES

### PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS:

**OUR LOCAL 26 CONTRACTOR IS CURRENTLY FINISHING ITS FOURTH HI-RISE ON ONE BLOCK IN ALEXANDRIA**

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**LOCAL 26 AND HELLER ELECTRIC BRING A NEW SCHOOL TO LIFE IN CALVERT COUNTY**

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# Training Programs, Seminars, and Member Events Keep Local 26 Busy



**Joe Dabbs**  
Business Manager

I hope everyone has been enjoying the summer and has taken some time off to relax and enjoy the company of friends and/or family. Local 26 is as busy as it has ever been. The picnics in Manassas, VA; Roanoke, VA; and Edgewater, MD, were very well attended. It was nice to see the families wearing their picnic t-shirts while enjoying the day together. The future looks bright judging by the number of children attending each of these events.

Training programs are in full operation. New member orientations are being held at least a couple of times each month. Members have the option to attend in Lanham or Manassas. Several agents host this training to help new members feel comfortable and learn about the operations of the Union, what some of their responsibilities are, and who to reach out to if they have any questions.

Steward training is being held in Lanham and Roanoke. Anyone interested in this training should call the Lanham office and ask to speak with Stacy. She will add you to the roster for the next available class. The new Benefit & Financial Awareness Seminar was held in Lanham, MD, this past May and in Roanoke, VA, in July. The information that was presented by President Thomas Myers, Financial Secretary Chris Cash, and Recording Secretary Richard Murphy was well received. All seats were full for these presentations. The participants expressed the need for this type of training and were appreciative of the Local Union's initiative to teach the information and answer all of their questions. The next scheduled date for this seminar is Saturday, November 4, 2023 in Lanham.

We met with the teledata contractors for the teledata/brand voice messaging guide. This is the first step in creating a marketing plan and messaging guide to help them with brand awareness. Our marketing partners will create a brand voice messaging guide like we did with the electrical contractors. Video and advertising will be formulated off of this guide to improve our position in this market and make sure our messaging is consistent.

A Solar Summit was hosted by Local 26 on Wednesday, June 21st. Utility scale solar and energy storage projects are forecasted to move into the Virginia region. Developers of this type of work attended the meeting along with industry partners and business managers from area local unions. Thank you to the JATC and business agents who helped host this event. Bill Murphy gave a wonderful presentation on the training the JATC provides. The attendees of this event were impressed with our facility and the hospitality Local 26 provided.

Local 26 attended the Fourth District progress meeting in July. We received a couple of awards. The first was the PAC award for total contributions in the Fourth District for 2022. PAC contributions are very important to help support our political department in securing work and protecting electrical work for our membership. The second award received was for signing the most contractors in the Fourth District for 2022. Congratulations to the Organizing Department for the fantastic work they do every day. Welcome:  
Concor Networks Inc.  
Milliamp Company LLC

Bernward Mechanical and Construction  
DC Electric LLC  
Titan Power LLC  
Excel Mechanical Contractors LLC  
Melwood & Eggleston Enterprises  
Jet Tech Solutions LLC  
Brown Electric Group LLC  
Load Side Electric LLC  
Barrett Concrete Cutting & Services

On August 9th a meet and greet with Open Road Renewables was held. They were one of the guests at the Solar Summit. Open Road Renewables has performed solar projects in other parts of the country. They are IBEW union-friendly. The purpose of the meet and greet was for IBEW Local 26 members to learn more about the Alameda Solar Farm Project in Fauquier County, VA. We had contacted the membership in this area a few months ago and there was a great response of letters submitted to the county in favor of this project. Open Road is working on bringing this project to market. They met with our membership to present what they are working on. This was a good way to educate people in the community about a project they would like to build that will employ the people of the community. More information will be forthcoming through email, regular mail, and phone messages just as we have done in the past for other projects. Thank you for helping to secure work for the membership.

Foreman training is scheduled to begin this fall. Local 26 has two outstanding instructors, Rick Villano and Rich Wilkinson. They have attended the training classes to be certified as instructors.

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**Tom Myers**  
President

## There are Rules to the Referral System

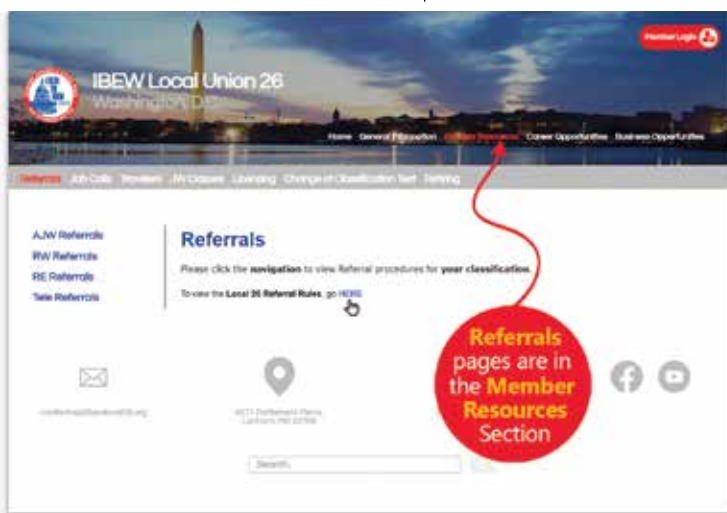
On the first Monday after the 25th of each month, the Referral Offices, the Business Manager, and I receive more than a few calls from brothers/sisters who have been removed from the Available-to-Work List. These calls are usually rough on us, as well as the person making the call, because inevitably the out-of-work member states “I didn’t know” or “I wasn’t told.” The worst conversations are with someone who had elevated through the list because they had been out of work for some time, and then for some reason, after following the procedures faithfully for the past three or four months, DIDN’T re-sign the Available-to-Work List before the 25th of the month. “Tom, I’ve done it right for the last three months. I’m only two days late; just put me back.” or “Am I supposed to wait through the list again?”

I dislike these calls, I know the referral agents dislike these calls, and I know the Business Manager dislikes these calls as well, but our collective dislike for these calls is probably not for the reason you think. Our hands are tied by the same rules that cause sisters and brothers to be removed from the Available-to-Work List (often referred to as being rolled off the list). The rules are laid out on the website, and in the emails that are received after registering for the Available-to-Work List. Everyone gets them; not everyone reads them. Once a member has signed the Available-to-Work List, they must RE-SIGN each month between the 1st and the 25th of the following month (and each month after), regardless of when they registered the previous month. As an example, if you register on

the Available-to-Work List on the 3rd of June OR the 28th of June, you are still required to re-sign between the 1st and 25 of July. Yes, even if you have been signing the day book every day. Yes, even if you have re-signed faithfully for the last three months.

As I write this, there are about 320 JWs on the Available-to-Work List, the vast majority of them sign and re-sign according to the requirements outlined in the information given to them when they first registered. When the office is asked to “just put me back, this one time,” what we actually hear is, “Please ignore the rules that most of my brothers and sisters followed because I forgot or was confused or was putting it off.” The problem is this: When JW number 30 on the Available-to-Work List gets rolled because of re-signing issues or takes a call they shouldn’t because of a special skills requirement they don’t have, everyone else on the list moves up one spot. If 12 members get rolled, everyone else moves up... you guessed it, 12 spots. Now if a brother/sister who got rolled within the requirements of our referral

procedure gets put back in their previous position, everybody else is moved back one position. “Tom, I get that but what’s the big deal?” The big deal is that everyone else is harmed by that action, everyone else has the same copy of the rules for the Available-to-Work List, and they have a *right* to expect those rules to be followed. The Local has the *legal* responsibility to enforce these rules, fairly, impartially, and without favoritism. The numbers fluctuate enough because of brothers and sisters being spun or short calls (in both cases, they get their spot back). If the Hall randomly allowed people to get their place back outside of the requirements, nobody would be able to trust the system. One of the things I ask the brothers and sisters I speak to regarding this is, “What if you had re-signed the book on time, and then three days later you check the list and were moved back 14 spaces because the Hall just let everyone back to their position? Would you be ok with that?” Usually, the member says, “No I wouldn’t be, but my case is different.” Is it? Brothers and Sisters, there are rules to the referral system!







**Chris Cash**  
Financial Secretary

# Dues Reminder, Pension Seminar, Local 26 Merchandise

I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer and kept cool. Just a friendly reminder that quarterly membership dues payments are due in the Finance Office by the beginning of every new quarter—January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st of every year. It is important that your dues are paid on time. They are due in advance of the quarter, not by the end of the quarter. Your union dues cover a pension from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers that is based on continuous years of membership. If you fall behind on these dues and drop from membership, the International Pension for the previous years will be lost. To qualify for the International Pension, at age 62, you will need 20 years of continuous membership. If you have less than 20 years, but at least five years of continuous membership, you will have to wait until 65 to draw the International Pension. You can see what kind of negative impact being behind on your dues can have.

Another benefit you receive from your dues' payment is a death benefit and this could be as much as \$12,500. However, if you fall behind on your dues by two months the death benefit will be lost, and it takes six months of new continuous membership for the benefit to be reinstated.

Dues payments can be made conveniently through the Unions Get It app, on the Local 26 website through the Member Login section, or by credit card over the phone by calling the main office in Lanham at 301-459-2900. You can also mail your payment to the Lanham office and we will mail the receipt to you. If you belong to the Local 26 Credit Union, you can call them and authorize them to make

a payment out of your account and they will bring it over to the Finance Office. It would be wise to call the Finance Office and confirm the amount of your dues' payment before authorizing the Credit Union to make your payment.

Please do your part to keep Local 26 running smoothly and efficiently by paying your dues on time each quarter or for the whole year all at once. Your union dues make it possible for Local 26 to protect your work and provide a good income for all upon retirement.

Remember to contact the Finance Office with any changes to your address, phone number, or email. It is very important that we have current information on file in case we need to contact you.

On October 7th at the Hall in Lanham, MD, we will be holding our Fall Pension Seminar. This seminar is one of our most popular events and fills up quickly. All those age 55 and older are welcome to attend as the seminar is designed for those nearing retirement and their spouses. You must sign up to attend. I will be presenting important retirement information, as will other Local 26 officers, staff from the Trust Fund Office, and a representative from the Social Security Administration. The Seminar will be held

virtually, as well as in person (satellite locations to be announced). You can also watch one of the past Seminars on the website under the "Events" tab Please watch your mail for the Pension Seminar postcard pictured below for more information.

Please check out our new webstore platform (scan the QR Code below) where you can order the most up-to-date Local 26 merchandise. The newly improved webstore will help us keep track of stock in a more efficient manner and enable us to restock items as needed.

And speaking of special Local 26 merchandise, you can earn a "Giving is Living" polo shirt by participating in our new year-round canned food drive. Each time you attend a Local 26 event and bring a canned food item you will receive a punch on your donation card (one punch per event). Donation cards are available at every Local 26 event. Ten punches on the donation card will earn you the "Giving is Living" polo shirt. I would love to see everyone in one of these shirts to show our support in all of our communities!

As always, thank you, Sisters and Brothers, for all your hard work and please stay safe!





**Mark Pontello**  
Organizer

# Local 26 Proud to Welcome Barrett Concrete Cutting and Services



**W**hen it comes to securing more work for our members, there is no stone our Organizing Department won't turn over to bring in new members and new contractors. And, in this highly competitive era in the construction industry, those who are most successful are those who think a little outside the box.

The Organizing Department recently signed a new signatory contractor to the Local Union—Barrett Concrete Cutting and Services. And, while the company's name does not indicate that their work falls under the umbrella of the electrical industry, in fact, the work they do often supports the work our members do and has been work many of our members have performed at some point in their career. With an increase in the scope of concrete cutting work and a decrease in job timelines, many of our good union contractors have been subcontracting this work out. With Barrett Concrete Cutting and Services, a proud Local 26 contractor now, this work can stay ours.

Some of the success of this organizing

campaign can be attributed to timing. Barrett Concrete Cutting and Services recently switched ownership to a union-friendly owner—Chris Brown. Not only was the previous owner opposed to unions; he offered an inadequate benefits package for his employees. Barrett's employees had reached out to other trades seeking union representation but the benefits package and contractor base of the other trades did not prove to be the right fit.

Under the direction of Business Manager Joe Dabbs, President Tom Myers and Lead Organizer John Collins met several times with the management and employees of Barrett, carefully listening to their needs and goals and planning a way in which both Local 26 and the contractor could benefit from joining forces. Brothers Myers and Collins drafted an employer-specific contract with multiple changes to create a contract that was equitable to both parties. Under this contract the 10 employees of Barrett Concrete and Cutting Services have a benefits package that is befitting of their skills and dedication.

This contract also represents the bigger picture of the importance of organizing to provide good wages, good benefits, and fair working conditions to ALL tradespeople, not just those doing traditional electrical work. The Organizing Department will continue to try to organize any contractor who does work adjacent to our electrical industry. Barrett Concrete Cutting and Services may be the first contractor of this kind to come under our representation but it certainly won't be the last. Over the past few years, Local 26 has also been quite successful in organizing many other smaller contractors and we look forward to adding more to our ranks. Our wage and benefits package and the protections Local 26 offers are things we can all be proud of, things that are beneficial to so many in the construction industry.

If you see any Barrett Concrete Cutting and Services employees—our new brothers and sisters—on a jobsite, please be sure to say hello and introduce yourself and welcome them into our proud Local 26 brotherhood/sisterhood!



Back row, left to right: Devon Wilkerson, Giana Cagnasso, Roberto Estrada, Hector Orellana, Paul Meirtheu, Jr., and Jaime Assencio.  
Front row, left to right: Rodolfo Picon, Carlos Miranda, and Zach Walker





**Joe Dabbs**

Business Manager

*Continued from page 3*

Each has extensive experience running work. Everyone we have spoken with is excited for this training to begin. This will help Local 26 to continue to be an industry leader.

If anyone has the opportunity to be a presenter at their children's school on Career Day, please contact the Union Hall. We can help you with a presentation and materials. We can also be the presenter if needed.

On May 13th there was a labor walk and low country boil. This was a day of action in support of pro-data center labor candidates who are running for office in Prince William County, Virginia. They met at Jefferson Plaza in Woodbridge, VA. Volunteers went out and knocked doors for candidates and then returned to a low country boil prepared by head chefs Thomas Myers and Rich Murphy.

Upcoming events this fall are:

- The 3rd Annual Fishing Trip will be Saturday, September 2nd. Boats will be running out of Happy Harbor in Deale, MD, with a banquet to follow at Deale Elks Lodge.
- The Poker Run, hosted by the Local 26 Motorcycle Club to benefit Special Love, for Kids with Cancer, will be Saturday, September 23rd. This is an easy opportunity for members to volunteer and support their Union. Should you have any additional questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact Jerry Lozupone at [ibew26motorcycleclub@gmail.com](mailto:ibew26motorcycleclub@gmail.com) or Paul Henriques at 301-918-8834 or [phenriques@ibewlocal26.org](mailto:phenriques@ibewlocal26.org).
- The Retiree Awards Gala will be Saturday, September 30th. This will be

the second time the event is being held this year. It will be a great time to catch up with friends from the past and honor those who came before us.

- The Fall Pension Seminar will be held Saturday, October 7th. It will be a morning full of important information for those planning to retire. It is always a packed venue supported by the EWTF Office, NEBF Office, Fidelity, and CVS Caremark.
- The Union Sportsmen's Alliance dinner will be held Saturday, October 14th. Contact Richard Murphy with any questions.
- The Retired Members' Crab Feast will be held Saturday, October 21st. Contact Susan Flashman if you would like to attend.
- The next blood drive, hosted by RENEW, will be in November. Thank you to everyone who supports these events on a regular basis.
- The Benefit & Financial Awareness Seminar will be held Saturday, November 4th. If you have any questions contact President Thomas Myers.
- The November Union Meeting will be held Friday, November 3rd due to the Veterans Day holiday.
- Christmas parties will be in Front Royal, VA, on December 1st; in Roanoke, VA, on December 2nd; and in Greenbelt, MD, on December 8th.

Finally, in preparation of upcoming negotiations for the Metro Inside CBA, Residential CBA, Shenandoah CBA, Roanoke CBA, and Teledata CBA please email suggestions to [negotiations@ibewlocal26.org](mailto:negotiations@ibewlocal26.org).

As a reminder, Local 26 is conducting a year-round Food Drive. Over the years,

Local 26 has helped many of our community partners through our annual food drive, which stocks food pantries that are low on critical supplies. The community partners we assist through our food drive are longtime advocates for Union Labor that have consistently lent us their support when called upon.

To support these friends on a more regular basis, we will be collecting non-perishable food items throughout the year. Beginning at the General Membership Meeting in April, Local 26 started having collection boxes. They will be at certain meetings and events, such as union meetings, blood drives, picnics, and Christmas parties, to name a few. We ask that you please bring a canned food item to donate. You will receive a punch card with your first donation and each time you make a donation, that card will be marked by an event representative. After 10 validations on the card, you will receive a Local 26 Giving is Living polo shirt. Please help Local 26 support our community!

#### **Dates to Donate:**

- General Membership Meetings - 2nd Friday of each month
- Blood Drives - To Be Determined
- Fishing Trip - September 2nd
- Poker Run - September 23rd
- Retiree Gala - September 30th
- Pension Seminar - October 7th
- USA Diner - October 14th
- RMC Crab Feast - October 21st
- Financial Seminar - November 4th
- Holiday Party, Front Royal, VA - December 1st
- Holiday Party, Roanoke, VA - December 2nd
- Holiday Party, Greenbelt, MD - December 8th



# Cherry Lane Has Paved a Path in Northern Virginia



Husband and wife  
Steve and Brenda Keener



Mother and daughter team  
Maria Rivera and Keyla Montoya



Mother and son team  
Jonathan Lopez and Aracely Alvarado



The crew from Cherry Lane working on the Meridian jobsite



Lazaro Carbajal

Erick Alvarez Andrade

Oliver Benites



Steven Mosby and Business Manager Joe Dabbs



Lowell Almonte, Darius Harris, and Hunter Lewis



Claudia Reyes and Erica Escobar

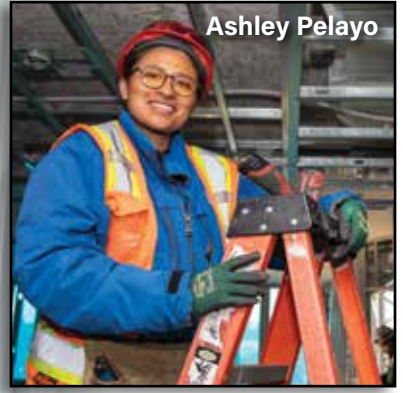
## Our Local 26 Contractor is Currently Finishing its Fourth Hi-Rise on One Block in Alexandria

**T**hose who live and work in and around DC know that the Washington, DC area really encompasses a much larger footprint than the four quadrants of the District. The surrounding areas of Maryland and Northern Virginia make DC much larger than it is on a map. And, many of those surrounding areas are practically cities in and of themselves. Alexandria, VA, is one such mini-city and thanks to the Local 26 brothers and sisters working for Cherry Lane Electrical Services, Alexandria's skyline is continuing to grow with the new Meridian 2250 apartment building.

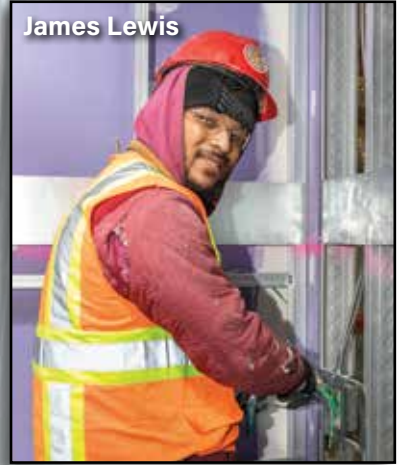




Denys Lovo



Ashley Pelayo



James Lewis



Brenda Keener



Business Manager Joe Dabbs  
and Lazaro Lovos

Corey  
Stewart, Jr.







**Tori Patton**



**Julio Zuleta**



Cherry Lane has been a signatory Local 26 contractor since the company started in 1994 and has been a leader in hiring female and minority electricians. In fact, there are 17 female electricians working on the Meridian project and many hold leadership positions. Cherry Lane performs a large amount of residential work on apartment buildings each year.

The Meridian 2250 is the fourth apartment building Cherry Lane has worked on with general contractor Paradigm Companies in this block of Alexandria around Eisenhower Avenue since 2006 and Meridian 2250 is currently the tallest building in Alexandria. Local 26 came onto the project in November 2021 and completion is expected in February 2024. Upon completion, this 26-story building will feature 443 units totaling nearly 400,000 square feet of apartment space, not including the amenity spaces, and five levels of parking. In fact, the four apartment buildings together make 1600 residential units Cherry Lane has constructed on this block.

Brother Steve Keener has been serving as superintendent, Sister Brenda Keener has been the site subforeman/fire alarm foreman, Brother Tyrone Maddox has been the rough-in foreman, and Brother Lazaro Carbajal has been the service foreman on the Meridian 2250 project. On average about 60 IBEW electricians have been on site daily, averaging about 2,000 manhours a week. Brother Keener estimates that it will take about 100,000 manhours to complete the project with a total project cost of about \$11 million.

The size of the building and the abundant amenities have made this project comprehensive. The building features a fitness center; work pods tenants may use for meetings; a dog spa; a vending machine area; a party room; a game room; and an outdoor area with a swimming pool, grills, pizza oven, a movie screen area, and a pavilion that can be reserved for parties. The 20th floor has a business center with conference room and computer stations and an outdoor seating area with TVs and fire pits, and the site around the building



**Front row, from left: Maria Serrano, Yesenia Martinez, Claudia Reyes, Erica Escobar and Ashley Pelayo. Back row, from left, Keyla Montoya, Maria Rivera, Brenda Keener, Aracely Alvarado, Denys Lovo, and Business Agent Cordelia Evans.**



**From left, Business Agent Paul Henriques, Business Agent Cordelia McKoy, Superintendent Steve Keener and Business Manager Joe Dabbs**





**J.P. Ebensjnpaul**



**Tyrone Maddox**



**Business Manager Joe Dabbs and Maria Serrano**



**Victor Iem**



**Isaac Amara**

has a dog park and a fountain with a water-fall feature back-lit with color changing LED lighting.

All of these amenities have meant that Local 26 members have performed a wide variety of electrical work. Work on this project began with the installation of temporary electrical service, electrical conduits and sleeves in concrete, and moved into the installation of lighting and connecting electrical equipment in the parking garage. The next phase of the electrical work included the installation of electrical systems in the main building, including three 4000A residential service panels, one 1200A 120/208V building house service panel, and one 3000A 277/480V panel. The Cherry Lane crew has also installed a 550kw backup generator to power the fire alarm system, apartments, elevators, fire pump, sump pumps, and lighting in the building through an automatic transfer switch in a loss of power; wiring to a 100hp fire pump; a complete building automatic addressable fire alarm system with voice, audio, and visual notification; the rough-in of all 443 apartments and the building's amenities; 40 light poles around the building and the vertical LED lights to illuminate all 26 levels of the building.

To complete the installation of these electrical systems and equipment, the team has installed nearly 1 million feet of MC cable that feeds Square D EZM meter stacks, main distribution panels, panel boards feeding mechanical HVAC systems, plumbing systems, five elevators, a complete automatic sprinkler system, and all of the apartment rough-in. The fire alarm system is a Gamewell FCI Series E3 automatic addressable full audio system with





**Yesenia Martinez and Bryan Pereira**

smoke detectors; manual stations; integration with elevators and sprinkler and mechanical systems; and notification appliances in common areas as well as in residential apartments. The fire alarm system alone required an additional 500,000 feet of wiring and within concrete slabs are 40,000 feet of conduit to power lighting in the parking garage stairways, the fire alarm system, apartment services, the sprinkler fire pump, and HVAC services.

Brother Steve Keener, superintendent, has high praise for his crew on this project. "This is a large project with a variety of electrical applications all going on at the same time and it would be nearly impossible to complete the project without the quality and workmanship of the members of Local 26," he says. "We have a mix of veteran members of Local 26 as well as new members who have all have been exceptional and have gained a large amount of experience they will be able to carry with them in the future." He adds that an additional benefit of having such a talented team on the job is the ability to meet construction schedules which leads to owners and general contractors being willing to award more work to union contractors over non-union contractors who are rarely able to meet construction schedules and often deliver poor quality of work.

Given the success of this project and the fact that this is the fourth collaboration with Paradigm Companies here in Alexandria, it is highly likely that Cherry Lane will continue to build and shape Northern Virginia's skyline well into the future. And, that is a role our brothers and sisters working for Cherry Lane are proud to serve!



**Suamy Ferrufino**



**Luis Guerrero**