Did you know that anyone can attend the annual IAEI Section Meetings? Members and attendees from across six regional areas get together every year to study and promote electrical safety. IAEI Section Meetings include learning opportunities, networking with peers and leaders, the ability to leverage the knowledge, and expertise of exhibitors/vendors.

Most people these days believe you can access the same information from webinars and online training. As great as this information is, I personally believe that it does not give you the full benefits and human connections as an in-person meeting. When attending these meetings, you can even benefit from the hallway conversations you overhear as well as the information being delivered by NEC code experts. Ask yourself, have you ever had an in-person conversation that you didn’t expect to have and yet learned something from it? Are you able to do that on a webinar? It is the industry leaders and person-to-person contact that bring the value of education to the IAEI Section Meetings.

The IAEI Southwestern Section kicked off the 2019 Section Meetings on August 25 in Phoenix, Arizona, during a scorching heat wave of over 100 degrees. Attendees were able to cool off with a welcoming reception and exhibitor preview. During the opening ceremony on August 26, attendees were addressed by then Section President James Murphy, a 17-year IAEI member from Berkeley, California. Other speakers included IAEI's International President Shawn Gaulsen and CEO/Executive Director David “Dave” Clements, where both updated all attendees on the progress of IAEI's Strategic Plan Vision 2021 and the state of the organization. Three and a half days of electrical education followed, including topics like PV training, motor requirements, and training from IAEI’s One- and Two-Family Dwelling Electrical Systems.

Following the Southwestern Section meeting, the 93rd Annual Northwestern Section meeting began on September 8–11, 2019, in Boise, ID, followed by the 115th Western Section meeting on September 15–18, in Wichita, Kansas; the 88th Canadian Section meeting on September 20–22, 2019, in Halifax, Nova Scotia; the 95th Eastern Section meeting on September 26–29, 2019 in Syracuse, New York; and the 91st Southern Section Meeting on October 6–9, 2019, in Chattanoog, Tennessee.

During the meetings, attendees were able to get a first look at the top changes in the NEC-2020 by receiving IAEI’s Analysis of Changes, NEC-2020 publication. This publication was compiled by IAEI's NEC subject matter expert, director of education, and top industry educator Keith Lofland and reviewed by NFPA technical experts. Also, right off the press were copies of the 2020 National
Electrical Code (NEC®), which were drop-shipped straight to the Southwestern Section meeting, making IAEI the first distributor outside of NFPA.

In this crazy, busy world, it is easy to forget how vital meeting with peers and industry leaders can be — we forget about the power of sharing and learning new information. Attendees from across the world were able to meet, socialize and ask questions to the industry subject matter experts, NEC code experts, code panel members, code moderators, board of director members, and committee chairs in attendance. These experts included: Joe Andre, Kevin Arnold, Bill Brooks, Mark Chrysler, Vincent Della Croce, Bruce Dempsey, Tom Domitrovich, Stephen Douglas, Mark Earley, Robert Fahey, Steve Froemming, Donald Gerjevic, Lyle Goldberg, Michael Hagan, Grant Hammack, Tim Hingtgen, Bryan Holland, Ray Horner, David Humphrey, Dean Hunter, Don Iverson, Pete Jackson, Chris Jensen, Mike Johnston, Bret Johnston, Dave Kendall, Chad Kennedy, Larry Kippes, Tom Lichtenstein, Keith Lofland, Mark MacDonald, Alan Manche, Brian McBain, Tim McClintock, Chuck Mello, Dave Mercier, Tom Moore, Susan Newman Scearce, Borgia Noel, Mark Ode, Charlie Palmieri, Christine Porter, Edmund Perich, Jeff Sargent, Greg Steinman, Mike Stone, John Taecker, Joseph “Jody” Wages, Jr., Scott Weaver, Dave Williams and many others.

If you want to, bring the family! (but you don’t have to, shhh...) At each of the six IAEI Section Meetings, there are different events to keep you on the go, or as time allows, you can always take a load off and find a nice relaxing dinner nearby. Some of the events include companion programs that are developed around the geographical area in which the section meeting is being held and could provide education, relaxation or thrilling adventures for companions; socials/trade shows; vendor receptions; and banquets allowing you to embrace opportunities and develop relationships with other industry partners. IAEI is the only source to bring inspectors, installers, testing laboratories, contractors, electricians, engineers, manufacturers, and all other electrical professionals together in one place. So whether you decide to come by yourself, or bring the whole family, don’t worry there is always enough to do for everyone.

Education focused meetings provide an optimal opportunity to network. Yes, we have Twitter and Facebook and other social outlets, but meetings give you the ability to take that relationship to the next level. You, too, could develop a reputation as being an expert when you are actively involved in the training community. I encourage you to step outside your comfort zone and attend your next IAEI Section Meeting, get to know your industry leaders, and develop those relationships outside of the office.

You would be surprised by what you learn about individuals you’ve only heard about over the years, get out there, and develop long-lasting professional relationships you didn’t once have.

See you at the 2020 meetings! 

![Industry leaders gathered together to train and network at the IAEI Eastern Section Meetings. Featured are: Jonnie Valler, Kevin Muller, Barry Yeslow, Brian Rock, and Mike Hofkin.](image1)

![TUV Rheinland North America Group's Field Evaluation Program Manager Gregory Smith was a favorite at all of the section meetings, both at the booth and on the piano.](image2)

![Every IAEI Section Meeting has vendor presentations to highlight the latest tools, techniques, and procedures within the electrical industry. Here attendees at the IAEI Eastern Section meeting ask questions and drop off cards for prize drawings at the evening banquet.](image3)

![After a full day or two of educational seminars, section meetings attendees often spend their final night unwinding at the section banquet.](image4)