

Inside Citywide Podcast Transcript Episode 8

Michael Santos: You are listening to the Inside Citywide Podcast brought to you by the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services. Inside Citywide provides you with a behind the scenes look at some of the work we do to serve the people of New York City.

Nick Benson: Welcome to Inside Citywide. I'm Nick Benson.

Belinda French: And I'm Belinda French. Thank you for joining us today.

Nick Benson: This episode will be discussing the work DCAS does retrofitting city buildings to reduce energy use. Buildings are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing energy use is key to achieving emissions reductions.

Belinda French: The City has a goal to reduce emissions from government operations 40% by 2025 and 50% by 2030. And this retrofitting work plays a key role. In addition to leading the retrofitting efforts, DCAS also pays the utility bills for city agencies. Reductions in energy use can also help reduce energy bills.

Nick Benson: Yeah, this is one of my favorite things we do at DCAS. People who know DCAS know we manage public buildings, but they may not realize the extensive retrofitting work we do, including on an array of buildings that we don't manage.

Belinda French: It's also work that involves extensive partnerships between DCAS and other agencies, as well as partners in the private sector and with labor unions.

Nick Benson: Which leads us to part of today's conversation. We'll be discussing the retrofitting work DCAS does. We're also going to discuss an excellent partnership we have with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, local number three, also known as the IBEW.

Belinda French: That's right, Nick. DCAS has a 35-year relationship with IBEW Local 3, and there are over 1000 City employees who are members of IBEW, including 12 who work right here at DCAS.

Nick Benson: We will dive into this partnership more during today's conversation, but it's a partnership we are very proud of.

Belinda French: Our first guest is Danny Donovan, who serves as DCAS's executive director of mechanical maintenance, operations and energy. He plays a key role in much of the retrofitting work we do. Thanks for joining us, Danny.

Danny Donovan: A pleasure to be here. Thank you for having me.

Nick Benson: And we're also joined by Chris Erickson, who leads IBEW local number three as the union's business manager. Thanks for joining us, Chris.

Chris Erikson: Thank you. Happy to be here.

Belinda French: Danny, I want to start with you. You serve as the executive director of mechanical maintenance and operations at DCAS and also handle energy management for that same unit. But tell listeners about your background and the work you do at DCAS.

Danny Donovan: Sure, Belinda. I grew up in Ireland and I immigrated to America in December of 1987. I went to work in the private sector doing construction. I joined the Department of Education in 1993 as a custodian and later a custodian engineer where I worked primarily on HVAC equipment.

Danny Donovan: During this time, I attended night school to further my education, and I moved over to DCAS Facilities Management in July 2004, and I was assigned to One Centre Street, our flagship building.

Danny Donovan: I became the director of Energy Management for DCAS Facilities Management in 2014.

Danny Donovan: Last year, I became the executive director for MMO Energy, where we operate 56 buildings, which is about 16 million square feet. Some of our facilities are from the mid-1800s. An example is Brooklyn Borough Hall, which opened in 1848. And newer ones like PSAC2, which opened in 2016.

Belinda French: Thanks, Danny. You know, I was familiar with your engineering work dealing with all the heating and cooling needs of the building and admired all the energy savings work that you have done with DCAS as well. So, hearing about your history before that is really amazing.

Belinda French: So, thank you.

Danny Donovan: Thank you.

Nick Benson: Chris, I want to start with the same question for you. I know you started as an electrician apprentice in 1975 and have led IBEW Local 3 for over 15 years. But tell us more about your background, the work you do and the work of IBEW Local 3.

Chris Erikson: Okay, so time flies. You know, 1975 come in as an apprentice and do a five-and-a-half-year apprentice program in New York. Exciting times. You become an A Journeyman. You graduate with an associate degree from Empire State College, which is a great program.

Chris Erikson: All of our apprentices get a college degree as well. But after that, I've worked on many large projects as an inside wireman and a foreman in New York City, the Javits Center, the World Financial Center, the Seaport. A lot of building was going on back then.

Chris Erikson: In 1989, I was appointed business representative and assigned to the maintenance department in Local 3. I was handed over 53 separate collective bargaining agreements and the principal responsibility was to negotiate those contracts. And I did that for more than 10 years.

Chris Erikson: In 2000, I became an assistant business manager, and in 2006, I was elected by the executive board to fulfill the unexpired term of my predecessor and my uncle, former international treasurer Thomas Van Arsdale. I'm only the third business manager in Local 3 since 1933.

Chris Erikson: We have a proud history. My grandfather was Harry Van Arsdale Jr., an iconic labor leader in New York City. And the guy that really built this union to the powerhouse that it is today. And he was succeeded by his son and now me.

Chris Erikson: And technically a fourth generation. I have boys behind me, fifth generation, Local 3 members. And it's ingrained in who we are and everything that we do. What was instilled in me was that the only purpose of the union was to serve the membership.

Chris Erikson: And that's what my family has done for all of this time and of the members of Local 3 have benefited because of all of that. In 2016, I was elected as chairman of the International Executive Council of the IBEW, 750,000 strong.

Chris Erikson: And that's an important part of the work that I do in serving our international union. I also serve Local 3's 28,000 members in various capacities on numerous boards. I've been married for almost forty years, and like I said, I have four sons and finally a granddaughter and two boys, two grandsons so.

Nick Benson: Well, first of all, I don't know when you sleep because that's a lot of responsibilities. Even your day job alone would be enough. But I think that's so impressive and especially that this is, you know, in your blood and something that's clearly a part of your family history.

Nick Benson: So, you know, our podcast, we focus a lot on what the City does and public service. But clearly the work that you do as well is a form of, you know, public service for your members. So, we appreciate everything you do.

Belinda French: Danny, you told us a bit about your background in the work that you do at DCAS but how do you and your colleagues partner with other city agencies in the work that you do?

Danny Donovan: Sure. So, the projects that we work on are typically broken down into two main groups, their capital and expense. So capital work typically is larger projects that include boiler or large chiller replacements. Expense funded projects are smaller projects that must be completed in one year and can be done using either a requirements contract or in-house labor.

Danny Donovan: So an example of some expense projects might be steam trap replacement or model replacement for higher efficiency. So we apply for and receive funds for these projects from DCAS DEM and then DCAS facilities management, within the group, we're very fortunate to have skilled trades at our disposal that can complete complicated projects that would typically be considered, in most agencies, capital work. So DCAS Local 3 electricians, the 638 steam fitters, local one plumbers, sheet metal shop. Even our local 30 engineers are DCAS control specialists as well as construction and technical services.

Danny Donovan: That's our CTS group, just to name a few, allow facilities management to apply for funding for these larger scale projects like LED upgrades and lighting controls, hot water system upgrades, building automation systems, variable refrigerated flow installations, which are heat source air pumps that are the first step in electrification of our buildings.

Danny Donovan: Just like I mentioned, these projects would normally be considered capital, which can take up to four years to complete. But in DCAS, having these skill sets available and willing to take on extra projects allows us to get expense funded projects completed within the timeframe required of one year at a much lower cost than using contractors.

Belinda French: Well, I'm certainly glad that we are saving the City money and I guess I didn't realize all of the different projects that we are able to do that would have been capital had it not been for the various skilled trades that we have here.

Nick Benson: Chris. Danny spoke to some of the ways his team partners with agencies across city government. But DCAS has also partnered with IBEW in a number of different ways over many years. One partnership I really love is how DCAS has partnered with IBEW to hire some out of work electricians to support the City's energy retrofitting.

Nick Benson: Tell us about this partnership, how it came about, and the difference it made for the members who participated.

Chris Erikson: So that is true. I have two business representatives, Sean Fitzpatrick and Tom Cozzo, who represent the City electricians and interact with all of the agencies. DCAS Deputy Commissioner Barbara Dannenberg. She's the contact person that they would deal with on a daily basis.

Chris Erikson: And as you said, we've had a long relationship with DCAS over 35 years, and they've hired many electricians to perform all kinds of electrical work. But most recently, DCAS has hired 12, A-journeymen electricians who are unemployed.

Chris Erikson: And they performed a number of renovations on different floors in the municipal building. And that was a model. And it is a direction that they were extremely appreciative of the hard work and the professionalism of the Local 3 members that came to work on those projects.

Chris Erikson: They are in discussions with Local 3 now, DCAS, about hiring another 60- uh 16 A journeymen to perform emergency work, installing lighting in the stairways and upgrading the lighting systems and, you know, different types of electrical work throughout the agency.

Chris Erikson: We have been in discussions with senior management on establishing a system where they can use Local 3 members across all city agencies when there's a need. And that works both ways. Guys, construction, there are cycles up and down and unemployment is a constant in the construction industry.

Chris Erikson: That's the reason why our wages are high, because most electricians don't count on a full year of work, unlike the City guys who pretty much are locked in. But we certainly are committed to satisfying the need of DCAS and the city by supplying the skilled electricians.

Chris Erikson: And it's sort of a win win for both sides here. For Danny and for Local 3 members as well.

Nick Benson: Yeah, that's what I was going to say. It's definitely a win win. I mean, your members, it's good for, you know, obviously their livelihood and for the local economy and it helps, you know, accomplish some really important work for the City.

Nick Benson: So, I'm very grateful that we do this partnership. It's something I didn't realize we did until recently. So it's great. And Danny, I want to ask you about this partnership as well. I know DCAS has 12 IBEW members on our staff, as was just mentioned, but what kind of difference did it make to have additional support on some of the retrofitting work? What were some of the projects they worked on?

Danny Donovan: So it definitely made a huge difference, Nick. It really began, first of all, with Steve Carlucci, the DCAS electrical supervisor, first approached me with the idea of hiring temporary electricians, and that was back in 2019.

Danny Donovan: The idea was really twofold. Yes, improve the energy efficiency of our facilities, and two would be to replace existing with maintenance, free LED light fixtures and lighting controls.

Danny Donovan: So, the electrical department had a backlog of over 1000 work orders.

Nick Benson: Wow.

Danny Donovan: As you mentioned, Nick, we have 12 DCAS Local 3 electricians, and they take care of 16 million square feet. That's approximately 1.3 million square feet per person.

Danny Donovan: So after the electricians complete their regular work, it really doesn't leave a whole lot of time for energy projects. So getting the temporary electricians on board would really speed up the conversion rate of the outdated lighting fixtures.

Danny Donovan: When the temporary electricians initiative was implemented for the first time, Steve was able to get over 3000 inefficient fixtures replaced with LED energy efficient lighting, which controls. Now, local law 30 requires City agencies to have 25% of their building lighting controlled by occupancy sensors by January 1st, 2023, and 50% by 2025.

Danny Donovan: Currently, DCAS has approximately 10% converted and we have about 200,000 fixtures total in our portfolio. So having electricians working with DCAS through this initiative mentioned previously, I feel that this goal of local law 30 is now achievable.

Nick Benson: Yeah. That's a daunting, you know, scale of projects that you guys have.

Danny Donovan: It is. And, you know, you had asked what other projects they worked on. Primarily, we did concentrate on LED retrofitting and lighting controls, but they also installed several variable frequency drives. They're VFDs. Now VFD installation replacement are huge energy saving devices.

Danny Donovan: Along with Steve and his partner Paul Nittoli, we've managed to replace or install over 70 of these units the past few years. So having electricians will allow us to ramp up these replacements and help us realize even greater savings. I would also just like to add that, you know, this initiative would not have been possible without full cooperation of several lines of service in DCAS, and that included Shameka Overton and H.R., Rich Thom, financial management, the commissioner's office as well, of course, as Local 3 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Nick Benson: And you mentioned VFD. What is that?

Danny Donovan: A VFD is a variable frequency drive. The best way for me to describe that is if you have a 100-horsepower motor that uses a lot of energy and if you reduce it by 50%, everyone will assume it's now 50 horsepower.

Danny Donovan: But the new horsepower from 100 at 50% is actually 12.5. So it's a 12 and a half horsepower motor. So, you can just see what those numbers, what the energy savings would be by installing VFDs in all of our larger motors.

Nick Benson: Okay. Okay. Well, I'm glad you do this work because this is way over my head. So thanks for what you do, Danny.

Belinda French: So, Chris, this next question is for you. One of the common misconceptions is that labor and environmentalists are at odds, but this partnership really shows this isn't true and that a green economy is not only good for our planet but can also be good for workers.

Belinda French: How do you see your union and its members continuing to be a part of the green economy?

Chris Erikson: Well, certainly, you know, you talk about a win win. And as a climate warrior and committing to the transition to renewable and the transition from good jobs and fossil fuel powerhouses throughout New York State to renewable green energy jobs is key to making this thing happen and work for everybody.

Chris Erikson: But our members certainly will benefit by all of the work opportunity that is coming down the pike. These transmission lines that are coming somewhat controversial from Canada, hydroelectric power, which is all necessary to replace the closing of the Indian Point and the solar wind that is happening offshore is exciting and that is going to bring countless man hours for my members. So we fix the planet and we create work opportunity for our members. That is so important. As far as the environmental issues go, and yes, there's been rubs over jobs like the Keystone certainly was one that was a problem.

Chris Erikson: But Local 3 is committed. We're part of a line which brings labor community environmentalist together. We Act, the West Harlem Group, is another one that Local 3 participates in. The Urban Green New York chapter of the U.S. Green Buildings Council, we're way into that, we teach the G Pro, which is the Green Professionals Curriculum to thousands of electricians, and when they work on customers' jobs, they get LEED points for their building, for LEED certification. And so, we're locked in.

Chris Erikson: And, you know, can I say it's a generational thing. As much as I'm a climate warrior, it's the next generation. It's the younger members that see it. We all suffered under Sandy. We saw what happened, the devastation, not only, you know, everybody in the city, but so many of our own members, their homes were destroyed. And so, this is real. This has to get done. No one side is going to get it done on their own. Both the government is going to have to put in place the incentives, the energy companies are going to have to figure out, as we transition, to keep it affordable, and even the gas, while a lot of people say, you know, we got to get rid of the gas, there has

to be a commonsense approach to this transition. You can't just shut this all off at once. I believe that. I didn't at first.

Chris Erikson: I was I was confident that the renewables can do this, but I'm not sure at this point. And so, we need a commonsense approach to a transition into a green energy future. And I think common sense will prevail and with both the environmentalists, the community, certainly the impact on marginalized communities in local and New York City. Local 3 is committed to them as well. They should share in the opportunities that will come as we clean up our city.

Belinda French: Could not could not agree more. It needs to be a collaborative effort among everyone that you mentioned and it's the way of the future. So, starts now. Thanks.

Nick Benson: Danny. You talked a bit about our partnerships with IBEW, but what are some of the other retrofitting projects you've been a part of over the years? And I think in general, people they know that retrofitting means reducing energy use. But explain that in kind of simple terms. What does that mean? What are the tangible things that are done to retrofit buildings? Some of the stuff we do here in the city.

Danny Donovan: Sure, there are several ways to reduce energy in a building. And of course, by reducing the energy, we're reducing our greenhouse gases. This is done through energy projects like steam trap replacements, building automation system installations, energy control valves, heat recovery systems, boiler retuning and air balancing of systems.

Danny Donovan: And a big one that people don't really think about is training of personnel. So, in better practices, right? So, we've more than 200 employees trained in energy management and building operations best practice with a total participation of almost 600 training seats filled.

Danny Donovan: A big one for us now is the variable refrigerant flow, which is a VRF installation. We're doing this primarily in-house and these are an air source heat pump that are extremely energy efficient over regular, smaller conventional systems.

Danny Donovan: So DCAS FM, we have approximately 12 members of our engineering personnel certified as installers of these air source heat pump systems. We converted one building totally to VRF that was 41 - 01 White Plains Road in the Bronx, also known as the Bronx Neighborhood Building.

Danny Donovan: And in total, we put 46 tons of capacity into that building. Since the retrofit has been completed, we've reduced our energy consumption at that facility by 44% and greenhouse gases by 46%. So, this project was such a success that it was featured in several magazines across the country, the latest one being an issue of federal construction. And that came out at the end of last year. We're now working on

converting another facility, Long Island City Courthouse, to VRF and we're in the middle of stage two at this point.

Danny Donovan: That's in-house. So, when we talk about retrofit in NEC, you know, I mentioned converting antiquated systems at end of life to newer energy systems like variable refrigerant flow units. So, this would be considered a retrofit or installing new energy efficient chillers in chiller plants where replacements are required, change in burners on boilers with no controls.

Danny Donovan: Whenever equipment is at end of life, we look to install the highest energy efficient replacement available, and this is an ever-evolving field. So, staying on top of new technologies is essential.

Nick Benson: And you mentioned the training component. I'd like to drill down into that a little bit more. So, what are some of the things the employees learn to do differently or to do better or things that they weren't doing before that they can now do? And are these primarily city employees that are getting this training or?

Danny Donovan: Yes. So, we do this through DEM again and their EMI program, they're in partnership with CUNY. There's also a lot of Archway and AE training available. So, the you know, the variety includes load management controls, renewable courses. A lot of them are involved in are enrolled in what we call BOC, Building Operative Certificate, level one and level two. And by attending these courses, they get a broader view. So, they get a look at best practices, right. So, when can we use what we call free coolant? What is the perfect outside temperature where we can bring in as much outside air as possible? Or what percentage of outside air at certain temperatures can we mix with return air?

Danny Donovan: So, you know, an example of that would be, let's say you have a 30-degree day outside, you bring in 100% outside air, you're going to freeze the area out or you're going to use a lot of energy to preheat that air to a comfortable level.

Danny Donovan: If you mix some of the return air to preheat that, you cut down on that energy consumption to bring that temperature up. So, you're making operators aware of this. And you'd be surprised at how much we reduced energy when we started sending the operators to these training courses because they were cognizant of how they were operating their building. And that made a huge difference.

Nick Benson: That's great investing in our employees. You know, it is great, you know, long term because it's information that they will use. And I assume as there continue to be new developments, new technology, that's something we'll continue. So, I think that's great.

Nick Benson: So Chris, I want to switch back to you because honestly, I feel a little bit of a kinship with you because we have some commonalities in our background. I

mentioned this to you before our interview, but you're a third-generation member of IBEW, and I'm the son of a third-generation union firefighter.

Nick Benson: I'm also the grandson of an IBEW member. So, I know a little bit about the hard work that goes into training and education for IBEW members. Can you talk about what that involves and how someone who's interested could pursue a career through the IBEW?

Chris Erikson: Sure. First of all, I'm a fourth generation.

Nick Benson: Oh fourth? Even better.

Chris Erikson: My great grandfather was also an electrician and Local 3, and my grandfather was actually born during a lockout in 1905 while his father was an electrician. That went on for almost four years in New York City. So, labor relations was a mess at the beginning of that century.

Chris Erikson: And, you know, we kind of turned that around for a while. But we've been in a fight. The labor movement has been in a fight. And that's going to tie into what I'm going to talk about a minute.

Chris Erikson: Certainly, our apprenticeship program is the key. It's a five-and-a-half-year program. And for those that are interested, you need to have algebra. That is a requirement to become an electrician. And so, for all of the younger ones that will have opportunities to come into Local 3, you need to think about algebra.

Chris Erikson: And that's like in the eighth or ninth grade, you know, it's not like after the fact, but we have more than a thousand apprentices at any one time. We have great diversity, many, many women in the program. I love my sisters and they come in through various direct entry programs.

Chris Erikson: 40% of every apprentice class comes in through direct entry programs, meaning construction skills, which is the building trades apprenticeship program. New Nontraditional Employment for women. Pathways to Apprenticeship. Helmets to Hardhats. NYCHA has a direct entry program with Local 3, and like I said, 40% of all apprentices coming in do come through these programs, which certainly give people from marginalized communities the opportunity. And even when we negotiated the project labor agreements with the City in New York. And why was that key? The City complained that the building trades didn't have a lot of members that looked like a lot of New Yorkers and weren't being afforded the opportunity.

Chris Erikson: That was, you know, a big criticism of the building trades for a long time. And unfortunately, the building trades employers weren't getting a lot of work from the City. So it was only after the partnership that the plays were signed by Mayor de Blasio that created the work opportunity for building trades.

Chris Erikson: Employers gave us the opportunity to bring in from the apprentice programs direct entry, and that increased work opportunity allowed the building trades to enhance minority hiring and such. So that was a good thing. We had a great success with new nontraditional unemployment from women coming into the trades.

Chris Erikson: There's a great story. P.S. 62 in Staten Island, a public school. It was the first net zero school in the Northeast, which means it produced more energy than it consumed. And it was done under the PLA.

Chris Erikson: It was done at prevailing wage, and it came in under budget. It was a success. The electrician foreman was Allison Ziogas, a female electrician foreman on that job, first net zero school. Very, very proud of that.

Chris Erikson: We were recognized by the Green Buildings Council. For that I got an award and certainly that was part of the project. We have journeyman enhancement skills programs; we have college tuition reimbursement. We have benefits that are you know; Harry was always committed to education being our success and continuing education.

Chris Erikson: Our contractors have bought in. It's not cheap. We have a state-of-the-art training center where the apprentices go to school and do hands on two weeks a year in each year of the four and a half year, five-and-a-half-year apprentice program, as well as the night theory training as well. You've got a basic foundation of skill sets that will allow our members to grasp the new technology and with the training for the apprentices. So, if you're interested in becoming a Local 3 electrician, get on the website local IBEW dot org and you know, drop a dime. Let's see what we can do here. Oh, I don't want to bring in kids to be solar installers. You know, somebody could say a solar installer is a great job. You know, it's a job. It's \$20 an hour. It's not a career job. It's not a middle-class job. I want to bring kids in into a program. Yeah, they could work on the solar in their communities for a year, but then move on, learn the rest of the skills to become a full-blown electrician.

Chris Erikson: Be able to make \$58 an hour, be able to sustain your family. Those are career, middle class jobs. That's what the labor movement is about. That's what Local 3 is about. And it's about giving that opportunity to people that have not had that opportunity. So I'm committed. We're all in.

Nick Benson: And that's one of the things that's great about the labor movement is it really helps, you know, really recognize the dignity of work and making sure that workers get paid what they deserve and have opportunities and it helps grow the middle class.

Nick Benson: And one thing I know that really sets your union and others apart is just the high level of skill of your members. So I know we spoke a little bit before we started, you know, about how when you know your members do a job, they do it right the first time.

Nick Benson: So, do you want to speak a little bit about that, how this the skill level of your members really helps get projects done, done well done the right way?

Chris Erikson: Certainly. That used to be a bumper sticker on electrical contractors' trucks, our skills cost less. And you got to think about that for a minute. And then you're right. You do this job the first time the right way.

Chris Erikson: You're not calling anybody back. When they call it the tailgate warranty, you have a warranty from the guy to fix your boiler as long as you can see his taillights. Once the taillights are out of view, the warranty is over. That's not the case. We're very proud of the high skill set, the level of training that you get. And electricians, union electricians, the trade. We make a good hourly rate of pay. And of course, that is being challenged in New York City. There are companies that are dumbing down the trade, basically having a few skilled electricians and a lot of helpers and guys that can move material around and they've figured out how to be able to do it cheaper. The economic crisis brought that on in New York City.

Chris Erikson: Is the is the training equal? Absolutely not. Is the safety the same? No. Does the light work when you turn the switch on? Probably. But do you really know what's behind the wall? That's a question that I ask.

Chris Erikson: You look at the premier buildings in New York City and it does cost a little more to build union. But the value on display every day for IBEW members, the skill set and not only the skill set, but the productivity. You know, productivity was the key to our success. We knew that if the contractor didn't make money on this job, he wasn't going to be around the long enough for the next job. So, the men are invested into the success of that project and the success to make sure that that customer calls IBEW back for the next job. So it's more than just training. It's the commitment to the productivity and making a success of the job. We have a program called Code of Excellence, and we hold on members and on contractors to a high standard as we deliver electrical services in the City.

Chris Erikson: We're committed to the City of New York. You know, both the public side of the City of New York and the private sector as well. And we're going to be here for a long time. We've been here for almost 130 years, and we expect to be here right on down the road.

Nick Benson: Well, we really appreciate that. And we see that every day with the members that, you know, we have on our staff here in DCAS. So we definitely recognize that.

Belinda French: Danny, I have one last question for you before we conclude today. We talk a lot about public service on this podcast. You're a stationary engineer by trade, but what is it like to work in government and to know that you are working on behalf of your fellow New Yorkers each day? What are you most proud of?

Danny Donovan: Well, Belinda, being part of an amazing team that's making a difference by reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gases makes me very proud to be a civil servant. So together, we're making a difference in the life of not only every New Yorker, but of everyone who visits this great city. When I look at the achievements of the team that I am fortunate to be a part of, greenhouse gas reduction over 30%, an operating savings of more than 8 million since FY 11. That to me is amazing.

Danny Donovan: So, we've been able to enroll personnel into training courses. When you have people in leadership positions that have faith in you and your team and back you 100% to succeed like DC Jerry Torres, it makes it much easier for us. As I hand the reins of the energy manager's position over to Victor Amatrudo, I know Victor will not only keep the great work that we're doing in a positive trajectory, but my job now is to ensure that he outperforms the past energy manager.

Danny Donovan: So, working alongside some great DCAS people like Stephen Paul that I mentioned earlier but also Joe Jensen from our plumbers, Dave Cardenas CTS, Serafin Gonzales, and Richard McCarthy. They're our custodian of services who redo a lot of the lamps for us.

Danny Donovan: Joe Puglisi in controls, Tony Andreani and Joe Horton and his maintenance collaborative crew. Their cooperation has been incredible. We've also managed to grow demand response. I'm sure everybody knows what demand responses in DCAS. And when we started it, I think we were enrolled for about one megawatt.

Danny Donovan: So we're now up to 11.84 megawatts of commitment per event. There are typically three events. There's the NY ISO SCR, that's the New York Independent System Operators. There is the Con Ed CSR and the Con Ed DLRP. And every time that there is an event that we hit that mark of 11.8 megawatts, that's equal to about 8.4 metric tons of carbon dioxide eliminated or 21,000 miles driven by a gasoline powered vehicle. So that commitment is incredible. But I'm going to also ask everybody listening that as these events happen from now on, because we've committed so much, we need everybody's help that visit our building. So, when these events happen and you're going to see a poster on a hot day in New York, turn your light off when you can. If it's if it's like 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., that four-hour window.

Danny Donovan: We need everybody's commitment so that we can help save the grid, the electrical grid in New York City during that time, it's essential to prevent blackouts or even brownouts. But, you know, going back again a little bit to your question, Belinda, you said, you know, some of the projects that stand out, if you insist, I'm going to pick one above all others. And that's the LED lighting upgrade here at One Centre Street, the tower. Now, I know you'll remember because I visited your office and I showed you our plan and you smiled. So, from its conception to its completion, this took about three years and was part of an amazing journey where we watched a spur of the moment

idea become a reality. What Steve Carlucci and Lester and all the entire DCAS Electrical Shop achieved during that journey is something that will stand out for many years to come. So, all I can say is stay tuned for City Hall and Staten Island Borough Hall upgrades, which will be coming to an evening close to you very soon.

Belinda French: So I can't help but smile again because I thought it was so amazing for any of our listeners who know the municipal building or know it well. You know, on holidays, on different days of the year, you will see the municipal building light up in different colors for all to see. And what Danny is talking about is just really amazing. Danny, you, everyone, you just mentioned at DCAS, putting that together. It was I mean, not only did it bring us into whatever the 21st century, but it was just an amazing project. And it's just beautiful and the work that you guys do.

Danny Donovan: And it was a pleasure to be a part of it and to be able to change the landscape in lower Manhattan for forever, right?

Belinda French: Absolutely.

Nick Benson: Yeah. And I want to echo Belinda on that. I know I think it was in 2018 or 2019 you had that project, and we took a reporter up to the roof and I got to go up there. That was awesome to be in the tower and to look out on the city. But yeah, it's great. I mean, the lights look better. It celebrates civic pride for different holidays and special occasions, and the fact that it saves energy use and the process is just a fantastic added benefit. So thanks for everything you did on that because it turned out very, very nicely.

Nick Benson: So, Chris, I have one final question for you. Now, obviously, your members do all kinds of work spanning the private and public sectors. But is it satisfying to know that your members are making a difference in the City's efforts to fight climate change? And what are you most looking forward to in your ongoing partnership with the City?

Chris Erikson: Well, it is satisfying and again, of moving the ball forward as this city transforms itself into a renewable energy. Kill the carbon footprint, create jobs for people, good jobs, good paying jobs. To be able to say to my granddaughter, well, to have her look back and say, "they did it, they made a difference." That is what is going to resonate with me the most. We're committed to the working relationship with the City, and we'll continue to look how to continue to move that forward. Certainly exciting stuff.

Chris Erikson: Offshore wind in New York, \$4.3 billion for the tracks, 9 to 12 gigawatts of electricity created, renewable green energy from solar to light our city is just going to be an amazing thing, not only New York City, but sending it back up to the grid. Hopefully a new and improved grid. Our president, *build back better*. That legislation on the infrastructure commitment. And to hear our president say PLA, prevailing wage union IBEW. You know I'm stepping out a little bit here, but the unions haven't had that type of relationship with the president in a very long time.

Chris Erikson: And for all the work that needs to get done, including the work anticipating another disaster like Sandy, it is so important and we're happy about that. I just want to mention again, I mentioned Allison, that female electrician. She's distinguished herself in such a way. She got hired, by Ørsted. She is the U.S. director of labor management relations for Ørsted in the United States. And this was an A-journeyman electrician in Local 3 that came through nontraditional employment for women and distinguished herself. So, anything is possible going forward. These members of mine that you know, they do this training program, they get that under their belt, the opportunity, the new technology. It's exciting, you know, and when I look back and see how the city has morphed into what is going to be something pretty special, I'm going to feel confident that I did play a small role in moving the needle at a time when it could go either way. We don't need low wage solar installer jobs. We need middle class jobs. We need to transition, and we're going to get that done.

Chris Erikson: And I want to thank you, Nick and Belinda, Danny and even Mike, the guy behind the mic. You know, we don't hear from him much, but he makes us all sound good on the podcast. And by the way, this is my first podcast, so I want to thank you for that. I appreciate it.

Nick Benson: Well, thank you so much, Chris. It's so good to have you on and to hear from you. And I want to echo thank you to Michael Santos, the guy behind the mic who makes all this stuff happen and makes it all sound good.

Nick Benson: So I know, Chris, I speak for all of us at DCAS when I say how much our agency appreciates our partnership with IBEW Local 3. So thank you again for joining us. And Danny, thank you for joining us as well.

Nick Benson: It's been a great pleasure to work with you over the years, and I'm always impressed by the work you do to make our buildings greener. So thanks, Danny, and thanks, Chris. We appreciate it.

Belinda French: Thank you both so much for joining us. This was a great conversation and an example of how city government and labor can work together to solve problems and strengthen our local economy.

Michael Santos: Thank you for listening to Inside Citywide. Inside Citywide is brought to you by the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services and is produced by Michael Santos. To learn more about DCAS visit our website at nyc.gov/DCAS. And follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook at NYCDCAS.