**Zero Net Energy Center**

***Contributed by Ronnie Holland***

The Zero Net Energy Center in San Leandro, Calif., opened last in late May. Its owners say the commercial building retrofit meets the US Department of Energy’s requirements for a “zero net energy” (ZNE) building.

The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) retrofitted the 46,000-sq-foot structure as an educational facility for 2,000 electrical workers that will participate in a program run by IBEW Local 595 and the Northern California Chapter of NECA.

IRESN Special Projects Director Ronnie Holland attended the center’s grand opening and reports that was very well-attended, including press and California state agency representatives. Fifteen speakers included the San Leandro mayor, California senate majority Leader, congressional and state assembly representatives, national union and training leaders, local utility representatives and the executive director of the US Green Building Council, Dan Geiger who called for the center to serve as a model for the millions of buildings that can be retrofitted to reduce net energy consumption.

Byron Benton, Training Director of ZNE Center, pointed to the center as the only retrofit commercial building in the U.S.to meet the California Energy Commission’s 2030 Net Zero Energy Challenge – 17 years ahead of the state target for all commercial buildings and en route to a Gold LEED rating. For more: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZuuNoNvWmA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZuuNoNvWmA).

Governor Jerry Brown capped the speaker list. He said ZNE reminds him of his time in seminary, i.e. like taking the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity – we must walk the talk and do everything we can to avoid wasting resources. For the complete speech, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8w3REZgwTZE>.