



**For Immediate Release:
December 8, 2004**

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IAEI Reaffirms Support of Premier Certified Electrical Inspection Program

Effective January 1, 2005, IAEI will become the sole sponsor of the premier certification program providing quality programs to certify electrical inspectors. The Certified Electrical Inspector program was developed jointly by IAEI and The National Fire Protection Association, which will continue its participation through ongoing committee work to support the certification program.

The certification program tests electrical inspectors on their knowledge of the *National Electrical Code* and related topics, and also measures the ability to apply that knowledge. This practical application facet sets the CEI program apart from other certification programs. Launched in 2003 at the request of the Electrical Code Coalition, a group formed to promote the need for qualified electrical inspections and direct adoption of the *NEC*, the certified electrical inspector (CEI) program was designed to showcase electrical inspectors' advanced skills—the extra hours of study and experience acquired through actively applying the *Code*. The coalition—made up of various supporters through NECA, NEMA, IBEW, EEI, IAEI, IEC, UL and NFPA—felt that IAEI and NFPA should jointly develop a state-of-the-art certification program based on knowledge and practical application of the *NEC*.

The coalition felt that individual inspectors and the organizations for which they work would benefit in the following ways.

- A nationally recognized electrical inspector certification system
- Quality control through advanced credentials
- Reduced necessity for developing and maintaining local certification programs
- Recognition of professional advancement
- Increased efficiency and productivity
- Improved electrical safety and potentially reduced liability

More than four years of research and development went into the creation of the CEI premier certification program. Representatives from NFPA, IAEI, and members of the

Electrical Code Coalition meticulously designed valid and reliable programs and examinations. Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) was chosen to assist in the development, administration, scoring and analysis of the CEI examinations. In addition to education or on-the-job training, length of service determines who is qualified to sit for either of the two types examinations: 2,000 hours of electrical inspection are required for the residential electrical inspector, and 4,000 hours of electrical inspection for the master electrical inspector. If one has no electrical inspection experience, the hours are doubled.

The outcome of this research and development is a premier certification program that emphasizes the advanced skills of the inspectors. Although the program causes the inspector to spend additional time and energy in studying and applying the *NEC*, the payback is national recognition, verification of his knowledge and skills to his employers, his clients, and the industry, and ensured proficiency in the use of codes and standards.

Though in existence for only one year, this premier CEI certification program is already recognized by several jurisdictions. IAEI will request the Electrical Code Coalition to lobby other jurisdictions for recognition. Other certification programs, while effective, do not make such strenuous demands on the inspector; they are designed more for entry-level certification. Any person who furthers his education and experience may sit the entry-level examination, as he feels ready.

While NFPA will no longer co-sponsor the CEI program, it will continue to actively support IAEI in this initiative; and the *NEC* and the *NFPA Electrical Inspection Manual* will remain as two of the basic texts for the CEI program. UL's *General Information for Electrical Equipment* (White Book) will continue as the basic standards text.

James Carpenter, CEO and executive director of IAEI, reiterates the full support that the association provides its members, "IAEI has always supported the electrical inspector at any level and will continue to do so. IAEI does, however, support raising the bar for the advancement of the inspector, particularly through the CEI premier certification program and the establishment of a national electrical inspector registry, from which jurisdictions and agencies can draw electrical inspectors. Further, IAEI will request jurisdictions and agencies to list electrical inspection job availabilities on the IAEI website for the convenience of the inspectors who have completed the CEI certification."

Said NFPA President James M. Shannon, "We are pleased that IAEI will continue to support this important certification program. Public safety can only be ensured if electrical installations are inspected by qualified electrical inspectors. IAEI is the professional organization for electrical inspectors and is the most appropriate party to certify inspection professionals."

Jack Wells, chair of the Electrical Code Coalition and vice president of corporate development for Pass & Seymour/Legrand, said, "In the mid '90s, the major electrical industries formed an informal coalition for the purpose of supporting electrical inspection by qualified inspectors as a *'vital public safety function.'*

“The ECC fully supports the IAEI Certified Electrical Inspector program as an integral component to ensure that electrical inspectors are, indeed *qualified*. The ECC is prepared to appear before state or municipal certification agencies to advocate the need for electrical inspector certification and the specific inclusion of the IAEI CEI program.

“Supporting the IAEI CEI program is a great opportunity for our industry to come together with the state and local electrical inspectors to address our unity and commitment to qualified electrical inspection. The CEI program provides the opportunity for manufacturers, utilities, contractors and others to come together to support their local inspectors, to emphasize the full capability IAEI brings to its certification program with educational programs, books and *IAEI NEWS*.

“The first ECC proclamation stated, ‘Inspections by qualified electrical inspectors reduce the potential for fire and shock hazards due to incorrectly installed electrical products and systems covered by the *NEC*, save lives, and reduce property damage that may result from unsafe electrical installations.’ The IAEI CEI program is a key element and contributes directly to public safety.”

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