



IBEW Local Union 21 • CWA Local 4250



Illinois & NW Indiana 2009 AT&T Mobilization & Bargaining News

Southside Irish Parade Draws Quarter Of A Million People

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BY [JASON FREEMAN](#) Staff Writer

Nearly a quarter-million people lined Western Avenue in Chicago on Sunday to watch the 2009 South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The parade kicked off at noon from 104th Street and Western and featured floats from local police and firefighters, radio stations, veterans groups, various unions, parishes, Irish dance schools, marching bands and the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the parade's grand marshal.

"This is the best parade ever," said Rich Duba, a Palos Park resident who grew up on the South Side. "We beat the (downtown) city parade every time." Duba said South Siders are proud of the parade. "It shows a sense of community," he said. "It shows the people that the neighborhood is still strong." The parade also gives South Siders something they can call their own, Duba said. "We sort of feel this is our parade," he said. The fact that Duba no longer lives in Chicago does nothing to diminish his pride in the area. "I was born and raised on 88th (Street) and Racine (Avenue)," he said. "I may have moved out to the suburbs, but I'm still a South Sider and will be for life."

Tim Gleeson, of Homer Glen, came with his wife, Julie. "It's a beautiful day, and we haven't come here in about 10 years, so we decided to come out," he said. "The parade has always been a huge deal, and it's always a fun time," he said. "It's a big family affair; the kids love it. You get to dress up and watch people act goofy."

Michael Mockus, of Oak Forest, walked in the parade with his girlfriend, Sharon Wilczek, and her daughter Allie, 10, for Pipefitters Union Local 597. "It's definitely a memory we'll hold for a long time," he said. "It's wild. I got family members who grew up in Chicago that are living all over the country now, and I told them, 'Hey, I'm in the South Side Irish Parade,' and they all freaked out. They're all super-jealous and excited." Mockus said the parade, coupled with the nice weather and large crowd, made for a great day. "It's just an event for everybody to get out of the house and get together, have fun, dress up and act a little crazy for a little bit," he said. "Everybody's Irish today."

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www.ibew21.org

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SET TO TALK – READY TO WALK

CWA Local 4250 Members and Families Ride In Unity With IBEW Local 21 On The Local 21 Float – Chicago Southside Irish St. Patrick’s Day Parade – Sunday, March 15, 2009





