

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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MORE NEW WORK! UNION INKS MOU FOR COASTWISE RIDING OFFICERS ON EXPRESS-CLASS VESSELS

The Union has secured a Memorandum of Understanding with Marine Personnel & Provisioning that puts an additional M.E.B.A. engineer onboard each of the Hapag/Crowley "Express Class" vessels to serve as a coastwise riding officer.

The MOU, brokered by Gulf Coast Vice President Adam Smith, requires the company to call an additional third assistant engineer to join each vessel during a U.S. coastwise trip following a foreign voyage to assist in maintaining STCW work-rest requirements.

The agreement covers the five A7 6,900 TEU Flex engine Express-class ships, including the DELAWARE EXPRESS, COLORADO EXPRESS, HUDSON EXPRESS, MISSOURI EXPRESS, and POTOMAC EXPRESS, as well as any replacement vessels.

V.P. Smith credited fleet Chief Engineers who have pushed for this additional position to benefit the company and provide additional work to the Union. The company began calling these jobs this week in Charleston and will soon open up to Jacksonville and Norfolk. Additionally, Maintenance Engineers will be called in Charleston and Norfolk.

The MOU has been forwarded to the Union halls, where it is available for review by members and applicants in good standing.

ITF INSPECTORS HOLDING SHIPOWNERS TO ACCOUNT

This year through November, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) ship inspectors managed to recover over \$47 million in wages that had been withheld from seafarers by unscrupulous shipowners.

M.E.B.A. is a member organization of the ITF, a global union federation fighting for the rights, equality and justice of almost 20 million working men and women in the transport sector around the

world. Primarily, ITF Inspectors help battle against substandard shipping to help raise up the wages and conditions of mariners worldwide.

The ITF and its team of Inspectors, which includes M.E.B.A.'s Eric White, continue to assist international seafarers by making sure they have basic amenities, are properly repatriated at the end of their ship assignments and receive the wages they are owed. ITF's inspectors enforce agreements with shipowners. They board vessels to check that seafarers have decent pay, working conditions and living standards.

As of November 2023, ITF Inspectors had conducted almost 10,000 ship inspections this year - of which 5,740 were routine inspections and 1,559 were following requests from seafarers/crew. The inspectors were most significantly responsible for recovering \$47,008,910 in owed wages, which marked an increase of \$12,277,651 over 2022. There are currently 138 ITF inspectors, located in 120 ports in 59 countries.

Steve Trowsdale, ITF's Inspectorate Coordinator, said, "it goes without saying that we are immensely proud of the work of the ITF inspectors. These men and women hold to account those shipowners who seek to exploit seafarers. All too often what we find are poor working and living conditions, seafarers being over worked and going unpaid for long periods. That's where the inspectors step in, to make sure the workers involved get treated fairly."

APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2024 to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. Union Plus is awarding \$200,000 in scholarships. M.E.B.A. members, retirees and their families - as well as members of affiliated M.E.B.A. unions - are eligible courtesy of the Union's enrollment in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to financing children's educations.

Visit www.unionplus.org/scholarship for details. Families of M.E.B.A. members or affiliated members are among past scholarship money recipients. Union Plus Scholarship are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

Applications can be submitted up until Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at noon (EST). Applications arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2024. During the first week of June 2024, award recipients will be notified. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended. The required essays can account for up to half your total score. Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators.

Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2024. Students may re-apply each year. Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting unionplus.org/scholarship Now in its 32nd year, the program has given over \$5.4 million in educational funding to more than 3,800 union members, spouses, and dependent children.

ØRSTED: TIME TO STOP UNION BUSTING

Offshore wind farm developer Ørsted US made many commitments to longshoremen in the US but has not lived up to its promises – leading to a failure to negotiate in good faith. Ørsted US froze workers represented by the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) out of their traditional jurisdiction of loading and unloading cargo in New London, Conn. and has negotiated in bad faith. In July 2023, Ørsted US disclosed it signed twenty-year contracts with historically anti-union shipping companies – a direct violation of their own code of conduct – breaking promises made to US seafarer unions.

Delegates at the International Transport Workers’ Federation’s (ITF) dockers’ and seafarers’ Fair Practices Committee (FPC), including the M.E.B.A., met in Santiago, Chile earlier this month and called on Ørsted to return to the bargaining table with the ILA. They urged the company to reach an agreement for all ITF maritime-affiliated unions in the United States, and to engage in a transparent and honest manner with ITF and its affiliates in other countries where Ørsted A/S has or will establish offshore wind projects.

FPC Co-Chair and ITF President Paddy Crumlin said, “Seafarers and dockers are vital to the supply chain. We, quite literally, keep the world moving. ITF will hold companies to account that attempt to undercut due process with unions – so we are currently looking very hard at the actions of Ørsted, and I strongly encourage Ørsted US to work with us to resolve these situations.”

AUSTAL USA WILL BUILD MSC EXPEDITIONARY MEDICAL SHIPS (EMS)

Austal USA was tapped by the U.S. Navy to design and construct three Expeditionary Medical Ships (EMS) that will serve in the Military Sealift Command fleet. The yard continues its construction of a series of Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessels, having already delivered 13 EPFs that are on various missions around the world with M.E.B.A.-represented Engine Officers onboard.

The EMS ships will be an EPF variant, with a cost-effective design providing a dedicated medical ship optimized to provide patient holding, stabilization, evacuation and transport in support of Distributed Maritime Operations. The EMS design features a shallow draft which enables greater reach and allows for direct access to austere ports. The flight deck will accommodate military aircraft, including the V-22 and H-53K.

WORK GETS GOING ON NEW TEXAS A&M TRAINING SHIP

Last week, Philly Shipyard celebrated the keel-laying of the 4th of 5 newbuild maritime academy training ships as part of the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) program. Texas A&M Maritime Academy will be the recipient of this fourth ship in the program scheduled for delivery in 2025. In September, SUNY Maritime took delivery of the first vessel in the program that replaced its 62-year-old training ship.

The NSMVs are designed to provide world-class training for America’s future mariners and to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need.

The next two vessels are being worked on at the yard’s outfitting and building docks. The PATRIOT STATE II will replace Massachusetts Maritime’s 55 year old vessel sometime next year. Maine Maritime’s NSMV will be ready for action in late 2024. The fifth vessel will go to the

California State University Maritime Academy (CMA) and delivery is set to take place in 2026. Construction on that vessel has not yet begun.

WHITE HOUSE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT RULE IS GOOD NEWS FOR LABOR

Last week, the White House, along with Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su, announced a final rule implementing an earlier Executive Order requiring Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) for most large-scale Federal construction projects with budgets exceeding \$35 million.

The strategic expansion of PLA deployment will require contractors and subcontractors to engage in negotiations with labor unions, establishing terms that prioritize the safety and well-being of workers at construction sites. Projections indicate that this regulation will extend collectively bargained wages, benefits, and safety protections to an estimated 200,000 construction workers, irrespective of their union membership status. As has been observed historically, the adoption of union standards tends to elevate overall industry standards, creating a rising tide that lifts all boats.

Sean McGarvey, the President of North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU), lauded the announcement pointing out the track record of PLAs in effectively addressing labor supply challenges, averting work stoppages, safeguarding workers' classification, fortifying health and safety standards, and achieving substantial and direct cost savings through the standardization of contract terms for highly skilled craft workers.

PANAMA CANAL TO SLIGHTLY EASE DROUGHT RESTRICTIONS

The Panama Canal announced that it will slightly increase the number of daily transits starting in January, following drought restrictions that have slowed ship traffic down to a trickle.

October 2023 marked the driest October on record for the Canal Watershed. In anticipation of a potential worsening of the situation in November and December, the decision was made to adjust the number of daily transits to 22 in December, 20 in January, and 18 in February. This year marks the first time the Canal has ever had to restrict transits. But, as rainfall and lake levels for November proved to be less adverse than expected, coupled with the positive outcomes from the Canal's water-saving measures, the Canal decided to bump ship transits up to 24 a day, along with certain exceptions, beginning on January 16th. The new limit will remain in effect until conditions warrant changes.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The M.E.B.A. wishes you and your family a safe and thriving new year filled with warmth, love, and happiness. Eat well, stay safe, and try to take some time to rest and relax. Many thanks to all our members and applicants who continue to work throughout this holiday season, and to all, we appreciate all the hard work you do year-round. May your New Year be filled with prosperity and joy.

M.E.B.A. halls and offices close early tomorrow, Friday, December 29 and will remain closed on New Year's Day, Monday, January 1, 2024. Happy New Year!

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS (*All times are local*)

Monday, January 8 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, January 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, January 10 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, January 11 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, January 12 – **Honolulu@1100**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; mebahq@mebaunion.org. For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.