

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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UNION SEWS UP NEW SHORESIDE JOBS WITH MARINE REPAIR OUTFIT

M.E.B.A. has finalized a contract with a new employer that secures shoreside job opportunities for our membership with a burgeoning new full service Marine and Industrial Repair company. Based in Naples, FL, BluePoint Engineering LLC performs repair work (including Government-contracted jobs) on large vessels around the country. They have serviced vessels for Military Sealift Command, the Maritime Administration, Coast Guard and many others. The Memorandum of Understanding, utilizing M.E.B.A.-contracted employer American Crewing Service, LLC, was finalized this week. BluePoint has long been aware of the expertise and professionalism of our M.E.B.A. engineers that will prove an asset to the newly formed company that is looking to further expand. All levels of experience are needed and members interested in the new work can visit www.Bluepointeng.com, or visit a local hall for more information. Jobs will also be called out of the Union halls before the work begins in a specific locale.

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac said, "Along with continuing to maintain and strengthen our existing contracts, the Union has focused on extending into new avenues of work that tap into the expertise of our talented M.E.B.A. workforce. These shoreside jobs that BluePoint brings to the table is another example of that commitment and will provide terrific opportunities for our membership with covered employment."

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE PORES OVER PANDEMIC IMPACTS ON MARINER FORCE

The impact of the pandemic on the nation's maritime sector took center stage at a House Subcommittee hearing this week as several expert witnesses helped Members of Congress understand the unique challenges the industry faces. Seaports, shipbuilders and a pair of coalitions representing U.S. shipping interests, including the M.E.B.A., testified at the hearing before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation – which is part of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Jim Patti, who heads up MM&P's Maritime Institute for Research & Industrial Development (MIRAID) but was testifying on behalf of USA Maritime, a U.S.-flag shipping coalition that includes the M.E.B.A., discussed the devastating effects a positive COVID case can have on the delivery of goods, as well as mariners who live in close quarters aboard ship. "If a crewmember tests positive for COVID-19 the vessel, depending on the jurisdiction, may be taken out of service and it, along with the entire crew, may be placed into quarantine for an undetermined period of time. The quarantine

and cleaning of the vessel is not only time consuming and extremely expensive for the shipping company, but the delay means that the vessel's cargo will not arrive at its destination when expected and when needed." He stressed that positive cases aboard a ship carrying military cargo could help jeopardize the mission and put the lives of overseas American troops at risk. He told the Subcommittee that mariners must be prioritized for vaccinations to help ensure the flow of commercial and military cargoes. Patti also highlighted the global crew change crisis and pointed out that a medical crisis at sea is now exacerbated by limited disembarkation opportunities because of rigid COVID restrictions at world ports.

The USA Maritime spokesperson also took the opportunity to tick off a list of vital concerns shared by U.S.-flag shipping interests. The Subcommittee was again reminded that U.S. sealift capability is in dangerous straits because of the shortfall in the mariner pool, the limited number of U.S.-flag vessels and the need for more cargo – components that are intrinsically linked. "We can address this shortfall in the American maritime manpower pool," he said, "by ensuring that greater amounts of government-generated and commercial cargoes move on U.S.-flag ships, thereby increasing the size of the U.S.-flag fleet and the number of American merchant mariners to crew the vessels needed to meet Department of Defense requirements."

He told the Committee that U.S.-flag shipping is encouraged by President Biden's "Buy American" Executive Order and the Chief Executive's directive to federal agencies to strictly enforce the Jones Act. He also discussed the importance of the Maritime Security Program and the need to fund the fledgling Tanker Security Fleet.

Mario Cordero, Port of Long Beach Executive Director who testified on behalf of the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), said that this past year has been "one of the most erratic and volatile years in terms of container volumes" but frontline workers have helped seaports weather the significant impacts of COVID-19. He told the Subcommittee that if we fail to take action on priority testing and vaccination of port workers, "we risk jeopardizing the fluidity of the movement of cargo." He called for additional funding for the Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program to help ports mitigate pandemic impacts.

Crowley's Michael Roberts, who testified on behalf of the American Maritime Partnership, told the Subcommittee that they can rest assured "that the American domestic maritime industry will continue to deliver the goods that are essential to our nation despite one of the most difficult work environments in a generation." He trumpeted the Jones Act and noted that the statute now applies to offshore wind development on the Outer Continental Shelf. He also repeated warnings about China's exponential growth of its commercial maritime industry that is putting U.S. national security interests at risk.

CLINIC CONTACT INFO – PROTOCOL UPDATED ON PLANS WEBSITE

As a reminder, safety precautions at the M.E.B.A. clinics during this pandemic are affecting the protocol for member visits. State emergency orders relating to COVID-19 have prompted procedural variances that could affect your current or future appointment. Members who are considering clinic visits should make sure they keep up with the latest news and information from the M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans by visiting their website at www.mebaplans.org The latest updates are posted towards the top of the page. A list of the M.E.B.A. Diagnostic Centers and alternate clinic sites follows:

M.E.B.A. Clinics – Pacific & Atlantic

M.E.B.A. Diagnostic Center

1005 Eastern Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202
410-547-9111

M.E.B.A. Diagnostic Center

548 Thomas L. Berkley Way
Oakland, CA 94611
510-663-6810

Alternate Clinic Sites – Gulf Coast

American Family Care Urgent Care-Houston

5568 Wesleyan Street
Houston, TX 77005
713-666-7050

American Family Care Urgent Care-Tampa

6182 Gunn Hwy
Tampa, FL 33625
813-960-1100

West Jefferson Industrial Medicine, LLC

107 Wall Blvd, Suite A
Gretna, LA 70058
504-433-5070

ADVISORY ISSUED FOR MARINERS NEAR LIBYA COAST

Mariners face enough challenges in the current environment, but those transiting near the coast of Libya need to keep an eye out for an additional threat. The Maritime Administration has issued an Advisory warning that U.S.-flag ships – and for that matter, any commercial vessel – transiting in waters close to that part of Africa could be potential targets for mayhem. The MarAd Advisory states that the ongoing conflict in Libya could pose a danger to commercial vessels in the form of (but not limited to) “missiles, rockets, artillery, mines, small arms, aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles.”

Maritime industry questions about the advisory can be directed to GMCC@uscg.mil Supplemental information may also be found on the MarAd Office of Maritime Security website at: <https://go.usa.gov/xUKsb>

MEMBERS SHOULD KEEP AN EYE ON THE M.E.B.A. DOCS & NOTICES SITE

Members and applicants are reminded to make use of the “Documents & Member Notices” section of the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) to find important notices and forms relating to the Union and our industry. There you’ll find hall and operational notices including announcements for upcoming online membership meetings that require a registration period. ***If a Union hall is closed for a national or local holiday, that information will be reflected in this section.*** You might want to double-check the site before making a hall visit. COVID-19 updates, NMC/Coast Guard notices are there as well as REC information and Marine Safety Information Bulletins.

In addition, you'll find application forms for Deep-Sea, Government Fleet and the various bargaining units. Also posted are Group Seniority Card application forms, Sailing Time Verification & Transmittal forms and Change of Bargaining Unit Affiliation forms. In addition, the M.E.B.A. By-Laws, Constitution and Shipping Rules are there as well as many other important documents including the Recommendation Form - (Reminder: two recommendation letters are needed from a Senior officer who sailed with the Applicant for at least 60 days.)

Please make it a habit to get familiar with that web page. To get there, go to the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) and scroll down to the large "Documents & Member Notices" box on the right side of the main page.

INTENTION TO HOLD FRC MEETING IN-PERSON

M.E.B.A. intends to host a Financial Review Committee meeting in-person at Headquarters in late April. Last year's meeting was postponed until September because of the pandemic. This year's FRC is scheduled to take place from Tuesday, April 27 through Thursday, April 29. The Committee will be comprised of six rank-and-file members who will be elected at the April membership meetings. The six-person FRC is a democratic safeguard adopted by the M.E.B.A. in the mid-1990s to examine Union finances from the previous year. Members will be elected during the April membership meetings hosted in NY/NJ, Houston, Oakland, Norfolk, Tampa and Seattle.

HALL, OFFICE CLOSINGS

The Union halls and offices are closed on Friday (2/12) in observance of Lincoln's birthday and will remain shuttered on Monday (2/15) for Presidents Day. There have been four U.S. Presidents born in February. George Washington (born Feb. 22, 1732), Abraham Lincoln (born Feb. 12, 1809), William Henry Harrison (born Feb. 9, 1773) and Ronald Reagan (born Feb. 6, 1911).

In addition, the New Orleans Union hall will be closed on Tuesday (2/16) as the city has a scaled-back Mardi Gras celebration.

ONLINE FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (All times are local)

Monday, March 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, March 9 – CMES@1430 (*CMES Meeting will be conducted in-person*); Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, March 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

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

Friday, March 12 – Honolulu@1100

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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. Visit us on Facebook. 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.