

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"

Number 14 – April 2, 2026



In this issue – New Portland, Maine Hall//MarAd Urges Ships to Disable AIS in Hotspots//NMC Notice on E-mailing MedCerts//Federal Funds for Maritime Infrastructure//ICS, ITF Concerns over Seafarer Safety//Hanwha Awarded Navy Subcontract//Maine Training Ship Delivered//Hall Closings for Good Friday, Jesse Calhoon Day (Observed)//

NEW PORTLAND, MAINE UNION HALL

The M.E.B.A. is opening up a Union hall in Portland, Maine to begin operation on May 1, 2026. M.E.B.A. retiree Bill Duffy will serve as the Representative at the new location at 2 Portland Fish Pier, Suite #302 in Portland. The hall will host a monthly Union hall meeting most likely taking place on the Tuesday of Membership meeting month. The hall will be open each weekday from 1100 to 1700.

The District Executive Committee is interested in better serving the large concentration of New England-based members in our Union. In addition to providing day-to-day operations for nearby members, the hall will also provide a vantage point to enhance recruitment efforts at Maine Maritime Academy.

Last month, Bill Duffy, who is a Maine Maritime graduate ('92), joined M.E.B.A. recruiting efforts at a Maine Maritime Career Fair and was present a few days ago when the new Training Ship STATE OF MAINE, the latest National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV), was formally delivered to the Academy on March 30th. Bill had a solid, distinguished M.E.B.A. career, first sailing as an engineer off the board out of the Boston hall, then later shipping out of the L.A. and San Francisco halls on a variety of vessels.

Contact information for the hall will be publicized once it becomes final.

MARAD ADVISORY URGES SHIPS TO DISABLE AIS IN MID EAST HOTSPOTS

The Maritime Administration issued a new Advisory (2026-006) warning of ongoing threats from the Houthis terrorist group to commercial vessels operating in the Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, and Somali Basin.

The Advisory recommends turning off AIS transponders where safe, while providing hourly position updates to NAVCENT NCAGS. Ships were advised to maintain as much distance as possible from Yemen's coastline, remain vigilant at anchor, when moving slowly, or in restricted areas, and avoid following any diversion requests or instructions from Houthis or entities claiming to be Yemeni authorities.

MarAd said evasive maneuvers can help complicate targeting, and armed security personnel may deter attacks, though vessels should never forcibly resist unauthorized boardings. Electronic signals, including Wi-Fi and some onboard systems, can reveal a vessel's location and should be secured. Extra lookouts should monitor for small boats, UAVs, or missile threats, with non-essential crew moved to safe areas if danger is observed, and small boats kept at a safe distance whenever possible. Any suspicious activity, attacks, or anomalies is to be reported immediately to NAVCENT NCAGS, UKMTO, or the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch, and vessels should monitor VHF Channel 16 and activate the Ship Security Alert System as needed.

The advisory remains in effect until September 22, 2026.

E-MAIL DELIVERY OF MEDCERTS

The National Maritime Center (NMC) began issuing medical certificates electronically via e-mail beginning yesterday, April 1, 2026. NMC notes this improves delivery speed, reliability, and accessibility by providing mariners with immediate access to their certificates. A copy of the notice can be secured from the [NMC website](#) and is also available on the M.E.B.A. website in the Member Documents & Notices section.

Questions about the changes can be answered by contacting the NMC Customer Service Center, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST, by using the [NMC online chat system](#), by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

FEDERAL FUNDS FOR MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE

The Maritime Administration (MarAd) announced \$488,628,000 in Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) funding to help revitalize American ports, shipyards and maritime capabilities. The PIDP aims to modernize America's ports and strengthen supply chains, helping reduce time and costs for shippers, and drive down the cost of goods for American families.

MarAd also announced that \$13,280,351 is being invested in 11 marine highway projects across seven states through the U.S. Marine Highway Program. The funding will support public and private partners in developing supply chains on marine highway routes — including the transportation of waste in Oregon and the improvement of barge docks in Pennsylvania — to ensure resiliency.

Finally, MarAd has announced \$35 million to upgrade ship repair and construction facilities, purchase new equipment and bolster training programs at small shipyards around the nation. Since 2008, the agency's Small Shipyard Grant Program has awarded 382 grants for \$320.5 million to equip American shipyards with the tools they need to work on American ships.

ICS, ITF FRET OVER IMPACT OF WAR ON SEAFARERS

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) have been in meetings to address the ongoing Iran conflict and its direct impact on seafarers and shipping in the Gulf. The meeting comes four weeks into the deadly conflict in which seafarers have been killed, ships have come under attack, and an estimated 20,000 seafarers remain stranded in conditions of fear and uncertainty, on ships unable to transit the Strait of Hormuz.

Discussions focused on urgent practical, joint initiatives aimed at supporting ships and crews currently impacted. These include: Introducing, as required, a reporting mechanism, via the International

Maritime Organization (IMO), for ships to highlight their most immediate concerns for resupply so this can be communicated to Gulf State partners; Recognition of seafarers as key workers in accordance with the national law and the need to prioritize their replacement onboard ships, where necessary and in accordance with the relevant international standards, to ensure that vessels in the affected region remain sufficiently manned and operational; and being able to quickly and safely disembark seafarers from vessels for medical reasons, as necessary.

These initiatives are intended to support both operational continuity for shipping and the immediate safety, protection and wellbeing of seafarers caught in the conflict zone.

HANWHA AWARDED FIRST U.S. NAVY SUBCONTRACT

Hanwha Defense USA (HDUSA) and Hanwha Philly Shipyard were awarded their first project with the U.S. Navy as a subcontractor to Vard Marine US, Inc. (VARD) on the Next Generation Logistics Ship (NGLS) Program, also referred to as the light replenishment oiler (T-AOL). This is the first U.S. Navy contract awarded to HDUSA since the company's establishment and Hanwha's acquisition of the Philly Shipyard. Since December 2024, Hanwha has invested more than \$200 million in upgrading the Philly Shipyard's workforce, capabilities, and capacity.

Under this contract, Hanwha will partner with VARD on conducting a market survey and perform a concept design and refinement for the new NGLS platform. Hanwha will also support manufacturability, commercial construction practices, and the evaluation of production costs.

The award also includes options that can be exercised for functional design planning and special studies. The NGLS will provide sustained afloat or ashore refueling, resupply and rearm capabilities within a smaller platform with the intention of focusing on commercially available, non-developmental and proven technologies.

MAINE TRAINING SHIP DELIVERED

The National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) STATE OF MAINE was officially delivered to Maine Maritime Academy on March 30, completing the transition of operational control from the U.S. Maritime Administration (MarAd) to the school.

STATE OF MAINE is one of five NSMVs replacing the aging training ships used by the nation's maritime academies. In addition to serving as advanced training platforms, the vessels are built to support federal missions during humanitarian emergencies.

At Maine Maritime Academy, the ship will function as the institution's next-generation training vessel — its first purpose-built ship of this kind. Equipped with two full-mission bridges and two engine rooms, it significantly expands opportunities for hands-on instruction. It is also the largest and most sophisticated vessel ever operated by the academy.

UPCOMING HOLIDAY CLOSINGS; GOOD FRIDAY, JESSE CALHOON DAY (OBSERVED)

Union halls and offices will be closed tomorrow (4/3) for Good Friday. Officials and some staffers can still be reached by cellphone and email during the lead-in to Easter weekend. Saturday April 4 is "Jesse Calhoon Day," an M.E.B.A.-exclusive holiday honoring the Union's longest serving President. M.E.B.A. Union halls will observe the day on Monday and thus halls will be closed on April 6.

Throughout his presidency (1963-1985), Jesse used his political savvy coupled with shrewd negotiating to win unprecedented gains for members and safeguard American maritime jobs at large. He vigorously fought for legislation to protect thousands of U.S. mariner jobs and helped ensure the continued viability of the U.S. maritime industry. Among many other achievements under Calhoon's administration, the Union established the training school which bears his name, launched the American Maritime Congress (then known as the Joint Maritime Congress), merged the deep-sea districts, Pacific Coast District and District 1 into a single all coast unit, and transformed M.E.B.A.'s pension plan into the best in the maritime industry. Born on April 4, 1923, Jesse made his final voyage on October 22, 2013 at the age of 90.

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

Monday, April 6 – **Closed - Jesse Calhoon Day (Observed)**

Tuesday, April 7 – **Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Wednesday, April 8 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, April 9 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, April 10 – **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. Website: www.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. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org