

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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M.E.B.A. PUSH TO REPRESENT ATC DECK OFFICERS GOES TO NLRB REPRESENTATION ELECTION

In a win for the M.E.B.A., Deck Officers serving on the three Alaska Tanker Company vessels have been granted the right to choose if they want collective bargaining rights and the advantage of union membership. The National Labor Relations Board has approved a Representation Election next month that will allow ATC Deck Officers to choose between the M.E.B.A., MM&P or to remain non-union.

The NLRB issued a ruling today clearing the way for the election that will begin on September 19 and conclude with an NLRB ballot count to take place on January 18, 2024.

ATC had argued that Chief Mates aboard the vessels should be deemed "supervisors" under the National Labor Relations Act and therefore should not be included in the election. However, the NLRB ruling rejected that argument and formalized the mail ballot representation election - that will not include Vessel Masters - but covers Chief Mates, Floating Chief Mates, Second Mates and Third Mates on the ships.

Earlier this year, M.E.B.A. began efforts to organize the non-union Deck Officers onboard the ATC U.S.-flag tanker fleet. The Engine Officers in the fleet are already represented by the M.E.B.A. The vessels include the ALASKAN EXPLORER, ALASKAN LEGEND and ALASKAN NAVIGATOR.

M.E.B.A. has a lot to offer the ATC Deck Officers with the best contracts in the maritime industry - the highest paying jobs, most protective work rules and best benefits. The Union is looking forward to welcoming the ATC Deck Officers into the fold and rewarding them with the gold standard of union membership that our current M.E.B.A. members enjoy.

The M.E.B.A. is asking our members, applicants and retirees who know Deck Officers working with ATC to assist with our efforts to bring this over the finish line.

M.E.B.A. SECURES LONG AWAITED STATEN ISLAND FERRY CONTRACT

After 13 years of negotiations, the M.E.B.A. and the City of New York have finally reached an agreement on a new contract. This landmark deal will have significant implications for the Staten Island Ferry, as it brings the wages of all officers (Deck and Engine) in line with industry standards. The M.E.B.A. represents all five officer titles at the Staten Island Ferry (Captain, Chief Engineer, Marine Engineer, Assistant Captain and Mate) and all of those titles have been without a contract for over 13 years.

Previously, these officers were being paid significantly less than their counterparts at other ferry operations around the country. This wage adjustment not only recognizes the skills and expertise of the ferry officers but also ensures fair compensation for their work and should relieve recruiting and retention issues that are currently plaguing the ferry system. If ratified, this would make the Staten Island ferry the highest paying public ferry system in the country.

The agreement also includes a retroactive payment of wages to the engineers as part of a settlement of a prevailing wage determination that the M.E.B.A. won on behalf of its members in August of 2022. That ALJ determination required the city to pay Maersk Chief Engineer and 1st Engineer wages retroactively and going forward. This means that they will receive compensation for the difference between their previous wages and Maersk wages, dating back to the start of the 13-year negotiation period.

The Union also secured large increases above the city pattern for the deck titles that were not part of the prevailing wage determination - this also includes retroactive payments dating back to 2010.

The contract has been put out to the bargaining unit for a ratification vote. Voting began on Tuesday and will conclude tomorrow at noon.

KEYSTONE WINS BID TO SUPPLEMENT NOAA ENGINEERS

Keystone Ocean Services, Inc. was the winning bidder for a contract to provide augmenting marine engineers for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) fleet of 15 research vessels. M.E.B.A. engineers will be dispatched to backfill for NOAA employees absent from the ships, to assist in port for routine maintenance and repairs, and to fulfill staffing requirements. The vessels perform fisheries research, nautical chartering and ocean and climate studies worldwide. This is a five-year contract if all options are exercised.

M.E.B.A. is pleased that NOAA placed its trust in M.E.B.A.-represented Keystone Ocean Services, Inc. to provide our highly trained, dedicated, and technically competent marine engineers to ensure that NOAA will continue to fulfill their critical mission requirements. The MOU will be sent to the M.E.B.A. Union halls by the end of the week.

GGF MEMBERS APPROVE MORE EQUITABLE DUES STRUCTURE

The District Executive Committee thanks our members sailing in the Golden Gate Ferry bargaining unit who exercised their right to vote in their just-concluded 4-week long Online Dues Equity Referendum. M.E.B.A. GGF members approved a revamped dues structure tied into their base wages that more closely mirrors the dues structure at other inland bargaining units.

M.E.B.A. represents Vessel Masters at the bargaining unit. The seven vessels in the fleet run between the Golden Gate terminal in San Francisco, CA to Larkspur, Sausalito and Tiburon. The current contract runs until June 30, 2024. Oakland Patrolman Max Alper kept GGF members informed throughout the process. 76% of M.E.B.A. members working in the unit participated in the online vote.

The bargaining unit's approval of the dues increase provides the M.E.B.A. the resources necessary to sustain the Union's ability to represent the GGF membership for the foreseeable future at the level they deserve.

ARMY CORPS HOPPER DREDGE CREW PART OF DRAMATIC RESCUE

Last Thursday around 1400, M.E.B.A. engineers aboard the Army Corps of Engineers Hopper Dredge YAQUINA were part of a team effort in the unlikely rescue of a woman who had plunged into the Columbia River and was seemingly headed toward an appointment with Davy Jones' Locker. But Boatswain Brian Marshall and AB/Deck Mechanic Tanner Ensworth heard a faint cry as they were having a conversation at the launch davit control station on deck. Scanning the river, they were able to spot a person about ¼ mile from the vessel being swept away by the current and strong winds. The Ship's Bridge was alerted and the crew's training kicked into action.

Acting Master Erich Krueck oversaw an immediate rescue operation, the alarm was sounded and all shipboard personnel responded to their MOB (Man Over Board) station bill assignments. Every crew member pulled together to respond to the desperate situation and the Fast Rescue Boat was prepared and deployed. They managed to catch up to the victim, pull her out of the water and bring her onto the YAQUINA. The Master reported that she had pale skin and blue lips, was stuttering and struggling to communicate and appeared to be in a hypothermic state.

YAQUINA crew began medical treatment and coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard and Emergency Services. Crewmembers eventually carried her onto the launch and transported her to Steamboat Landing Park Boat Dock in Washougal, Washington where EMS services were onsite. The victim was transferred to an ambulance and whisked off to further treatment. Eventually it was learned the lady had been strolling on a sand bar when she got swept into the river. She would have met an unhappy fate on that day if not for the expert crewmembers onboard the YAQUINA. The Captain credited every one of the vessel crew who all played a role in the dramatic rescue. From the time the victim was spotted bobbing in the water until she was safely aboard the vessel under medical care took only about 9 minutes.

M.E.B.A. crew aboard the vessel included Chief Engineer Eric Risheim, 1st A/E Tom Martincello, 2nd A/E Michael Lange, and 3rd A/E Matt Carlsen.

FIRST OF MSC'S NEWBUILD TOWING/SALVAGE SHIPS IS CHRISTENED

The lead vessel in the Military Sealift Command's next-generation towing, salvage and rescue ships was christened last weekend at Bollinger Shipyards in Houma, LA.

The USNS NAVAJO is the first of ten planned newbuilds that will replace the aging Powhatan-class ocean tugs and Safeguard-class rescue and salvage ships in the Military Sealift Command fleet. The Navajo-class vessels will provide a wide range of missions including open ocean towing, oil spill response, humanitarian assistance, search and rescue and surveillance.

NLRB MAKES IT HARDER TO UNION-BUST

The National Labor Relations Board issued a decision last week that creates a new framework for determining when employers are required to bargain with unions without a representation election. NLRB said this ruling will both effectuate employees' right to bargain through representatives of their own choosing and improve the fairness and integrity of Board-conducted elections.

Under the new framework, when a union requests recognition on the basis that a majority of employees in an appropriate bargaining unit have designated the union as their representative, an employer must either recognize and bargain with the union or promptly file a Representation petition seeking an election. However, if an employer who seeks an election commits any unfair labor practice that would require setting aside the election, the petition will be dismissed, and—rather than re-running the election—the Board will order the employer to recognize and bargain with the union. The Board explained that the revised framework represents an effort to better effectuate employees' right to bargain through their chosen representative, while acknowledging that employers have the option to invoke the statutory provision allowing them to pursue a Board election. When employers pursue this option, the new standard will promote a fair election environment by more effectively disincentivizing employers from committing unfair labor practices.

PANAMA CANAL WILL CONTINUE DROUGHT RESTRICTIONS

The Panama Canal will continue to uphold ongoing measures restricting daily vessel transit and maximum draft for another 10 months in response to an ongoing drought affecting water levels. The drought has led to substantial ship backups and delays at the Canal. Over the past few dry months, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) has restricted the number of vessels permitted to traverse the Canal. Additionally, limitations have been imposed on the depth of ships while navigating the canal, thus reducing the volume of cargo they can carry. The drought has diminished the amount of available water used to fill the canal locks, which require 101,000 cubic meters of water to fill. The water is drawn from nearby lakes. As a consequence of the situation and ACP limitations imposed earlier this year, companies have been compelled to reduce cargo loads or opt for alternative routes, triggering escalated freight expenses. Wait times for ships arriving at the canal have extended from hours to numerous weeks, as reported by S&P Global. In response, several private shipping firms have reportedly introduced additional charges for clients moving merchandise via the Canal.

MARAD WARNS ON CHINESE THREAT TO MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE

The Maritime Administration has issued a Maritime Security Communication with Industry (MSCI - No. 2023-009) to warn of potential threats to maritime infrastructure by a Chinese-supported logistics management platform. MarAd advises that it is within the realm of possibility that potential vulnerabilities in maritime port equipment, networks, operating systems, software, and infrastructure could endanger ports that utilize the Chinese-backed National Public Information Platform for Transportation and Logistics (LOGINK), Nuctech scanners, and automated port cranes worldwide. LOGINK is a single-window logistics management platform that aggregates logistics data from various sources - including domestic and foreign ports, foreign logistics networks, hundreds of thousands of users in the People's Republic of China, and other public databases. At least 24 global ports have cooperation agreements with LOGINK, which has the ability to collect massive amounts of sensitive business and foreign government data, such as corporate registries and vessel and cargo data. The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC) recently identified this ability as a threat to the United States and reported that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) plans

to use LOGINK to strengthen its influence over international maritime trade and port infrastructure. LOGINK's installation and utilization in critical port infrastructure very likely provides the PRC access to and/or collection of sensitive logistics data.

MarAd put forth a series of recommendations and asked those who discover related compromised or suspicious activity to contact the Coast Guard's National Response Center, Cyber Command or FBI Cyber Division. The notice has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website in the Documents & Member Notices section.

A FEW SLOTS OPEN FOR UPCOMING DIESEL ENGINEERING COURSE

There is still space available in the upcoming Diesel Engineering class that will be conducted at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School from September 11 to October 20. The six-week course delves into theory, construction, operation, and maintenance of main propulsion and auxiliary diesel engines, engine control systems, and related auxiliary equipment.

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org), faxed to (410) 822-7220, or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

HALLS, OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY FOR LABOR DAY

M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Labor Day - Monday, Sept. 4th, but will reopen on Tuesday. Union halls which usually have their regular membership meetings on the Monday of meeting week (Boston & Seattle) will instead conduct their meetings on Tuesday, September 5th at the regular time. Labor Day is observed on the first Monday in September to pay tribute to the contributions and achievements of everyday working families. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated in New York City on Tuesday, September 5, 1882. Following the deaths of 13 workers during the Pullman Strike in June of 1894, President Grover Cleveland made reconciliation with the labor movement a top political priority, and Labor Day become a federal holiday in 1894.

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

Monday, September 4 – **Labor Day – All Halls Closed.**

Tuesday, September 5 – **Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300**

Wednesday, September 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, September 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, September 8 – **Honolulu@1100.**

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***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.***