

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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## **\$80 MILLION FOR S.I. FERRY; NYCDOT URGED TO COMPENSATE CREWS**

Sen. Chuck Schumer announced that almost \$80 million in "unobligated" federal COVID relief funds, initially earmarked for Staten Island Ferry operations, will not be rescinded as some Members of Congress intended. During a press conference yesterday at New York's St. George Ferry terminal, the Senate Majority Leader said he reached an agreement to protect those funds - as a result of the recent debt limit negotiations - and he celebrated that the money will, in fact, be infused into the beleaguered ferry system.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha also spoke at the Staten Island, NY press conference and pointed out that the money should be used to fairly compensate underappreciated mariners in the fleet, a plan supported by Sen. Schumer. It has been more than 12 years since crewmembers had a pay increase and the NYC Department of Transportation continues to offer below-market compensation for its mariners.

NYCDOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez, New York State Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton and NYC Councilwoman Kamillah Hanks were also in attendance at the press conference, among others. During his remarks, Rex lauded the expert crews that keep the ferry running and called for them to finally receive the compensation they deserve. Underpaid workers in the fleet have sought opportunities elsewhere through the years and the City's inability to attract and retain qualified mariners has created numerous service disruptions.

Scarcella-Spanton noted that, "Our ferry is an essential service for all Staten Islanders and in order for them to run, we need the workers and we need for them to be paid."

That sentiment was also echoed by Councilwoman Hanks who pointed out that, "the Ferry is crucial and we need to make sure our workers are taken care of."

## **AMHS FERRY GETS OVERDUE CHRISTENING**

Nine years after its construction began and a month after it debuted, the newest addition to the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) received an official christening ceremony, presided over by the Governor's wife, Rose Dunleavy. Originally planned as a vessel for day trips when construction began in 2014, the M/V HUBBARD underwent modifications following its completion in 2018 to

allow it to sail continuously. It returned to the yard and crew quarters were added to accommodate routes that extend beyond regular employee working hours. The M/V HUBBARD and the M/V TAZLINA are the only vessels in the fleet built in Alaska (Vigor Shipyard in Ketchikan).

Commencing operation in late May, HUBBARD serves the route connecting Juneau, Haines, and Skagway in a daily circuit, excluding Mondays. The vessel is 280 feet long, seats up to 300 passengers and carries 53 standard vehicles. Onboard amenities include observation lounges with comfortable chairs, a covered heated solarium, a cafeteria-style cafe, a children's play area and a quiet room.

### **NAVY/MSC WILL FURTHER EXPAND FLEET OF NEWBUILD TOWING/SALVAGE SHIPS**

The U.S. Navy is putting different shipyards to work in constructing next-generation towing, salvage and rescue ships that will replace the aging Powhatan-class ocean tugs and Safeguard-class rescue and salvage ships in the Military Sealift Command fleet.

It was recently announced that Austal USA will be tasked with building an additional vessel in the new Navajo class, their fifth such ship and the tenth in the series. Gulf Island Fabrication, recently purchased by Bollinger Shipyards, is constructing the first three vessels in the series, the USNS NAVAJO, USNS CHEROKEE NATION and the USNS SAGINAW OJIBWE ANISHINABEK. They launched the USNS NAVAJO last month. Bollinger Shipyards is working on the LENNI LENAPE and MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION.

Austal will now construct five vessels in the class. The yard has already begun work on two of the vessels, as yet unnamed, and construction will commence on two others later this year. Work on the newly announced vessel will begin next year with delivery planned in late 2027.

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.

### **SHIPYARD CEREMONY CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF NEW SUNY VESSEL**

The first newbuild Academy training ship in the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) program was officially named and christened this week at Philly Shipyard. The beautiful new EMPIRE STATE VII will replace SUNY Maritime's EMPIRE STATE VI which was built as the SS OREGON for States Line in 1961. M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha attended the ceremony for the Union and American Maritime Congress President Fair Kim also took part. The ship will be delivered to SUNY this summer.

Four other NSMVs are in various stages of construction at the yard and will replace aging training vessels at four other maritime academies. The PATRIOT STATE II will replace Massachusetts Maritime's 54+-year old TS KENNEDY next year. Maine Maritime's NSMV will be ready for action in late 2024. The fourth newbuild is slotted for Texas A&M Maritime Academy and should be completed in 2025. The fifth will go to the California State University Maritime Academy (CMA) and delivery is set to take place in 2026.

### **HOLLYWOOD UNREST: SCREEN ACTORS GUILD COULD STRIKE**

The 160,000 union members represented by the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) could go on strike on Saturday if company heads don't

address industry issues by then. Hollywood actors are the face of the union but SAG-AFTRA also includes announcers, broadcast journalists, dancers, DJs, news writers, news editors, program hosts, puppeteers, recording artists, singers, stunt performers, voiceover artists and other media professionals. They are bargaining with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers which includes major studios and streamers such as Amazon and MGM, Apple, NBC Universal, Disney, which owns ABC and Fox, Netflix, Paramount and CBS, Sony, and Warner Bros.

SAG-AFTRA Executive Director Duncan Crabtree-Ireland said, "...Inflation, dwindling residuals due to streaming, and generative AI all threaten actors' ability to earn a livelihood if our contracts are not adapted to reflect the new realities." Almost 98% of union members voted to authorize a strike if the AMPTP fails to address their concerns when the contract expires at midnight on June 30.

In related news, the 16,000+ members of the Directors Guild of America – representing directors, assistant directors, unit production managers, associate directors and stage managers - ratified a new agreement with studios and streamers. Among other things, the new pact increases international streaming residuals, adjusts scale minimums to accommodate inflation, and safeguards human jobs against replacement by Artificial Intelligence.

The Writer's Guild of America - representing writers in motion pictures, television, cable, digital media, and broadcast news – are in their third month on strike against the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. The WGA is looking for increased minimum compensation in all areas of media, including streaming, artificial intelligence guardrails and better working conditions.

### **RELY ON UNIONS TO CELEBRATE AMERICA THIS WEEK**

Backyard grilling, warm weather, and fireworks are best enjoyed when you support unions and help give a voice to workers. Here's a list of union-made July 4<sup>th</sup> drinks, snacks, and more so you can support companies that treat workers fairly:

**Union Beer** - Budweiser (IBT, IAM); Beck's (IAM); Coors (IUOE, IBT); Michelob (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Miller Genuine Draft (UAW, IAM, IUOE, IBT); Stella Artois (IAM). **Union Soft Drinks** - Coca-Cola (UAW); 7 Up (BCTGM); A&W (BCTGM); Dr. Pepper (UFCW, UAW). **Union Coolers** - Rubbermaid (IBEW). **Union Sunscreen** - Bain de Soleil (AFGE); Coppertone (IBT). **Union Hot Dogs** - Ball Park (UFCW, IBT); Hebrew National (IBT, UFCW); Hormel (IBT); Oscar Mayer (UFCW, IBT). **Union Ice Cream** - Good Humor (IBT); Prairie Farms (IBT). **Union Snacks** - Cheez-It (BCTGM); Fritos (BCTGM); Mission Tortilla Chips (IBT); Ritz (BCTGM); Ruffles (BCTGM); Sun Chips (BCTGM, IBT); Triscuit (BCTGM); Wheat Thins (BCTGM, IBT).

### **M.E.B.A. HQ ONLINE MEETING ON WEDNESDAY – SIGN UP NOW**

The monthly town-hall style M.E.B.A. Headquarters informational meeting will be held online utilizing "Teams" - with no voting and no resolutions introduced - on Wednesday, July 5 at 1300 (Eastern Time). This is not an actual membership meeting, but it is an excellent opportunity for Members, Applicants and Retirees to discuss M.E.B.A. business, exchange information and learn more about the latest Union initiatives. Members, applicants and retirees need to register in advance for this meeting to [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org) When registering for the Online HQ Informational Meeting, provide your full name and proof of good standing - such as your last dues receipt/service charge number or statement that you are enrolled in Dues Check-Off (DCO) with a particular

bargaining unit. Retirees should provide their full name and indicate their retired status. Upon confirmation of your status, the Teams access link will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting.

**HALLS CLOSED TUESDAY FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY; WEST HALLS  
CLOSED WEDNESDAY FOR BLOODY THURSDAY; MEETING DAYS SHIFT**

The schedule for the regular July membership meetings gets a little screwy with a pair of holidays next week. M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Tuesday, July 4 for Independence Day. West Coast halls will continue to be shuttered on Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup> in observance of “Bloody Thursday.”

Bloody Thursday commemorates the 1934 longshoremen labor action led by Harry Bridges that culminated in street fighting and clashes with police. Hundreds were injured and several were killed in the riots that came to a head on July 5, 1934. Following a general strike and federal intervention, the longshoremen won a coast-wide contract, union hiring halls, and various improvements to wages and conditions.

Because of the holidays, the CMES, Charleston and Houston membership meetings for July will be held on Wednesday and the Oakland meeting shifts all the way to Thursday (see the schedule below).

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

Monday, July 3 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, July 4 – ***Independence Day* – All Halls Closed**

Wednesday, July 5 – ***“Bloody Thursday”* - CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

Thursday, July 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Oakland@1230; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, July 7 – **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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*