

# 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"*

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### **BIDEN BUDGET PROPOSES FULL FUNDING FOR MSP, TANKER PROGRAM**

U.S.-flag shipping interests were encouraged that the President's budget plan for Fiscal Year 2022, released on Friday, includes full funding for both the Maritime Security Program and the Tanker Security Program. The President's \$6 trillion budget is an outline that signals the launch of the months-long Congressional budget process.

The Administration is supporting full funding for the MSP in the budget which works out to \$318 million for FY '22. The President proposed full funding (\$60 million) for the launch of the Tanker Security Program, a fleet of 10 commercial U.S.-flag petroleum product tankers modeled after the Maritime Security Program. The program would fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense and is strongly supported by the U.S. Transportation Command. The TSP would support our nation's long-term strategic defense needs and reduce the U.S. military's reliance on foreign-flag commercial vessels while also expanding the qualified mariner pool.

The President proposed \$480 million in federal funding for a new lock at Michigan's Soo Locks to keep vessel traffic on the Great Lakes flowing freely. The budget also recommends \$6.793 billion in discretionary funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program, the largest ever proposed for the Corps.

The Biden budget slots \$315.6 million to continue funding the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) program that will enable the construction of the fifth and final new training vessel that would go to the California Maritime Academy. The President proposed that an additional \$30 million be reserved for the maritime academies to keep their aging training vessels in sailing condition until the newbuilds replace them. The first vessel of the new multi-mission vessels will replace the 60-year old SUNY training ship EMPIRE STATE VI in early 2023. The second will replace the 53-year old TS KENNEDY at Massachusetts Maritime Academy. The third and fourth will go to Maine Maritime Academy and Texas A&M Maritime Academy, respectively. Each ship will be capable of supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in times of need. They are being constructed at Philly Shipyard, in Philadelphia, PA.

### **SSA FLEET SAILS ON AS TICKETING/RESERVATION PROCESS SLOWED BY RANSOMWARE HACK**

The Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket Steamship Authority (SSA) is trying to overcome Wednesday's cyber-attack that is hampering ticketing and reservation operations and creating plenty

of headaches. Hackers appear to have infiltrated some of the Authority's land-based computer networks with a ransomware attack that is currently causing delays for customers. The vessels have not been affected and continue to complete their runs. The Authority's website was knocked off line and officials were looking for workarounds for reservations, parking and payroll and trying to make sure passengers are accommodated until systems can be restored.

The Authority was relying on social media to post vessel schedules and urged customers to use cash instead of credit cards when making reservations. A message they issued today noted, "At this point, customers remain unable to book or change reservations online or by phone, and the use of cash is recommended as there is limited access to credit card systems at some terminal and parking locations. We thank our customers for their patience today..."

In related news, M.E.B.A. recently began negotiations with SSA for a new contract. The current agreement expires at the end of July. Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan and Boston Representative Stuart Fay head up bargaining for the Union along with a rank-and-file team. M.E.B.A. has represented the engineers in the SSA fleet since the mid-1960s.

### **M.E.B.A. HQ ONLINE MEETING ON WEDNESDAY; HALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE IN-PERSON**

As an additional reminder, the monthly Union hall membership meetings will be held in-person next week. The monthly town-hall style Headquarters informational meeting will be held online – with no voting and no resolutions introduced - on Wednesday June 9 at 1300 (Eastern Time). This is not an actual membership meeting but it is a terrific opportunity for Members, Applicants and Retirees to discuss M.E.B.A. business, exchange information and learn more about the latest Union initiatives.

President Adam Vokac will chair the meeting, and several other Union officers and key point persons will be on hand for a productive discussion. Members, applicants and retirees will need to register in advance for this meeting to [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org) Participants can register for the meeting up until the morning of June 9.

***When registering for the Online Headquarters Informational Meeting you must 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 Zoom access link will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting.

### **SHIPS WILL SOUND OFF ON 'DAY OF THE SEAFARER'**

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), along with industry partners, are encouraging ships in ports around the world to sound their horns at 12 noon local time on June 25<sup>th</sup> in honor of the International Maritime Organizations' 'Day of the Seafarer', to remind the world of the urgent need to vaccinate all seafarers.

Last year's campaign brought the crew change crisis to the world's attention. Almost a year on, the number of crew impacted by the governments' border restrictions has been cut in half to 200,000. However, deadly second waves in India and other countries are seeing a return to travel bans for seafarers. Access to vaccines is also a pressing issue; over half of the international seafarer workforce stems from developing nations that have limited vaccine supplies.

**MAKE SURE YOUR DOCUMENTS ARE IN ORDER FOR JOB CALL**

*It is the responsibility of members and applicants to have all their necessary documentation in-hand ahead of time for job call.*

Those who have recently upgraded their license should make sure their STCW reflects the upgrade. Your license, passport and other important documents should be valid for at least six months from the time you begin working aboard ship. Your drug-free certificates have to be valid at least until the day you join your ship.

If flying with your documents on the way to a hall, double-check that you haven't left any essential documents at home and make sure to keep your docs with you in your carry-on luggage. The primary documents you'll need include your Merchant Mariner Credential with current STCW, VSO or VPDSO endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Annual M.E.B.A. physical card, Drug-free Certificate, Group Card and Dues Receipt. Permanent or relief employees should get their company clearance to the hall ahead of time. Work with the Military Sealift Command will require security clearances.

As you should know, no one can be dispatched to a job while on vacation or while receiving a paid vacation benefit without a waiver. The Union requires a return to work date when clearing for a vessel so make sure you have your vacation pay and vacation carry over statements, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of Return to Work. It should also be noted that failure to obtain prior Union permission to return to work early, before the return to work date as listed on your carry-over or vacation statement, will subject you to a penalty.

Remember, a member or applicant cannot be dispatched for a job requiring STCW credentials if the Coast Guard Medical Certificate is due to expire prior to the completion of the job called. Members are encouraged to have their paperwork for the USCG Medical Certificate completed and to submit it for renewal at every annual physical in order to avoid an issue at job call. Certain jobs require proof of benzene or shot records, MSC Physical and MSC courses, GMDSS, High Voltage/Marine Propulsion, Crowd Control, Welding, or other courses to satisfy company requirements.

Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. Keep your documents with you at all times when travelling and NEVER leave them in your car. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic. If you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

**DETAILS FINALIZED FOR UPCOMING FUNDRAISER,  
DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT AT CMES**

All systems are go for the upcoming M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF) Fundraiser and Disc Golf Tournament on Thursday, June 17. The Fundraiser will benefit the Memorial Park at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School and a portion of the proceeds will benefit the M.E.B.A. Good & Welfare Fund.

As you know, the Memorial was created to honor fallen seafarers who have delivered the goods and answered the call of this country since 1775. The Foundation supporting the Memorial is a section 501(c)(3) entity under Internal Revenue Service rules, so all donations are tax deductible. The G&W fund is used to help active and retired members and their families in times of need.

The event will include a silent auction, a 50/50 raffle, the first annual Leroy Koehler Disc Golf Tournament, music and fun. There is a \$25 entry fee for the tournament which will begin at 11 a.m. The after party and silent auction will take place at 4 p.m.

The 4MF is still accepting donations and hole sponsorships. To participate in the disc golf tournament or for further information, contact 4MF Chairman Bill Van Loo at (443) 676-6248 or [bvanloo@bvlworks.org](mailto:bvanloo@bvlworks.org)

### **MAKE SURE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS ON FILE!!!**

Members and applicants should make sure that M.E.B.A. Headquarters has your e-mail address along with your other contact information. If you haven't filled out an M.E.B.A. Database Update Form – or if your information has changed – grab the form off the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) located in the “Documents & Member Notices” section. Update Forms should be sent to the HQ Membership Dept. by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org) The HQ database is NOT LINKED to the databases at the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore OR the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School.

To update your information with Plans, you can find a change of address form on the Plans website ([www.mebaplans.org](http://www.mebaplans.org)) under “Forms & Documents” and “Member Services Forms”.

### **JUNE MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – ALL *REGULAR* MEETINGS ARE IN-PERSON**

*(All times are local)*

**Monday, June 7** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300.

**Tuesday, June 8** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

**Wednesday, June 9** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300** (No voting) – **sign up by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

**Thursday, June 10** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

**Friday, June 11** – *King Kamehameha Day (Honolulu Hall Closed)*

**Monday, June 14** – Honolulu@1100

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



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