

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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NATIONAL M.E.B.A. CONVENTION: HONORING TRADITION & POWERING AHEAD

For the 114th time in our Union's history, Delegates, officials and guests gathered at the National M.E.B.A. Convention to discuss plans to work toward a stronger and more prosperous future. 17 elected Delegates fulfilled a constitutional duty and carried on a proud tradition on Tuesday at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School in a productive all-day discussion of both National and District business.

The National M.E.B.A. is an administrative umbrella organization that was restructured in the 1960s to house M.E.B.A. Districts. It has no paid employees and holds no contracts. As members know, there is currently only one District under the National M.E.B.A. which is District No. 1-PCD, M.E.B.A. The District holds and controls all the assets of the M.E.B.A. membership whereas the National holds the charter with the AFL-CIO. National Conventions are conducted every four years, aligned with the District election cycle. The District is governed by its own By-Laws, but is also beholden to the National Constitution and the Constitution for Districts.

During the Convention, Delegates honored the past with tributes to our great Union as we celebrate our 150th anniversary. National M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac hosted the one-day event and provided some historical context to Delegates and attendees as to how the Union has progressed through the years from the organization's founding on the shores of the Great Lakes in 1875.

At each Convention, a new five-person National Executive Committee (NEC) is elected. National President Adam Vokac continues in that position by virtue of his win in the District election. For the next four years the NEC will once again mirror the District Executive Committee as District Executive Vice President Max Alper was elected as National Vice President, District Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha was elected as National Secretary-Treasurer and the two additional positions were filled by District Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan and District Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith, who were elected as NEC Members.

Although much of the business of the day focused on the National M.E.B.A. and the "ritualistic" agenda of the National Convention, a segment in the Order of Business laid out in the Constitution is dedicated to District affairs. This afforded Delegates the opportunity to hear reports delivered by

the District Executive Committee and discuss day-to-day Union business and items of interest. In addition, John Paul Smith, the Executive Assistant to AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond addressed Delegates and guests.

20 National Delegates were elected during the 2024 District election, though three were not able to attend the Convention. They are comprised of a mixture of Union officials and rank-and-file members and included National President Adam Vokac, National Vice President Max Alper, National Secretary-Treasurer Roland “Rex” Rexha, NEC Member Jason Callahan, NEC Member Adam Smith, Torey Zingales, Kevin Cross, Nicole Greenway, Craig Moran, Chris Coombs, Jacob LeBeouf, Kenny Smith, Jack Menendez, Doug Berdel, Terence Cooper, Chris Nardone, Mark Gallagher, Mark Collins, April Fleischer and Conor Golden.

BLACKBURN/LEE BILL WOULD BAN FEDERAL WORKER UNIONS, VOID UNION CONTRACTS

A bill introduced this week by two Senators would put an end to federal labor unions and immediately terminate their collective bargaining agreements. Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah) introduced the “Federal Workforce Freedom Act” to put a stop to collective bargaining agreements between federal agencies and labor unions. A statement said the bill would “ensure the federal government is working on behalf of the American people – not labor unions – by increasing the productivity of its workforce.”

The bill introduction follows the Trump administration’s recent move to end collective bargaining at the Transportation Security Administration.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25.3% of the federal employee workforce are members of public sector unions. The largest organizations include the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the National Treasury Employees Union, and the National Federation of Federal Employees. The M.E.B.A. Government fleet – the Military Sealift Command, NOAA and Army Corps - would be affected if this legislation were to pass into law, as well as M.E.B.A. affiliate the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS).

The Federal Workforce Freedom Act would repeal the statutory framework that currently governs federal labor relations; Prohibit federal employees from being allowed to organize, join, or participate in labor unions for the purposes of collective bargaining or representation; Ban federal agencies from engaging in collective bargaining negotiations with labor unions on behalf of federal employees; and immediately terminate all collective bargaining agreements, whether established before, on, or after the date of enactment of this bill, and dismiss any arbitration, dispute resolution, or grievance proceeding related to the collective bargaining agreements.

The bill, S. 1006, was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

START OF GREAT LAKES SHIPPING SEASON

This Friday marks the official start of the 2025 Great Lakes shipping season, as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opens the Poe Lock (part of the Soo Locks) in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan to all marine traffic at 8 a.m.

Federal regulation establishes the shipping season based on the feasibility of vessels operating during typical Great Lakes ice conditions. The locks officially closed after the last vessel of the 2024 season on January 16, to undergo critical repairs and maintenance during the 10-week-long winter shutdown. Maintenance crews performed a variety of critical tasks on the Poe Lock during the break. The MacArthur Lock, located south of the Poe, will remain closed for maintenance until April.

NAUTILUS FEDERATION REPORT ON RECRUITMENT/RETENTION

The Nautilus Federation, a group of 21 global trade unions in shipping and inland waterways transport, has released a new report on recruitment and retention of seafarers, and hopes to prompt the industry to act on the issue.

The results, which are drawn from an analysis of more than 20 academic studies from leading institutions, clearly show that three main emerging themes influence the recruitment and retention of seafarers: The importance of job satisfaction, career progression and good working conditions; Respect, involvement and commitment shown by employers; and the provision of adequate communication facilities.

In light of these findings, the report presents clear solutions to improve recruitment and retention, including: improving onboard living conditions; addressing workload and stress issues by reducing hours of work, increasing rest hours, and promoting a culture of mutual respect and work-life balance; encouraging women and people from all walks of life to pursue seafaring careers; implementing career advancement pathways and opportunities for life-long learning and training; and supporting international initiatives to address the seafarer shortage, with better collaboration on this issue between industry, government and trade unions.

“We hope this will be the last report of its kind, as we have spent many years discussing the recruitment and retention crisis. This study shows that we have the answers: the time now is for action,” said Nautilus Federation coordinator Danny McGowan. The full report is available to download from the Nautilus Federation website - www.nautilusfederation.org.

U.S. WIDENS STRIKES ON HOUTHIS

The U.S. will continue striking Yemen’s Houthis until they cease attacks on shipping, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Sunday. The Iran-backed group warned of escalation after U.S. airstrikes killed at least 53 people. Hegseth stated the campaign would end once the Houthis stopped targeting ships and drones. The strikes, aimed at securing maritime trade, hit Houthi military sites and leadership areas. The M.E.B.A. condemns the previous uncalled for attacks on our civilian mariners and strongly supports this action - it was long overdue.

Since November 2023, Houthi militants in Yemen have conducted drone and missile attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandab Strait, and Gulf of Aden, citing support for Palestinians in the Gaza conflict as their motive. The U.S. and its partners have launched hundreds of targeted strikes against the rebels since January 2024, but these latest U.S. airstrikes signal a heightened effort to neutralize the Houthi threat.

Iran warned of retaliation, while denying direct control over the Houthis, while Russia urged restraint. President Trump called on Iran to stop supporting the group, vowing consequences if threats persisted.

KEEL LAYING FOR CAL MARITIME NSMV

Hanwha Philly Shipyard recently celebrated the keel laying of the fifth and final vessel in the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) program, that will become the new training ship for California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) upon its completion. In addition to providing best-in-class training for America's future mariners, the NSMVs will be available to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need.

The first and second NSMVs, EMPIRE STATE (SUNY) & the PATRIOT STATE II (Massachusetts Maritime), were delivered in September 2023 and 2024, respectively. The three remaining vessels, including the unnamed fifth ship, are currently in various stages of construction at Hanwha Philly Shipyard - LONE STAR STATE (Texas A&M Maritime) and the STATE OF MAINE (Maine Maritime). These state-of-the-art vessels feature advanced training facilities, a fully equipped bridge, and accommodation for up to six hundred cadets and one hundred faculty. The vessels will be owned and operated by the Maritime Administration.

Vessel specifications: Length: 159.85 meters (525 feet); Beam: 27 meters (88 feet); Draft, scantling: 7 meters (21 feet); Total berthing: 760 persons; Speed: 18 kts; Deadweight: 8,487 tons. Installed power: 16,800 kW (22,500 hp), plus 900 kW (1,200 hp) emergency generator; Propulsion: 4 x Wabtec 16V250MDC engines,[1] single all electric drive shaft.

GET YOUR SPOT FOR THIS SUMMER'S CAA REUNION

The entire M.E.B.A. membership, active and retired, and especially Calhoon graduates, are invited to the Calhoon Alumni Association (CAA) Reunion scheduled for June 27-29 at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The weekend will also include a celebration of the M.E.B.A.'s 150th anniversary. The Union is 150 years old as of February 23 and there will be much rejoicing. Information, event fees, and registration forms are NOW on the CMES website located at www.mebaschool.org. Look for the CAA page link. The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27 at 1000. There will be an evening muster at the Calhoon Saloon later that evening. The party on the Manor House Lawn will take place all day Saturday, June 28. This is a great family event that you should be sure to sign up for. Direct any questions to caa@mebaschool.org and check out the School website to get the complete lowdown. Take this opportunity to spread the word throughout the M.E.B.A. world as well as to past Calhoon School cadets, instructors, shipmates, friends, and families.

COAST GUARD HOMEPORT OUTAGE

The U.S. Coast Guard's Homeport platform (<https://homeport.uscg.mil>) has been plagued by technical issues and remains inaccessible to the public since March 5th. The outage has spawned major disruptions, making it impossible for employers to verify crew credentials among other things. On Monday, the National Maritime Center announced that there is "no estimated time to repair." Affected credentialing services that have been interrupted and suggested workarounds include:

- Merchant Mariner Application Status: To check on the status of an application for a merchant mariner credential or medical certificate, please contact the National Maritime Center (NMC) at 1-888-427-5662, IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or via Live Chat. NMC customer service agents are available Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. EST. The NMC experiences its busiest times around midday. To avoid longer wait times, they recommend calling early in the morning when phone lines are less busy or using the Live Chat service, which will connect you with their support team during normal hours.

Additionally, their Chatbot can assist with many inquiries, providing immediate answers without the need to wait for a representative.

- Merchant Mariner Credential Verification: To verify the authenticity of a merchant mariner credential, e-mail IASKNMC@uscg.mil. To aid in providing a faster response, indicate 'Credential Verification' in the subject line of your e-mail along with mariner name(s) and mariner reference number(s) in the body of the e-mail. Note, processing times at the NMC will vary based on e-mail volume.
- Mariner Training and Assessment Data (MTAD): Course curricula and course certificate modification requests should be sent to NMCCourses@uscg.mil. Please note, to prevent delays in mariner applications, course and program completions should be documented through the issuance of completion certificates. Completion certificate format and content should match that approved by the NMC during the approval process. For questions related to mariner training and assessment, contact the NMC at 206-815-6893.

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

Monday, April 7 – Boston@1200; [Seattle \(Fife\)@1300](mailto:Seattle(Fife)@1300).

Tuesday, April 8 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

Wednesday, April 9 – Jacksonville@1300; [New Orleans@1315](mailto:NewOrleans@1315); **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, April 10 – [L.A. \(San Pedro\)@1230](mailto:L.A.(SanPedro)@1230); NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, April 11 – 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 Calhoun 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