

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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### **AMC MEDIA CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRY**

The American Maritime Congress has launched a media campaign that will raise the profile of the industry and highlight the strategic importance of U.S.-flagged shipping to our nation's security and economy. The AMC is a research and education group comprised of an M.E.B.A. and employer-side Board of Directors.

The campaign began with a rooftop event at M.E.B.A. Headquarters last week with the unveiling of professional looking web ads and an almost three minute video featuring clips of American mariners including M.E.B.A. members along with shipping footage from contracted companies.

M.E.B.A. President and AMC Board Chair Adam Vokac said, "With the launch of a campaign that highlights our role to this nation — in times of both peace and war — we want to break through the noise and help the average American better understand and support our complex and crucial service."

In the coming weeks and months, you may see different ads from the campaign "pop up" while reading news articles or watching videos online. The campaign runs through the end of December 2021, in a multi-phase format focusing on reaching the wide-swath of those in the nation's capital that may never have given much thought to the U.S. shipping industry. It features illuminating digital, video and social media content that showcases the unique operations and contributions of major U.S.-flagged deep-sea carriers and the maritime labor working with them. As the campaign continues, the focus will shift from general awareness to a more granular level of education on the federal policies and programs that help sustain the Industry, including the Maritime Security Program, Tanker Security Program, Cargo Preference ("Buy/Ship American laws") and the Jones Act.

"We're excited to launch this awareness campaign designed to draw attention to the value and importance of the men and women of the U.S. Merchant Marine and the U.S. companies that employ them," said AMC President Jim Caponiti.

The campaign comes at a time when the U.S. portion of the maritime industry has decreased in size compared to its foreign competitors, even as the role of deep-sea shipping has swelled in importance to everyday Americans. Internal research that AMC has conducted also shows that many policymakers

know little about the U.S. shipping industry's significant role in our nation's strategic security objectives, or about its significant impact on the economy.

The American Maritime Congress aims to reverse these trends by educating our communities and garnering increased support for the industry, so that the industry can ultimately build a stronger fleet that will help move our nation further. AMC is presenting these impactful stories on a new website – “Security at Sea” which takes a deep dive into the three main pillars of the U.S.-flagged deep-sea shipping industry (MSP/Cargo Preference/Jones Act). Here are the key links to get you started - check them out, “like” them and share them with family, friends and strangers. This is important to our industry and jobs!

**Web:** <https://americanmaritime.org/security-at-sea/>.

**Twitter:** @americanmaritime\_AMC

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanMaritimeCongress>

**You Tube:** [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi3a6PywGdoUIYnPKIThmGJ9xc3o\\_-evx](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi3a6PywGdoUIYnPKIThmGJ9xc3o_-evx)

**LinkedIn:** [American Maritime Congress | LinkedIn](#)

### **CG INFRASTRUCTURE, PORT PROJECTS, NEW ICEBREAKER, PART OF RECONCILIATION BILL**

This week, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee marked up and approved transportation-related provisions that are part of the massive \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package proposed by Democrats. The bill is intended as a companion to the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill that has already passed the Senate.

Several Democrats have already balked at the overall price tag of the reconciliation bill which includes many of the President's tax and spending priorities including child care, public housing, immigration reform and climate change programs among other issues. The proposal will likely need to bridge the ideological gap between progressive and moderate Democrats to win enough votes for passage as the reconciliation bill is absent of any Republican support at this juncture. Under the budget reconciliation process, it would only require 51 votes for passage in the Senate - a simple majority rather than the 60 normally required to prevent a filibuster.

On Tuesday, the House Committee approved \$1 billion for U.S. Coast Guard shoreside infrastructure nationwide and \$350 million for a heavy Great Lakes icebreaker as part of the bill. They also okayed \$2.5 billion for port infrastructure, including projects to support supply chain resilience, reduce port congestion, and develop offshore wind support infrastructure.

The Great Lake Maritime Task Force (GLMTF) deemed the proposed funding “great news for the Great Lakes” noting that the icebreaker is desperately needed. GLMTF expects that a portion of the infrastructure funds will go to good use replacing and repairing crumbling Great Lakes search and rescue stations and other USCG facilities that are used to protect Great Lakes ports and waterways.

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac, commenting on the icebreaker and Lakes funding noted, “Securing this funding is a critically important step toward facilitating the long-term commerce and growth of the Great Lakes region, as well as new economic opportunities that will help advance the domestic maritime industry.”

The Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO) also lauded those provisions and expressed support for several other items in the package that would assist transportation networks. TTD noted the Affordable Housing Access Program would provide an additional \$10 billion to ensure that affordable housing is connected to public transportation. They also praised the \$10 billion proposed in the bill that would assist planning and development of public high-speed rail projects.

### **M.E.B.A. IS PART OF 9/11 BOATLIFT COMMEMORATION**

M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress representatives were on hand on Friday to honor 9/11 victims as well as the maritime heroes who helped deliver frantic New Yorkers to safety following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. After the towers came down and lower Manhattan was enveloped by a billowing plume of smoke and ash, more than 800 mariners in 150 vessels transported over 500,000 survivors from lower Manhattan across the harbor to safety.

M.E.B.A. members helped effect relief and recovery operations during the aftermath of the attack. Mariners on the Staten Island Ferries navigated through an immense cloud of smoke and debris, transporting thousands to safety. Throughout the following weeks, they altered their schedules to accommodate the enormous saturation of emergency and medical services personnel and equipment which they transported with 24-hour-a-day availability. Members in New York Harbor also volunteered their off-hours to comb through the rubble, first in a rescue capacity and then in recovery. Members on the NYC Fireboats rushed to the scene and feverishly doused the escalating flames. Because the water mains in lower Manhattan were wrecked, the fireboat fleet was the only source of water for the first 72 hours. After the initial boatlift, members on the Army Corps of Engineers vessels and the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS COMFORT joined relief and recovery efforts using their powers to placate the misery.

At the 9/11 Boatlift commemoration last week in Wagner Park/New York Harbor, M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast Vice President Jason Callahan and AMC's Policy Director Fair Kim took part in the ceremony that was attended by many of the hero mariners who were part of the boatlift as well as rescue and recovery operations. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Karl Schultz and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) delivered remarks.

During the event, dozens of vessels joined the New York Harbor procession, including private ships, ferries, and tugboats that participated in the 9/11 boatlift rescue on that tragic day. The boatlift procession was led by New York City Fire Boats that honored those lost and the contributions of American Maritime on 9/11 with a red, white and blue water cannon salute.

### **NY AREA NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS CITY'S UNDERCUTTING OF S.I. FERRY MARINERS**

A New York City daily newspaper, the *Staten Island Advance*, penned a recent article highlighting the difficulties the City has endured with staffing its ferry system due to a non-competitive wage structure.

The Staten Island Ferry system has had to cut back overnight sailings in recent months because of inadequate staffing levels. M.E.B.A., which represents deck and engine officers on the Ferries points out that the City's refusal to pay mariners adequate wages and benefits has created the considerable retention problems that have directly led to the service disruptions.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland "Rex" Rexha, who formerly served as a Staten Island Ferry Shop Steward, said that mariners at comparable ferry systems around the country are much better

compensated than the Staten Island Ferry workforce, which has complicated the City's efforts to lure new mariners to crew the vessels. In addition, the high cost of living in the New York City area coupled with the dangers of working such a high-trafficked area during a pandemic have further dampened the desire of workers to sail in the fleet instead of departing for greener pastures. Staten Island Ferry mariners have worked without a contract for the last 11 years. "...Nobody sticks around, they leave," said Rexha. "Why would they stay at the Staten Island Ferry when it's not even close to the industry wages?"

"Overtime almost becomes mandatory," Rex said, "because you have to work overtime or you're not going to make a livable wage in New York City. If you don't work overtime, who can support a family in New York City on \$70,000 a year? Especially when you consider the level of responsibility these workers have."

M.E.B.A is in current litigation with the City to settle longstanding contractual disputes. The article, available on the Staten Island Advance website (SIlive.com) can be accessed from the M.E.B.A. Facebook page (Sept. 9 posting) or you can visit this link to go directly: <https://tinyurl.com/3d2jj2f9>

### **MEMBERS, APPLICANTS ENCOURAGED TO SEEK STCW ETO ENDORSEMENT**

The M.E.B.A. membership is strongly encouraged to take advantage of a simplified process to obtain the STCW Endorsement as Electro-Technical Officer. At present, mariners can earn the endorsement easily by completing onboard assessments followed by notification to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard intends to implement additional time-consuming requirements to obtain the endorsement following the expiration of a delay put in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so now is the best time to get this valuable endorsement.

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School has made online guidance available to assist the membership in applying for the endorsement. A School link provides information and documents needed for application: [www.mebaschool.org/curriculum/stcw-electro-technical-officer-endorsement](http://www.mebaschool.org/curriculum/stcw-electro-technical-officer-endorsement)

### **ICS GUIDANCE FOR MARINERS TO NAVIGATE PANDEMIC**

The International Chamber of Shipping has published new and updated guidance to protect seafarers and shipowners against the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. The free resources include guidance on vaccinations, manning agents, mental health issues, and shore leave.

Despite noted improvements in rates of vaccination for international seafarers, only 25% are fully vaccinated, and most are not in line to receive a vaccine through their national programs until at least 2022. Meanwhile, severe travel restrictions across the world have led to seafarers being stranded on board, some for more than 18 months and "no shore" policies have helped keep mariners trapped aboard their vessels. This has helped stretch global supply chains to the breaking point, with shortages of key goods reported, and shipping costs approaching all-time highs. The restrictions on seafarer movement have made maritime jobs less desirable, during an already acute worldwide shortage of trained mariners.

Now, ICS has worked with a coalition of industry partners to produce new and updated guidance, which aims to empower seafarers and shipowners with the knowledge to protect and support themselves through the next stage of the pandemic.

The new seafarer guides address acute issues faced by seafarers during the pandemic. *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccination for Seafarers and Shipping Companies: A Practical Guide* answers pressing frequently asked questions in an approachable and informed way. *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Seafarer Shore-Leave Principles* sets out principles for providing shore leave while navigating draconian travel restrictions across the globe. *Manning Agency Guidelines* was produced to help shipping companies choose reputable manning agencies and to ensure that seafarers are recruited in line with the requirements of the ILO. *Handling a Mental Health Crisis or Emergency and Spotting Suicidal Behavior in Seafarers* lays out tools for companies to create a caring on-board culture to address mental health matters. You can check out the guidance at [www.ics-shipping.org/publications](http://www.ics-shipping.org/publications)

### **SNACKS & OTHER COUCH-WORTHY ASSISTANCE FOR FOOTBALL**

Now that you successfully endured the dark months without professional and college football, it's time to spend some quality time on your couch soaking up the poetic ferocity of pigskin pitching combatants. In honor of the occasion, Labor 411 offers a list of labor-friendly bingeable brews and bites (listed along with the union) to make the gallant struggle on the gridiron that much more memorable. Labor 411 is a research organization that raises awareness of worker-friendly goods and services.

**Beer** - Anchor Brewing Company (ILWU); Bass (IAM); Beck's (IAM); Blue Moon (IUOE, IBT); Budweiser (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Coors (IBT); Dundee (IBT); Goose Island (IBT); Hamm's (UAW); Henry Weinhard's (IUOE, IBT); Keystone (IAM, IUOE); Kirin (IAM); Land Shark Lager (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Leinenkugel (UAW, IUOE, IBT); Mad River (IAM); Mendocino (IBT); Michelob (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Miller (UAW, IAM, IUOE, IBT); Natural Ice (IAM IUOE, IBT); O'Doul's (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Pabst (UAW); Rolling Rock (IAM); Schlitz (UAW); Shock Top (IAM, IUOE, IBT).

**Soft Drinks** - Barq's Root Beer (IBT); Coke (UAW, IBT); Dr. Pepper (UFCW, UAW); Pepsi (IBT); Sprite (IBT, UAW).

**Snacks** - Act II Popcorn (UFCW); Cheez-It (BCTGM); Cheetos (BCTGM); Chex Mixes (IBT); Doritos (BCTGM, IBT); Rold Gold Pretzels (BCTGM, IBT); Slim Jim (UFCW, IBT); Sun Chips (BCTGM, IBT); Wheat Thins (BCTGM, IBT).

Visit the Labor 411 Directory at <https://labor411.org> for more union-made products.

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

**Monday, October 4** – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300;

**Tuesday, October 5** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

**Wednesday, October 6** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online Headquarters “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting)

**Thursday, October 7** – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

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

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

