HEALTH & SAFETY BUS HITS THE HIGHWAY
MESSAGE FROM THE LIUNA GENERAL PRESIDENT

Our time is now: Elect Kerry-Edwards

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

Why we need political involvement

ACTION AROUND THE STATE

Village of Horseheads bypasses congestion with roadwork
E.W. Howell, Local 66 ahead of schedule at Bay Shore High
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Rolling out the Health & Safety bus

NEWS FROM HEALTH & SAFETY

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WTC screening program to aid Laborers and other rescue workers
Laborers team up with AGC to raise safety awareness in the work zone

MESSAGE FROM A LIUNA VICE PRESIDENT

On the road with the Health & Safety Fund
Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The working men and women of this great International Union have never before faced as clear a choice in an election as we do this November. Since the Bush Administration took over the White House in 2001, Laborers and all working families have faced setbacks and attacks. Among the first acts of this Administration was to attack prevailing wages for Laborers. Among his most recent acts are efforts to gut overtime protections.

Since President Bush was elected, safety protections on the job have been eroded. More than 3.1 million jobs have disappeared – a greater job loss than at any time since the Great Depression. Privatization has been encouraged, regardless of the cost. By giving away billions in tax breaks to the rich, state and local government budgets have suffered and fundamental investments that benefit all working people – such as improvements for highways and airports – have been scuttled.

While the health care cost crisis at home eats away at every family’s budget, the Bush Administration has proposed no real solutions. It is a nightmare to imagine our future if George Bush actually wins the election this time around and believes he has a real mandate to continue on this current path.

Fortunately, we have a positive and unifying alternative. As Laborers, as union members and as working people, we can defend ourselves and move our families and country forward by electing the Kerry-Edwards ticket. They are men whose lives and records we can be proud of.

If we want leaders who respect the people that make government run day in and day out, if we want a president who thinks outsourcing jobs overseas is something to be ashamed of, if we want to fight for higher wages instead of playing defense, and if we want our country to be respected and not just feared, we must fight for Kerry-Edwards with everything we have.

You have often heard me say that history is made by the few who take action. If ever there was a time for us to act and make history, it is now. At this historic crossroads, we are joining with the entire labor movement to build the most massive mobilization effort ever – and every New York State Laborer is crucial. Whether you are able to volunteer in a battleground state far from home, or help build resources and strength in New York, every single one of you counts.

I urge you to join with our General Secretary-Treasurer and New England Regional Manager Armand Sabitoni, Vice President and Assistant Regional Manager Vincent Masino, Vice President and Regional Manager Raymond Pocino and your local leaders in helping to inform your fellow union members about what is at stake this fall. As always, I’m sure that New York State Laborers are ready and willing to do whatever is necessary to fight for fellow Laborers and elect John Kerry and John Edwards.

Brothers and sisters, by working together and fighting together, we will not fail. We will march shoulder to shoulder and arm in arm and reclaim our country by electing a president and vice president who stand up for working families.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Terence M. O’Sullivan
General President
Laborers’ International Union of North America

‘We will march shoulder to shoulder and arm in arm and reclaim our country by electing a president and vice president who stand up for working families.’
With elections approaching in a just a few months and the air-ways already crowded with political advertisements, many of us are tempted to tune out, not pay attention and stay home on Election Day. But as General President Terry M. O’Sullivan points out in his column, our union and our members have a lot at stake this November.

We need to defeat a President who has made it his mission to try to destroy all unions and to make life as hard as possible for the many working men and women in our great country.

Political involvement does not refer to only the presidential election. We need to be involved in elections at all levels – from presidential to the local school board. Decisions at every level can affect our rights as union members and our livelihoods as construction Laborers.

We are fortunate in New York to have political friends from both political parties who continue to help us. At the legislative reception sponsored by the NYS Laborers’ Political Action Committee recently, I had the opportunity to meet many of your state representatives. These include Assembly members such as Susan John from the Rochester area, Richard Brodsky from Westchester County and Tom Dinapoli from Long Island.

From the Senate, I had the opportunity to meet William Larkin from the Lower Hudson Valley and Randy Kuhl from the Finger Lakes area. Sen. Kuhl is chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and is currently running for Congress from that area. These representatives and many others have supported our state legislative initiatives and deserve our support in return.

By being active politically, we ensure that our rights as union members are protected and that adequate funding is available for the construction projects that we work on. Funding for both the Route 86 construction project in Elmira and the school construction job on Long Island are the results of our political efforts. Our politicians are pressured by many interest groups; we must make ourselves heard if we expect our issues to be addressed.

In the New York primary in September and on Election Day in November, show your support for the national, state and local politicians who will support us. Be sure to vote. And do more by offering to help your union with voter registration, get out the vote efforts and other political programs.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Armand E Sabitoni
General Secretary-Treasurer and New England Regional Manager
Laborers’ International Union of North America
The unique name for the village of Horseheads in Chemung County originated from a historic Revolutionary War battle in 1779. The conflict left many packhorses from America’s Continental Army dead from exhaustion in what is now Hanover Square.

When later settlers came to the valley, they stumbled across the bleached horse skulls from the earlier battle all along the trail and subsequently named the area “Horseheads.”

Two hundred years later, the skulls have long been cleaned up from the trail to make transit easier. However, a modern-day factor now clutters the roads in Horseheads: traffic congestion.

In 1996, a New York State Department of Transportation study determined that a new I-86 bypass was needed in Horseheads to reduce accidents, improve regional and statewide transportation and help improve the area’s economy.

The design plan for the Horseheads Bypass will elevate NY 17 over the existing highway and construct service roads beneath it.

Various phases of the project have been completed during the past five years, but the current phase is the first to use union labor. It came about when a variety of trade groups got together with Lane Construction, the Connecticut-based primary contractor for the project, and Tioga Construction, to collaborate on a winning bid for the project.

“We are extremely happy to be involved in the first phase of the project to include union labor,” said Tom Norconk, business manager of Local 1358. “This is just the beginning of great work for the region that will affect not only our local in a positive way but also the community of Horseheads.”

“Local 1358 took an active part in helping a union contractor get this project,” said George Hassfurter, project manager of Lane Construction. “In the bidding phase, they helped create a competitive edge that never lost momentum. They’ve continued to move along with the same enthusiasm, an attribute that we appreciate and one that is critical to our current success.”

There are 300 active and retired members of Local 1358, of whom 22 are currently employed by the Horseheads Bypass project. The current phase of construction is a $60 million project and is expected to take three and a half years to complete.

This is the first time Tioga Construction has worked with Local 1358 and the experience has been described as a positive foundation for collaboration on upcoming projects in the area.

“We sat down with Tom Norconk and other unions prior to bidding on this project,” said John Dillon, vice president and project manager of Tioga Construction. “We structured the deal in a way that made everyone comfortable and ultimately secured the work. As our first project working with Local 1358, we are pleased with the progress and we hope to have a continuing relationship throughout the project.”

September 2004
As the busy summer season winds down, there’s good news on Long Island from E.W. Howell, the century-old general construction/construction management firm, and Laborers from Local 66. The Melville-based local finds itself ahead of schedule on a multi-stage project at Bay Shore High School on the Island’s south shore.

Although work began just a few months ago, in January, Local 66 expects to finish the project before the scheduled two-year completion date. The project includes three additions: a 51,000-square-foot classroom and administration wing, a 5,100-square-foot guidance wing and a 55,000-square-foot gym.

The local also is building five tennis courts, a basketball court, a soccer field and a field hockey turf that will enhance and expand students’ outdoor recreation and fitness opportunities.

The total cost of the exterior building renovation is approximately $40 million, while additional interior work to update existing classrooms will cost another $10 million. The bulk of the heavy interior work is being completed during the summer months while the school is empty.

“It is great to be involved with projects that have such a high level of visibility with the public,” said Local 66 Business Manager Steve Flanagan. “In addition to the project being union labor, it is also terrific to be building the structure that will eventually house education and sporting events for future generations in the community.”

Of the approximately $8.5 million worth of masonry work, 50 percent of it will be handled by Local 66. The local will account for about 20 percent of the entire project’s workforce.

According to Harry Hansen, superintendent of construction for E.W. Howell, general contractor of the prevailing wage job, Local 66 has proven to be an impressive force.

“ Probably the biggest hurdle we’ve experienced on this job is completing the work in accordance with the school safety standards while maintaining a fully functional school,” said Hansen.

“However, the pressure of meeting these standards has been alleviated with the accommodating members of Local 66 and the leadership of Steve Flanagan. Steve has always been fair, available and cooperative. We look forward to working with this union on future projects.”

PHOTOS BY DON POLLARD

Laborers are working hard on major building renovations for the Bayshore school project.
Steve Flanagan is part of a family tradition – a labor of love. He has been involved with Laborers’ Local 66 for more than 16 years. Before him, his father, brother and two sisters also belonged to various unions throughout Nassau County in Long Island.

Before joining the Melville-based union in 1987, Flanagan worked as a New York City corrections officer. After working his way up the ranks of Local 66 for 10 years in positions such as shop steward and business agent, Flanagan became business manager.

In addition to his current role, he actively participates as vice president of the Long Island Federation of Labor and is an executive board member of the Mason Tenders District Council.

Under Flanagan’s leadership, local 66 is currently 100 percent employed with all 1,000 active members out in the field. The local also has about 1,100 retired members – approximately 600 of whom still pay dues.

Flanagan summarizes his long-term vision for the local with three goals. First, to raise the pension for the local and get it out of what he calls the “prehistoric phase.” Second, to encourage continued growth of the local to surpass the 1,000-member mark, while keeping his current members happy. And lastly, to turn the nearby Heartland project, currently a non-union job, into union work. Flanagan is actively participating in town board meetings and is in discussions with the local political community to gather public support for union workers.

He fully subscribes to the local’s grassroots philosophy, and he often finds himself automatically turning onto job sites, talking to contractors and constantly promoting union labor.

When asked what the most gratifying part of his work is, Flanagan said simply, “I love this stuff.”
TRI-FUNDS LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE:
Keeping the focus on legislation for members across the state

Chief LIUNA staff, legislators and other political figures participated in the annual New York State Laborers’ Tri-Funds Legislative conference at The Desmond hotel in Albany.

The full-day event started with a working lunch, including comments on the current state of legislation concerning organized labor from Assembly Labor Chair Susan John and state Comptroller Alan Hevesi.

The conference continued in the town hall amphitheater with a discussion of topics affecting the many locals across the state. Participants were encouraged to ask questions, making this an open forum for an exchange of ideas and sharing of best practices.

After welcoming participants to the town hall meeting, LIUNA General Secretary-Treasurer and New England Regional Manager Armand E. Sabitoni gave an overview of issues facing the union and the programs in place to address them.

Other speakers included Art Wilcox of the New York State NYS AFL-CIO, who discussed Workers’ Compensation; NYS Laborers’ Health & Safety Fund Director Mickey Kelly, who addressed Health and Safety initiatives, including the
new mobile bus and Work Zone Safety Campaign; and Jim Conlon of Milliman & Robertson, who gave a health care update.

In addition, NYS LECET Executive Director Frank Marchese Sr. discussed apprenticeship program issues around the state. This resulted in the development of a new LECET program with field coordinators monitoring apprenticeship programs in designated areas statewide and reporting findings at bi-monthly meetings. The meeting wrapped up with a legislative update from LECET Governmental Representative Tom Hartnett.

After the meeting, conference participants moved to a reception at the Sign of the Tree restaurant in the Empire State Plaza, where they enjoyed food and drink while discussing the latest legislation with representatives from their regions.

“This annual conference and a constant, year-round focus on the importance of current legislation is critical to the continued success of the union,” said General Secretary-Treasurer Sabitoni. “By displaying influence in the political arena, we are able to highlight our union needs, which will ultimately secure more jobs for our members.”
Early this year, the Health & Safety bus steered its way into the Albany area. This 2004 Champion Challenger 190-E450 Ford 6.8L shuttle combines a multi-media environment – complete with two 13” flat screen monitors, a DVD player and four-speaker sound system with a comfortable open seating arrangement.

This shuttle bus or “mobile classroom” will travel to job sites across the state to educate members about health and safety. Since its debut, its has been on the road throughout the summer and is getting positive feedback from the local unions.

Participants settle into this traveling classroom to watch a video, collect handouts and listen to a tool box discussion on various topics important to working men and women. The first stop on the bus tour was in late June at Local 435 in Rochester.

From left are Local 1358 Office Manager Mary Hartsock, Business Manager Tom Norconk, Vice President/Organizer George Harkness, Secretary-Treasurer/Training Facilitator Steve Payne, NYS LECET Field Coordinator Gary Bernardo, National LECET Marketing Representative John Hutchings and Health & Safety Trust Fund Executive Director Mickey Kelly.

The Laborers’ new Health & Safety bus offers another vehicle for learning. Pictured in front of the bus are, from left, are Local 66 members Lou Micillo, Robert Bonanza, Business Manager Steve Flanagan, Joe Cavalieri, Bobby English and John Ippolito.
“Health and safety has been high on the priority list for our local, and the bus could not have come at a better time,” said Local 435 Business Manager Robert Brown. “The job site visit was a success all around. Our members were able to take advantage of the safety program, and the contractor was on hand to see everyone benefiting from the convenience of the program brought directly to the people who need the message most.”

“We’re constantly trying to find innovative ways to reach each local member,” said Health & Safety Trust Fund Executive Director Mickey Kelly. “Our newest vehicle takes our message conveniently to each worker – on the job, at a health fair – where it will make the most impact and be the most valuable.”


NYS LECET Field Coordinator Gary Bernardo discusses worksite health and safety issues with members of Local 1358.

Executive Director Mickey Kelly gives instruction on the bus.
Mickey Kelly
Executive director, Health & Safety Trust Fund

Mickey Kelly is a man with a mission. That mission: to enhance the lives of LIUNA members and their families in New York state through a combination of forward-thinking programs, initiatives and educational forums that promote health, safety and wellness at all levels.

“Our goal is to improve the quality of life for all our members across the state, and it can only be met if we are reaching them in the most effective manner,” says the 31-year LIUNA member, executive director of the NYS Laborers’ Health & Safety Trust Fund.

Before his newest appointment, Mickey was deputy director of the Greater New York LECET, where he spent five years working to monitor contractors who violate the state prevailing wage laws and to promote contractor union cooperation throughout the New York metropolitan and Long Island areas.

Prior to that, he was a business agent with Local 79, covering the Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond counties. Throughout his union career, he has logged 24 years of work in the field.

As Health & Safety executive director, his main focus is to help educate workers, management and government representatives about job safety and health issues. Progress in these areas will not only boost the quality of life for union members and their families, but it will also create a more productive workplace.

Recent initiatives for the Health & Safety Trust Fund include the distribution of ergonomic manuals for heavy and highway and concrete and cement Laborers to locals in New York.

In April, the Fund entered a partnership with the Associated General Contractors of America, New York State Chapter, Inc. to announce their 2004 Work Zone Awareness Campaign (please see story on page 14). The campaign, which featured statewide radio spots, made drivers aware of legislation to increase penalties for drivers who speed and cause accidents in construction work zones.

An important milestone and ongoing project for the Fund in New York is the recent arrival of the Health & Safety bus. This mobile classroom is already rolling along to various job sites, educating members about issues that affect them.

Other ongoing efforts include a survey of Health and Welfare funds throughout the state, developed to analyze health care costs and devise strategies to optimize savings.

“Throughout the remainder of this year and into next, we are looking to our members for direction on the best ways to meet their health and safety needs,” said Mickey. “Our message to members is, ‘Tell us what you think and what you need.’ We’ll continue to ask for feedback, review current programs and do research to deliver the most innovative health and safety programs in any union, anywhere.’

NYS Laborers’ Tri-Funds Administrator Dr. Jim Melius said the union was fortunate to have a person of Mickey’s experience and background to direct the Health & Safety Fund. “I am sure that Mickey will continue to expand the important activities of the Fund,” he said, “in a way that benefits all of our members.”
Laborers from the New York City area and tri-state region were among the many Americans who responded selflessly to the attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, taking an immediate, active role in the heroic rescue and recovery efforts.

Thousands more were involved in the restoration of essential services and in the removal of debris from Ground Zero. As they worked tirelessly, many sustained exposure to a wide range of hazards, which produced conditions involving respiratory illnesses, psychological distress and musculoskeletal injuries.

Unfortunately, there is evidence that many individuals have obtained either no medical care or less than the standard of care for their persistent WTC-related health problems.

To address this lack of care and improve the health and wellness of those involved, the Mount Sinai-Irving J. Selikoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, with the support of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), has been coordinating the World Trade Center Worker & Volunteer Medical Screening and Medical Monitoring Programs.

These comprehensive programs offer free and confidential medical screening examinations nationwide for exposed workers and volunteers. The Mount Sinai staff expects to collect evaluations from nearly 12,000 participants by the program's completion this September.

World Trade Center responders have participated in the $12 million Medical Screening Program for the past two years.

This $90 million second round of funding supports clinical center grants to Mount Sinai and other select occupational medicine providers offering critically needed medical monitoring exams over the next five-year period, as well as program coordinating grants to both Mount Sinai and the New York City Fire Department, which runs its own program for department personnel.

“The preliminary findings of our national program point up the critical need for not only a medical screening program, but also for short- and long-term medical monitoring and treatment services,” said Dr. Stephen M. Levin M.D., medical director of the Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Mount Sinai and co-director with Dr. Robin Herbert of the WTC Medical Screening Program.

“The earlier these WTC-related illnesses are detected and treated, the more likely that treatment will prevent long-term illness and disability,” he noted.

Laborers who qualify or believe they qualify are encouraged to call the World Trade Center phone bank to check their eligibility.

“This second round of funding will also include money for first time screeners,” said Dr. Jim Melius, administrator of the New York State Tri-Funds. “Even if you haven't participated in the program before, we encourage you to call. Our members are important to us, and just as they stepped up to help others in time of need, we are stepping up to put the best medical programs at their disposal.”

Workers and volunteers interested in obtaining more information or registering for the program are asked to call the WTC Program phone bank at 1-888-702-0630.

In the most recent issue of our magazine, we may not have been clear about two scholarship funds set up in memory of Sam Marchio, the Local 35 business manager who died recently.

The Samuel J. Marchio Memorial Scholarship Fund is available to students from Local 35's jurisdiction who are planning to study the civil and mechanical technology, carpentry or masonry Trades. For more information, please contact:

The Samuel J. Marchio Memorial Scholarship Fund
c/o Mohawk Valley Community College Foundation
1101 Sherman Drive
Utica, NY 13501

For the College Fund for Michael F. Marchio, please make checks payable to:

College America #73482390.

Mail checks to:

First Niagara Bank
41 Kellogg Road
New Hartford, NY 13413
Attn: Lisa Calhoun
In May, the NYS Laborers’ Health & Safety Trust Fund and the Associated General Contractors of America, New York State Chapter, Inc., joined forces to launch the 2004 Work Zone Safety Awareness Campaign.

The campaign introduced radio listeners to statewide legislation that increases penalties for speeding drivers who cause accidents in highway and bridge construction work zones.

In addition, a joint statewide radio campaign urged drivers to proceed slowly, be cautious and take extra time when driving through a work zone where construction Laborers are on the job.

In the long run, reducing speed does not amount to a significant loss of travel time – and it could save a life, the radio spot noted.

The partnership and campaign were launched in conjunction with the busy summer road and bridge construction season, a time when, unfortunately, the traveling public often views work zones and construction workers as a hindrance.

In 2002, the last year for which statistics are available, 60 people died in roadwork zone accidents across the state – a figure that has tripled since 2000.

“We’ve been put in a position where we must take action to improve the security of our thousands of members and their ability to do their job safely,” said NYS Tri-Funds Administrator Dr. Jim Melius.

“The impact of a careless driver takes away our workers’ right to feel protected on the job,” he added. “We cannot continue to let the reckless behavior of a few affect hundreds of workers across the state who are trying to earn a living. Our roadways are the ‘offices’ for many – and we should all be vigilant in our vehicles.”

Laborers from the earliest days of Local 1010 in Flushing are shown below. At right, a photo of the local’s charter from March 1937.
Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The NYS Laborers’ Health & Safety Fund is hitting the road. With assistance from State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, the Fund recently purchased a training bus to make health and safety presentations at worksites around the state.

This on-site safety training bus is one more example of the innovative approaches of our union to solving problems. We know that our members can’t always leave work to travel to a training site and that conditions on many constructions sites are not ideal to hold even short safety training classes. So we will bring the safety training to the site.

Traveling to each site, our new bus can provide a fully equipped classroom ideal for short safety talks. Already, the bus has motored from one end of New York state, Buffalo, to the other, Long Island. We know that safety on the job is important for our members, and this type of program helps to promote better safety on our job sites.

Another example of our efforts to improve health and safety for our members is the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring Program (please see story on page 13).

We know that in the chaotic days and even weeks after the tragic events at the World Trade Center, our members working and volunteering at the site – in rescue and recovery efforts, cleanup, debris removal and restoration of essential services – weren’t always properly protected from dust and fumes. We worked hard to get them better protection, but we need to recognize that despite our efforts, some individuals may develop later health problems from their exposure at the site.

Working with other construction unions, we lobbied to get the federal government to establish a long-term medical monitoring program for these workers. With the help of Sen. Hillary Clinton and others, we now have that program, located at one of the premier environmental health centers in the world – Mount Sinai. Beginning this fall, members who worked at the site will be able to get regular health checkups.

Through health fairs, our Laborsafe publication and many other programs, your NYS Laborers’ Health & Safety Fund works to promote safer workplaces and better health for you and your families.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Vincent R. Masino
Vice President
Laborers’ International Union of North America
in the next issue

NYS Laborers’ Make-A-Wish Golf Classic

Launch of the redesigned NYS Laborers’ Website

Launch of the new CFC Website

Election 2004

Look for these stories and more…