



# BUILDING TRADES NEWS

VOLUME 28, NO.2      LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTIES BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL, AFL-CIO            SPRING 2023

## PORT VOTES FOR P.L.A. Long Beach Says ‘Yes’ to 10-Year Deal



The massive Port of Long Beach occupies 3,520 acres of land and 4,600 acres of water.

**BY ANNE-MARIE OTEY AND ZEESHAN PASTA**

The year 2023 started strong for the Building Trades when the Long Beach

Board of Harbor Commissioners voted unanimously in January to extend its portwide Project Labor Agreement for 10 more years.

The PLA with the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council brings union labor standards to about \$409 million in

projects, with more to be added. “This will expand and enhance training opportunities for our San Pedro Bay workforce,” said Mario Cordero, **SEE PORT PAGE 18**

## UNIONS MORE DIVERSE NOW

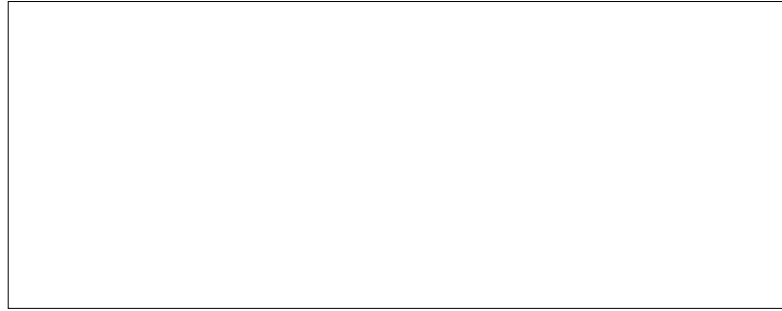
**BY LESLIE BERKMAN**

Apprenticeship programs co-sponsored by unions and contractors

outperform non-union training programs in recruiting and retaining women and racial minorities, a new study says. North America’s Building Trades Unions held its first Opportunity Pipeline Forum Jan. 17 in Washington, D.C. to present “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives in the Construction Trades,” a data-based evaluation of the efforts by this nation’s Building Trades to recruit women and people of color. **SEE DIVERSITY PAGE 3**



Forum moderator Melissa Wells.



PRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LOS ANGELES  
CA. Permit NO.  
31327



CALIFORNIA IS STILL GOLDEN FOR OPPORTUNITY

There’s been a lot in the news lately about the crisis of California. The state is having a small population loss, after decades of growth. Aside from the numbers, people are saying California is tarnished. Too much homelessness, a lack of civil order on our streets and public transportation, and to top it off, a record storm season that cured the drought but caused havoc and deaths in our unprepared counties.

But there is so much more to California, and the Building Trades are a huge part of it.

California has some of the country’s strongest labor-protection laws, union density and prevailing wage standards. We will make that even more forceful in the 2024 election, when we ask voters to add the right to unionize to the state Constitution.

We work together to turn crises into opportunities. Faced with a record lack of homes for poor and middle-class families, the Building Trades joined other unions and community groups to pass United to House LA in the city of Los Angeles. It will raise hundreds of millions of dollars a year to build new homes with Project Labor Agreements, and protect renters.

On a statewide basis, the Building Trades support bills to streamline housing permits and promote our skilled and trained workforce.

To solve the housing crisis, we must build more, and we must bring more workers into the middle class with good union jobs.

We’ve spent too many decades under-building California. Our economy is the fifth-largest in the world and a massive generator of jobs, from bio-tech to TV streaming to tourism. And the Building



BY CHRIS HANNAN  
Executive Secretary

Trades are active in building the facilities these industries require: factories, labs, soundstages, mass transit, museums, schools and ports. Let’s not forget, Southern California is hosting the 2028 Olympics. The world will be watching as athletes compete in state-of-the-art sites like SoFi Stadium and the Intuit Dome.

The other constant challenge is energy. California leads the nation in going green. The Building Trades are part of ARCHES, a top contender for a federal hydrogen hub, which will create green hydrogen facilities and jobs.

Big and Ambitious

Several years ago, our state legislature passed SB 54, bringing a skilled and trained workforce to the refineries that supply oil and gas. Now, we are working to expand these job standards to other industries with SB 740. This will make the new plants safer for their workers and surrounding communities.

When it comes to taking on huge infrastructure challenges, California and our Building Trades are in the forefront. On any given day, 1,000 skilled men and women are working to bring high speed rail into reality. We just celebrated the 10,000th Building Trades job created on this project.

High speed rail is ambitious, and it’s not easy. Nothing important is.

That’s kind of like California: We’re the biggest state and sometimes, the most frustrating.

As members of Building Trades local unions, we welcome the chance to improve our great state while we earn a good union living, and pass on our skills to the next generation of Californians. If we do everything right, they’ll be able to do the same thing, too.

BUILDING TRADES NEWS

Building Trades News is published monthly by the Los Angeles/ Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council.

PUBLISHER  
Chris Hannan

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
Anne-Marie Otey

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS  
Leslie Berkman, Robert Buscemi, James Duffy V,  
Beige Luciano-Adams, Karen Robes Meeks, Mark Edward Nero

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS  
Hector Cruz Sandoval, Mark Savage, Jessica Sterling

ART DIRECTOR  
Cynthia Tan

LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTIES BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026 P 213.483.4222 •  
714.827.6791 • F 213.483.4419  
www.LAOCBuildingTrades.org  
www.BuildingTradesNews.com



"Building Trades News" is a member of the  
International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO.

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Chris Hannan, Executive Secretary  
Anthony Gazzaniga, President  
Eric Brown, Vice President  
Ronald Sikorski, Trustee  
Lupe Aldaco, Trustee  
Vidal Zambrano, Trustee  
Tony Olea, Sergeant-at-Arms

Glaziers Local 636  
Tradeshow & Sign Crafts  
Local 831  
Painters Local 1036  
Resilient Floor Local 1247  
Civil Service Local 1991  
UA Pipe Trades District Council 16  
Plumbers Local 78

Steam & Pipefitters Local 250  
Plumbers Local 345

Plumbers & Fitters Local 398  
Plumbers & Steamfitters  
Local 582

Road Sprinkler Fitters Local 669  
Sprinkler Fitters Local 709

Plumbers & Fitters Local 761  
Plasterers-Cement Masons  
District Council

Plasterers-Cement Masons  
Local 755

Plasterers Local 200  
Cement Masons Local 500

Cement Masons Local 600  
Roofers & Waterproofers Local 36

Roofers & Waterproofers  
Local 220

Sheet Metal Workers Local 105  
Sheet Metal Workers Local 170

Teamsters Joint Council 42  
Teamsters Local 848

Teamsters Local 952  
Teamsters Local 986

District Council 36 Painters  
& Allied Trades

Drywall Finishing Local 1136

Change of address: Union members, please contact your local.



“If more people find out about this, people who come from where I come from, this will be a game changer.”

—Judaline Cassidy, UA Local 1 Plumbers

DIVERSITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Results of the independent study that NABTU commissioned from the Institute for Construction Employment Research, a network of academic researchers, also gave guidance for what the Building Trades can do better.

On the positive side for NABTU, the study identified many successful union initiatives to increase diversity, from apprenticeship-readiness programs for those unfamiliar with the Trades to policies designed to support women apprentices and journey workers, such as a maternity leave benefit spearheaded by the Iron Workers.

Female, Black, Latino and “other race” apprentices account for a greater proportion and number of all union, joint labor-management apprentices than their non-union counterparts, both historically (1999-2019) and in

2019, the most recent year of the data.

Nonetheless, the numbers show that the Building Trades must do more to attract women and Black Americans, with the percentage of females in the union workforce between 1999 and 2019 averaging just 2 percent, and the Black share dropping from 8 percent in the early 2000s to 6.6 percent in 2019, having failed to rebound fully after the Great Recession.

By contrast, Latino representation in union and non-union construction has seen explosive growth, particularly in states like California where Latinos are a large part of the population. The Latino share of the national Building Trades workforce doubled from 1999 to 2019. “The Latino share in construction is substantially higher than their overall share in the U.S. labor force,” the report said.

Between 1999 and 2019 women filled only 3.7 percent of union apprentice



“You don’t need any experience to come into our Trades,” says LAOC Council leader Chris Hannan, left. “You just have to be willing to work hard.”

INSIDE BUILDING TRADES NEWS

1 LONG BEACH PORT VOTES FOR TRADES  
Project Labor Agreement wins 10 more years

1 BUILDING DIVERSITY  
National and local efforts to open up apprenticeship

2 FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
California still offers a golden future for all

8 ON THE JOB: ALL-UNION INTUIT DOME TOPS OUT  
The \$2 billion basketball arena is set to open in 2024

14 READY, SET, GO!  
Eight students are excited to prepare for apprenticeship

PG. 8



## DIVERSITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

slots and Black workers claimed 9.3 percent. The Latino portion of apprentice registrations was over 24 percent nationally.

“The study doesn’t paint a glorious picture of the North America’s Building Trades Unions. It’s not everything we would want it to be. But it’s not bad,” said NABTU President Sean McGarvey. McGarvey said the study’s results provide a “benchmark” of data that construction Trades can use to continue pushing toward workforce diversity.

“It is all about improving the opportunities that are out there across the United States in the construction industry, one of the last sure paths to the middle class,” McGarvey said.

McGarvey said he is “proud of what we have done in the last 25 years and I greatly anticipate what we’ll do over the next 25.” He noted that “the Building Trades are investing a couple billion dollars a year of our own money operating 1,600 apprenticeship training centers that rival anything in the world. We have 250,000-plus people in our training programs currently and room to dramatically ramp that up when the opportunities present themselves.”

## Demand for Workers

Several speakers said the timing couldn’t be better to train women and minorities to help fill skyrocketing demand for construction workers to tackle a massive amount of projects that will stem from recent federal legislation, including the Infrastructure, Inflation Reduction and CHIPS and Science Acts.

“The demand for construction workers is absolutely unprecedented,” said Sam Lyon, global workforce services manager for Bechtel, a major engineering and construction management firm.

Apprenticeship-readiness programs have expanded in recent years with



Melissa Wells of NABTU is also vice chair of the Black Caucus of the Maryland State Legislature.



NABTU President Sean McGarvey is “proud of what we have done in the last 25 years.”

a national curriculum developed by NABTU as key to reaching females, minorities, veterans, emancipated foster youth, the formerly incarcerated and others without family ties to organized labor.

“The program works. It is fantastic,” Lyon said. A stream of women and minority construction workers that came through apprenticeship-readiness programs to help build several Bechtel projects over the last three years has convinced him of their merit.

## Racial and Economic Equity

The forum moderator, Melissa Wells, special assistant to McGarvey, is a state delegate to the Maryland State Legislature, where she serves as vice chair of the Black Caucus. Wells said she is “very passionate about racial equity and economic equity” and she is impressed by McGarvey’s commitment to those causes.

“He has put his money where his mouth is,” Wells said. “He is leveraging all his relationships, whether it is at the federal level with our Administration, with contractors, with other industry partners, and also with our Building Trades Council leaders across the country.”

NABTU has established a nonprofit organization called Trades Futures to work with local Trades Councils in providing “wraparound services” that women and minorities need to succeed.

Before TradesFutures existed, the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council pioneered the use of apprenticeship-readiness programs. In 2017, the Council started its own nonprofit, the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund, to serve as an umbrella over 21 programs in two counties.

Panelist Chris Hannan, Council Executive Secretary, said the council is using three tools—Project Labor Agreements, apprenticeship and apprenticeship-readiness—to nurture workforce diversity. He said the doors are open to the region’s union apprenticeship programs, which are

training more than 21,000 apprentices living in the two counties. “You don’t need any experience to come into our Trades,” he said. “You just have to be willing to work hard.”

Hannan also said the ARF programs have placed 1,200 people across 35 craft unions. Of those who became union construction workers through these programs, he said, 93 percent were individuals of color. While the majority were Latino, 34 percent identified as African American.

Women were also well represented. “The thing we struggle with most in our area is trying to introduce the Trades to women,” Hannan acknowledged. But he said female participation increased eight-fold with the introduction of apprenticeship-readiness programs.

About 40 percent of ARF placements were from one of the most challenged groups for job-seeking, and a group the Trades have especially targeted: the formerly incarcerated.

To make apprenticeship-readiness programs feasible for people of limited means, money must be found to pay for tools and boots and arrange for transportation, housing and childcare with hours that coincide with training and work schedules. That is one of the things that ARF coordinates. Unions were encouraged to seek partnerships with community-based organizations and government agencies to identify the best candidates for training and to tap financial resources.

Once women and underserved communities are recruited, the researchers said, retention methods that have worked best include mentoring, paths for career advancement and job recognition. Also they advised that on-the-job bullying and intimidation must be stopped—a benefit to all workers on site, regardless of their background.

Project Labor Agreements that the council negotiates typically set priorities for hiring local residents and veterans, and that has improved workforce diversity.

## More Women on the Job

Like NABTU, the Council relies on data to make policy adjustments to improve diversity, Hannan said. A study of hours worked by women in the Trades revealed that on average, women work four times as much on Los Angeles County construction projects that are governed by a PLA than on other county projects. As a result, the LA County Board of Supervisors has approved its first blanket Project Labor Agreement.

Panelist Judaline Cassidy offered her own example: She was an immigrant from Trinidad who learned the plumbing Trade, became the first woman to join UA Local 371 Plumbers (now Local 1) in New York City and now travels the country as a Building Trades evangelist.

Unions must be bolder about getting



Allison Ziogas started with IBEW Local 3 and is now director of labor relations for Orsted Offshore, a wind-project developer.

the word out to women and people of color that they can find a satisfying career and good pay to support their families by joining the Building Trades, Cassidy told forum attendees. She founded the nonprofit Tools & Tiaras to acquaint girls and women about nontraditional careers, and said she particularly enjoys visiting schools where she introduces Building Trades women as “super heroes.” She tells girls as young as 6 that they too can grow up to help build the country. “I teach them

career field where they can thrive, where they can build the life they want for themselves and their families,” she said.

“The Trades are for everyone,” Schwartz added. “We are working extremely hard to make sure that every person in every corner of the country is aware of the opportunities that exist for them in the Building Trades.”

A Building Trades career is lifelong—as much as 40 years. Retaining women and other under-represented workers

at a caucus in 2016 that women were ignoring the dangers to themselves and their unborn children of continuing on the job without accommodating their pregnancies.

## 97 Percent Retention

O’Leary said 143 Iron Worker women had used the paid maternity leave benefit as of the end of 2022 and 83 percent returned to their jobs after childbirth.

Ryan Boyer, the first Black man to be Business Manager of the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council, described his council’s program to welcome incarcerated people into the Building Trades. It provides apprentice-readiness while individuals are still in prison and allows them to stay overnight at apprenticeship programs once they are released. He said with pride that the formerly incarcerated in that program have had a 97 percent retention rate.

Boyer said there is “a need to confront and challenge some of our leaders in unions that want to take it the old way” by limiting recruitment to relatives of existing union members, who grow up knowing what it means to be a Trades worker.

He said he sparks the attention of youths with no knowledge of the value of a Building Trades career by asking, “How would you like to make more than a lawyer in four years and have no debt?”

“Opening the gates of the Building Trades can change lives,” McGarvey said at the start of the forum, and he was echoed by other speakers, including Fred Redmond, Secretary-Treasurer of the national AFL-CIO.

“NABTU has shown how far this labor movement has come, how far our commitment towards social justice has come, and how we are really, really living up to what Dr. King talked about when he talked about a coalition between civil rights and organized labor,” Redmond said.

**BUILDING TRADES NEWS 5**



L-r, TradesFutures Executive Director Nicole Schwartz; Vicky O’Leary, general organizer for the Iron Workers International; Ryan Boyer, Business Manager of the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council, and Brian Doherty, Secretary-Treasurer of the Greater Boston Building Trades Unions.





The SMART Local 105 crew from Murray Company joins business representative Donny Sappington, far right, in El Segundo.



Apprentice Javier Contreras.



The main building will span 145,000 square feet.



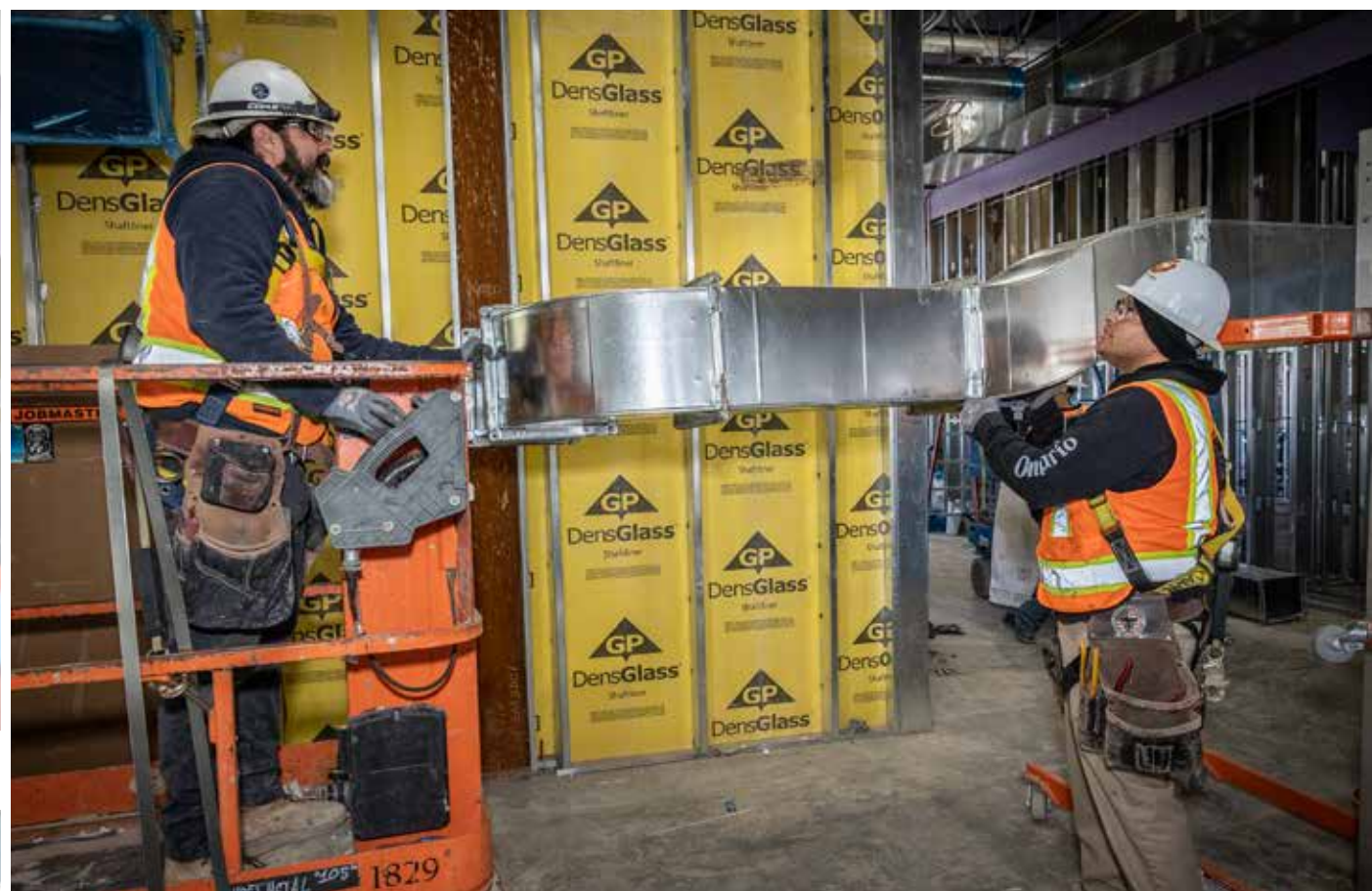
Victor Medina is job site steward, certified welder and a union trustee.



Seasoned journeyman Anthony Rodriguez finesses the plenum to make up the "slip and drive" connection.



Hector Castaneda is a 5th-year apprentice.



Journeyman Jessie Lopez, left, and classified worker Erik Camarena are erecting a sectioned run of rectangular ductwork.



Anthony Lopez is the son of general foreman Ernie Lopez. Anthony will attend college on a scholarship for soccer and hopes to come back to become a Sheet Metal Worker.



The center will open in 2024.



The training campus was designed by the Sports division of architect Gensler.

# THIS IS SHEET METAL



LABOR MANAGEMENT COOPERATION TRUST

**Steve Hinson, Business Manager,**  
SMART Local 105, [www.local105.org](http://www.local105.org)

**Kevin O'Dorisio, Executive Director,**  
SMACNA-So Cal, [www.smacna-socal.org](http://www.smacna-socal.org)

Sheet Metal local union members and contractors are an essential part of any building. The Sheet Metal Trade includes architectural work, air balancing, and the fabrication and installation of duct and mechanical equipment for HVAC.

It's a range of specialties based on craftsmanship with metal and composite materials, and dedicated to the highest quality.

This crew from Murray Company is on the job in El Segundo, where the Los Angeles Chargers broke ground in May 2022 on their new practice facility. The \$270 million project is slated to open in 2024. It will include three natural grass fields, a main building of 145,000 square feet and 5,000 bleacher seats for a public training camp.

"To be able to develop 14 acres of prime real estate, it's another major step toward building a

perennial contender and further rooting ourselves in the community we serve," said team owner Dean Spanos. General Manager Tom Telesco added, "The look, feel and functionality of your training facility means more today than it ever has in professional sports."

Each signatory contractor follows the principles of excellence. Jobs are completed efficiently, helping save money for the client. The highly trained union workforce promotes safety and increases productivity.

With over 200 contractors signatory to SMART Local 105, and over 2000 nationwide in the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors National Association, the partnership of labor and contractors works to grow the Sheet Metal Industry to the highest quality.



# INTUIT DOME ON THE RISE

## \$2 Billion Arena Tops Out in Inglewood

Inglewood is becoming a sports magnet. The city of 105,000 opened SoFi Stadium for football’s Rams and Chargers in 2020, and in 2024, the Intuit Dome will become the home of

the NBA’s Clippers. These sports landmarks are being built by the skilled and trained union members of the 48 local unions and district councils that make up the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council.

On March 7, the Intuit Dome celebrated its topping out. As the traditional steel beam, signed by all on

site and decorated by an American flag and evergreen tree, made its way 150 feet up, Clippers owner Steve Ballmer admitted he did not know much about construction—but he liked what he saw.

“We had our players out here the last time and there was nothing except a shovel, a few mounds of dirt and it didn’t seem very impressive,” he said.

“It sure didn’t seem like it would be this far along in a year and a half. I don’t know the first darn thing about construction, but it’s pretty impressive.”

Thanks, Steve! We agree. The project is being built under a Project Labor Agreement with the LA/OC Building Trades, allowing unions to target local workers for hiring.



The crew from UA Local 250 on the job for Southland, taking a healthy lunch break. L-r, Gary Prevo, Joseph Sito, Jared Lohman, Armando Senda, Joshua Chacon, Robert Contreras and Mark Blanco.



The Intuit Dome will welcome 18,000 fans to each Clippers game.





The Intuit Dome will include a double-sided halo scoreboard with an acre of LED lights.



Ken Billups, center, director of diversity, equity and inclusion for infrastructure firm AECOM, leads the tour of the Intuit Dome with AECOM-Turner specialist Christopher Tiamzon, at left.



A skilled Painter from IUPAT District Council 36.



UA Local 78 Plumbers apprentice Eswin Estrada.



Foreman Shane Swaim of Iron Workers Local 433.





Anne-Marie Otey, Council representative, left, hosts a tour for Coro Fellows who are learning about unions. L-r, Saman Haddad, Nathan Shapiro, Amir Ebtehadj and Sophia Kownatzki.



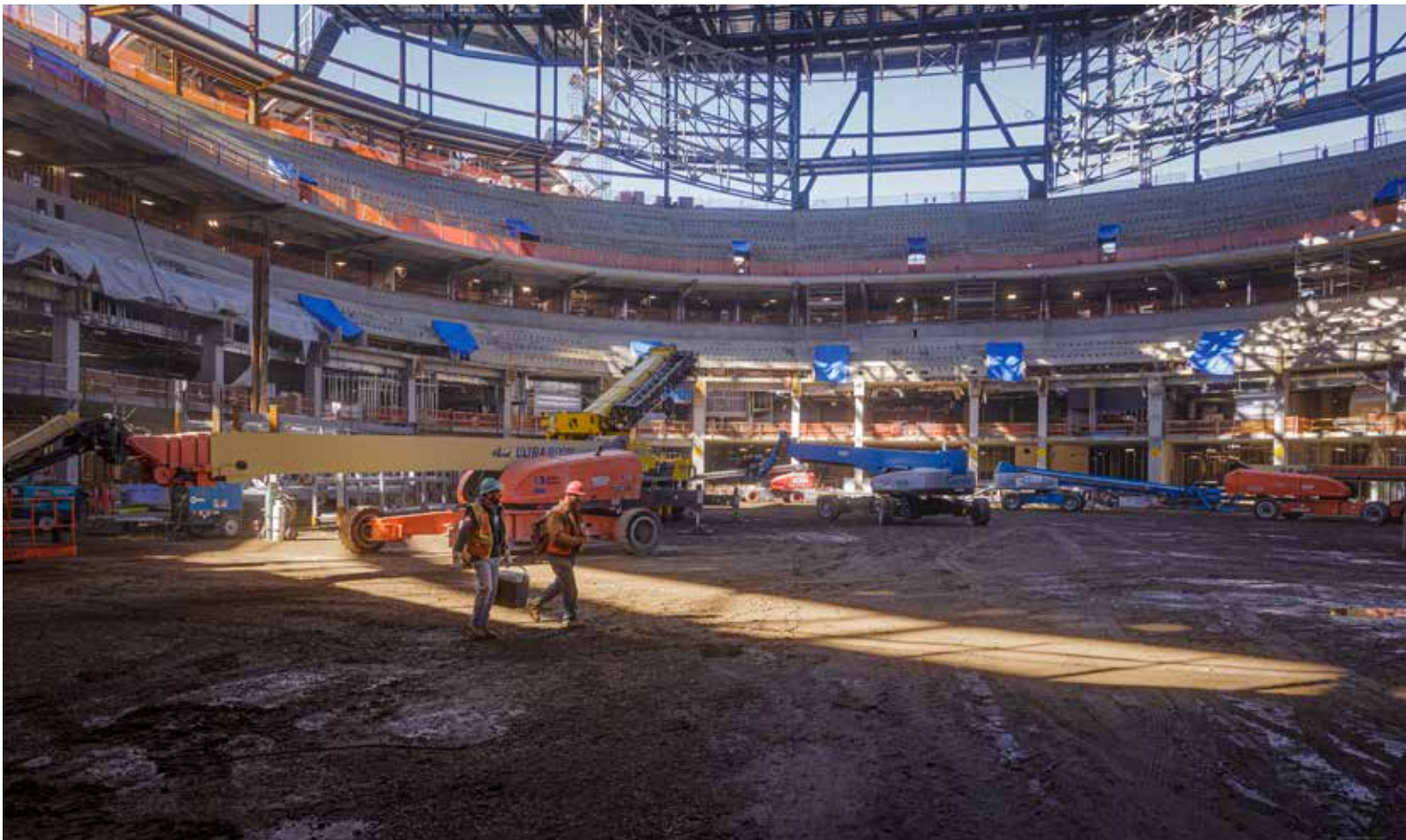
Iron Workers ready to weld some of the site's 10,500 tons of structural steel.



Journeyman Clyde Jeffries of UA Local 709 Sprinkler Fitters has 36 years in his Trade.



From UA Local 709 Sprinkler Fitters, apprentices Miguel Rodriguez, 25, left, and Llonzayah Ellis, 27, who lives near Inglewood.



The Intuit Dome will include a special standing-room area for die-hard fans.



IBEW Local 11 foreman Richard Zubiate.



The Dome grounds will include a public plaza with an outdoor basketball court.

“To date, almost \$10 million in wages have been paid to workers in Inglewood and the immediate surrounding areas,” said Gillian Zucker, the Clippers’ President of Business Operations.

That includes Llonzayah Ellis, 27, an apprentice with UA Local 709 Sprinkler Fitters. He lives in Westmont, an unincorporated part of LA County directly to the east of Inglewood. “I’m on the job for Wolverine, and I’m learning a lot,” Ellis said.

All Trades are contributing their skills. Approximately 10,500 tons of structural steel in the bowl was erected in eight months, including seven roof trusses that each weigh 200 tons.

And at this arena, it’s not only Plumbers who especially care about how many toilet stalls are getting built.

It’s also a billionaire who is one of the 10 richest people in the world.

Ballmer said the Intuit Dome will have 1,160 toilets and urinals. “Three times the NBA average number,” he pointed out. “We don’t want people waiting in lines. We want them to get back to their damn seats.”

**Solar Power**

On a site visit by “Building Trades News” a week before the topping out, Richard Zubiate, an IBEW Local 11 foreman for Baker Electric, explained that the roof, with a pattern resembling a basketball net, will actually house solar panels. Combined with state-of-the-art battery storage, the site itself will generate enough power to run its game-day operations.

The dome is aiming for a LEED Platinum certification for environmental friendliness. Zucker said nearly 1,000 trees will be planted throughout Inglewood “in partnership with Intuit and Aspiration to commemorate this milestone, to absorb carbon, to beautify and bring shade to the city. It represents our commitment to sustainability at Intuit Dome.”

Nowadays, that sustainability also extends to the human side—the workers, residents and families who will be the dome’s neighbors, builders, visitors and fans.

“The Clippers have committed to the biggest Community Benefits Agreement in the history of sports,” said Inglewood Mayor James Butts. “We look forward to the first game.”



Journeyman Jimmy Martinez of Operating Engineers Local 12 operates the manlift.



# READY, SET, GO!

## Students Prepare for Great Union Careers



Richard Yazloff, an MC3 instructor at the Slawson Center, shows Jose Raymond Jimenez the basics of electrical wiring.

**BY BEIGE LUCIANO-ADAMS**

On a February morning at Richard Slawson Occupational Center in Bell, students raced back and forth between two sides of a classroom, rearranging mismatched questions and answers scrawled on Post-It notes: “Why was construction halted in the 1930s?” “Most Building Trades organized when...,” “The Fitzgerald Act,” “Taft-Hartley,” “New Deal.” After math and hands-on shop, this game, called “Heritage of the Unions,” added a sense of history for a cohort of young men who would all be the first in their families to join a union.

Through the Council’s nonprofit, **14 BUILDING TRADES NEWS**

the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund, a professional staff assists 21 MC3 programs in the two counties. The Slawson program is one of the newest and is close to the Building Trades’ heart: The occupational center is named for Richard Slawson, who served as leader of the Council from 1995 to 2011 after starting out as a union Steamfitter.



The center is named for Richard Slawson, retired head of the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building Trades.

Reflecting a broadening interest in technical and trade education, the LA/OC Building Trades launched the Slawson Center program in 2021 in partnership with LA Unified School District. It joins MC3 programs across the Southland, located at community colleges, neighborhood organizations and school districts. Four are at LAUSD Adult Education sites.

Some MC3 programs recruit from specific populations, including formerly incarcerated individuals and women. The Slawson program is open to all adults, and aims to serve local residents.

**How to Get Into a Union**

“We’re trying to ensure everyone in the community knows about career pathways in the Building and Construction Trades,” said Ben Garcia, program director with the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund. “It’s been very difficult to understand how to navigate getting into our local unions. Historically, we’ve had issues with educational institutions pushing only post-secondary and college pathways. Now you’re seeing a big shift in that process. Educational authorities really want to participate and partner with the Building Trades.”

Garcia is confident that the popularity of “STEM” (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education will bring more interest. MC3



The group presents lessons on workers' history.

graduates are introduced directly to Building Trades apprenticeships, and other industries are looking toward the Building Trades’ apprenticeship model for inspiration.

“With STEM we’re talking about getting back to folks working with their hands, exposing them to different things like robotics. And as the Building Trades evolve and start using new technology, we now have younger generations of folks doing these things,” Garcia said.

The Slawson Occupational Center typically hosts four cohorts per year, each lasting 10 weeks with a total of 240 hours of instruction, Monday through Thursday, 7:30 am to 3:45 pm. The current cohort began Jan. 9 and finished March 23.



This chart gets right to the point.



L-r, at Slawson Center ribbon cutting in 2013: Current Council Executive Secretary Chris Hannan; past Council Orange County representative Jim Adams; past Executive Secretary Ron Miller; honoree and past Executive Secretary Richard Slawson; State Building Trades representative Frank Zavala; past Council President Tom Moxley.

**The Richard Slawson Occupational Center in Bell held its grand opening Feb. 2, 2013. Built by the unions of the Building Trades, the center is named for Richard Slawson, who served as Executive Secretary of the LA/OC Building Trades from 1995 to 2011. At the opening ceremony, Slawson told an audience of 400, “This center will give hope and opportunity to thousands of students who will seek a**

**better life through education over the years to come. It’s a fantastic opportunity.”** Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard honored Slawson by saying, “Dick dedicated his career to expending apprenticeship programs in construction and to ensure that those working in the Building Trades have fair wages and benefits.” Ten years later, the Slawson Center is fulfilling its promise.



Giovanni del Toro hoists concrete blocks.

The Slawson program launched in the middle of the pandemic on Zoom, which meant a slow start. Class numbers are smaller, but the advantage is that students get even more personalized attention.

Isaac Lopez, the Fund’s case manager, applies methods honed in his previous role with the Anti-Recidivism Coalition’s Second Chance Boot Camp, an MC3 program.

“What I do now is to help folks with their essential skills, life skills and communication, to coach them through the program,” Lopez said.

**A Personal Connection**

Lopez personally connects with each recruit, helping them navigate barriers to employment, whether it’s a driver’s license or a GED. “It’s about building that trust, and helping people with whatever issue they may have.” He typically does an initial 30-minute phone call, “making sure they know what it is, then putting the ball in their court. They get to decide if union construction is something they want to do.”

Since the pandemic, some younger people who have already graduated high school or even college have been

unable to find a well-paying job, and they are looking to rebuild their career from the ground up.

The goal is the same, Lopez said. “Folks that have been incarcerated vs. folks that have not, there are more

**SEE SLAWSON PAGE 16**



Part of the training is for physical strength.



At 18, David Ortiz is the youngest in the class but old enough to join a union.



similarities than differences. Everyone wants to support their families, everyone wants a good-paying career and benefits. When we communicate these things, it’s the same buy-in.”

According to Richard Yazloff, an MC3 instructor at the Slawson Center, the number of candidates currently may be smaller, but quality and commitment is higher. “We’re getting better candidates, people who want a career in construction. And they’ve gotten better at getting those people to show up who really want to do this,” he said.

“I think it’s getting back to what it used to be, in the old days. Young people today are finding out that you have to work and earn everything that you get. Now they understand, ‘This is what I have to do to improve my life and improve my quality of life.’ They’re all trying to work hard.”

Ready for Responsibility

LAUSD apprenticeship adviser Oscar Meier said recent cohorts are skewing younger than the national and state apprenticeship averages, but are composed of more serious candidates.

“We are attracting a different crowd, and it’s usually a young man or woman that’s already had a child or two, they’re ready to take on responsibility. Hey, you’ve got to get up at 4 in the morning! And you have to have tools and transportation,” Meier said.



Precision counts.

There are currently many efforts to attract women to apprenticeship-readiness—of the 1,211 MC3 graduates placed into apprenticeship since the ARF started, 18 percent are women. This current Slawson cohort has no women. But two cohorts ago, there were six women, Meier said, adding that the overall culture is changing.



Paul De Maximo carries a 90-pound bag filled with sand.



“We’re trying to ensure everyone knows about career pathways in the Building and Construction Trades,” says Ben Garcia, second from right, program director with the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund.

“Too often the woman was there all by herself. Now there’s getting to be a little more support. Guys are being taught to behave themselves. Unfortunately, the job site is terrible



Using tools and written lessons.

sometimes. So part of our training is, you have to behave as if you were in church or you were in school. Just because you’re on a jobsite doesn’t mean everything is off the table. So it does change,” he said.

LAUSD apprenticeship program adviser Anna Gray said a “really wonderful collaborative working relationship” with the Trades makes the program unique, with support services and placement assistance from the Readiness Fund.

“Just by networking with Ben, and them supporting the MC3 program with us, we’re able to have outcomes for students,” Gray said. “I’m always trying to make each cohort better. Right now we’re trying to standardize all the training, so in any given week we know what project they’re working on. The idea is to really have

teachers engage with students, not just lecture but really engage with the curriculum.”

That showed in the classroom, where student David Ortiz joined the others in learning how to strip wires and use basic electrician’s tools. “What we were working on today, electrical, it’s new, so it was a little challenging. But I think I was getting the hang of it,” he said.

Serving Southeast LA

Slawson Principal Sonya Ramirez stressed the importance of training people in the community, who can then take advantage of local hire provisions in the network of Project Labor Agreements negotiated by the Building Trades. These agreements



Anna Gray is LAUSD apprenticeship program adviser.

bring labor standards to projects and enable contractors to target certain groups, such as local residents or veterans, for hiring.

“One of the reasons Slawson Occupational Center was built was because they needed career/technical education training in the Southeast LA community,” Ramirez said.

The Building Trades Council has a multi-year Project Labor Agreement with LAUSD for billions of dollars’ worth of work, and a goal to hire district residents.

“Local hire is very important to us, because when you come to the jobsite,



Isaac Lopez is the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund’s case manager.

there weren’t any guys that look like the neighborhood,” Meier said. They were outside the fence, we were inside the fence. That has been broken. And I think LAUSD has been the difference. We got bond money, the Building Trades supported us with jobs for the community, and that helps our K-12 students. It trickles down to, ‘I’ve got a dad that can earn an upper-middle-class wage,’ and these kids aren’t coming to school hungry. We start setting a new standard for the next generation.”

*Read on for personal stories from the recent Slawson MC3 students.*

**APPRENTICESHIP  
READINESS  
IS OPEN**

The Apprenticeship Readiness Fund of the LA/OC Building Trades oversees 21 programs to prepare newcomers for union apprenticeship. Interested, for yourself, a friend or family member?

Please contact Ben Garcia or Isaac Lopez:  
[ben@laocmc3.org](mailto:ben@laocmc3.org);  
[isaac@laocmc3.org](mailto:isaac@laocmc3.org).



David Ortiz, 18

I graduated when I was 15—I was homeschooled. I started working non-union, for two years. I saw there was a lack of security in many places. We didn’t have any benefits. The work conditions were a little rougher. So when my teacher contacted me about this program, I decided I wanted to get into a union. It’s a good opportunity. **The different trades care about your future, there’s a pension.** Right now I’m leaning toward the Carpenters. We went to visit them for a field trip and I liked it. What we were working on today, electrical, it’s new so it was a little challenging. But I think I was getting the hang of it.



Ronald Omar del Duarte Sandoval, 22

I started slacking off after high school. I was messing around with drugs, the party life. I didn’t know what to do with my life. I didn’t want to go to college because I’m not really a reading and writing type of person—I’m more of a hands-on type of person. I saw a billboard for a trade, and I only live 10 minutes’ drive away from here. When I came to this program I was coming for electrician or HVAC. But they told me those courses are filled up. At the same time when I’m talking to the secretary in the office, the Pre-Apprenticeship Navigator, Mr. Manriquez, walks in, and it was like a Godsend or something. He overhears the conversation, and says, “Hey, we have this new course, and today and tomorrow are the last days to get people.” And I’m not just learning one trade, I’m learning all the trades. I just want to turn the chapter in my book to move on with my life. Because I’ve been doing drugs for seven years. I started when I was 15. And I’m already 17 weeks sober. **Yes, it helps me stay focused and sober, and I like the community, too.** I have no experience in construction whatsoever. I am an immigrant from El Salvador, I came when I was five years old. So I would be the first member of my family to have studied here, the first one to graduate from high school, the first one to learn a second language. They were disappointed in me for all the lifestyle choices before, but now there are more smiles on their faces, for sure.



Marvin Villegas, 26

I’d been laid off because of Covid, and my caseworker got me involved with the school, and then the school called me and told me about the MC3 program. Before that, since I was 18, I was a shipping clerk, but it was not an ideal job or something I’d like to do for the rest of my life. Honestly, I didn’t have any clue or idea of what I wanted to do in my life. So this was perfect. It shows me all the Trades that are out there, and now I actually see myself in the future in one of those unions, doing something I like to do every day. **So far, the Sheet Metal trade is really calling my attention, but I’m open-minded.** We’re going to visit different unions, and we got certified for OSHA and first aid and CPR. As soon as we finish we’ll hopefully choose a trade and apply to get into apprenticeship. I’d be the first union member in my family. So that’s a really big deal, you know? Because no one believes it’s easy to get into a union. From what I’m seeing, you just have to want it.



Paul De Maximo, 22

I managed okay in high school and had wanted to go to college but my parents told me I had to go into work immediately. So I went to work in construction. It worked out because I wasn’t ready for college. I didn’t have the patience for school. Construction kept me busy. But then my mom got sick, and I had to take care of her. I got a job at Wal-Mart and was miserable. I worked hard and got promoted but I was working for nothing. I didn’t see myself going anywhere. I had liked working in construction before, so I was looking to get back into HVAC. A friend referred me to this program. I had always heard that it was hard to get into the unions and that you had to know someone. **But the program really gives you all of the information you need to know to apply.** And they help you with sponsorship opportunities and help you get the tutoring you need to pass the tests. Mr. Yazloff, my instructor, taught me what it means to be a good union worker. Being on time, being responsible, high energy and having a positive attitude.



Jorge del Toro, 27

I found out about this through my brother, who is a probation officer. **He told me it’s a good opportunity to start a new career and build on that.** I was in retail sales before this, for three or four years. It was cool at the beginning, but then after a while they just want you to get more and more, numbers, schematics and all that, quotas. Prior I had done construction, just the trenchwork, from the foundation, the rebar and digging before the cement poured in. Electrical work is interesting me most right now.



Jose Raymond Jimenez, 30

I was referred by my parole agent. I did 12 years. So when I got out, I got into non-union, residential construction. I was working in Glendale, then when it slowed down there I went to Sacramento. It was wherever I could find it. It got to the point where it got to be too much, you know? Going over there for two weeks, coming back. They were the only ones that would hire me. I was trying to work at regular jobs but I wouldn’t get them because of the way I look, and my record. My parole agent referred me before they shut down the resources, so I got lucky. I want a career. I experienced how it’s hard to get a job, and this is a place where they’re not judging me on my past. I can help my family, it’s a blessing. I want to have kids, raise a family. I feel like I’ve been through everything, so nothing about the program is really challenging. Maybe the math. **I’m a fast learner. I like physical labor, that’s why I’m trying to get into Laborers Local 300,** so I can just do a little bit of everything. I like it, I feel good at the end of the day. I just hope to work and one day maybe have a house.



Jorge Luis Murillo, 29

Since I was 19 I was in and out of jail. I was an addict. When I paroled in 2021, I didn’t have my high school diploma, I didn’t have any education. All I know is I wanted a career, I need to do something with my life. I knew my intentions were to go into a trade, I just didn’t know what area. I’d done renovation before, with my family’s business. But I saw how it went, it’s busy one season and then it’s not. I didn’t want that path. So when I was in school getting my diploma, a counselor pulled me aside and asked me what I was trying to do. She told me about this MC3 program. It gave me more fuel. I became more committed. I finished my high school in less than a year. That was my whole journey to get here.

Man, it’s a lot of knowledge, a lot of things from every trade. **It gave me the opportunity to see what I like.** So far, it’s Sheet Metal. The physical part is easy, I’m pretty healthy. The hard part would be the math, in the way the trades use it. What I like about it here is, they give you the tools, they help you out, and let you know where to go.



Giovanni del Toro, 23

I was working at AT&T as a retail sales associate. I did that for about four years. I did pretty well, always top of the sales at my store. It wasn’t a bad gig, it just wasn’t very fulfilling. I found myself sad and angry when I’d get home from work. Sales is a pretty stressful job. I have a couple of buddies who own their own construction companies, non-union. So I did that for three or four months and I just loved it. **I heard about this, and saw it as an opportunity to grow and join a union.** My parents are immigrants from Mexico. Basically what they taught us was go to school, get good grades and try to go to university. I was at CalState LA but I didn’t finish up, just because I don’t think school was really meant for me. I always did well, it just wasn’t what I was trying to do. And I didn’t know what to do with the rest of my life. I knew I didn’t want to go to school, I knew I didn’t want to sit behind a desk. Then I started working construction, and it was just night and day. I loved it. Right now I’m really leading toward the Electrical trade.



Executive Director at the Port of Long Beach.

The PLA targets local residents, veterans and transitional workers for hiring.



Board Secretary Bonnie Lowenthal.



The Trades-built Port of Long Beach headquarters.

In doing so, the PLA helps power the Port, the third-busiest container seaport in the United States, and an economic engine for trade, logistics and good, lifelong union careers.

“This is going to be a positive agreement for the next 10 years, that is going to allow us to construct and maintain the best port in the nation, and in the world, with the highest quality for job standards,” Chris Hannan, Council Executive Secretary, told the board at its Jan. 23 vote.



Board Vice President Bobby Olvera Jr.

In 2016, the Port signed a 5-year blanket PLA with the Building Trades for all significant construction. Previously, the Port had project-specific agreements for many years. In 2021, the Port and Council inked a one-year extension, and set the course for the new 10-year term.

Vote of Confidence

The 10-year contract is a vote of confidence in the Building Trades. “Our projects will move forward without any interruption whatsoever,” Cordero said.

That includes an expansion of Pier B, going from 82 acres to 171 with a budget of \$191 million.

Building Trades union representatives attended the vote, which was held at the Trades-built Port headquarters on Ocean Blvd. in downtown Long Beach.

Tommy Faavae, business development representative with



“This will expand and enhance training opportunities for our San Pedro Bay workforce,” says Port Executive Director Mario Cordero.

PLA.

“I think this 10-year agreement in front of you is a great agreement,” Faavae said. “We look forward to many great projects down the pipeline.”

Tyler Byrd, business representative for Iron Workers Local 416, said many local residents who are union Iron Workers are benefiting from the PLA. “We get to help the upcoming construction workers of Long Beach



Commissioner Steven Neal.

to be able to live and work in their community as well.”

Commissioners praised the PLA. “We have great partners in labor,” said board President Sharon Weissman.

Commissioner Bonnie Lowenthal expressed her gratitude for the Building Trades unions, stating, “It’s clear that by having this Project Labor Agreement, we’ve ensured quality work for so many years on all these projects. Look what we have—we have quality outcomes.”

32 Projects So Far

Port staff, including Darrin Lambrigger, director of construction management, and Adriana Ramirez, manager of labor compliance, further explained the inner workings of this PLA.

It has resulted in 32 projects being awarded, with \$507 million in paid wages.

With the goal of hiring diverse workers, Ramirez said, the Port will continue to work with programs like Helmets to Hardhats for outreach to



Commissioner Frank Colonna.

veterans, and local apprenticeship-readiness programs WINTER (Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles) and at Long Beach City College.

Project Labor Agreements make these programs possible.

“LiUNA! Local 1309 is excited to continue our partnership with the



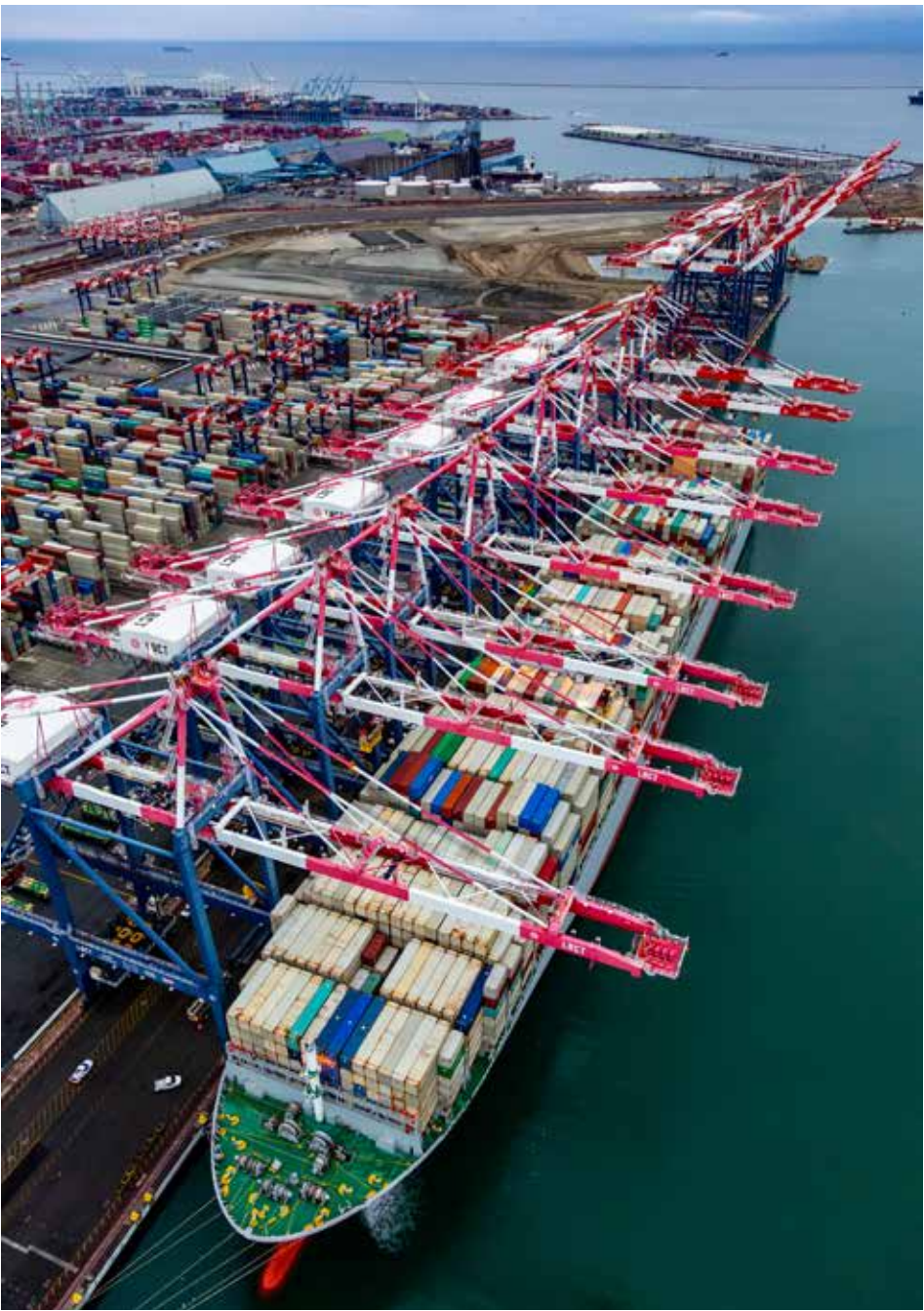
Harbor Commission President Sharon Weissman.

Port of Long Beach and to work on projects that will benefit the entire port community,” said Nicholas Santos, business agent for Laborers Local 1309, based nearby in Lakewood, after the vote.

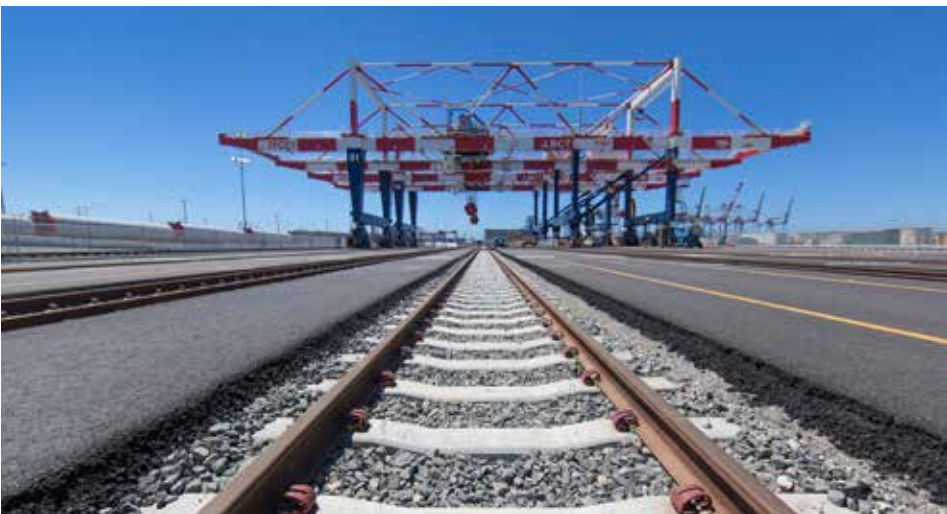
Mario Cordero had the last word. On Jan. 26, at the annual State of the Port address, he specifically lauded the PLA.



Looking northwest from Pier J.



Vertical terminals at Pier E.



The future of the Port will be “multi-modal,” mixing trucks, trains and ships.

“Over the years, we have been able to increase the use of Project Labor Agreements,” Cordero told hundreds in his audience. “These agreements, which help us to guarantee a well-trained, well-paid workforce, are available for all our projects. This week, the Harbor Commission approved the new port-wide 10-year Project Labor Agreement with the Los Angeles/Orange County Building and Construction Trades Council, covering the projects with an estimated construction value of nearly half a billion dollars.

“It has been an exciting year, and we have great plans this year to come.”

NEW PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

PIER B ON-DOCK RAIL SUPPORT FACILITY

• This expansion will more than double the size of Pier B, going from 82 acres to 171. This project consists of a complete transformation of the Pier B rail yard, turning it into a modern, high-tech facility. It will increase the speed and efficiency of the on-dock operations throughout the entire Port, and is estimated to reach completion in 2032.

• At a combined \$190.9 million, this upgrade will include the locomotive facility, westward expansion of the existing site and realignment of Pier B street, eastward expansion of the site, relocation of a Los Angeles flood control pump station, and widening the Dominguez Channel Bridge to accommodate a third track.

• All in all, this is a huge improvement to the Port, adding more than 130,000 feet of rail, and quadrupling the number of tracks, from 12 to 48.

PIER E NORTH GATE EXPANSION

• The majority of efforts are focused on improvements, including constructing a new storm drain, installing new sewer and water utility infrastructure, and installing a new cement treated base. Overall, Pier E will be largely renovated to ensure maximum efficiency.

PIER A WEST JOINT PORT GOODS MOVEMENT WORKFORCE TRAINING CAMPUS

• A 20-acre site will house a training center attracting new workers into the cargo industry, addressing skill shortages and providing opportunities for workforce up-skilling or re-skilling to meet the rapidly changing needs of the cargo industry. The center will also train workers in green and zero-emissions technologies.



# WE'RE BACK!

**WOMEN'S BUILDING TRADES CONFERENCE RETURNS TO CALIFORNIA**

**JOIN US JUNE 3-4 IN SACRAMENTO**



**Union women are stronger together! Please join us Saturday and Sunday, June 3-4, at the Sheraton Grand in Sacramento for the California union women's conference.**

Meet other women in your Trade and share your experiences, challenges and ideas. Workshops will include:

- **Thriving in apprenticeship**
- **Running for union office**
- **Lifelong learning in your Trade**
- **Dealing with harassment on the job**
- **Having a family while you're in the Building Trades**
- **Trade caucuses: Breakfast with other women from around California**

We'll have many receptions and chances to relax and meet up informally. This conference is open to all blue-collar union women and allies in California, highlighting women in the Trades as well as a chance to connect to other union sisters.

**REGISTER NOW!**

[www.cabuildingtrades.org](http://www.cabuildingtrades.org)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**916-443-3302 or 310-497-1554**



State  
Building &  
Construction  
Trades  
Council



California  
LABOR  
Federation



Presented by the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California and the California Labor Federation

