



# BUILDING TRADES NEWS

VOLUME 30, NO.2      LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTIES BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL, AFL-CIO            SUMMER 2025

## OCVIBE POWERS ANAHEIM JOBS BOOM



A nighttime rendering of the reimagined district surrounding Honda Center, part of the 100-acre OCVIBE project transforming Anaheim with new dining, public space, and union-built infrastructure.

The largest private construction project in Orange County history is rising in Anaheim—and it’s being built entirely by union hands. Known as OCVIBE, the \$4 billion mixed-use development is reshaping 100 acres around Honda Center into a dynamic district of concert venues, housing, retail, offices, green space, and transit

connections. At the center of it all: more than 10,000 union construction jobs across every craft and trade. Crews are on-site now, building the first phase of a project that’s setting a new standard for scale, ambition, and local workforce opportunity.

**SEE ON THE JOB PAGE 6**

## TWIN WINS FOR TRADES IN LANCASTER AND PALMDALE

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The cities of Lancaster and Palmdale voted unanimously to approve Community Workforce Agreements with the LA/OC Building Trades, marking a united commitment to union labor on major city-funded construction. Both City Councils voted 5–0—Lancaster on June 24 and Palmdale on July 1 to uphold standards for wages, training,

and jobsite safety while expanding access to career pathways through targeted hiring and state-certified apprenticeship programs. These agreements ensure that public infrastructure will continue to be built by skilled local workers, strengthening the Antelope Valley economy and workforce from the ground up. **SEE LANCASTER/PALMDALE PAGE 2**





City of Palmdale advances local jobs and equity through its newly approved Community Workforce Agreement.

## LANCASTER/PALMDALE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The cities of Lancaster and Palmdale have both voted unanimously to renew their Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs) with the LA/OC Building Trades, reaffirming their commitments to building major public projects with union labor—delivering the highest standards of safety, wages, and training for local workers and families across the Antelope Valley.

More than a dozen members from local unions packed the council meetings to voice their support. Workers shared personal stories of growing up, training, and building careers in the High Desert, urging the city to keep those jobs local.

“This is about careers, not jobs—not gigs, but careers,” said Eddie Escotó Alvarez, LA County Representative for the Building Trades. “For local residents who live here in the High Desert, who instead of having to travel 70 miles, sometimes 100 miles each way, they

can now spend that time with their families, bettering their communities, and spending their hard-earned money right here at home.”

The CWAs in both cities apply to major city-funded construction projects and include strong provisions for union hiring, jobsite safety, fair wages, and apprenticeship training.

Union member Leonard Lemos, of Laborers Local 300, told the Lancaster Council he’s proud to build the community where he was raised.

“I’ve been in this community since I was four years old,” he said. “I went to college here, and when I started doing demo work, it gave me a sense of pride to see what my labor could accomplish from start to finish. I want to build here so I can tell my kids, ‘This is what Dad worked on.’ It’s a smarter way to use tax money—and it keeps money flowing in our local economy.”

In Palmdale, union members and supporters filled the chambers to express strong support for renewing the agreement. Among them was Norris Carter, a 25-year Palmdale resident, who called on the Council to approve the deal. He noted that 68 Ironworkers from Local 433 live in Palmdale and emphasized that the CWA ensures they have access to good jobs, fair wages, and safe working conditions on projects funded by taxpayer dollars.

“Approving this agreement keeps our work local, gives the youth a pathway into meaningful careers, and helps build a stronger Palmdale—one where people who live here can work here,” he said.

According to an impact memo prepared by the City of Lancaster Public Works Department, Lancaster’s CWA has been successful in shifting contracts from outside Los Angeles County back into the region, while helping retain multiple contracts within the city itself. The memo also noted that entering into the agreement has not limited competitive bidding or increased project costs—a clear signal that building union doesn’t come at the

expense of efficiency.

During the Palmdale vote, Eddie Alvarez also took a moment to honor a key figure in the labor movement who helped lay the groundwork for this success: Dave Gomez, a beloved member of IBEW Local 11, who passed away before seeing this latest agreement come to fruition.

*“I want to build here so I can tell my kids, ‘This is what Dad worked on.’ It gives me a sense of pride to see my work where I live.”*

*—Leonard Lemos, Laborers Local 300*

“I need to thank our good friend who isn’t here with us anymore, Mr. Dave Gomez,” Alvarez said. “His spirit lives on in every single agreement we sign in the Antelope Valley. I can honestly say we would not be here where we are today in this valley with the union movement if it wasn’t for Dave.”

He noted that Kathy Mac Laren-Gomez, Dave’s wife and a current union staff member with NECA and IBEW, was present at the meeting, continuing the family’s legacy of service to labor.

With Lancaster and Palmdale under renewed agreements, both cities are sending a unified message: public infrastructure should be built by—and for—the communities that call the Antelope Valley home.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

# WE BUILD WITH DIGNITY, NOT FEAR

Know your rights. Protect your crew. Stand with our communities.

Recent immigration enforcement actions across Los Angeles have sent a chill through many communities—and the impact is being felt on and around our construction sites.

Not because of a labor shortage. Union construction jobsites are fully staffed and moving forward. But that doesn’t mean our members aren’t feeling the weight of what’s

happening in their communities. Some of our members are worried for their friends, families, and neighbors. Not for anything they’ve done, but because of where they’re from or how they look.

Over the past few weeks, we’ve seen increased immigration enforcement activity across Southern California. The biggest impacts are being felt on non-union, residential jobsites, where oversight is weak and workers are more vulnerable. But in June, federal agents attempted to question workers at a City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works jobsite in South L.A. They had no



BY ERNESTO MEDRANO  
Executive Secretary  
LA/OC Building and Construction Trades Council

paperwork. No warrant. They asked to speak to workers. And thanks to a supervisor who knew their rights and took immediate action, no one was taken by ICE.

Let this be a lesson to every supervisor, foreman, and contractor in our industry: Ask for a warrant. Ask for identification. Do not let agents question workers without proper

legal documentation. If they can’t prove they’re authorized to be there, you can—and should—turn them away.

We are proud to represent the most skilled, most diverse workforce in the country. The LA/OC Building Trades stand with all construction workers—union or not—and we will not tolerate fear or intimidation on our jobsites.

We’re also working with the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor to distribute Know Your Rights materials. If you’re a supervisor, download it. Keep it on site. Make sure every member of your crew knows what to do.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: WHAT TO DO IF YOU’RE APPROACHED BY IMMIGRATION AGENTS

### IF AGENTS APPROACH YOU AT WORK OR HOME:

- Do not open the door unless they present a warrant signed by a judge with your name on it.
- Ask to see a warrant. If they cannot show it, you are not required to speak.
- Do not sign any papers without talking to an attorney.
- Remain silent and say: “I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.”
- Do not give permission to search your belongings or property.



### IF YOU ARE STOPPED OUTSIDE YOUR HOME OR WORKSITE:

- Ask: “Am I free to go?” If yes, leave quietly. If no, ask to speak to a lawyer.
- Remain silent. You are not required to answer questions about your status.
- Do not give consent to any search.

### USE THIS STATEMENT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OR ICE AGENTS:

- “I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my Fifth Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution.”
- “I do not give you permission to enter or search my home or belongings based on my Fourth Amendment rights, unless you show me a warrant signed by a judge.”
- “I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.”

### FOR HELP OR MORE INFORMATION:

**Los Angeles County Office of Immigrant Affairs**  
Department of Consumer & Business Affairs  
(800) 593-8222  
oia.lacounty.gov

**OC Rapid Response Network**  
(714) 881-1558  
ocrapidresponse.org

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## BUILDING TRADES NEWS

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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

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



# A NEW GATEWAY TO LAX— UNION BUILT, UNION PROUD

Metro's new transit hub connects Los Angeles—and honors the workers who built it



The train arriving at the LAX/Metro Transit Center for the first time with passengers.

BY EDNA DEGOLLADO

After decades of promises, the train to LAX is finally real.

With the June opening of the LAX/Metro Transit Center Station, Southern California now has its first seamless rail connection to Los Angeles International Airport. But beyond the infrastructure and innovation, this

milestone is also a powerful tribute to the workers who built it—every one of them a union member.

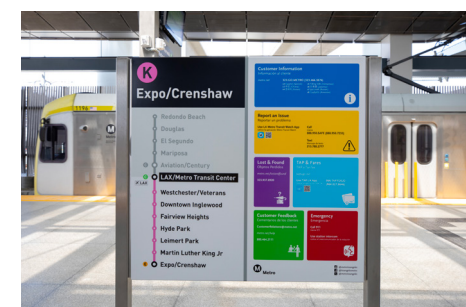
Located at Aviation and 96th Street, the new station connects Metro's C Line and K Line, and links directly to LAX terminals via a dedicated, zero-emission LAX shuttle operated by LAWA. The result: a smooth transfer for passengers traveling from as far as

Inglewood, Norwalk, or the Westside straight to the airport, without having to sit in traffic or rely on expensive rideshares.

For the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council, the station represents a visible, lasting example of what union labor delivers: quality, safety, and legacy.

“Our members built this project with union skill, union grit, and union pride,” said Ernesto Medrano, Executive Secretary of the LA/OC Building Trades. “From the ironworkers who shaped its frame to the electricians who powered its core, this station stands as a tribute to every trade that showed up and delivered. Our members built a gateway for millions of people coming into Los Angeles.”

The station itself is designed for scale and sustainability. It features real-time train and flight information, large bus bays, wayfinding signage, digital displays, and infrastructure for electric Metro buses and bike/scooter access.



New station map.



Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins and Executive Secretary Ernesto Medrano posing for a photo with elected officials and government representatives at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

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The entrance to the new LAX/Metro Transit Center.



Mayor Karen Bass joins Metro Board for ribbon-cutting.

The entire project was constructed under a Project Labor Agreement.

“This station is a construction and economic milestone,” Medrano added. “Every concrete pour, every rebar tie, every wire was laid by someone who lives here, supports a family here, and is invested in the long-term success of our region.”

“The wait is over, Los Angeles,” said Metro board chair Janice Hahn in a news release. “At long last, we are getting a train to LAX. And when the Automated People Mover finally opens, we will truly have an international airport that connects people from inside the terminals to the world beyond through Metro.”

*“The wait is over,  
Los Angeles.  
At long last,  
we are getting  
a train to LAX.”*

*— Janice Hahn,  
Metro board Chair*



The bus bay at the LAX/Metro Transit Center.



An original sculpture from artist Glenn Kaino titled The Distance of the Sun hangs in the station.

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# OCVIBE RISES: BUILDING ORANGE COUNTY'S FUTURE IN UNION HANDS

**A \$4 billion vision is reshaping Anaheim  
and creating 10,000 union careers across every trade.**

With 10,000 construction jobs and 100 acres of entertainment, OCVIBE is a testament to generational investment in union labor.

Backed by a \$4 billion private investment, OCVIBE is transforming more than 100 acres around the Honda Center into a next-generation entertainment district—with new housing, music venues, parks, transit access, and over two dozen dining offerings and bars. But beyond the renderings and retail, the project's most powerful impact is already happening: 10,000 union construction jobs in Orange County.

After over a year of intense negotiations led by Ernesto Medrano, the developers finalized a Project Labor Agreement with the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council—ensuring that every trade on-site is represented, every hour of work pays union wages, and every phase of construction creates career opportunities for local workers.

Photos by  
**HECTOR SANDOVAL/SANDOVAL MEDIA**



Jason Lammens and Nolan Morales of IBEW Local 441.



Future site of the Market Hall at OCVIBE. Design by House & Robertson Architects.



Progress underway at the OCVIBE development in Anaheim.



“When private developers commit to union labor, everyone wins—workers, cities, and the communities that live here,” said Andrew Gonzales, Council Representative for the LA/OC Building Trades.

The master plan is bold. When complete, OCVIBE will feature a 5,700-seat concert venue, over 20 acres of parks and open space (including two 4-acre parks), 28 dining offerings and 6 bars, residential housing (with 15% affordable units), and a mass timber office complex—anchored by new pedestrian and transit infrastructure to connect the site to Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC) and beyond.

*“OCVIBE is a once in a generation project that will not only be a catalyst for economic growth, but a union-built project benefitting all of Anaheim.”*

*—Ashleigh Aitken,  
Anaheim Mayor*



OCVIBE will offer outdoor dining in a lively, green setting



OCVIBE will be a vibrant hub of entertainment and activity.



OCVIBE's flexible workspaces blend innovation, comfort, and panoramic views.



Green space designed for community, concerts, and cultural experiences at OCVIBE.



Solar panels being installed by IBEW Local 441.



Laborers Local 1184 pouring concrete.



Radoslaw Kuraczyk from Ironworkers Local 433.

The project is not just being built in Anaheim—it's being built by Anaheim.

At full buildout, OCVIBE is expected to generate more than \$10 million annually in revenue for the City of Anaheim and create more than 3,000 permanent jobs in hospitality, entertainment, and operations. But for the LA/OC Building Trades, the legacy of the project is about more than numbers—it's about building a skilled workforce and lifting up the next generation.

Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Company is serving as one of several general contractors for OCVIBE. “OCVIBE is a landmark development designed to elevate the entertainment experience and reshape the skyline for generations to come,” said Jose Iniguez, Project Executive with Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Company.

Every day on site, dozens of trades are represented—from Ironworkers and Operating Engineers to Electricians, Plumbers, and Sheet Metal Workers. Together, they're building a new identity for the city.

Anaheim may be known around the world for theme parks and sports teams, but OCVIBE marks a new chapter—one defined by walkability, access, culture, and community investment. And behind it all: union labor.

As vertical construction continues in phases, the project is already delivering on its promise: good jobs, real careers, and a visible reminder of what happens when private vision meets public responsibility.

*“OCVIBE is a landmark development designed to elevate the entertainment experience and reshape the skyline for generations to come.”*

*—Jose Iniguez,  
Project Executive,  
Hathaway Dinwiddie  
Construction Company*

**OCVIBE**  
AT A GLANCE



100

ACRES OF DEVELOPMENT



\$4B

PRIVATE INVESTMENT



10,000

CONSTRUCTION JOBS



3,000+

PERMANENT JOBS  
CREATED



28

DINING OFFERINGS

+



6

BARS



20

ACRES OF OPEN SPACE,  
INCLUDING TWO 4-ACRE PARKS



5,700-PERSON  
CONCERT HALL



15%

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN  
NEW RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES



\$10M+

ANNUAL REVENUE  
TO CITY OF ANAHEIM



# BUENA VISTA PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENT SECURES JOBS AND HOUSING

The Riboli Family and local elected officials unite with the Trades to bring good union jobs, affordable housing, and walkable access to one of LA's most historic neighborhoods.



Executive Secretary Ernesto Medrano with Mayor Karen Bass, Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez, State Senator María Elena Durazo, Assemblymember Mark González, the Riboli Family and union representatives.

City leaders, union workers, and community members gathered at Capitol Milling in Chinatown to mark a major milestone for working families and the future of Los Angeles. The Buena Vista Project Labor Agreement (PLA)—a partnership between the Riboli Family and the LA/OC Building Trades—was officially signed, securing a union-built future for nearly 1,000 new homes at the edge of LA State Historic Park.

Developed by the Riboli Family, longtime stewards of the historic San Antonio Winery, the Buena Vista project will bring 986 residential units, including 200 units of affordable housing, plus community-serving

*“The signing represents a commitment to create local, good-paying union jobs as we work in Los Angeles to meet the need for affordable housing.”*

—Mayor Karen Bass

retail and a new pedestrian corridor to the Chinatown Metro station.

At the heart of it all: a Project Labor Agreement ensuring strong workplace protections, good wages,

and apprenticeship opportunities for local residents.

“This PLA represents what we fight for every day: respect on the job, opportunity for our communities, and

a voice for working people in how our cities grow,” said Ernesto Medrano, Executive Secretary of the LA/OC Building Trades.

The ceremonial signing took place before a crowd of more than 100 union members, with speeches from labor leaders and elected officials underscoring what this moment means for the community.

“It was my honor to be in attendance to celebrate the Buena Vista PLA signing,” said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. “The signing represents a commitment to create local, good-paying union jobs as we work in Los Angeles to meet the need for affordable housing.”



The Buena Vista project will offer scenic terraces overlooking open green space and surrounding hillsides.



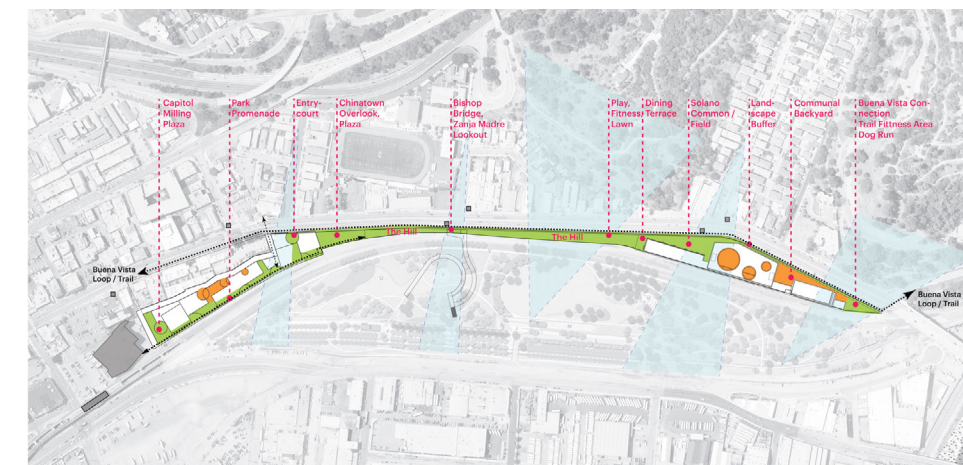
The Buena Vista project will overlook Los Angeles State Historic Park, offering sweeping views of green space and downtown.

The project site sits just north of the Chinatown Metro station and across from LA State Historic Park. In addition to housing and retail, the plan includes widened walkways and new access points that reconnect the neighborhood with transit and open space.

“At a time when labor is under attack, Project Labor Agreements are one of the strongest tools we have to protect workers and ensure that communities share in the benefits of development,” said Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez. “This project also moves us closer to our goal of building more affordable housing — and shows that we don’t have to choose between union jobs and affordability.”

For the Riboli Family, the partnership is a continuation of their legacy in the neighborhood.

“This Project Labor Agreement ensures Buena Vista will be built efficiently, safely, and responsibly by high-quality union workers, including local residents,” said Steve Riboli. “This agreement is an extension of our family’s century-long involvement



The site plan illustrates how Buena Vista PLA will integrate walkable pathways, gathering spaces, and park access along the historic rail corridor.

in Los Angeles and represents our commitment to building better opportunities for workers, our community, and our future.”

The commitment was echoed by State leaders as well.

“The Buena Vista Project Labor Agreement proves that we don’t have to choose between building more housing and protecting workers,” said Senator Maria Elena Durazo. “When developers partner with skilled union labor like the LA/OC Building Trades,

we get quality construction, family-supporting wages, and housing that actually serves working families. This is how we build California right — with strong labor standards and genuine affordability requirements working hand in hand.”

“As a renter living in Chinatown and representing one of California’s most renter-heavy districts, I’m proud to support the Buena Vista project,” said Assemblymember Mark González. “This is the kind of local,

community-driven development our neighborhoods need—200 units of affordable housing, safer and greener pathways to transit, and open space that brings people together. It’s a plan that lifts up working families, supports small businesses and nonprofits with affordable retail space, and creates good union jobs. Buena Vista means ‘good view,’ and this project offers exactly that—a better, more hopeful view of what our communities can become when we invest in equity, dignity, and the people who make our neighborhoods home.” The signing event capped off months of collaboration between the developer, city leaders, and the LA/OC Building Trades. In a city struggling with both housing and economic insecurity, it offered a model of what’s possible when jobs and justice are at the center of development.

“We’re not just building for the future,” Medrano said. “We’re making sure the people who build it have a future too.”



The shaded promenades at Buena Vista will create welcoming spaces for walking, dining, and gathering.

*“This is the kind of local, community-driven development our neighborhoods need.”*

—Assemblymember Mark Gonzalez



# LAUSD AND BUILDING TRADES HOST WOMEN-FOCUSED CONSTRUCTION CAREER DAY



An event participant learns the art of taping from Alejandro Alvarado with Finisher Local 1136, mastering the skills needed to create smooth, paint-ready surfaces.

Close to 100 high school juniors and seniors gathered at Slawson Southeast Occupational Center for the first-ever Women in Construction: Pathways to Apprenticeship event—a day designed to spark interest in construction careers and break down barriers that have long excluded women and underrepresented communities from high-wage, high-skill jobs in the trades.

The event was hosted in partnership by the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund, Los Angeles Unified School District's Division of Adult & Career Education (DACE), and the LA/OC Building Trades Council, with support from the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and its Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). Additional partners included Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER).

Funded by the Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeships (ERiCA) Grant, the event combined



Two students get hands-on with pipefitting under the expert guidance of Sara Valenzuela from Sprinkler Fitters Local 709.

live demonstrations, hands-on skill-building, and direct interactions with journey-level tradeswomen and union representatives. Students learned to use real tools, completed small-scale projects, and left with hard hats, tote bags, and a set of high-quality tools to continue exploring their interests.

The ERiCA Grant is transformative state funding administered by the California Department of Industrial Relations. It is designed to increase equitable access to building and construction career pathways for women, non-binary individuals, and other underserved populations throughout California. A core priority of the grant is to dismantle systemic barriers, especially the cost of childcare, which disproportionately affects women trying to enter apprenticeship programs.

The Apprenticeship Readiness Fund received the maximum grant award of \$1.8 million, which it uses to increase outreach, offer supportive

services, and build sustainable pipelines into union construction careers. The Women in Construction event was an early milestone made possible by this grant.

The Apprenticeship Readiness Fund has helped more than 1,800 individuals enter union construction careers over the past four years. Of those, 90% are people of color, 35% are formerly incarcerated, and 20% are women—a rate that far exceeds the national average of just 3% for women in union construction. These outcomes reflect a focused effort to remove barriers and expand pathways for communities historically excluded from the trades.

“By putting tools directly into the hands of these students, we’re sending a clear message: you belong in the trades, and we’re here to support you every step of the way,” said Ben Garcia, Executive Director of the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund. “This event was a real investment in the next generation of builders.”

Thirteen union trades were represented, including cement masons, drywall finishers, electricians, floorlayers, glaziers, ironworkers, painters, pipefitters, plasterers, sheet metal workers, sprinklerfitters, steamfitters, and tilersetters. Also present were signatory contractors PCL Construction and Bali Construction, both of whom shared hiring insights and mentorship opportunities with attendees.

LAUSD DACE offers tuition-free courses in construction and apprenticeship readiness programs. DACE’s hands-on training programs are a key component of the region’s efforts to connect young people, especially women, to high-road union careers that provide family-sustaining wages and long-term growth.



A young woman receives step-by-step instruction on flooring alignment from Sean Padilla representing Floorlayers Local 1247.



Current MC3 students from Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER) served as group leaders, guiding participants through the day's workshops and offering peer mentorship along the way.



Signatory contractors, including Alameda Construction, were on hand to highlight real career pathways and opportunities in the skilled trades.



A student tests her skills with Painters and Allied Trades Local 1036 on a VR painting simulator, gaining hands-on experience with precision techniques used in the field.



# TOUGH TIMES NEED INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

**An Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District is a smart, equitable way to finance projects such as the undergrounding of the Metro Southeast Gateway Line, members of a coalition write.**



In tough times, innovative solutions start with those who build.

Originally Published in *Los Angeles Business Journal*

**BY ERNESTO MEDRANO, AMY TURK, AND CLAUDIA OLIVEIRA**

Los Angeles faces intersecting regional challenges: a humanitarian crisis on our streets, underfunded infrastructure and a nearly \$1 billion budget deficit. At a time when public dollars are stretched thin and political will is being tested, we must turn to bold, innovative financing tools that allow us to meet these challenges head-on.

That's why our coalition is urging the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Board of Directors to advance the formation of an Enhanced Infrastructure

Financing District (EIFD) to fund the undergrounding of Phase 2 of the Southeast Gateway Line – an investment that will not only deliver critical transit infrastructure but also serve as a powerful new tool to address the city's fiscal and humanitarian crises.

The EIFD model is fundamentally different from traditional funding approaches. After redevelopment agencies were dissolved in 2012, Senate Bill 628 was passed two years later to establish EIFDs, which expand where tax increment can be captured from and what projects can be funded.

Subsequent legislation has only added to the ways EIFDs can be leveraged to address numerous public policy priorities. At its core, it signals a strategic alignment between the

public and private sectors, centered around one clear principle: investing in communities equitably.

To date, EIFDs have been formed in

*An Alameda Corridor EIFD equals economic empowerment for residents who've long been cut off from opportunity.*

nearly every major city in California. San Francisco is funding 2,600 housing units and 1.8 million square feet of commercial use at the Potrero Power Station. San Diego is financing the construction of a new sports arena and thousands of homes in the Midway District. And Sacramento is funding public infrastructure improvements for UC Davis' new Aggie Square Innovation District. Transformative, regionally impactful projects with high price tags have now become possible.

#### How to use in L.A.

In L.A. County, EIFDs have been established in West Carson, La Verne and Palmdale, among other cities and unincorporated areas. Los Angeles, especially in this moment, needs to be next.

In this case, the City of Los Angeles identifies the Arts District – along the Alameda Corridor – as a high-priority redevelopment zone. The private sector responds to that signal, channeling investment toward housing, infrastructure, and mixed-use development. In turn, the increased property tax revenues generated by that growth are reinvested – through the EIFD – into the very systems that uplift our communities: transit, housing and homelessness solutions.

At its core, an EIFD is not a subsidy or giveaway: it is a smart reinvestment strategy. By capturing the value created by development catalyzed by Phase 2 of the Southeast Gateway Line, we create a self-sustaining funding loop.

An Alameda Corridor EIFD equals infrastructure dollars that don't have to come out of the city's general fund. It generates capital to build a world-class transit line. And it invests directly in Skid Row housing and homelessness interventions. But most of all, an Alameda Corridor EIFD equals economic empowerment for residents who've long been cut off from opportunity.

#### L.A. at a turning point

Los Angeles is in a defining moment. We are three years out from hosting the world during the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Recent wildfires and our growing unhoused population have revealed the fragility of our systems. And our municipal budget faces serious headwinds.

Against this backdrop, the Southeast Gateway Line and the EIFD that supports it represent a new model –



Streetscape above potential underground route for Metro Southeast Gateway Line.

one where infrastructure builds more than transit; it builds fiscal resilience and economic inclusion.

The Alameda Corridor is uniquely positioned for this kind of value-capture strategy. It is home to vast, underutilized parcels – ready for transit-oriented development that does not displace residents. With the DTLA2040 Community Plan already approved, the groundwork is laid for dense, walkable, and inclusive growth.

By undergrounding the Southeast Gateway Line's Phase 2 – from the Santa Monica Freeway to Union Station – we avoid the community disruption that often comes with

above-grade alignments. Instead, we unlock a future of equitable access, increased safety, and high-quality design that benefits all Angelenos.

Our coalition, the Solutions Alameda Coalition, brings together labor, business, transit, social services and community groups. We may not always agree, but on this we are aligned: Forming an EIFD to fund the undergrounding of this line is not just good infrastructure policy – it's good fiscal policy. It's how we invest in a city that works for everyone, even in hard budget years.

The Metro Board has an opportunity this month to do something rare –

deliver a project that strengthens our budget, serves the most vulnerable, and positions Los Angeles as a global model for equitable urban investment. Let's seize it.

*LA/OC Building and Construction Trades Council Executive Secretary Ernesto Medrano co-authored this op-ed originally featured in the Los Angeles Business Journal with Amy Turk, chief executive of the Downtown Women's Center, and Claudia Oliveira, president of the DTLA Chamber of Commerce. All three are board members of the Solutions Alameda Coalition.*



Photo from archive: Crews working on the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station along the Alameda Corridor.



## LEADERSHIP AWARDS

# A TRIBUTE TO UNION LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

This summer, the LA/OC Building Trades celebrated three leaders whose work has shaped the region's labor movement.

On May 29, during the 44th Annual Salute to the World Champion Los Angeles Dodgers, IBEW Local 11 Business Manager Robert Corona and IBEW Local 11 Business Development Specialist Mario Barragán were honored with Director's Awards for their enduring commitment to the community.

Corona, who has served the union for decades, is the first Latino Business Manager in the local's 83-year history. A U.S. Air Force veteran, Corona joined Local 11 in 1991 and became a union organizer in 1998. Barragán, who was born and raised in Boyle Heights and graduated from Roosevelt High School, has been a proud member of IBEW Local 11 since 1995 after completing a five-year apprenticeship and becoming a Journeyman Wireman in 1999. After completing a five-year apprenticeship and becoming a Journeyman Wireman in 1999. Both men were honored at a special luncheon hosted at the Dodgers Stadium Clubhouse, recognizing their leadership, advocacy, and commitment to uplifting the next generation of workers.

A few weeks later, on June 21, Ernesto Medrano, Executive Secretary of the LA/OC Building Trades, was named the 2025 South County Labor Ray Cordova Outstanding Labor Leader, an honor commemorating the late organizer's enduring legacy in Southern California. The award recognizes Medrano's decades of work advancing the rights of workers, expanding apprenticeship opportunities, and building coalitions



IBEW Local 11 Business Manager Robert Corona and IBEW Local 11 Business Development Specialist Mario Barragán at the 44th Annual Salute to the World Champions Los Angeles Dodgers.

between labor and underserved communities across Los Angeles and Orange Counties. His leadership has helped secure transformative Community Workforce Agreements and increased access to good, union jobs for thousands.

These three leaders represent the best of the trades: steady, principled, and deeply rooted in the communities they serve. Join us in honoring these leaders.



LA/OC Building Trades Executive Secretary Ernesto Medrano honored as the 2025 Outstanding Labor Leader.

## CASTING CALL

### Want to Be Featured in Building Trades Media?

We're always looking for union members to spotlight in upcoming stories, photo shoots, social media, and videos. Whether you're on the job, training an apprentice, or building your community—we want to hear from you and showcase you.

Help us highlight the real faces of the Trades!

Scan the QR code to tell us your story and help represent the strength of union labor across Southern California.

