



# BUILDING TRADES NEWS

VOLUME 31, NO.1

LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTIES BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

© TRADES COUNCILS

WINTER 2026

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF THE BUILDING TRADES



Apprentice welding two pieces of iron.

BY DAVID WINFIELD

The LA/OC Building and Construction Trades Council represents more than 160,000 members who work on landmark projects across Southern California, from transit and schools to stadiums and housing. These members are comprised of skilled and well-

trained professionals, most of whom have had the opportunity to go through one of the Building Trades' comprehensive training programs. A recent visit to one of these apprenticeship training centers offered a powerful reminder of what union apprenticeship programs do best: providing the next generation of

**SEE APPRENTICESHIP PAGE 6**

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# PROPOSITION 50 PASSES



California Governor Gavin Newsom signing the "Election Rigging Response Act" legislative package in August 2025.

BY DAVID WINFIELD II

In November of 2025, California voters approved Proposition 50, a measure championed by Governor Gavin Newsom, that allows the state to temporarily redraw its 52 congressional districts. Traditionally, redistricting, also known as reapportionment, is done every ten years following the census. In California, a nonpartisan redistricting commission is tasked with redrawing legislative lines with the new census data. Proposition 50 was advanced in California in response to mid-

cycle redistricting in Texas done at the behest of the President of the United States. Proposition 50 redraws several congressional districts to incorporate larger shares of urban and suburban Democratic voters, strengthens Democratic registration advantages in competitive areas, and converts a number of Republican-leaning seats into Democratic-leaning ones. Republicans have responded to Proposition 50 with legislation, their own propositions, and litigation.

The measure requires temporary use of new congressional district

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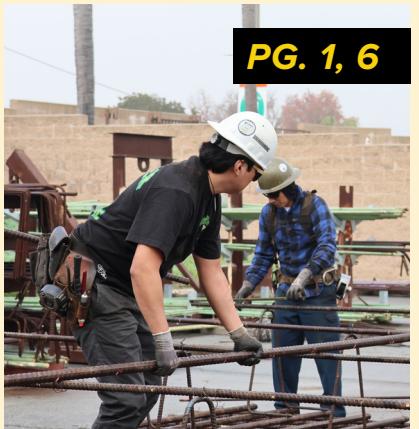
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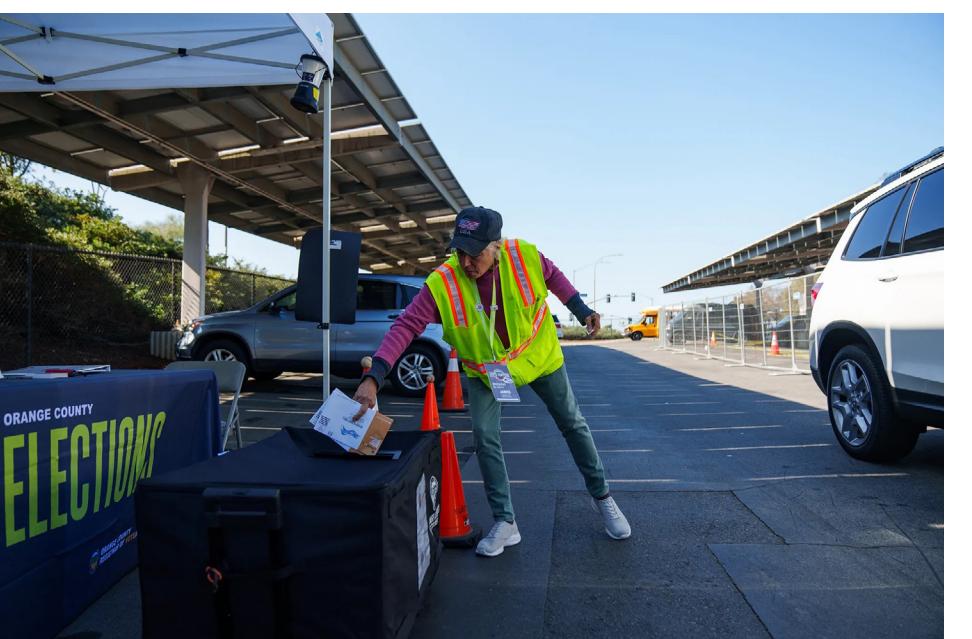
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An election worker puts two ballots in a curbside ballot drop box outside a vote center at the Huntington Beach Central Library on Nov. 4, 2025. Photo by Jules Hotz for CalMatters.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

# THE FUTURE OF HYDROGEN POWER



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

As mentioned in our Fall edition of Building Trades News, we have been telling our elected officials and policymakers that the prices of our essentials have been increasing dramatically. Our energy policy is a big part of why, and utility bills are continuing to increase without enough investment in reliable infrastructure. While we continue to fight for all energy opportunities

and are not dismissive of non-renewables, it's more important than ever to invest in proven energy alternatives like hydrogen energy, as well as the infrastructure to house them.

cleaner environment, helping reduce the health risks associated with carbon emissions for all of us.

First Public Hydrogen is an organization that recognizes what an opportunity this is. When they asked me to join their board, it was not only because they need our workers to help build the infrastructure of the future, but because they recognize that union

workers need a seat at the table of the people defining our state's energy policy. First Public Hydrogen is very committed to working with the Building Trades, and



Developing these new housing areas for energy alternatives makes power generally more affordable, as access to a diverse range of options and more competition helps drive prices down. Utilities can also use hydrogen-based energy storage to stabilize grids powered by intermittent renewables like wind and solar. By utilizing resources like renewable hydrogen, cities can reduce their dependence on nonrenewable energy imports, bringing cost savings to you and the businesses that reside in them.

The development of this energy infrastructure also naturally creates new jobs in construction. Hydrogen infrastructure creates generational jobs with projects that need to be maintained and monitored for years or even decades, much like other mega infrastructure. This kind of equipment needs the highly skilled union workers that make up the LA/OC Building Trades to build and maintain, and it provides us with long-lasting opportunities as well.

Ports and airports can also integrate this technology to reduce their emissions, and innovations like hydrogen fuel cells are already offering benefits in transportation. The shift toward renewables like this contributes to better air quality and a

**"Union workers need a seat at the table of the people defining our state's energy policy."**

we already have a dedicated Project Labor Agreement for current and future projects.

The LA/OC Building & Construction Trades Council will continue to advocate for opportunities for our members across the entire energy sector. Supporting endeavors like this gives us the opportunity to have a true global impact, and can bring you better jobs and healthier communities right here in Southern California.

In solidarity,

Ernesto Medrano,  
Executive Secretary  
LA/OC Building & Construction Trades Council



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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  
Ernesto Medrano

**EDITOR**  
David Winfield II

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Cynthia Tan

**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
Blake Miller, Andrew Gonzales, Edgemoor,  
First Public Hydrogen

**LOS ANGELES/ORANGE COUNTIES BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL**  
1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026  
P 213.483.4222 • F 213.483.4419  
www.LAOBuildingTrades.org  
www.BuildingTradesNews.com



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Cement Masons Local 600

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Local 220

Sheet Metal Workers Local 105

Teamsters Joint Council 42

Teamsters Local 848

Teamsters Local 952

Teamsters Local 986

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

# PASADENA CITY COLLEGE BUILDS PATHWAY TO UNION CAREERS

Board of Trustees approves comprehensive plan to connect students with local jobs, training, and a union future



Pasadena City College School Board of Trustees.



Southern California Political Coordinator for the District Council of the Iron Workers of the State of California and Vicinity Xochitl Medrano speaking in support of the CWEA.



A tradesman speaks in front of the attentive Board of Trustees.

BY BLAKE MILLER

On November 12th, Pasadena City College's Board of Trustees voted unanimously in favor of a monumental Community Workforce and Education Agreement (CWEA). Union representatives from all over LA County attended the board meeting in support of the agreement, with many speaking directly to the Board urging its adoption.

The agreement creates a new, expanded vision for educational opportunities and workforce development by including a collaboration between the District, the LA/OC Building and Construction Trades Council and trade unions. Many of the goals of the CWEA are to establish Pasadena City College as a premier educational destination for pre-apprenticeship programs while ensuring access to these programs in underrepresented populations.

A CWEA differs from a standard CWA/PLA. It goes further beyond



The Board of Trustees voting unanimously in support of the CWEA.

labor standards and jobsite conditions during construction by integrating pre-apprenticeship education and equitable outreach efforts directly into the partnership. CWEAs not only ensure good union jobs but also build long-term career pathways by tying workforce development directly into college programs.

"This Community Workforce and Education Agreement creates new opportunities for students, current and future workers, and the communities we serve," said PCC Superintendent/President José A. Gómez. "It expands access to education, training, and hands-on experience so that everyone contributing to the Pasadena region's well-being and prosperity can build strong, sustainable careers. This partnership reflects our belief that education and opportunity must go hand in hand, and by working with the LA/OC Building Trades, we're



LA/OC Building Trades Los Angeles County Representative Eddie Escotó Alvarez and PCC Superintendent/President José A. Gómez.

creating meaningful pathways for our students, our neighbors, and our community to learn, contribute, and shape the future of the San Gabriel Valley and beyond."

Executive Secretary of the LA/OC Building Trades Ernesto Medrano believes that "this partnership is a

testament to what we can achieve when we work together as a community, especially one which was heavily affected by the Eaton Fires last year. It is also a representation of what the Building Trades fight for every day: opportunity for our communities, and a voice for working people in how our cities grow."

The passage of this CWEA marks a bold step forward, not just for Pasadena City College, but for the broader San Gabriel Valley Region. By connecting education with real career opportunities in the unionized construction trades, Pasadena City College is inspiring a new standard for how public institutions can empower students and strengthen local economies. This agreement is further proof that when education and labor work together, communities thrive.



PCC Board of Trustees and union representatives after the passing of the CWEA.



Left and right, Apprentices adjusting rope as they lift iron beams on the training structure.



Program instructor providing guidance to apprentices.

## APPRENTICESHIP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hardworking tradespeople with the skills and opportunities to succeed in their careers.

### A Proven Model for Opportunity

Walking into the complex in La Palma, it was impossible not to notice the commitment to teamwork on display. Apprentices mostly worked together in groups, training on both

short and tall steel structures and creating their own in impressive time. It was clear that there was a firm commitment to simulating real-world problem solving, and that the training they received mirrored the conditions ironworkers face on job sites every day.

The Field Ironworkers Apprenticeship & Training Program is the largest of its kind in the country, serving roughly 1,100 apprentices across Ironworkers Local 433 (structural) and Local 416 (reinforcing). While the program

is rigid and has high standards, it ensures that everyone learns how to do everything, producing versatile, highly skilled workers who can adapt to changing job demands.

“You’re not just working, this is a lifestyle,” said Ernie Penuelas, Ironworkers Local #433 Trustee and an instructor in the program. “Not only do we teach the core foundation of the trade, but we try to give (apprentices) all of the elements necessary for them to learn the trade and also become better tradesmen.”

Apprentices attend classes from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for one week every three months, as most of their hands-on learning happens on their respective work sites. A key benefit of the program is that these apprentices get to earn while they learn at 50 percent of a journeyman’s scale, with a 5 percent raise every six months as they progress through the program. With journeyman ironworker wages ranging between \$51.85 and \$55.59 per hour in our relevant California counties, apprentices are still taking home meaningful pay as they learn on the job.

### Who These Programs Serve

Another critical aspect of the program is that there is no cost to the apprentices themselves, as training is funded by journeyman ironworkers. The program has a 65% graduation rate, which is high for this sector, and graduating apprentices set themselves up for impactful careers with comprehensive benefits including healthcare and dental coverage, a retirement plan, and more.

Opportunities like this are also opening doors for people historically excluded from the trades. Approximately 8 percent of apprentices are women, which is significantly higher than the national average, and about 30 percent are justice-impacted individuals. The program also partners with Cerritos College, allowing apprentices to earn



Apprentices securing a rebar structure with ties.



Apprentices assembling a rebar training structure.



Apprentices adjusting a beam so they can practice welding.



Apprentices assembling a rebar training structure.



LA/OC Building Trades Executive Secretary Ernesto Medrano speaks with classroom of apprentices.



Apprentices using blowtorch on iron beam.

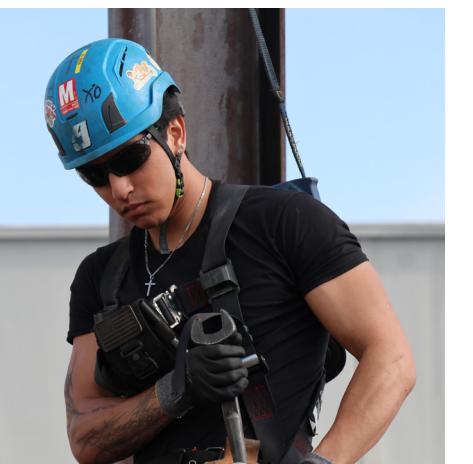
## APPRENTICESHIP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

college credits toward associate's degrees. Beyond learning the tools of the trade, apprentices receive guidance and professional growth, whether their goal is to start their own business, move into supervision, or one day become a superintendent. These kinds of benefits are virtually unheard of in the non-union construction world, and the program is a powerful example of the success that comes from workers investing in the next generation.

Eric Flores, an ironworker apprentice currently working at LAX, had this to say about the program: "Three years ago from where I started, I've come a long way. I have my own apartment, I'm paying for a vehicle, I have a fiancé,

[and] my little daughter is getting taken care of. I was incarcerated through most of my life, and three years ago I decided to join this union... it's been a lifechanging experience."



Apprentice receiving instruction after scaling the training structure.



Apprentices preparing their harnesses to scale the training structure.

## Union Apprenticeship vs. the Non-Union Alternative

This level of investment also leads to a stark contrast between union and non-union training in the industry. Union apprenticeship programs are jointly administered, standardized, and accountable to the industry that they serve. They are designed to produce highly skilled and adaptable workers who meet the demands of the industry. Non-union apprenticeship programs often fall short, as these programs frequently lack consistent training standards and provide little of the same access to benefits, wages, and worker protections. Non-union programs also don't benefit from collective bargaining agreements that would dictate these benefits, leaving workers open to having their labor exploited. Without the same level of dedicated commitment to investing in these apprentices, non-union programs can often undermine the career trajectories of workers and the quality of construction projects.

This is where prevailing wages become critically important. Prevailing wage laws ensure that workers on publicly funded construction projects are paid wages and benefits that reflect local standards for skilled labor. When the prevailing wage is enforced, contractors are incentivized to hire well-trained, union apprentices and journeymen, as it prevents contractors from underpaying workers just to submit the lowest bid on a project. When prevailing wage



Program instructor providing guidance to apprentices in classroom setting.

is weakened or bypassed, it can lead to a race to the bottom for labor costs, undercutting wages, apprenticeship funding, and ultimately the quality of the project itself.

## Building the Future

California joint labor management apprenticeship programs currently

have over 70,000 apprentices in construction and boast a graduation rate of close to 95%. Within the LA/OC Building Trades jurisdiction, there are over 24,000 apprentices, which is more than any other jurisdiction in the country. While exact figures in each construction discipline fluctuate, the broader point is clear: union

construction apprenticeships are an important and fantastic model for responsible workforce development in our state. At a time when our region needs skilled labor more than ever, union apprenticeship programs are the gold standard of building the labor force of the future, today.



Apprentices carrying rebar and securing a rebar structure with ties.

# LBCC EXTENDS BUILDING TRADES AGREEMENT UNTIL 2041



A rendering of the completed Stadium and Athletic Sports Complex (SASC).

BY ANDREW GONZALES

The Los Angeles and Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council once again landed a major victory for union construction workers in Long Beach. The Board of Trustees of the Long Beach Community College District (LBCC) voted unanimously to amend their Community and Student Workforce Project Agreement, extending the agreement until 2041 and adding nearly \$1 billion in facilities construction.

The Community and Student Workforce Agreement between LBCC and the LA/OC Building Trades is unique in its commitments and collaboration. The agreement contains provisions that require the two sides to come together at regular intervals to discuss amendments and priorities.

In 2024, LBCC passed Measure AC, a historic \$990 million bond that will provide modernization and new facilities for Long Beach City College's campuses. Following the passage of Measure AC, the time was ripe for LBCC and the LA/OC Building Trades to reconvene.

"With these funds, we will be able to transform our campuses with cutting-edge facilities that match the ambition and potential of our students," said LBCC President Mike Munoz. "From upgraded nursing labs and state-of-the-art classrooms to affordable housing and sustainable design, Measure AC



Board Vice President Dr. Ennette Morton shakes hands with LA/OC Building Trades Orange County Representative Andrew Gonzales.



LA/OC Building Trades Orange County Representative Andrew Gonzales speaks with union representatives.

will make LBCC an institution where students can thrive academically and personally."

Council Representative Andrew Gonzales also expressed his continued support for this long and mutually beneficial relationship. "LBCCD has enjoyed best-in-class quality from union construction workers and has benefited from our commitment to prioritize hiring Long Beach residents, students, and veterans. These workers have enjoyed the benefits of union representation, living wages, and access to quality, affordable health insurance."

The Board of Trustees was also enthusiastic about the amendment to the Community and Student Workforce Project Agreement.

"Tonight's amendment represents the next evolution in the partnership between our district, labor unions, and the community," said Board President Uduak-Joe Ntuk. "This is about careers, not just jobs."

Trustee Sunny Zia added, "One of my biggest pride and joys is having an agreement till 2041. That's fantastic. It makes sure that we hire and build careers in perpetuity."

"There is no better time to support our local workforce," said Trustee Vivian Malauulu. "Especially right now, when so many people, their jobs and livelihoods are on the line, and that we can create opportunities for our community into the next decade."



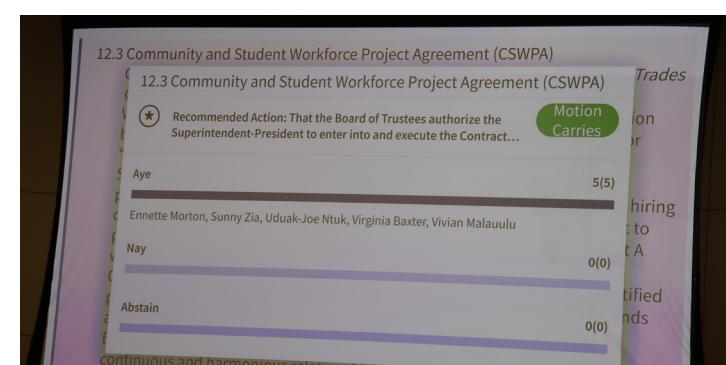
LA/OC Building Trades Orange County Representative Andrew Gonzales with union representatives.

**“One of my biggest pride and joys is having an agreement until 2041.”**

—Trustee Sunny Zia



Board President Uduak-Joe Ntuk speaks during CSWPA vote.



Screen detailing the unanimous approval of the CSWPA vote.



LA/OC Building Trades Orange County Representative Andrew Gonzales with members of the Board of Trustees & attendees.



Attendees listen to CSWPA deliberations from the Board of Trustees.

## OTHER PROJECTS AWARDED UNDER JOB ORDERED CONTRACTING (JOC)



Beyond the funds and projects provided by Measure AC, the amended agreement includes smaller maintenance projects awarded under Job Ordered Contracting (JOC).

**Job Order Contracting is a method for awarding contracts based on prices for specific construction tasks rather than bids for a specific project.**

**AB 846 adds requirements that a contractor awarded a JOC in excess of \$25,000 must provide the awarding agency a commitment that the contractor and all of its subcontractors use a Skilled and Trained Workforce.**

**Contractors and awarding agencies are exempted from the Skilled and Trained Workforce requirement if the JOC is subject to a project labor agreement.**



BUILDING TRADES NEWS 11

# UNION HAPPENINGS IN THE CITY OF GARDEN GROVE



Attendees pose for photo after the CWA extension.

## CWA UNANIMOUSLY EXTENDED WITH THE CITY OF GARDEN GROVE

BY ANDREW GONZALES

The Garden Grove City Council unanimously approved a 5-year extension to their Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) with the Los Angeles and Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council at its regular City Council Meeting on December 9, 2025. The agreement covers projects from the

city's capital improvement plan, including street rehabilitation, park improvements, affordable housing development, and city facility beautification. The CWA also sets ambitious goals and prioritizes jobs for Garden Grove residents, US military veterans, and graduates of the Building Trades Apprenticeship Readiness Program.

Garden Grove Resident and IBEW

441 member Israel Mosqueda was in attendance at the meeting to speak in support of the agreement. "The ability to learn a trade is much more than getting a job. It's an investment into the people of the community," said Mosqueda. "As a citizen of this city, I want to see our leaders invest in the people of our community."

A unique feature of this agreement helps the city to achieve goals set by

the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds for certain city projects. Contractors performing work on city projects funded in part or in whole with CDBG funds must demonstrate best efforts to hire "Targeted Workers." Those who qualify as "Targeted Workers" include those residing in public housing, low-income workers, or those enrolled in federal assistance programs. The CWA, in collaboration with the Building Trades Multi-Craft Core Curriculum Pre-Apprenticeship Program (MC3), and the Union's dispatch referral lists can help contractors identify and hire targeted workers, which in turn, helps the city to comply with CDBG requirements. Compliance with these requirements can make Garden Grove grant applications more competitive for future funding requests.

"As Mayor, one of my jobs is ensuring on-time and on-budget delivery for city projects of the highest quality for our city. The Community Workforce Agreement



Attendees listen to union support of CWA extension.



Attendees listen to the Garden Grove City Council discussions of the CWA.

helps us to achieve those goals," said Mayor Stephanie Klopfenstein. "The fact that we can achieve these goals, while prioritizing local hiring for city residents, and do it all at no additional costs for labor, is a win for the city, our residents, and the taxpayers."

"Projects completed under a Community Workforce Agreement are performed by the highest-skilled workers in the industry, and those workers produce projects to a standard that our residents expect and deserve," said City Councilmember Ariana Aretegui. "Those highly skilled workers also expect and deserve to be compensated and treated to the highest standards, and this agreement provides for that as well."

## THE GARDEN GROVE CIVIC CENTER REVITALIZATION PROJECT ACHIEVES WATERTIGHT

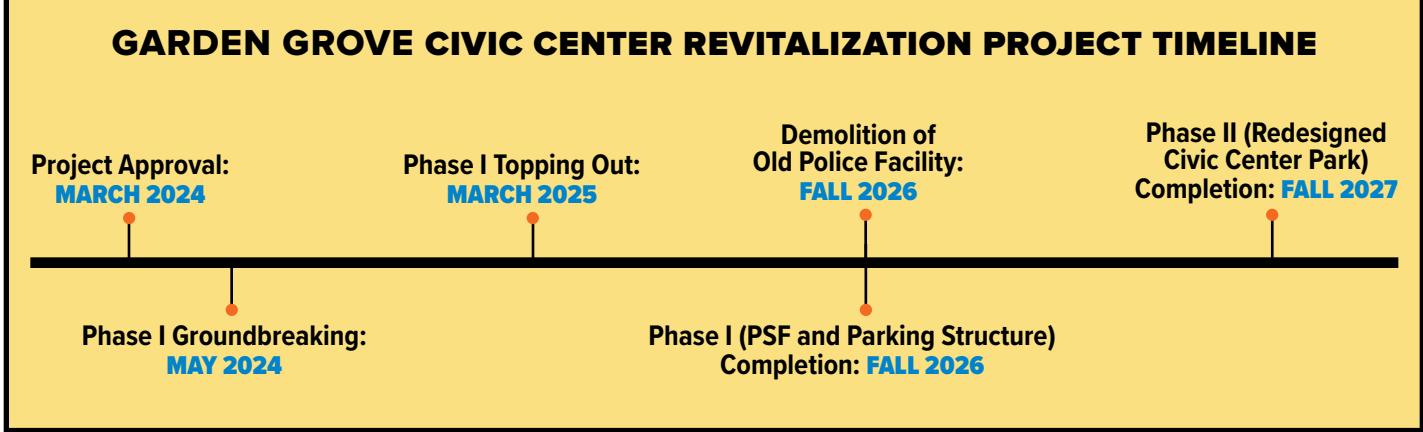


Side of the Civic Center.

BY BLAKE MILLER

After renewing its CWA, the City of Garden Grove can point to the Civic Center Revitalization Project as the kind of jobsite where skill, accountability, and access matter most. Approved on March 26, 2024, the development of a new public safety facility for the Garden Grove Police Department (GGPD) reached watertight this past winter.

SEE GARDEN GROVE PAGE 14



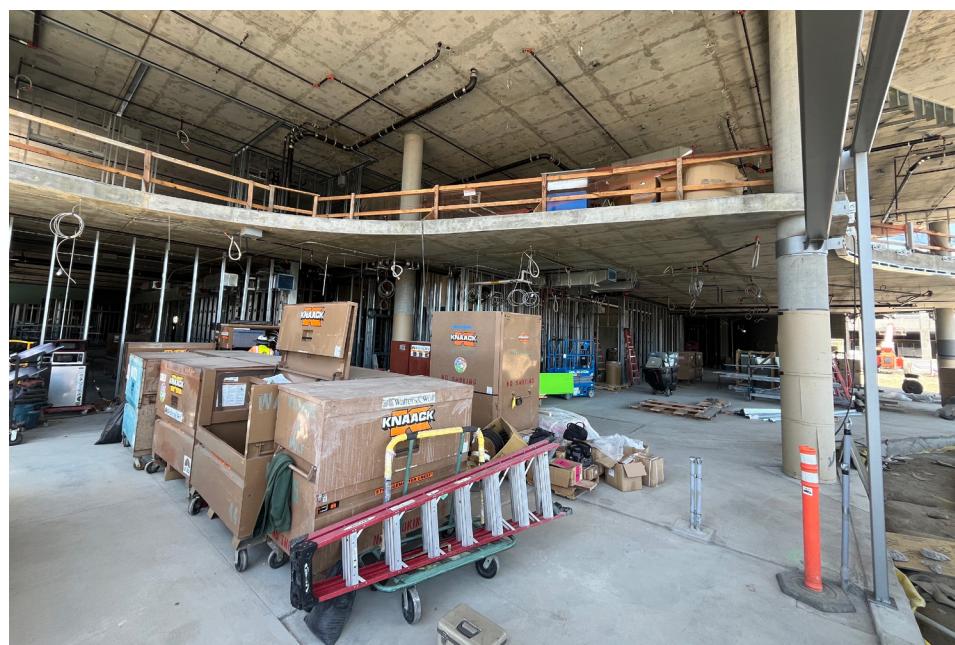
## GARDEN GROVE

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The project is split into two distinct phases. The first is a new three-story public safety facility accompanied by a four-level parking structure in the heart of Garden Grove. Phase Two is a redesigned Civic Center Park with open green space, a memorial grove, and a walking trail. Phase One of the project is projected to complete this year with Phase Two is slated for 2027.

Big civic projects succeed when the workforce pipeline is just as well engineered as the building. The PLA between Clark Construction and the LA/OC Building and Construction Trades signifies not only a longstanding relationship, but also a trust that the workforce pipeline, in addition to the quality of work, will be first-rate. Much like CWA's, PLAs like this are great at ensuring on-time, on-budget delivery, community benefits, and local hiring goals.

"I am excited to be part of the team building the Garden Grove Police Department's new public safety facility and the neighboring Civic Center Park" said Project Executive Marc Kersey from Clark Construction. "As a proud 22-year resident of Garden Grove myself, I'm thrilled that the project is being built by the community it will serve, as set by the local hire mandates on the PLA with the LA/OC Building



Interior status of the Civic Center.



Project rendering of the Garden Grove Civic Center Revitalization Project. (courtesy of Edgemar)

Trades. This commitment to local hire on the project reflects our belief that our community should shape the future of Garden Grove."

The Civic Center Revitalization Project shows what the union standard produces: a complex public facility with community benefit built in that is delivered to expectations and by a trained, professional workforce.

"The Building Trades and the City of Garden Grove have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship, and both of these agreements only serve to strengthen those bonds," said LA/OC Building Trades Executive Secretary Ernesto Medrano. "The residents of Garden Grove can rest assured that their City is committed to the highest quality standards for their facilities, their infrastructure, and their workforce.



West side of the Civic Center.



Entrance to the Civic Center.

## BUILDING TRADES ENDORSEMENTS: 2026 ELECTIONS

The State Building and Construction Trades Council of California have officially endorsed their candidates for state constitutional office. The LA/OC Building & Construction Trades Council are in support and are adopting the endorsements of the State Building Trades Council. We are endorsing the following candidates:



GOVERNOR:  
ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA



LT. GOVERNOR:  
FIONA MA (INCUMBENT)



ATTORNEY GENERAL:  
ROB BONTA (INCUMBENT)



CONTROLLER:  
MALIA COHEN (INCUMBENT)



SECRETARY OF STATE:  
SHIRLEY WEBER (INCUMBENT)



INSURANCE  
COMMISSIONER:  
STEVE BRADFORD



SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:  
JOSH NEWMAN

Endorsements for Treasurer and the California State Board of Equalization will be announced at a later date.

### STATEWIDE ELECTION DATES FOR CALIFORNIA:

JUNE 2, 2026:  
PRIMARY

NOVEMBER 3, 2026:  
GENERAL ELECTION

### INFORMATION FOR THE 2026 CALIFORNIA PRIMARY:

- The last day to register to vote for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election is May 18, 2026.
- All California active registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election.
- Your county elections office will begin mailing ballots by May 4, 2026.
- Ballot drop-off locations open on May 5, 2026.
- Vote-by-mail ballots can be returned by mail, at a drop-off location, or your county elections office.
- Vote centers open for early in-person voting in all Voter's Choice Act counties beginning on May 23, 2026.
- Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received by June 9, 2026.

For more information on the upcoming elections, please visit [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/upcoming-elections](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/upcoming-elections).

Are you registered to vote? Check your registration at [voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/](http://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/).

## PROP 50

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maps through 2030, and directs the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to resume enacting congressional district maps in 2031. Proposition 50 also establishes policy supporting nonpartisan redistricting commissions nationwide.

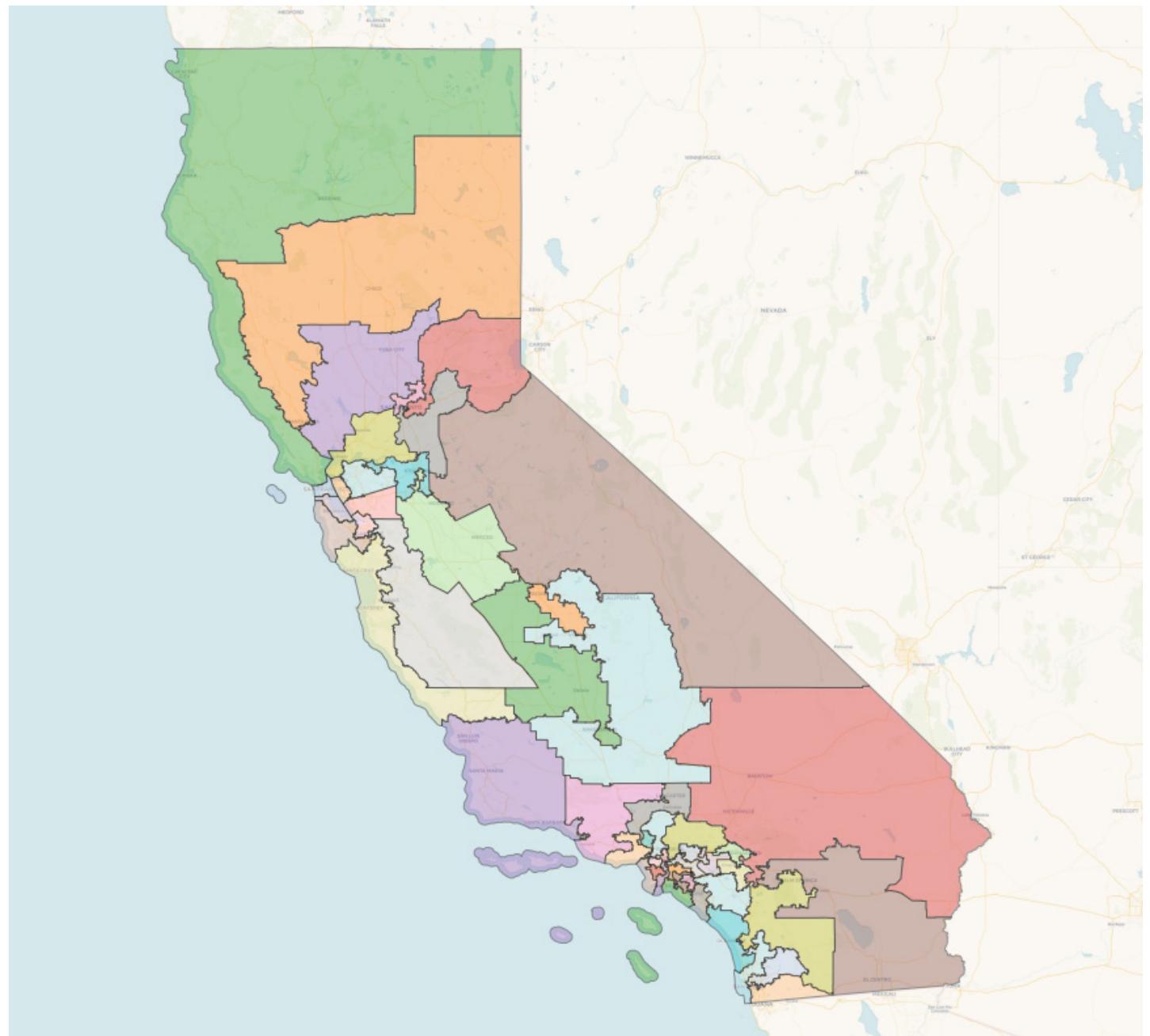
The two-and-a-half-month campaign became one of the most expensive ballot measures in state history. Supporters poured more than \$120 million into Newsom's committee supporting the measure. Opponents of the measure raised \$44 million, with outside groups spending \$27 million to try to sway the vote. In the end, Proposition 50 passed with an overwhelming 64.4% in favor and enjoyed majority support from both Los Angeles and Orange County voters.

### What this means for the Building Trades

The redistricting plan impacts all 52 districts, with the plan specifically targeting the following representatives in Southern California:

- Young Kim in District 40
- Ken Calvert in District 41
- Darrell Issa in District 48

In the short term, the elected representatives that we work with



California district map.

## 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.



Representative Young Kim of District 40, Representative Ken Calvert of District 41 and Representative Darrel Issa of District 48

may change in the next election, and the rhetoric you hear from your elected officials about this proposition may shift going into the midterms. In the long term, all political activity can

lead to more work for the Building Trades, and we will continue to work with whoever is in office and advocate for the interests of our affiliates and workers.



People walk by the vote center at Valley Hi-North Laguna Library in Sacramento on Nov. 4, 2025. Photo by Jungho Kim for CalMatters.