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IUOE values the  
close working relationship  
it has with its corporate partners

# TOTAL TEAMWORK

Greg Lavee with some of the heavy equipment at the union's training center.—PHOTOS BY ROBERT SCIARRINO





Greg Lavee believes in building partnerships that can last over many jobs and many years. — PHOTOS BY ROBERT SCIARRINO

**BY TOM BERGERON**  
tbergeron@roi-nj.com

**T**he International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825 always has viewed itself as more than just a union that does the job right and does the job on time.

IUOE Local 825 feels it is a partner on every job it has.

"Why would we approach a job any differently," Greg Lavee, the Local 825 Business Manager asked and then answered his own question.

"Our mantra is to work with our businesses making sure they get the employees they need to get the job done correctly the first time and at the right cost. Everyone benefits when we work as a team."

And that teamwork doesn't necessarily end when the job ends.

Lavee said IUOE Local 825 believes in building partnerships that can last over many jobs and many years. To Lavee, there's

no better way to do business.

One of IUOE Local 825's strongest partnerships is with Herc Rentals Inc., a premier, full-service equipment rental firm with four locations in New Jersey (Newark, Fairfield, South Hackensack and East Brunswick).

The two groups have a lot in common. After all, Herc Rentals takes pride in providing their customers the equipment, services and solutions they need to achieve optimal performance safely, efficiently and effectively.

"Herc Rentals is the highest quality rental firm in the region," Lavee said. "We know when we partner with Herc, we will have everything we need to do our jobs right."

Herc Rentals VP Rob Cowing, who has helped build Herc Rentals into a regional powerhouse and oversees the entire NJ operation, said the relationship goes both ways.

"Local 825 is a partner of ours in the truest sense

of the word," he said. "The union leadership understands what needs to get done and is always helping in finding solutions to our operational challenges."

Perhaps the best indication of the way Herc Rentals and 825 work together is three former 825 members with nearly 60 years of experience at Herc Rentals have risen thru the ranks as union members into management.

Paul Fernandes, Sergio Sousa and Scott Van Sickell all moved from entry levels to senior positions at the company.

Sousa was elevated from yardman to mechanic, then road technician and now sits in a corner office in Newark as the Branch Manager overseeing Herc Rentals' operation.

"We have a nice relationship built on trust," Sousa said. "The Operating Engineers back their members and I'm proof of that."

Van Sickell also started as a yardman and now is Shop Supervisor. He appreciates what

IUOE Local 825 brings to the table.

"Local 825 never pigeon holes," he said. "They are always out to see their members improve themselves to advance their careers."

"The union is respectful of the job that has to get done every day. They are flexible and always willing to lend a hand. I appreciate how they work."

Fernandes, also a Shop Supervisor, started as a mechanic and credits the union with help in advancing his career.

"They gave lots of positive reinforcement and encouraged me to grow," he said.

While Sousa, Van Sickell and Fernandes highlight the growth opportunities at Herc Rentals under Cowing's management, current members are benefiting as well.

Six years ago, Alex Santos started at Herc Rentals as a yardman and advanced to mechanic shortly before Superstorm Sandy hit in 2012.





Regional Vice President Rob Cowing, left, and CEO Larry Silber of Herc Rentals, in Fairfield.

"We worked very hard to get up and running after Sandy," he said. "It was a team experience and I learned the importance of working together."

Santos emphasizes he enjoys his job and the encouragement from both Herc Rentals and 825 to keep striving to advance his career.

Marc Lolankowski feels similarly. A mechanic whose responsibilities have expanded, Lolankowski said the job is different.

"This is the first job I've ever had where I enjoy waking up and coming to work every day," he said.

That of course is the goal. Training 825 members for career advancement while also making sure employers get the employees they need and the support critical to getting the job done.

Erik Hepsen, Herc Rentals District Manager, summed up the relationship this way: "There's no us versus them mentality," he said. "It's all one team means one theme."



Herc Rentals' also rents smaller equipment, such as generators, compressors and hand tools.



Contact

## International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825

**[iuoe825.org](http://iuoe825.org)**

or

**973-921-0305**



Contact

**Herc Rentals**

**[hercrentals.com](http://hercrentals.com)**

or

**800-654-6659**

For more about the relationship between Herc Rentals and IUOE Local 825 go to:

**[roi-nj.com/2018/03/20/industry/herc-rentals-has-no-fear-of-promoting-union-workers-to-management-roles/](http://roi-nj.com/2018/03/20/industry/herc-rentals-has-no-fear-of-promoting-union-workers-to-management-roles/)**