

825. NEWS



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SERVING THE LOCAL 825 MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS VOL.16 ISSUE 2 (MARCH/APRIL 2026)

Portal North Bridge reaches final phase Cutover work underscores the value of skilled labor



The Portal North Bridge is entering its final phase of construction as crews begin placing the first track into service. Operating Engineers are leading critical cutover work to transfer rail operations from the existing Portal Bridge to the new structure. Stretching

2.44 miles end to end, this massive new bridge will double passenger capacity by expanding the line from two tracks to four. It will also raise the speed limit from 60 mph to 90 mph, improving reliability and reducing delays for hundreds of thousands of daily riders.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Dates are subject to change. If changes are made they will be posted to the IUOE825.ORG website.

Note, all district meetings begin at 7 p.m. unless noted otherwise.

March

2 - District 1 Meeting

Double Tree Suites by Hilton
515 Fellowship Road, Mt. Laurel

4 - District 2 Meeting

Holiday Inn
2870 Hwy. 35, Hazlet

8 - Daylight Savings Begins Set Clocks Forward 1 Hr.

9 - District 3 Meeting

Lake Hopatcong Elks #782
201 Howard Blvd., Mt. Arlington

11 - District 4 Meeting

NY Training Center
96 Bates Gates Road, New Hampton, NY
Blood Bank - 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm

17 - St. Patrick's Day

20 - Spring Begins

29 - Palm Sunday

April

1 - 2026 Scholarship Applications Due

1 - Passover

3 - Good Friday

5 - Easter

6 - District 1 Meeting

Hammonton Fire Company Station 2
51 North White Horse Pike, Hammonton

8 - District 2 Meeting

Holiday Inn
160 Frontage Road, Newark

13 - District 3 Meeting

Lake Hopatcong Elks #782
201 Howard Blvd., Mt. Arlington

15 - District 4 Meeting

NY Training Center
96 Bates Gates Road, New Hampton, NY

22 - Earth Day

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Greg Lalevee, Business Manager



Infrastructure commitments under the spotlight

Conditions are changing in real time. Between the moment this column was written and the day it reaches your mailbox, the landscape may already look different. That pace is evident in the debate over the Gateway Tunnel and the broader question of how major infrastructure projects will be funded at the federal and state levels.

Long-term infrastructure investments depend on stable, multi-year commitments, yet shifting political priorities and unresolved budget decisions have introduced new uncertainty. Much remains unsettled, and the coming weeks will help define the path forward.

In New Jersey, Governor Sherrill's March 10 budget address will offer the first real indication of the administration's priorities. At the same time, the New Jersey Department of Transportation canceled its February Transportation Trust Fund meeting, pushing the state several weeks behind previously established timelines. Whether this delay reflects a short-term adjustment or a broader shift in approach remains to be seen.

As these issues continue to unfold, Local 825 will remain engaged at every level to ensure infrastructure investments deliver long-term value for working families.

Local 825 endorses Governor Hochul

No elected official has a perfect record, but Governor Hochul's support on issues that matter to our members has been consistent.

Her administration has advanced Route 17 improvements, secured additional funding for water infrastructure and signed critical pipeline permits. Each of these decisions required leadership. The use of project labor agreements on major clean energy projects has also made a real difference. The Champlain Hudson Power Express stands as a clear example of work that would have gone elsewhere without a PLA in place. For these reasons, our support will be behind Governor Hochul as she seeks re-election in November.

Momentum in organizing

Arcosa has completed two successful yes votes by both the bargaining committee and the membership. Upon ratification, new members will be welcomed into Local 825.

Their decision reflects a broader truth. Workers across the region continue to recognize the value of being a Local 825 Operating Engineer.

Contact Information

Local 825 Headquarters
65 Springfield Avenue, 3rd FL
Springfield, NJ 07081
(973) 671 - 6900
(973) 921 - 2918 FAX

District Offices:
3242 Route 206
Building A Unit 6
Bordentown, NJ 08505
Tel. 856-470-1480
Fax 856-470-1485

96 Bates Gates Road
New Hampton, NY 10958
845-674-9020 - Phone
845-674-9025 - Fax

Health & Welfare office
65 Springfield Avenue, 2nd FL
Springfield, NJ 07081
(973) 671 - 6800
(973) 921 - 0706 FAX

96 Bates Gates Roads
Suite 70
New Hampton, NY 10973
(845) 374-2559
(845) 374-2564 FAX

NJ Training Center
338 Deans Rhode Hall Rd.
Dayton, NJ 08810
(732) 798-2170
(732) 798-2175 FAX

NY Training Center
Wawayanda location
96 Bates Gates Road
New Hampton, NY 10958
845-673-3154 - Phone
845-674-9025 - Fax

ELEC Office
65 Springfield Avenue, 2nd FL
Springfield, NJ 07081
(973) 630-1010
(973) 630-1013 FAX

Union Plus®
(Offered through Wells Fargo Home Mortgage)
Debra Botulinski
(908) 608-2013

Funds roll out new tools to support members and retirees

The Funds Department continues to expand tools and resources designed to improve access to information and help members plan for their futures.

Are you ready for retirement?

The Funds Department held its first Retirement Seminar last month to help members better understand their retirement options. The seminar was conducted as a scheduled, small-group meeting led by Funds Department staff.

The session drew on years of frequently asked member questions and covered key considerations to help participants prepare for and make informed retirement decisions. Attendees also had the opportunity to ask individual questions.

Seminars may be held throughout the Local 825 jurisdiction, and spouses or significant others were welcome to attend. Additional sessions will be offered upon request.

Beneficiary information gets accessibility boost

A new online tool is available to help members review beneficiary information across



multiple funds. Through the Member Portal, both on the website and the IUOE 825 mobile app, members can now view beneficiaries for the Pension, Profit Sharing and Death Benefit.

While beneficiary information can be reviewed online, any changes must still be completed with Funds Department staff. Requests to update beneficiary designations can be ini-

tiated through the Member Portal in the app.

AI Support tool launch

The Funds Department has launched a new AI-powered chat bot that is accessible through Member Services. The tool assists members by answering questions related to the Funds and the Union.

Health fair opens semi-annual meeting activities

Ahead of the semi-annual meeting, members participated in a health fair that offered biometric screenings, access to benefit providers and the opportunity to visit the apparel store.



Keep your funds information up to date

Members are reminded to report all life-changing events to the Funds Office. Marriage, the birth or adoption of a child and divorce can all affect benefits and eligibility.

Semi-annual meeting opens the year with strong outlook

The new year began with a strong showing of over 650 members at the semi-annual meeting, where a packed room reflected continued engagement. Business Manager Greg Laveve reported that the Funds are in excellent shape and that Local 825's business agents, organizers and ELEC staff remain laser focused on delivering opportunities for the membership.

Funds updates

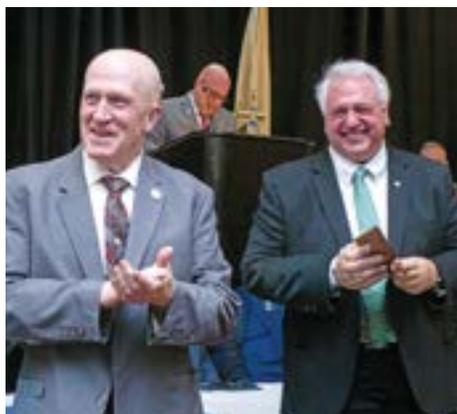
The Funds Trustees voted to continue improving pension benefits. Under the approved schedule, the maximum credit value will increase from \$95 to \$97 per credit effective July 1, 2026. On January 1, 2027, the maximum credit value will rise again to \$99 per credit. As with previous benefit improvements, these increases may apply retroactively to credits earned as far back as 2004.

The Welfare Fund continues to deliver strong benefits but faces increasing costs tied to the healthcare system. The Fund experienced a 17 percent increase in the monthly cost of providing benefits, along with a nearly three-month reduction in fund reserves.

Despite these challenges, the fund remains solid. The leadership will continue to closely monitor medical costs as they continue to rise at an accelerated pace nationwide.

Measurable Progress

A key benefit of belonging to a labor union built on strength and stability is the behind-the-scenes work of ELEC staff and 825 organizers, delivering measurable results



through legislative advocacy, negotiations and organizing efforts.

In 2025, the ELEC team tracked 45 separate bills impacting workers and the construction industry. Of those proposals, 24 bills are being supported and 21 are being opposed based on their potential effect on wages, safety and job opportunities.

Shop agents successfully negotiated 20 successor collective bargaining agreements and completed 19 contract wage re-openers

addressing wage distribution and benefit allotments.

The Organizing Department welcomed 103 new members and conducted 378 top-down interactions, including conference calls, meetings and contract negotiations. An additional 248 bottom-up interactions took place with employees working for non-union contractors. During the year, organizers signed nine new contractors to the Union's Construction Agreement.

Portal North Bridge cutover signals new era for Northeast Corridor

The Portal North Bridge project has reached a pivotal milestone, entering its final and most technically demanding phase as the first track is placed into service. The cutover marks the transition of rail operations from the century-old Portal Bridge to the new high-level fixed span bridge, which will move traffic at higher speeds and with less interruptions.

Operating Engineers are at the center of this effort, performing complex cutover work that includes removing interfering catenary poles, installing new interlockings and completing tens of thousands of feet of track, signals and related infrastructure.

Just as important as the structure itself are the people who built it. This moment belongs to the members who have been on this job since day one, through every phase, every challenge and every deadline. Business Manager Greg Lavee said, "This is an extraordinarily complex project and it speaks volumes about the skill of our members that work of this scale is being delivered on time. Projects like this don't happen without experienced union labor doing it right."

"The cutover of the Portal North Bridge rep-

resents more than just work to connect railroad infrastructure; it signifies a whole new level of reliability on the Northeast Corridor and New Jersey that has never previously ex-

isted," said Amtrak President Roger Harris.

Once complete, the new bridge will improve reliability, reduce delays and benefit millions of rail passengers for decades to come.



Winter training closes out a cold winter

Winter classes are underway with strong attendance from apprentices and journeymen across programs, even as the region experiences its coldest winter in years. Members gathered early in the season for hands-on instruction and classroom learning.

The apprentice program remains a core focus, with 138 apprentices currently enrolled, including 117 in New Jersey and 21 in New York.

Terrence O'Brien, NY Site Coordinator, says "We've had great turnout this year and the demand has made it possible to expand our class offerings." Both the New Jersey and New York training centers have seen consistently full

classrooms and hands-on sessions, reflecting strong demand across programs.

Facility upgrades underway in New Jersey

In New Jersey, work is moving forward to modernize and expand training facilities. A \$1.2 million grant from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority has been awarded to support construction, with the Training Fund contributing an additional \$300,000 to \$400,000 toward two new buildings.

This spring, the Dallenbach trailer complex will be demolished and replaced with a new 60-

by-60 building. A second 60-by-60 building will also be constructed to replace the trailers located between the paving and crane sections, creating improved learning spaces and long-term infrastructure for training operations.



TRAINING CENTER CALENDAR

NEW JERSEY TRAINING CENTER

(732) 798-2170 (All classes start at 7 a.m. unless noted otherwise)

8-HOUR HAZMAT REFRESHER

Sat., Mar. 14
Sat., Mar. 21
Sat., Apr 11
Sat., Apr 25

40 HOUR

Apr. 6-10
Apr. 20-24

CCO PREP & TEST

Sat., Mar. 7, test
Sat., Mar. 14
Sat., Mar. 21
Sat., Mar. 28, Test
Sun., Mar. 29, Test
Sat., Apr 4 test
Sat., Apr 11
Sat., Apr 18
Sat., Apr 25, Test

OSHA 30

Mar. 31 - Apr. 3
Apr. 14 - 17

NEW YORK TRAINING CENTER

(845) 673-3154

(Classes are scheduled on request and start at 7 a.m. unless otherwise noted.)

Please contact the New York Training Center if you are interested in one of the following classes: CPR / 1st AID, Task 70 & 71, Rigging and Signaling, OSHA10. Once we have enough names for a class, members will be notified.

8-HOUR HAZMAT REFRESHER

Sat., Mar. 7
Sat., Mar. 21

Groundbreaking ahead for union-built hotel

After years of collaboration with the developer, navigating local challenges and overcoming the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on hotel financing, the KMS Hilton Hoboken hotel and redevelopment project is nearing reality. The project will be built and operated with 100 percent union labor.

In November, the Economic Development Authority approved more than \$60 million in tax incentives, a critical step in securing the project's financial viability. With this award in place and the remaining financing secured, the KMS Hilton Hoboken project is now positioned to move forward, with construction expected to begin this spring.

Stronger penalties for deadly work zone crashes

Legislation aimed at strengthening protections for construction workers continues to advance with a bill sponsored by Senator Latham Tiver, Local 825 member.

The bill would increase penalties for drivers who commit vehicular homicide in active highway construction or repair zones. "Work zone warnings exist for a reason. They are meant to alert motorists of the men and women who are working on the side of the road, repairing and enhancing our infrastructure. It is an inherently dangerous job and drivers need to respect that," said Senator Tiver.

Under current law, reckless vehicular homicide is charged as a second-degree crime, carrying a prison sentence of five to ten years. The proposed legislation would allow charges to be elevated to a first-degree offense, which carries a penalty of ten to twenty years, when a fatal crash occurs in a work zone or designated safe corridor.

The bill passed the New Jersey Senate. Under the new administration, the measure will need to be reheard as it moves forward in the legislative process.

Scholarship Applications Due April 1

Members with a child or grandchild graduating from high school have until April 1 to apply for a 2026 Local 825 Scholarship. Applications are available on the website or by contacting the Springfield Union Hall.



Rendering of the proposed Hilton Hotel courtesy of Cooper Carry Associates.



This year, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825 is awarding seven academic scholarships, each valued at \$2,500 per academic year for four years. The Scholarship Fund continues its partnership with the

Labor Education Center at Rutgers University, where faculty members will review applications and select scholarship recipients.

Additional scholarship opportunities are also listed on the website under News/Events.



International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825

65 Springfield Avenue, 3rd Floor
Springfield, NJ 07081
(973) 671-6900
(973) 921-2918 FAX

www.IUOE825.org



BETTER BUILDING BEGINS HERE

Climate Coalition launches to tackle energy affordability

It's no secret that energy prices are rising and New Jersey is facing a growing energy and affordability crisis. "Electric bills are rising faster here than just about anywhere else in the country, largely because we import much of our energy from other states. As long as we rely on outdated and out-of-state energy, working families will continue to see their bills go up while jobs leave our communities," said Local 825 Business Manager Greg Lavee. "We urgently need to address these issues in a way that creates union jobs and a more affordable, secure New Jersey."

That challenge is why Greg became a founding member of Climate Jobs New Jersey, a new coalition bringing together labor leaders from across the state, including Local 825, LiUNA, IBEW and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, among others. The coalition is focused on

confronting New Jersey's energy affordability crisis while creating union jobs.

The plan

The coalition is advocating for a large-scale buildout of solar and battery storage over the next 24 months. Rooftop solar is one of the fastest resources that can be deployed, particularly in a densely populated state like New Jersey. Pairing it with battery storage allows energy generated during the day to be used at night.

Looking ahead, the coalition plans to advocate for legislative commitments for 24.2 gigawatts of new clean energy infrastructure by 2035. This investment would close New Jersey's energy deficit and position the state to once again become a net exporter of energy. Together, these steps outline a path toward a better energy future for New Jersey.

