

825. NEWS



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SERVING THE LOCAL 825 MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS VOL.16 ISSUE 3 (MAY/JUNE 2026)

Building a better place to play 825 transforms Edison Park for future athletes



Operating Engineers of Tomco Construction are advancing work at Thomas A. Edison Park, where a new Athletic Complex is taking shape in Middlesex County. Located next to Middlesex College, the project will feature 14 synthetic

turf fields, 16 tennis courts and a cricket field. Operating Engineers are leading site work and grading. Quality Electric, home to some of the Local’s newest members, is installing underground utilities and lighting systems.

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.

May

4 – District 1 Meeting

The Forum
109 N Black Horse Pike, Blackwood

6 – District 2 Meeting

Hilton Garden Inn
50 Raritan Center Parkway, Edison

9 – 14th Annual IUOE Local 825 Golf Outing

Gambler Ridge
121 Burlington Path Road, Cream Ridge

10 – Mother's Day

11 – District 3 Meeting

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

13 – District 4 Meeting

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

16 – Armed Forces Day

25 – Memorial Day – UNION HOLIDAY

31 – Hike for Hope

NJ Training Center
338 Deans Rhode Hall Rd, Dayton

June

1 – District 1 Meeting

Elks Lodge 1875
600 Washington Street, Toms River

3 – District 2 Meeting

Embassy Suites
250 Connell Drive, Berkeley Heights

8 – District 3 Meeting

Russian Hall
464 Outwater Lane, Garfield

10 – District 4 Meeting

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

14 – Flag Day

19 – Juneteenth

21 – Father's Day / Summer Begins

28 – IUOE 825 Annual Clay Shoot

Lehigh Valley Sporting Clays
2750 Limestone Street, Coplay, PA

29 – Semiannual Meeting

Hilton East Brunswick
3 Tower Center Blvd., East Brunswick

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Greg Lalevee, Business Manager



A growing industry and a growing challenge

NJ needs data centers and the power supply to sustain them

A new challenge is taking shape across New Jersey, one that directly affects both household costs and job opportunities. The rapid expansion of data centers, driven by AI and cloud computing, is placing unprecedented demand on the state's power supply. These facilities are essential, but right now too much of the cost is falling on working families.

The issue is not whether data centers should exist. They are part of the modern economy and will continue to expand. The issue is how they are powered and who pays for it. Over the last decade, New Jersey's approach to energy generation has failed. The state has added little new energy capacity while retiring major sources of generation. In the near term, there are not enough green solutions alone to meet growing demand. An "all-of-the-above" approach, including natural gas, will be necessary to keep pace.

Data centers require enormous amounts of electricity, often enough to power tens of thousands of homes. As more come online, demand is driving up costs across the grid, and residents are feeling the impact.

At the same time, this challenge presents a real opportunity. Meeting the growing demand will require major investment in energy infrastructure, from site development and heavy construction to long-term operations. That means significant work for union labor across the state.

We cannot tell a rapidly growing industry to take its business elsewhere, but growth must be handled the right way. There are no unicorn solutions here, but there are reasonable ones.

This is about strategic long-term planning. Growth should not come at the expense of working people. Done right, it can strengthen the industry, create opportunity and ensure the benefits are shared by the members who build it.

Happy Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a time to pause and remember the men and women who gave their lives in service to our country. Their sacrifice secured the freedoms we enjoy and the opportunities we work to build on every day. Wishing all members and their families a safe and meaningful Memorial Day.

Contact Information

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Building A Unit 6
Bordentown, NJ 08505
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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
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Union Plus®
(Offered through Wells Fargo Home Mortgage)
Debra Botulinski
(908) 608-2013

Members plan for the next chapter

The Funds Department held a series of retirement readiness seminars throughout the spring, giving members and their spouses an opportunity to better understand available options and prepare for long-term decisions.

The sessions were led by Thomas Edwards and Marybeth Bonapaine, who drew on years of frequently asked member questions to guide the discussions. Attendees received individualized folders with information specific to their own situation, along with general retirement readiness materials to review and reference later.

One member noted, "Your whole working life, someone is always telling you what comes

next. Retirement is different. There are a lot of choices to make and a lot to understand. We're lucky to have this kind of support. It takes some of the pressure off."

Each seminar concluded with dedicated time for Q&A.

Retirement webinar available now

A web-version of the retirement seminar is available online. Members and their spouses can access the presentation through the member portal for the same detailed guidance shared during the in-person sessions, with the flexibility to review information at their own pace.



Getting the most out of your benefits

An experience with your Mobile Care Coordinator, Michelle.

A recent interaction with Guardian Nurse and Mobile Care Coordinator Michelle provided the support needed to help a member's spouse become pain-free for the first time in a long while. Michelle visited the participant in the hospital and found her in excruciating pain. The ENT on staff believed the issue was neurological and insisted the patient be discharged if she wanted a different diagnosis, rather than considering other possibilities.

Michelle stepped in, spoke with the patient, reviewed her chart, and brought together the attending physician, RN, RN manager and patient services team to reassess the situation. Together, they agreed that something else needed to be addressed. After continued discussion, the ENT acknowledged there was a 50/50 chance that a previously identified salivary stone was the source of the pain, and that it could not be treated at that facility. "For someone suffering the way she was, those odds were worth pursuing," Michelle said.

Michelle researched options and, before the patient was discharged, secured an appointment for the next day with the appropriate spe-

cialist. Within a week, the patient underwent outpatient surgery to remove the stone. At her follow-up appointment, she reported she was finally pain-free!



Most members and their spouses see their doctors when an urgent issue arises. Your Mobile Care Coordinator, Michelle, is available to help ensure you understand who you are seeing and to guide you through your options when facing a serious diagnosis.

Members and their families can count on their nurse advocate to*:

- GO WITH YOU TO SEE DOCTORS, to ask questions and to get answers.
- VISIT YOU in the hospital or at home to make sure you're receiving proper care.
- IDENTIFY PROVIDERS for all care needs, including second opinions.

- EXPEDITE APPOINTMENTS so you can be seen as quickly as possible.
- EXPLAIN A NEW DIAGNOSIS to help you make informed decisions.
- PROVIDE GUIDANCE when you consider treatment options.
- ASSIST IN OBTAINING covered equipment and services.
- BE YOUR GUIDE, coach and advocate for any healthcare issue.

For more information about the Guardian Nurse Program, see the inserted flyer.

*Nurse advocates do not make medical or financial decisions for you, make a medical diagnosis, determine fault or legal liability, provide direct nursing care, or provide financial management services.



Winter classes end, spring brings new apprentices

Winter classes have officially concluded at the training centers, marking the end of another productive season. Apprentices and journeymen completed their final hours of training and prepared equipment for the work ahead.

“This was a difficult winter,” said Training Center Director Willie Vaccaro. “But we made the most of it. Thank you for your hard work and dedication, and congratulations on so many new certifications earned. We wish everyone a great season ahead with all of the work they want.”

The season closed with members coming together to share a meal, catered by Tuscany of Old Bridge, offering an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the winter and the work that lies ahead.

Welcome new apprentices

With the arrival of spring comes the next generation of operating engineers. The training centers welcomed new apprentices in April, with 39 beginning in New Jersey and 8 in New York. They join a program built on skill, safety and opportunity, continuing the tradition of excellence that defines Local 825.



Progress underway on major athletic complex

Operating Engineers of Tomco Construction are helping transform Thomas A. Edison Park into a premier destination for recreation and athletics in Middlesex County.

Located off Mill Road adjacent to Middlesex College, the site is being developed to serve athletes, families and the surrounding community for years to come. The project includes 14 multi-sport synthetic turf fields, 16 tennis courts and a state-of-the-art cricket field, along with additional amenities that will expand opportunities for play and competition.

From site work to final grading, Operating Engineers are playing a key role in delivering a modern facility built to meet growing demand for recreational space. New members at Quality Electric are on the job as well, handling electrical infrastructure including underground utilities, powering field lighting systems and supporting the complex's overall network to ensure safe and reliable operation.

Once complete, the complex will stand as an investment in community infrastructure, supporting youth sports, regional tournaments and everyday recreation. It is another example of skilled union labor building projects that strengthen communities across New Jersey.



Lead Engineer of Tomco Eddie Vazquez.



New and upcoming events

May comes with new opportunities for members to stay engaged.

A historical photo contest will launch May 7 in celebration of the Local's charter anni-

versary, inviting active and retired members in good standing to submit photos from job-sites, training centers and union events. Prizes will be awarded and selected photos will be showcased at the semi-annual meeting in June. Updates and full details will be shared on the IUOE Local 825 website and social media pages. Stay tuned.

A new event is coming to the New Jersey Training Center on May 31. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention will be hosting Hike for Hope, an opportunity to raise awareness about suicide prevention in the construction industry, while enjoying the great outdoors. No registration fee. Visit <https://supporting.afsp.org/njconstruction> for details.



Members give back at blood drives

Members at the training centers rolled up their sleeves to help others by participating in blood drives. Hosting blood drives at the training centers made it easy for members to take part and contribute

to a cause that saves lives every day. The strong turnout reflects the spirit of service that extends beyond the jobsite and into the communities where operating engineers live and work.



Bags fly at sold-out tournament

Local 825's cornhole tournament was held at a new location with expanded space for play, providing the setting for a sold-out event that brought members, families and friends together for a "hole" lot of fun and friendly competition. A set of branded IUOE Local 825 corn-

hole boards was awarded as the raffle prize. Lunch was served, stories were shared and the competition remained strong throughout the day. Thank you to the METALS team for organizing another great event, and to all of the members and families that attended.



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., May 16

Sat., Jun 27

SIGNAL PERSON

Sat., May 2

RIGGER

Sat., May 9

ASBESTOS AWARENESS

Sat., June 6

OSHA 10

June 13, mod 1

June 20, mod 2

CPR

Sat., May 9

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.



New law expands PLA authority for municipalities

New Jersey municipalities now have a stronger tool to manage public construction projects following enactment of a significant labor measure that directly benefits union workers, including operating engineers.

Governor Phil Murphy signed Bill S4864 into law, expanding the authority of local government entities to utilize Project Labor Agreements on more public works projects. The legislation authorizes municipalities, counties, school districts and fire districts to enter into PLAs with local Building Trades Councils on projects below the previous \$5 million threshold.

Prior to S4864, public entities were limited in their ability to implement PLAs on

margin, an uncommon show of unity in today's political climate.

What it means for members and signatories

For union operating engineers, the impact is clear. Many municipal projects under \$5 million involve site work, excavation, grading, paving, utilities and heavy equipment operations. With PLAs now available on those jobs, contractors can draw from union hiring halls and apprenticeship programs, ensuring that skilled, safety-trained operating engineers are dispatched to perform the work. That means more consistent hours, stronger workforce standards and greater opportunities for members to work on local public projects.

wage and benefit standards, reducing the likelihood of labor disputes and keeping projects on track. For signatory contractors and their employees, that stability translates into reliable work and protections that support family-sustaining careers.



Hudson County's new Frank J. Guarini Justice Complex was constructed under a Project Labor Agreement (PLA).

smaller-scale projects due to a \$5 million minimum project cost requirement. Removal of that threshold significantly broadens local governments' discretion when structuring construction contracts. The change opens the door for PLAs on projects ranging from road resurfacing and utility work to public safety facilities, school renovations and infrastructure upgrades that previously fell outside the threshold.

The measure received overwhelming bipartisan support, passing the General Assembly by a 63-10 vote and the Senate by a 35-4

PLAs also make signatory contractors more competitive in pursuing public work.

But benefits extend even further. When a non-union contractor is awarded a PLA project, the agreement still requires that 88 percent of the workforce be drawn from local union hiring halls. That structure ensures that even in those cases, union members are performing the work, reinforcing labor standards and delivering a win for the union workforce.

PLAs also promote predictable scheduling, uniform work rules and established

Newark Bay Bridge project moves forward



Governor Mikie Sherrill announced support for advancing the \$6.7 billion Newark Bay Bridge program through the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. The project will replace aging infrastructure along a key route for freight movement and daily commuters, improving safety, reliability and long-term performance.

The program is expected to support approximately 19,000 jobs, including thousands of union construction jobs across multiple trades.

Project Labor Agreements will be included in future bids, helping ensure the work is completed safely and efficiently.

The investment creates significant opportunities for operating engineers and the Building Trades, while reinforcing strong labor standards on major infrastructure projects.



International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825

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BETTER BUILDING BEGINS HERE

Women of 825 join 20th WILD Conference

Members joined more than 350 union women from across the state at the 20th annual Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference, a program organized by Laurel Brennan of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO. The annual event brings together union sisters to share experiences and build solidarity across trades and industries.

This year's conference featured remarks from Governor Mikie Sherrill, who addressed current labor priorities and the importance of continued investment in major infrastructure projects, including Gateway. AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler spoke as well, reinforcing the role of union women in shaping the future of the labor movement. Workshops throughout the conference focused on professional growth and union engagement.

The WILD Conference continues to serve as a powerful platform for education, connection and empowerment.



Standing, from left: Alli Strosenruether, Diane Papa, Kelly Raeuber, Capri Rispoli and Ashley Banks. Seated, from left: Emilynn Furrquesson, Nicole Pietrasiak and Monique Young.