

825. NEWS



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SERVING THE LOCAL 825 MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS

VOL.16 ISSUE 4 (JULY/AUGUST 2026)

Direct Connect eliminates dangerous bottleneck Members tackle one of NJDOT's largest jobs



Operating engineers of South State are helping build NJDOT's Direct Connect project, a nearly \$900 million effort to modernize one of South Jersey's busiest highway interchanges. The project will eliminate the dangerous Al-Jo's Curve and replace

it with safer, more efficient highway connections. The project is currently in its third of four phases. Crews have completed major bridge, drainage and roadway improvements while maintaining traffic through the corridor. Read more on p. 5.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Greg Lavee, Business Manager



Nuclear power returns to the conversation

For years, we've argued that New Jersey needs an all-of-the-above energy strategy. The state's demand for electricity continues to grow, driven by new development, data centers, manufacturing and the electrification of everything from transportation to home heating. Meeting that demand will require every available source of reliable power, which is why one of the most important opportunities on the horizon is now taking shape in South Jersey.

Over the past several months, discussions among industry leaders, elected officials and energy stakeholders have focused on two new nuclear reactors at the Salem Nuclear Generating Station and momentum is building. Governor Mikie Sherrill is working on legislation that would establish New Jersey's commitment to the project and Delaware has expressed support as well. At the federal level, the Trump Administration announced an \$80 billion strategic partnership with Westinghouse Electric Company to deploy a new generation of AP1000 reactors across the country. Salem is among a select group of sites positioned to be part of that package.

For our members, the significance of Salem doesn't need much explanation. Many have spent years working at Salem and Hope Creek. Together, those facilities produce

more than 40 percent of New Jersey's electricity and have helped keep the lights on for decades. Just as important, the site already has the workforce and infrastructure needed to support future expansion.

No one should expect construction to begin tomorrow. There will be years of engineering, permitting and environmental reviews before the first shovel hits the ground. But we've seen this story before. For years, the Gateway Program was little more than a plan on paper. Then funding came together, contracts were awarded and members went to work. The same thing could happen at Salem. Stay tuned.

Gateway prepares for next phase of construction

This spring, the Gateway Development Commission awarded a \$711.7 million contract for the New Jersey Surface Alignment to the Skanska-Creamer-Schiavone joint venture. This component of the project will connect the future tunnel beneath the Hudson River to the Northeast Corridor rail network. The contract covers approximately 1.5 miles of rail infrastructure between Secaucus and North Bergen, including embankments, retaining walls, bridges and viaducts. Tunnel boring machine components are currently being assembled, and construction activity is

expected to increase throughout the summer as work progresses on both sides of the Hudson River.

New banner, new benefits

The Local 825 banner plane will take to the sky each weekend from July 4 through Aug. 15, flying an even bigger banner along the shore.

Members should also watch their mail for new National Coalition of Labor member benefits information, which will be arriving soon.

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.

July

4 - Independence Day - UNION HOLIDAY

19 - 8th Annual IUOE Local 825 Fishing Trip
Miss Belmar, 905 NJ-35, Belmar,
7:00 am - 2:30 pm

August

No Events

Contact Information

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Wawayanda location
96 Bates Gates Road
New Hampton, NY 10958
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Families gather to celebrate scholarship winners

The results of this year's Local 825 Scholarship Awards are in. These children and grandchildren of our members have each won \$10,000 over four years to help pay their college expenses.

Congratulations to our 2025 scholarship winners. In alphabetical order, they are:

Salvatore Borrometi of Saddle Brook, son of Carmen Borrometi, winner of the Outstanding Student Athlete Scholarship. Salvatore will attend Campbell University to study Trust and Wealth Management.

Sebastian Fraczek of Lodi, son of Marek Fraczek, winner of an Academic Scholarship. Sebastian will attend Northeastern University to study Biology.

Nora Gill of Newton, daughter of Kieran Gill, winner of the Outstanding Appreciation/Understanding of Unionism Scholarship. Nora will attend Montclair State University to study Psychology.

Eva Lalevee of Hackettstown, daughter of Gary Lalevee, winner of an Academic Scholarship. Eva will attend the University of Florida to study Computer Science.

Mickey McGovern of Ocean Township, son of Bryan McGovern, winner of an Academic Scholarship. Mickey will attend the University of Detroit Mercy to study Finance.

Grace Meyers of Branchville, granddaughter of Patrick Tamburro, winner of an

Academic Scholarship. Gracy will attend Mount Saint Mary College to study Nursing.

Joaquin Nikolic of Clark, son of Uros Nikolic, winner of an Academic Scholarship. Joaquin will attend James Madison University Honors College to study Business Marketing.

Gabriela Quevedo of Westampton, daughter of Walter Quevedo, winner of an Academic Scholarship. Gabriela will attend Rutgers University to study Political Science.

Abagale Ranger of Mays Landing, daughter of John Ranger, winner of an Academic Scholarship. Abagale will attend Clemson University to study Aerospace Engineering.

Laila Angelique Turan of Riverdale, daughter of Burak Turan, winner of the Outstanding Student Service Scholarship. Laila will attend the University of Delaware to study Kinesiology.



Local 825 executive board members and the Rutgers University judges honored recipients and their families at the Hilton Hotel in East Brunswick.

Local 825 newsletter earns Hermes Gold Award

Local 825's earned national recognition, receiving a Gold Hermes creative award in the publications category. The Hermes awards honor outstanding work in traditional and digital media and are judged by industry professionals from the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals.



Salvatore Borrometi



Sebastian Fraczek



Nora Gill



Eva Lalevee



Mickey McGovern



Grace Meyers



Joaquin Nikolic



Gabriela Quevedo



Abagale Ranger



Laila Angelique Turan

Building New Jersey for 100 years

Almasi family celebrates centennial

For 100 years, long-time signatory Almasi Contractors has built a legacy rooted in hard work and family tradition. The Almasi family, now in its fourth generation, plays a vital role in site work, utility installation and material transport across New Jersey and beyond.

Their story began in the 1920s, when John Almasi Sr. arrived in the United States from Hungary. With limited English and few resources, he relied on a strong work ethic to build a better life for his family. During the Great Depression, he launched a jitney bus service in Woodbridge that grew so rapidly that Public Service purchased the route in 1929. The sale of the bus service laid the foundation for



John Almasi Sr., founder of Almasi construction, stands with one of the original trucks of the Almasi Trucking fleet.

what would become a century-long business. Using the proceeds, John purchased land in Woodbridge and established the Almasi Trucking Company. The property would later become the site of Woodbridge Center Mall, an early example of the family's lasting impact on New Jersey.

From the start, the company was family owned and operated. John Almasi Sr. worked alongside his sons, John Jr. and Bill Sr., expanding operations into excavation and material hauling. Their expertise in mining and transporting materials helped carve out a niche in the construction industry and laid the groundwork for future growth.

Almasi Trucking Company, and later Almasi Contractors, supplied materials for many ma-



Three Generations. John Almasi Sr. stands alongside his sons, John Jr. and Bill Sr., and grandson Bill Almasi Jr.

nor projects. They provided clay for the tennis courts throughout New York City and infield mixes used in Major League Baseball stadiums across the Northeast. Clay from the family's Main Street pit was also used in the construction of the Lincoln Tunnel, connecting the company's history to one of the region's most iconic pieces of infrastructure.

The Almasi family business continued to grow alongside the region it helped build. In the past 25 years, operations expanded into a full-service site work and utility contractor, gaining expertise in underground utilities, road construction, paving and landscape construction. The company eventually rebranded from Almasi Trucking Company to Almasi Companies, reflecting the broader scope of work it performs today. However, trucking still remains a core part of the business. Almasi's fleet operates year-round, supporting construction activity in warmer months and transitioning to snow removal during the winter season.

The third generation of the family, William "Bill" Almasi Jr., his wife Anne Marie, her sister Laura Bianchini and cousin Ken Nagy, helped



guide the company's growth and success over the past two decades. Today, the fourth generation, including Bill Almasi III, Maura Almasi and Ted Urlton, is helping position the company to meet the challenges of the future while continuing the family traditions that have defined the business for a century.

Bill Almasi Sr., a 50-year member of Local 825, is the owner of Almasi Contractors. He was one of the first expert Gradall operators and became known for his skill on the machine. Anne Marie Almasi serves as President and Owner of Almasi Companies, helping guide the company's continued evolution while upholding the values it was built upon. Her commitment to supporting others inspired the creation of the "Kindness Matters" Foundation, reflecting the family's dedication to giving back and empowering future generations.

Laura Bianchini serves as Vice President and Director of Projects, overseeing project budgeting, contract negotiations, quality control and client relations, helping ensure projects are completed efficiently and to the highest standards.



The Almasi family's work can be seen across many of New Jersey's most recognizable projects, including MetLife Stadium, Prudential Center, the PNC Bank Arts Center, Rutgers University and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

Local 825 congratulates the Almasi family on 100 years of success and thanks them for their longstanding partnership and commitment to quality work. Their contributions have helped build communities throughout New Jersey and strengthen the union construction industry for generations. Here's to continued success and the next chapter of the Almasi legacy.

Building safer connections in South Jersey

Operating Engineers are on the job at the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Direct Connect project, one of the largest highway projects in South Jersey history. The nearly \$900 million multi-phase project began in 2013 and is currently in its third contract. The first contract was awarded to PFK-Mark III, the second to Conti Enterprises and the current phase is being completed by South State, Inc.

For decades, drivers traveling on Interstate 295 were forced to navigate "Al-Jo's Curve," named after a popular nightclub that once operated nearby along West Kings Highway in Mt. Ephraim. The notoriously sharp left-hand interchange connected I-295 southbound to Route 42 and Interstate 76 and was known for its confusing traffic pattern and abrupt speed reduction. Drivers were forced to slow from 65 mph to 35 mph in a short distance as they entered the ramp, creating dangerous driving conditions that contributed to crash rates higher than the state average.

Under the Direct Connect project, Al-Jo's Curve is being eliminated and replaced with a new configuration that will allow I-295 traffic to move directly above the existing interchange using an elevated roadway and flyover ramps.

The Direct Connection project also includes traffic reconfigurations throughout the



The flyover bridge will carry I-295 traffic directly over route I-76 and Route 42



surrounding area, including bridge construction, retaining walls, roadway realignments and drainage improvements. The work has required precise coordination of utility relocations, temporary bridge construction, interim drainage systems, highway lighting installation, noise mitigation and major ground improvement operations, all while maintaining traffic through the busiest transportation networks in the region. Local 825 operating engineers have played a critical role throughout every phase of the project.

When completed, the redesigned interchange will provide safer travel and more efficient connections for commuters and commercial traffic.



Lawrence Taylor, South State lead engineer.



Reconstruction of the Route 130 bridge over Big Timber Creek.

For the future, golfers brave the rain

Sold-out event supports the Scholarship Fund at new home course

Despite steady rain, the golfers played on. IUOE Local 825's annual golf outing brought members and friends together at its sprawling new home, the High Bridge Hills Golf Club. The event helped support the IUOE Local 825 Scholarship Fund, which invests in the next generation of union members and their families.

Lunch was served before golfers headed to the first tee and dinner followed a full 18 holes on the course.

Thank you to everyone who came out and to the sponsors whose support helped make the

event possible.



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., July 25

Sat., Aug 15

SIGNAL PERSON

Sat., Aug 1

RIGGER

Sat., Aug 8

40 HOUR

July 13-17, 2026

OSHA 10

Sat., Jul 11 mod 2

Sat., Jul 18 mod 1

OSHA 30

July 7-10

June 20, mod 2

CCO

Sat., Jul 11

Sat., Jul 18

Sat., Jul 25

Sun., Jul 26 test

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.

Local 825 hosts Hike for Hope

The Local 825 Training Center welcomed hundreds of members, families, friends and supporters for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Hike for Hope, raising more than \$60,000 to support suicide prevention programs and mental health initiatives. According to AFSP, suicide remains a leading cause of preventable deaths among construction workers, underscoring the need for increased awareness, education and support.

The event brought together the construction community on a beautiful summer afternoon for a walk dedicated to raising awareness and honoring loved ones lost.

New Jersey Construction Hike for Hope Co-Chairs Barbara Brennan and Chris Lalevee, and motivational speaker Mark Farrell gave insightful remarks. Mark shared, "Taking care of our tools comes naturally. We inspect them, maintain them and make sure they're ready for the job. The same goes for our equipment. We keep it running because we know what happens when it's neglected. Taking care of ourselves isn't always as intuitive, but it's just as important. Getting enough sleep. Eating well.

Taking a break when it's needed. Giving yourself grace during difficult times. These aren't signs of weakness, they're the things that keep us healthy and able to keep moving forward."

Following the hike, attendees enjoyed food trucks, games and a 50/50 drawing and raffle. Local 825 extends its gratitude to the sponsors, volunteers and participants whose support made the event a success.



Photo contest celebrates Local 825 history



Local 825 members and retirees shared a glimpse into the union's history during the Historical Photo Contest. Submitted photos featured operating engineers at work on iconic projects including the Walt Whitman Bridge and Salem Nuclear Power Plant.

All photographs were displayed at the Semi-annual meeting and members voted to select this year's winning entries. Thank you to all who submitted photographs and helped preserve the history of Local 825.





International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825

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BETTER BUILDING BEGINS HERE

Career Day highlights apprenticeship paths

Local 825 participated in Construction Industry Career Day, a two-day event focused on showcasing the opportunities and occupations available in the construction industry.

Local 825 brought a brand new mobile simulator unit to the event. Matt Walker, Bobby Lane and Rick Marvin helped participants practice operating equipment on the simulator. Inside, Chris Szpila, Shana Grace and Kelvin Duran-Jiminez answered questions about apprenticeship opportunities and careers within the operating engineers.

ELEC's Gina Sullivan volunteered during the event, helping feed students throughout the two-day program. Construction Industry Career Day was sponsored by ELEC and continues to provide students with valuable exposure to careers in the construction industry.

