

Volume VIX, Issue III
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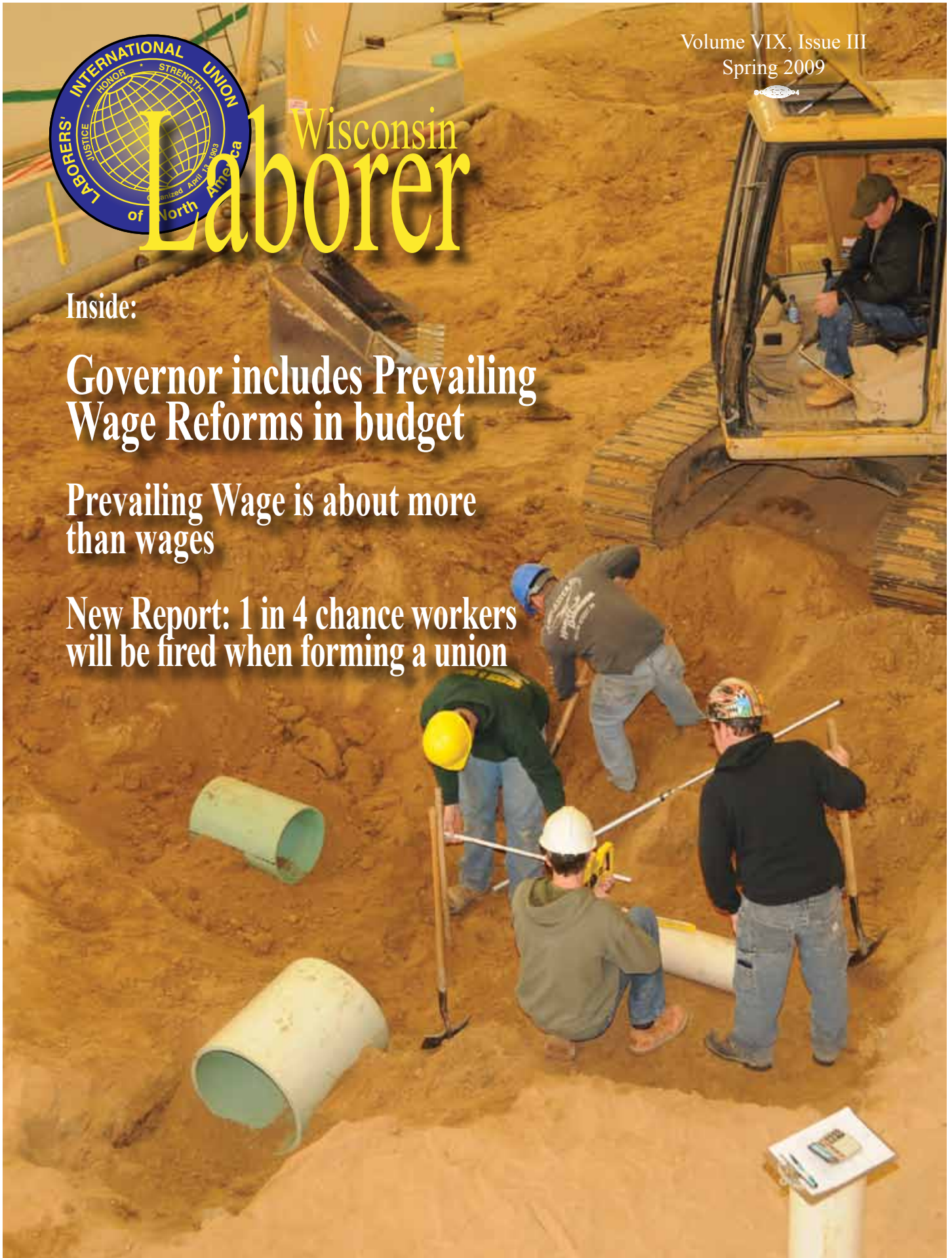
Wisconsin Laborer

Inside:

Governor includes Prevailing Wage Reforms in budget

Prevailing Wage is about more than wages

New Report: 1 in 4 chance workers will be fired when forming a union





When you come right down to it
it's really quite simple ...

We train.

Wisconsin Laborers provide the most diverse training and apprenticeship opportunities in the construction industry.

- Commercial and Industrial Building
- Heavy and Highway
- Tunnel Work
- Utility Construction
- Trenchless Technology
- Demolition and Asbestos Removal
- Environmental Remediation
- Nuclear Decontamination and Demolition

You gain.

Working with our employer partners we develop innovative courses that match training to industry, market and project needs.

- Marketable skills in all areas of construction
- Knowledgeable, safe and productive workers
- Trained, certified instructors
- State-of-the-art facility and equipment
- Classroom and hands-on training regardless of weather conditions
- Mobile training capacity



Wisconsin Laborers' District Council

608-846-8242

www.WILaborers.org

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On the Cover



Laborers attending classes at the Wisconsin Laborers' Training and Apprenticeship Center participate in a Pipe Laying Class this Winter. Inside training bays allow for hands-on training under job-like conditions.



"We know that the better we are understood the greater will be the esteem in which we are held.

"We wish to impress upon the minds of those who are not familiar with the workings of labor organizations that ours is a business organization and that we are organized for the benefit of the toilers of our country.

"We wish everyone to know just what we are and for what we stand, and there is no better way to insure a thorough understanding than to publish an official journal, which would be read by our members, the unorganized workers, and the public at large."

H. A. Stemburgh
General-Secretary-Treasurer
Trenton, N.J., Jan. 11, 1904

Wisconsin LABORER is a publication of the Wisconsin Laborers' District Council, in cooperation with Laborers' Local #113, Milwaukee; Local #140, La Crosse; Local #268, Eau Claire; Local #330 Menasha; and Local #464, Madison.

Wisconsin LABORER is intended to provide information on issues of concern to union members and friends of Wisconsin Laborers.

Wisconsin LABORER welcomes your comments and suggestions, and will consider submissions for future publications. Please send letters and articles to:

Wisconsin LABORER
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DeForest, WI 53532

For more on the
Wisconsin Laborers' District Council
visit our web site at:
www.WILaborers.org

Business Manager's Report

by Tom Fisher, President and Business Manager

Governor includes prevailing wage reforms in state budget



Thomas E. Fisher
President and Business Manager

In the wake of AIG, years of corporate excess, mismanagement, and shady financial deals that have contributed to the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression, it was welcomed news to learn that Governor Jim Doyle included provisions in his recently introduced state budget that will ensure greater transparency and accountability in the way we invest public money in Wisconsin.

For workers in the construction industry the news gets better. The Governor's proposals deal specifically with much needed reforms in the state's prevailing wage law.

Basically, these reform measures would:

- Increase accountability by having prevailing wage law apply to more publicly financed projects
- Create transparency and further ensure that contractors compete fairly and play by the rules by requiring contractors to submit certified payroll records to verify that they are paying area standard wages.

With wealthy developers receiving millions of dollars every year in Wisconsin, the public surely has a right to know that that money is being used as intended – to create value in communities that extend

beyond the life of any one project.

As this month's feature story makes clear, prevailing wage is about more than wages.

In addition to maintaining area wage standards, prevailing wage helps build apprenticeship and training programs, provides health care coverage and other benefits, and generally works to sustain an industry with an industry workforce as devoted to craft as it is capable of meeting the demand for its services as needed.

And if you don't think that is important, look at Iowa, a state with no prevailing wage law.

There, a construction trade association is in the middle of a campaign to recruit construction workers from neighboring states, including Wisconsin, because their contractors lack the skilled labor force necessary to handle projects created by the recently passed federal stimulus package.

Give credit to the Governor for recog-

With the millions of dollars in public money flowing to wealthy developers every year in Wisconsin, holding them accountable to local community wage standards while creating greater transparency in the system seems a pretty fair request.

nizing that it is precisely during hard economic times, when the construction industry and its workforce are most vulnerable, that these sorts of reforms are most needed.

Let's not forget that the state Prevailing Wage law was first implemented at the height of the Great Depression as a means to sustain local construction markets and assure quality projects through even the worst of recessions.

The reform measures Governor Doyle has included in his budget recognize the positive influence public investment has in sustaining local construction markets and adding value to local communities.

With the millions of dollars in public money flowing to developers every year in Wisconsin, holding them accountable to local community wage standards while creating greater transparency in the system seems a pretty fair request, for workers and taxpayers alike.

Training Center hosts UI bill signing



The Wisconsin Laborers' Training and Apprenticeship Center recently hosted a bill signing by Governor Jim Doyle extending unemployment insurance to state workers. Afterwards the Governor spent time visiting with over 100 Laborers attending classes that day. Pictured with Governor Doyle are members Angela Armonda, Local 464; Rosemary Sheeder, Local 113; Al Friedl, Training Director; Tom Fisher, District Council Business Manager and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman.

DOT: Double-lets to begin in April

The State DOT plans on conducting double lets in April, May and June to begin moving over \$300 million in transportation infrastructure projects as part of the federal economic stimulus package.

These projects are in addition to regularly schedule let activity and are designed to help boost the state's economy by making critical investments in infrastructure and putting people back to work.

The economic downturn has taken a toll on Wisconsin working families. Unemployment is over 8 percent and expected to creep higher as the recession deepens.

Unemployment among construction craft laborers is nearing 20 percent statewide and that number does not include more seasonal workers typically called back by employers when projects begin in the spring.

The Governor's budget places a top priority on job creation that will have a

Wisconsin Laborers can be proud of the role they will play in helping to turn our economy around and pull us from recession.

ripple effect throughout the economy, restoring hope to individual workers and businesses hit hard by the recession, while developing and maintaining the infrastructure necessary to facilitate long term economic benefit to businesses in all sectors and in communities throughout the state.

Wisconsin Laborers can be proud of the role they will play in helping to turn our economy around and pull us from recession.

District Council

4633 LIUNA Way, Suite 101

DeForest, WI 53532

Phone: 608-846-8242

Fax: 608-846-5460

Website: www.wilaborers.org

- Tom Fisher, President and Business Manager
- Pat Ervin, Assistant Business Manager
- Joe Oswald, Government and Community Affairs
- Donna Neustadter, Office Manager; Rachael Larson

Training Center to receive state grant

Wisconsin Laborers Training and Apprenticeship Center is slated to receive \$265,000 in training grants as a result of the State Economic Stimulus Package that was passed by the state legislature in February.

The effort to provide training grants directly to industry training facilities was spearheaded by Joint Committee on Finance Co-Chair and Assembly Member



Rep. Mark Pocan

Mark Pocan (D-Madison) who saw the measure as an opportunity to boost job training programs enabling more workers to take immediate advantage of federal stimulus projects and prepare for the growth of green jobs.

Laborers will use the funding to provide OSHA, Hazardous Waste, Asbestos Removal and other training to prepare workers for the infrastructure, green building and energy jobs that will grow out of the federal economic stimulus package recently passed by Congress.

Prevailing wage law is about more than just wages

Prevailing wage levels the playing field, sustains the industry and ensures accountability and transparency on public work



In 1931, laws were enacted both in Washington and in Wisconsin to guarantee fair competition for federal and state construction projects. For nearly 80 years these laws have been providing stability to an otherwise volatile construction industry.

More importantly for Wisconsin workers, consumers, and taxpayers, these laws have also been protecting the economic vitality of entire communities from unscrupulous contractors who would undermine the public works process and local wage standards, by slashing workers' wages in order to win work.

The federal Davis-Bacon Act and state prevailing wage law levels the playing field and prevents cut-throat competition by establishing a wage floor on which all contractors must compete for public work based on local wage standards.

By basing these wage rates on real wages, being earned by real workers who are working real jobs in the private sector — these laws ensure that the contractors bidding and ultimately winning public work are competing based on their knowledge, skill, and efficiency, and not on how little they choose to pay their employees.

Stability in an unstable industry

The nature of the industry has not changed since the passage of federal and state prevailing wage laws. Whether it is low-wage or high-wage, union or non-union, large or small, contractors continue

to compete on a time and materials basis.

Given low-bid requirements of public works projects, and the volume of activity it represents, without prevailing wage standards there would be tremendous downward pressure on wages in the construction industry, especially during hard economic times.

The demand for construction varies widely, from road and bridge work to schools and libraries. Construction tends to be a seasonal industry that heats up in the summer and cools down in the winter. In between there's plenty of rain to affect work.

With families, homes, and all the responsibilities that come with them, construction workers face the constant threat of losing work and the constant pressure of finding it.

Construction workers work in multi-

employer situations that require an ability and willingness to travel often great distances between projects.

Again, it is the pressure to find work, not the wage one receives, that often becomes as the deciding factor for many construction workers.

Based on private sector wages

Prevailing wages are based on wages paid and benefits received in the private sector.

Prevailing wage is not the "union wage." Prevailing wage simply reflects the wages and benefits earned on similar work in the private sector.

That determination is made through industry wage and benefit surveys conducted of private sector work. Based on survey data the prevailing wage rate may be one of the following: 1) a rate less than

Prevailing Wage includes benefits that sustain the industry: *Training, Apprenticeship, Health and Pension*

In addition to lending stability to the construction industry, prevailing wage laws have had other positive impacts on the industry including providing the proving ground for many of the benefits like apprentice and training programs that have sustained the industry with one of the most productive, highly skilled and safest construction workforces in the world.

Training and the availability of a skilled and productive work force have been a well documented need in the construction industry.

Prevailing wage makes possible the apprentice and training programs necessary to maintain a steady supply of construction labor.

The costs of training, as well as other benefits are so important to the industry they are included in the prevail-



ing wage formula.

Without structured apprenticeship and training programs, the cost of training shifts from employer to employee.

The subsequent decline in wages and safety contributes to workers leaving the trades in search of better pay, more stable employment and a safer work environment.

For example, Iowa, a state without a prevailing wage law, is currently trying to lure construction workers from Wisconsin because they don't have enough skilled construction workers to handle the infrastructure projects funded by the federal stimulus bill.

Iowa, a state without a prevailing wage law, is currently trying to lure construction workers from Wisconsin because they don't have enough skilled workers to handle the infrastructure projects funded by the federal stimulus bill.

the collectively bargained rate; 2) the collectively bargained rate; or 3) a rate greater than the collectively bargained rate.

For example, collectively bargained rates were found to prevail on only 22 percent of all job classifications issued by the state Department of Workforce Development for state building work.

That figure varies widely by county, ranging from 14 percent in places like Barron and Crawford Counties, to 33 percent in Dane County.

Even when confining work more narrowly to basic trades, the union building rate prevails on roughly 57 percent of the time, ranging from lows of 22 percent in Adams County to 88 percent in Dane and Dodge Counties.

No correlation between wages and total project cost

While critics charge that expansion of prevailing wage coverage will raise project costs, the fact is, there is no correlation between wages and overall project costs.

A comparison of a "high-wage" state, Wisconsin, to low-wage states clearly illustrates that point. A study of the Federal Highway Administration annual average construction wages from 1980 to 1993 shows that Wisconsin has lower costs per mile than 12 of 13 low-wage states.

For example, Wisconsin outdistanced North Carolina (wage rate less than half of Wisconsin's) by 58%, and Virginia (wage rate slightly more than half of Wisconsin's) by over 80%.

Prevailing Wage's Republican Roots

The federal prevailing wage law or Davis-Bacon Act derives its name from the Act's two Republican sponsors —Congressman Robert Bacon of New York and Pennsylvania Senator James Davis. Bacon, a former banker, and Davis, the former Secretary of Labor under Presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, viewed the law as a means to stabilize an industry increasingly active in the government procurement process and subject to low bid requirements.

A study released last year reviewing decades worth of literature on this subject found that most researchers conclude that in practice prevailing wage laws do not increase government contracting costs. (Prevailing Wages and Government Contracting Costs, Nooshin Mahalia, EPI, July 8, 2008)

Local #113 Milwaukee

Laborers' Local #113
Meeting - 4th Wed. 7pm

6310 W. Appleton Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53210
Phone: 414-873-4520
Fax: 414-873-5155

- John Schmitt, Business Manager
- Steve Bako, Secretary Treasurer
- Business Agents: Jim Annis; Steve Cagle; Mike Emordeno; Nacarci Feaster, Dave Harris; Tony Neira; Michael Wilburn
- Dispatcher: Luis Guevara

Work to begin on North-South Freeway Project to create 2,300 jobs



The \$1.9 billion in improvements planned for the North-South Freeway will be the single largest transportation project Wisconsin has ever undertaken.

What's Ahead

North-South Freeway project

- Move ramp exits to the right side of the freeway;
- Minimize current and future congestion, which results in fewer crashes, less waiting time and safer driving on the freeway;
- Replace deteriorating pavement and structures with new designs;
- Minimize impacts to local residents and the environment;
- Provide aesthetic treatments for those who live adjacent to the freeway; and
- Construct an additional lane in each direction.

Laborers recently joined Governor Jim Doyle to announce construction is soon slated to begin on the I-94 North-South Freeway project.

About \$1.9 billion in improvements are planned for the North-South Freeway which runs from the Illinois-Wisconsin state border to Milwaukee.

The project, which will modernize and expand the corridor to eight lanes, is expected to create more than 2,300 jobs and be completed in 2016.

“Improvements to the North-South will create thousands of jobs and will support Wisconsin’s overall economy by accommodating business and recreational travelers for years to come,” Governor Doyle said. “The state and federal investments being made to Wisconsin’s transportation system mean we will emerge from the national economic situation stronger, more modern, with an improved infrastructure that will help Wisconsin succeed in the worldwide economy.”

The North-South Freeway, which is about 50 years old, is the most widely used freeway in the state carrying 150,000 vehicles every day. Segments of the freeway have been resurfaced four times.

The initiative is the single largest

transportation project Wisconsin has ever undertaken.

Construction will follow the Marquette Interchange model of success, now a national model for “mega” transportation projects.

The Marquette Interchange was completed last summer early and under budget.

The Governor’s current budget includes \$245 million for the construction to begin. The Governor’s FY 09-11 budget proposal provides \$517 million dollars for the North-South project. Additional funds for the project will come from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Work at UW-La Crosse Stadium moving forward



UW-La Crosse is in the middle of replacing its current stadium. The project, which continues to provide work for a number of Local members, will double existing seating capacity and include a synthetic turf football field, a nine-lane track, new locker room space, training facilities, a fitness center, press box, concessions and restrooms.

The Veterans Hall of Honor will be relocated and prominently featured as part of the new stadium.

The new multi-use sports complex will feature a soccer field, football practice field, lighted recreation and intramural fields. Though the project will be part of the UW-L campus, its benefits will extend far beyond the boundaries of the campus.

Local #140 La Crosse

**Laborers' Local #140
Meeting - 1st Tue. 7:30 pm**

1920 Ward Ave.
La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone: 608-788-1095
Fax: 608-788-6082

- Kevin Lee, Business Manager
- Business Agent: Clark Jensen

Reminder

Laborers' Local #140 camo hats are available to members in good standing.

If you haven't received your hat this year be sure to stop in at the Local to pick one up.

Featured Project

Luther Midelfort Hospital, Eau Claire Oscar Boldt Construction



Oscar Boldt is construction manager on the five-story, 358,000-square-foot addition to Luther Midelfort Hospital in Eau Claire.

The project will create new, larger labor and delivery rooms with whirlpool tubs and views of Half Moon Lake. Family lounges and kitchenettes will be available along with a new, state-of-the-art special care nursery.

In the outpatient surgical area, four additional procedure rooms and increased pre- and post-operative space will help accommodate demand.

A third floor medical/surgical inpatient unit, with 10 additional beds, along with 15 additional beds in other units, will accommodate increasing demand without overbuilding.

The \$112.5 million building project is expected to be completed in early 2011.

Local #268 Eau Claire

Laborers' Local 268 Meeting - 1st Fri. 7pm

2233 Birch Street
Eau Claire, WI 54703
Phone: 715-835-5001
Fax: 715-835-4098

- Ron Holden, Business Manager
- Business Agents: Jeff Dehnhoff and Tom Hill

Local on hand for Bill signing



When Governor Jim Doyle came to Eau Claire to announce the signing of a state economic stimulus bill that included over \$330 million in transportation project funding, he was joined by Laborers Tom Hill, Paul Zimmer, Josh Garr, Business Manager Ron Holden, Jeff Dehnhoff and Nick Henke.

Attention Local 268 Hunters and Anglers

A representative of the Union Sportsman Alliance (USA) will be on hand at our May 1 Union Meeting in Eau Claire to conduct a Gun Give-A-Way.

Any member who signs up to join USA on-line at www.UnionSportsman.org by April 27th, or brings an application to the May 1st meeting is eligible.

USA membership is \$25 a year and includes a top outdoor magazine subscription, a \$25 gift certificate for Beretta field gear and other money saving discounts and deals, including the chance to win a gun every month.

Firearms to be awarded are:

- Beretta 3901 American Citizen semi-automatic shotgun – made in USA
- Benelli Nova 12 gauge pump shotgun, available in synthetic black or Max camo – made in Italy
- Remington 770 rifle with scope, any caliber – USA/ Union made

Employee Free Choice Act deserves our support

by Ron Holden, Business Manager

America needs good jobs, and unions make jobs better. Workers in unions earn on average 28 percent more than nonunion members. Workers in unions are also 62 percent more likely to have an employer-covered health care plan, and much more likely to have a secure pension (statistics provided by the Laborers' International Union of North America).

Workers with unions can help America compete in today's tough economy. There are many successful employers who agree that their employees should have a free choice in deciding whether to join a union.

There's a good reason for that -- when workers earn living wages, have secure benefits and a voice at work, they care more about their company. Numerous studies demonstrate workers in a union are more productive, safer, and save employers money.

Too often, workers who want to join together in a union are blocked by unscrupulous employers who blame workers for their own failures. The law today lets bully employers get away with heavy-handed actions.

High-paid CEOs have gone too far; they're cutting hours, health care benefits and raises.

When workers try to form unions to fight back, they're met with harassment. In fact, 25 percent of employers deal with an effort by workers to join a union by firing their own employees, 51 percent threaten to shut down the work site, 91 percent force workers to attend one-on-one anti-union propaganda meetings.

We need policies and solutions that bring back balance in America. More than half of America's workers say they want to join a union. We need changing rules for changing times.

When America was more prosperous, working people were free to choose to join together for better lives. Today, corporations get to decide how workers join a union.

The Employees Free Choice Act will give working people, not corporations, the choice of joining together in a union by simply signing up, or if they choose, through secret ballot elections.

Employee Free Choice Act would require employers to negotiate with workers who want a union, or be faced with arbitration, preventing employers from dragging out negotiations in order to crush workers' efforts to join a union.

Your support for the Employee Free Choice Act is needed to turn America around!

Local #330 Menasha

Laborers' Local 330 Meeting - 2nd Tue. 7pm

2828 N. Ballard Rd.
(Appleton Labor Temple)

Office Location:

886 W. Airport Rd.

Menasha, WI 54952

Phone: 920 722-2104

Fax: 920 722-2105

- Tony Marcelle, Business Manager
- Richard "Tiny" Geneske, Sec. Treas.
- Business Agents: Mike Grater; Joe Heyrman

Informational Meetings

Fond du Lac

1st Wednesday, odd months
(Jan/Mar/May/July/Sep/Nov)
Fond du Lac Labor Temple
50 E. Bank St, 7:00 p.m.

Green Bay

3rd Wednesday, even months
(Feb/Apr/Jun/Aug/Oct/Dec)
Green Bay Labor Temple
1570 Elizabeth St, 7:00 p.m.

Marcelle speaks up for Prevailing Wage Reform

Laborers' Local #330 Business Manager Tony Marcelle recently appeared before the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance during a day-long public hearing in Appleton on the the state budget.

Marcelle used the opportunity to speak in favor of the bill's efforts designed to reform state prevailing wage law.

"Years of corporate excess, mismanagement and dubious financial deals have brought our country to the brink of financial ruin," Marcelle said. "We believe moves to ensure transparency and accountability in the way we invest public money are a welcomed reform."

Critics of the reform items claim the changes will drive up project costs and stop development from occurring.



Tony Marcelle

In response, Marcelle reminded committee members that many of the contractors currently building development projects are also setting the local prevailing wage rate.

Calling the claim that the "prevailing wage" is a "union wage" a "myth," Marcelle pointed out that prevailing wage rates were dependent on the local construction market.

For example, in Calumet County less than 23 percent of building wage rates by trade classification reflects the local union rate. In Outagamie County it's slightly more than 21 percent. Statewide it's closer to 22 percent.

"Prevailing wage is about more than wages," Marcelle said. "With wealthy developers getting millions of dollars in public assistance for projects every year in Wisconsin, we need greater accountability to ensure that public investment creates value in local communities that extend beyond the life of any single project."

Now accepting '09 - '10 scholarship applications

Applications are available at our office or can be downloaded at www.laborerslocal330.org (click on scholarships).

Applications must be submitted to our office by Oct. 1, 2009.

Applicants must furnish a bio along with the application form.

More information is listed on the application form.

Scholarships are available to any member, spouse, and/or their dependents who are a full-time student carrying at least 12 credits and will be enrolled in the fall semester at an accredited college or technical school.

Winners will be selected by the Executive Board based on the applicant's bio.

The first semester must be completed and confirmed before scholarships are paid out in January 2010.

30-day call-in

Members of Local 330 must register their availability for referral every 30 days in accordance with Local 330's written policy.

Failure to call in will drop the member to a miscellaneous list until the member notifies our office of their availability.

There are several members on the current out-of-work list, so please keep us informed of your working/non-working status!

Laborers welcome news of State Stimulus with area contractor



Laborers' Local #464 Secretary Treasurer Pete Satern, Business Agent Jim "Toby" Meicher, Business Manager Tom Roach and Assistant Business Manager Dan Burke look on as Dennis Olson, Vice President of Capitol Underground, Inc. welcomes Governor Doyle to the company's main office in Sun Prairie where the Governor announced details of his state budget that includes significant increases in state infrastructure investment. In addition to appropriating \$265,000 for the Laborers' Training and Apprenticeship Center in De Forest, the bill pre-approved \$300 million in spending of federal stimulus funds in order to immediately put Wisconsin people to work on transportation projects that modernize state infrastructure.

Local participates in career fair



Assistant Business Manager Dan Burke visits with State Senate Majority Leader Russ Decker at a career fair sponsored by the South Central Wisconsin Building and Construction Trades Council at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison.

Local #464 Madison

**Laborers' Local 464
Meeting - 1st Wed. 7:00pm**

2025 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
Phone: 608-244-6400
Fax: 608-244-6540
Toll-Free: 1-800-362-4442

- Tom Roach, Business Manager
- Pete Satern, Secretary Treasurer
- Assistant Business Manager: Dan Burke
- Business Agents: Terry Nelson and Jim Meicher

Members heading to Iraq

Members Jared Thomas and Raymond Betts were inducted into the Military in February and are currently training in Texas getting ready for a 400 day deployment in Iraq .

Prior to enlistment, Thomas worked for Mandt Excavating and Betts worked for Miron Construction.

The Local extends our deep thanks to Jared and Ray for their service and look forward to their safe return.

**Local Spring Feed
and
50-year Member Recognition**

May Monthly Meeting
May 6, 2009
7:00 P.M.

Local #1091 Duluth

Laborers' Local 1091 Meeting - 3rd Thur. 7:00pm

2002 London Road
Duluth, MN 55812
Phone: 218-728-5151
Fax: 218-728-2431

- Dan Olson, Business Manager
- Business Agent: Bill Cox
- Market Representative: Larry Anderson

With the help of the Northern Wisconsin Building trades and comments from key people, including a local signatory contractor, we secured a 7 to 2 vote in favor of a PLA Resolution for the City of Superior.

Up North News

by Dan Olson, Business Manager

After a long and cold winter we, here at Local 1091, are excited to get some work underway in the 2009 construction season. Over the winter we were able to pass a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) resolution in the City of Superior.

I am a city councilor and abstained from voting on this resolution but with the help of our friends in The Northern WI Building trades and comments from key people including a local signatory contractor we secured a 7 to 2 vote in favor of the PLA.



Dan Olson

Superior Days

I attended the 24th annual Superior Days in February at the state Capitol in Madison.

Among this years topics were Department of Workforce Development (DWD) issues on Prevailing Wages and how they are reported.

I facilitated a meeting with our concerns on misclassification of workers and the inability of third party reporting of those wages.

We also thanked the Department for their efforts of retrieving money owed to workers. Our own Joe Oswald from the WI District Council has also been working with the DWD with current legislation being considered. Thanks to Joe as well.

UW Superior Project

We lobbied for the Academic Building to be built on the campus of UWS in Superior. Since then we are happy to announce that through the efforts of our local elected officials and Governor Jim Doyle that \$32 million project is going to start construction this summer.

We are working on PLA language for the job to ensure local union people will be working in their own community. We also

lobbied for Murphy Oil located in Superior and the way they are being taxed and will be in the future.

Superior Ports

I am currently working with some City of Superior officials protecting our ports from legislation that might put them at an unfair advantage regarding salt water vessels taking cargo from not only the Superior port but to include Green Bay and Milwaukee as well.

This legislation as proposed by the WI Department of Natural Resources could prevent Salties from entering our ports and have an economic impact of \$200 million on Superior including \$54 million worth of dockwall repair typically done with union Laborers.

Other Projects

We have a few shovel ready projects that are waiting for approval through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and are looking forward to some Building Trades projects as well.

We have started negotiations in our statewide Heavy Highway and Twin Ports Building contract agreements.

I am working with management on reestablishing a vacation/savings fund for those people working in Ashland, Bayfield, and Douglas counties.

Please make every attempt to be at the April and May regular union meetings held the 3rd Thursday of the month and be a part of the decision making that will affect us all in the years to come.

Finally, there have been many changes in all of our pension plans and your labor trustees are doing their best to make the right decisions to insure that the Laborers' International Union of North America is the best union to be a member of.

Prevailing Wage Reform making its way through the legislature

Budget provisions will increase accountability and transparency to ensure public dollars create value that extends beyond any single project

After years of corporate excess, mismanagement, and shady financial deals that have contributed to the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression, moves to ensure transparency and accountability in the way we invest public money are a welcomed change.

The state budget bill now working its way through the legislature promises to do just that by reforming Wisconsin's state prevailing wage law.

The reform provisions focus on four areas that will increase accountability and transparency to ensure public money is being used as intended -- creating value in communities that will extend beyond the life of any single project.

Not surprisingly, the provisions have come under attack. Fueled by myth and misinformation, critics fear the provisions will install "union wages" on private projects, raise project costs and kill development efforts.

Prevailing wage is not the union wage

While it would certainly help union contractors compete for public work if that claim were true, the fact is it is not.

The claim that "prevailing wage" as the "union wage" is a myth. The truth is prevailing wage is completely dependent on the local construction market.

For example, in Wisconsin roughly 20 percent of building wage rates by trade classification reflects the local union rate.

Most developers may not realize this but many of the contractors currently building their projects are the very ones setting the local prevailing wage rate they now fear.

The prevailing rate is based on real work, performed by real workers, working real jobs, in the private sector.

The other myth

The other myth detractors of the proposal keep telling is that prevailing wage equates to higher project costs

Conveniently ignored is the fact that even in areas where the prevailing rate is lower than the local collectively bargained rate, union contractors continually win competitively bid public building projects.

Now, of course that couldn't happen if there was a correlation between wage rates and total project costs.

But the fact is there is no correlation between wage rates and total project costs.

Contractors overcome wage differentials in any number of ways, ranging from long term measures to increase productivity such as apprenticeship and training programs to more short term solutions like factoring lower profit margins into their bids.

Prevailing wage is about more than wages

Anyone unfamiliar with how construction unions work might dismiss these reforms, as some have, as political payback for our support in past and future elections.

But most building trades, if not all, have been around for over one hundred years. To succeed for that length of time in such a competitive industry requires an ability to not be short sighted, but rather take a long term view of the industry.

Union building trades understand that prevailing wage is about more than just wages. Prevailing wage is about sustaining an industry with highly skilled, safe and productive workers, ready to work when we need it.

Prevailing wage promotes apprenticeship and training opportunities, accounts for health care and other benefits, and generally sustains an industry with the workforce ready to meet demand in even the worst economy.

So important are these benefits to sustaining the industry, they are factored along with wages into the prevailing wage rate formula.

The prevailing wage reforms in the

Calls needed for Prevailing Wage Reform

As a construction worker you know that prevailing wage is about more than wages. It's about being able to sustain our industry with skilled workers in a family supporting career.

A strong construction industry requires strong prevailing wage laws

If you support Prevailing Wage Reforms that will increase accountability and transparency, call your state lawmakers today at:

1-800-362-9472.

Tell your state Senator and Representative to support the Prevailing Wage Reforms that are included in the state budget.

state budget will increase accountability and transparency so public dollars are spent as intended.

By having prevailing wage law cover publically financed projects we increase accountability. With wealthy developers receiving millions of dollars every year in Wisconsin, the public has a right to know that that money is being used as intended -- creating value in communities that extend beyond the life of any one project.

By requiring certified payroll we create transparency to ensure contractors compete fairly and play by the rules.

And, by lowering thresholds we extend protections to all workers regardless of project size, helping to sustain the local construction market with safe, productive and well trained workers through even the weakest of economies.

One in four chance workers will be fired when forming a Union

Penalties so small makes firing a worker an effective anti-union strategy

by Seth Michaels, AFL-CIO

Every time workers try to exercise their freedom to form a union, there's a better than one-in-four chance that a worker will be illegally fired as a result.

That's the finding of a new study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), and it's a strong argument for passing the Employee Free Choice Act and restoring the freedom to form unions and bargain.

As part of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, held earlier this year, one of the study's authors, economist John Schmitt, took time to discuss the findings in the report and the critical need for labor laws that protect workers.

Schmitt was joined by workers who have been fired for trying to form a union. The CEPR report, "Dropping the Ax," makes a strong case for a new law to protect workers' freedom to form unions.



Written by Schmitt and economist Ben Zipperer of CEPR, the report details the growth of illegal termination as a common strategy by companies trying to stop their workers from forming unions and reveals a deeply broken system that fails to protect the fundamental freedom of workers to choose a union and bargain for a better life.

Workers shouldn't fear being fired for the simple act of trying to form a union—but our flawed labor laws mean that it happens routinely.

The report documents that in more than a quarter of union campaigns since 2001, workers faced illegal firing.

By 2007, nearly 30 percent of union organizing campaigns resulted in at least one illegal firing.

This has had a strongly negative effect on the ability of any worker to exercise the freedom to form a union.

Schmitt and Zipperer conclude that in-

Legislative and Political Action

Special thanks

Wisconsin co-sponsors of Employee Free Choice

U.S. Senator Russ Feingold

Congress Members:

Tammy Baldwin

Steve Kagen

Ron Kind

Gwen Moore

Dave Obey

creased management interference has been a driving factor in undermining the freedom of workers to join a union.

The penalties for this illegal behavior, Schmitt and Zipperer find, are so small as to make firing a worker a cost-effective anti-union strategy for management.

President Obama quick to reverse Bush's anti-worker agenda

In January 2001, then President George Bush set the tone for his anti-worker Presidency by signing an executive order banning the use of Project Labor Agreements on federally funded projects.

It is fitting then that President Barack Obama would set the tone for his pro-worker Presidency by signing executive orders reversing Bush Administration policies that had so undermined workers and their unions.

President Obama's executive orders encourage federal agencies to consider requiring construction contractors and subcontractors to enter into Project Labor Agreements - which set uniform wages, benefits and

standards - on federal projects of \$25 million or more, helping to prevent contractors from forcing down local standards.

Another executive order prohibits the use of taxpayer money for efforts by federal contractors to interfere with employees trying to form or join a union.

Meanwhile, at the Department of Labor, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis is getting high marks for already beefing up occupational safety and health enforcement, and wage and hour law enforcement after years of neglect.

A recently released Government Accountability Report said the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division under the

previous administration had essentially failed workers.

According to the Report, "This investigation clearly shows that Labor has left thousands of actual victims of wage theft who sought federal government assistance with nowhere to turn. Unfortunately, far too often the result is unscrupulous employers taking advantage of our country's low-wage workers."

Under Solis, the Wage and Hour Division is slated to hire an additional 250 investigators to make sure contractors working stimulus projects comply with the law and to generally refocus the agency on its enforcement responsibilities.

Apprenticeship and Training



Laborers' Apprenticeship and Training Center

4633 LIUNA Way, Suite 100
DeForest, WI 53532

Phone: (608) 846-5764

Toll free: (800) 275-6939

- Al Friedl, Director
- Cindy Anderson, Apprentice Coordinator

There is still the time to take classes at the Laborers' Apprenticeship and Training Center in DeForest. The 2009 training season is winding down, but additional summer schedule will be announced soon.

April

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION April 13-17
 BASIC TRANSIT / LEVEL April 13-24
 FORKLIFT OPERATION April 27-28
 FORKLIFT OPERATION April 27-28, and 29-30

May

CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION May 4-8
 MASON TENDING May 11-15
 GENERAL CONSTRUCTION (Apprentices only) May 18-22

For more information on the Laborers' Apprenticeship and Training Center please call the Center at 1-800-275-6939

Eligibility

Classes are open to construction laborers who are employed by contractors contributing to the Training Fund and are in good standing.

Applications

Application forms are available at your local union office or from the Training Center. Complete the application form and return it by mail or fax it to the training center.

Lodging

Laborers are housed at a hotel and commute daily to the Training Center. There are two people to each room. Rooms are paid for by the Training Center. No pets are allowed at the hotel or the Training Center.

Transportation

Laborers who are staying at the hotel will be reimbursed mileage to the Training Center and back home. Commuters are paid \$20.00 per day.

Meals

The Center will not provide meals at the Training Center. Laborers who are housed at the hotel will receive a daily meal allowance.

Students should plan on bringing lunch for the noon meal.

A large cooler to store food, micro-waves to heat food, and snack and soda machines are available.

Paper plates, napkins, silverware and coffee are provided.

Laborers preparing for green building

by Jerry Knapp

LECET Marketing Representative

With the prospect of hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal government coming into Wisconsin for infrastructure work, workforce needs has once again been a topic of much discussion throughout the state.

The message that LECET has been delivering – to everyone from project owners, to contractors and to community and environmental organizations – is that the Laborers are in the best possible position to provide a well-trained and ready workforce.

Already LECET is in talks with a variety of project owners about how they can take advantage of our training center and work with various pre-apprentice programs in urban areas throughout the Wisconsin to attract new members and sharpen the skills of existing ones.

For example, LECET is currently coordinating a training initiative with a national real estate developer and a green building consultant that will teach LIUNA members principles and techniques of sustainable building.

Because both the developer and the consultant are based in Wisconsin, this initiative will kick off in Milwaukee.

Marketing contractors who are signatory to the Laborers to project owners and thereby increasing work opportunities for members helps ensure the continuance and growth of union construction in our region.

LECET is always exploring new ways to market our contractors, our members and our training abilities and we welcome feedback and suggestions from both our contractors and our members.

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Course Descriptions

Advanced Scaffold Builder

Course complies with OSHA regulations 1926.450-454. Curriculum includes the OSHA standards, fall protection, stairways and ladders, electrical hazards and loading of scaffold. Hands-on training on the scaffold systems include frame & brace, tube & clamp; tower scaffolds and rolling tower.

Basic Transit/Level – 2 Weeks

Transit, Builders level, grade rod, range poles, set up and operation, applications field exercise, elevations and stakes, construction mathematics.

Basic Concrete – 1 Week

Basic construction mathematics, measuring, leveling, squaring methods, form systems, placement, vibration, stripping, cleaning, site safety, hand/power tools, field project to include; placing concrete, tool and equipment maintenance.



General Construction – 1 Week

Introduction to the construction industry with regards to safety and proper techniques. Tool recognition and usage.

Mason Tending/Scaffold and Rough Terrain Forklift Operation

***Must have a Forklift Safety & Scaffold User to attend this class*

Forklift safety, operation and maintenance. Skid Steer Loader, Safety Operations & Maintenance, material handling. Job setup, tools, equipment, materials, estimating, hand stocking, scaffold building, mortar mixes.

Rough Terrain Forklift Safety and Operation – 2 Days

Forklift safety, operation and maintenance. Skid steer loader, safety operation & maintenance, material handling.

OSHA 10 + – 2 Days

16 hour OSHA class. Intro to construction safety. This card is required to work in the paper mills.

LECET promotes the Laborers



Local #113 member Jeff Byers, and Local Business Agents Michael Wilburn and Tony Neira promote the Laborers at a recent career fair at the Waukesha Exposition Center.

Wisconsin LECET



4633 LIUNA Way, Suite 101
DeForest, WI 53532
Mike Haggerty, Director
phone (608) 846-8242
fax (608) 846-5460

Laborers partner with employers on regulatory issues

Wisconsin Laborers are partnering with employers on a number of regulatory issues that if successful will result in more work for union contractors and more jobs for union members.

Chief among this coalition work is the partnership Laborers have developed with our employer partners in the transportation development industry.

Laborers have been very engaged at the federal, state and local levels advocating for increased funding for infrastructure projects as part of the federal stimulus package.

Transportation Infrastructure

Working with the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association, Wisconsin Laborers are focused on ensuring that federal stimulus money coming to the state creates jobs maintaining and expanding state infrastructure.

We were pleased that this work resulted in an initial 20 percent increase in state highway work over the next two years.

We understand this is a long budget process and stand committed to continuing to work for securing increased revenues for projects across the state.

In addition to the state budget, the

Partnering on regulatory issues results in more work for union contractors and more jobs for union members.

recently passed state stimulus bill contained provisions designed to move projects quickly and assist the industry in meeting the demand for skilled labor.

Laborers' Training

The state stimulus bill included over \$300 million for transportation projects so that the state could act immediately on any projects resulting from the federal stimulus package.

The state bill also included a line item providing \$265,000 to the Wisconsin Laborers' Training and Apprenticeship Center.

The grant will allow the Center to conduct OSHA, asbestos abatement and hazardous waste training in anticipation of infrastructure and green-projects growing out of the federal stimulus package.

Building Construction

Wisconsin Laborers have also been working with the State Chapter of the Wisconsin AGC and state Department of Administration on revising delivery methods on state projects.

We share a common goal of creating efficiencies that keep projects moving as smoothly as possible from design to completion, while ensuring process fairness, accountability and quality projects.

Wind Projects

Our coalition work also extends to green energy developments where we have joined Wind for Wisconsin, a broad coalition of business, labor and environmental groups advocating uniform siting standards for wind farms in Wisconsin.

Energy infrastructure is key to economic development and job growth in Wisconsin and wind energy is an important part of that energy mix.

Unfortunately, in some parts of the state ordinances have been enacted making wind projects difficult if not impossible to develop.

Uniform citing standards will allow sound projects to go forward, creating more work for contractors and more jobs for members.

How to guard your eyes at work

by Jennifer E. Jones

In a moment, your vision can change and so can your ability to work. An on-the-job eye injury can be quick and devastating. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2007, the construction industry had 5,200 eye injuries that resulted in lost work hours.

Don't let it happen on your jobsite. By taking the proper precautions and safety measures, workers can protect themselves from one of the most easily avoidable workplace injuries.

While on construction jobsites in particular, workers' eyes are exposed to a number of substances that, when airborne, can cause serious damage, such as:

- Splashes of chemicals or solvents
- Sparks
- Splinters
- Dust
- Debris full of wire or glass
- Insulation fibers
- Welding fumes
- Nails and other sharp objects
- Working with power tools, live circuits, welding arcs, cement mixers and pressurized liquids or gases are among the numerous ways that eye injuries occur.

Even working in the vicinity of workers in these circumstances can be hazardous.

Performing overhead tasks puts Laborers in precarious situations as well.

Protecting the eyes starts with using the right equipment.

In 2003, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) updated its voluntary standard on eye and face protection devices (ANSI Z87.1), covering safety goggles and face shields among

other equipment.

The protectors were separated based on their shatter resistance in basic- and high-impact testing. The ANSI Z87.1 can be purchased in ANSI's web store.

Newer, sleeker models also make protection more popular to wear. "I believe use of protective eyewear has increased significantly as more styles are available and it has become cool," says LHSFNA's Director of Occupational Safety and Health Scott Schneider. "Enforcement by contractors is another key element."

Employers are encouraged to provide protection for workers according to the tasks performed.

ANSI-approved safety goggles are necessary for overhead work, operations that create dust or where fumes/gases are present.

Workers should wear a clear, plastic face shield when sandblasting, working with chemicals/metals that can splash or exposed to flying particles.

Welding should be done with a welding hood and behind a flameproof screen to protect other workers.

If you work under these conditions, an eyewash station must be visible on your jobsite.

If a chemical gets into your eye, rinse it thoroughly for 10 to 15 minutes. Do not rub your eye. Seek medical attention immediately if your eye is punctured or hit with metal, wood or debris

from a power tool.

For more tips on eye injury first aid, read Eye Injuries – Common but Preventable.

March is "Workplace Eye Health and Safety Month," and the Laborers' Health and Safety Fund of North America wants to help you create a safer worksite.

The Fund publishes a health alert called "Eye Injuries in Construction," which is available to signatory contractors via the online publications catalog.

Also, the Roadway Safety Program has a "struck-by" module that demonstrates the speed at which particles can fly and the subsequent damage that can occur.

For more information or to download a free copy, visit www.workzone-safety.org.



More information about protecting your eyesight at work or other workplace health and safety issues, visit the Laborers' Health and Safety Fund on-line at www.lhsfna.org.

WE WON NOW WHAT?



Union members worked hard and took Step 1 to turn around America by electing Barack Obama and expanding our worker-friendly majority in Congress.

NOW COMES STEP 2

We need bold efforts to create good jobs, protect vital public services and strengthen our failing economy. But they won't produce shared prosperity or rebuild the middle class unless we pass the Employee Free Choice Act to restore workers' freedom to bargain for a better life.

The Employee Free Choice Act will:

- Allow workers to form a union if a majority wants one.
- Protect the benefits and wages that union building trades workers have fought to gain.
- Increase penalties against companies that abuse workers and put real teeth into laws meant to protect workers.
- Guarantee that workers who form a union can get a contract.

Big Business front groups are gearing up to spend \$200 million to defeat the Employee Free Choice Act so they can hold onto all the power in the workplace.

Join the
campaign

**Employee
FREE
CHOICE
ACT**

Sign up at [www.
EmployeeFreeChoiceAct.org](http://www.EmployeeFreeChoiceAct.org)



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