



36th MOST National Tripartite Alliance Conference

2023 MOST NTA kicks off with change, announces new initiative

The 36th MOST National Tripartite Alliance conference opened with what several participants described as a refreshing focus on transparency and progress as the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers emerges from a months-long struggle that resulted in a significant leadership change.

“Since its inception in 1989, MOST has partnered with the owners, contractors and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers. Everyone here knows the power of partnership,” said MOST programs administrator Mark Garrett.

“We are constantly striving for the common goals of meeting the construction industry needs now and in the future by helping to provide the industry with a safe and cost-effective

workplace while providing state-of-the-art technology to address the problems of the customer, contractor and craftspeople.”

Speakers addressed future opportunities presented by new Boilermaker leadership, reported on safety and training programs and discussed the need for a culture of change and collaboration. Also highlighted was an announcement that a new program focused on members’ mental well-being is already in motion to launch.

“Yesterday the MOST Trustees agreed to adopt a mental health program,” said Boilermakers International President Warren Fairley, who noted the prevalence of depression and suicide among workers in the construction industry. “We’re

not asking anyone to be a counselor, but we want to equip them to know how to help a member get the help they need. If we can prevent one person from doing something that’s irreversible, it will have been worth it. I look forward to implementing that program and offering it to our members.”

Boilermakers in Canada already have a successful mental wellness program, and plans are for MOST programs to work with them to set up a similar program in the United States.

“With our owner, contractor and union tripartite partnership, we continue to build on our established culture that provides a safe work environment for all Boilermakers,” said Garrett. ▲

IP Fairley addresses ‘elephant in the room,’ focuses on new future

The Boilermakers new International President, Warren Fairley, talked openly with attendees about the organization’s months-long struggle to oust Newton Jones from his position after International Vice Presidents discovered the former president’s inappropriate use of union funds.

“This is going to be a little different from what you’re accustomed to, but I think it’s important,” IP Fairley said. “Let me just be frank, I’m not able to



Boilermakers International President, Warren Fairley

ignore the elephant in the room, and as we gather here this morning, I’m going to be direct.”

He walked through the events that led International Vice President John Fultz to file internal disciplinary charges against Jones, resulting in an internal hearing that ultimately called for Jones’ position and union membership to be stripped, among other disciplinary actions. Not only did Jones ignore the decision, but

he made the matter public by using the union's lawyers to file a federal injunction against International Vice Presidents J. Tom Baca, Arnie Stadnick and Tim Simmons, who voted in favor of Jones' discipline, to halt the Boilermakers' internal decision. On August 15, Federal Judge Eric F. Melgren issued a summary judgment decision from the bench in favor of the Boilermakers internal decision.

"The federal judge was incredible. He took the time to understand what our Constitution said and made a plain interpretation," IP Fairley said. "He ruled in accordance with our Constitution and upheld the Article 17 charges against Newton Jones."

IP Fairley, who had retired in January, noted that he enjoyed his retirement for a brief few weeks before the International Vice Presidents called upon him to consider filling the International President's vacancy.

"Tom Baca, John Fultz, Arnie Stadnick and Tim Simmons put their reputations and their livelihoods on the line with no clear path to victory," he said. "They did something that had never been done before, and they stood up to make sure the right thing was done."

IP Fairley outlined immediate changes for the Boilermakers union going forward, including:

Restoring the International Vice Presidents' constitutional authority as a governing body. Decisions, he said, will be made among the whole International Executive Council, which is composed of the International President and Vice Presidents.

Focusing decisions on spending, strategies and initiatives on efforts that will bring positive impact to members.

"We are guided by one question: Is what I'm about to do going to make the life of a rank-and-file Boilermaker better? If the answer is yes,

we're going to do it. If it's no, we're not going to spend one dime on it," he said.

"We are going to remember that at our core, we are a service organization. When we serve our members, we serve everyone in this room. We are going to remind Boilermaker members that they are an elite craft. The better they perform on the job, the more opportunities come to all of us. This puts us in a much better position to serve contractors and our owners."

Said keynote speaker Ed McWhorter, General Manager of Babcock & Wilcox Construction Company, Inc., following IP Fairley's address: "It was truly refreshing to hear from a president speaking so transparently to owners and contractors. To hear from the 'horse's mouth' and understand—that's refreshing and a paradigm shift." ▲

MOST programs administrator Mark Garrett gave an update on training and testing during the 2022 year:

Boilermaker Code training

764
(10,222 to date)

OSHA 10 training

1,833 (live)
1,401 (online)

OSHA 30 training

506 (live)
283 (online)

MOST 5-hour refresher

833

Steel erection

231

Scaffold Erection

256

Supplemental Rigging Modules 1-4

1,445

Project Management

15

Field Leadership

155

Common Arc Certified

6,087

2022 drug testing results

Negative tests

12,433

Positive tests

148

1.19% positive rate

Random tests

1,719

Random positive results

37

2.15% random positive rate



KEYNOTE:

McWhorter stresses need to embrace change

Babcock & Wilcox Construction General Manager Ed McWhorter, who is the “most progressive contractor we have in the West,” according to Western States IVP Tom Baca, discussed the rapid changes to the industry and the need to embrace innovation and change. During his presentation he asked a lot of questions about how owners, contractors and the union can change and create new opportunities.

“It’s very evident we need to embrace change,” McWhorter said, noting that organizations can become trapped by past success and land on organizational complacency. He reminded attendees that “we’re not too big or too great to fail.”

To move forward, McWhorter emphasized the need to change the perception of success and foster a proactive culture that promotes thinking outside the box. To do that, he said, escape the routine, create collaborative team environments, implement operational goal setting and establish process improvements to increase efficiency and effectiveness.



Keynote speaker Ed McWhorter, Babcock & Wilcox Construction General Manager.

McWhorter suggested creating uniform best practices, including the union operating as one cohesive unit. He suggested standardized training across all regions to ensure universal understanding and replication—and not only for apprentices. Journeyworkers also need to update their skills amid changing technology. This includes standardization in steward training, making sure that training is “best in class.”

Making criteria for approval of M.O.R.E. Work Investment Funds understandable from region to region, he said, would give contractors greater knowledge of how to achieve success when applying for M.O.R.E. Work program funds.

He also suggested establishing a uniform Boilermaker National Agreement that covers all regions, that would standardize language and bring all four regions together.

“The road to change is going to be a difficult, awkward set of events. But remember to think differently, act swiftly and embrace change as we move forward together.

Don’t let our egos get in the way.” ▲

Local 363 takes top MOST award

The Charles W. Jones Award, which honors the local lodge demonstrating the highest use of specified MOST programs during the preceding year, was awarded to Local 363 (Belleville, Illinois) for 2022. MOST programs considered for the honor include OSHA 10/30, Common Arc, Substance Abuse, Scaffolding, Steel Erection, Rigging, Field Leadership and the Boilermaker Code.

Boilermakers International President Warren Fairley presented the award to L-363 Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer William Mulconnery for the local’s excellent achievement.



More work, manpower, safety and quality top caucus concerns

Caucuses were held Monday with separate sessions for Boilermakers, owners and contractors. Executive Director of Construction Sector Operations Marty Stanton highlighted selected issues that emerged from the Boilermakers' caucus.

Stanton said he plans to discuss Common Arc issues with the program's board members to find solutions.

With the M.O.R.E. Work Investment Fund, Boilermakers would like to see more time to file paperwork and request funds before a job is to commence. He acknowledged that sometimes contractors don't have time, "but if we can, we'd like a longer lead time."

And finally, Boilermakers would like to see contractors bid work at new and different facilities. "We want more opportunities for our guys, and more potential for growth."

Bob Carroll, Director of Projects for Suncoke Energy, spoke for the owners.

"As an owner, I've seen a great improvement in safety," he said. "The desire to remove hazards is really what drives safety."

He said a few years ago there was an issue with quality. "That's really, greatly improved since COVID. The rejection rates have really been lowered."

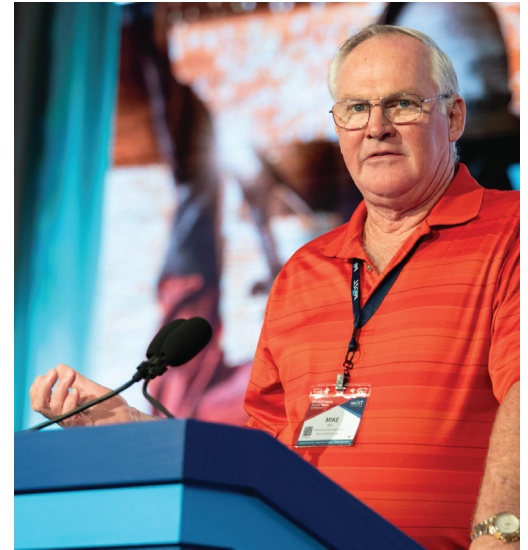
Concerning manpower, inter-trade agreements help meet needs of the owners because, he said, it's hard to accomplish anything if you don't have enough workers.

With advancements in new and emerging technology, he asked how technology can be leveraged to drive quality and safety numbers. "Can we do that with welding? Can we make sure everyone's weld certs are updated in a timely fashion?"



Today we're here for positive solutions.

Michael Bray
Senior Executive Consultant
Riggs Distler & Co., Inc.



Bob Carroll, Director of Projects,
Suncoke Energy



Marty Stanton, Boilermakers Executive
Director of Construction Sector Operations

And finally he noted that 95% of problems on projects relate back to communications. "We need to communicate more perceptions of success to the tool level. Everybody needs to understand to have a successful project."

Mike Bray reported for the contractor's caucus. He said a lot of what contractors talked about were some of the same issues raised by the union and owners' caucus.

"Today we're here for positive solutions," he said. "The contractors are totally enthused with the new leadership."

Bray said contractors would like to see THC removed from MOST drug testing, but keep it for owners that need it. "It's something that's an ever-moving target."

He said that training and education aren't just for apprentices but also journeymen, such as CAD training. Updating apprentices on best safety practices is essential, as well as educating them on how absenteeism hurts everyone.

"We need to improve absenteeism," Bray said. "It improves the ability of the contractors to finish the work." ▲



For 85 years, not a turbine has run, not a facility has run without the Boilermakers' skilled craft laying their hands on it to ensure reliable, resilient power across the Tennessee Valley.

Will Trumm
Director of Labor Relations
Tennessee Valley Authority

TVA's Trumm talks labor shortfalls

TVA's Director of Labor Relations Will Trumm outlined the next 30 years at the Tennessee Valley Authority and the urgent need for more Boilermakers. He said for the first time in TVA's history, they're having to pause work because there's not enough people to build.

"For 85 years, not a turbine has run, not a facility has run without the Boilermakers' skilled craft laying their hands on it to ensure reliable, resilient power across the Tennessee Valley," he said. "And we are very proud inside TVA that we have the best Boilermaker partnerships that exist."

Trumm said that TVA is dependent on the union's skills to recruit and train highly skilled people to come and perform the work. "We have a big problem right now. And that big problem creates opportunity," he said, noting this is the time to embrace the call to action to recruit and train more Boilermakers.

"We're all aware of the challenge [of finding people], Trumm said. "TVA has been taking action. Not only are we looking at skilled trade labor, boilermaker is a key craft to TVA's portfolio chain. You are driving us."

Concerning Boilermaker labor demand, TVA is doing a lot of work right now to make sure there aren't valleys and mountains in their demand for labor. They're working now to solve the challenges before them.

Those include:

- Local union jurisdiction and the challenge of jurisdictional issues, which is not a problem with Boilermakers but it is with other crafts.
- The necessity for contractor partnerships to pivot. TVA needs the ability to share resources between contractors to move people where the work demands.
- Leveling supply and demand. In the lodges TVA pulls from, L-40, L-454 and L-455, the peak for TVA's labor demands often coincides with peak demand for the locals.

"We're looking for solutions and not sitting around waiting," Trumm said. "We have got to provide opportunities to get people into the middle class. We have to get out in communities where we haven't been good at getting workers in the union. We have to get people in union shops. Today, it is time to grow the Boilermakers union and capitalize on this moment. And the moment is here today." ▲

NACBE debuts new logo during safety report

Before Ron Traxler, Executive Director of the National Association of Construction Boilermaker Employees, reported on safety and project man-hours, he gave MOST NTA Conference attendees a first look at NACBE’s new logo and website.

“The website is still evolving, as they do,” he noted, briefly showcasing the clean modern logo and website. “Now let’s talk about safety.”

“Safety isn’t just a word, it’s a commitment,” he continued. “It’s a promise we make to ourselves, to our families—when we leave home—and we make to one another. It’s about being in an environment where everyone feels secure both physically and mentally.”

He announced injury rates so far this year from the 31 participating NACBE contractors who commit to reporting numbers.

“Working together, we’ve lowered those numbers,” Traxler said. “We’d like to see them at zero, of course, but those are pretty good numbers.”

He said the man-hours covered in the study was 37.08%.

“We need more people from the contractor side to participate and report their safety numbers,” he said.

Traxler expressed his appreciation for the new MOST mental health program initiative. He reported that one in five construction workers have either contemplated or committed suicide.

“There is more to safety than physical well-being,” he said. “I’m grateful we are looking at this and making changes.” ▲



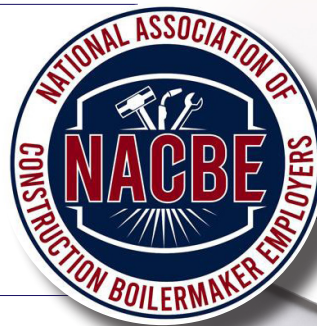
Ron Traxler, Executive Director of NACBE

2023 NACBE Reported Injury Rates

Lost time injuries	Boilermaker compensable injuries	Recordable injury rate	Compensable eye injuries	Eye injury rate
0	1.16	.039	1	0

NACBE’s New Look

Ron Traxler, Executive Director of the National Association of Construction Boilermaker Employees gave MOST NTA Conference attendees a first look at NACBE’s new logo and website.



Wertz reports on LMS, EPRI updates and grant money

Boilermaker National Apprenticeship Program Coordinator Mark Wertz gave an update on Boilermaker's training, grant money and recruiting efforts.

"We're trying to keep up with the times, Wertz said, as he gave an overview of the next iteration of the apprenticeship's learning management system, LMS 3.0. "With each one we do, there's research. And our goal is to get all the apprentices to be well-rounded and informed about what's going on...so [on the job] they have a basic understanding."

Wertz encourages Boilermakers to get certified in EPRI. "This is something you can use to sell us a little bit more," he said, noting it's a hard test to pass and takes time and effort.

The Boilermakers are the only craft teaching EPRI 3.13, which is rigging and signaling together. It's another training piece to help sell the Boilermaker workforce.



Boilermaker National Apprenticeship Program Coordinator Mark Wertz

Training takes money and Wertz said that there are many grants available. The union won a New York state grant worth \$270,000. That covers the cost for eight all-purpose welding machines and one milling machine.

"When you apply for these grants, it's almost all clean energy," he said. "So we're adding in new classes on clean energy."

For recruiting new Boilermakers, BNAP has found fertile ground at SkillsUSA competitions. Three apprentices from Detroit Local 169 placed first at the Michigan state competition and captured eighth at National SkillsUSA. He said competing at SkillsUSA is an excellent way to show that post-secondary college isn't necessary for a career in the trade.

"You get free tuition, free training...and now they can see our people winning," Wertz said. "They killed it at the state level."

He said if other locals want to get involved, talk to state level SkillsUSA staff. Wertz is also available to guide local lodges. ▲

M.O.R.E. Work Investment Funds keep initiatives moving

Boilermakers International staff reported on three key strategies of the M.O.R.E. Work Investment Fund: State legislative initiatives, recruiting and marketing.

Martin Williams, National Coordinator of State Legislative Initiatives, M.O.R.E. Work Investment Fund, gave an update on legislative activity relative to the potential for Boilermaker job opportunities. He noted the success of past state initiatives, California SB54, Washington ESHB1817, New Jersey Assembly Bill 202 and the most recent legislative win, Minnesota SF10. The initiatives each focus on requirements for refineries and other specific worksites to hire a skilled and trained workforce that meets certain training



Martin Williams, National Coordinator of State Legislative Initiatives, M.O.R.E. Work Investment Fund

requirements. The results have been increased work and man-hours for Boilermakers. The Minnesota measure, which passed in May, is expected to bring in an additional 200,000-250,000 man-hours for Local 647.

Williams alerted attendees on the status of upcoming initiatives in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and California, with mostly positive projected outcomes. Illinois HB2839 is the same framework of a past stalled out initiative and has been stymied by lack of consensus among labor groups.

"Our challenge is with other trades. We are going to need unity and to continue building consensus," Williams said.

Williams said there are a plethora of CCUS, hydrogen and nuclear initiatives in the works, including 70 CCUS-related bills currently in legislation, 30 bills that have been introduced related to carbon procurement and 60 bills that have been introduced relative to hydrogen production. He advised that advanced nuclear is seeing significant state-level activity as well.

He also mentioned a recent Minnesota “100% Net Zero” bill, that takes a different approach focusing on net-zero carbon rather than methods for achieving carbon reduction, which leaves room for more support.

“As more states continue the pursuit of strategies to reduce carbon emissions, technology agnostic, ‘all of the above’ language is the only practical path for us,” Williams said.

Additionally, Williams encouraged contractor partners to serve on State Boiler Safety Councils.

“Your voice in these seats strengthens all of our voices,” he said.

Marketing Manager Johnny Baca began an update on recruiting by driving a stark and important message: Boilermakers membership peaked at 80,000 in 2001-2002—today, there are just 46,000 members.

“We’ve lost 34,000—or 40%—in the past 20 years,” he said, emphasizing the point by showing how the current trajectory eliminates membership to zero in the year 2049.

Baca’s point was to show the dire need to recruit and organize.

“The point of the tripartite is working together to solve problems,” he said. “The old mantra was, ‘If you build it they will come.’ If we have projects, we’ll get the Boilermakers. With the new infrastructure projects coming online, we are seeing they are ‘building it’—



It’s going to take everyone here working together to make sure our prosperity in the future is on track.

Johnny Baca
Boilermakers Marketing Manager

the time for action to bring in members is now.”

As part of recruiting strategies, Baca said that \$10 million in M.O.R.E. Work Investment Funds has been spent on job targeting initiatives, resulting in: 196 new jobs, \$61 million in Boilermaker wages and 2 million additional man-hours.

“Our brothers and sisters have \$60 million they wouldn’t have had—and it’s at a 500% return on investment from the members,” he said.

Baca gave an update on the recruiting database, which has added 10,000 prospective members who have indicated interest in Boilermaker apprenticeship. He pointed to new marketing initiatives, such as social media ads, materials and local campaigns that have found innovative ways to reach prospective members.

Importantly, he showed that if the union grows membership by net 500 members per year—just a few new members per lodge—the projected trajectory dramatically reverses to a positive growth outcome.

“It’s going to take everyone here working together to make sure our prosperity in the future is on track,” he said.

Director of Communications Amy Wisner showed how the International, Boilermaker International Vice President areas and local lodges are using M.O.R.E. Work Investment Funds to increase awareness of Boilermakers as the elite craft and elite craftspeople, generate leads to increase recruiting and organizing efforts and grow work opportunities.

She showcased strategies and tactics available through the communications department, including ads, digital media and printed material. She also showed how the union had taken advantage of public relations and earned media, which is free of charge.

Wisner pointed to a recent guest commentary IVP Tom Baca authored for and published by the Carbon Action Alliance, as well as a podcast interview she did for America’s Work Force Union Podcast.

“These are free opportunities for us to get the word out about who we are and what we do, and we get to add any message we want to emphasize,” she said. “We need to do more of this.”

She also pointed to paid regional and local sponsorship efforts,



Amy Wisner, Director of Communications

including the Northeast Section’s sponsorship of an A.M. radio show, which allows Boilermakers to choose guests and topics to be interviewed and plays Boilermaker promotional spots as commercials. Local 374, she also noted, has used M.O.R.E. Work marketing funds to sponsor an online youth sports platform—which allows them market to the parents of high school students. The local also sponsored a SkillsUSA competition, which exposed students to the Local 374 training center and its resources.

Wiser said the department is always looking for new ideas to market the Boilermaker trade and reminded everyone of the importance of showing work stories that demonstrate the quality of work and the positive relationships between Boilermakers, contractors and owners.

“We need more stories to share, and we want you to tell us if there’s something we might be able to photograph, film and write about,” she said. ▲



IP Fairley focuses on ‘new day’ for Boilermakers

At the close of the 36th MOST Tripartite Alliance, International President Warren Fairley thanked speakers and attendees and emphasized what he said multiples times during the tripartite. “I want us all to be guided by a simple principle: Is what I’m going to do going to make the rank-and-file Boilermaker’s life better?” And if it’s not, the union won’t spend either time or money on it.

He said that the union needs to think differently, act swiftly and nurture a more collaborative environment with owners and contractors. “I’m not saying it’s not going to be without pain and that we not going to disagree. But here’s what I’ll commit to...we’ll work to find a solution that will work for all of us.”

Going forward, Fairley said the union will remember the past but not focus on it. “Our destination is the future. Being overly focused on the past sometimes hinders what we want to do tomorrow.”

He said we needed strategies “that push us where we want to go.” And that includes increasing the member-

ship. “If we can recruit 500 members year, we can turn it around and grow,” he said, referring to Marketing Manager Johnny Baca’s earlier presentation.

“I promise you this, you’re going to see a more collaborative group amongst the executive council,” he said, noting that if there’s collaboration on everything, it will naturally build a system of checks and balances. That system will end a practice of one individual making decisions on behalf of the entire organization—decisions they’re not aware of nor of which they approve.

“As much as I enjoyed my few weeks of retirement, I really am happy to be back,” Fairley said. “I think it’s an exciting day for this organization. We’re either going to adapt or die, it’s just that simple. And let me tell you now, as long as I’m around, we’re not going away. We’re going to be an independent, strong union, that is well-financed, that is well-managed. And we’re going to re-earn our respect in the industry.” ▲