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SHORT CUTS

January jobless rate unchanged at 3.7%

WASHINGTON (PAI) – The U.S. unemployment rate remained unchanged at 3.7 percent in January, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Feb. 2. Joblessness has now been 4 percent or below for more than two years.

Some 6.124 million people were unemployed in January, while 6.268 million were jobless the month before. There were 5.719 million jobless (3.4 percent) in January 2023, which matched the lowest unemployment rate since 1969.

The BLS reported that average hourly earnings rose slightly for all groups of workers from December to January, but average weekly earnings declined in 10 out of BLS's 14 four sectors of jobs.

Average weekly earnings for all private sector jobs rose to \$993.61 in January from \$962.54 in January 2023.

Construction companies added 11,000 jobs in January, to 8.137 million. That's compared to January 2023, when construction firms employed 7.921 million workers.

"With the strong January job growth and the upward revisions to the December data, there is no longer any basis" for concerns about job growth being limited to a few sectors, said Dean Baker of the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

OSHA nears OK for union walk-alongs

The Biden Administration has begun its final review of a new OSHA regulation allowing union representatives to accompany government officials during workplace inspections.

More specifically, the rule would allow nonunion workers to authorize a union to help inspect their workplace, on the basis that the "skills, knowledge, or experience" of the union could make inspections more effective.

For example, union representatives may have more experience monitoring their workplaces for safety hazards, and as third-party inspectors, they may be less afraid to point out violations than the non-union employees themselves.

Meanwhile, business groups worry that the inspections will open the door to union drives at nonunion workplaces.

No cream or sugar from anti-union Starbucks

Starbucks has violated federal labor law yet again, according to an administrative law judge's decision released this month.

The judge ruled that the company illegally fired two union supporters at an Illinois store after they initiated a union drive and spoke to their coworkers about joining Starbucks Workers United.

These violations are part of a pattern: since SWU began organizing at Starbucks, the company has been found to violate the law in 98 percent of its hearings before the National Labor Relations Board.

In September, one ALJ noted Starbucks' "demonstrated proclivity for violating the (National Labor Relations) Act," citing 31 prior cases as grounds for imposing a "broad and extraordinary" cease-and-desist order against the company.

—John Fry, On Labor

Quotable

"How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

—William Shakespeare, (1564-1616), *The Merchant of Venice*



USING A "Total Station" precision scanner to set the locations for duct hangers on the floor below is Colby Hengesberg of Sheet Metal Workers Local 7. Employed by Dee Cramer, he's working on the YMCA portion of the Harrison Street Commons project in an area that will have a basketball court and running track.

Flint to get YMCA, added apartments, busier downtown

By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

FLINT – The city's quest for a downtown revival is inching forward, and it will be moved ahead a bit more with a new \$41 million project that will provide much-needed new housing – and a place to help city residents to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Uptown Reinvestment Corp. is undertaking construction of the "Harrison Street Commons" project, which revitalizes a long-vacant site into a four-story, 115,000-square-foot mixed-use building. The two-part structure will contain 50 apartments, 7,500 square feet of office space, a physical rehabilitation facility, and a full-service YMCA.

"We are honored to be partners in the Harrison Street Commons. Providing 50 high-quality, mixed-income housing units in the heart of Flint is part of the transformational change we strive for in our work," said Uptown Development Coordinator Moses Timlin. "Through this development, we envision a more vibrant and resilient downtown with increased walkability, density, occupancy, and diversity of building uses."

Earlier this month there were about 50 tradespeople on the project, which is being managed by Lurvey Construction. The project began last June and is expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2025. "We're doing great, there's a really good group of professional tradespeople here," said Lurvey Project Supt. Chad Jones.

Being erected on the site of a former parking lot at Harrison and Third streets, the project joins a five-level apartment building that earlier this month was a maze of lumber studs and wooden

(Continued on Page 2)



APPLYING PVC CEMENT to a three-inch drain pipe in a third floor apartment at the Harrison Street Commons project in Flint is Jesse Nickels. The Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local 370 member is employed by Goyette.



RUNNING NO. 12 WIRE in a fourth floor apartment at the Harrison Street Commons project in Flint is Marcos McDonald of IBEW Local 948. He's employed by Roth Electric.

Appeal upholds Whitmer's effort to enact limited prevailing wage requirement

By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

LANSING – There was a double shot of good news this month regarding prevailing wage in Michigan.

Not only was the state's Prevailing Wage Act formally reinstated on Feb. 13, a state Court of Appeals on Feb. 1 upheld the

validity of a related wage directive issued by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. In that October 2021 directive, made 18 months prior to the state Legislature fully reinstating prevailing wage, Whitmer ordered the state Department of Technology, Management and Budget to apply a prevailing-wage policy to state construction

contracts let by the DTMB.

A 3-0 opinion handed down by the appellate court agreed with the Whitmer Administration, that the DTMB "is permitted by its discretionary power established" in state statute to require the payment of prevailing wages on their state construction contracts

(Continued on Page 2)

Strap yourself in: Boldt mandates safety helmets

SAFETY HELMETS are replacing hard hats on Boldt Co. jobsites starting June 1, which may be part of a trend away from the traditional head gear. The new generation helmets provide enhanced head protection, chin straps, as well as greater versatility for add-ons like face shields and other accessories.

Credit: Shane Van Bostel, Image Studios



By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

How long, hard hats?

How much longer will the familiar hard hat with the mostly unchanged, decades-old design, continue to be the go-to piece of equipment to protect the noggins of American tradesworkers?

It's hard to say, except at the Boldt Co. There, the Appleton, Wis.-based construction services firm this month announced that it will be among the first contractors to require "everyone on its sites" to wear safety helmets, which have next-generation safety and versatility features. The 100 percent safety helmet mandate becomes effective July 1. Boldt has offices in Detroit and Wixom, and the company has worked extensively in the Upper Peninsula.

"Our employees are our most valuable assets, and their safety is non-negotiable," said Scott Frazer, vice president of Corporate Safety at Boldt. "By making helmets the new norm, we're ensuring that every

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Hello again, state prevailing wage. Nice to have you back...

By Marty Mulcahy
Editor

LANSING – The Michigan Prevailing Wage Act is back.

On Feb. 13, it became formally reinstated and returned to its traditional role – protecting the incomes of Michigan's construction workers, helping shield taxpayers from shoddy work and shielding legitimate contractors from shady contractors who win bids by underpaying workers.

Prevailing wage was reinstated legislatively last March by a majority vote of Democrat lawmakers in Lansing, who took control of both the House and Senate for the first time in four decades. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's signature on the prevailing wage reinstatement law came a few weeks later, but it was adopted without "immediate effect" which meant that a number of months had to pass before Feb. 13 became the red-letter day on the calendar.

"Today, we are coming together to restore workers' rights, protect Michiganders on the job, and grow Michigan's middle class," Whitmer said at the signing ceremony last March. She also signed legislation repealing right-to-work in the state. "Michigan workers are the most

Wage law resurrected Feb. 13 after GOP terminated it

talented and hard-working in the world and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect."

Michigan became only the second state in history to reinstate a statewide prevailing wage law. The Michigan Prevailing Wage Act of 1965 was overturned in 2018 by the Republican majority in the state Legislature. The GOP vote to repeal came after the Associated Builders and Contractors – Michigan spent millions of dollars on lobbying, and on a pair of petition drives intended to repeal the prevailing wage law.

Their second petition drive garnered enough signatures, and the subsequent vote by GOP lawmakers repealed the 33-year-old wage law. But all that effort only won the ABC's nonunion contractors a few years respite from having to bid on state contracts without a standardized prevailing wage floor for paying workers.

(Continued on Page 3)

...And don't let the door hit you, right-to-work

By Robert Reich

Last year, Michigan became the first state in 60 years to repeal its right-to-work law. The repeal officially goes into effect today (Feb. 13)

So-called "right-to-work" laws are all about weakening unions rather than giving workers more rights. Don't be fooled by the name.

In a number of states a battle is being waged over so-called right-to-work laws. Which should really be called "right to work is wrong" laws, because they're so bad for workers.

Right to work sounds harmless, but it's not. Consider these facts.

The average worker in states with right to work laws makes 12.2 percent less annually than workers in states without right to work laws, when all other factors are removed. People in right to work states are less likely to have health insurance, and pay more out of pocket for insurance.

Right to work states have higher poverty, higher infant mortality, less investment in education, and higher workplace fatalities.

Michigan Dems' repeal of state RTW law becomes official

Viewpoint

So why do right-to-work laws hurt workers in all these ways? Because these laws destroy unions. That's their purpose.

Here's how.

Under the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, when a majority of workers votes for a union in their workplace, they're entitled to have a union. And that union bargains with management for higher wages and better working conditions. The union has bargaining clout because all union workers at that company are union members, that's what

(Continued on Page 4)

Cut red tape, unleash U.S. infrastructure money, urge contractors

Four national trade associations on Feb. 15 petitioned the White House to make improvements to speed its implementation of "made in America" requirements for construction products and materials related to the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act.

They noted their contractor-members have encountered significant difficulty in navigating the White House Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) "opaque and unbalanced implementation," risking delays and cost increases for related housing, transportation, and water infrastructure projects.

Adopted in 2021, the Act is the largest national infrastructure law adopted in history, and a signature triumph of the Biden Administration benefiting the building trades. The law includes the "Build America, Buy America

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Viewpoints



Big day for workers' rights

LANSING— More than a dozen workers' rights laws passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor last year went into effect Feb. 13. Among them are the repeal of Michigan's 2012 ban on union security clauses, otherwise known as "right to work," the first repeal of its kind in the nation in almost 60 years. The bills taking effect are part of a broad agenda to expand and protect workers' rights, something Michigan voters overwhelmingly favor.

"This moment has been decades in the making," said Michigan AFL-CIO President Ron Bieber. "By standing up and taking their power back, at the ballot box and in the workplace, workers have made it clear Michigan is and always will be the beating heart of the modern American labor movement. The work to get here after decades of attacks on wages and collective bargaining rights was grueling, but Feb. 13, the beginning of a new workers' rights agenda, where people come before profits, takes effect. I couldn't be more proud."

- Among the laws that took effect on Feb. 13:
 - The repeal of Michigan's 2012 ban on union security clauses, otherwise known as "right to work"
 - The restoration of prevailing wage
 - The expansion of the Working Families Tax Credit
 - The repeal of former Governor Rick Snyder's tax on retiree pensions
 - The creation of a new Community and Worker Economic Transition Office
 - The restoration of subjects of collective bargaining rights for public school employees
 - The restoration of Detroit Public School teachers wage bargaining rights, for teachers hired after 2019.
 - The elimination of penalties on public employees when their contracts expire.
 - The restoration of teachers unions right to bargain over privatization of school support staff
 - The ability for teachers unions to bargain over teacher evaluation terms
 - The restoration of organizing rights for graduate student research assistants

"This is a big day for workers across our state," said state Sen. Darrin Camilleri (D-Trenton). "In a matter of months, our Democratic majority has been able to get more done for Michigan's working men and women than we've seen in the past decade. As the son and grandson of union auto workers, I was particularly proud to sponsor and fight for Senate Bill 34, which expands collective bargaining power and allows workers to more freely and effectively negotiate for the pay, benefits, and working conditions they need and deserve."

"Workers showed up at the ballot box and have elected a Democratic trifecta that is standing up for them," said state Rep. and Michigan Legislative Labor Caucus Chair Regina Weiss (D-Oak Park). "From repealing anti-labor legislation such as so-called 'right to work,' to restoring collective bargaining rights for teachers and school employees, House and Senate Dems have delivered on our promise to put working families first."

The Building Tradesman welcomes your letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and to shorten them. Please sign the letter and include a way to contact you.

How to contact us —

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"Anyone who has gumption knows what it is, and anyone who hasn't can never know what it is. So there is no need of defining it."

—L. M. Montgomery (1874 - 1942)

"I have always felt that a politician is to be judged by the animosities he excites among his opponents."

— Sir Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965)

"What we call 'Progress' is the exchange of one nuisance for another nuisance."

—Havelock Ellis (1859 - 1939)

"A tough lesson in life that one has to learn is that not everybody wishes you well."

—Dan Rather (1931 -)

"Chance is always powerful. Let your hook be always cast; in the pool where you least expect it, there will be a fish."

—Ovid (43 BC - 17 AD)

Appeal upholds Whitmer's effort to enact limited prevailing wage requirement

(Continued from Page 1) exceeding \$50,000. The appeals ruling is only effective for a short time. And Whitmer's prevailing wage directive was also limited in scope, as it did not include locally initiated construction contracts that use state money — such as lucrative school building projects.

In 2021, a related statement from the National Federation of Independent Business in Michigan said the governor was "blatant in her abuse of power." The Associated Building and Contractors- Michigan brought the case first to the state Court of Claims, where it lost, and to the Court of Appeals, where it lost again this month.

Both the state DTMB and intervenor Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council argued that the case became moot after the state Legislature enacted a new prevailing wage law in March 2023, but the appeals court judges thought otherwise.

"If we were to agree with ABC and reverse the Court of Claims grant of summary disposition, that judgment will still have a practical legal effect on the existing controversy through March 2024," Murray wrote with concurrence from Judges Michael J. Riordan and Michael J. Kelly. "This appeal is not moot."

But it's approaching mootness.

The conservative Mackinac Center for Public Policy served as legal counsel in the case for the ABC. Senior attorney Derk Wilcox said the plaintiffs are "not planning an appeal because this issue is likely moot, as Michigan lawmakers have re-instituted the state's prevailing wage law."

"If the wind will not serve, take to the oars."
—Latin Proverb

"We are so vain that we even care for the opinion of those we don't care for."
—Marie Ebner von Eschenbach

"Fanaticism consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim."
—George Santayana (1863 - 1952)



GOING UP at Harrison and Third Streets in Flint: the Harrison Street Commons project, which combines a YMCA with 50 apartments.

Flint to get YMCA, added apartments, busier downtown

(Continued from Page 1) floors, with a YMCA that's currently much more open. But in the coming months it will be filled in with a competitive lap pool, a family splash pad, a basketball court, exercise studios, running/walking track, locker rooms, community space, and after-school rooms.

Uptown, a longtime developer in the city, said it looks for the project to bring additional foot traffic and economic activity to the area, and perhaps as a catalyst for future development. The project is also expected to create or retain 51 full-time jobs.

"Housing, entertainment and recreation are all critically important parts of a vibrant neighborhood. We are thrilled to see and support our partners in Flint as they work so intentionally to create a thriving, attractive and equitable downtown community," said Eric Hanna, president and CEO of Michigan Community Capital, a nonprofit investor in the project.

The YMCA of Greater Flint said its first facility was opened in 1913. The current downtown YMCA, about a five-minute walk from the Harrison Street Commons project, was dedicated in 1962.

"With only 30-40 percent of the facility currently utilized, it has reached a point of functional obsolescence," the YMCA said.

Jones said setting foundations for the Harrison Street Commons project at the former parking lot offered few obstacles, as happens sometimes on downtown properties in older communities. "So far, nothing really challenging has come up," he said. "There's a good mix of materials we're using, so that makes the building a fun challenge. In the end Uptown is going to get a quality, top of the line, state-of-the-art building with no shortcuts."

Now food for kids is political

By Jim Hightower

This plot line could have come from one of Charles Dickens' novels about upper-class depravity: "Miserly governors refuse to provide gruel for poverty-stricken ragamuffins."

Unfortunately, this is not a novel, but modern-day reality taking place in 15 states, where right-wing office-holders have scorned a federal program to provide food for millions of children mired in poverty.

"No!" bark these political ideologues. Seeking to punish poverty, they piously demonize public aid — even for hungry children! This program hardly lavishes luxury dining on anyone, offering only \$40 per child in gro-

ceries. Not for one meal or even a week, but \$40 a month — about \$1.30 a day. Feast on that!

Yet the politicians in such deeply impoverished states as Mississippi and Louisiana have arrogantly shunned this minimal assistance their people so desperately need. So have the minging governors of Florida and Texas, large states where millions of children need this food.

Note that these elitist governors are personally wealthy, yet they have no ethical qualms about taxpayers picking up the tab for their pricey meals.

Then there's the pathetic duplicity of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. She rejected the grocery benefit for her state's children, asserting that it "does nothing to promote nutrition" and could contribute to childhood obesity.

Well gosh, governor, providing food has actually proven to be nutritionally beneficial for children. On the other hand, she's

right that denying food to children definitely can cause them to lose weight! Thanks, Kim.

All told, 8 million hungry kids will go out without food because of these governors.

Turning down food assistance for poor children is shockingly callous, just plain mean, and politically stupid — even for right-wing puritanical ideologues. The good news is that 35 states, five U.S. territories, and four Native American tribes have welcomed the summer program. Learn more at FeedingAmerica.org.

"When we are unable to find tranquility within ourselves, it is useless to seek it elsewhere."
—Francois de La Rochefoucauld (1613 - 1680)

"A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies."
—Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900)

"He that climbs the tall tree has won right to the fruit."
—Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832)

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Aiello Law Group has just released our 2024 Construction Worker's Daily Logbook in both a print and digital version! We have provided logbooks to Michigan's building trades for over 30 years.

The traditional paper version can be picked up in our office, your union hall, the Building Trades office at 1640 Porter in Detroit, or can be mailed directly to you by giving us a call at (313) 964-4900. The digital version can be found in the App Store for Apple or Google Play for Android. Simply search for "Aiello Daily Logbook."

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BUILDING MICHIGAN!

Fort Brady, old and 'new'

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

By Marty Mulcahy



THE INFANTRY BARRACKS at "new" Fort Brady in Sault Ste. Marie. Completed in 1903 and shown here in 1908, one of the two buildings was destroyed by fire in the 1960s. The other remains standing, and along with 14 other buildings has been incorporated into the campus of Lake Superior State University. The first Fort Brady was erected in 1822 as a bulwark against a British incursion, the second was constructed beginning in the 1890s to protect the Soo Locks.

Photo credit: U.S. Library of Congress

Long before our state officially became a state in 1837, Michigan's proximity to the Great Lakes made it a key geographic place on early maps of North America's "Northwest Territories."

Native Americans, of course, roamed the two peninsulas for centuries before the French, British, Spanish and American flags, at one time or another, flew over Michigan communities and settlements. When European settlers began arriving, the Michigan Territory's swampy interior initially didn't hold many charms for European settlers, but our state's strategic location, easy water transportation and mineral wealth – not to mention traded goods like beaver pelts – irresistibly drew the attention of military strategists.

Thus came the construction of forts – military installations built to protect the interests of whatever nation was controlling the region. Michigan's oldest fort, Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City, was built by the French in 1715. More than 100 years later, Fort Brady in Sault Ste. Marie was constructed by Americans.

"The original Fort Brady, established by Colonel Hugh Brady in 1822, established United States authority over the northern Great Lakes region," says the state's Department of Military and Veteran Affairs. "It was abandoned in 1892 and the New Fort Brady was completed in 1893. The New Fort Brady site is now on the campus of Lake Superior State University and has 14 of the original fort buildings repurposed and in use."

The placement of a fort was first dictated by military, political and geographical factors, then the presence of natural resources (trees for a fort's walls and structures), labor and some basic engineering know-how. Early forts were relatively rare in Michigan: they were constructed in Detroit, Drummond Island, the Mackinac region, Niles, Port Huron, Sault Ste. Marie and St. Joseph.

"Americans were slow to move into Michigan, even after the lands had come under American control," says Michigan State University's *Project Geo*. "The British continued the fur trade on U.S. lands, encouraged Native nations to resist U.S. expansion, and repossessed some western forts. These acts contributed to the War of 1812, and the formation of a resistance movement by the Shawnee leader Tecumseh. Only with the end of the war (in 1815) did the U.S. secure its claim to the area."

The British surrendered Fort Mackinac in 1815, but their influence in the region continued as they moved their garrison about 30 miles east to Drummond Island. The local Chippewa band preferred to continue to trade with the British, and saw no reason to



THIS VIEW OF FORT BRADY features a line of row houses that were built in the 1890s to house Army officers and families. Today these structures are student housing and Lake Superior State University offices.

Photo credit: Lake Superior State University

welcome the Americans.

"The American government decided to establish a garrison along all lake side shores and end British dominance in trading," says Lake Superior State University's *History of Fort Brady*. "In order to build in the Sault the government had to first receive consent from the Chippewa, since all their land had been returned to them with the treaty with Indian tribes in 1815." The tribe reluctantly ceded the land to the Americans. "In the summer of 1822 a battalion of the Second United States Regiment arrived from Sackett's Harbor (New York) under the command of then-Colonel Hugh Brady. The fort was then constructed under Colonel Brady's direction."

The Soo's first fort was along the St. Mary's river across the river from Canada, and consisted of a rectangular fort design with posts and picket stakes pounded into the ground – with blockhouses at the southwest and northeast corners. Picket-walls were 12 feet tall and set four feet in the ground.

"It is a small gap to Canada, which is why it was important to station a fort right next to British-occupied lands," says *The Abridged History of Fort Brady*, published by Michigan Technological University. "It was not that impressive of a fort, but it was enough to enforce an American presence in the Upper Peninsula near a pseudo enemy at the time. Due to the fact that there wasn't that much conflict in this fort, it really boosted the area around it. It may have not been a reinforced fort with brick and mortar walls, but it contained a grove and a cemetery. It earned Hugh Brady a promotion to Brigadier General. He left his fort around 1822 along with most of the soldiers to head to Fort Snelling in Minnesota."

"For more than 20 years," says *History of Fort Brady*, "the old fort was operational, Fort Brady was very important in the life of Sault Ste. Marie, occupying 26.14 acres extending 550 feet along the bank of the river and running parallel to Portage Street. The fort had a large garden, a cemetery, and a grove of large trees. The main

entrance was located on Portage Street, where a sentry with a rifle would pace back and forth."

At the start of the Mexican-American War in 1846 the volunteers from Michigan at the fort headed south to war. Soldiers returned in 1849, but left eight years later to quell a domestic uprising, and the Army left the fort unoccupied. That was a concern for locals, who then, as now, considered the Soo Locks a vital transportation conduit prone to sabotage, especially with the burgeoning copper industry becoming a major economic engine for the region.

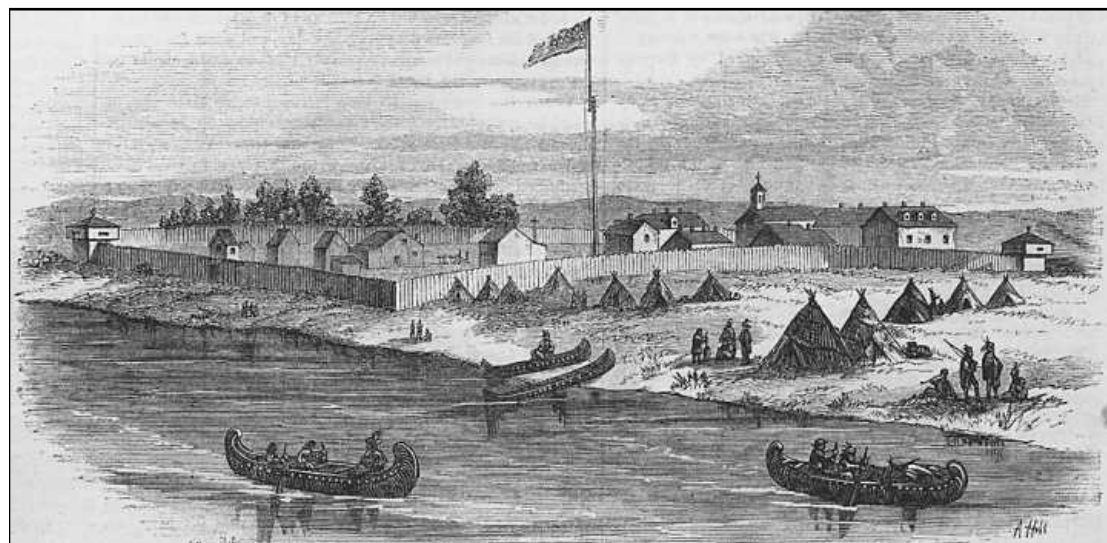
The Army returned to Fort Brady in 1866, with a mission to protect the locks, and the fort buildings were rebuilt and remodeled. But in 1886, a planned widening of the locks canal meant there wouldn't be space for the old fort, so plans were begun to move the fort's operations upland. Thus the New Fort Brady was moved to heights on nearby Ashumn Hill, with construction beginning in 1892 and lasting through the turn of the century.

The New Fort Brady consisted of 64 buildings on 73 acres surrounded by 12-foot-high fencing. An Officer's Row constructed in the 1890s housed the garrison's officers and commanding officers. (The commandant's quarters is now the residence of the president of Lake Superior State University).

Other officer's row houses have been turned into student residences. One of two Infantry Barracks is still standing, housing the College of Business and Economics. The Post Headquarters houses LSSU's Department of Education.

No hostile shots were ever taken at either the new or old Fort Brady. But during World War II, the facility teemed with 15,000 troops. "There they learned how to be effective soldiers in harsher colder climates. Around 1944 is when New Fort Brady became what a lot of the older forts became: 'surplus,'" says *The Abridged History of Fort Brady*.

The Army moved out and it became eligible to be donated, bought, and preserved as a surplus fort. In 1966, Fort Brady became the site of the Lake Superior State College; then Lake Superior State University.



THE FIRST FORT BRADY, depicted in a woodcut image made in 1857. The fort protected Sault Ste. Marie from invaders who never came, until a new fort was erected nearby on higher ground in 1893.

Image credit: Wikipedia Commons

Hello again, state prevailing wage. Nice to have you back

(Continued from Page 1)

"Job security in the 21st Century includes protecting workers' rights when they speak up in solidarity for better wages and better working conditions," state Rep. Regina Weiss (D-Oak Park), chair of the Labor Caucus and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on School Aid and Education. "Organized labor built the middle class, and working Michiganders are stronger today because of it. We've worked hard to put people first and to put more money than ever back into the pockets of working Michiganders. We're continuing the long-standing Democratic tradition of standing up for workers."

The Associated Builders and Contractors and their allied have traditionally argued that prevailing wage laws artificially inflate construction costs to taxpayers, although that is refuted by numerous academic studies. The ABC has also argued that prevailing wage laws benefit union contractors – while labor unions and their allies say the rules simply even the playing field for contractors bidding on taxpayer-funded work. With prevailing wage, contractors have a baseline for paying workers based on wage levels that "prevail" locally, thus out-of-area contractors can't win bids simply by bringing in a lower-paid workforce.

"On March 24, Michigan

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed into law S.B. 34 and H.B. 4007, which respectively repeal the state's right-to-work protections and reinstate prevailing wage requirements for public construction projects," the national ABC said in a statement following the signing. "The actions reward labor unions' substantial financial and political contributions to Michigan Democrats' unified state governmental control and garnered significant opposition from ABC of Michigan, the wider business community and Republican lawmakers."

The ABC added: "A 2017 study by Michigan's Mackinac Center for Public Policy found state prevailing wage requirements would transfer about \$230 million annually from Michigan taxpayers to unionized workers and confirmed extensive existing findings that such requirements increase construction costs by 15 percent. Union officials applauded Democrats' fast action to artificially bolster work availability via public coffers for the 14 percent of Michigan's workforce that is unionized. H.B. 4007 includes a variety of devices to enhance nonunion contractors' exposure to compliance burdens and associated liability, including a \$5,000 penalty per violation."

One of the more recent academic studies on prevailing wage, released in January 2023

by the University of Illinois Labor and Economic Research Department, looked at six states, including Michigan, where prevailing wage had been repealed. The study found "no evidence that the repeals reduced public construction costs or benefited taxpayers."

The Whitmer Administration paired the reinstatement of prevailing wage with procedures to update sorely outdated construction worker wage data that prevails in various geographic regions. That is sure to raise wages – much of the old data on worker wages was decades old.

"We've made incredible progress for working people since Democratic pro-worker majorities took the gavel in Lansing. From repealing anti-worker 'right-to-work' laws for the first time in nearly 60 years, to protecting paychecks by reinstating prevailing wage, to restoring collective bargaining rights for our teachers and school staff, Democrats are delivering on their promise to make Michigan a workers' rights state. Last year's accomplishments were historic, but we still have work to do. I look forward to the year ahead, working with our legislative leaders to continue delivering the agenda the working people of this state deserve," said Michigan AFL-CIO President Ron Bieber this month.

Strap yourself in: Boldt Co. mandates safety helmets

(Continued from Page 1)

worker has the best protection possible. Our goal is to make helmets the undisputed choice for construction crews."

It's generally accepted that the first modern hard hats were used during construction of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco in the 1930s. While the construction industry has long adhered to the now-familiar design, the traditional protective headgear's design doesn't always account for frontal, rear, or side impact protection.

Workers struck in one of these areas are more at risk for concussions or serious traumatic brain injuries that affect both long-term physical and mental health. Boldt said it has taken a "protective stance to safeguard employees across all crafts, including those that require versatile accessories (e.g., grinding, torching, welding, excavating), which moved the company to explore options for safety helmet designs."

Boldt first decided to move away from traditional hard hats in 2021. The company said it extensively researched different helmet and accessory manufacturers and styles, and field-tested each option to ensure optimal safety and functionality.

Boldt selected Milwaukee Tool's Milwaukee BOLT Safety Helmet along with PPE manufacturer Jackson Safety's Hard Hat Interchange System (HHIS) for helmet accessories (including welding attachments, full face shields, ear muffs, lamp clips, ear plug hooks, wind, rain, cold weather and sun protection, replacement padding, brims, etc.).

Unlike traditional hard hats, Boldt said the new helmet includes high-density foam to better absorb impact to all areas of the head, an integrated chinstrap to secure it to the wearer's head, comfortable padded suspension with adjustable swinging ratchet, an antimicrobial sweat band and liner, air vents to combat heat stress, accessory slots to integrate additional PPE and accessories to adapt to different work scopes.

In addition, the helmet offers a five-year service life from the date it is put into service and an extended shelf life of 10 years, two times longer than many traditional hard hats.

"Getting feedback from Boldt's employees helped us develop the Jackson Safety HHIS system that not only works for them but can also be used throughout the industry," said Mark Nelson, Jackson Safety. "I'd highly encourage other companies to implement proactive programs like Boldt has that have an immediate positive safety impact on their employees."

Said Andrew Olson, a Boldt



SAFETY HELMETS will be required of everyone on Boldt Co. jobsites by July 1. Hi-visibility clothing and safety glasses became mandated seemingly overnight about a decade ago on the nation's jobsites – time will tell if safety helmet requirements will become just as inevitable.

Credit: Graham Images

foreman and an Iron Workers Local 8 journeyman: "I appreciate the team working hard to find solutions for everyone in the field. The Boldt safety team worked to find the best fit for hot work accessories with the resources that were available to them because there weren't a lot of options when we made the switch. I know getting everyone on the same page from hard hats to helmets was not easy, and anytime I called with a question or problem, they got on it right away."

Boldt, an *Engineering News-Record* Top 400 construction services firm, said it recognizes the cost implications of the transition, with helmets costing more than double the cost of traditional hard hats. However, the company emphasizes that the investment is "a small price to pay for the long-term well-being of its workforce."

Safety helmets have been around for at least the past decade, and seem to be more prevalent on jobs out west, said Boldt Safety Operations Manager Kristin Clements. "But we've been seeing the helmets slowly implemented around here. We're not the first contractor to mandate safety helmets, but we didn't want to wait around and have some sort of unfortunate incident with a traumatic head injury happen before we put this policy into place."

Just joking

An orthodox rabbi who's been leading a congregation for many years doesn't mind his Kosher diet, but he has always been tempted to eat pork. So he devises a plan during a vacation to Hawaii where



he makes plans to attend a luau.

He checks into his hotel, then immediately gets himself a table for dinner at a beachfront restaurant across the street with a luau scheduled that night.

As he's eagerly waiting for dinner to be served, he hears his name called. He looks up to see 10 of his loyal congregants approaching. What bad luck – they'd chosen the same time to take a group tour to Hawaii.

Just at that moment, the waiter comes out with a huge silver tray, and gets ready to carve a whole roasted pig with an apple in its mouth.

The rabbi sheepishly looks up at his congregants and says, "What kind of place is this? You order an apple and look how it's served!"



Local 25 Iron Workers

Iron Workers 25

NOVI – February’s Union meeting will be Monday, Feb. 26, at 7 pm. We will conduct the second reading of the proposed By-Law Proposal during this meeting. The meeting will be in person and zoom. All Union Halls will be open.

There will be NO Union meeting in March; however to accommodate Voting for the By-Law and June Wage Allocation we will conduct an April Union Meeting earlier in the month, as follows.

The April Union meeting will be Monday, April 8 at 7:00 pm and will be in person and zoom. We will conduct the third (3rd) reading of the proposed By-Law Proposal.

On Wednesday April 10, 2024 we will conduct Voting for the By-Law Proposal and the June Wage Allocation Vote. All Union Halls will be open from 12 pm (noon) until 7:00 pm.

Steward meeting(s): The Lansing Steward meeting will be Monday, Feb. 26 at 6 pm. The Saginaw Steward meeting will be Thursday, Feb. 29 at 6 pm. All are welcome!

Communications Alerts & E-mails; sign up via our website (www.ironworkers25.org). We continue to communicate through the **PUSH NOTIFICATIONS**. You can download our APP for android on google play or for iPhone at the APP store just search “Iron Workers Local 25” Martinez web shop.

Congratulations to Haleigh Davis & Alex Boyd #1657103 on the birth of their baby daughter Scarlet Ann Marie Boyd born on Tuesday Feb. 13, 2024 and weighed 8# 3oz. We wish your family the best!

IMPORTANT: Dependent Eligibility Verification for Health Insurance Benefits coverage. PDA Verification Team from Livonia MI is conducting this audit. All members who have dependents (spouse and/or children) on their health care must comply. If you missed the mailing somehow, watch your mail for a second mailing coming soon!! PLEASE RESPOND RIGHT AWAY WHEN YOU

RECEIVE YOUR LETTER AS THIS IS VERY TIME SENSITIVE AND CRITICAL TO YOUR CONTINUED COVERAGE IN THE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN.

The 2024 Dennis O’Dowd SCHOLARSHIP Rules & Application form is available. All COMPLETED applications must be turned in by March 15, 2024. Call the Novi Union Hall 248-344-9494 to get one mailed to you. These are for sons/daughters of full dues paying **active/working members** of Ironworkers Local 25 who are in their senior year of High School. The member must have a minimum of five years continuous membership to be eligible.

New Apprentice Applications are being accepted BUT you MUST go to ironworkers25.org where you can now make your application appointment & pay the application fee online; you must have an appointment to turn in your application. No walk-in foot traffic.

The 2024 Mandatory Apprenticeship Meeting will be on Saturday, March 16, 2024 @ the Novi Union Hall from 10am-1pm; all Classes, all Apprentices must attend.

Apprentices: Fill out your monthlies online at the website or mobile app located under the apprenticeship tab “Monthly Report Sign-In” this gives you the ability to electronically submit your monthlies. Also, located under the Apprenticeship Tab you will find “Make-Up Days” & “Welding Test Certifications.” You can now electronically schedule your make-up days and welding tests.

To view classes at the Local 25 Apprenticeship School, please go the ironworkers25.org to view the 2024 Block Schedule, Roster and Raising Gang Training Schedule. If you have Facebook or Instagram, please give us a follow. **The Wixom Training Center – Phone: (248) 960-2130**

24/7 CREDIT-DEBIT CARD processing for Union Dues: Pay via our APP or website www.ironworkers25.org. **The phone no. is 866-635-2826. Or pay union dues with personal check or money order and mail to:** Iron Workers Local 25

– P.O. Box 965 – Novi, MI 48376-0965. Pay union dues in person at the Novi Union Hall (M-F) from 8 am to 3 pm (NO Cash).

FRINGE BENEFIT OFFICE: 800-572-8553 or 248-347-3100 and follow the prompts. Hours 7:30am to 4:30pm. The mailing address for member BENEFIT related matters is: Iron Workers Local 25 Fringe Benefit Funds, PO Box 99219, Troy MI 48099-9219. Blue Cross Health Claims and Customer Service 877-790-2583. Delta Dental Claims and Customer Service 800-482-8915.

Check your HRA Balance: my.wexhealthcard.com

Check you online benefit information: ourbenefitoffice.com/iw25/benefits/

BENEFIT FOR NEW CHILD: Any member who has a new born child, or a new dependent child through marriage MUST NOTIFY the Fringe Benefit Office of your new dependent within 31 days; otherwise wait until the next open-enrollment period (April 1-April 30).

BENEFIT FOR LIFE CHANGE: Any member experiencing a divorce or a new spouse MUST NOTIFY the Fringe Benefit Office within 31 days; otherwise wait until the next open-enrollment period (April 1-April 30).

The Iron Workers’ Local 25 Retirees’ Club: The Retirees’ Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday March 5 at 8:30 am. The Retirees’ meeting/luncheon will be Tuesday March 19 at 10 am in Novi. All are welcome.

Thoughts & prayers for Lifetime ironworker James Clement #485069 who was in the hospital. Get well wishes!

The West Michigan Chapter Retirees breakfast will meet Tuesday March 5 at 9 am at Red Rock Grille & Café, 228 N. Ball Creek Rd, NW, Kent City, MI 49330. All are welcome.

The next quarterly meeting for the Bay City Chapter will be April 18, 2024; **NEW LOCATION:** at the Iron Workers Local 25 Saginaw Union Hall, 11 Bridgeview S. Saginaw MI 48604 at 1:00 pm. All are Welcome.

The **Downriver Chapter.** The next quarterly Retirees break-



LIFTING A PIECE OF angle iron at the Harrison Street Commons project in Flint is Sean Dusek of Iron Workers Local 25. He’s employed by AMS Steel.

fast will be April 19 at Mom’s Restaurant, 2691 Fort St., Trenton, MI, 48183. All are welcome.

Local 25 Retirees’ Club 2024 Scholarship is available. Eligibility Requirements: child or grandchild of a retired Local 25 member. Applicant must be in their Senior year of high school with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Retiree must have a *minimum of five years continuous* Local union membership and be a member of the Iron Workers’ Local 25 Retiree’ Club as of the prior year and must be current on their *annual* club dues to be eligible and apply. Contact John Miller: text/call (734) 812-8036. All requests must be made by March 12, 2024. Completed applications due by 5pm April 30, 2024.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan: www.bcbsm.com/behavioral-mental-health/ Resources on the home page including In-Person Crisis Care options in many locations throughout the state. BCBS Michigan 877-627-1041, Blue Care Network 800-482-5982 for Substance-use-disorder.

FindTreatment.gov where you can search by zip code/city. Or call SAMHSA 800-662-4357. **MentalHealth.gov** provides information & programs about mental health

Dial 988 (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) For help 24/7 in a Time of Crisis. Call 988 if you or someone you know is in

danger of suicide or experiencing a mental health crisis. Whatever you are struggling with, help is available – its free & confidential.

The IRONWORKER Magazine changes: The magazine published by the International will now be issued every other month (6 times per year). To subscribe to the digital edition of the Ironworker or the monthly newsletter, please use the following link: <https://www.ironworkers.org/s/ironworker-digital-sign-up>

ironworkers.org/s/ironworker-digital-sign-up

In Memory: Benjamin Pawlowski #955175 passed away Jan. 24, 2024 at the age of 70. He held membership 1975 - 2002. *Our deep condolences to all of the family and friends as you mourn the loss of your dear loved one(s)!*

This information is as of Submission Time for this Article (Feb. 19, 2024 10:00 am E.S.T.).



GETTING SOME CLIPS to be welded at the Harrison Street Commons project in Flint are iron worker journeyman Tanya Curtis. Handing them to her are foreman Troy Breasbois. The Local 25 members are working for AMS Steel.

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Outdoors

Lake St. Clair: best for bass



By Jan-Michael Hessenauer
Fisheries Research Biologist
Michigan Department of
Natural Resources

Lake St. Clair, nestled between the St. Clair and Detroit rivers in southeast Michigan, is one of the premier smallmouth bass fisheries in the world.

As reported in "Status of the Fisheries in Michigan Waters of Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair 2022," numbers from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Master Angler program – in which anglers can submit documentation of trophy-sized catches of more than 50 species – shore up the lake's reputation as a trophy smallmouth bass fishing hotspot.

"Statistics from the Master Angler program indicate that Lake St. Clair is the premier waterbody in the state for trophy smallmouth bass," the report stated. "With 46 entries in the Master Angler program in 2022, Lake St. Clair represented 29 percent of the total smallmouth bass entries statewide."

"The continued strong representation of Lake St. Clair and adjoining waters in the smallmouth bass statewide Master Angler program is likely a reflection of an abundance of trophy-size smallmouth bass in the lake, a high degree of angler effort targeting the species, and widespread practice of catch-and-release among smallmouth bass anglers."

The DNR Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station has been extensively monitoring the lake's smallmouth bass population for decades to ensure the health and sustainability of this outstanding fishery. Annual monitoring activities include trap netting, trawling and jaw tagging.

DNR researchers are now using new tools and developing new partnerships to better understand smallmouth bass movements and behaviors in the lake.

Lake St. Clair is a component of the connecting channel system draining the upper Great Lakes of



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT of Natural Resources researcher Jan-Michael Hessenauer performs surgery on a smallmouth bass to insert acoustic transmitters.

MDNR photo

Superior, Huron and Michigan into the lower Great Lakes of Erie and Ontario via the St. Clair River and Detroit River.

As a result, a huge volume of water moves through the system quickly. Nearly all of Lake St. Clair includes ideal smallmouth bass habitat, and its size and depth make the study of the species' behavior and movement a daunting task.

Acoustic telemetry represents a revolutionary technology for studying fish populations in the Great Lakes. This technology allows researchers to surgically implant tags in fish, which transmit an electronic signal that is unique to each fish. While not audible to human ears, this signal can be detected and stored by passive listening stations located throughout Lake St. Clair and the rest of the Great Lakes via the Great Lakes Acoustic Telemetry Observation System, also known as GLATOS.

This technology has provided

amazing insights into the behaviors of lake sturgeon, walleye, muskellunge and other species in Lake St. Clair and beyond.

In July 2023, DNR researchers partnered with the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society to tag smallmouth bass at the Bassmaster Elite Series tournament held at Brandenburg Park on Lake St. Clair.

Using tags purchased through a conservation grant provided by the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, 15 smallmouth bass that were captured and weighed in by professional anglers were acoustically tagged and given an external jaw tag.

Society tournament staffers allowed DNR researchers access to their BASSTrakk system, which records GPS coordinates for every fish coming into the weigh-in. This allowed the researchers to select fish caught from different locations within the system for tagging.

These tagged smallmouth

bass will provide information about how fish behave and respond to capture in competitive fishing events, especially in situations where fish are transported many miles from their original capture location.

"Previous Bass Fishing Hall of Fame Grants have gone to organizations doing fish habitat enhancements or tournament fish-care projects. This grant to the Michigan DNR is the first one provided to a state agency for a true research project," said Gene Gilliland, society conservation director and a board member of the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame.

Additionally, after answering questions in the short term about fish behavior after weigh-in at a competitive angling event, each tag's three-year life will ensure that the tagged fish will continue to provide valuable information to fisheries managers and anglers about how and when smallmouth bass use the different types of habitats available in Lake St.



PROFESSIONAL ANGLER Marc Frazier holds a smallmouth bass with a Michigan DNR tag.

Bass Anglers Sportsman Society photo

Clair long after the fish were tagged.

Fisheries research is "a large part of why many of our fisheries here in the U.S. are top-notch. It also provides an interesting look into the behavior and migration patterns of the fish we chase," professional angler Shaye Baker wrote in a blog post about the research project on the society's website.

The 15 fish tagged at the Bassmaster Elite Series tournament joined 46 other fish that the DNR implanted with acoustic tags in 2021. These smallmouth bass, and thousands of others

tagged with Michigan DNR jaw tags since 2002, will continue providing valuable insight into the behavior of the species.

Data and summaries from this and other work can be found in the annual report that will be available on the Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station webpage in the coming months.

Anglers are reminded to report their capture of a tagged fish at Michigan.gov/TaggedFish.

Who knows? The next tagged fish you catch on Lake St. Clair may also have been caught by a pro angler!

Fall fish stocking should yield more angler opportunities

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources last month announced the totals from its 2023 fall fish stocking efforts. The DNR stocked six different species – totaling 1,076,204 fish that weighed a total of 14.5 tons – at 103 locations throughout the state.

"It was another outstanding fall fish stocking season that will provide enhanced fishing opportunities throughout Michigan," said Ed Eisch, assistant chief of the DNR Fisheries Division. "When added to our successful spring and summer stocking efforts, that brings the total for 2023 to more than 10.4 million fish stocked in Michigan's waters."

Fall 2023 fish stocking consisted of six species: brook trout, coho salmon, lake trout, steelhead strain rainbow trout, walleye and muskellunge.

The number and type of fish stocked vary by hatchery, as each facility's ability to rear fish differs because of water supplies and temperature. In Michigan, there are six state and three cooperative hatcheries that work together to produce the species, strain and size of fish needed by fisheries managers. These fish must then be delivered at specific times and locations for stocking to ensure their success.

In general, fish are reared in Michigan's state fish hatcheries anywhere from one month to one and a half years before they are stocked.

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