



GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATIONSⁱ

Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Arbitrations

MARBA did not receive any arbitration demands in the month of June.

Laborers Joint Grievance Committee

The Laborers JGC did not meet in July. The next meeting will be held on August 25, 2026, at the Laborers District Council office in Burr Ridge beginning at 9:00 a.m. The Union will notify the Committee of any grievances that need to be heard at a later date.

Operating Engineers Joint Grievance Committee

The Operators JGC met in July to hear four (4) grievances, three (3) of which were filed against the same contractor. The first three (3) grievances involved the company's use of non-bargaining unit members to operate equipment in contravention of the CBA. The company did not attend the pre-grievance hearing or the JGC hearing. As a result, based on the total dollar value of the three cases the Union filed a Demand for Arbitration after the JGC deadlocked the three (3) grievances. The last grievance heard in July involved a company using non-bargaining unit employees to operate equipment. The company had changed names and owners on a few occasions and no one from the company attended the JGC hearing. The JGC voted to uphold the grievance, and an award was issued in favor of the Union. There was a fifth (5th) grievance scheduled to be heard but it was settled prior to the hearing. The next meeting is scheduled for September 8 beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Operators offices in Countryside. There are currently two (2) grievances on the hearing schedule.

Teamsters Joint Grievance Committee

The Teamsters JGC did not meet in July. The next hearing date is scheduled for August 27th at 9:00 a.m. at the MARBA office should there be any grievances.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING/LABOR ISSUES

2027-2029 Expiring Contracts Posted on MARBA Website

A list of contracts due to expire over the next several years is posted on the MARBA website. You can access that document by clicking [here](#). If you are aware of any contracts that are set to expire in 2027-2029 that are not listed on the linked page, please contact Aaron Janik, Executive Director, at ajanik@marba.org.

Additionally, the most current versions of the MARBA collective bargaining agreements can always be found on the MARBA website under the Agreements tab. This includes any Tentative Agreements reached

by MARBA and its Trade partners during negotiations, as well as any MOUs/MOAs agreed to during the term of existing agreements.

Labor Relations Intake Form

As has been written about in the past few MARBA Matters, QR code stickers have been delivered to MARBA Member Associations that allow a user to quickly scan the code and provide direct access to the MARBA Labor Relations Intake Form (the survey is also on the MARBA website landing page). These stickers can be placed in the field, offices, or other convenient locations to allow those individuals who oversee field operations to quickly fill out the survey. The survey is just a few questions long and should take less than 3 minutes to complete.

The purpose of the survey is to gather feedback, observations, and information related to field operations and the administration of MARBA collective bargaining agreements. Information submitted through the form is transmitted directly to MARBA. The survey responses will assist in identifying trends, addressing potential issues, improving contract administration, and supporting ongoing labor relations initiatives.

The form can also be accessed [here](#). As always, if a matter would benefit from further discussion, please feel free to contact Aaron Janik, Executive Director, at ajanik@marba.org.

INDUSTRY NEWS

City of Joliet to Rename Portion of Street in Honor of Les Cheney

On August 23, 2026, the City of Joliet will designate the portion of McRoberts Street between Benton Street and Cass Street as Honorary Les Cheney Way. According to the resolution unanimously approved by the Joliet City Council, Les Cheney was a “respected leader in the construction industry,” serving as a trustee or board member for many local organizations and later as executive director of the Contractors Association of Will and Grundy Counties. The ceremony begins at 3 p.m. with drink and appetizers to follow at Jameson’s Pub at 2755 Black Rd. Joliet, IL 60453.

AGC to Host Collective Bargaining Seminar in Rosemont

The AGC of America’s Collective Bargaining Seminar is fast approaching. The program, to be held in Rosemont on October 15-16 this year, is open to both AGC members and non-members and will cover the full spectrum of the collective bargaining process. Attendees will gain insight into topics such as bargaining communications, conflict management, mediation, impasse procedures, and other key aspects of labor negotiations. Contractors who participate in collective bargaining, as well as members of bargaining committees, should strongly consider attending this program. The program is being hosted by the AGC of America, however any questions regarding the seminar can be directed to Mike Hampson, Executive Secretary of the Chicagoland Associated General Contractors (CAGC). To contact Mike via email, click [here](#).

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Economic Indicators

Unemployment Rate June 4.2%, (May 4.3%), (April 4.3%) Illinois 5.1% (45th)

Labor Participation Rate	June 61.5%, May 61.8%, April 61.8%
CPI All Urban Consumers	June 2026 over June 2025 = 3.53%
CPI Chicago All Items	June 2026 over June 2025 = 2.47%, 2025 Annual = 3.72%
CPI Midwest All Items	June 2026 over June 2025 = 3.81%, 2025 Annual = 2.78%
Union Membership	2025 = 10.0% (Private Sector 5.9%) 2024 = 9.9%, 2023 = 10.0%
Unionized Construction Workers	12.0% (2025), 11.2% (2024), 11.4% (2023), 11.7% (2022)
30 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 7-30-26 6.66%, down 0.06% over the prior year. Annual Average 6.52% (25), 6.90% (24), 6.61% (23), 5.34% (22)
15 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 7-30-26 6.04%, up 0.19% over the prior year. Annual Average 5.72% (25), 5.93% (2023), 4.58% (2022)
Brent Crude Oil Price	\$81.17 per barrel (as of July 31, 2026) \$145.61 per barrel all time high July 2008 \$2.23 per barrel all time low May 1970
Privately Owned New Housing Building Permits	3.0% below revised May rate 2.3% below June 2025 rate
Privately Owned New Housing Starts	19.0% above revised May rate (+/-15.9%) 3.5% above June 2025 rate (+/-14.3%)
GDP	Q2 2026 (Adv) +1.5% Q1 2026 +2.1% Q1 2026 (3 rd) +2.1% Q1 2026 (2 nd) +1.6%
DJIA	52,485.03 as of July 31, 2026 (4:00 p.m.) 52,317.01 as of June 30, 2026 (2:30 p.m.) 51,005.91 as of May 29, 2026 (4.00 p.m.)

JANIK'S J.D. – AN UPDATE ON LABOR/CONSTRUCTION/LEGAL ISSUES
AARON JANIK- MARBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NLRB Issues Decision in Whole Foods Case Rejecting BLM Apparel Worn on the Job

In a case pending since summer 2020, the NLRB issued a decision in *Whole Foods Market, Inc.* involving employees who wore Black Lives Matter buttons, pins, masks, T-shirts, and other apparel at work. The Board held that Whole Foods did not violate Section 7 of the NLRA by disciplining employees who continued wearing the apparel after being asked to remove it. The decision may have significant implications for employer dress code policies. In its broadest ruling on the issue to date, the Board found that the BLM message was not connected to the employees' job duties and was not tied to any prior

employee complaints about workplace issues. Instead, the Board concluded that the apparel expressed support for a broader cause. As a result, Whole Foods could enforce its policy prohibiting slogans, messages, or logos not directly related to the company or an approved vendor.

Employers should note that this decision will likely be appealed to federal court. Prior Board decisions have held that when an employee's—or group of employees'—political or social message has a causal connection to job duties or workplace concerns, enforcing a dress code policy may violate the NLRA. For now, employers should review their dress code policies to ensure they are content-neutral and should enforce those policies consistently. The *Whole Foods* decision can be found by clicking [here](#).

UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EVENTS

GLCA GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

JOIN THE GLCA AND MEMBERS OF THE LAKE COUNTY BUILDING TRADES AS THEY ASSEMBLE FOOD BASKETS FOR 150 FAMILIES IN THE LAKE COUNTY AREA

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 29
 TIME: 9:00 A.M. FOOD BASKET ASSEMBLY, 10:00 A.M. TO NOON BASKET DISTRIBUTION
 LOCATION: AMERICAN PLACE CASINO
 4011 FOUNTAIN SQUARE PLACE
 WAUKEGAN, IL 60085
 COST: NO COST
 CONTACT: EMAIL [TIM MARABELLA](#) OR CALL (847) 623-2345.

CALENDAR

AUGUST 5	11:30 A.M.	UCA LUNCHEON (SCHAUMBURG)
AUGUST 5	5:00 P.M.	MCAGC KNOW YOUR CONTRACT (GLEN ELLYN)
AUGUST 17	9:00 A.M.	SWEENEY CLASSIC (LEMONT)
AUGUST 20	12:00 P.M.	TGT REUNION LUNCHEON (MARBA)
AUGUST 25	9:00 A.M.	LABORERS JGC (BURR RIDGE)
AUGUST 27	9:00 A.M.	LABORERS GOLF OUTING (ORLAND PARK)
AUGUST 27	9:00 A.M.	TEAMSTERS JGC (MARBA – IF NECESSARY)

¹ Information for MARBA Matters was obtained from the following sources: BNA Construction Labor Reports, Crain's Chicago Business, Northwest Times of Indiana, Chicago Tribune, and Sun-Times, CDQ, and the BLS, as well as various websites and other publications.

Did You Know?

America is younger than the sandwich. In 1762, the Earl of Sandwich requested meat be served between two pieces of bread creating the sandwich. America was created 14 years later on July 4, 1776.