



GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATIONSⁱ

Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Arbitrations

MARBA received no arbitration demands in the month of January.

Laborers Joint Grievance Committee

The Laborers JGC did not meet in January. The next meeting will be on February 24, 2026, at the Laborers District Council office in Burr Ridge beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Operating Engineers Joint Grievance Committee

The Operators JGC did not meet in January. The next JGC is tentatively scheduled for February 18, 2026, at the Operators offices in Countryside, IL beginning at 8:30 a.m. The Union will advise the Committee of the number of grievances to be heard at the next session about a week before the 18th.

Teamsters Joint Grievance Committee

The Teamsters JGC did not meet in January. The next meeting date is scheduled for February 26, 2026, at the MARBA offices if there are any cases to be heard.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING/LABOR ISSUES

2025 Bargaining Rights Packets

Bargaining rights packets for the upcoming 2026 negotiations have been distributed to the MARBA member Associations. MARBA will have negotiations with the Laborers District Council and Cement Masons Locals 502 and 11. The bargaining rights packet contains information related to these two CBAs only. Please be advised there are specific timing requirements as it pertains to the return of the packets to your Associations. If there are any questions about these two agreements or the information contained in the bargaining rights packet, please contact your MARBA member Association or the MARBA office.

Labor Relations Intake Form

In an effort to track issues pertaining to the MARBA collective bargaining agreements, MARBA has created a Labor Relations Intake Form. This form, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#), allows contractors to submit information concerning labor matters related to a MARBA CBA. The answers will be sent to MARBA. This will assist MARBA in preparation for negotiations as well as potentially addressing any industry-wide issues prior to a negotiation should the need arise.

Contracts Expiring in 2026

MARBA is in the process of updating its list of collective bargaining agreements expiring in and around the Chicago area later this year. The current list of contracts set to expire that is known of at this time is posted on the MARBA website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#). If there are agreements set to expire in 2026 not on the list currently being maintained by MARBA, please contact Aaron Janik at ajanik@marba.org to let him know.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Construction Supervision Fundamentals Course 2nd Session Added

Due to the popularity of the first session, a second session of the Construction Supervision Fundamentals training course has been added. The event is held over the course of three days and provides trade and craft workers with guidance and technique to take the next step in their careers to a supervisory level. Topics include communication skills, time management, risk management, construction law and documents, as well as others. The three days run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Do not delay in registering for this event as it is sure to sell out. More information can be found [here](#).

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Economic Indicators

Unemployment Rate	December 4.4% (November U.S. 4.5%), Illinois 4.6% (38th)
Labor Participation Rate	December 62.4%, November 62.5%, September 62.5%
CPI All Urban Consumers	December 2025 over December 2024 = 2.68% Half Year 1 = 2.59%, Half Year 2 = 2.78%
CPI Chicago All Items	December 2025 over December 2024 = 2.17% Half Year = 3.62%, Half Year 2 = 2.63%, Annual = 3.08%
CPI Midwest All Items	December 2025 over December 2024 = 2.69% Half Year = 2.84%, Half Year 2 = 2.84%, Annual = 2.78%
Union Membership	2024 = 9.9% (Private Sector 5.9%), 2023 = 10.0% (Private Sector 6.0%), 2022 = 10.1% (Private Sector 6.0%)
Unionized Construction Workers	11.2% (2024), 11.4% (2023), 11.7% (2022), 12.6% (2021)
30 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 1-26-26 6.10%, down 0.85% over the prior year. Annual Average 6.52% (25), 6.90% (24), 6.61% (23), 5.34% (22)
15 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 1-29-26 5.49%, down 0.63% over the prior year. Annual Average 5.72% (25), 5.93% (2023), 4.58% (2022)

Brent Crude Oil Price	\$69.22 per barrel (as January 30, 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*	0.2% below revised September rate 1.1% below October 2024 rate
Privately Owned New Housing Starts*	4.6% below revised September rate (+/-11.2%) 7.8% below October 2024 rate (+/-11.7%)
GDP	Q3 2025 (Updated) +4.4% Q2 2025 +3.8%
DJIA	48,892.47 as of January 31, 2026 (4:00 p.m.) 48,090.06 as of December 31, 2025 (4:00 p.m.) 47,716.42 as of November 28, 2025 (1:00 p.m.)

*Due to the government shutdown that occurred in October 2025, information from the Census Bureau is delayed.

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

Lockbox Litigation Update

In 2016, the Safe Roads Amendment (SRA) was passed. This Amendment, ushered in via a voter referendum, created a “lockbox” for tax revenue derived from gasoline sales tax and other motor vehicle fees. The intent behind the passage of the SRA was to restrict the state (or its political subdivisions) from using monies that were earmarked for maintaining Illinois roads and bridges (among other transportation related projects) for other purposes. In 2018, a group led by the Illinois Road and Transportation Builders Association (IRTBA) filed suit against Cook County claiming the County was impermissibly budgeting funds from the “lockbox” to non-transportation related line items. While MARBA was not directly involved in the litigation, the suit included other MARBA member associations in addition to IRTBA, including the CAGC, GLCA, and UCA.

The suit proceeded to trial, and the County argued it was exempt from compliance with the SRA as it is a home-rule unit of government. The case made its way to the Illinois Supreme Court. The Supreme Court rejected the County’s home-rule argument finding the SRA created no such exemption. As such, the case was remanded back to the trial court level for re-hearing on damage calculations. In subsequent hearings, the Country presented the Court with a methodology that showed only a tangential relationship to transportation projects. As an example, the Country argued that traffic enforcement done by the Illinois Sherriff’s department and traffic cases prosecuted by the State’s Attorney allowed for portions of its budget to be paid for by SRA taxes. Some of the items called into question as not having a transportation related (i.e. direct) purpose were toilet paper and doughnuts.

In a decision issued on January 28, 2026, Judge Allison Conlon of the Circuit Court of Cook County held the County improperly diverted \$243 million dollars in FY 2023 to non-transportation related programs. The judge’s decision can be found by clicking [here](#).

UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EVENTS

JOIN THE GLCA FOR THEIR ANNUAL SAFETY AWARDS

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026
 TIME: 5:00 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M.
 LOCATION: DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON
 510 E. IL ROUTE 83
 MUNDELEIN, IL 60060
 COST: \$60.00
 CONTACT: TO REGISTER CLICK [HERE](#)

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2	12:15 P.M.	CBA CONSTRUCTION LAW SEMINAR (WEBINAR)
FEBRUARY 3	8:00 A.M.	BAC FUNDS MEETING (ELMHURST)
FEBRUARY 13	7:30 A.M.	CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FORUM (MARBA)
FEBRUARY 18	8:30 A.M.	OPERATING ENGINEERS JGC (COUNTRYSIDE)
FEBRUARY 20	10:30 A.M.	MARBA EXECUTIVES MEETING (MARBA)
FEBRUARY 24	9:00 A.M.	LABORERS JGC (BURR RIDGE)
FEBRUARY 26	9:00 A.M.	TEAMSTERS JGC (MARBA)

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?

Super Bowl Sunday is the second biggest day for food consumption in the U.S. trailing only Thanksgiving. Over 1 billion chicken wings will be consumed and Americans will spend \$1 billion on beer. 16.1 million people will miss work the day after the Super Bowl.



The Patriots have been in the Super Bowl 12 times and go for their 7th SB win. The Seahawks seek their 2nd title in 4 attempts.