



GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATIONSⁱ

Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council Arbitrations

MARBA received no arbitration demands in the month of December.

Laborers Joint Grievance Committee

The Laborers JGC did not meet in December. The next JGC is scheduled for January 27, 2026, at the Laborers District Council office in Burr Ridge beginning at 9:00 a.m. provided there are any grievances to be heard.

Operating Engineers Joint Grievance Committee

The Operators JGC did not meet in December. The next Joint Grievance Committee hearing will be held on January 14, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in Countryside. The Union will advise the JGC of the number of grievances to be held at a later date.

Teamsters Joint Grievance Committee

The Teamsters JGC did not meet in December. The next hearing date needs to be scheduled in January. There are two grievances that are pending. The hearing will be held at the MARBA offices beginning at 9 a.m., most likely on the last Thursday of January.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING/LABOR ISSUES

2026 Bargaining Right Assignment Packet Have Been Distributed to Associations

The 2026 Bargaining Rights Packets have been sent to the MARBA Associations. Contractors should receive the packets, which contain important information about the 2026 negotiations, from their Association within the next few weeks. Contractors' signatory to the Laborers District Council and Cement Masons (Local 502 and Local 11) agreements, expiring on May 31, 2026, will want to pay particular attention to certain deadlines in which the necessary paperwork needs to be turned in. If there are questions about the bargaining rights assignment process, please do not hesitate to contact the MARBA office or email Aaron Janik, Executive Director, at aianik@marba.org. Additionally, if you are interested in learning more about the negotiation process or being involved in the negotiations directly, the MARBA Laborers Craft Committee and/or the Cement Masons Craft Committee are always looking for volunteers. Interested individuals should contact their Association to get involved.

List of Expiring Contracts Posted to MARBA Website

MARBA compiles and disseminates a list of contracts expiring in the construction industry. That list may be accessed by clicking [here](#). In the months of January and February, MARBA will be seeking information concerning those agreements expiring later in 2026 to ensure the list is current and up to date. After that information is compiled the list of expiring contracts will form the basis for the negotiation update email sent weekly in late April/early May until all negotiations have concluded. If you have any information concerning contracts that are expiring later in 2026, particularly in the Chicagoland area, please contact Aaron Janik at ajanik@marba.org.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Construction Safety Council to Offer Free Safety Training

Contained within most of the MARBA collective bargaining agreements is a contribution of \$0.01 per hour worked to the Construction Safety Council. The CSC offers several different training courses throughout the year specific to the construction industry. Due to a grant that was received from OSHA, CSC can offer the following five courses for free: Workzone Hazards, Excavation Dangers, Harmful Silica, Fall Protection, and Electrical Safety. Information concerning registration for the courses can be found by clicking [here](#).

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Economic Indicators*

Unemployment Rate November 4.6% (September 4.4%), Illinois 4.4% (36th – Sept.)

Labor Participation Rate November 62.5%, September 62.4%

CPI All Urban Consumers November 2025 over November 2024 = 2.73%
Half 2025 = 2.59

CPI Chicago All Items November 2025 over November 2024 = 2.48%
Half 2025 = 3.62%

CPI Midwest All Items November 2025 over November 2024 = 3.00%
Half 2025 = 2.84%

Union Membership 2024 = 9.9% (Private Sector 5.9%), 2023 = 10.0% (Private Sector 6.0%), 2022 = 10.1% (Private Sector 6.0%)

Union Construction Workers 11.2% (2024), 11.4% (2023), 11.7% (2022), 12.6% (2021)

30 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 12-31-25 6.15%, -0.76% over the prior year. Annual Average 6.90% (24), 6.61% (23), 5.34% (22), 2.96% (21)
15 Year Fixed Mortgage	As of 12-31-25 5.44%, -0.69% over the prior year. Annual Average 5.98% (24) 5.93% (23), 4.58% (22), 2.27% (21)
Brent Crude Oil Price	\$60.84 per barrel (as December 31, 2025) \$145.61 per barrel all time high July 2008 \$2.23 per barrel all time low May 1970
Privately Owned New* Housing Building Permits	% above/below revised _____ rate % above/below November 2024 rate
Privately Owned New* Housing Starts	% above/below revised _____ rate (+/- ____%) % above/below November 2024 rate (+/- ____%)
GDP	Q3 2025 (Initial) +4.3% Q2 2025 +3.8%
DJIA	48,090.06 as of December 31, 2025 (4:00 p.m.) 47,716.42 as of November 28, 2025 (1:00 p.m.) 47,546.62 as of October 27, 2025 (2:30 p.m.)

*Due to the government shutdown updated figures are not available for November

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

NLRB Finally Has a Quorum; What to Expect Next

If you have followed the field of labor law this year, 2025 has been a year like no other. It started in January with the removal of Board member Wilcox (litigation still pending), the firing of Board General Counsel Abruzzo, several lawsuits filed by employers challenging the constitutionality of the Board itself (litigation still pending), and a handful of states passing their own labor laws due to Board being without enough members for a quorum.

Like Chicago weather, if you wait a few minutes things change. Late this month, the Senate confirmed President Trump's nominees to the NLRB, Scott Mayer and James Murphy. The confirmation of Mayer and Murphy brings the total number of Board members to three thus restoring a quorum at the Board (the Board generally has five Board members). The composition of the Board now stands at two Republican members (Mayer and Murphy) and one Democrat (Prouty – who had been the only member since August). Additionally, the Senate confirmed Crystal Carey to serve at the NLRB General Counsel. Carey will replace William Cowen who had

been serving as Acting General Counsel since the firing of GC Abruzzo.

With a new GC ready to lead the prosecution arm of the agency, labor law experts expect Carey to begin to attempt to align the enforcement of Board policy towards more employer friendly positions. Although there is a quorum allowing the Board to conduct business (i.e. issue decisions, process elections, etc.) changes in Board precedent may not occur quickly as one might expect as long-standing tradition has generally required three votes to overturn prior holdings (however, if 2025 is any indication things have not been “traditional”).

Despite the practice of three votes being needed to overturn Board precedent, areas in which many expect the Board to and General Counsel to focus on include employee handbooks (*Stericycle*), election procedures (*Cemex*), and employer speech (*Amazon Services*). If custom holds true and any pending cases in these areas are not overturned by the Board then any changes to these specific areas (as well as any other areas) would need to occur at the appellate level. There are still a plethora of changes that are likely to come with GC Carey set to issue new enforcement priorities. This, coupled with the Wilcox litigation and pending litigation relating to the constitutionality of the NLRB structure, means changes will still be afoot in 2026.

UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EVENTS

CAGC HOSTING CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION FUNDAMENTALS

THE CSF COURSE IS DESIGNED FOR ASPIRING FRONT LINE LEADERS WHO ARE LOOKING TO LEARN THE ENTRY LEVEL MANAGEMENT SKILLS TO LEAD CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES.

DATE: WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28, 2026, TO FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2026
TIME: 8:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.
LOCATION: UNDERGROUND CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OFFICES
1051 PERIMETER DRIVE, SUITE 1075
SCHAUMBURG, IL 60173
COST: \$685 MEMBERS, \$925 NON-MEMBERS
CONTACT: EMAIL [STACEY KELLY](#) OR CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER

CALENDAR

JANUARY 13	11:00 A.M.	MIAF BOARD MEETING (MARBA)
JANAUARY 13	12:00 P.M.	MARBA BOARD MEETING (MARBA)
JANUARY 14	8:30 A.M.	OPERATING ENGINEERS JGC (COUNTRYSIDE)
JANUARY 27	9:00 A.M.	LABORERS JGC (BURR RIDGE)
JANUARY 29	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?

January is named after the Roman god Janus, protector of beginnings and endings, appropriate for the new year.