

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
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## **SERVICE TIMETABLE MOVED UP FOR ALASKAN FRONTIER**

M.E.B.A.-contracted Overseas Shipholding Group, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Alaskan Tanker Company, has given notice that it intends to put the ALASKAN FRONTIER into service in August, an expedited timeline for the recently-purchased tanker that had been languishing in deep lay-up since 2019.

New opportunities in the tanker trades prompted OSG to reach an agreement with BP Oil Shipping last year to purchase and reactivate the Jones Act compliant FRONTIER which has a 1.3-million-barrel capacity.

OSG initially announced an end-of-the-year date for the vessel following its refurbishment. The tanker will undergo a comprehensive modernization of each of the four engines onboard to improve performance and fuel efficiency and make them methanol-compliant. Engine upgrades will be completed by MAN Energy Solutions SE. It is expected that the fuel efficiency gain will result in 15-20% fuel savings as compared to the vessel's current consumption, leading to a meaningful reduction in carbon output. The significant capital investment being made will permit ATC to operate the vessel for a longer period of time and with fewer maintenance costs for its remaining life.

MAN Energy will also perform engine and operational improvements on the ALASKAN EXPLORER, ALASKAN LEGEND and ALASKAN NAVIGATOR that will make them more environmentally friendly while extending their serviceable lives.

## **NOAA MARINERS RECOGNIZED FOR AT-SEA RESCUES**

Mariners sailing for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration were recognized by the agency recently for their involvement in rescues at sea. M.E.B.A. represents engine officers aboard the 15 NOAA research vessels that conduct a variety of scientific missions. The NOAA fleet collects data critical for nautical charts, fishery quotas, exploration of the nation's 4.3-million-square-mile Exclusive Economic Zone, storm surge modeling and climate research.

The crews of three NOAA fleet vessels were singled out and celebrated at a Washington DC ceremony on February 6. Mariners serving aboard the NOAA vessels THOMAS JEFFERSON, OREGON II and RONALD H. BROWN were honored with the 2023 Department of Commerce Gold Medal.

The crew of the JEFFERSON rescued three fishermen in distress on Aug. 20, 2022. The fishermen, who had been caught in a storm on Lake Erie, were in a 12-foot bass boat without propulsion taking on water, several miles off the coast of Cleveland, Ohio. After hearing their distress call and seeing a red flare, the ship expertly maneuvered alongside and tied the boat off to the ship's rail. They lowered a Jacob's ladder and treated the individuals for hypothermia symptoms prior to the U.S. Coast Guard's arrival. Rescued personnel did not have enough personal flotation devices or foul weather gear and would have been unable to make it ashore without assistance.

The crew of the OREGON II assisted a vessel in distress on Oct. 16, 2022. While preparing for arrival in Pascagoula, Mississippi, OREGON II heard a radio distress call from a nearby vessel and diverted course to assist. The vessel was taking on water and without power, resulting in no available dewatering systems. The NOAA crew worked together to deploy the fast rescue boat and provide engineering assistance to the mariner. They were able to stop the flooding, restore the vessel's power and help with subsequent dewatering. This accomplishment saved the property, and potentially the life, of a fellow mariner.

The crew of the BROWN assisted a disabled sailing vessel with a broken mast and evacuated three people hundreds of miles from Cabo Verde in the North Atlantic. On Nov. 28, 2022, the Brown was on a 40-day mission in the Atlantic to service buoys that provide critical information on the Atlantic climate system and collect data used globally for ocean and weather prediction. After transiting more than 200 miles to intercept the sailboat, the BROWN's crew assessed the needs of the disabled vessel and the condition of the crew. One person, who was injured by a falling mast, and two others were then evacuated from the disabled vessel via small boat in rough seas. Additional passengers decided not to evacuate, and the BROWN's crew provided fuel to assist them. The rescued individuals remained on the BROWN for several days of their transit, eventually debarking in Newport, Rhode Island. Congratulations all!

### **GOVERNMENT REPORT CONFIRMS IRAN'S ONGOING HOUSHI SUPPORT**

The Government's Defense Intelligence Agency issued a report confirming Iran's ongoing support, despite their constant denials, for Houthi rebels who continue disrupting commercial shipping in the Southern Red Sea.

The report highlights the evolving and strengthening relationship between the Houthis and Iran. Since 2014, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) has provided the Houthis a growing arsenal of sophisticated weapons and training. Iran's aid has enabled the Houthis to conduct a campaign of missile and UAV attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea since November 2023, threatening freedom of navigation and international commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways.

The report, "Iran: Enabling Houthi Attacks Across the Middle East," can be viewed at [www.dia.mil/Military-Power-Publications/](http://www.dia.mil/Military-Power-Publications/)

## **SURVEY SEEKS TO GAUGE MARINER PERCEPTIONS OF AMMONIA AS A FUEL**

In order to better to understand perceptions and concerns of mariners regarding the safety of ammonia as a potential marine fuel, the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller Center for Zero Carbon Shipping has launched a quick survey they hope you will undertake. They are trying to gauge safety concerns and identify competence gaps among future users of ammonia in maritime operations. The insights gleaned from this survey may help shape future training protocols and guidelines and influence the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).

According to projections by the Center for Zero Carbon Shipping, the technological feasibility of implementing ammonia as a marine fuel is within sight and could materialize between 2025 and 2026. But challenges remain, as it introduces novel complexities to the maritime landscape.

This ongoing global ammonia safety study spearheaded by the Center focuses on understanding the maritime community's perception of ammonia as a prospective marine fuel. Of particular interest is discerning how ammonia's viability as a fuel is perceived and accepted within this sphere. Many mariners are extremely wary of forcing utilization of such a dangerous fuel simply to achieve ambitious zero carbon goals, and without any regard to mariner wellbeing. The anonymous survey, open until February 24, 2024, ensures candid responses, with an estimated completion time of five minutes. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/fuelstudy> to participate.

## **WORK BEGINS ON FINAL MARITIME ACADEMY NSMV**

The construction of the last of five National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMV) destined for the maritime academies has commenced. Philly Shipyard celebrated the steel cutting for the 5<sup>th</sup> NSMV bound for California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) upon its completion in 2026.

The NSMV program is designed to provide purpose-built, state-of-the-art training platforms for five state maritime academies in New York, Massachusetts, Maine, Texas, and California, respectively. In addition to providing best-in-class training for America's future mariners, the NSMVs will be available to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need.

SUNY Maritime took delivery of the first vessel in the program, the EMPIRE STATE, in September 2023. The PATRIOT STATE II is undergoing testing and commissioning and will be ready in the next few months to replace Mass Maritime's current 55-year old training ship. The STATE OF MAINE is being prepared for launch and should be delivered to Maine Maritime Academy later this year. The LONE STAR STATE had its keel laying in December and its engines were recently installed. Delivery of the vessel to Texas A&M Maritime Academy is expected sometime next year.

## **RIGHT-TO-WORK OFFICIALLY REPEALED IN GREAT LAKES STATE**

Over a dozen worker-friendly laws took effect in Michigan this week headlined by the official repeal of the state's egregious Right-to-Work law. The 'Restoring Workers' Rights' package was passed and signed into law last year but only went into effect on Tuesday.

By allowing workers to benefit from union representation without having to pay for it, “right-to-work” laws - currently in force in 26 states and Guam – thin out dues-paying members and weaken union leverage in negotiations with employers. That makes it more difficult to negotiate better wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers.

The new labor laws protect workers’ safety, keep government from getting in the way of negotiations between businesses and workers, and empower workers to advocate for better working conditions and wages. They restore prevailing wage, expand the working families tax credit, restore collective bargaining rights for public school employees, and end a tax on retiree pensions among other things.

“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.”

### **AMC PHOTO CONTEST – LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS TO WIN**

The American Maritime Congress is running a Photo Contest until February 29, 2024 with a grand prize of \$1,000. Photos must have been taken after January 1 of last year. Contestants must be the sole creator and copyright owner of the submitted photo. Entrants agree that submitted photos can be used by AMC for advertising purposes, with proper attribution. Multiple submissions (up to five photos) are allowed. Photos must be in their original state, without alterations. Images should be no smaller than 1MB and no larger than 5MB. Winners will be contacted via the provided email address and must respond within three business days. Submissions will not be accepted after the February 29, 2024 deadline. Visit <https://americanmaritime.org/> for full rules and additional details.

### **HALLS, OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY FOR PRESIDENTS DAY & FUN FACTS**

As always, the third Monday in February marks the observance of Presidents Day. M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Monday, February 19. The holiday was officially approved in 1968 as “Washington’s Birthday” in honor of our first President, George Washington (born Feb. 22, 1732). It eventually evolved into “Presidents Day” and became an occasion to also celebrate the birthday of another one of our greatest Presidents – Abraham Lincoln (born Feb. 12, 1809). But on Monday, feel free to also honor the memories of the other two February Presidents - William Henry Harrison (born Feb. 9, 1773) and Ronald Reagan (born Feb. 6, 1911). However, the way the calendar works, it’s impossible that one of those Presidential birthdays can actually fall on Presidents Day. Incidentally, October and November are the months with the most Presidential birthdays – 6 each. Here are some fun Presidential facts:

Besides George Washington, James Monroe is the only other President to run unopposed for office. He is the 3<sup>rd</sup> President to have died on July 4 (following John Adams & Thomas Jefferson five years earlier). Calvin Coolidge is the only President to have been born on July 4. Andrew Jackson’s pet parrot had such a vulgar vocabulary that it had to be removed at Old Hickory’s funeral after it shocked attendees with repeated profanity-laced outbursts. Martin Van Buren was the first President born as a U.S. citizen (1782) but the only President for which English was his second language. He was brought up speaking Dutch. His nickname was “Old Kinderhook” (from his hometown in NY). Supporters of our eighth President shortened it to “OK” which then became known as a slang word for approval. After President William McKinley was shot in 1901, his surgeon declared himself “too

busy” to assist, so a gynecologist was employed for the task and botched the surgery with tragic results. Theodore Roosevelt owned as many as 48 pets during his time in the White House including a badger, hyena, lizard, black bear, one-legged rooster and a snake named “Emily Spinach.” Richard Nixon's favorite snack was cottage cheese with ketchup. Calvin Coolidge enjoyed having Vaseline rubbed on his head while he ate breakfast. “Silent Cal” was said to be the quietest President and supposedly won a bet with a woman who vowed to get him to say at least three words. He responded, “You lose.” Have a happy Presidents Day!

**NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS** *(All times are local)*

Monday, March 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, March 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, March 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

Thursday, March 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, March 8 – **Honolulu@1100**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.  
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline  
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

*The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*