

METAL TRADES DEPARTMENT, AFL-CIO ★ 2011



69th Convention • Bally's • Las Vegas, NV

President's Report

Acknowledgement

The work of the Metal Trades Department is carried out on a daily basis by a wide range of men and women, from stewards on the job giving their co-workers guidance about working conditions and contract language, to officers of local metal trades councils. We applaud these courageous and selfless brothers and sisters who thrive on the challenge of helping their co-workers and advancing the cause of labor while serving with little or no financial reward.



President Ault and Department Representatives Jim Seidl and Tom Shaffer are the Department's field generals, troubleshooting, handling contract negotiations and high-level representation issues. They also back

up the front lines of the Metal Trades by providing periodic training and mentoring grass roots leaders in the essential skills of representation, grievance handling and arbitration, contract negotiations and enforcement and organizing as the need arises.

At the national level, Lisa Johnson, Executive Assistant to the President, manages correspondence and communications flowing through the office. She arranges meetings and handles the full range of administrative duties, including planning, scheduling and bookkeeping.

International Unions affiliated with the Metal Trades Department:

- International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Ironworkers
- International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
- Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union
- Office and Professional Employees International Union
- International Union of Operating Engineers
- Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association of the United States and Canada
- Sheet Metal Workers International Association
- United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada
- Laborers International Union of North America
- International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
- International Chemical Workers Union
- International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades
- Service Employees International Union
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters

As president, Ron Ault spends about 200 days a year on the road, visiting with councils, sharing much of the representation work with the Metal Trades representatives and attending functions of affiliated unions or the AFL-CIO.

With limited resources and abundant challenges, the Department relies heavily on the generosity and solidarity of our affiliates and the individuals assigned as “keys” to work with the Department. The Department extends our sincere appreciation to the Executive Council: R. Thomas Buffenbarger, First Vice President; Edwin Hill, Second Vice President; James A. Williams, Third Vice President; Newton Jones, Fourth Vice President; William P. Hite, Fifth Vice President; Vincent J. Giblin, Sixth Vice President; James A. Grogan, Seventh Vice President; Patrick D. Finley, Eighth Vice President; Walter Wise, Ninth Vice President; Joseph J. Nigro, Tenth Vice President; and to the International Presidents and leaders of each of our affiliated unions, and the individual keys who have served the Department over the past four years.

The Metal Trades Department is deeply indebted to the AFL-CIO and President Richard Trumka, especially to the Strategic Campaign Committee headed by Keith Maddox, for their extensive support of the Metal Trades Department’s initiatives.

A Look Back

When our 68th Convention closed in October 2007, the Metal Trades Department was preparing for a landmark election, providing support for Barack Obama and Joe Biden. We were also actively engaged in a series of congressional races in conjunction with

our brothers and sisters from affiliated international unions. One of the most important congressional races at the time was in support of a good friend, Carol Shea-Porter in New Hampshire. Due in large measure to the hard work and organizing skills of our Portsmouth, NH Federal Employees Metal Trades Council, Shea-Porter was reelected in 2008—part of a strong showing by Democrats to expand their House majority by 21 seats. Overall, House Democrats, on the strength of wide coattails of the Obama-Biden ticket, amassed an impressive 65.2 million votes. The pickup in the Senate—adding seven seats—gave labor a strong sense of encouragement that at long last our most pressing agenda items stood a good chance of passage.



Unfortunately, the reality was not as impressive as the numbers suggested. For a brief two years, the Republican minority fought a rear guard action that literally stonewalled progress on Card Check and other pieces of labor’s agenda. Although Health Care Reform was enacted, the opposition was able to water down its contents and have since thrown so much mud into the process that it is difficult to measure what real progress has been made.



On one score, however, we enjoyed a stunning victory with the defunding of the controversial National Security Personnel System (NSPS), thanks to the work of Carol Shea-Porter. It would take another year before the Defense Department actually admitted defeat, but Ms. Shea-Porter’s rider delivered the fatal blow.

Lobbying Congress

Lobbying on behalf of affiliated unions, their members and the industries in which they work is a major responsibility for the Metal Trades president. That responsibility entails frequent trips to Capitol Hill to testify on pending legislation, or monitor hearings and debates on such topics as Department of Defense budgeting, federal worker legislation, and all issues related to labor and economics.

On behalf of the Department, President Ault also keeps tabs on Executive Branch Departments—especially the Pentagon and the Department of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Energy and the Department of Labor. In addition to



these direct representational duties, President Ault administers the Department’s relations with major employers, acts as co-chair for the NAVSEA joint labor-management partnership, attends legislative briefings held by the AFL-CIO and coordinates relations between the Department and other major departments of the AFL-CIO, including the Maritime Trades, Building Trades, Transportation Trades and the

Union Label Department. President Ault also convenes and presides over the Department’s disputes resolutions process when the need arises.

Metal Trades Department Mission

The mission of the Metal Trades Department is to advance the objectives of our councils and affiliates while improving the economic circumstances of union members who depend upon Metal Trades entities. The Department

accomplishes that mission by providing leadership and representation in collective bargaining, health and safety, apprenticeship and training, and legislative and political issues at the national and state level. Pursuing all these objectives requires that the Department carefully marshal and utilize available resources, employing the most efficient technology and best practices to those ends. The Department maintains a



very active website which highlights news about topics of interest to our councils, the leadership and union members. From July 2010, through Oct. 15, 2011, the Metal Trades Department website received 148,423 unique visitors.

Augmenting the website, the Metal Trades Department's Facebook page enjoys active involvement from a growing number of interested participants. For instance, during the month prior to this Convention, the MTD Facebook page experienced an increase of 43% in the number of active users and a 147% increase in the number of people who posted their views to the site. No doubt this is related to the heavy activity surrounding the campaign to save Avondale, but it also underscores the utility of social media.

Serving workers in very disparate industries—such as shipbuilding and repair, petrochemical and refinery, nuclear remediation and materials handling, general maintenance, manufacturing, mining and production in both private and public sector bargaining units—requires a broad understanding of the differences in how these workforces are organized to perform

their tasks as well as constant attention to the unique features and economics of each of these industries. Most of that study is done on the fly as we work with local council leaders who

know and communicate the situation on the ground to the Department's representatives.

In reviewing the Department's activities over the past four years and looking ahead to the coming challenges it is clear that we have made some headway on our general goals, but it is also evident that we have a long way to go to try and restore the quality of life that our members deserve and expect for themselves and their families.

As with every other element of organized labor, we operate within an economy that is needlessly mired in an economic morass created by external forces intent on shackling working families and undermining many of the industries and employers that negotiate with us. All around us, we see constant reminders that politics exerts an outsized influence on our economic life and that those who stand in our way are diametrically opposed to the principles of free collective bargaining and the inherent right of workers to form and join unions to represent them.

America needs a new agenda with a fundamental commitment to restoring good jobs that pay adequate wages; good jobs with guarantees of fundamental pension and health care benefits, employment security, healthy and safe working conditions, and acceptable levels of dignity and respect; ensuring economically healthy communities that nurture our families and our own better natures. These are simple goals that should be within the reach of workers and

the unions representing them. The most difficult obstacle to realizing those goals is the presence of a well-funded right-wing in America that dominates the media through ownership and dominates our political processes through unlimited funding. Today, for the first time since the right-wing inspired Tea Party emerged on the scene, we can see some hope for creating a counterweight through the energy and success of Occupy Wall Street—a movement with goals and objectives that generally parallel those of the AFL-CIO. Following the lead of AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka, the Department will work to support OWS and to harness its energy in the 2012 elections and beyond.

Shipbuilding



The announcement on October 17, 2011, that Avondale will not die in 2013 with the launch of the last Navy ship on its order book creates the very real prospect that it will transition into a commercial shipyard. This is the first time in decades that the civilian shipbuilding industry in the U.S. may experience a substantial expansion opportunity. Preserving Avondale, combined with the rollout of the American Marine Highway represents a fortunate

confluence of events that could mark the rebirth of the U. S. shipbuilding industry.

The American Marine Highway is a low-cost, high yield project that will bring the nation “back to the future” by enabling shippers to make use of intra-coastal transportation on specially built short-sea shipping vessels. Avondale could be one of several commercial shipyards that could soon be working to build new “green” vessels to serve American ports. These new ships will be the most efficient shipping mode in the nation for transporting products on both U.S. coasts and up and down America’s vast network of rivers and canals. These vessels will be complementary to surface transportation modes, not in competition with highway or rail modes. Most importantly, the American Marine Highway will relieve traffic congestion on the nation’s interstates and make it easier to begin repair of our entire national transportation infrastructure.

Economists say that in addition to stabilizing the existing shipbuilding employment, producing several hundred new ships to serve the American Marine Highway will create some 16,500 direct new jobs—and save more than 12,000 jobs in the New Orleans area. Ship construction and the additional business activity created by the transition to more waterborne freight will generate \$2.5 billion in business activity and some \$334 million in tax revenues. These economic benefits would be spread across the entire U.S. economy, requiring only minimal government investment to upgrade U.S. coastal and river ports and added navigation aids.

The Department is hopeful (as we remain vigilant) that these developments point to a bright and prosperous future for Avondale and the communities depending upon it.

Nuclear Workers

Another positive development — one that emerged from President Obama’s stimulus programs in January 2009— was the release of \$8 billion to accelerate the cleanup and remediation of the U.S nuclear weapons sites; some \$1.9 billion additional cleanup work at Hanford. The Department worked closely with the leadership of the Building and Construction Trades, President Mark Ayers and with the White House to marshal these funds through a very difficult congressional process. The funds that were appropriated resulted in the addition of 3,805 more jobs at Hanford.

The Department is in constant touch with our local councils representing nuclear workers—Pantex in Amarillo; at Hanford, Washington where our HAMTC represents workers remediating the area around Richland, Washington, as well as HAMMER which has become a state-of-the-art training facility for nuclear safety; Idaho Falls, where the Eastern Idaho Metal Trades Council represents workers engaged in reprocessing spent nuclear fuel for the U.S. Navy; and at the Albuquerque, Oak Ridge Y12 DOE operations. The Department has been facilitating efforts by these councils to protect the negotiated pensions for contract personnel and to combat DOE’s plans to impose two-tier pensions on the contract workforce and to force a consolidation of these units into one massive contract. This situation remains in a state of flux despite the best efforts of each of these councils to establish meaningful dialogue with DOE management collectively and individually.

RECOVERY WORK UPDATES	
Recovery Act Jobs	
Recovery.gov Prime Contractor plus Subcontractor Jobs	Lives Touched!
DOE Richland Operations Office	3,204 10,132
DOE Office of River Production	601 3,472
Hanford Total	3,805 13,604
* Reported as full-time equivalents (FTE) contracts hours worked during the most recent 12-month period (July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2011) for the individual number of jobs if all were full-time and completely funded by the Recovery Act.	
** DOE Office of Environmental Management (OEM) (now merged): The total number of months that have ever had a job at least partially funded by the Recovery Act since funding was received in April 2009 through the end of June 2011.	
Funding Received and Spent*	
	Funding Received Funding Spent
DOE Office of River Production	\$326,035,000 \$290,995,251
DOE Richland Operations Office	\$1,634,500,000 \$1,349,607,340
Hanford Total	\$1,960,535,000 \$1,640,602,491

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The Department continues to work on a more humane and sensitive solution to the plight of former nuclear workers who have been caught in a web of complex rules and red tape in attempting to secure financial compensation for illnesses and conditions which they have contracted as a result of their exposure to nuclear materials. In this case, too, we hope to have some positive information in the very near future. We have had very solid indications that the Department of Health and Human Services is prepared to accept significant reforms that will expedite compensation payments for this long-suffering cohort of workers and their families.

Organizing

The Department’s approach to long-term organizing is through coordinated and joint union organizing campaigns—sharing staff, resources and sharing the membership gains over entire industries, regardless of geographic regions. The Metal Trades Department was formed for just this purpose over a century ago.

Some say the Metal Trades time as a craft trade umbrella organization has passed, but the reasons it was formed are just as valid today as in 1908 and the circumstances of today are remarkably similar to those in 1908.

The Metal Trades Department belongs to the International Unions as it is an extension of those organizations. The future of labor is in doubt as it is structured. Within our own ranks, there is no agreement on what organized labor will look like in the near future or what its role should be in the workplace. There are voices for “corporate unionism” that is little more than a working partnership with

owners, while others say labor should remain strictly a representative of workers without regard for the industry they work in.

Pure craft trade organizations are a rarity today as traditional craft unions expand their ranks to include nontraditional jobs and to embrace workers usually considered as unskilled service workers.

Union membership of the U.S. workforce is under 7%. When 93% of all private sector workers do not belong to unions, we cannot be considered successful in organizing. We must do something different.

In 2007, the Convention encouraged local councils to develop campaigns and seek involvement from local unions within their councils on organizing campaigns. Among the Metal Trades Councils, the Columbus, GA, Metal Trades Council took that advice to heart, utilizing the provisions of the Service Contract Act to expand the size of their council a thousand fold. We salute these efforts and cite this council as an example others could follow. The Department also applauds the work of our Hawaii Metal Trades Council serving the Pearl Harbor Shipyard and our Tidewater Metal Trades Council, both of which have conducted ongoing internal organizing campaigns with significant success. So, too, those councils that have taken an active role in the development and administration of apprenticeship and training programs have found that the infusion of young and energetic workers into their ranks has created greater opportunities to grow through organizing.



The Department has been working with the leadership of the Washington, D.C. Metal Trades Council which has done a remarkable job of reconstituting that council as a viable entity, largely through the efforts of the Machinists, Laborers and the IBEW in the region.

The Department will continue to encourage individual council efforts to make organizing a priority within their operations. We encourage use of the Metal Trades Website and Facebook pages both to share your successes with the rest of the Department and to cultivate new approaches to the problem.

Training

The Department's ongoing training programs at the IAM's Winpisinger Center have continued over the past four years, thanks to the hospitality and support we have received from President Buffenbarger. Metal Trades Representatives will continue to provide training on an ad hoc basis to prepare new officers and stewards for the rigors of day-to-day representation and union administration.

Summary

Despite the challenges and obstacles that confront the labor movement, the Metal Trades Department is optimistic that labor's best days are still ahead. Those who dismiss the need for energetic advocacy and aggressive collective bargaining at the worksite and in the economy as a whole ignore the evidence of human history that workers united will never be defeated. Our challenge is to muster the courage and the leadership to sustain that unity.



Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO
Ron Ault, President
815 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202-508-3705
www.metaltrades.org