



# Building Material & Construction Trade

## Teamster Building Material & Construction Trade News

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James P. Hoffa, General President • C. Thomas Keegel, General Secretary–Treasurer • Ed Jacobson, Director BMCT Division

## FIGHTING BACK

### Teamsters Unite to Stop the War on Workers

**T**he fallout from the November election has been nothing short of disastrous for the American middle class, but it didn't catch the Teamsters Union off guard. The moment the threats of the campaign trail became a reality, the Teamsters Union sprang into action.

"This wasn't the first time we saw a slew of anti-union legislation hit states at the same time, but the sheer number of bills taking aim at the heart of working America was daunting," said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President. "Luckily, we were prepared. And even more important, our members, local unions and Joint Councils have worked together to show the kind of solidarity that's a hallmark of the Teamsters Union."

The sea change followed the November 2010 elections when anti-worker politicians took the helm in a number of states. Immediately after the election, the Teamsters put into place plans to deflect as many of these attacks as possible. As we've seen in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and elsewhere, there is no shortage of proposed legislation aimed directly at working Americans. Before the onslaught, the union

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## Division Hosts Helmets To Hardhats Meeting



### Military, Union Officials Come Together For Veterans

In January, officials from the U.S. Armed Forces and Teamster leaders gathered for an all-day meeting in Washington, D.C. to discuss the Helmets to Hardhats program. The main reason for the meeting was to discuss ways in which the program could be expanded so that more military veterans were aware of what the program offered.

Helmets to Hardhats is a national program that connects National Guard, Reserve and transitioning active-duty military members with quality career training and employment opportunities within the construction industry. The Teamsters Union has been a leading partner with the program.

"I believe we have the best training programs in the country," said Ed Jacobson, Director of the Building Material and Construction Trade Division. "We want to train as many veterans as we can so that they can get good jobs."

Joining the meeting, too, were the directors of the Teamsters Safety and Health Department, Lamont Byrd, and the National Training Department, Mark Johnson. Each spoke about how their departments are already working with Helmets to Hardhats.

"The military is a terrific source for young, disciplined people," Byrd said. "Trucking companies will be looking for new drivers who have good training. We have written grant funding applications for local unions for training and instructor development."

### Transferable Training

The Teamsters National Training Department has construction driver training at various sites throughout the U.S. Some offer apprenticeship programs, too, and enable participants to earn their CDL licensing.

"A CDL license is usually transferable between states," Johnson said. "This

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# A Message From Division Director Ed Jacobson

## Infrastructure Growth

Infrastructure funds mandated by the Obama administration are flowing into states for road and bridge rebuilding, laying of rail track and other projects.



Even in this tough economy,

construction projects continue on, perhaps not at the level of more solvent years, but they are keeping pace.

We recently convened a meeting at Teamster headquarters with military leaders, Helmets to Hardhats representatives and Teamster officials to discuss how to further broaden the program with the goal of reaching as many veterans as possible. We believe that there is a great pool of talent in our returning veterans and we are committed to helping them find good-paying Teamster construction work.

Ready Mix drivers will soon be receiving a survey that is designed to record how many slips and falls our members have while on the job. This is important information for us to have in order to ensure safer working conditions. So, please, if you receive a survey, fill it out as soon as possible and mail it back to us.

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held numerous conference calls with locals in targeted states, prepared and held steward seminars and worked closely with state lobbyists and other activists. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters has worked closely with Joint Councils and local unions across the country on:

**Member mobilization:** The union assisted Joint Councils and locals to put together solidarity rallies.

**Messaging:** The Teamsters assisted Joint Councils and locals on drafting public statements in solidarity with Wisconsin and other workers under attack. The union has also coordinated with more than a dozen other international unions. The Teamsters offered all pertinent polling research on many of the threats facing labor, as well as polling and information on key messaging points, in order to educate people about the real reasons behind the war on workers and where it could lead.

Utilizing Facebook, Twitter and other social media have also helped the International Union get its message out, along with the [stoptheworkonworkers.com](http://stoptheworkonworkers.com) website. The International Union also employed robocalls, "take action" e-mails, and has prepared and mailed materials to Joint Councils and locals, such as the "Stop the War on Workers" signs that have been so prevalent at rallies, letters to the editor, postcards, press statements and other materials.

**Trainings:** The Teamsters Union coordinated training programs and provided training on building one-on-one communication networks at locals and work-sites to educate members on legislation pending in their state. So far, more than 1,000 Teamsters have participated in trainings in Wisconsin and Missouri. More are scheduled.

In Wisconsin alone, the International Union has held trainings, wrote letters to the editor, sent press releases, rally signs and postcards, blogged on local news websites and been in hourly communication with the locals there. Most importantly, from the International to the Joint Council

to the local union level, Teamsters have pulled together in solidarity to beat back their common enemies.

### United

For months before this anti-union blitz, the Teamsters Union conducted massive amounts of opinion research, including polling and focus groups. That information was carefully analyzed to see what the public thought about labor unions and how the union could win their support. Message after message was tested to determine the best way to change peoples' opinions about specific anti-union proposals and to change their broader perception about unions.

But that's only a fraction of the fight. The Teamsters Union, working closely with Joint Councils and local unions, has continued to build on their foundation of solidarity with rank-and-file members. People across the country are engaged and active in this fight, but union members are truly turning the tide.

Hoffa recently took Wisconsin and Ohio by storm, marching through the streets of the capital cities and pumping up crowds with energetic speeches promising to stay in the fight for American workers until it is won.

"Destroying workers' collective bargaining rights won't balance the budget and it won't create a single job," Hoffa said. "The Teamsters Union stands with workers in Wisconsin and we stand united in this battle for all of labor, all working families, across the country."

There are currently 22 right-to-work (for less) states and up to 12 states hope to pass such legislation in 2011. Meanwhile, politicians in places like Wisconsin who are not satisfied with worker concessions on wages, pensions or health care to help fill the state budget gap are now trying to completely strip workers of their collective bargaining rights.

Teamsters are urged to stand together to defeat these measures. For more information on what you can do, go to [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org).

## Ready Mix Drivers Receive Survey

## Safety Conditions Examined

**R**eady Mix drivers across the country can expect to receive a survey in their mail in the next month.

Coordinated by the Teamsters Safety and Health Department and the Center for Construction Research and Training, the survey will examine the root causes of slips, trips and falls among Ready Mix concrete drivers.

“We want to analyze the information we get back and then engage the manufacturers in a discussion to try and eliminate physical hazards on the job,” said Ed Jacobson, Director of the Building and Construction Trades Division.

The topics covered in the survey range from the type of truck you drive to whether there are guardrails to pro-

tect all elevated walking and working surfaces and whether you have been injured due to a slip, trip or fall. The survey also asks what changes you would make to your vehicle in order to improve safety.

“I urge all of our Ready Mix drivers to take the time to fill out the survey and mail it back to us,” Jacobson said. “The information you provide will go a long way toward improving safety on the job. In fact, your feedback might just end up saving a life.”

The survey is just three pages long and should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. It comes with a business-reply envelope so mailing it back is free.

## Hardhats to Helmets

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portability makes it easier for our graduates to get jobs and keep working once a particular project is completed. Plus, we have been working to have Helmets to Hardhats language in every Project Labor Agreement.”

Later in the day, Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President, joined the meeting and recounted how a military veteran had been helped by his membership in the Teamsters Union. Hoffa’s story resonated with many in the room who have faced similar problems returning to work.

“I know of a member who had just come back from a tour in Iraq,” Hoffa said. “He wanted his old job back at Yellow Freight but the company said no. He went right to his local union and they came to his aid immediately. Now he has his job back.

“As troops start coming home, they need our help. We need to take their valuable training in the military and put them to work. I am proud of the Teamsters Union’s role in this program,” Hoffa said.



# A Message from General President James P. Hoffa

## The Battle Continues

Haymarket. Homestead. Minneapolis. Detroit. These are storied names in the history of the labor movement. These are places where workers risked it all for their rights, their dignity, their future. Some gave their lives for the cause.

Now, Madison. The protests against Gov. Scott Walker's attempt to destroy workers' rights have ignited a movement that is now sweeping the country like wildfire. Throughout America, people are standing shoulder to shoulder with Wisconsin, with Ohio, with Indiana and, most important, with each other.

"We cannot let this fire go out." "We cannot let this light fade." These are the words of our Teamster brothers and sisters who are holding the line for the rights and protections of working families throughout America. We must seize this moment and understand it for what it is. It is not just a rejuvenation of the labor movement, but an awakening of the entire middle class. It's an awakening to the reality that for 30 years, workers' standard of living and their economic security have been under attack by large corporations and their political stooges.

Today, for the first time in many years, workers, students and minorities are fighting the same war—together.



I was so proud to be a Teamster when I marched into the Wisconsin Statehouse behind the blue Teamster flag with several hundred of my brothers and sisters. You could hear people say to each other, "The Teamsters are here!"

*DRIVE is a political committee that furthers labor-related goals, including making contributions to support candidates for local, state and federal offices. Individuals may refuse to join or contribute without fear of reprisal.*

Find out more about this exciting program by talking to your local union, or on the web at [www.teamster.org/drive](http://www.teamster.org/drive)

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