



# Building Material and Construction Trade news

Spring 2004

## Summing It Up at Aggregate Industries

Workers at six locations of Aggregate Industries Redi-Mix in New Hampshire now enjoy the benefits from one strong and uniform three-year contract. The Local 633 members overwhelmingly approved the agreement late last year.

Before the new agreement, workers at Aggregate Industries' Manchester, Dover and Rochester locations operated under three separate agreements. However, when the company purchased three additional plants in Boscawen, Hudson and Raymond, the workers at those

facilities also chose to join Local 633 so they could earn the same wages and benefits as their counterparts at the other locations.

After the organizing wins, the number of Aggregate Industries workers in New Hampshire with a powerful and united Teamster voice increased from 50 to more than 100. The local then negotiated one contract for all six plants.

"Without the solidarity and determination of all of the workers, organizing our newest

*I love being a Teamster. Without the union, I would probably still be looking for another job.*

—Robert Marble  
Local 663

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## East Meets West

### Regions Focus on Industry Issues

Approximately 100 Building Material and Construction Trade Division (BM&CTD) delegates met December 6-10 to discuss the state of the industry. The delegates, who attended from the division's Eastern and Western Regions, discussed topics ranging from the state of the industry and safety and health to benefits and division leadership.

"It's been a good conference, which I expected," said Carlos Ramos, a business agent from Local 776 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. "[Division Director] Richard Stern has been very helpful, particularly with ideas for handling a prevailing wage situation in my jurisdiction."

### Focus on Pre-Jobs

One of the focal points of the conference was a discussion of and training about using pre-job forms and the pre-job conference with contractors and other union representatives to make sure Teamster work does not get misassigned. Several division representatives, including Rick Knight of Local 631 in

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A Message from Building Material and Construction Trade Division Director Richard Stern



## Preparing For Success

In the Building Material and Construction Trade Division, we are putting our expertise on the line to grow the division and, in turn, help grow the union.

Recently, General President Jim Hoffa appointed Ed Jacobson as

Assistant to the Director assigned to the waste industry for the United States. As such, he is working closely with the Teamsters Organizing Department and locals around the country to build a unified waste organizing policy. Currently, the Teamsters represent 25,000 industry workers.

This is the kind of coordination we are

proud to take part in. Working together, we can build a stronger union with even more leverage for better contracts. This is something that is sorely needed in the waste industry, and we're committed to making that happen.

But while we continue with this important work, we are also continuing to gain ground and build strength in our other industries. From our work with the PUMP Coalition in the pipeline industry to efforts in the metal trades, and in many other areas, the division is working to increase our numbers and build good contracts. We're all in this together—and together we can build a better, Teamster way of life for each of our members and their families.

## Summing It Up at Aggregate Industries

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members and securing this contract would not have been possible," said Local 633 Field Representative Rick Laughton.

### Benefits of a Teamster Contract

Joe O'Shaughnessy, who has worked in the garage maintenance facility at the Raymond, New Hampshire plant since May 1996, is really excited about the new Teamster agreement.

"Since we approved this contract, the medical plan has been a whole lot better, and the retirement package three times better. A while ago, the company dropped the eyecare benefits to cut costs—at our expense. But

under this new agreement, the vision coverage has been reinstated only to union workers, while the nonunion workers still don't have that benefit," O'Shaughnessy said. "And because of the seniority language in the contract, this company can no longer use favoritism to determine who gets to work overtime anymore. Being a Teamster really helps to secure your future."

### Grateful to be a Teamster

Shortly after the workers joined the union, Robert Marble lost his job in Aggregate Industries' attempt to implement further cut-backs by laying off its employees. However, Local

633 fought for Marble and won his job back. Marble, who has also worked for the Raymond garage maintenance facility since 1996, was reinstated within two weeks without losing any of his benefits.

"I love being a Teamster. Without the union, I would probably still be looking for another job," said Marble, who is married with two children. "I look forward to being a Teamster for many years to come so I can make a good living for my family, and I hope to retire as a Teamster."

# No Wasted Effort

## Coordinated Solid Waste Organizing Campaign Underway

Across the country, Teamster locals are organizing workers in the solid waste industry. The growth is no accident—the Teamsters Building Material & Construction Trade Division and the Teamsters Organizing Department are working hard together to make sure workers in the waste industry have fair and strong representation and a good union contract.

“Every day, these men and women work long days, performing a critical job in our communities,” said Jeff Farmer, Director of the Teamsters Organizing Department. “Their pay, benefits and the way they are treated need to reflect their dedication.”

### Victory at BFI

One of the most celebrated recent victories happened at Allied Waste/BFI in Atlanta, where workers at the company’s Bankhead Highway center voted by an 8-1 margin, 80-10, in late February to join Local 728 in Atlanta. A second group in Tyrone, Georgia voted March 19 to join Local 728, also by an 8-1 margin, and a third group in

Lawrenceville and Gainesville, Georgia voted on April 2 to join the local.

In addition to Metropolitan Atlanta, the Teamsters are organizing waste workers at various companies in the Boston area, in Central Pennsylvania and are preparing two new metro area campaigns in coming months.

“The campaign got off to a winning start at Bankhead because we had a solid plan for winning, and the workers did such a great job educating themselves and the community,” said Lead Organizer Chuck Stiles, a 19-year Teamster who has worked for the Organizing Department for the past four years. “We did house calls at all the workers’ homes before filing for the election, and educated all the workers. We also worked closely with the various community, religious, civil rights and political groups in Metro Atlanta—we had many allies. Teamsters are there for them, as they are there for Teamsters. We got the workers out into the community to explain the issues to community leaders. The workers really responded and took such an active role. They met with BFI’s major customers and explained what they were going through.”

Working with community allies was critical for the campaign’s success.

“The idea is that we are building a movement in Atlanta to support trash workers and their families, so that we can organize the entire industry, not just one shop,” said Celia Petty, Deputy Director of the Teamsters Organizing Department. “Religious leaders, political leaders, and civil rights leaders see this as a broader campaign to ensure quality jobs in the community, equal treatment, worker and neighborhood

safety, and corporate responsibility. When the majority of the industry is organized, workers have some real power and can begin setting standards for wages, benefits and working conditions.”

The workers received support from other BFI workers as well. During a meeting one Saturday before the organizing vote, six BFI workers from Huntington, West Virginia came to Atlanta to support their brothers and sisters.

“They worked 12 hours the day before and then drove 600 miles to Atlanta,” Stiles said. “It was a great show of support.”

### Job Security

Charles Johnson, a nine-year Allied Waste/BFI employee who drives a roll-off truck, which hauls steel waste containers, said he is working longer for less.

“The company has made us do more and more stops, and work longer, but we don’t get any more pay. The longer we work, the more our hourly rate drops,” Johnson said.

But even with the hourly rate falling, job security is on the minds of nearly every worker. Allied Waste/BFI has a strict “zero tolerance” policy, which means that if a driver gets into an accident, even a minor mishap that’s ruled unavoidable, the worker faces termination after the first incident.

“You’re always walking on ice,” said Brian Cooper, a residential driver and 10-year employee. “It shouldn’t be like that.”

“If you hit the rear of a vehicle in front of you, or if you back into a vehicle, you’re fired,” Finch added.

Other important issues to workers include improved health coverage and pensions, consistent work rules and having a voice at work. The workers knew what issues were important, but first they needed to beat the company, which was waging a vicious anti-union campaign. Thanks to the organizers and all the workers themselves, they will have a stronger voice at work.

Any local union seeking help with waste campaigns should call the Organizing Department at (202) 624-8718.



# Local 853 Members Work to Bridge Bay

In January, members of Local 853 participated in much more than an ordinary day's work as they transported nearly 12,000 cubic yards of concrete over, across and underneath the existing San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The concrete was then placed in footings on Yerba Buena Island for the replacement span of the eastern section of the Bay Bridge, which was originally built during the 1930s, and which failed during the Loma Prieta earthquake in October 1989.

"This was the West Coast version of the 'Big Dig,'" said Rome Aloise, Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer. "The Local 853 members at RMC Pacific Materials showed their expertise and professionalism during the two continuous pours, which each lasted more than 30 hours. They have every reason to be proud of their part in making history."

"All the work was done with the existing bridge open and traffic going back and forth without a single accident," said Phil Tarantino, Local 853 Vice President and Director of Construction. "With the heavy traffic in the area, hauling more than 1,100 loads of concrete without any traffic accidents is an accomplishment. These members are used to coping with these difficult conditions every day."

The traffic wasn't the only challenge on the job. The steep terrain and the need for 5,000 cubic yards of concrete to harden simultaneously added an unusual challenge, as well.

## Cold As Ice

Business Agent Bo Morgan said the members met the challenge by loading two huge blocks of ice into the trucks' mixer drums before loading the concrete at the plants, and then they shot nitrogen into the loads at the job site before unloading. The effect, he said, was to lower and regulate the concrete's temperature so all the concrete in the forms set up at the same time for the greatest strength. Once the loads were "nitroed," drivers took the loads up a hill on Yerba Buena Island in the middle of San Francisco Bay to where the footings were located. During the pours, which started on



Friday nights and continued into the following Sundays, it was common to see two trucks backed up to each of six pump trucks placing concrete into the massive footings.

Adjacent to man-made Treasure Island, which was built in the 1930s for a World's Exposition and later used as a military base, Yerba Buena Island serves as an anchorage point for the eastern span of the bridge. The only other significant island in San Francisco Bay is Alcatraz.

Each of the pours, which were visible from the bridge and the surrounding East Bay shoreline, went smoothly as shifts of 50 drivers hauled concrete from plants on either side of the Bay and within Local 853's jurisdiction.

"Our members worked both day and night, in marginal weather and in sunshine, on two different weekends to make this pour happen," Aloise said. "The members can feel good about what they did, and can tell their children and grandchildren that they as Teamsters helped build the new Bay Bridge."

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# Casino Ready-Mix Loses Gamble

## After Seven Years, Company Forced to Pay Out

Casino Ready-Mix gambled by not hiring union labor—and lost badly. Recently, two Teamsters and a member of the Operating Engineers were awarded a total of nearly \$150,000 in back pay and benefits when the ready-mix company refused to hire them because they were union members.

Wayne King Sr., a business agent at Local 631 in Las Vegas, was one of the awardees. King said the local knew the company was hiring drivers, so they sent a few guys over who had little or no experience. Those men were hired, and the next day, King said he and Bill Dooley, then a business agent for the local, and Charlie Phillips, an Operating Engineers member, all applied for jobs as well. King said all three were extremely qualified for the position, but they all wore their union gear—shirts and hats—and made it clear that they wanted to organize a bargaining unit at the company. Casino Ready-Mix took the applications but would not hire the three.

After years of litigation—during which Dooley, unfortunately, passed away before seeing the case through—the courts upheld the initial administrative law judge’s decision. In the



last step of that court process, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case, upholding the initial decision by default and leaving the company without any further appeal options. The judge agreed that the three men had established that the company was in a hiring mode, and that the only reason the men weren’t hired was their union affiliations. In the end, the court held that the company owed King and Dooley approximately \$65,000 apiece and owed Phillips \$20,000.

“We set the precedent that you can go in there and actively tell them you’re union and you want a job, and that’s legal,” King said. “That is very important.”

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Vegas; Dale Robbins of Local 315 in Martinez, California; Mike Tobin of Local 150 in Sacramento, California; Eastern Region International Representative Bubba Davis; and Central Region Director Bob White, worked through a pre-job conference role-play with Teamsters Education Director Mary Hardiman to demonstrate good and bad techniques in those situations.

Stern emphasized not only that division representatives need to turn in the forms, but that they need to make sure they’re signed by both the local union and the contractor.

“It’s the same as signing a contract,” Stern said.

Stern also briefed the delegates on a new computerized jurisdiction system that will allow the division to quickly search for signed pre-job forms, arbitrated decisions on jurisdiction, jurisdictional assignment letters and craft committee decisions. He said there are approximately 600 of these forms inputted into the system at this time, and 80 percent of those are pipeline jobs. The forms can be used to track jurisdiction, which is extremely critical in an industry where many different unions are vying for jurisdiction on a variety of equipment.

“This is probably the most important form you can get to us right now,” said Chuck Gagnon, Eastern Region Director. “This is for the benefit of everyone in the construction industry.”

“For 20 years, all of us have been saying the biggest problem in this industry is jurisdiction,” Hardiman said. “Now we have a tool for dealing with that.”

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## A Message from Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa



# We'll Continue to Fight

Our union continues to play a leading role in the fight for universal health insurance and to protect worker pensions. Over the past several months there have been significant assaults on workers' rights—whether it be the presidential platform of the Republican National Committee or the proposals in Congress to restrict overtime pay.

Although the White House may want to distract us with other issues, we must keep the focus on programs and promises critical to working families.

The Teamsters has always attracted politically active members that are not afraid

to voice their opinions, write letters or volunteer for campaigns. I urge you to join DRIVE, our political action fund. By doing so, you will increase our political clout and ensure the voice of working families is heard. To access information about DRIVE, please go to our website at [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org).

A collective, strong voice is the best weapon to battle Big Business interests in the White House and Congress.

Remember, United We Win!

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