



**Construction & General Building  
Laborers' Local 79**  
131 W 33rd Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Phone: 212-465-7900 Fax: 212-465-7903



RETIREE NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2021

# LOCAL 79 NEWS

CONSTRUCTION & GENERAL BUILDING LABORERS



## IMPORTANT UPDATES

*Out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with government protocols, Local 79 at this moment has scaled back outdoor rallies and postponed all large-scale indoor gatherings until further notice. Future membership meetings will now be available via an individualized Zoom webinar link sent by email.*

*The Union Hall is open for appointments only. To schedule an appointment or for any questions, please call 212-465-7900.*

*Contact information for the Mason Tenders District Council's Trust Funds can be found on our website at [local79.org/funds](http://local79.org/funds).*

**[www.local79.org](http://www.local79.org)**



## Laborers Fight Back Against Worker Exploitation

**OUR ORGANIZING HAS PUT THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY ON NOTICE OF THE POWER AND STRENGTH OF OUR UNION.**

For the launch of our Laborers Fight Back campaign in September, over 600 hundred members turned out to declare "I am worthy" and speak out against worker exploitation by body shops, which are non-union contractors that target formerly incarcerated workers who must maintain employment as a condition of parole. "This fight has been a long time coming and builds on all the past battles that we have won together through the years," said Vice President John Norbury.

## Local 79 Signs Historic Deal with L&M Development and Renews NYC PLAs

**IN NOVEMBER, OUR UNION ANNOUNCED AN AGREEMENT WITH L+M DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, THE LARGEST AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPER IN NEW YORK CITY.**

This deal covers thousands of units across the city and the first project has already begun in East Harlem on the largest residential passive house building in the country. Business Manager Mike Prohaska said, "Our agreement is setting a new precedent for how to build permanently affordable housing with union labor, hire locally and create more pathways to the middle class."

The NYC Building Trades also signed a \$40 billion dollar five-year Project Labor Agreement with the Mayor last year which sets a new precedent of community hiring for the rest of the nation. Finally, Governor Cuomo has announced a new \$50 billion plan for public infrastructure and we look forward to negotiating an agreement for this work.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Info

COVID-19 vaccinations will be available for no cost to all members. If you are over the age of 65, you are eligible to schedule an appointment in New York. We encourage all qualifying members to receive the vaccine. If you have any individual concerns, you should reach out to a qualified medical professional. In New York State, call 1-833-697-4829 to determine your eligibility status and schedule an appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine.

**LEARN MORE** > [nylaborers.care/covid19](https://nylaborers.care/covid19)



**DUES NEWS**  
**Member Dues: \$37/month**  
**Retiree Dues: \$8/month**

*REMINDER:* Dues payments must not go over two months without being paid or the member will be suspended.

Members' Union Book numbers must be written on their checks or money orders when paying dues by mail. Members may also call the Dues Department and provide their book number to pay by credit card.

**UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO**

Local 79 will periodically send out timely information via email or text message. Invitations for our monthly membership meeting will be sent out by email with an individualized zoom link. To check or update your contact information, call Melissa at 212-465-7976.

**TRUST FUNDS SUMMARY**

Members should feel secure knowing that according to last year's accounting our Annuity Fund's net return was 14.47%, our Pension Fund is over 100% funded and our Medical/Welfare Fund has approximately two years in reserves. We expect another year of positive returns to be announced by the Trust Funds in April.

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An affiliate of: the Mason Tenders District Council of Greater New York and Long Island, LiUNA; the New York City Central Labor Council; the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York; and the New York State AFL-CIO.

  **Follow us on Facebook & Twitter**

**Contact information, events calendar, news, and general information can be found at [www.local79.org](http://www.local79.org)**



**MESSAGE FROM  
BUSINESS MANAGER  
MIKE PROHASKA**

First and foremost, I am proud that the other trustees and I stepped up to send a 13th check to retirees at the end of the year and granted a credit of up to 300 hours of work in 2020 for active members to qualify for the 2021 health-care eligibility requirement. We worked diligently to make sure our funds have strong reserves so we can support our membership during extraordinary circumstances like now.

No matter what, this pandemic has spotlighted Local 79 at its finest. Our union is full of true working-class heroes that have demonstrated the true power of commitment and solidarity in action. This is not the time for us to let up and we must continue to be vigilant in bringing our country back better and stronger.

Our out-of-work list dropped below 350 as of our January Membership Meeting. Work hours have been increasing since the shutdown in the Spring and our hours worked are in line with our historical numbers. This is an impressive feat given the challenges we have faced.

We should all be very proud of our apprenticeship and training program. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have offered a wide-array of virtual classes and in the Fall launched essential in-person instruction. We have also brought in new apprentices and made sure our members are prepared for new Site Safety Training requirements going into effect. Our apprentices are the future of our union. That is why I am proud to announce that over the last 10 years we had an over 80% retention rate of graduated apprentices and this year we hit a milestone of over 40 graduates with 20+ years in the local.

I thank everyone who voted in the 2020 election. American democracy is built on the recognition of our right to self-governance and your vote is the fulfilment and expression of that freedom. New York City has a crucial election cycle coming up this June with primaries determining our next mayor, comptroller, Manhattan DA, borough presidents and the majority of the city council. For more information specific to where you live, visit [www.liunavotes.org](http://www.liunavotes.org). If you want to join our political action team, call Ari at 646-721-1235.

Whoever you support, we can all agree that baseless, frivolous and unfounded attempts to throw out or overturn votes is a threat to law and order and a direct assault on our great republic. Through war and peace, good times and bad times, orderly transition of power must be a shining example of the rule of law. We must continue to fight to make our country a beacon of hope.

In solidarity,



**LiUNA!**  
*Feel the Power*

**LiUNA's Marty  
Walsh Appointed  
Labor Secretary**



In early January, newly elected President Joe Biden announced his appointment of LiUNA member Marty Walsh as Secretary of Labor. Marty started his career at Laborers' Local 223 and was later

**Longterm Staff  
Announce their  
Retirement**

We congratulate Kenneth Brancaccio, Jose Andino and Juan Mazylian on their retirements and thank them for their many years of dedicated service.

Kenny became a LiUNA member in 1981 and served our union for over a decade as our President and retires as our Secretary-Treasurer. "When Local 79 was first chartered in 1996," said



Business Manager Mike Prohaska, "Kenny Brancaccio was one of the first leaders in our union. Back then, Local 79 worked less than half the amount of hours as we do now and had almost no money

head of the Boston Building Trades Council before his successful election to become Mayor of Boston. "Marty is a working-class warrior," said Chaz Rynkiewicz, Executive Board member. "We are proud that one of our very own will be leading the fight for labor justice in our national government." On his first day in office, Biden fired the anti-union head of the NLRB who led the lawsuit against Local 79's use of an inflatable rat. Biden also signed an executive order that stated it is "the policy of the United States to encourage union organizing and collective bargaining." This is why we said Biden is the real deal and a true friend of LiUNA and the entire labor movement. Our union stands ready to rebuild our country out of the darkness of the pandemic.

in the bank. Kenny now leaves us in a strong financial position including our recent acquisition of our own office condominium."

Jose Andino retires as a longtime leader in our union who proudly served as Business Agent for the demolition industry. Jose was an Executive Board member for the last 5 years and previously was our Sergeant-at-Arms from 2012 to 2015 and before that was a longstanding Auditor. According to President Anthony Vita, "Jose is a tried and true Laborer. No matter what, Jose always stepped up to aid our union in whatever was needed."

Our Membership Coordinator Juan Mazylian retires after many decades of leadership, which begins and ends with Local 79. Juan joined us during our historic demolition and asbestos campaigns in the



**HEART 9/11  
Honors BM  
Prohaska**

Business Manager Mike Prohaska was honored at the September fundraiser of H.E.A.R.T. 9/11, an organization of union firefighters, policemen and construction



workers that volunteer to help those in need of emergency aid response. Hundreds of Local 79 members over the last decade have been deployed on countless service trips and have helped themselves through helping others. "Under Mike's leadership, Local 79 has greatly expanded their commitment to our organization and made a lasting impact on lives around the globe," said Bill Keegan, Founder and President of H.E.A.R.T. 9/11.

1990s and advocated for the rights of immigrant workers before Congress. After leadership roles at other LiUNA locals, Juan returned in 2012 to Local 79 as a Business Agent and was a leading activist in Frente Hispano. "Juan organized our annual Flushing Meadows Park Cleanup," said Sergeant-at-Arms Barrie Smith, "He always was someone looking to bring people together to help others."

