Public Works Employee Memorial

The above Memorial is dedicated to the Public Works employees who have lost their lives while performing public duties for the people of New Hampshire. This memorial is located in front of the NHDOT building at 7 Hazen Drive in Concord and features a walkway and reflection garden surrounded by four gray granite benches representing the four seasons during which public works employees are always on call. Four large black granite monuments bear the names of those who died on duty, and a black granite sign welcomes visitors.

On dedication day, June 5, 2019, 37 names were inscribed on the monuments, dating from 1893 to 2016. Due to COVID-19, there were no new names added to the monuments last year. This year, however, a number of volunteers are ready and spent yesterday working to clean up the property and get it ready for new dedications. But Mother Nature must agree and the weather must stay at a consistent temperature of 70 degrees for a period of time before new names can be added. This year approximately eleven new names will be added and those dedicated employees honored and remembered.

In this special edition of the SEA News, we focus on you, your work, and your commitment to the Granite State!
A Message of Thanks

FROM THE PRESIDENT & THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This week we recognize that Public Works Agencies and Municipal Highway Crews are part of our essential critical infrastructure workforce. With the impacts of COVID-19 on your workforces this year, we know that there is no better time to say thank you than now.

The exemplary work you perform during extraordinary circumstances is commendable. Please accept my sincere “Thank you” for your dedication and the hard work that you continue to do on behalf of the citizens of the Granite State. The general public should know that you have a strong set of values that you embody every day—those of family, honesty, teamwork, accountability, and always prioritizing the needs of our citizens.

The facts are such; that you report for work, work numerous hours straight, unselfishly, for the citizens of the Granite State. We recognize that you are well trained and seasoned for such expectations, but we also recognize that these have been challenging times.

In closing, I and the Board of Directors here at the SEA/SEIU 1984, “Thank you” once again for the tremendous exemplary effort that each and every one of you have collectively put forth throughout the year.

Every year National Public Works Week gets bigger and better. The number of participating municipalities continues to grow, which means the number of citizens exposed to the value of public works grows. One of the main goals is to educate the general public about the value and necessities of public works projects throughout North America and public works professionals like you!

Since 1960, we have celebrated National Public Works Week. Across North America, thousands of members use this week to energize and educate the public on the importance of public works to their daily lives: planning, building, managing, and operating at the heart of their local communities to improve everyday quality of life.

Here in the Granite State, we recognize that our Public Works employees are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for 365 days a year. They work quietly and tirelessly whenever they are needed. Their work is dangerous, and their service often goes unrecognized. We at the SEA thank you for that service and dedication, especially during the challenging times of the past year.
On Friday, May 14, 2021, the subunit bargaining team representing the Department of Transportation met with the State’s bargaining team for mediation. The DOT team has been in negotiations with the State since December of 2020 and has been trying hard to negotiate some much-needed economic changes in the DOT contract.

These include:

- Tool Rental Increases
- Removing the requirement to use comp time before annual time
- Providing year-round maintenance stipends
- Increasing wages for DOT employees who are required to have a CDL and are subject to random drug testing
- A pay increase for employees who have a CDL medical card
- Exemption from the loss of overtime pay when using unscheduled sick
- Double OT pay for employees who are called back to work on a major holiday
- 40-hour workweek schedules for employees who have the same job classifications

During negotiations, the SEA/DOT team repeatedly argued that turnover and retention rates are at critical levels for maintenance divisions. The DOT team is frustrated with the State for not attempting to accept any of the DOT team’s proposals or offering any proposal ideas to address the major problems facing workers at the agency.

Due to the continued impasse, NH labor law requires the SEA and the State teams to now go into fact-finding where the SEA team will present their proposals to a fact-finder appointed to hear the case. The State will present counterarguments to the DOT team’s proposals in an attempt to get the fact-finder to disagree with the DOT team’s requests. Once the fact-finding hearing is complete, the fact-finder writes a report and presents it to the parties. In the report, there will be an analysis of the arguments and recommendations for a new contract between the parties.

Fact-finding is a very important step for the SEA members at the DOT to undertake. The DOT unit has not gone to fact-finding over the sub-unit contract before, and this next phase will help to decide what a new contract looks like. The SEA is moving ahead to generate the report for the fact finder and anticipates that the parties should have a hearing sometime later this summer.

Watch for more updates.

Update on Appeal

The appeal of New Hampshire Department of Transportation

In April of 2019, the State of NH DOT imposed a new policy requiring CDL positions to hold CDL medical cards to be eligible for transfers, promotions, and demotions. This new policy did not accompany any pay increase, nor did DOT cover the cost of the medical card. The SEA filed an unfair labor practice against the DOT due to its failure to bargain the new requirement, and on June 23, 2020, the PELRB found in favor of the SEA and ordered the DOT to cease and desist from requiring CDL medical cards. The DOT has since appealed the decision to the NH Supreme Court. The SEA filed its brief on May 19, 2021. The Court will next likely schedule oral arguments with the parties.
Stories FROM THE SHEDS

VERSATILITY!

The arc welder emitted the sounds of frying bacon as a shower of sparks fizzled to the ground. Its handler, stepping out from behind the heavy plow frame that was the subject of his attention, flipped up his mask and, with a chuckle, said, “You can’t use those paper masks they give us for COVID when you’re on the welder. They just catch fire.”

Harry Lindsay is the Chapter President of the Exeter Public Works Union, and when he is not repairing equipment, he serves as the conduit of information to his members. Updates on meetings with management, collective bargaining, and unit safety are among the many topics that Lindsay discusses daily with his union.

The year of the pandemic has posed a series of challenges and adversities that we are still learning to navigate nearly 15 months later. Over the course of 2020, and what we have seen of 2021, individuals in the workforce have learned to adapt, evolve, and overcome the hardships posed to them. Whether this is through new PPE requirements, stay-at-home orders, learning to homeschool their children, or any other number of struggles, the general public has developed a newfound sense of resiliency.

“We’ve learned to adapt to these challenges, and luckily for us, we will be renegotiating our contract this year, and that will allow us to address these challenges directly,” said Lindsay.

DEDICATION!

Sincere Thanks to
Chapter 17 President Mark Hamilton

During the Mother’s Day flooding a few years back, he missed what would later be recalled as his mother’s last mother’s day so that he could repair the roads to let others spend mother’s day with their loved ones. A sacrifice no one should ever have to make but you did! Thank you for your service to the citizens of the Granite State!

CONGRATULATIONS

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Congratulations to Tom Leach, a highway maintainer who recently received his GED! Tom took classes to obtain the honor while raising his family and being an active union member, 15+ years after dropping out of high school! Everyone knows what a challenge it is to make that kind of a decision, and to do it with a full-time job and family is a challenge like none other.

Congratulations, Tom, on an accomplishment that you, your family, and your union are proud of!
A huge shout out to all the NHDOT members who helped vaccinate tens of thousands (OVER 36K) of granite staters at the NH Motor Speedway over three separate weekends!

Thank you for helping to keep us all safe!

While we can’t name every NHDOT member who helped protect our communities and families by going above and beyond their normal duties staffing phone centers and staffing vaccination clinics, we want to highlight a group of NHDOT members who went above and beyond to help a record number of granite staters get vaccinated!

Thank you to Kyle Bryant, Chris White, Jason Damren, Russel LeBaron, John DeBonis Jr. Jacob Belanger, John Faulkner, Rob Lambert, Chris Rose Clark, Gary Morrison, Anthony Reynolds, Gary LeBlanc, Bill Milburn, Eric Healy, Jeff Zedalis, and Mark Hamilton.

"Safety Patrol stayed with me until the flatbed truck arrived. Made sure that both myself, and my vehicle were safe from other vehicles on the highway. Was very re-assuring and helpful that everything would work out."
(Spaulding Turnpike) 8-4-19

Thank you to all who assisted in the refresh and clean-up of the Memorial site on Thursday, May 20th!
Your help and dedication are much appreciated!!

"Driver saw we’d been in an accident and stopped to ask if we are ok. He cleaned the debris of the road and put his lights on so we were safe.
(I-95) 10-9-19

Thank you to all who continued to "go to the office" inside or out every day to keep our infrastructure moving and safe even during the unknown!!
We appreciate you.

"Chris T was amazing! I had a car full of kids and he changed my tire and put air in it in the rain! He was kind, overly helpful and felt like an angel. I cannot say enough good things!"
(I-95) 8-19-19

"The patrol drivers name was Mike. I had gotten a flat tire on I-93 heading south (a little before the Hooksett toll booth). He was there within 10 minutes of when I had to pull over. He quickly changed my tire and I was on my way. He was very courteous and I really appreciated the help."
(I-93) 9-27-19