

Plumbers spearhead Deer Island

by Hugh Kelleher, PHCC of
Gr. Boston Executive Director

A U.S. district court judge, declaring Boston Harbor one of the most polluted in the nation, determined that the region's wastewater discharges violated the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972. Under court order, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is building new wastewater treatment facilities to control the pollution.

The MWRA established the Boston Harbor Project, a massive \$3.5 billion, 11-year program. The centerpiece of the project is a new primary and secondary treatment plant on the 210-acre peninsula off Winthrop known as Deer Island.

Plumbers have played an essential role in building this enormous project which is creating the second largest wastewater treatment plant in the nation. The Deer Island wastewater plant, along with the newly-constructed Nut Island Headworks in Quincy, will be able to serve the needs of over 2.5 million Boston area residents. The plants will have the capacity to clean up to 1,270 millions of gallons of sewage each day.

ONE OF THE NATION'S MOST COMPLEX PIPING SYSTEMS

When most people think of plumbers, they think of pipes running through their houses that connect sinks and toilets. But, when it came time to install the miles of piping at the Deer Island treatment plant, the range of plumbing systems was enormous.

The plumbing contractors on Deer Island were asked to install

everything from quarter-inch diameter tubes up to pipes large enough for people to walk through. As one contractor put it, "This was not your average plumbing job. The types of piping and their sizes were as great as anything you could find anywhere in the world." The Deer Island plant is the size of a small town—with pipes running everywhere.

Don't let the view from across the harbor, or from an airplane, fool you. What most people notice are the huge ten-story "eggs." The

treatment plant's digesters contain large ductile-iron piping which plumbers from J.C. Higgins and Interstate Mechanical installed using a complex scaffolding and rigging system. But the really impressive parts of Deer Island—at least to the craftsmen who built the plant—are the huge underground galleries through which oversized vehicles can drive.

One local contractor showed a fellow contractor from New York what his firm had built on Deer Island. *Continued on p. 2*



DEER ISLAND'S signature "eggs," which serve as the treatment plant's digesters, are featured in this aerial view.

Deer Island photos: Kevin Kirwin, Regina Villa Associates, courtesy of MWRA

LMCTs: A new model

by Tom Sullivan, LMCT Trustee

The old—and never quite accurate—picture of labor/management relationships in the construction trades was of adversaries at each other's throats. According to this old model, the parties met only when necessary; and, when they did meet, fireworks were expected.

While negotiations still may deadlock and strikes still occur, cooperation, not confrontation, more accurately describes our relationship today. For close to half a century, joint labor/management committees have worked in harmo-

ny to advance common goals including the provision of health and welfare programs, pension plans, and training programs for union journeymen and apprentices.

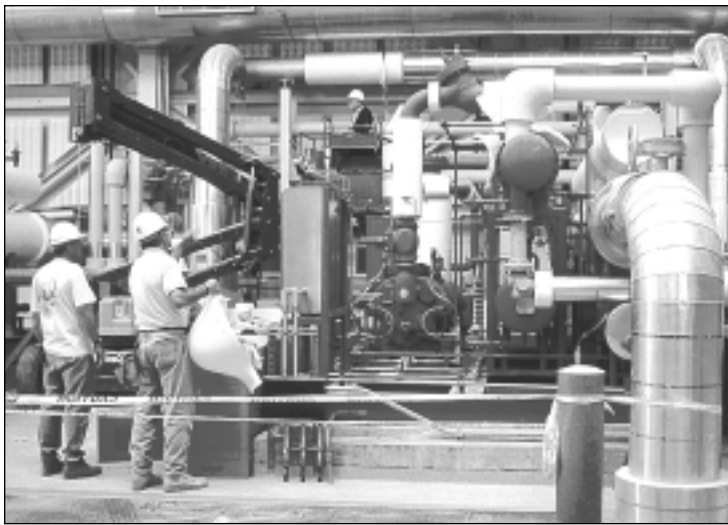
Today, negotiators in the construction industry are creating labor/management cooperation trusts (LMCT) to enhance and expand their mutual efforts to understand and solve industry problems. The Local #12 LMCT, negotiated in 1993, is supported by an employer contribution of 50¢ for every hour worked by a Union journeyman or apprentice.

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The Deer Island plant is the size of a small town—with pipes running everywhere.

For close to half a century, joint labor/management committees have worked in harmony to advance common goals.





A CRYOGENIC COMPRESSOR in the secondary reactor at the Deer Island treatment plant.

Deer Island project is massive

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Island. Walking into one of the galleries beneath the egg-shaped tanks, the New Yorker remarked, "I've never seen so much piping in my life!"

The galleries are packed with a vast array of color-coded piping. These systems include:

- Welded stainless steel piping for pure air systems.
- Another stainless steel system carries methane gas from the eggs back to the power plant. Recycling saves thousands of dollars in energy costs.
- Special plastic pipes for chemical lines
- Miles of cast iron sanitary waste and vent piping
- Special fiberglass reinforced plastic piping used in odor control systems
- Multi-sizes of glass-lined, ductile-iron piping used in various sludge systems
- A variety of pumps that would fascinate any plumber. Some of the pumps are nearly two stories tall. All were piped by local Union contractors and plumbers.
- Gate valves designed like the ones you'd find in a typical basement—except that some of the ones on Deer Island are 20 feet tall.

THE ROLE OF UNION CONTRACTORS

Many Union Local contractors have been involved with the enormous Boston Harbor Project. J.C. Higgins of Stoughton, for example, has sometimes employed upwards of eighty plumbers.

In total, over 300 plumbers have been hired by Union contractors working under a special Project Labor Agreement. These contractors were successful in the public bidding process competing against many local and national non-union contractors.

Some of the contractors who have employed Local #12 plumbers in building the MWRA plant include: William M. Collins Co., P.J. Riley, Harding and Smith, Interstate Engineering, Maurer and Sforza, P.J. Kennedy and Sons, Modern Continental, Total Mechanical, J.F. White/PKF Mark III, Poole and Kent, Walsh Construction of Illinois, Norfolk Mechanical, Thomas O'Connor Co. and PLR Mechanical.

Each contractor's installation is carefully reviewed, not only by state inspectors, but also by independent in-house inspectors. Kaiser Engineering, which is overseeing the entire project, inspected the work as well.

Local #12 continues proud tradition of affirmative action

by Kevin Cotter, Local #12 Business Manager

Local #12 is a forceful advocate for all plumbers regardless of race, gender, or national origin. Our diverse membership reflects our efforts to represent every person who works in the plumbing trades. Over 10% of Local #12's journeymen and over 20% of the apprentices are minorities or women. These percentages reflect a long-standing commitment by the Union to affirmative action.

Joseph Conley, the Local's training director, participates in the Apprentice Preparedness Program (APP) run by the Boston Building Trades Council. APP is a pre-apprenticeship program designed to give young adults the training and skills they will need in order to successfully complete a union apprenticeship program.

Local #12 also participates in the Just a Start program administered by the City of Cambridge. Similar to the APP program, it too is designed to reach out to young adults in the minority community and work with them to ensure they have the skills to succeed in a union apprenticeship program.

Members of the Union also serve on the advisory committees of several inner-city vocational high schools and participate in inner-city trade fairs. Through deeds, as well as words, we are committed to building a diverse membership that reflects the interests of the

communities in which we work.

Many government bodies have passed affirmative action goals and guidelines for construction projects. They are of little value, however, if they are not enforced. The Union works closely with elected officials and regulatory agencies to insure that publicly funded projects follow city, state, and federal minority and female participation rates.

As an example, the file sub bid plumbing work on Hyde Park High School in Boston is valued at over \$1,000,000. The project's general contractor selected a Union, woman-owned, business enterprise plumbing contractor with a successful history of complying with affirmative action policies. The general contractor knew that the Union contractor would offer a diverse work force and be able to meet all affirmative action goals.

Unfortunately, while Local 12 has taken extensive steps to support affirmative action in the plumbing trades, the same can not be said for the non-union sector of the plumbing industry. According to the 1990 Census, the minority participation rate in the plumbing trades was less than 7% for the Greater Boston PMSA. The Census includes both the Union and the non-union sector. Taking away the Union numbers, the non-union minority rate would be even lower than 7%. Clearly, building Union is the best way to insure a diverse workforce in the plumbing trades.

"The MWRA rate-payers deserve a first-class job," said contractor Bob Strickland of William Collins Co. "Anyone who worked on Deer Island knows that they are getting one."

The plumbers, contractors, and other building trades involved in Deer Island can take

pride that the project will be completed on schedule, under budget, and with a remarkable safety record. They can take pride, too, for helping to reclaim Boston Harbor.

As a Local #12 plumber said, "It's the kind of job you'll tell your grandchildren about."

Cooperation, not confrontation

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MEETING CHALLENGES

The LMCT was created to meet challenges in the plumbing construction industry that are not typically resolved through the collective bargaining process. These challenges include: the hazardous nature of construction work, the pressure of competition from employers who do not pay standard area wages or do not provide standard area health and pension benefits, understanding and complying with governmental regulations, and assuring that plumbing codes, materials, and installations truly protect public health and safety.

The LMCT, now in its fifth year, has developed a wide range of initiatives, including public seminars and a newsletter, to encourage the free flow of ideas and information throughout our industry. We also offer training programs that lead to the certifi-

cation of journeymen and apprentices for the specialized demands of trades such as medical gases, cross connection control, working with hazardous materials, and the proper handling of lead and asbestos.

We now have a system to monitor and enforce compliance with federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, and standards governing the work and work sites of employers.

Perhaps most importantly, the LMCT is facilitating the exchange of information among the officers and members of Local #12 and our employing subcontractors concerning projects, contracts, events, trends, and a host of other important matters. We give special attention to the promotion of quality work, efficient operations, and the economic competitiveness of the unionized sector of the construction industry.

PLAs play role at Deer Island

by Kevin Cotter, Local #12 Business Manager

Over 300 plumbers and many other workers have been hired to build Deer Island under a special Project Labor Agreement (PLA). The huge project provides an opportunity to look at the landmark PLA tool and its impact on the highly successful project.

With a no-strike labor agreement in place, the contractors and their workers have moved the project ahead at an impressive pace. Under the PLA, 20 million man-hours have been logged with no time lost due to strikes or lockouts. Of 257 subcontracts awarded, 102 were awarded to non-union contractors.

Now over 90% complete, contractors and plumbers can point to the Deer and Nut Island plants—and the PLA—with pride.



POINTING TO a piece of pipe held by U.S. Congressman Barney Frank is LMCT Trustee, Tom Sullivan. Looking on are Local #12 Training Director, Joe Conley (L) and Local #12 Business Agent, Joe Green. Frank was visiting the Local's Training Facility in Dorchester.



WELCOME Local #12 Business Manager, Kevin Cotter (L), and PHCC of G. Boston Executive Director, Hugh Kelleher. Both assumed their new positions in January.

Photos this page: Harry Brett

Call us PHCC of Greater Boston

by Tom Sullivan, LMCT Trustee

It is now official: Our local plumbing contractors' association, the GBPHCC, has changed its name to Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of Greater Boston, Inc.

Originally organized in 1883, the contractors' association was incorporated in Massachusetts in 1917 as the Master Plumbers' Association of Boston and Vicinity, Inc. Throughout its long history, this Association has been the bargaining agent for plumb-

ing subcontracting companies which employ U.A. Plumbers' Boston Local #12 journeymen and apprentices.

The current officers of the PHCC of Greater Boston, Inc. are President Charles P. Riley II, (P.J. Riley Co.); Vice-President John F. O'Leary (J.C. Higgins Corp.); Clerk-Treasurer Paul R. Crane (Crane Plumbing & Heating) and Assistant Clerk-Treasurer Robert A. Strickland (William M. Collins Co.). Hugh Kelleher is Executive Director.

DO THE MATH

by Joe Green, Local #12 Business Agent

What is the area, in square inches, of a pipe that has a four-inch diameter?

Formula: $d^2 \times .7854 = \text{Area in sq. inches.}$

Example: $4^2 \times .7854$

$16 \times .7854$

$12.5664 \text{ sq. inches}$



Or, you can use the pipe's radius to determine the area. The radius is half of the diameter.

$r = 4 \div 2$

$r = 2$

Formula: $r^2 \times \pi = \text{Area in sq. inches.}$

Example: $2^2 \times 3.141$

4×3.141

$12.5664 \text{ sq. inches}$

Notes:

π (3.141) is the circumference (the distance around a circle) of a circle that has a one-inch diameter.

.7854 is the number of square inches in a circle that has a one-inch diameter.

THE PIPELINE

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YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO SAFE

Uniting for safety at Deer Island project

by Hugh Kelleher, PHCC of Gr. Boston Executive Director

Safety is a key concern on any construction site. Union contractors and workers take this part of the job especially seriously. And when you get to a job the size of Deer Island—which at times has involved 3,000 workers—the level of attention to safety is very high indeed.

Anyone who has ever worked on a construction job can tell you that the more workers there are at a site, the greater the safety risks. To complicate matters, the Deer Island project combines a great number of workers with an unusually dense site that forces them to work in close proximity.

Together, the plumbing contractors and their Union employees are taking an aggressive approach to safety. Every worker has to successfully pass a pre-hire



A PLUMBER tightens a bolt at the Deer Island project.

drug and alcohol test. Workers are issued hard hats and goggles and are expected to use them.

Plumbers on scaffolding or ladders over six-feet high are required to wear safety harnesses. These have been shown to be much more effective at preventing injuries than the old-style safety belts which can result in spinal and internal injuries if a fall occurs.

Both workers and contractors are benefitting from the special safety efforts. Contractors typically hold weekly safety meetings where they review issues such as working in confined spaces, ladder safety, and the care of power tools.

You aren't likely to find a chewed-up power cord on Deer

Island. The on-site safety inspectors insist that risky tools be immediately taken out of service. Something else you won't find on Deer Island: a worker down in a manhole without OSHA-required protection. Union contractors and workers understand that preventing accidents makes sense for everyone.

Because of the emphasis on safety, the injury rate has been below that of comparable projects. And contractors have benefited because their Worker Comp rates have been lower.

Safety, then, is a win-win situation for everyone at Deer Island. And it is a partnership between Union workers and Union contractors that helped make this possible.

New programs help UA grow

by Joe Green, Local #12 Business Agent

Local #12 has increased its membership by 55 new members over the last year with several programs.

The Union's COMET program trains members to talk with non-union plumbers about the benefits of union contracts. Also, UA General President Martin Maddaloni introduced the "Temporary Amnesty Program" whereby former UA members

could re-join the union for a flat \$200 re-initiation fee. The 1997 program applied to former journeymen members expelled for non-payment of dues unrelated to disciplinary charges. The amnesty program was initiated as the first step in a major industry organizing effort.

Plumbers and Gasfitters Local #12 is offering non-union plumbers a reduced rate of \$200 to join the union if they assist with organizing efforts.

THE PIPELINE

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The mission of the LMCT is to both protect public health and safety by ensuring that plumbing systems are properly designed, installed, and inspected and to promote the mutual interests of our industry's licensed craftsmen and their subcontractor employers.

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