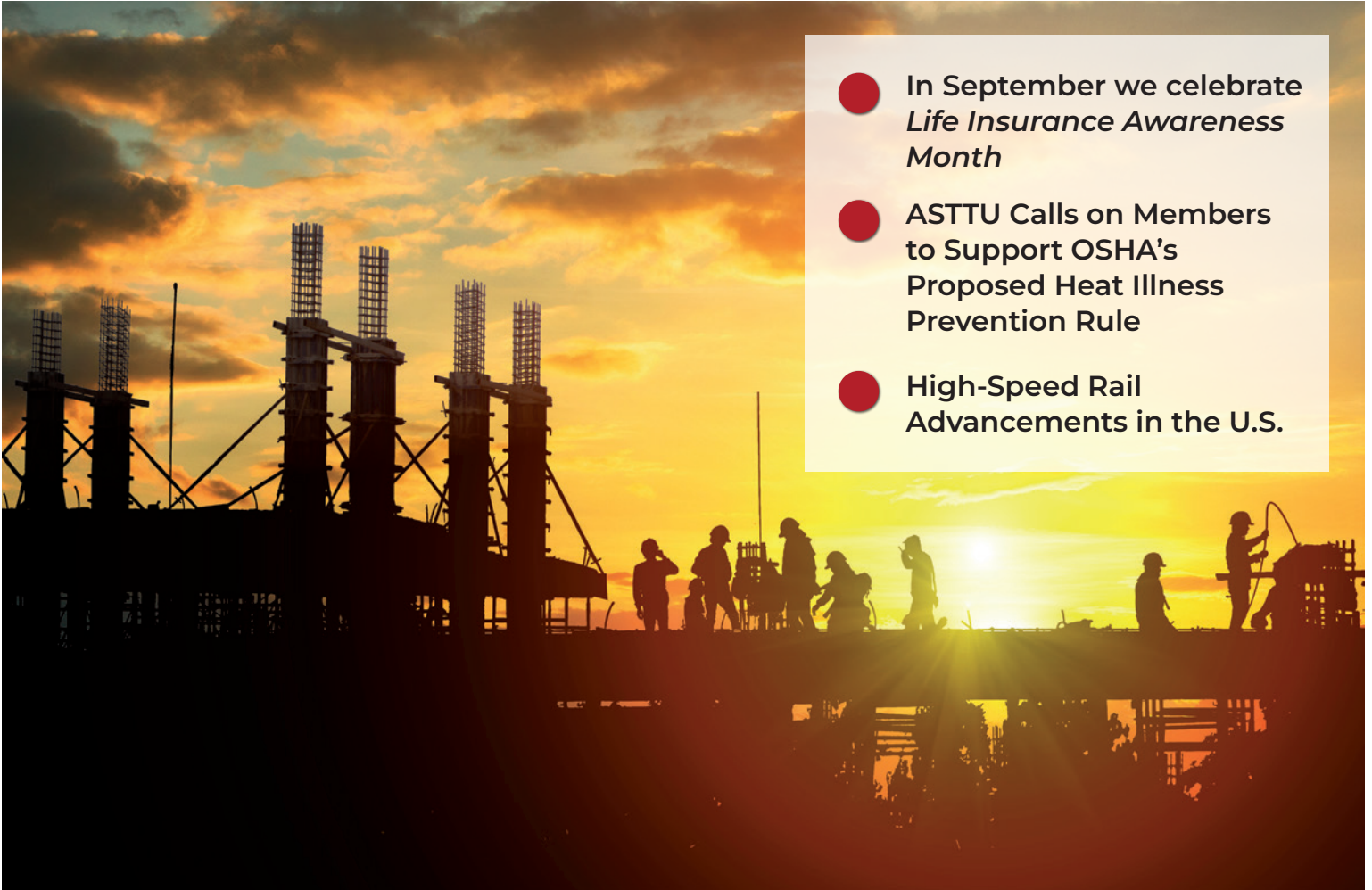


The Trade & Transit Times

Your Guide to Skilled Trade and Transportation Union News



- In September we celebrate *Life Insurance Awareness Month*
- ASTTU Calls on Members to Support OSHA's Proposed Heat Illness Prevention Rule
- High-Speed Rail Advancements in the U.S.

In September we celebrate *Life Insurance Awareness Month*



Life Insurance Awareness Month is designed to educate individuals about the importance of life insurance as part of a sound financial plan, increase awareness of its benefits, and encourage people to evaluate their coverage needs to ensure that loved ones are financially protected. The ASTTU offers members voluntary insurance benefits, including Life Insurance, to help protect what matters most. For more information, visit: www.asttu.org.

ASTTU Calls on Members to Support OSHA's Proposed Heat Illness Prevention Rule

The Association of Skilled Trade and Transportation Unions (ASTTU) is strongly backing OSHA's newly proposed regulation to prevent heat-related illnesses and injuries in outdoor and indoor work settings. The rule aims to protect millions of workers across construction, manufacturing, utilities, and transportation industries who are at risk of hazardous heat exposure. As climate change continues to drive up temperatures, heat safety standards are becoming increasingly critical for ensuring worker health and safety.

Understanding Why This Rule Is Critical

For many of ASTTU's members, extreme heat is a constant threat. Electricians, plumbers, HVAC technicians, truck drivers, and machine operators often work in high-risk environments that can quickly become dangerous when temperatures soar. Prolonged heat exposure in these settings can lead to heat stress, dehydration, exhaustion, or even life-threatening conditions like heat stroke. The new OSHA rule addresses this by requiring employers to implement comprehensive heat illness prevention plans to safeguard workers in such conditions.

ASTTU's Commitment to Heat Justice

On September 5, 2024, ASTTU's Director of Membership and Benefits, Carl Galdine, joined labor leaders and safety advocates at the **National COSH Fired Up! Town Hall: Workers Speak Out for Heat Justice**. Also in attendance were prominent figures such as OSHA Assistant Secretary of Labor Doug Parker and U.S. Representative Judy Chu (D-CA) to highlight the urgency of protecting workers from heat hazards. The event emphasized that strong, enforceable standards are necessary to prevent heat-related tragedies and ensure that no worker has to choose between their health and their livelihood.

To advance these efforts, ASTTU has partnered with **National COSH** to include their **Petition for Heat Justice** at the **ASTTU Action Center**. The petition urges the Biden Administration to prioritize heat protections and gives ASTTU members and supporters an opportunity to voice their support for this important cause. We encourage all members to visit our Action Center and sign the petition to show their support for stronger worker safety standards.

Strengths and Gaps in the Proposed Rule

The proposed OSHA rule is based on scientific evidence and includes several strong measures, such as mandatory access to water, shaded rest areas, and periodic breaks at temperatures of 80°F or higher, with paid rest breaks at 90°F. It also calls for written heat illness prevention plans and training for both supervisors and workers to recognize and respond to signs of heat stress.

However, ASTTU believes more can be done to strengthen the rule. While it emphasizes worker input in creating heat hazard plans, it lacks clarity on involving workers in identifying high-heat areas and tasks that pose additional risks. The proposed rule also falls short in protecting temporary and contract workers, who are often left out of key safety protocols. These gaps need to be addressed to ensure that all workers, regardless of their employment status, are equally protected.

Join the Fight for Safer Workplaces

With rising temperatures, the need for a strong federal heat safety standard is urgent. Visit the **ASTTU Action Center** to sign the **Petition for Heat Justice** and use the **NELP Action Center** to submit your comments to OSHA. Together, we can ensure every worker has access to basic protections against hazardous heat. ASTTU is committed to advocating for our members' safety and will continue working with groups like the National COSH, and other allies to make workplaces safer.

Sources:

1. <https://nationalcosh.org/demand-heat-justice>
2. <https://www.nelp.org/take-action/action-center/take-action-now-protect-workers-from-hazardous-heat-exposure/>
3. <https://www.regulations.gov/document/OSHA-2021-0009-4761/>

Protect Workers from Extreme Heat

Please sign the **National COSH Petition** to demand that the White House quickly enact full and final heat protections.

Visit the ASTTU Action Center

www.asttu.org/action-center

Visit the NELP Action Center

www.nelp.org/take-action/action-center

High-Speed Rail Advancements in the U.S.

The recent surge in funding, new production capabilities, and nationwide planning initiatives indicate that high-speed rail is no longer a distant vision but a rapidly advancing reality in the U.S. Recent developments mark a transformative period for rail transportation in America, making high-speed rail a key component of the nation's infrastructure strategy.

Siemens Announces First U.S. High-Speed Rail Production Facility

In a landmark development, Siemens Mobility has unveiled plans to establish the first dedicated high-speed rail production facility in North America. Located in Horseheads, New York, this \$60 million investment will create a 300,000 square-foot factory and generate approximately 300 new jobs. The plant will produce American Pioneer 220 trainsets for Brightline West, marking a significant milestone in bringing high-speed rail technology to the U.S. The facility is expected to begin operations in 2026 and will partner with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) to ensure a unionized workforce.

Brightline West Secures \$3 Billion for Las Vegas-California Line

In parallel, Brightline West received a \$3 billion federal grant to fund its high-speed rail corridor between Las Vegas and Southern California. The 218-mile route is expected to serve 11 million passengers annually, providing a sustainable and efficient alternative to driving. Brightline West's trainsets will be built at the new Siemens facility in Horseheads, making it the first project to utilize American-made, high-speed rail technology. This line is a key part of the U.S. strategy to develop more high-speed rail options across the nation.

\$8.2 Billion in New Federal Grants for Nationwide Rail Projects

The Biden administration has taken another major step to boost rail infrastructure, announcing \$8.2 billion in grants for high-speed rail and other passenger rail

projects across the U.S. This funding, facilitated by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will support ten projects in nine states, including California's Central Valley, Virginia's expanded rail corridors, and upgrades to the Chicago Union Station hub. This investment also lays the groundwork for new high-speed rail corridors, such as a route connecting Las Vegas to Southern California and extensions of existing routes in Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

Federal Investments Pave the Way for Future High-Speed Rail

With nearly \$30 billion in total rail investments announced in the past year, the Biden administration has positioned high-speed rail as a cornerstone of America's transportation future. These funds are aimed at building a network that rivals the world's best, enhancing connectivity, and providing a more sustainable alternative to air and road travel. As production begins at Siemens' new facility and projects like Brightline West break ground, the U.S. is moving closer to achieving a modernized rail system that will significantly enhance travel for generations to come.

Sources:

1. <https://press.siemens.com/global/en/pressrelease/siemens-mobility-establish-americas-first-high-speed-rail-production-facility>
2. <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/politics/2024/09/09/high-speed-rail-manufacturer-to-build-factory-in-chemung-county>
3. <https://railroads.fra.dot.gov/newsroom/press-releases/president-biden-announces-82-billion-new-grants-high-speed-rail-and-pipeline-projects>
4. <https://www.brightlinewest.com/media/press-releases/2024/signed-sealed-and-delivered-3-billion-grant-agreement-for-brightline-west-project-officially-signed>



High Speed Rail Alliance

in-depth content exploring topics such as train engineering, operations, policy, and environmental impact, tailored for both beginners and enthusiasts. The multimedia format includes readings and curated videos, providing a flexible learning experience designed to engage and inform individuals interested in transforming transportation in the U.S. **For more information, visit www.hsrail.org/academy**

Join the High Speed Rail Alliance

Joining the High Speed Rail Alliance helps support a sustainable, efficient, and fast rail network in the U.S., aiming to reduce congestion, lower emissions, and create thousands of jobs. Members receive news updates, access to web broadcasts, and connections with like-minded advocates. Your membership directly supports local and state officials, encourages private-sector investment, and connects leaders to improve rail service nationwide. **For more information, visit www.hsrail.org/join-us**



The Association of Skilled Trade and Transportation Unions (ASTTU) is a not-for-profit founded in 2019. We are committed to the advancement, protection, and betterment of skilled trade and transportation unions and the workers that they represent.

Unite for Strength: Join as a Union Leader

Join a broad network of trade and transportation unions to expand your union's effectiveness. Collaborate with fellow leaders to increase the collective voice and influence of your members, building a more resilient community. You'll have access to extensive resources, advocacy tools, and opportunities that strengthen your union's impact and unity.

As a union leader, you'll gain:

- Valuable voluntary benefits for your members
- Enhanced networking and collaboration opportunities
- Robust advocacy and legislative support
- Access to industry insights and best practices

Show your Support: Become an ASTTU Approved Vendor

ASTTU invites vendors passionate about advancing the union movement and enhancing our members' experiences. By becoming an approved vendor, you have the unique opportunity to present your products and services to a committed audience. Your contributions will significantly advance the skilled trades and transportation sectors, directly benefiting union members.

As an approved ASTTU vendor, you can:

- Present your products and services to a committed and attentive audience.
- Actively support the development and progress of the skilled trades and transportation sectors.

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