

# Focus on Job Creation in 2010



By Bob Seeger

If you think New York's 9.4 percent unemployment average is bad, just look at the 30-50 percent average unemployment in certain corners of the building and construction trade unions statewide to see real economic pain.

Unemployment among the construction trades is at staggering levels and taking a major toll on the highly skilled men and women who build and maintain the buildings we live and work in and the infrastructure and roads in our communities. Add to that the thousands more finishing jobs that soon face a very uncertain future.

Trade-sector unions such as the Millwrights are tirelessly fighting to utilize our skills and experience for the public good, and to offer our members the opportunity to earn an honest days' wage. Yet, across the State each and every project faces significant state regulatory roadblocks or runaway NIMBYism.

Thousand of us are on hold waiting to work on significant and needed infrastructure projects, such as the expansion of the Hempstead Resource Recovery Facility, as well as construction of new power generation plants in Dover and Wawayanda. These multi-year projects will create thousands of construction and hundreds of long term jobs for New York.

We are also facing an influx of unskilled, out-of-state workers for these projects – some of the many reasons why Industrial Development Authority funds should go to local contractors that hire local workers. This will pump dollars back into local businesses and economies.

In the energy industry, the lack of a power plant siting law has made a precarious situation even worse. And certain elected officials are still focused on closing Indian Point; a destructive action which would devastate the union workforce and their families already burdened with excessive utility rates and high energy taxes.

Now is not the time for red tape, blind ideology or other roadblocks. Speaking on behalf of the 30-50 percent in the building trades who need jobs to pay our property taxes and feed our kids, we can no longer keep waiting on the sideline while economic opportunities bypass New York. Jobs are the type of stimulus we need in 2010.

*Bob Seeger is an Advisory Board member of the New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance.*

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