



State of the Council

"Now more than ever, it's important to acknowledge and remember the struggles and sacrifices of those who came before us."

By Ryden Valmoja DC50 Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

First Annual DC50 Membership Meeting

Mahalo to all who attended our first annual DC50 membership meeting – either in-person or virtually. I want to personally thank you for the lively discussion, questions, constructive comments and kind compliments for the work our Council is doing to support you. Please know that every suggestion, concern and proposal will be reviewed and taken into consideration.

I want to express my gratitude for the respect showed to our guests: Lt. Gov. Sylvia Luke, Gregg Smith, General Secretary Treasurer, Mike Gutierrez, General Vice President of the Western Region and Ron Kniess, Chief Financial Officer, and DC50 leadership – even when some of their views differed from your own. That respect speaks volumes about the strength and unity of our membership!

Before the closing of the meeting, John Frigillana, Jr. was recognized for his 50 years of membership with the Tapers Local Union 1944. John truly epitomizes what it means to be a true trades unionist. He has dedicated his entire career to the finishing trades and to our district council, serving in many capacities—Trustee, Vice President, President, Apprentice Instructor, Business Agent, and Director of Service. John has done it all. While he will be stepping down as Business Representative at the end of August, rest assured he will continue to assist the district council with the same commitment and passion.

On behalf of the leadership of DC50, thank you again for showing up, for the pride you show in being union members, and for the confidence you've placed in me over the years. It is truly an honor to serve you every day, and I remain committed to working for you and with you in the years to come! Mahalo!

Mario Manrique, Jr<mark>., A</mark>ppointed as Business Representative

Please join me in congratulating Mario Manrique, Jr., on his appointment as the Business Representative for the Tapers Local Union 1944, effective September I, 2025. Mario brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, having recently served as the Training Director. Tapers, if you need assistance or have questions regarding job deployment, referrals, and so forth, please reach out to Mario – he'll be happy to help!



Labor Day Celebrations

Labor unions annually join together on Labor Day to celebrate the nation's tribute to its workers. Labor Day honors the contributions of American workers and the progress achieved throughout history. Now more than ever, it's important to acknowledge and remember



the struggles and sacrifices of those who came before us – fighting for better working conditions, fair wages and an eight-hour workday – we now enjoy the rights and protections that workers continue to fight for today!

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HAWAII'S CHOICE TO FINISH THE JOB!

International Union of Painters and Allied Trades

District Council 50

2240 Young Street • Honolulu, HI 96826 Phone: (808) 941-0991

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State of the Council

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First Annual DC50 Membership Meeting



Labor Day Celebrations Continued from Page 2.

Once again, was a pleasure to see so many of you at the festivities at the Waikiki Shell. It was so nice to "talk story," enjoy the great entertainment and 'ono food, watch the keiki on the rides and games, and share in the comradery amongst our brothers, sisters and siblings. This truly is a day that I look forward to every year!

On Saturday, August 30, 2025, DC50 and HGEA joined together to



host a special Labor Day celebration in honor of our hard-working Maui members. Held at the Maui Mall Mega Plex 12, members and their families enjoyed a showing of "Bad Guys" along with a complimentary snack pack to enjoy during the movie. A special shout out goes to Shane Awai, Ty Ka'anana, and Nathan Nakamura for their dedication in making sure our Maui members were celebrated!





On Hawaii island, the Big Island Labor Alliance (BILA) will host a Labor Day Bingo and Lunch on September 13, 2025, 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. at the ILWU Hall. This family-friendly event will feature an afternoon of food, bingo, keiki activities and fellowship to celebrate the contributions of Hawaii's working families. I encourage members to attend and take part in this exciting day of fun.

Showcasing the Finishing Trades at the Women's Community Correctional Center

On August 28, 2025, District Council 50 held a workshop at the Women's Community Correctional Center, where 30 residents explored careers in the finishing trades. This effort was led by Lorna Woo, with apprentices Tysja "Ty" Ka'anana and Kiara "Kiki" Carroll. The session combined trade demonstrations with stories of resilience and empowerment.

Ty and Kiki emphasized that union work offers more than just a career – it offers a community. They encouraged women to see that there is a place for them in the trades where you never have to rely on a man or anyone to be successful! They both shared how the union has given them stability, confidence, and the ability to support themselves and their families. Ty and Kiki showed the women that there is a path forward to build independence and self-reliance. I am so incredibly proud of these members and thankful that they are the future of DC50! Mahalo Ladies!

DC50 is going Paperless

As a reminder, all union notices will be sent electronically to email addresses on file for each member. This change reflects the council's commitment to cost savings and faster communication. These policy changes do not apply to notices that are required to be sent via USPS mail under the International Union or Local Unions bylaws and/or the International Constitution. If you wish to continue receiving notices via USPS mail, please contact the district council office at 808-941-0991.

Please remember to keep safe and enjoy the rest of your summer. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please call me or stop by the hall - I'm willing to try to help! Mahalo!

Rych Valya

On the Cover...

John Frigillana, Jr.: My Journey Through the Drywall Trade



joined the Drywall Trade out of envy – yes, envy – of my five brothers-in-law. After all, there were making good money, driving new cars, riding motorcycles, traveling, and still had cash in their pockets. They were drywall tapers. And, while most people think taping is just about slapping mud on walls, I quickly learned it's an art and a trade that can showcase a person's true skills.

Back in 1971, I was working at Datsun of Hawaii making \$1.60 an hour as a lot person, service writer, and occasional grease monkey. I asked my in-laws to help get me into the trade. They did

not pull me into the Union right away. Instead, they took me on side jobs and paid me in cash – just enough, since I was learning. I did not mind. I loved working with my hands. The more I did, the more I realized I belonged in the trade.

Eventually, with their help and some experience under my belt, I joined the tapers apprenticeship program. My starting wage was \$2.40 per hour, plus benefits, which came in handy since I was married and raising three kids. I soaked up everything I could. My brothers-in-law taught me the ropes: how to mix and apply joint compound, how to finish walls and ceilings with precision and pride. I got good, really good, and contractors noticed it.

Then opportunity knocked. The journeyman at the company I was working for quit unexpectedly, and I was thrust into the role and had to step up. I finished projects quickly and with quality. Within the two years as an apprentice, I was bumped up to journeyman by the drywall taping coordinator. My pay as a journeyman was \$6.85, a solid wage in the late 70s.

My career took off, as I became a foreman, then a supervisor. I ran large scale projects: from residential tracks in Hawaii Kai, Hahaione Valley, Queens Gate, Po Hakea Point and Maile, to major developments like the UH student housing, the Landmark in Salt Lake, and the Liliuokalani Twin Towers in Waikiki. I mastered all the automatic tools and even learned to walk the stilts.

I took pride in everything I did, and stayed involved. I attended Union meetings every month on Friday evenings at 6 pm. My consistent attendance led to leadership roles. I became a trustee, then vice-president, and eventually president of our union.

I was also asked to be an apprentice instructor, a role I truly valued. I got to know almost all of the members and apprentices on all the islands, and I worked with some of the excellent journeymen who helped mentor and teach the next generation of apprentices.

My identity as a union man solidified. When the Business Representative (BR) asked me to consider working as a union agent, I initially turned it down. I was young and full of energy. I wanted to stay in the field. But in 1999, as President of the union, I was asked to attend the IUPAT General Convention in Washington, DC. I attended with my wife and granddaughter. That trip changed my mind and perspective of the union and I told them I would work for the Union. The mission, the solidarity, and the future vision of our union inspired me.

When I got back to Hawaii, I informed my boss that I was leaving

the field to become a union agent. On January 2, 2000, I officially joined the union staff as a field agent. I loved the job and committed myself to practicing what I preached: to represent the members and do the work with integrity.

Around that time, the IUPAT headquarters pushed for the formation of District Councils, bringing the Painters, Drywall Tapers, Glaziers and Flooring Unions under one roof – and that is how District Council 50 was formed. In 2013, after the passing of our business representative (BR), I stepped into the role and served it ever since. I remember being told when I was appointed the position, "You're one of us now."

As BR, I've focused on negotiating the best Collective Bargaining Agreement possible. I earned the trust of both the members and the signatory contractors. I believe in being consistent, honest and hardworking and I think that is what got me to where I am today. Why? Because I know where I came from. I was an apprentice struggling to make ends meet. I was a journeyman earning respect on the job sites. I've walked the same path that many of our members are on now.

This is just a short summary of my journey from apprentice taper to the leadership of our union, the Drywall Tapers, Finishers, and Allied Trades, LU 1944. And that's why I always stress to apprentices and journeymen alike: get involved. Attend meetings. Learn your trade. Work hard. The opportunities are out there if you want them!

Compliance Classes Benefit Members

The DC50 training program continues to provide essential compliance courses in Hazard Communication (HazCom), FirstAid, and Fall Protection. These classes are primarily scheduled on weekends, with an additional option for members to attend on Tuesdays if they are unable to participate on the weekend. This approach ensures



that all members have the opportunity to remain current with OSHA standards while reinforcing a culture of safety in the workplace.

In addition to compliance courses, DC50 also provides Forklift Certification and Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWPs) Certification, which are

offered exclusively on Saturdays. These specialized certifications are critical for members who operate equipment on the job and help ensure both regulatory compliance and safe work practices.

By offering both compliance training and equipment certifications,

our DC50 training program remains focused on safety, preparedness, and the continued professional development of all members. All members are encouraged to attend and com-



plete required training on schedule to remain in full compliance with safety and industry standards.

One Union, One Ohana, One Fight

In Hawaii, ohana means more than just family — it's a way of life. It's about standing together, supporting one another, and sharing responsibility for the greater good. For union flooring workers, ohana perfectly describes the spirit of solidarity on and off the job.

One Union: Standing Strong Together. Being part of a union isn't just about carrying a card. It's about knowing that every flooring installer, finisher, and apprentice is united under one purpose — protecting our trade, our wages, and our future. When we're one union, we're not competing against each other; we're fighting side-by-side for fair treatment and quality jobs.

One Ohana: Looking Out for Each Other: In Hawaii, workers don't just clock in and clock out — they build relationships. Like an ohana, we care about each other's safety, training, and well-being. If someone needs help learning a skill, the union is there to provide it. If someone is struggling, the brotherhood and sisterhood of our trade step up. No one gets left behind.

One Fight: Protecting Our Trade and Our Future. The flooring industry faces real challenges — from unlicensed contractors to low-bid competition that undercuts wages and quality. Our fight is about standing together against anything that threatens our livelihoods or disrespects our craft. It's about ensuring our work is valued, our families are secure, and our young workers see a future worth building in the trades.

Solidarity That Builds More Than Floors. When union flooring workers stand together, we're doing more than laying vinyl, wood, or carpet. We're building schools, hospitals, cultural centers, and homes — projects that strengthen our communities and keep dollars in Hawaii. Our solidarity ensures these projects are done right, with pride and professionalism.

The Meaning Behind the Words One Union, One Ohana, One Fight is more than a slogan — it's a commitment. It's a reminder that when we stick together, we protect our trade, lift each other up, and create opportunities for the next generation of Hawaii's flooring workers.

Labor Day Inspiration

These days it is easy to take for granted the many benefits we enjoy as union members, including an eight-hour workday, good wages, weekends off, health care, job safety, pensions, and more.

These benefits did not exist in the 1920s, and they were not simply given to us over time. They were paid for in blood, sweat and tears shed by union brothers and sisters who came before us.

In 1924, Filipino sugar plantation workers on the island of Kauai went on strike. The strike turned violent and 20 people lost their lives, with many more injured. Unfortunately, the Hanapepe Massacre, as that incident is known, was forgotten over time.

Thanks to the work of historians and community members, however, information about this deadly event from our past has been rediscovered and is being preserved for future generations. Journalist Brittany Lyte recently wrote an article for Honolulu Civil Beat describing the tremendous effort that went into uncovering the facts of this event. Her article can be found at: https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/08/why-the-hanapepe-massacre-was-largely-forgotten-for-decades/

This Labor Day remember our fallen brothers and sisters, honor their sacrifice, and do your part to ensure that you and your children never have to endure something like the Hanapepe Massacre.

Introducing Garrett Russell



y name is Garrett Russell, and I am honored to introduce myself as the new Training Coordinator for the Tapers Union.

I began taping at the age of 20, starting with The Looking Glass, a small commercial company focused on highend finishes, before moving to Allstates Drywall, where I gained valuable experience in track homes and texturing. From there, I joined BEK Inc., working in high-rise commercial projects,

becoming a foreman, and learning how to run big projects and multiple crews. Later, at Alii Drywall, I expanded my knowledge in exterior finishes.

I began teaching in the apprenticeship program about 10 years ago, eventually earning my Master Instructor certificate and certifications in OSHA 10 and 30, First Aid/CPR, HazCom, Fall Protection, MEWPs, Forklift, and EIFS. I am also pursuing my bachelor's degree at Chaminade University to continue growing in leadership and service. Teaching has always been one of the most rewarding parts of my career. I enjoy seeing apprentices not only build confidence in their skills but also grow as individuals.

My leadership is built on honor, integrity, respect, and hard work, carried out with a positive attitude, and I hope to bring those values into everything I do as Training Coordinator. I feel truly blessed to serve in this position, and I look forward to working with all of you to continue making our union stronger.

Port of Maui Warehouse

The Port of Maui Kahului Pier Maintenance Warehouse project has been in the planning stages for a long time. Today, we are happy to say that the State of Hawaii is following through with this much-needed, state-of-the-art warehouse where there will be

adequate space for the entire maintenance staff.

DC50 is especially proud to be a part of this long-awaited improvement. This project has provided work for several of our members, and we look forward to the future as we continue to partner with the State of Hawaii.

Currently, work on the Port of Maui Warehouse is on schedule – approxi-



mately 50 percent finished. Moreover, the general contractor reports that our members are very professional and are awesome to work with. DC50 is proud of all our members!

Building the Future for Floor Layer Apprentices

The Fall semester for our Floor Layer Apprenticeship program began on August 4. We currently have 40 apprentic-



Ciana Kauhi

es enrolled, including two female apprentices. We're proud to support a diverse and growing workforce in our trade. Our priority is to ensure that all apprentices become assets to our contractors by providing them with comprehensive training, and strict adherence to manufacturer specifications and best practices. We continue to improve and expand our installation mockups that give our apprentices hands-on experience in real-world scenarios.

We also continue to offer specialized certification classes for nora

rubber flooring, Tarkett resilient flooring, and ARDEX concrete moisture control. These certifications help our members meet industry standards and stand out in a competitive job market. We are now offering refresher installation classes at our new training center and at Honolulu Community College. These classes are a great way for current journey workers to update their skills and stay current with evolving materials and methods.



Lynnelle DeGrandis

The Motorized Jobsite: Baker Scaffold

Designed to increase worker efficiency, the six-foot Baker scaffold has drywall tapers wanting a new set of wheels!

This system eliminates the need for the operator to get off the scaffold to move it. Instead, the motorized scaffold is powered by a powerful 18- or 20-volt battery from any of the six largest brands in the industry. The battery provides 4,500 feet of battery life on a sin-



gle charge, wheels on the bottom of the scaffold are controlled by a joystick mounted on the guardrail or directly on a rung, and the wheels lock automatically.

These features enable the Baker scaffold to move safely around the work site at height. In addition, it is compatible with all METALTECH Baker scaffolds. Lighter and more compact than a scissor lift, it does not need a freight elevator to be moved around the job site, either.

Most drywall tapers have used a Baker scaffold and are familiar with the set-up and break down of the scaffold. It is easy to transport to a jobsite, can be set-up in a few minutes, and, most importantly, it complies with OSHA standards.

Kevin Amin: Building Hawaii's Skyline

For more than three decades, Kevin Amin has been shaping Hawaii's building landscape. As principal and owner of Pacific Building Envelope Inc. (PBE) and president of the Hawaii Architectural Glass and Metal Association (HAGMA) since 2021, Amin has dedicated his career to advancing glazing and building envelope standards in the islands. His journey into the trade, however, began unexpectedly.



From Stockbroker to Glazier: Glazing wasn't part of Amin's original plan. "I was a stockbroker in California at the time and not happy. A close friend offered to team up with me and go into glazing. He had several years of experience, so I took a chance—and here we are."

That leap of faith led him into the glazing industry in the early 1990s. After years of building experience, including lessons from his father, a California general contractor, Amin founded Pacific Building Envelope Inc. in 2012, following the sale of his interest in a prior glazing company.

Union vs. Non-Union: Having worked alongside both union and nonunion operations, Amin believes the union model brings clear advantages. "Union glazing companies often provide stronger benefits for workers, including better training programs, standardized safety protocols, and competitive wages that attract skilled labor," he explains. "This leads to higher quality workmanship and lower turnover, which ultimately benefits clients. Union companies also have access to stabilized funds and labor management resources, like those from Hawaii Glaziers Local Union."

The Impact of Leadership: Owning a glazing company has been both rewarding and demanding. Amin describes the experience as one that has given him "a sense of purpose through building lasting structures that contribute to Hawaii's skyline and communities." He acknowledges the challenges—long hours, regulatory shifts, and material innovations—but also emphasizes the rewards: financial stability, professional growth, and the satisfaction of leading a skilled team.

His role with HAGMA has expanded his influence even further. "As president, I'd like to see our industry evolve toward greater innovation and collaboration," Amin says. "That means stronger advocacy for proper trade classifications, partnerships to address labor shortages, more training programs, and a focus on resilience against challenges like hurricanes."

Looking Ahead: In the next five to 10 years, Amin envisions mentoring the next generation of glaziers and possibly moving into a more advisory role. "I see myself semi-retired, spending more time with family, and giving back through community initiatives in construction education."

Advice for the Next Generation: Amin emphasizes continuous learning and professionalism. "Stay updated on codes, materials, and techniques. The field evolves quickly, so build strong relationships with associations for support and networking and always focus on quality. For aspiring owners, remember that understanding the business side of regulations, contracts, and client trust are just as important as technical skills."

Closing Thoughts: Amin is grateful for the opportunity to highlight both PBE and HAGMA. "The glazing industry in Hawaii is vital yet often underappreciated. Stories like this help raise awareness about our contributions to safe, beautiful and efficient buildings.

DC50 Volunteers Give Back to Kula Churches

In a heartfelt demonstration of community spirit, members of District Council 50 recently volunteered their time and labor to assist with the removal of old carpeting at two cherished Kula church-



es: Our Lady Queen of Angels and Holy Ghost Church. This initiative was made possible through the support of BMST Ryden "Bully" Valmoja, who strongly believes in giving back to the community.

The project involved the careful demoing of worn carpet in preparation for a fresh installation, bringing new life to these sacred spaces. Valmoja's commitment to service inspired union members to roll up their sleeves and contribute their skills to a cause that benefits the wider community.

Adding to the generosity, Kahului Carpet, the signatory carpet company for District Council 50, donated all the new carpeting

for both churches. Their team also joined in the demo work, exemplifying the power of collaboration between labor and local businesses.

John Montrone Scholarship Recipients



mma-Grace Cabinian's father has been a member of the Painter's Union since 2004. Emma graduated in 2025 from Leilehua High School and will be attending McKendree University in Illinois starting Fall semester 2025. There, she will study Business Entrepreneurship and Sports Management.

In high school, Emma was class valedictorian and played sports for four years. She was a fouryear high school wrestling MVP and finished as the Hawaii State Wrestling Championship Runner-Up. In spite of the time spent to excel at sports, the fact that Emma was still able to graduate as a valedictorian is testament that she has the will to succeed in her future endeavors.

lett Clark has been a member of the Painter's Union since 2021. While working in the field, lett's interest in the business side of painting grew, and he started to take business classes at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Spring 2024. As painters, we know that it is not

easy to work and take care of your personal business, let alone go to school at night. lett shows that he is committed to succeeding as a painter and graduating college to succeed in life.

Congratulations Emma and Jett for winning the John Montrone scholarships. Both turned in compelling essays expressing the role that the painters union played in their lives. We wish both of them well in their field of study and success moving forward. Keep the values that molded you into who you are close to heart.





The donation and hands-on support from Kahului Carpet ensured the project was completed efficiently and with high-quality materials.

This act of service highlights the union's dedication not only to its members, but also to the broader Maui community. By volunteering their time and resources, District Council 50 and Kahului Carpet have made a meaningful impact on two historic places of worship, reinforcing the values of unity, generosity, and aloha.

As the churches prepare to welcome parishioners into refreshed spaces, the spirit of giving behind this effort will continue to resonate. It's a reminder that when people come together with purpose and heart, they can uplift the entire community.

Together We Win

nions across the country are under attack like never before. In just the past few months, federal workers have been stripped of their collective bargaining rights by executive order. The National Labor Relations Board has been gutted by court challenges and political firings, leaving thousands of unfair labor practice cases stalled. States are moving to outlaw bargaining rights for teachers, firefighters, and public workers—jobs that keep our communities safe and strong. At the same time, mass layoffs across federal agencies have silenced the voices of more than a quarter million workers, devastating families and weakening services the public depends on. Employers, emboldened by these rollbacks, are openly refusing to recognize unions or even allow elections. These attacks are no accident—they are a coordinated effort to weaken the power of working people. But workers are fighting back.

Here in Hawaii, we know that the price of living is sky-high, and the only reason so many of us can raise our families on these islands is because of union wages, benefits, and protections. Our contractors count on us to deliver quality painting, taping, glazing, and flooring work—and we deliver. But none of that is guaranteed unless we keep building and defending our movement. Every time we recruit one more member, every time we have that conversation on the jobsite or in our community, we strengthen DC50's voice and make sure working families can continue to thrive in Hawaii.

This is not a time for silence or sitting on the sidelines. History shows us that when labor is pushed down, our answer must be to rise higher. The attacks are real, but so is our strength. We are thousands strong, and together we can't be ignored. Let this be the moment we turn frustration into action, conversations into organizing, and solidarity into victories.

Let's talk. Let's organize. Let's win—together.





International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 50 2240 Young Street Honolulu, HI 96826

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Wanted: Please submit news clips, photos and articles on special events to: Lwoo@dc50.org

District Council 50 Meetings

- District Council 50 Membership meeting Saturday, July 25, 2026, Time/ Place - TBD
- Young Lions Committee meetings Thursday, December 4, 2025, 5:00 p.m., DC50 Hall and via Zoom video conference.
- Women's Committee meetings Saturday, December 13, 2025, 10:00 a.m., in-person at the DC50 Hall.

SPECIALTY WORKERS LOCAL UNION 1941

• Membership meetings – Second Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m., at the DC50 hall and via Zoom

PAINTERS LOCAL UNION 1791

• Membership meetings - Third Wednesday of the month at 5:00 p.m., at the DC50 hall and via Zoom

DRYWALL TAPERS FINISHERS LOCAL UNION 1944

•Membership meetings – Second Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m., at the DC50 hall and via Zoom

GLAZIERS, ARCHITECTURAL METAL AND GLASSWORKERS LOCAL UNION 1889

- Executive Board meetings Second to the last Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m., at the DC50 hall and via Zoom
- Membership meetings Last Thursday of the month at 4:45 p.m., at the DC50 hall and via Zoom

CARPET, LINOLEUM AND SOFT TILE LOCAL UNION 1926

 Membership meetings – Third Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m., at the DC50 hall and via Zoom

OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 7:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. SATURDAY: 7:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

District Council 50

Painters - LUI791 808-941-0991 808-946-6621 Tapers - LU1944 Glaziers - LUI889 808-946-3329 Floor Layers - LU1926 808-942-3988 SpecialtyWorkers-LUI941 808-941-0991 Toll-Free Neighbor Island 888-811-4020

DC 50 Joint Apprenticeship Training 808-947-6606 808-941-0991, Option 2

IN MEMORIAM

HARRY AKIYAMA, JR., FORMER MEMBER OF PAINTERS LU1791 BRADLEY FORD, FORMER MEMBER OF PAINTERS LU1791 RAYMON SEDENO, FORMER MEMBER OF FLOOR LAYERS LU1926