

Newsletter

Volume 1



Introduction

This is the first edition of a newsletter intended to help every member of Local 31 keep up to date on developments within our industry, our union, and the labor movement as a whole. By keeping up to date on the struggles, strategies, and successes of other workers, we can learn from each other and identify opportunities to improve our lives by standing together at work.

Keep other members of the Local informed about what's happening in your workplace by sending newsletter submissions to Secretary Bjorn Westergard (secretary@nabet31.org).

Sports Daily Hires Work PGA Championship Tournament

Scottie Scheffler emerged the victor and took home \$3.4 million of the \$19 million dollar purse at the [PGA Championship](#) last weekend. Tens of thousands watched in person at the Quail Hollow Golf Club in Charlotte, North Carolina. But this crowd was dwarfed by the [more than one million people](#) watching live on ESPN thanks to eighteen NABET members routing fiber optic cable, shooting and editing video, mixing audio, and running instant replays.

Since 2016, the sports broadcasting daily hires have had a [nation-wide collective bargaining agreement with ABC Sports](#). Enforcement of the contract is [divided geographically among locals](#), with Local 31 covering events in the southeast.

Live sports have [continued to outperform](#) other elements of major broadcasters' portfolios. ESPN is the flagship of Disney's sports division, which announced [sizable profits](#) in February of

this year. The economic strength of the company and the enjoyment of millions of fans are made possible by the skill and drive of sports daily hires.

Photo Credit: Derek Thompson



***Deep South Today* Newsrooms Join Local 31**

Approximately thirty workers at the nonprofit *Deep South Today* — including reporters, photographers, news fellows, and social media coordinators — are in the process of joining NABET-CWA Local 31 after ratifying their first contract.

Founded in 2016, the Jackson-based *Mississippi Today* [won a Pulitzer in 2023](#). Its sister newsroom, [Verité](#), launched in 2022 and is based in New Orleans.

Tristan Baurick joined Verité as a reporter about a year ago and soon after became a member of the bargaining committee. He emphasized how important the mission was for him and his coworkers.

“Working for a nonprofit is very different,” Baurick said. “We have a mission and mindset focused on doing good for the community and staff, which is very different from a for-profit outfit.”

Trust was high between management and staff beforehand but the contract provides something new: “Now we have guarantees.”

A [2020 study](#) by UNC's Hussman School of Journalism and Media found that half of newspaper readers and journalists had “vanished” over the previous fifteen years. Last year, researchers at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism found that “news deserts” — parts of the country with no local news coverage — [have continued to expand](#). In response to these alarming trends, philanthropic foundations [have increasingly sought](#) to fill the gaps left by a shrinking for-profit media sector.

“People can donate, but that isn't a huge part of our budget,” said Baurick. “We get a lot of support from the Ford Foundation, and my position has been supported by the Walton Family Foundation. Our health reporter is supported by the Kaiser Family Foundation.”

Baurick believes this model has distinct advantages. “Being a nonprofit newsroom, we're not focused simply on what will get the most clicks,” he said. “That thinking can tilt coverage and steer resources at a lot of for-profit media organizations. At Verité, we are trying to cover marginalized communities, vulnerable communities and communities of color. I think that really distinguishes us from other organizations.”

Asked about the improvements he and his coworkers are looking forward to under the new contract, Baurick pointed to several key gains. “We were able to increase wages three different ways: a one-time salary increase depending on your current pay; minimum pay for three types of positions; and annual cost-of-living raises of 3 percent in each of the first two years,” he said.

Other wins included paid parental leave, improved PTO policies and protections around layoffs. “We won parental leave for the first time—the basic structure is three months of fully paid leave during the pregnancy or after the birth,” Baurick said. “We got PTO carryover; [the earlier policy] was restrictive, now we can transfer eight days of PTO to the next year. We got some wording [in the contract] about layoffs, including 10 days' notice or 10 days' pay in lieu of notice. We were looking at the [NPR Digital Media United] contract as one of our templates.” The contract is set to expire on March 4, 2028.

During the Local 31 Executive Board Meeting on May 10, 2025, the board approved a motion to extend the initiation fee waiver for Deep South Today members until July 11, 2025.

Those in the new unit who have not yet submitted their paperwork, or are unsure whether their membership applications are ready for approval by the board, are strongly encouraged to reach out to the Local's administrative staff at info@nabet31.org as soon as possible. They are also welcome to speak directly with staff by calling 301-459-4999 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

NABET-CWA Rallies to Defend PBS, NPR, and Press Freedom

President Trump, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), and billionaire political donor Elon Musk have been pursuing a campaign to defund and legally harass multiple media outlets where NABET-CWA and NewsGuild-CWA members work.

They have called for an [immediate end to all funding](#) for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which provides grants to NPR and PBS member stations so they can run local newsrooms, employ broadcast workers, and maintain equipment that gives [99% of the U.S. population](#) access to high quality journalism, music, and cultural programming.

Trump's FCC pick, Brendan Carr, has launched a transparently political ['investigation' into NPR and PBS](#), the ultimate goal of which is to cut off private donations to the network.

The targets include commercial media organizations as well. The administration and its allies are threatening the broadcast licenses of [ABC](#), [NBC](#), and [CBS](#). Most recently, President Trump signed an executive order that [directed](#) the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to cut off funds to NPR and PBS and [tried unsuccessfully](#) to fire members of its board. Legal experts [interviewed](#) by [current.com](#) agree that the President cannot legally issue an order to constraint or remove CPB board members.

[Recent polling](#) has found that regardless of party affiliation, most Americans don't support defunding PBS and NPR.

This has encouraged the NABET-CWA members organizing, lobbying congress, and [rallying](#) to stop this attack on our livelihoods and a free press. For the last three months, President Opiotennione (NBC) and Secretary Westergard (NPR) have been attending biweekly conference calls to coordinate a response. Over the past few weeks, NABET members and staff have held rallies in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Binghamton (pictured). Local members have also worked with the CWA Legislative Affairs department and NABET-CWA President Charlie Braico to develop a strategy for lobbying elected representatives.

 [Click here](#) to **get involved in the campaign** and **contact your elected representatives**.

Photo credits: William Murray and NABET Sector Staff.



NABETs Behind the Scenes at Presidential Transitions

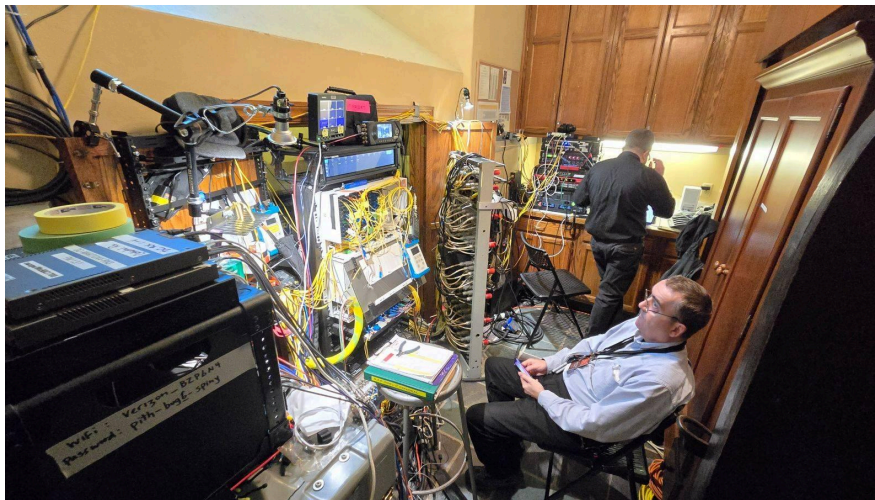
In January, NABET Local 31 members brought two milestones in the history of the U.S. Presidency to the viewing public.

On January 9, 2025 members at ABC provided the pool feed for former President Jimmy Carter's funeral at the National Cathedral in Washington.

Later in January, members at the Senate Recording Studio ran fiber-optic cable in anticipation of an outdoor inauguration for President Trump. Freezing temperatures and wind forced the ceremony indoors.

"This cable pull took place on Jan. 17, 2024. New guys are always put on the cable pull, and we had a lot this year. It was a little icy, but we got our fiber up without an issue," writes Angelo Skarlatos.

Photo Credits: Alex Staherski (ABC) and Angelo Skarlatos (SRS).



Upcoming Steward Trainings

During its April 12, 2025 meeting, the Local 31 executive board discussed plans to offer training for stewards and those interested in volunteering to become a steward.

Vice President Staherski reported back on discussions with President Carrie Biggs-Adams of NABET-CWA Local 51 (San Francisco), who will conduct the training. Dates have not been finalized, but Biggs-Adams has proposed **June 7 and June 21** for one class and **June 8 and June 21** for another. July dates are also being considered.

Stewards are the foundation of the union and becoming a steward is a rewarding way to make life on the job better for yourself and your co-workers. For a preview of some of the topics covered in steward training, see the [CWA Steward Handbook](#).

Each unit in our Local is divided into "steward groups" by the executive board. Each group has its own steward, who is elected by the members of that group. The President can also appoint a steward in the event of a vacancy.

There are currently vacant steward positions in some steward groups at [ABC](#), [NBC](#), [WRC](#), [WJLA](#), [NPR Prime](#), [MCM](#), and [WSVN](#). **Interested in attending a steward training or running for steward?** Email Vice President Staherski at vice-president@nabet31.org.

Bargaining Calendar

Here is a quick summary of where each unit stands in the cycle of contract bargaining, enforcement, and planning. It is best to begin preparing for bargaining with surveys and discussions of priorities one year in advance of contract expiration. Reach out to your steward, executive board member, or Secretary Bjorn Westergard (secretary@nabet31.org) to get involved.

- [WJLA](#): Bargaining in progress. Reach out to Rich Guastadisegni (revdom@yahoo.com) and Dave Howell (davehowell92@gmail.com) for the latest.
- [SRS](#): The contract recently expired and bargaining may have begun by the time you receive this email. Reach out to Angelo Skarlatos (askarlatos@gmail.com) to get involved.
- Deep South Today: A first contract was recently ratified by the membership. It will expire on March 4, 2028.
- [HRS](#): The contract expires on June 30, 2025. Reach out to Doug Koztoski (dkoz3000@gmail.com) or Kristin Stevens to get involved.
- [ABC](#): The contract was extended and will expire on September 30, 2026.
- [WRC](#): The contract will expire in March of 2028.
- [NPR Prime](#): On April 23rd, 2025, the "Prime" bargaining unit at NPR (which covers NPR's engineers and technicians) ratified a new contract, bringing to a close negotiations that began in January of this year. The most significant change was in how most employees select leave. The unit will go through a leave selection process twice a year instead of once. The contract is set to expire March 31st, 2028.
- [NPR DMU](#): The contract expires on November 8, 2026.
- [PBS](#): The contract expires on June 30, 2026.
- [WSVN](#): The contract expires on June 30, 2026.
- [NBC](#): The contract expires on March 31, 2027.

- [MCM](#): The contract has expired. Reach out to Bob Rutledge (bobrutledge@hotmail.com).
- [WITE](#): The contract expires on January 1, 2026.

BJ:cw