

# Keep 5

# ALIVE!



The CSEA Central Region 5 Safety & Health Committee Newsletter

Joe Miceli, Safety & Health Committee Chair

Kenny Greenleaf, Central Region President

## Safety Happenings: Region mourns DOT workzone fatality

By former Communications Specialist Mark Kotzin

**OWEGO** – A sea of yellow safety vests lined the steps outside the church as State DOT workers said a final farewell to their co-worker Dennis “Matt” Howe.



Dennis “Matt” Howe

Howe, 45, died in March from injuries he sustained after a tractor-trailer hit the truck he was working in alongside State Route 17 in Tioga County. Howe was parked on the highway shoulder, in the rear vehicle in a NYS DOT road crew work zone patching potholes.

CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Josh Kemp is investigating Howe’s death on behalf of our union, and said that the repair operation the DOT workers were doing, commonly referred to as “throw and go,” is inherently dangerous, especially because it doesn’t require a full lane closure to occur.

Following Howe’s death, Governor Cuomo ordered flags flown at half staff and CSEA President Danny Donohue was among many who offered tribute.

“This tragic incident highlights the risks so many CSEA members face every day,” Donohue said. “This serves as a strong and powerful reminder that we all need to do our part and drive carefully through work zones so our hardworking public employees can return safely to their families and loved ones after every shift. DOT employees are some of the most vulnerable workers, and every one of us needs to help ensure their safety.”

Central Region President Ken Greenleaf attended Howe’s funeral and later invited Howe’s widow Alycia Haus to attend our Region’s Workers Memorial Day obser-

vance where Matt was remembered.

“It was very moving to have Alycia and other members of Matt’s family with us as we mourned his tragic death,” he said.

CSEA is working with PESH and NYS DOT management to determine what changes can be made to prevent this type of incident from occurring in the future.



Photo: Joe Hall

## Safety Happenings: Around our Region

Reported by Occupational Safety & Health Specialist Josh Kemp

CSEA’s statewide Peer Trainer Program welcomes the following new members from our Central Region: SUNY Oswego members Jason Hrnecirik and Dustin Barbera and SUNY Potsdam members Christopher Sherman and Ray Dousharm.

Speaking of our Peer Trainer Program, at the recent statewide conference, Peer Trainers Matthew Harper and Robert Stevens, City of Oneonta won this years Charlie Noble Award. Congratulations!

Congratulations also to Syracuse State Employees Local 013 President Diane Burton who was appointed to our statewide standing Safety and Health Committee.

We strengthen our dedication to keeping workplaces safer with every Safety and Health Committee our union created.

Welcome to our two newest committees formed at Broome DDSO and Baldwinsville Central Schools!

OSH Specialist Josh Kemp has been busy, performing direct safety training at twenty different work locations throughout the region in the recent past.

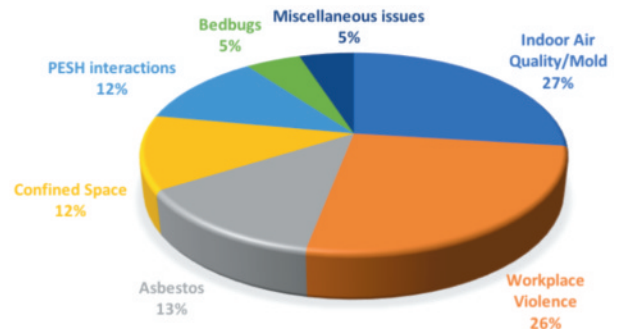
Kemp has also been assisting with our union’s Member Engagement activities, making presentations in ten different Locals/Units and also participating in our recent Chemung/Schuyler County “Blitz.”

As noted in the story above, CSEA’s OSH Department is continuing to investigate the death of Dennis “Matt” Howe. The

Department of Labor’s Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau’s investigation is ongoing.

Here’s a visual representation of the types of issues our OSH Department has been handling around our Region:

CURRENT SAFETY ISSUES IN REGION 5



## Every needless death reminds us of work to be done

Over the years our union has made great strides in making sure our CSEA work places are safer. Through Labor-Management conversations and agreements, you have helped insure safer and healthier environments, not only for our members, but for the communities we serve as well.



Kenny Greenleaf

Recently I was reminded that there is still much more to do. With the recent preventable death of our brother Dennis “Matt” Howe in Tioga County, we were tragically reminded that we cannot ever become complacent with the way our employers may have us conduct our work assignments. We must question and evaluate every aspect of our jobs to make sure as employees we go home safe at the end of every day. For instance, the road patch repair operation that Matt was involved in was an inherently unsafe practice. This in part contrib-

uted to his death. Had anyone really thought about the devastation that operation could cause? If so, we should have collectively addressed the danger and shut it down.

As workers, we also need to take the time to make sure we are always aware of our surroundings, paying more attention and noticing any potential hazards we could face. Then we must report them to our employers and

to our Union, so we can immediately address unsafe practices and working conditions. In doing so we can help prevent the terrible incidents that happen, and you might just be saving your own life. We have a great resource in our Occupational Safety and Health Department staff, but they can’t fix hazards they don’t know about.

As a Union we need to constantly be reminding our members to always think

safety first. We can help by forming workplace safety committees that help keep those issues front and center.

Finally, as drivers, we all need to take responsibility to take our laws seriously and obey them. Everyone is always in such a hurry and speeding through work zones has created many accidents that would not have occurred if someone had just paid attention. In Matt’s case, had the truck driving not only slowed down but moved over, perhaps this would have not happened. At Matt’s funeral I heard his wife Alycia deliver her eulogy to Matt, asking each of us to please slow down and move over in his memory. Let’s honor him by doing that and remember to stay focused when out on our roadways.

In Unity,

## A message from the Chair

by Joe Miceli, Chair, Region 5 Safety & Health Committee

### Keep 5 **ALIVE!**

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Safety & Health Committee

Kenny Greenleaf, President  
Joe Miceli, Chair  
Tom Hingher, Officer Liaison  
Josh Kemp, OSH Specialist  
Mark Kotzin, Editor

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Joe Miceli

Well we’ve hit the halfway mark for our Workers’ Memorial Day Observances with our 10th annual tree planting at SUNY Cortland. Once again, it was a beautiful dedication which couldn’t have been done without a lot of help. First I need to thank Tom Hingher. Without Tom, I would have to be running back and forth to arrange everything. He set up everything from the location to the purchase of the tree. He got the minister and even had the mayor get up and speak. Every year we do this we need a point person to handle these things so again let me thank Tom. I would also like to thank Lynn May for leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance and our minister Thomas E.C. Margrave for his kind and thoughtful words. I also need to thank Region President Ken Greenleaf and all of our Region Officers past and present who attended, as well as Cortland Mayor Brian Tobin who also spoke about the need for safer workplaces. Josh Kemp our Safety and Health Specialist spoke about having to deal with all

three deaths that occurred in the last year. Thanks also to all who gave up part of their Sunday to attend, and all who attended from our Safety and Health Committee.

At the observance, I read the names of three workers who died on the job this past year: Jean MacDonald from the Town of Hempstead Local 880, Jeffrey Farrell from Monroe County Local 828, and Dennis “Matt” Howe of Southern Tier State Employees Local 002. Our hearts go out to them and their families. We were honored to have Matt Howe’s wife Alycia attend our observance and she thanked us for doing this. It’s us who should be thanking her. People need to slow down in work zones and pay attention. Everybody deserves the right to go home from work. Work safe and report things that aren’t.

We will now start planning next year’s Memorial. Please have a healthy and safe summer and remember it’s road construction season. Lives are at stake. Have a great summer. Work Safe and Be Safe,



## Workers Memorial Day in pictures

Photos by CSEA former Communications Specialist Mark Kotzin



**CSEA REGION 5 WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE**  
APRIL 24, 2019  
REGION 5 HONORS OUR MEMBERS WHO HAVE DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY. WE RECOGNIZE AND SALUTE THEIR ULTIMATE SACRIFICE. THEY SHALL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.  
KENNETH GREENLEAF, CSEA REGION 5 PRESIDENT



**CSEA Region 5 observes Workers Memorial Day 2019 (clockwise from top):**

CSEA activists gather at the Workers Memorial in Ilion after a moving ceremony; Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan addresses those attending the CNY Labor Council AFL-CIO's Workers' Memorial Day dinner; Central Region Safety & Health Committee Chair Joe Miceli reads aloud the names of those workers we lost in the last year at the Region's WMD observance at SUNY Cortland; SUNY Cortland Local 605 President Tom Hinger places the plaque that designates the tree as a Living Memorial; Alycia Haus, widow of fallen DOT worker Dennis "Matt" Howe wipes away a tear at our remembrance in Cortland; Occupational Safety & Health Specialist Josh Kemp speaks at the Cortland event; and Central Region President Kenny Greenleaf speaks to the crowd at our Cortland event.

# We need to know!



If you come across a **serious workplace hazard** or have any type of **emergency situation** arise that has or could jeopardize the safety of CSEA members, you should immediately notify your nearest CSEA Officer, and request that they **immediately report the situation to CSEA's Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Josh Kemp.**

CSEA can most effectively respond to emergency situations and protect your safety with **prompt notification.** This allows us to assess the situation and to hopefully address problems **before** anyone is hurt.



OSH Specialist Josh Kemp can be reached at **(800) 559-7975, ext. 3376.**

## Region 5 Safety & Health Committee Members

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| Ralph Cavo, Oneida County.....                          | (315) 941-6876 |
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| Lynn May, Jefferson County.....                         | (315) 486-9958 |
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| Tom Simchik, Madison County.....                        | (315) 264-8940 |
| Kevin Thompson, Black River Valley State Employees..... | (315) 782-4473 |
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## Safety Tips: Fire Extinguisher Safety

Contributed by Brett Furnia, CSEA SUNY Canton Local 603

We often hear about the importance of having smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in our homes and workplaces. I'd like to touch on another important item every household and work area should have – fire extinguishers. Many people think the main purpose of fire extinguishers are to put out fires. In many small fire situations, this is true, but the main purpose is to extinguish a path for you to leave an area were flames are present.

Let's look at what makes a fire: You need a chemical reaction between three elements: oxygen, fuel, and heat. You cannot have a fire unless all three things are present. You take one item away, the fire will go out. With a fire extinguisher, depending on the type used, you will take one of the three elements away.

There are five types, or classes of fires. You need to be familiar with them in order to choose the right extinguisher. Here's a brief

description of them:

- **Class A** – Wood, paper, and trash fires
- **Class B** – Flammable liquids and gases (propane, natural gas)
- **Class C** – Electrical fires
- **Class D** – Combustible metals
- **Class K** – Cooking oils and greases

Always make sure you have an extinguisher that can handle the type of fire threat in your area. In a lot of homes, the most common fire extinguisher is a dry chemical ABC type.

Once you know the types of hazards in your home/area, purchase your extinguishers. Here are some recommended places to put your extinguishers: Place one in the basement, which is usually where your heating equipment is located. Place one in the kitchen, one on each floor of the home, and one in the garage. Make sure they are in a convenient place and readily seen.

Once you have your extinguishers, it's a good idea to know how to use them in case of fire. I always use the **PASS** technique:

Pull the safety pin on the extinguisher  
Aim the hose towards the base of the fire

Squeeze the trigger  
Sweep the hose back and forth at the base of the fire to extinguish and prevent spreading the fire.

The last thing I'd remind you is to inspect your extinguishers every month. Make sure the safety pin is in place, the gauge shows the extinguisher is full, and there is no visual damage to the unit. If you have a dry chemical ABC type extinguisher, turn the unit upside down and gently shake the extinguisher to keep the dry powder inside from settling, insuring your extinguisher will perform to its specifications.