



Orthodox Union and Partners Host City Eruv Conference, Create Support Network for One Hundred Industry Professionals



BY [OU Staff](#) 04 DEC 2024

Unifying Event Hosted by the Orthodox Union and National Eruv Initiative Featured Leading Poskim, Networking Opportunities, and Best Practices Sessions for Building and Maintaining City Eruvin

While city eruvin are largely constructed out of simple material, the halachos and work involved in erecting and maintaining them are extremely intricate and complex, requiring highly skilled professionals. These include poskim who are experts in hilchos eruvin, as well as builders and supervisors who construct, oversee, and maintain eruvin's myriad components and installations.

To help eruv professionals with this avodas hakodesh, the Orthodox Union recently co-hosted a second annual City Eruv Conference at the Marriott Saddle Brook hotel

in New Jersey. Organized by OU Director of Halacha Initiatives Rabbi Ezra Sarna and the National Eruv Initiative's Rabbi Baruch Gore, the two-day conference offered chizuk, networking opportunities, and a space to learn best practices from leading rabbanim.

"It's staggering to contemplate the impact of this small group of unsung heroes," says Rabbi Sarna. "As a direct result of their yir'as shamayim and commitment, millions of Jews keep Shabbos every single week. Communities are able to thrive; young couples, children and the elderly are all able to go to shul and share Shabbos meals with others. In most communities eruv professionals largely work alone and with little recognition. The OU admires them and their work, and we want to support them."

About 100 eruv professionals across the religious spectrum from 55 North American cities – from as far as Seattle, Florida and Montreal – attended the event. Previously held at the OU's headquarters in New York, the conference was moved to a hotel to accommodate this year's increased attendance, which almost doubled that of 2023. Rabbi Sarna says that the hotel setting enabled participants to foster connections late into the night and early the following morning.

Yoshi Falber is the CEO of The Chesed Fund, the conference's lead corporate sponsor. Falber was particularly touched by the collaboration of attendees from diverse communities.

"The variety of cities represented, the diversity of backgrounds, and the multitude of unique personalities only amplified the remarkable sense of achdus and camaraderie," he says. "It was truly inspiring to see such unity around this shared responsibility, and the dedication to shmiras Shabbos across North America. This was an absolutely unparalleled event and a true kiddush Hashem."

Moe Bamberger, the COO of Central Jersey Screw & Bolt, a conference corporate sponsor, agrees.



Conference participants discuss an eruv scenario

“It was amazing to see the achdus of Yidden from every part of the U.S. and Canada, united in the common goal of improving eruvim,” he says.

Following introductions by Rabbi Sarna, Rabbi Gore, and OU President Mitchel Aeder, participants enjoyed dynamic sessions presented by leading poskim, including Rabbi Yechiel Steinmetz, dayan and head of the Vaad Mishmeres Eruvin l'Mehadrin, and Mishmeres HaKashrus; Rabbi Shlomo Francis, author of “The Laws of An Eruv” and Rabbinic Director of the Eruv Network; Rabbi Chaim Jachter, eruv posek and author of “Walking the Line”; Rabbi Mordechai Willig, Av Beis Din of the Beth Din of America and a rosh yeshiva at Yeshiva University; Rabbi Mordechai Fuchs, who oversees many eruvim in Lakewood, New Jersey; and Rabbi Moshe Steiner, eruv posek, from Monsey, New York.

Sessions covered eruv fundraising, education, checking standards, common mistakes, and traffic safety, among other topics. Participants also explored the OU's free software developed for eruv administrators, which Rabbi Sarna unveiled at the inaugural convention last year. The software takes thorough inventory of all of the components and details of a community eruv, and tracks issues and repairs in real time, enabling the entire eruv maintenance team to communicate quickly and effectively. This year Rabbi Sarna shared new features and updates, as the OU team continues to refine and improve the software to meet the expanding needs of city eruvim.



L to R, at the City Eruv Conference: Rabbi Shlomo Francis, author of “Laws of an Eruv,” Rabbi Chaim Jachter, author of “Walking the Line,” Chaim Yadlovker, eruv builder and supervisor, and Rabbi Chaim Meir Steinmetz, Monsey eruv supervisor and popular eruv consultant

Highlights included a Q&A session with Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Kresch, rosh kollel of K'hal Nsiv HaTorah in Far Rockaway, New York; a chance to explore eruv builders' bucket trucks (utility trucks fitted with buckets that people can stand in for elevation); a session on practical eruv situations and pitfalls led by Rabbi Mordechai Paretzky, who oversees over 30 eruvim throughout the country; and a roundtable discussion where participants shared insights and experiences over lunch.

“The 2024 City Eruv Conference was a tremendous display of achdus and a kiddush Hashem,” says Rabbi Gore. “All types of Jews came together to focus on, and to enhance, the shmiras Shabbos of millions of Jews across North America. No longer will someone who does eruv work feel alone in caring for their community. Our attendees left the conference feeling proud of what they do, and uplifted by the feeling that klal yisrael is counting on them to ensure our communities’ highest form of shmiras Shabbos. Each individual now has the support of fundraising and construction specialists, new technologies, legal assistance, and other like-minded eruv professionals from around the continent.”



Conference participants explore one of four bucket trucks brought to the hotel for a hands-on seminar

The conference also included an awards ceremony honoring attorneys David Yolkut, Yehudah Buchweitz, and Robert Sugarman, who have won multiple high-profile eruv cases on behalf of various communities. Rabbi Yoel Friedman, a chaplain at the Bergen County Sheriff’s Office (BCSO), was also recognized for his advocacy work on behalf of community eruvim.

“Rabbi Friedman dedicated many hours to fostering a relationship between eruv professionals and highway officials, and was successful in acquiring necessary permits for city eruvin along the Garden State Parkway and other major thoroughfares, so that both parties could work collaboratively,” says Rabbi Sarna. “He achieved an outstanding feat.”

Rabbi Avi Wealcach, an eruv builder and supervisor from Boca Raton, Florida, was thrilled to attend the conference.

“The chance to meet and connect with experts and others like me, who are out in the field, provided me with tremendous chizuk,” he says. “As a builder and maintainer of an ‘out-of-town’ community eruv, it was great to have an opportunity to explore firsthand the tools, techniques, and best practices utilized by other communities.”

Rabbi Eytan Jacob, an eruv supervisor from Montreal, Quebec, feels similarly.

“The conference provided a very unique platform for us to meet rabbanim who specialize in the halachos needed for eruv construction, as well as experienced eruv builders. Many of us ‘eruv men’ from smaller communities previously lacked support and guidance around this vital service. Thanks to the OU and the National Eruv Initiative, now we have it.”

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