



THE ACT REPORT

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News Of The Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation

July/August 1992

ACT Board Names White New Director

ACT's board of directors has named a fulltime director to guide day-to-day operations.

Steve White began as ACT's director August 3. Since then he has been busy getting out to listen to the membership's needs.

"I need to hear what people want to do, what the problems are and what solutions they see," White said.

Originally a member of the Carpenters and Joiners Local Union 108 and now Millwrights Local 1755, White said he came to West Virginia for several reasons.

"This is building trades acting together and acting statewide, which is a rarity," he explained.

"I saw ACT as being very involved with Cancer Creek and Kmart — they were certainly willing and able and I wanted to work with a group like that. They had a strong commitment from the membership to support and fund ACT."

White's career with labor began as an organizer for the Carpenters after getting his masters degree in labor relations from the University of Massachusetts.

White worked at the Washington D.C. headquarters of Carpenters and Joiners for seven years. His first position was in the corporate campaign office.

"Our goal was to use non-traditional means through researching targeted companies and then using that information to encourage them to use union labor."

He tells the story of how his office discovered that American Express managed and invested millions of dollars in union pension plans, and yet would not allow

ACT Convention Slated Sept. 15

Act's first annual convention will be held Sept. 15 in Charleston.

The convention, first to be held since the ACT Foundation was created last December, will be held at the Charleston House Holiday Inn.

Convention day activities will begin with a meeting of the Executive Board at 9 a.m., followed by a general convention meeting at 1 p.m. for representatives of ACT's 23 participating local unions.

union contractors to even bid on their construction jobs.

"Here you have American Express aggressively pursuing unions for business and would not allow



Steve White

New ACT Director

them to bid on their construction projects. So we used a top down approach by going to the management with this information, instead of striking or using picket lines."

Management at American Express got the message and now employs only union labor.

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New Fight Looming On Water

ACT has once again taken on industrial interests which seek to pollute West Virginia's water with cancer causing chemicals.

ACT previously fought off efforts to increase the dioxin level in the state's streams and rivers by up to eight times.

Now ACT has joined environmentalists and others in opposing dioxin levels in the state's underground water supply even higher than that proposed for the streams and rivers.

Public hearings are continuing on the state's proposed groundwater regulations which will determine the dioxin levels in more than 90 percent of rural West Virginia's drinking water.

Jacqueline Hallinan, a lawyer in ACT Attorney Stuart Calwell's office, recently told the State Water Resources Board "There's no good reason for West Virginia's citizens to be exposed to the cancer risk posed by consuming dioxin-contaminated water."

Hallinan's appearance before the board on behalf of ACT was in opposition to efforts to allow in-

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ACT Awaits Kmart Fairlea Bid Opening

Soon after August 27th ACT will learn whether it has been successful in its campaign to push Kmart into employing union building and construction trade contractors to build its new stores and additions in West Virginia.

That's when Kmart has set the deadline for bids on constructing a new \$2-million store at Fairlea, Greenbrier County. Three union and two non-union contractors have bid on the project, according to Bubby Casto, business manager for the Charleston Building & Construction Trades Council which includes Greenbrier County.

The union contractor bids were entered after representatives met with Kmart officials following ACT's month-long television campaign last spring criticizing Kmart for using non-union workers.

Casto said Kmart agreed to give preference to union contractors if their bids were "within reason" and if the TV commercials came off.

ACT pulled the commercials and Casto said the Charleston council gave incentives to make union contractors more competitive. Now, he said, he's waiting to learn whether those contractors get the Kmart job.

"We went after this pretty hard and hopefully in the future we'll get them all," Casto said. "But if we don't, I guess we can always put the commercials back on. They sure didn't like those commercials."

New ACT Fight Looms On State Ground Water

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industry to significantly increase groundwater pollution.

The present dioxin levels proposed by the Caperton administration would allow industry to release the chemical in amounts which may cause 1.3 cancer cases for every 10,000 people. This is higher than the standard carcinogen risk of one cancer case per million people.

ACT requested the board to

instead adopt a standard of "non-detectable" for dioxin in groundwater in West Virginia.

Missy Wolverton of the West Virginia Citizens Action Group, also testifying before the Water Resources Board, said "there's no threshold below which dioxin is safe."

ACT and the state building and construction trades have opposed the "Cancer Creek" project.

White Named ACT Director

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White said informing business and the public on the advantages of using union construction workers also is his priority.

He quickly points to tell-tale figures regarding labor costs of highway construction.

"The states which are typically non-union and pay their workers about \$9 an hour are spending more on labor per mile of highway built as the states categorized as union which pay their workers a much higher wage. And it's because the non-union workers just don't get the training the union workers get."

Training is something else White knows about. The position he vacated to come to West Virginia involved managing the international apprenticeship competition for the Carpenters and Joiners.

"Part of it was a competition, but it was also a trade show on new training ideas from all over the world."

White plans to use his experiences in both areas to further the goals of ACT.

ACT Hard Hat, Bumper Stickers Now Available

Bumper stickers bearing the ACT logo and declaring "Unions Mean Better Quality" have been printed and are now available along with hard hat stickers with the ACT logo.

Supplies are being shipped to your local union hall where they can be picked up.

Naming Of Director Key To ACT Success

By Bruce Tarpley
ACT President

When ACT's Executive Board named Steve White our director to guide the foundation's day-to-day operations, we truly took a giant step forward in our efforts to build a better future for West Virginia's union building and construction trade workers.

It isn't enough for local unions to band together and elect an Executive Board to encourage more West Virginia contractors and businesses to use union construction workers. We would expect some initial results — as we have with Kmart. But the long haul requires more guidance than a parttime board of directors can give.

We need a long term strategy, a plan which will do much more than just target random crises. The fact is the union movement — and especially the building and construction trades — have achieved much for working men and women everywhere. But too often the public has forgotten what unions have accomplished and what they can continue to achieve. How often have you heard people say, "Well, unions once were necessary but not any longer"?

It's ACT's job to develop a more effective and lasting way to communicate to business and the public that everyone wins when they hire union building and construction trade workers. We pay for our own job training, health care and pensions *and* produce quality work, while non-union workers often not only are unskilled but ultimately much more costly to both business and the taxpayers.

That's the goal of ACT. Now it's the goal of Steve White.

Affiliated Construction Trades

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