

THE ACT REPORT

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2
FEBRUARY, 2000



A PUBLICATION
OF THE AFFILIATED
CONSTRUCTION
TRADES FOUNDATION

The ACT Foundation is a division of The West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council, with offices in Charleston and Clarksburg. Steve Burton, President; Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer; Steve White, Director.

Charleston - (304) 345-7570
Clarksburg - (304) 624-0682

email actwv@compuserve.com



INSIDE

Pol Ed Class	Pg. 2
Cranes	Pg. 2
Budget	Pg. 2
Settlement	Pg. 3
Convention	Pg. 3
COMET	Pg. 4
Common Arc	Pg. 4

Union Voted In 10-3 At Hughes Supply

Hughes Supply Co. workers voted 10-3 on Feb. 4 for representation by Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 625.

This victory came after Hughes fired two workers active in the organizing drive last December.

The men struck in support of two employees, Rodney Harless and Leland Salmon.

The strike lasted three weeks at the Alum Creek office, a few miles south of Charleston.

They were fired after testifying in a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) hearing on who should be eligible to vote in the election.

Plumbers and Pipefitters Locals 625 and 152, of Charleston and Morgantown, also protested outside a Hughes Supply sister company, West Virginia Water

and Waste Supply Co., in South Charleston and Fairmont.

"I want to personally thank all the members of Locals 625 and 152 who not only showed support for the men who were fired, but for all Hughes employees," said Tim 'Squirrel' Jividen, Plumbers & Pipefitters organizer.

Two weeks before the election Harless and Salmon were offered their jobs back with full back pay after they served a

two-day suspension and agreed to hear the company's argument.

The remaining strikers were also offered full back pay if they returned.

"We were not reluctant at all to let the men go back to work under that condition," said T.L. Ranson, Local 625 business manager.

"We knew these men could see through the company's pro-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

FOCUS IS ON HIRING LOCAL WORKERS FOR GILMER CO. PRISON PROJECT

ACT Sponsors Job Fair

More than 250 people attended the ACT sponsored job fair February 5th in Gilmer County.

The job fair was held to collect information from local workers in and around Gilmer County and to show local workers are capable of building the upcoming \$90 million federal prison project.

"We were surprised at the number of people who turned out, considering the fact we didn't really get to advertise until a few days before the job fair was to take place," said ACT's Jim Lewis.

"I know we would not have been as successful

as we were without the effort of all the organizers and agents who helped put this thing together."

The job fair was part of an ongoing effort to draw attention to the fact that Bell Construction,

the contractor from New York hired to build the prison, is considering the use of out-of-state workers for the its construction.

A total of 12 crafts were present at the fair and eight of the

12 setup informational displays.

"The job fair was a great place for us to learn about local workers and for them to learn about us," said Doug Barker of the WV Laborers Training Fund.

The purpose of the job fair was twofold.

The first objective was to showcase the different crafts and things like their training programs.

The second was to identify the construction workers in the area who were not represented by unions.

The attendees filled out surveys which asked about their experience to give

CONTINUED
ON PAGE 3



ACT'S STEVE MONTONEY HELPED WORKERS FROM the Gilmer County area fill out surveys about their skills and experience. ACT wants to prove there are plenty of local workers available to build the prison.

Political Education



Members of Iron Workers Local 548 of Wheeling, participated in a political education class on Wed. Jan. 12.

The class, taught by ACT's B.B. Smith, was designed to

teach members why unions are involved in the political process. Smith teaches several political education classes a year.

The classes address such things as how politics can effect working conditions and workplace safety, the importance of

voting in every election and the political issues facing the average working family.

"The political education classes help union members to understand the importance of their involvement in the political process," said Smith.

NEW JULY 1 DEADLINE

Crane Certification Delayed

The West Virginia Legislature has made the decision to push back the deadline for crane operator certification for six months.

Crane operators now have until July 1 to complete all certification requirements.

Those who are certified before July 1 will not be required to take a hands-on test.

"We are not real happy with this decision," said ACT's Steve White.

"But we agreed to a six month

extension if the certification remains a high quality program."

Apparently a number of crane operators were unable to pass the written exam.

Some had not heard about the new law until recently, others failed to prepare for the test and found out it was a comprehensive and serious exam.

The six month extension will allow those who failed the test to prepare and retake it.

"We are very much in support of this legislation," said Ronnie Burdette, Operating Engineers Local 132 business manager.

"Safety is a major concern on all job sites and mandatory certification will ensure only qualified workers are operating cranes."

After July 1, 2001 those applying for the certification must pass both a written exam and a hands-on test.

The details of the hands-on test have not been finalized by the West Virginia Department of Labor.

An advisory committee, with labor participation, will be working on the hands-on test this year.

Budget Digest Is 'Hot Topic' In Legislature

A hot topic at this year's legislative session has been the Budget Digest.

Legislative leaders use the Budget Digest to direct funds to special projects, totaling \$37 million last year.

That's why the ACT Foundation has released a new report detailing the West Virginia Legislature's Budget Digest planned expenditures for fiscal years 1999 and 2000.

Critics claim the Budget Digest has allowed legislative leaders, particularly in the House of Delegates, to spend millions in their home districts.

Claims have also been made that Budget Digest allocations have been used to control votes.

The ACT report on the Budget Digest compares spending on a county-by-county basis.

The comparisons were made in an effort to educate the public as to where the money for Budget Digest projects is being spent.

The data comes from the items found under the Legislative Intent headings in the *Digest of the Enrolled Budget Bill* and from the West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs 1998 Provisional Census.

"We have documented the past two fiscal years as to the money each county is getting per person," said ACT's Steve White.

The table lists the top

five and the bottom five counties and their combined per capita Budget Digest expenditures for FY 1999 and FY 2000.

"Pendleton and Hardy Counties, represented by Del. Harold Michael, House Finance Chair, received the most money per capita," said White.

Hampshire, Pocahontas and Jefferson counties also fall in the top five and are represented by Del. Jerry Mezzatesta, House Education Committee Chair, Del. Joe Martin, House Majority Leader, and Del. John Doyle, Vice-Chair House Finance Committee respectively.

"We would like to point out that while many argue this only represents a small part of the total budget, the Budget Digest does represent a significant portion, around \$37 million," said White.

If you would like a copy of ACT's full Budget Digest report, please contact the ACT office at 1-800-932-WORK (9675).

Top 5 and Bottom 5 Counties	Total Budget Digest Amount Per Person
1. Pendleton	\$255.58
2. Hardy	\$250.98
3. Hampshire	\$147.97
4. Jefferson	\$118.15
5. Pocahontas	\$108.54
51. Mineral	\$16.54
52. Berkeley	\$13.28
53. Monongalia	\$12.68
54. Harrison	\$9.52
55. Wood	\$9.00

Three Year Fight Ends In \$17,000 Settlement

After a three year fight, workers for Cleveland Construction, Inc. will share more than \$17,000 in back pay.

Bruce Murphy, Raymond DeNuzzo and Michael George, received \$3,400, \$6,000 and \$8,000 respectively.

All three are members of Carpenters Local 1207 in Charleston.

Cleveland Construction of Ohio was a subcontractor on the Embassy Suites Hotel in Charleston, a project plagued with problems from the beginning.

Murphy, along with DeNuzzo and George were fired in early 1997 for protesting safety con-

ditions on the job.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) found the men were terminated as a direct result of their efforts to organize the company.

The original ruling was made in December 1997, but the amount due each employee was not agreed upon until this year.

"It's a great feeling to be able to stand up for the rights of workers in West Virginia and win," said Murphy.

"This company thought it could just come into our state, hire our workers, have them work in unsafe conditions, pay them sub-standard wages and get away with it.

"With ACT's help we were able to prove them wrong."

JOB FAIR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

business agents and organizers a way to contact them.

"We wanted get an idea of how many qualified workers we have in this area and what types of skills they have," said Lewis.

"That way if Bell tries to use the excuse there are no qualified local workers for them to use, we can use the information from the surveys and from our membership to refute them.

"We will everything we can to make certain local workers get these jobs."

"I was very pleased with the way things turned out," said Mike O'Hara, organizer for Operation Engineers Local 132.

"All of the organizers, including myself, who attended the job fair spoke with several skilled

workers who need and deserve the jobs this project will create."

"It's important local workers are involved with this prison project," said Tony Polentas, organizer for Pipefitters Local 152 of Morgantown.

The Tuesday before the job fair, Lewis and several other union members went before the Gilmer County Commission to ask for its support.

"The Commissioners agreed we need to keep these jobs in West Virginia," said Lewis.

Lewis plans to meet with the County Commissions in the surrounding counties as well to ask for their support.

ACT also has erected a billboard at the prison site asking the public to demand local workers get the construction jobs.

Trades Constitutional Convention



The West Virginia State Building Trades held its constitutional convention last month at the Charleston House Holiday Inn.

The attendees addressed

many issues effecting union members and made some minor adjustments to the Building Trades constitution.

"I am happy with the way things went at this year's convention," said Steve Burton, State Building Trades President.

"The members showed a willingness to get along and work together to make the Building Trades a stronger organization.

"We are now only a few links away from full participation by all crafts."

HUGHES SUPPLY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

paganda."

"I believe the reason the company offered to bring the employees back to work was because of all the support the men received on the picket lines," said Jividen.

Jividen believes Hughes Supply spent several thousand dollars in its attempt to persuade employees to vote down the union.

"These men really wanted union representation, and I don't think anything or anyone could have changed their minds," said Jividen.

"Especially after they talked

with the current union members on the picket lines who had become a part of Local 625 under

vor of the union," said Ranson.

"We even found out after the election two of the three office

"THESE MEN REALLY WANTED UNION REPRESENTATION, AND I DON'T THINK ANYTHING OR ANYONE COULD HAVE CHANGED THEIR MINDS."

TIM 'SQUIRREL' JIVIDEN, ORGANIZER PLUMBERS AND PIPEFITTERS

the same conditions these men were facing."

"I don't think the company understood how strong their employees' feelings were in fa-

workers voted for the union.

"The next step is to sit down with the company and the employees and negotiate a contract."

Eastern Panhandle's First COMET Class Successful

The first COMET, (Construction Organizing Education and Training Program) class in the eastern Panhandle was held on Jan. 20 and deemed a success by all who participated.

ACT's Bill Thomas and Larry Young taught the class and led the evening's discussions. Twenty-three people, both union and non-union, attended the class.

"We had a very frank and open discussion about the pros and cons of union organizing," said Thomas.

"We talked about the many obstacles facing union organizers and the different ways to work to overcome them.

"I was most impressed with the positive attitude of the crowd and everyone's understanding of the situations union organizers can find themselves in.

"These things are why the organizers in this area are making such progress."

Rick Williams, business manager for the North Central Building Trades; Gary Long, business manager for Laborers Local 679; Kenny Fike, business manager for Carpenters Local 1024; Dave Cardwell, organizer for the Carpenters; and Charlie Shindle, organizer for IBEW Local 307.

On Jan. 21, the North Central Building Trades hosted a breakfast for area contractors and business managers to discuss construction jobs in the Eastern Panhandle.

Speakers included Steve Allred, Bob Miller, and Mary Beth Whitmore of the West Virginia Department of Labor, and Kelly Lapping of the Laborers' International Union.

"We discussed some of the major construction projects in the area," said Young.

"We are looking forward to doing something similar in the near future."

Local 667 Takes Part In 'Common Arc' Program



KURT HAMRICK OF BOILERMAKERS LOCAL 667 is pictured checking the heat on his machine as he prepares for testing as part of the Common Arc program.

In late January, Boilermakers Local 667 held a testing session for welders as part of the national Boilermakers Common Arc Program, based in Illinois.

One hundred eighty-nine members of Local 667 were tested on their welding skills while representatives from 15 different construction companies observed.

The members who successfully completed the test were then certified to work for every company that participated in the program for the next six months.

To be a participant in this area, the company can contact Local 667 and get the necessary information to contact the Illinois office.

"The purpose of the Common Arc program is to save time and money," said Clarence Clonch, Assistant Business Manager for Local 667.

"This way the members only take one test, the certification is good for six months nationwide and the different companies and the members don't lose time and money on testing at each job for each employee."

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 1374
Charleston, WV
25301

ACT Foundation
523 Central Avenue
Charleston, WV 25302
(304) 345-7570

'West Virginia Works' Show Times & Stations

FOX 46 -
Clarksburg & Morgantown
Saturdays @ 7:30am

Cable Ch. 10 -
Wheeling, St. Clairsville & Moundsville
Saturdays @ noon

FOX 59 -
Beckley & Bluefield
Saturdays @ 12:30pm

Cable Ch. 16 -
Steubenville, Follansbee & Wellsburg
Saturdays @ noon

FOX 11 -
Charleston, Huntington & Parkersburg
Sundays @ 11:30am

Give us a call if you have an idea for a
show! 1-800-930-WORK!