

# THE ACT TRADES REPORT

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## WAGE RATES ON FEDERAL PROJECTS

# DAVIS-BACON SURVEY UNDERWAY

The U.S. Department of Labor has begun a new West Virginia wage survey to determine the minimum pay rate for craft workers on federal projects.

The survey is part of the federal Davis-Bacon Act requirements to set area wages for construction projects funded with federal funds.

The DOL will look for wages paid in each of West Virginia's 55 counties for both Building and Heavy types of work.

Any project that was underway during the period of February 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009 is eligible to be included in the survey.

Survey forms have already gone out to many contractors who had projects during that time period.

In order to better understand the survey process representatives from the DOL came to WV to give presen-

tations in Charleston, Wheeling, Huntington and Morgantown during October.

They went over the data collection process and explained what projects and classifications of work were

acceptable.

Anyone can submit data as long as it was for actual work done on a project, the project was underway during the time frame, and the work is not residential or highway.

Labor representatives can participate in the survey process as well as contractors.

"This is a tremendous undertaking, someone must find projects that happened al-

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DOL SENIOR WAGE Analyst Maria Cedrone Duffy (right) gives a presentation regarding the federal Davis-Bacon wage survey process to a packed room of trades and contractor representatives at the WV State Building Trades office in Charleston. The training took place at four locations in the state during October.

# HARLEY DAVIDSON STORE AND TRADES WORK TOGETHER

A project that started out nonunion was turned around after some hard work from Building Trades and craft representatives in the Parkersburg area.

S & P Harley Davidson in Williamstown should be opening their new \$3 million building by Thanksgiving. The 24,000 square foot Butler Manufactured building was built for owners Steve and Patsy Hardy.

They chose Mondo Building and Excavating from

Ohio as their general contractor and soon found out that didn't sit well with local trades workers.

"Mondo is a nonunion contractor," said Bill Hutchinson, Business Manager of the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades.

However the story didn't end there, Hutchinson and other Trades leaders approached the Hardy's and explained their position on the importance of hiring local workers who are paid a fair wage and benefits.

"We wanted the owner to

know many of their customers, and potential customers were union trades workers because they got fair wages working for union contractors," said Hutchinson.

"And they were very much willing to listen and work with us, I was impressed."

The couple asked Mondo to try and work with the Trades which resulted in the Trades getting to build the remainder and majority of the project.

Hutchinson also credits Mondo representatives with taking the owners request se-

riously and working with the Trades.

According to Hutchinson all sides, owner, labor and contractor pitched in to make the project a success.

"Some crafts early in the job did not get their work, and that is unfortunate," said Hutchinson.

"But in the end we have a project that produces some good work opportunities at a time when work is down, and that's a good thing."

According to the owners the project has been a great success.

AEP COMMISSIONS PILOT PROJECT

# NEW CARBON CAPTURE PROCESS HOLDS PROMISE FOR WV COAL AND UTILITIES

American Electric Power officially commissioned their new carbon capture and storage facility with a ceremony held on October 30 at their Mountaineer Plant in Mason County.

The celebrating marked completion of the first phase of implementing a cutting edge technology to allow for the burning of coal to pro-

duce electricity and reduce greenhouse gasses.

The project takes a portion of the plant's flue gas and removes the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) through a process that uses chilled ammonia.

The CO<sub>2</sub> is then injected into brine-filled rock layers some 8,000 feet below ground.

The underground areas have been carefully studied to make sure they have the

right qualities for containing the CO<sub>2</sub>.

Rock formations need to have good porosity and good permeability for effective CO<sub>2</sub> storage.

Porosity is a measurement of the amount of empty space, or void space, in a solid material. Porous rocks, or rocks with holes, are good reservoirs for oil, gas and water.

Permeability is a measure of the ability of a liquid or

gas to flow through a material. A material can be highly porous, but if the pore spaces are not connected, liquid and gas will not flow through it.

Once stored in these layers, the CO<sub>2</sub> is permanently trapped underground by cap rock. Non-porous rock layers act as caps or seals to trap the liquid.

The combination of removing CO<sub>2</sub> and storing it underground holds much promise for electricity producers like AEP who burn coal to power turbines.

With the pilot project underway AEP is already planning for a larger use of the technology.

AEP has plans for a 'scaled-up' project at the Mountaineer site that would take more than ten times the amount of flue gas as the current operation is using.

They have applied for Federal stimulus funding for the project.

Currently it takes a significant amount of electric power

to operate the process, the goal is to lower the amount of power used.

Ultimately if the carbon capture and sequestration process proves cost effective it could be used commercially and allow coal-fired power plants to expand and continue to produce electricity and meet tough environmental standards.

AEP has already invested billions into a variety of environmental projects at the Mountaineer site including Low NO<sub>x</sub> burners and a selective catalytic reduction (SCR) system to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions; a sulfur trioxide mitigation (SO<sub>3</sub>) system; electrostatic precipitators to remove fly ash particles; and a flue gas desulfurization (FGD) system or scrubber to remove sulfur dioxide.

The 1300 megawatt Mountaineer plant went into service in September 1980 and burns on average 3.5 million tons of coal each year.

## CARPENTERS AND LABORERS HANDBILL KROGER STORE



LABORERS AND CARPENTERS teamed up to handbill a St. Albans Kroger store near Charleston this month.

The effort took place because Kroger hired an out-of-state general contractor, M&J General Contractors, based in Illinois and Roanoke, VA, for the project.

The project had been bid two times previously and union contractors were low both times. But Kroger kept trying til they found a nonunion general contractor who undercut local companies and workers.

Fortunately some local union workers will end up on the job for mechanical and electric sub-contractors.

According to Carpenter Agent Scott Brewer an unlicensed concrete contractor was on the job and temporary workers were hired for some demolition work.

## DAVIS-BACON

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

most a year or more ago and get payroll records for each craft on the job, and for every county," said Larry Young, ACT Representative.

If the majority of work in a county is found to be done at the union scale then wages for projects in the county will increase when collective bargaining agreements increase.

But if the majority of work for a craft is found to be non-union then an average wage is

set and it remains at that rate until another survey is done.

Some counties have not had a survey for 15 years.

It has been many years since any Federal survey has taken place in WV, and never has one been done that covers all counties. In the past, groups of counties were considered, not the whole state.

The deadline for submitting data is February 26, 2010. Then the data will be analyzed and verified. A new wage schedule is expected in early 2011.

## TRADES BENEFIT FROM COLLEGE CLASSES

Fifteen members of the Trades recently completed a pair of college courses putting them one step closer to a college degree.

The classes, organized with help from the WV State Building Trades, are part of an ongoing effort to help members of the Trades get college degrees by combining courses with credit for completing their apprenticeship programs.

The students were from the Charleston area and took two classes, English 101 and Cost Estimating.

Each class earning them

three credits towards a college degree.

Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College and Bridgemont Community and Technical College provided the instructors.

Both classes were held at the Carpenters Training Center in South Charleston for 16 weeks starting in July and ending in October.

Each class met one night a week for three hours.

A variety of Trades were involved including Laborers, Carpenters, Pipefitters, Ironworkers and Painters.

A new set of classes is being scheduled for January in Charleston and the Fairmont

area.

One will be Public Speaking, the other has yet to be decided. There is space available in each location.

The Charleston classes will cost approximately \$200 per class, but the Fairmont classes will be free.

"In Fairmont, Pierpont Community and Technical College is offering the first round of classes for free to get the ball rolling," said Sheryl Johnson, coordinator for the WV State Building Trade Council.

"And the \$200 rate in Charleston is well below what is normally charged, this is a

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## FAIR POLICIES COST THE SAME

A new study concludes that Responsible Contractor Policies have no negative effect on construction costs.

The recently completed study, conducted by David C. May of Concord Cymorth LLC and C. Jeffrey Wadouds of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, looked at Ohio elementary school construction projects from 1997 to 2008.

Results show that adopting Responsible Contractor Policies may be an effective way to improve jobs and living standards of workers without raising costs to taxpayers by providing employment-based health insurance, support for skill formation and safer workplaces.

Critics of Responsible Contractor Policies often claim the cost of construction increases if such policies are used.

The study was done to provide scientific evidence for the debate.

Most public construction projects are awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. Finding the lowest number is easy, but determining who is responsible can be difficult.

Many states, including some agencies and Counties in WV, have adopted Responsible Contractor Policies to better define the term

These policies include data on past job performance, whether a contractor brings projects in on time and within budget, compliance with state and federal regulations, whether the contractor pro-

vides health and pension benefits, participation in apprenticeship programs, alcohol and drug free policies, and information about sub-contractors.

The study specifically focused on policies aimed at making sure workers have a health insurance benefit.

The majority of workers in the United States obtain health insurance through their employer.

According to the study construction workers have a consistently lower than average rate of coverage due to the prevalence of small employers, seasonality, a higher incident of part-time employment, and the prevalence of racial minorities in the construction industry whose employment-based health care is underrepresented.

Construction employers who fail to provide health insurance coverage, or do not provide ample coverage, shift these costs onto the tax payers by shifting costs to hospitals providing uncompensated care.

In West Virginia legislation has been introduced for many years to require contractors that bid public projects show their workers have health care.

The Contractors Association of WV has repeatedly defeated the legislation although it has passed the House of Delegates.

A new bill is being prepared for the 2010 legislative session.

A link to the study can be found on the ACT web site – [www.actwv.org](http://www.actwv.org).

## WHY DO WEST VIRGINIA FUNDS GO TO FLORIDA? ASK PAINTERS



*RICH PATRICK (left) and Mike Smith of Painters District Council 53 banner a \$700,000 bridge painting job in Lincoln County funded with Federal stimulus money. The project was awarded to Seminole Equipment from Florida.*

*"Why use stimulus fund in West Virginia to hire companies and workers from Florida when there are plenty of unemployed workers here who need jobs?" asked Mike Smith, Director of Marketing for Painters District Council 53.*

MARSHALL COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE INVOLVED  
**PAINTERS PROGRAM GETS \$124,000 STATE  
 GRANT FOR VIRTUAL REALITY TRAINING**

Painters District Council 53 has been awarded a \$124,000 "Workforce Development" grant in October from the state of WV to help fund the purchase of two virtual reality training simulators.

The funds will be matched by the Council to create a \$250,000 investment to purchase, install and operate virtual reality (VR) painting and sand blasting simulators.

The simulators give students more variety of sur-

faces and environments and will allow for more effective training process.

According to Council Business Manager Rick Hackney the VR simulators can speed up training, take up less space, don't waste material and are safer.

"We are investing in state-of-the art technology to produce the best trained painters in the industry," said Hackney.

Working with Marshall Community and Technical College the funding will also help train the trainers who in

turn will use the equipment to provide hands on training to members of the Council.

The effort is part of a major ramping up of training capabilities undertaken by the Council over the past few years.

Key to the effort is the purchase of 96,000 square feet of training area and a new site located in Weston.

Goals set for the grant program include training a minimum of 250 up to 600 students over a three year period.

Goals also include increas-

ing enrollment of members into a college degree program that gives credit for apprenticeship completion.

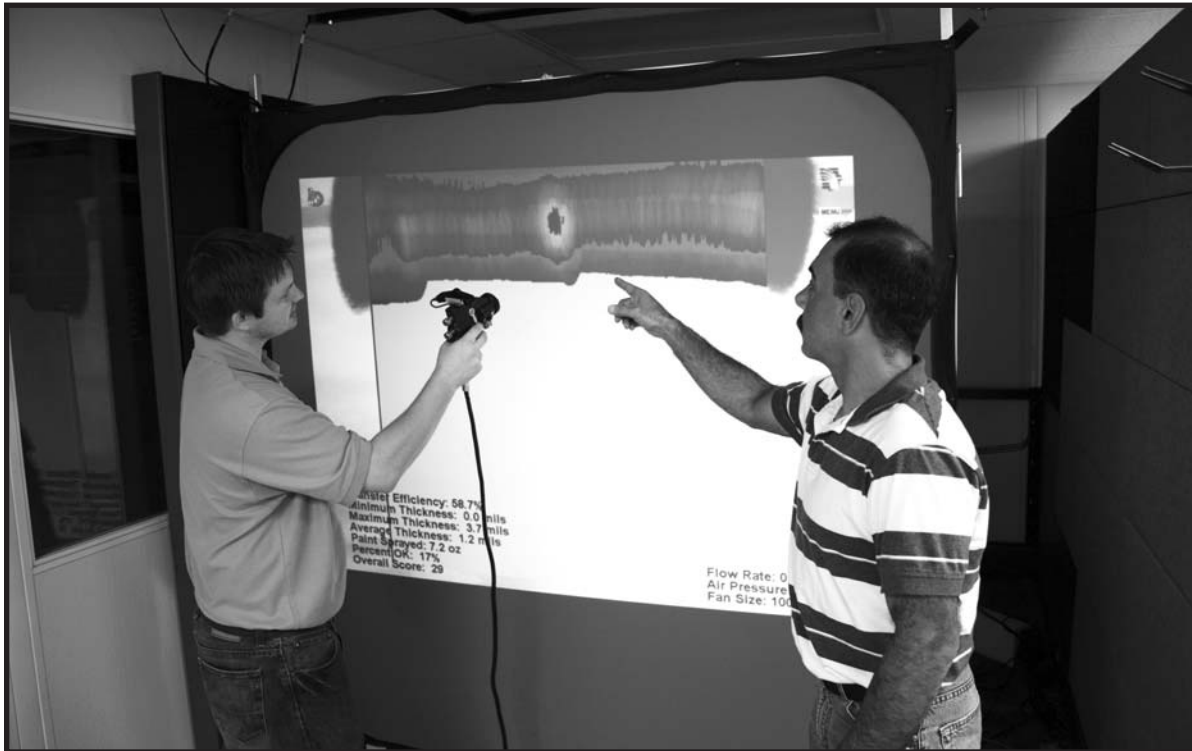
"The need for skilled Painters is increasing because many members of the Baby-Boomer generation are look-

ing towards retirement," said Hackney.

Painters District Council 53 has more than 2000 members and approximately 100 signatory contractors in West Virginia and surrounding states.

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*THIS PROMOTIONAL PICTURE of a virtual reality simulator shows how the equipment works in a training setting. Painters District Council 53 will purchase and operate two new simulators at their Weston training site.*

## COLLEGE

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great deal for our members."

Johnson has been working with Community College leaders to customize classes so they better meet the needs

of construction workers.

According to Johnson all the classes will be tailored to the construction industry.

Classes are available to those who have completed, or are in, their last two years of apprenticeship.

Trades members can get 43 hours of college credit for completion of apprenticeship programs.

If they take an additional seven classes they can earn an Associates Degree in Occupational Development.

Those with prior college classes, no matter when they were taken, may get credit towards the degree.

The State Building Trades got a grant earlier this year to

help coordinate and promote the college degree program.

Members interested in the classes can call Sheryl Johnson at 304/546-3903 for more information.



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### SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM UNION TRADES FCU



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Offer Expires 12/31/2009

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