



A PUBLICATION OF THE AFFILIATED CONSTRUCTION TRADES

A Division of the WV State Building Trades, AFL-CIO | Bill Hutchinson, *President* | Dave Efaw, *Secretary-Treasurer* | Steve White, *Director*

WV Legislative Session at Halfway Point

Safety Bill Makes Progress

Efforts to pass a bill aimed at improving construction workplace safety may finally be paying off.

A compromise appears to have been reached which will allow a bill to advance that will require OSHA 10 construction training on all public construction sites.

The compromise provides for a two year phase-in of the legislation and allows time after arriving at a job to get the required training.

Attempts to add a section that would have allowed "equivalent" training to the OSHA 10 standard

has been dropped.

"We are ready to make a deal and get this bill moving," said Gary Tillis, Business Manager for the West Virginia Laborers District Council.

The breakthrough came as union members and contractors got increasingly involved with visits to the Capitol, calls and emails to legislators.

A newspaper ad was also used to get the legislature focused on safety.

The bill has been proposed for a number of years and failed due to pressure from nonunion contractors.

The bill, S.B. 376, has already passed the Senate Labor Committee and is before the Senate Judiciary Committee. With the compromise bill it is expected to be on the committees agenda soon and, if passed, put before the full Senate.

The bill must be sent over to the House of Delegates no later than February 26 to stay alive.

Other legislation supported by the Building Trades includes a bill to provide for representation on the State Fire Commission for both electricians and sprinklerfitters. Both

groups pay licensing fees to the Commission.

The bill has stalled because other groups want to get seats on the Commission, making a simple bill more complex.

"The Commission should have a member who understands our trade," said Joe Samples, Business Manager for Electricians Local 466 in Charleston. "And we want representation for our members who pay big dollars in licensing fees."

Elimination of funding for infra-

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HVAC Bill Takes Shape

Member Involvement is Working

An effort to get more building trades members involved in legislation is paying off.

Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades has lobbied for years on behalf of building trades members.

"But when our members show up at the Capitol, make calls or send emails, we can see the difference," said Efaw. "They are getting the job done."

One example is the certification effort for HVAC technicians.

The Sheet Metal Workers, led by Local 33 and including Local 24 and 100, have been promoting a certification law that would put West Virginia workers and contractors on an even playing field with neighbors Kentucky and Maryland.

Both these states and a number of cities in Ohio have licensing or certification laws for workers who per-

form HVAC and Fire Damper installation work.

The Sheet Metal Workers began preparing for the legislation last year

when they submitted an application

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House Government Organization Chair Jim Morgan (D-Cabell) (left) meets with Sheet Metal Worker members to discuss HVAC/Fire Damper certification. Local 24 Business Representative Jeff Rowe (left/from back) brought members who lived in Morgan's district, journeyman Jeremy Sarver, second year apprentice Tim Cook and instructor Sam Schaffer to the Capitol.

No Increase in Costs of Public Construction Prevailing Wage Study Documents Many Benefits to Industry and Communities

Yet another study confirms what local trades' members and contractors have known for years – prevailing wage laws are good for the construction industry and communities.

The most recent study comes from researchers at the University of Illinois and Michigan State University and sets forth five clear conclusions about the state law in Illinois.

The first conclusion is “prevailing wages do not lead to increases in costs of public construction projects.”

Second, the “repeal of Illinois’

Safety Bill

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structure has been proposed to balance the state budget and that has Trades members concerned.

A bill to take \$11 million per year from highway funding and \$20 million per year from water and sewer funds is a bad idea.

“Our highway funds are already down,” said Tommy Plymale, Business Manager of Operating Engineers Local 132. “And the need for water and sewer projects across the

Member Involvement

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to the legislative auditor.

All legislation aimed at licensing and certification must first go through a review to see if the measure will benefit the public.

The auditor’s report agreed that the public would benefit from certification because of the complex nature of the work and the inherent safety that goes along with proper installations, especially of smoke and fire dampers.

The group then began working on legislation and talking with legislators and industry representative.

House Bill 4392 was drafted and introduced.

“We spent the first few weeks talk-

PWL would result in job losses throughout the state, decreased GDP, and millions of dollars in lost tax revenue.”

Third, “more construction workers would suffer fatal work-related injuries if Illinois’ PWL is repealed and construction workers would lose many of their work-related benefits.”

Fourth, “PWLs encourage apprenticeship training in the construction industry.”

And fifth, “PWLs do not reduce participation of African-American

state is huge, any loss of funds will make it that much harder for communities who are already struggling.”

The budget gap comes from reduced tax revenues attributed to recent measures to lower corporate tax rates, eliminate the business franchise tax and eliminate the food tax.

A bill to raise the minimum wage has passed House of Delegates and is before the Senate. It will phase in increases over the next few years. ■

ing to legislators and finding out how they felt about the bill,” said Randy Gombos with the Sheet Metal Workers.

“Now we are working on some changes to get more people on board.”

The bill will soon be brought before the House Government Organization committee where it will begin the process of review and votes that hopefully will lead to passage.

Failure to pass in a committee or on before the full House will end the bill.

And if it does make it through the House it will then have to go through the same process on the Senate side.

“It’s a lot of work,” said Gombos. ■

workers in construction trades.”

The report grew out of claims that the elimination of Illinois prevailing wage law would bring benefits to the public.

In fact the conclusions were exactly opposite.

In West Virginia a similar effort to repeal the state prevailing wage law spouting the same false claims are often made, most recently by Senators Bill Cole (R-Mercer) and Mitch Carmichael (R-Jackson).

The two have sponsored legislation to eliminate the law known as SB

360, along with Senator Evan Jenkins (R-Cabell), Clark Barnes (R-Randolph), Craig Blair (R-Berkeley) and Chris Walters (R-Kanawha).

The law requires an annual survey of construction wages which are used to set minimum wage rates for tax funded projects.

The measure insures tax funded jobs don’t end up driving down local wage standards and putting local contractors out of business.

To see a complete copy of the study follow the link found on the ACT web site www.actwv.org. ■

Congressman Nick Joe Rahall Speaks About Infrastructure, Money



U.S. Congressman Nick Joe Rahall speaks to members of the State Building Trades at their legislative conference held in Charleston on January 21.

Rahall spoke about the need for a new transportation bill this year because the current bill will expire. He also talked about the influence of outside money that has no disclosure because of a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court called Citizens United. Funding will come from billionaires like the Koch brothers who are already spend huge sums of money in the state. Funding may even come from foreign countries because there is no regulation currently in place.

Rahall represents the 3rd congressional district and will likely face Evan Jenkins in the fall. Jenkins, currently a state senator from Huntington, switched parties last year to run against Rahall.

Ethane Cracker Developer Tours Training Facilities and Gas Processing Project

Representatives of Odebrecht and Braskem, the Brazilian based developers of a proposed multi-billion dollar ethane cracker in Wood County toured area training programs and projects last month.

The tour was aimed at showing the strength of local craft training facilities and the commitment to an alcohol and drug free workplace.

Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades Business Manager Bill Hutchinson led the tour that began at Plumbers and Fitters Local 565 training program in Parkersburg.

There the company representatives gave an overview of the proposed project and some insights into the time frame it would take to make a final decision about the project.

Many factors are still being worked out including equipment selection, environmental permitting, raw material supply, financing and more.

A key component of any large project is available skilled manpower to build it.

Because the project design is not done an estimate of workers needed

is not yet available but the ranges discussed make it clear the project would need thousands of workers.

With the miles of pipe that would be installed the companies want to better understand how the crafts would man the project.

Local 565 Business manager Gary Yarnell along with UA International Representative Ed Boone explained the manpower in the region and the ability to call on sister locals from across the country if needed.

The group also toured the Alcohol and Drug testing program in Parkersburg called TOPS.

Key to the discussion was the commitment to a drug and alcohol workplace with meaningful and real testing and education.

The group then visited the Sherwood plant owned by MarkWest in Doddridge County.

Chapman Construction is building the facility and has completed three phases on time using local union trades workers.

Currently the site can process up to 600 million cubic feet of gas per day and commitments have been

made to double the facility.

"It's not the biggest site in the region but it is not far from the proposed site and we wanted to show our workforce can build similar projects," said Hutchinson.

According to Hutchinson the meetings and tour went great and more events are planned.

"We learned they have a ways to go with their planning and the groundbreaking is more than a year away," said Hutchinson. "We also learned these folks are very serious and putting a tremendous effort into this project, we came away feeling very up-beat about the project and our role in it." ■



Gary Yarnell (standing left) Business Manager of Plumbers and Fitters Local 565, Parkersburg, leads a discussion about craft training with representatives of Odebrecht, Braskem, the Building Trades and staff from the local apprenticeship program.

First Thursday of Each Month

Millwrights Take Apprentice Applications

Millwright Local #1755 Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee have adopted a year round application policy.

Starting this year applications will be taken on the first Thursday of each month, between 1:00pm and 4:00pm at three locations, Bridgeport, Charleston and Parkersburg.

Parkersburg at
4600 Camden Ave.,
304-842-5431

Bridgeport at
609 Broadway,
304-342-4321

Charleston at
205A Tennessee Ave.,
304-422-1593

The five year/10,000 hour program has paid on-the-job training as well as classroom instruction.

Included in the training are courses in mathematics, welding, a working knowledge of hand tools, power tools, bench & machine tools, training in engineering principles, optical instruments, safety and blueprint reading.

Applications must be completed in person and you must have the following information:

- Copy of high school transcripts or GED and post high school education
- Copy of Birth Certificate (must be 17 to apply)

- Copy of Social Security Number of U.S. Works Authorization Document

- Copy of proof of residency (photo ID) can be Federal, State or Local issued

- Copy of Work History
- Copy of DD-214 (if Veteran)
- Three non-family references: Name, Address, Contact Information and Occupation.

In addition you must live in one of the following counties to apply:

In WV: Barbour, Boone, Braxton, Cabell, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Grant, Greenbrier, Harrison, Jackson, Kanawha, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, Marshall,

Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Monroe, Monongalia, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, and Wyoming; in Ohio: Washington and Athens.

An aptitude test and a drug test will be required at a later date.

All applicants will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin or sex.

For more information check their web site www.millwright1755.com or call 304-422-1593. ■

\$20 Million Battery Yard Planned Beech Ridge Ready for 33 More Wind Turbines at Greenbrier County Site

Beech Ridge Energy currently operates 67 wind turbines in Greenbrier County and has plans to build 33 more.

Approval has been granted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a "Taking" permit allowing the facility to create new habitat for endangered bats and accommodate the existing and new locations of turbines.

According to the project developers all permits are now in place for the second phase of the project.

All that is needed for the project

to move forward is to secure a contract to sell the power.

Beech Ridge plans to add a battery-based storage device or "battery yard" to the site and is seeking approval from the state Public Service Commission.

The 32 megawatt energy storage system will consist of 18 battery containers roughly the size of a standard shipping container.

The new technology will be used to help balance energy supply and frequency in the grid.

The storage system also may in-

clude up to eight smaller containers to convert power and cool the battery containers.

A similar energy storage device was installed at the AES Laurel Mountain wind farm in Randolph and Barbour Counties.

The battery yard will be approximately one acre and located 1,000 feet from the wind farm substation.

If approved construction is expected this summer, will cost \$20 million and will take three months to complete using 10 to 20 workers. ■

"The 32 megawatt energy storage system will consist of 18 battery containers roughly the size of a standard shipping container."

Governor Tomblin Speaks at State Building Trades



Governor Earl Ray Tomblin speaks to members of the West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council at their annual legislative conference held in Charleston on Tuesday, January 21. Governor Tomblin spoke about the increased need for skilled construction labor to meet the demands of the many new shale related projects.

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