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A Division of the WV State Building Trades, AFL-CIO | Chuck Parker, President | John Epperly, Secretary-Treasurer | Steve White, Director

Out-of-State Construction Gets Nucor Concrete Job

On June 17, Utah contractor Associated Brigham Contractors, who goes by ABC Concrete, was awarded the concrete phase of the \$2.7 billion Nucor steel mill in Mason County.

Two regional union contracts were in the running but unable to win the bid.

While the total dollar amount of the contract is unknown, sources say it represents more than two million hours of construction work. The contract includes 360,000 yards of concrete, with a project timeframe of 26 months, which will be completed in two phases.

The massive job loss for local construction workers has some questioning why huge amounts of state tax dollars are going into the job without any consideration of local hiring.

Legislation passed last year provides for \$315 million in direct taxpayer funding. In addition, property and corporate income tax breaks will make Nucor the largest corporate recipient of taxpayer funds in history.

"Our state has given Nucor tax breaks and direct cash payments," said Luke Begovich, Senior Council Representative of the Eastern Atlan-

tic States Regional Council of Carpenters. "If taxpayers are footing the bill, why are local workers not getting the jobs?"

According to Begovich, the Carpenters had about one million hours' worth of work on the concrete contract, the Laborers and Iron Workers

about 500,000 hours each, and about 200,000 hours of work would have been available for Operating Engineers.

"This was no small job, and it is going to an out-of-state firm who has a track record of importing workers," said Begovich.

The track record Begovich is referring to is the current \$1.7 billion Nucor project in Brandenburg, Kentucky. ABC Concrete is currently at this project and is importing most of their workforce from outside the region, and perhaps outside of the

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This Nucore facility in Brandenburg, Kentucky is still under construction. Reports suggest out-of-state workers make up over 80% of the total project workforce. With the recent award of a concrete contract to out-of-state contractor ABC Concrete at the Mason County facility, who is also working on the Brandenburg project, it is likely the West Virginia project will have the same result.

New Study: Union Construction Industry is Superior at Meeting U.S. Workforce Needs

New data from a survey of more than 5,000 contractors nationwide shows that union contractors are better equipped to supply well-trained

workers to projects than their non-union counterparts.

With the United States facing a labor shortage in the post-pandemic

work environment, the labor market has become a major issue for businesses. However, an analysis of the situation has found that using union

firms may be the solution to the problem.

According to the survey of the **Cont. on p. 2>>**

WV Taxpayers Get Stuck with Bill for Failed Carbonyx Coke Plant in Jackson County

Taxpayers may have lost millions from an investment in a failed factory in Jackson County.

An auction was held on July 13 to sell equipment, paid for by taxpayers, which was leased to a company called Carbonyx Inc. at a facility in Millwood, West Virginia.

Details about exactly how much taxpayers lost, and where the funds for the failed effort came from, are still unclear.

Carbonyx Inc., a Texas-based company, announced plans to build a \$250 million facility in West Virginia in 2013. The company said they had invented a new technology to manufacture coke for steelmaking. At the time, company representatives claimed their process offered a lower-cost option, with less impact on the

environment because it used chemicals rather than heat to make coke.

According to news reports the West Virginia Economic Development Authority (EDA) approved a 10-year \$15 million loan for the company just hours before the announcement.

The planned multi-million-dollar facility was to create 60 full-time jobs in Jackson County. Construction began but was never completed and the facility never operated. Local union construction workers had hoped to see employment opportunities, but none were realized.

News reports say a similar Carbonyx project in Gary, Indiana was cancelled by US Steel in 2014. The report says \$210 million had been spent in the failed attempt to build an

alternative coke production facility.

The next year an equipment lease agreement was signed in August of 2015 between Carbonyx and the Jackson County Development Authority.

A public notice about the auction stated the equipment is owned by the Jackson County Development Authority. Minutes from an August 2020 meeting of the WV Water Development Authority state the money was loaned by the Infrastructure and Development Council Fund to the WV EDA.

“It appears the WV EDA borrowed money from the IJDC and then gave it or lent it to the Jackson County Development Authority for this equipment, but we don’t really know because there is little transparency,” said Steve White, ACT Director. “Could the Jackson County Development Authority have bought defunct equipment from the Gary, Indiana site?” asked White. “One thing is clear, when our government makes a bad business deal, we the taxpayers are the ones left with the bill.” ■

Out-of-State

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country.

The possibility of imported construction workers was raised by Delegate Phil Diserio (D-Brooke) when the special legislative session was held last year to award Nucor mil-

lions.

“We are missing an opportunity to support local construction workers with this legislation,” commented Diserio during debate on the measure. ■

WV Carpenters Partner with Make-A-Wish Foundation



West Virginia Carpenters Jeremy Jeffers (left), Gary McCallister (back center), and Luke Begovich (right) stand with Blake and his mother Julie, after installing a new pool lift at their house in Prince, West Virginia.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation contacted the Carpenters last month to take on the volunteer project to help Blake get in and out of his pool more easily.

“We take every opportunity we can to give back to the community that has given us so much,” said Jeremy Jeffers. “We’re glad we were able to help Blake and his family.”

Union Construction

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Associated General Contractors of America, researchers found that “the skilled labor shortage is much less severe in the union segment of the industry.”

The survey gathered information from 1,768 union contractors and 3,893 nonunion contractors over a four-year period and showed that union contractors are 21% less likely to experience delays in project completion due to shortages of workers compared to nonunion contractors.

Furthermore, the survey found that union contractors are 14% less likely to experience difficulty in filling craft worker positions than nonunion firms.

“When it comes to getting the job done right and on time, our unions will always answer the call,” said Chuck Parker, President of the West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades.

An analysis of the data by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute (IEPI) stated that “union contractors are better able to attract, develop, and retain skilled construction workers.”

To support this conclusion, the IEPI pointed to joint investment from labor and management in apprenticeship programs and higher pay and benefits as factors that keep union contractors’ skilled labor pipeline strong.

In addition to showing the strength of the union skilled labor pipeline, the survey also found that union contractors are more diverse and inclusive.

The data showed that union contractors are 10% more likely to employ minority workers and 8% more likely to employ veterans.

For more information, and to read the full study, log on to www.illinoisiepi.org/reports. ■

Career Day Charleston Building Trades Recruitment at Mountaineer Challenge Academy Event

Last month, the Charleston Building and Construction Trades Council attended a career day event for Mountaineer Challenge Academy cadets at their south campus in Montgomery, West Virginia.

The Charleston Building Trades Council's involvement in this event is part of an ongoing effort to strengthen the pipeline of quality applicants to the skilled trades.

"With the amount of work we have on the horizon due to the passage of the federal infrastructure bill, it is extremely important that we focus our efforts

on recruiting good personnel," said Fred Chandler, Business Manager for the Charleston Building and Construction Trades Council.

The Mountaineer Challenge Academy is a quasi-military alternative school sponsored by the West Virginia National Guard.

The mission of the Academy is to train and mentor at-risk youths, between the ages of 16-18, to become contributing members of society.

The Academy uses a 22-week residential program and a one-year post-residential follow up curriculum in a structured environment to train cadets to pay attention to detail, respect others, develop self-discipline, and obey a chain of command.

"We take every opportunity to engage with young, motivated people who may have an interest in taking

"We take every opportunity to engage with young, motivated people who may have an interest in taking on a career in the trades."

Fred Chandler

*Business Manager
Charleston Building and
Construction Trades Council*



Gary McCallister (left) and Steve Wyatt (right) from the Carpenters speak to members of the Mountaineer Challenge Academy at the Career Day that was held on June 22 at their south campus in Montgomery, WV.

on a career in the trades," said Chandler. "I want to thank the Mountaineer Challenge Academy staff and all of the crafts who participated in this event."

Representatives from the Carpenters, Electricians, Roofers, Painters,

and Laborers were in attendance at the event.

For more information on apprenticeship opportunities in the Charleston, West Virginia area and around the state, log on to www.wvapprenticeships.com. ■

WV AFL-CIO Holds State COPE Meeting for General Election



Matt McComas, Organizer for the West Virginia Appalachian Laborers District Council, speaks to an assembly of the WV AFL-CIO State Committee On Political Education (COPE), during their endorsement process on June 17 in Charleston, West Virginia.

The COPE process is based on questionnaires, which candidates submit to their local Central Labor Council (CLC). The CLCs then give candidates the opportunity to have a virtual or in-person interview to get a better idea of their background and vision as a candidate.

The endorsement process is based on work related issues like restoring prevailing wage, workplace safety, enforcing and strengthening licensing laws, opposing so-called Right-to-Work, etc.

The WV State Building Trades (WVSBT) participate in the COPE process. However, there are times when the Trades do not agree with the results of COPE and will take a different position.

The main difference with the WVSBT process is assessing the viability of a candidate to determine their probability of success. Candidate viability is measured in terms of campaign resources, name recognition, and the strength of their opponent.

The WV State Building and Construction Trades will be officially releasing their endorsements in the August ACT Report, following a meeting of the executive board.

Tri-State Trades Annual DAD's Day Event Raises \$10,500 for Diabetes Research

The Tri-State Building and Construction Trades held their annual DAD's Day Golf Outing on June 10. The event raised \$10,500 for diabetes research.

'DAD's Day' stands for Dollars Against Diabetes Day. The event has been a long running effort by the North American Building Trades Unions in the U.S. and Canada to support research for a cure to diabetes.

Over the years, the trades have raised more than \$57 million for the Diabetes Research Institute, located

at the University of Miami.

Opened in 1994, the Diabetes Research Institute at the University of Miami was built entirely by union construction workers.

Today, the Institute is internationally known for its state-of-the-art research and technology related to diabetes research.

"With over 30 million Americans suffering from this disease, we try to do all we can to help out," said John Holbrook, Business Manager for the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council.

The Tri-State Building Trades Council holds their golf outing event every year for DAD's Day, and this year's event was held at Hidden Cove Golf Course in Olive Hill, Kentucky.

"We thank all those who sponsored and participated in the event

from both Labor and Management," said Holbrook. "I also want to thank all the volunteers who helped put this event together.

Everyone's time and effort truly help to make a difference for those with diabetes." ■



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Boilermakers 667 Raise \$990 For Oldman Rivers Food Bank



Members of Boilermakers Local 667 and Electricians Local 968 pose for a picture following their Ride for Charity event on June 18.

The motorcycle ride raised \$990 for Oldman Rivers Food Bank in Parkersburg, WV.

Boilermakers and Electricians rode from Parkersburg, West Virginia to Miners Memorial Park in McConnellsville, Ohio, where the picture was taken inside a derigging machine named 'Big Muskie,' used for mining coal.

Oldman Rivers is an entirely volunteer-run non-profit, and all the money raised will go to helping those in need.

"Everyone enjoyed the ride this year and it was for a good cause," said Bruce Forshee, Business Manager and Secretary-Treasurer for Boilermakers Local 667. "We are currently making plans for another charity ride in 2023."

Tri-State Elects Holbrook Business Manager

The Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council recently held an election for a new Business Manager on June 27.

John Holbrook, former Business Manager for Plumbers, Steamfitters and HVACR Local Union 248 of Eastern KY, will replace outgoing Tri-State Business Manager Mark Johnson.

There are 50 local construction unions affiliated with the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council from 14 different international unions. Tri-State represents union members in 33 counties across three states: West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky.

For more information and to stay up to date with current events, visit their Facebook page: Tri-State Building & Construction Trades Council.

