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

Pre-Apprenticeship Camp Featured at WV Capitol

Last month, the Mid-Ohio Valley Workforce Development Board (MOVWD) was invited to the West Virginia Capitol, during interim committee meetings, to report on Apprenticeship Readiness Week; a first-of-its-kind, day camp aimed at giving high school students a hands-on preview of careers in construction.

The week-long camp (sponsored by MOVWD, the City of Parkersburg, and the Parkersburg-Marietta Building and Construction Trades Council) gave young individuals the opportunity to visit Building and Construction Trades craft training sites and even participate in hands-on instruction related to those crafts.

The event was held to get high school students to engage with local trades programs to give them an idea of what a career in construction would look like for them.

“Well, if you do some hands-on activities with them to not only look at their interests but their attitude and ability to do certain jobs that

sparks those interests, and that interest becomes a fire,” said Monterosso. “They become hungry and want to

do that and make a career out of it.” At the end of the week, students were given the opportunity to inter-

view with craft programs and multiple students even began the process **Cont. on p. 2>>**



WV Legislative Photography, Photo by Perry Bennett

Bill Monterosso, Executive Director of the Mid-Ohio Valley Workforce Development Board (MOV), gives a presentation on Apprenticeship Readiness Week during the Joint Workforce Development and Labor Issues Committee interim meetings as Chairman Evan Worrell (R-23) looks on.

\$243 million project

Trades Sign MOU for New Solar Project in Mineral County with Potomac Hills Energy

The West Virginia Building and Construction Trades signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Potomac Hills Energy to construct a new solar project in Mineral County,

West Virginia.

According to West Virginia Public Service Commission documents, the 100MW facility will be located about 3 miles west of Keyser and 1.25

miles south of Piedmont on 650 acres that were formerly used for strip mining.

Approximately 265,000 solar panels will be organized in rows at the

site and “generate enough electricity to power approximately 60,000 homes for a day,” according to a press release circulated by Potomac Hills **Cont. on p. 2>>**

Construction Completed at Form Energy in Weirton, WV; Expansion Plans Underway

Last month, a grand-opening ceremony was held to mark the completion of the Form Energy project in Weirton, West Virginia.

The 520-thousand square foot iron-air battery factory took roughly 15 months to complete and has already begun production of batteries.

Two hundred and forty-five employees have begun work building the batteries, which will be used as renewable energy in places where wind and sun are unavailable.

However, company representatives have already stated their plans for expansion just after opening their doors on the 55-acre site where the Weirton Steel mill once stood.

The expansion will enable the company to scale up production, hire 500 more employees over the next four years, and deliver more iron-air batteries to customers nationwide.

The Form Energy team anticipates completing the Form Factory 1 expansion project within a year – by

the end of 2025.

The team set similarly ambitious timelines when they set out to construct the initial factory space and achieved that goal this summer.

To make that possible, Form Energy brought on hundreds of local construction workers, including many union laborers, and expects to do so again for the expansion effort.

Before beginning construction on the initial Form Factory 1 facility, a site assessment was performed, and the area was cleared of any unsafe structures from the old mill. In the process of planning for the Form Factory 1 expansion, a similar site assessment revealed that the mill's old Stock Building, originally construct-

ed in the 1920s, will soon need to be dismantled due to several overhead safety concerns.

The Form Energy team plans to repurpose and preserve parts of the old Stock Building's frame, both practically as part of its expansion plans and culturally as part of a larger effort to honor the mill's legacy. Much of the scrap steel from the building's frame will be saved to create artwork and communal congregation spaces for employees in and around the factory in the future.

Form Energy representatives say they hope to have an annual production capacity of 500 megawatts and have a total of 750 workers at Form Factory 1 by 2028. ■

Pre-Apprenticeship

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of joining an apprenticeship program.

"Our goal is to meet students where they are and bring them out to see the benefits of a career in the trades," said Monterosso. "College is not for everyone, and we set this up to show them that they can have a successful and rewarding career in construction."

Buddy Malone, Business Manager for the Parkersburg-Marietta Building and Construction Trades Council said while this is the first time the

event has been held, there are already plans to hold the event annually.

"Even though this was the first year we've held this event, I think it was very successful, and we're already looking at ways we can grow the program," said Malone. "I want to thank all our crafts and instructors who made this possible."

We also appreciate our partnerships with [MOVWD] and the City of Parkersburg, and we look forward to working with them to hold this event again next year." ■

New Solar Project

Continued from Page 1

Energy.

In addition to the 100MW facility, a 200-megawatt battery storage system will also be constructed on the property, along with a substation to deliver power to FirstEnergy Corp.

Potomac Hills Energy, which is owned by Energix US, LLC, of Arlington, Virginia, applied for the site certification through the West Virginia Public Service Commission on Dec. 20, 2023.

During the application stage, representatives from Energix US, LLC described themselves as "one of the leading solar energy entities" in the mid-Atlantic.

In its application, the company estimated that construction will have a \$64.7 million economic impact on Mineral County. Additionally, the company stated that the facility represents an investment of \$243 million.

The project was made possible by legislation, passed by the West Virginia legislature, two years ago that provided an avenue for public utilities to construct utility-scale solar projects.

For more information on this project, log on to the West Virginia Public Service Commission's website at www.psc.state.wv.us. ■

2024 NAFC Conference



Last month, the 2024 National Alliance for Fair Contracting (NAFC) Conference was called to order in Nashville, Tennessee.

Each year, the event brings together leaders from across the country including contractors, Fair Contracting Organizations, labor leaders, policy makers, legal experts, researchers and representatives from academia to learn about the latest policy developments in the construction industry.

"NAFC allows us all to collaborate to promote fair contracting and increase market share for our skilled trades members," said Lesly Messina, Research Director for the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council.

"The ideas shared, and the relationships built through the organization, are invaluable to the work we do here in West Virginia," said Messina.

Election Day: November 5

2024 General Election Endorsements

<u>US Congress</u>		20th Sarah Drennan (R)	55th JB Akers (R)	76th Rick Garcia (D)
Riley Moore (R)		23rd Evan Worrell (R)	56th Kayla Young (D)	77th Joe Statler (R)
<u>State Treasurer</u>		25th Sean Hornbuckle (D)	57th Hollis Lewis (D)	78th Diane Market Gaston (D)
Larry Pack (R)		26th Matthew Rohrbach (R)	58th Walter Hall (R)	79th Evan Hansen (D)
<u>Attorney General</u>		27th Michael Amos (R)	59th Andy Shamblin (R)	80th John Williams (D)
John "JB" McCuskey (R)		28th Ryan Browning (R)	60th Dana Ferrell (R)	81st Anitra Hamilton (D)
<u>State Senate</u>		29th Wayne Bug Williamson (D)	67th Cody Thompson (D)	88th Rick Hillenbrand (R)
2nd Chris Rose (R)		30th Jeff Eldridge (R)	68th Chris Phillips (R)	90th George Miller (R)
5th Ric Griffith (D)		33rd Jordan Bridges (R)	70th Shannon Welsh (D)	96th Lisa White (R)
9th Brian Helton (R)		34th Mark Dean (R)	71st Laura Kimble (R)	97th Lucia Valentine (D)
13th Joey Garcia (D)		35th Adam Vance (R)	73rd Bryan Smith (R)	99th Wayne Clark (R)
<u>House of Delegates</u>		40th Roy Cooper (R)	75th Stephanie Tomana (D)	100th Maria Russo (D)
1st Pat McGeehan (R)		43rd Chris Toney (R)		
4th Bill Flanigan (R)		44th Carl Bill Roop (R)		
5th Shawn Fluharty (D)		46th Jeff Campbell (R)		
7th Chuck Sheedy (R)		47th Ray Canterbury (R)		
8th David Kelly (R)		48th Thomas Clark (R)		
9th Trenton Barnhart (R)		49th Stanley Adkins (R)		
12th Vernon Criss (R)		50th Elliott Pritt (R)		
13th Scot Heckert (R)		51st Marshall Clay (R)		
14th Dave Foggini (R)		53rd Tristan Leavitt (R)		
15th Erica Moore (R)		54th Mike Pushkin (D)		

Election Information

Early Voting: Wednesday, Oct. 23 – Saturday, Nov. 2

General Election Day: Tuesday, November 5

Find your Polling Location: www.GoVoteWV.com

Trades Partner with First Choice to Promote Mental Health Resources for Workers

The West Virginia Building and Construction Trades has partnered with First Choice Services to promote mental health and wellbeing resources available to construction workers in the industry.

The partnership was developed as a response to recent data suggesting there is a higher rate of mental health and substance use issues in construction compared to other industries.

According to a 2022 study completed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, construction workers have significantly higher rates of injuries, fatalities, death by suicide, and overdose deaths than American workers overall.

For example, although construction workers are only about 7% of the entire workforce, they were 20% of on-the-job fatalities and 16% of opioid overdoses.

Furthermore, in 2022 the National Center for Health statistics reported that more than 17 thousand construction worker fatalities were a result of substance use overdose.

Of those 17 thousand, more than 5 thousand were confirmed as suicides.

"We are stronger together, and our well-being matters," said John Epperly, Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council.

"The alarming rates of suicides in our industry are a stark reminder that we must prioritize our health

and safety, both on and off the job site.

That is why we have chosen to partner with First Choice Services to let our members know these resources are available to them."

First Choice Services operates several programs and helplines across six states with the common goal of promoting well-being and facilitating access to behavioral health and social services.

First Choice has more than 175 staff members who work around the clock and help over 175,000 people each year.

"We are stronger together, and our well-being matters"

John Epperly

Secretary-Treasurer

West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council

The nonprofit began in 1995 as a collaborative effort among West Virginia's comprehensive behavioral health care centers.

Their goal was to combine resources and expertise to provide management of statewide behavioral health care contracts.

The Board of Directors includes executives from Genesis Youth Crisis Center, Healthways, Potomac Highlands Guild, Prester Center, Valley HealthCare System, and Westbrook Health.

First Choice offers resources for substance use disorders, gambling addiction, and a wide variety of mental health issues.

If you or someone you know would benefit from these resources, log on to www.FirstChoiceServices.com or call and text the mental health crisis hotline by dialing 988. ■

December 2nd - January 3rd IUOE Local# 132 to Begin Accepting New Applications for Apprenticeship Program

Operating Engineers Local 132 wants qualified candidates for their heavy-duty equipment operator apprenticeship program. The three-year program trains in all aspects of operating heavy equipment including bulldozers, backhoes, cranes and excavators.

Applications will begin to be accepted starting December 2 and will continue to be accepted through January 3, 2025.

“We want members to be well versed in all types of equipment,” said Allen Nelson, Training Director. “We focus on safety and productivity.”

Each year an apprentice spends five weeks at the training center located south of Parkersburg in Medina, West Virginia.

school diploma or equivalent and have been a resident of West Virginia for at least one year.

A successful applicant will have a

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Building Trades Continue Player of the Week Award



Riverside High School running back Malakhi Hope is awarded the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades high school football player of the week during the pregame of the Riverside girls' volleyball game.

Students from Riverside High School dressed up in their best construction gear to celebrate the event.

The Player of the Week program is done in partnership with HD Media, the owner of the Charleston Gazette, the Hunting Register Herald, and various other news outlets throughout the state.

Each week, an independent group of reporters and high school sports experts meet to determine who had the most outstanding performance on the football field in West Virginia. The player selected as the most outstanding each week is awarded the Player of the Week in West Virginia.

This is the second year the partnership between the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades and HD Media has been undertaken.

“The Player of the Week award gives us another avenue to go directly to the schools and engage with students about the benefits of a career in the trades,” said John Epperly, Secretary-Treasurer for the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council.

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www.actwv.org



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While most of the training takes place during the winter, apprentices must complete at least 1,000 hours of paid on-the-job training to advance each year.

Interested individuals can submit an application to the program online at www.iuoe132.org or by calling 304-273-4852 from December 2, 2024 through January 3, 2025.

In order to qualify, a person must be at least 18 years old, have a high

valid WV driver's license, be physically able to perform the work of the trade and pass a drug test.

The recruitment, selection, employment, and training of apprentices shall be without discrimination because of age, race, color, religion, national origin, or sex and will conform to ADA regulations.

For more information call (304) 273-4852 or visit the website at www.iuoe132.org. ■

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