

Beckley contractor accused of repeatedly violating federal labor laws

By Fred Pace/register-herald business editor

Members of the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation held a small protest outside the federal courthouse in Beckley Friday, saying they are upset with the government's treatment of a Beckley company that has repeatedly violated federal labor laws.

"We are protesting the fact that one entity of our federal government has said that Beckley Mechanical Inc. is a federal violator and other entities of the same federal government giving out millions of dollars in federal contracts to the same company to do work for them," said Randy Gombos, an organizer for Sheet Metal Workers Local 33.

The National Labor Relations Board filed a motion in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for civil contempt and fines of \$50,000 against Beckley Mechanical for failing to comply with a 2001 order to bargain with the Sheet Metal Workers, according to federal court records.

NLRB is seeking enforcement of the order, directing the company to bargain with Local 33.

"The federal government keeps giving Beckley Mechanical contracts knowing they have violated labor laws," Gombos said. "Beckley Mechanical was awarded a plumbing and heating contract at a women's prison project in Alderson, as well as numerous other public and private projects in the area."

According to the labor board, the company and its president, Bill Mahaffey, misrepresented information requested by the union regarding subcontracting of duct work fabrication. The company also is accused of unilaterally changing travel pay, granting an employee a wage increase without consulting the union and repeatedly refusing to respond to union requests for bargaining information.

Noncompliance fees of \$50,000 for each violation of the court's judgment and a consent order should be levied against the company, the labor board said. It is asking for \$250 a day in fines for each day the violations have continued.

A telephone message to Mahaffey was not returned Friday, and attorneys representing the company could not be reached for comment.