

THE ACT REPORT

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The ACT Foundation is a division of The West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council, with offices in Charleston and Clarksburg. Steve Burton, President; Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer; Steve White, Director.

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MIXED RESULTS FROM LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Crane Law Weakened, But Not Destroyed

Attacks on the Crane Operator Certification law have weakened safety for West Virginia construction workers.

Although weakened, significant parts of the law have survived, including mandatory written and hands-on testing.

Passed two years ago certification of all crane operators was required as of Janu-



JACK TURNER OF OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 132 voices his concerns at a public hearing to address the Legislature about a bill which would weaken the Crane Operator Law.

ary 1, 2000. However, confusion regarding the test and requirements led to an extension of the deadline to July 1, of this year.

"We agreed with the extension to give folks more time to prepare for and pass the test," said ACT's Steve White.

"But as soon as the extension was passed, those opposed to the bill kept push-

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CONTRACTOR FOUGHT UNION ORGANIZING EFFORTS

CCI Defaults On Federal Project Near Martinsburg

According to reports from the Eastern Panhandle CCI Construction Company has defaulted on the National Center for Cool and Cold Water Aquaculture project.

The bonding company now owns the contract.

CCI, of Camp Hill PA,

was the general contractor on this \$12.6 million federal project near Martinsburg, WV.

A major organizing effort by Laborers and Operating Engineers led to a strike at the site

last October.

ACT's Larry Young had salted the project and was working with employees on a union election drive.

"We first heard deliveries were requiring cash and the guys pay checks were being paid by the bonding company," Young said.

"Now we understand from the USDA, the owners

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**"IT'S NO SURPRISE THEY HAVE
DEFAULTED. IN FACT WE TRIED
OVER AND OVER AGAIN TO WARN
THE USDA ABOUT PROBLEMS ON
THE JOB."**

**TIM MILLNE, ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGER
WV LABORERS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

CCI DEFAULTS



UNITED AUTO WORKERS PRESIDENT, JOHN ROGERS and other UAW Local 1590 members join trades members Gary Long, Tim Millne, Dave Brode, and Mike O'Hara in the picket against CCI at the federal project near Martinsburg. The UAW's show of solidarity was greatly appreciated by all building trades members.

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of the project, that CCI has defaulted."

Young and Tim Millne, assistant business manager for the WV Laborers' District Council,

employees faced were bounced paychecks, poor working conditions and threats for exercising their rights to organize.

The men were also being asked to perform shoddy work.

Trades Council.

"We heard the company has also defaulted on a road construction project in Pennsylvania."

ACT representatives traveled to the Pennsylvania site in December of last year to picket.

Williams had petitioned for an NLRB election on behalf of CCI Construction employees who are working on the Martinsburg project, but the petition has been withdrawn since CCI will not finish the job.

The bonding company will now be responsible for completion of the job.

"It was a poorly managed job from day one", commented Mike O'Hara, organizer for the Operating Engineers and another salt on the job.

"This is another example of tax payers money being wasted on a nonunion contractor who should never have gotten the job in the first place."

"It's no surprise they have defaulted," said Millne.

"In fact we tried over and over again to warn the USDA about problems on the job."

"Apparently CCI is in trouble all over the place," said Rick Williams, business manager for the North Central West Virginia Building and Construction

traveled to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Maryland to find out the terms of CCI's contract on this project.

An investigation by the USDA, as well as other agencies, into CCI's work has been launched.

Among the problems CCI

IBEW Local 596 Is Called On To Finish Maplewood

Union electricians in Clarksburg were brought in to finish electrical work at United Hospital Center's (UHC) Maplewood Retirement Community Project.

Shortly after the original electrical contractor walked off the job at Maplewood, the project's general contractor contacted a signatory contractor with IBEW Local 596 in Clarksburg.

ing done."

Local 596 members picked up the job halfway through and many of Electrical Equipment's employees stayed and joined the union.

"We were able to sign up six of Electrical Equipment's key employees, including the foreman, during this project," said Ash.

"By capturing this project we were able to create 70,000 man hours of work for our members," said Darwin Snyder, busi-

**"BY CAPTURING THIS PROJECT,
WE WERE ABLE TO CREATE
70,000 MAN HOURS OF WORK
FOR OUR MEMBERS."**

**DARWIN SNYDER, BUSINESS MANAGER
IBEW LOCAL 596**

According to Doug Ash, business manager for IBEW Local 596, Electrical Equipment of Morgantown walked off the job when the company ran out of money and could no longer meet its payroll.

(Electrical Equipment, at that time, was on the federal debarment list and was ineligible to bid on federal projects.)

"Before we were asked to take over this job, I made several trips to the job site," said Ash.

"I took notice of the quality of work and talked to the employees about the shoddy work be-

ness manager for Local 596.

Local 596 took over work at Maplewood much like members of the Bricklayers Union did in 1998.

The Bricklayers District Council, Local 596, along with others from the North Central West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council, fought long and hard to bring local union workers on this project.

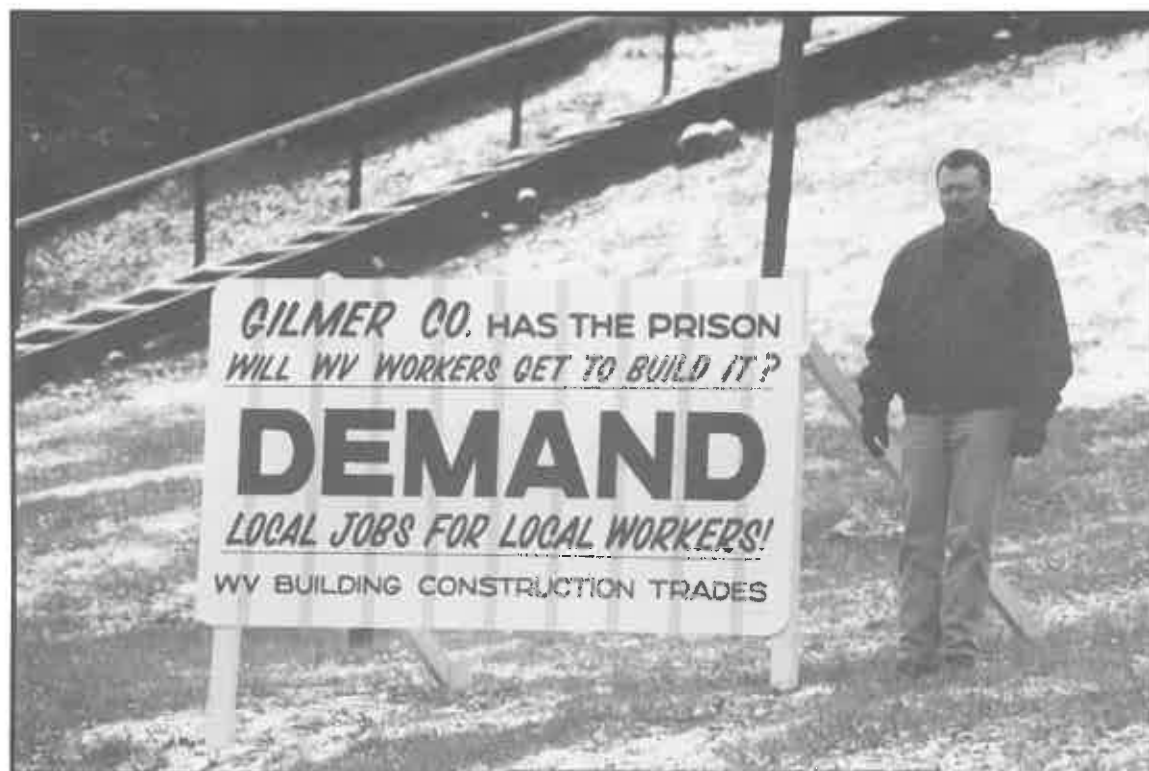
Together they were able to prove the quality of work by companies employing union construction workers surpasses that of the non-union companies previously on this job.

Trades Ask County Commission To Help Local Workers Get Prison Jobs

The West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council has asked the Gilmer County Commission to consider a resolution that would help local workers get the construction jobs provided by the new federal prison project.

The resolution calls for the Federal Bureau of Prisons to monitor the construction work force of the project as to the number of local workers on the site and to report the results to the County Commission on a monthly basis.

The resolution is based on an Environmental Economic Impact study conducted by the Bureau of Prisons which was used to



PICTURED IS A BILLBOARD ERECTED BY ACT'S STEVE MONTONEY AND LARRY YOUNG (pictured with the billboard) at the Gilmer County Prison site. It asks residents to demand that local workers get the jobs this prison project will create.

persuade the residents of Gilmer County to allow such a project.

The study says "... approximately 90 percent of the required construction employment is likely to be hired locally. This proportion translates to 676 person-years of employment within the nine county region resulting from the construction of the proposed project."

"So far we have a general contractor, Bell Construction, from New York, and we just found out a company from Pennsylvania has been given the contract to construct the cells," said ACT's Jim Lewis.

"The construction of these cells is a significant amount of work being taken right out from

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'West Virginia Works' Show Times & Stations

FOX 46
Clarksburg & Morgantown
Saturdays @ 7:30am

Cable Ch. 10
Wheeling, St. Clairsville & Moundsville
Saturdays @ noon

FOX 59
Beckley & Bluefield
Saturdays @ 12:30pm

Cable Ch. 16
Steubenville, Follansbee & Wellsburg
Saturdays @ noon

FOX 11
Charleston, Huntington & Parkersburg
Sundays @ 11:30am

Give us a call if you have an idea for a show!
1-800-930-WORK!

National Building Trades President To Step Down

Robert A. Georgine will resign as President of the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD), AFL-CIO effective April 15.

The General Board of Presidents of the BCTD elected Edward C. Sullivan to fill Georgine's unexpired term. Sullivan is head of the Elevator Constructors Union.

Georgine has led this department since 1974.

The BCTD is made up of 15 unions representing more than three million construction workers in the United States and Canada.

Georgine, a member of Lath-

ers Local 74 of Chicago, will continue to serve as Vice President of the AFL-CIO and as a member of its governing Executive Council.

During his reign as BCTD

increased by 131,000.

The Bureau of Labor also reported an increase from 17 percent to 19 percent in union density in the construction industry.

In press release announcing

UNDER GEORGINE'S LEADERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP IN BUILDING TRADES UNIONS INCREASED BY 131,000 FOR THE PERIOD OF 1998-1999.

US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS REPORT

President, Georgine helped to turn around the declining membership in building trades unions.

According to a U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics report for the period of 1998-99, membership in building trades unions

Georgine's retirement, the BCTD credited the increase in membership to "Georgine's leadership in urging building trades unions to devote more resources to organizing new members."

CRANE BILL AND OTHER LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing to weaken it."

White notes the attack on the crane bill came from an unlikely alliance of groups including the United Mine Workers of America, the antiunion Associated Builders and Contractors, and the West Virginia Contractors Association.

The latest attempt to rework the legislation would have 'watered down' the bill making testing requirements optional.

"What is the point of having certification if a crane operator never has to take a test?", said Ronnie Burdette, Operating Engineers Business Manager.

"Certification without a test would have been just another useless tax on our members."

A new TV commercial aired all over the state urging people to call their legislators and tell them to 'vote no' on the bill.

ACT also mailed a postcard to its mem-

bers in West Virginia with the same message.

Two major contractor associations, the West Virginia Construction Council and the Constructors Labor Council of West Virginia joined the fight in support of safety and certification.

As a result, a compromise was reached.

**"WHAT IS THE POINT OF HAVING
CERTIFICATION IF A CRANE OPERATOR
NEVER HAS TO TAKE A TEST?
CERTIFICATION WITHOUT A TEST WOULD
HAVE BEEN JUST ANOTHER USELESS TAX
ON OUR MEMBERS."**

**RONNIE BURDETTE
OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 132**

The new legislation delays the implementation of the bill until September 1, 2001 and after that point, there will be both a compre-

hensive written test and a hands-on test.

Grand-fathering provisions have also been put in place up to the Sept. 1, 2001 deadline, and rather than operators having to retest, they can participate in continuing education

Yet SAK has been able to get demolition projects from the city of Wheeling.

A situation unfair to other local contractors who comply with laws and regulations.

The bill also creates a procedure for debarring contractors in the state who have committed crimes or demonstrate a track record of poor performance relating to public projects.

Reauthorization of highway bond funds was also approved.

This allows the state's road building program to continue.

The bill will allow another \$110 million in bonds to be sold for highway projects.

This is part of a \$550 million package which was approved in a previous session.

Public employee insurance, or PEIA, was a hot topic during the session.

Ultimately no bill was passed, which was a positive note for public employee labor leaders.

Higher premiums and lower benefits had been proposed.

A bill to reform the Budget Digest system failed to get out of committee.

The Budget Digest has been a point of controversy in the House of Delegates.

An ACT research report showed earlier in the session that the largest amounts of these specific budget allocations have gone to those counties represented by the legislative leaders.

Some counties get 20 to 30 times more money per person than others.

programs.

Important legislation passed that was sponsored by the West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council and supported by the West Virginia AFL-CIO including the Contractor Debarment Bill.

Debarment means a company is prevented from bidding public contracts.

This bill will stop contractors who have been placed on the federal debarment list from bidding on state, county and local projects.

One example of a federally debarred contractor bidding on public project was SAK Environmental from Sistersville, WV.

SAK is on the federal debarment list and can not bid federal projects.

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COUNTY COMMISSIONS

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under the local workers.

"Gilmer and surrounding counties, face a significantly high unemployment rate, higher than both the state and national averages.

"Because the residents of these counties were told this project would create hundreds of jobs, they agreed to let a prison be constructed basically in their backyards.

"Now they are watching these jobs be

given to out-of-state workers."

Lewis and others plan to take the resolution to the County Commissions of the other counties mentioned in the Impact study as well.

They are, Wood, Harrison, Lewis, Braxton, Doddridge, Calhoun, Ritchie, Roane, and Upshur.

"The County Commissions have a duty to support job opportunities for local workers," said Lewis.

"We are giving them the perfect chance to do just that."

**"THE COUNTY COMMISSIONS HAVE A
DUTY TO SUPPORT JOB OPPORTUNITIES
FOR LOCAL WORKERS. WE ARE GIVING
THEM THE PERFECT CHANCE TO DO JUST
THAT."**

**JIM LEWIS, REPRESENTATIVE
ACT FOUNDATION**