

# 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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## PROTESTERS WANT LOCAL JOBS FOR LOCAL WORKERS

# Columbia Gas Project Plagued With Problems

**Protests, unfair labor practice charges, safety issues and allegations of illegal workers are plaguing Columbia Gas's work site at its Glady Compressor Station near Elkins.**

ACT has been protesting Columbia Gas's use of Sunland Construction, Inc. of Louisiana to do compressor and line work at the Glady station because the company is using an out-of-state workforce instead of qualified, local workers who need these jobs.

Bud Parsons, president of Operating Engineers Local 132, said members of several crafts are participating in the picket against Columbia Gas.

"We've had a great turn out of supporters on the picket line," Parsons said. "We've had a good picket and we believe our protest has been effective."

Because it chose to use the out-of-state contractor, Columbia Gas is faced with a job that already may be \$250,000 over budget and is only 50 percent complete even though the project was scheduled for completion by the end of September.

ACT Representatives Steve Montoney and Larry Young were hired to work on the job and they talked to the Sunland employees about the Union.

In an effort to stop them, a Sunland foreman sent them to the main office to be fired. After Sunland contacted its lawyer, the company tried to deny its intentions to fire Montoney and Young.



Supporters are picketing Columbia Gas for unfair labor practices and protesting the company's use of out-of-state workers at the Glady Compressor station near Elkins. Pictured left to right are Bill Lemley, Bobby Shamlan, Randy Teter, Larry Young and Boyd Pennington.

## Workers Protest Twice Against Dominion's Hiring Practices

**Union construction workers have protested Dominion/Consolidated Natural Gas's use of imported workers at its Hastings plant in Wetzel County at two separate rallies recently.**

Members from all crafts participated in the informational rally at Dominion's corporate office in Clarksburg and a rally held along Route 2 in New Martinsville.

The two rallies, simultaneously held on Oct. 2, were a major part of ACT's campaign against Dominion's hiring practices.

ACT has used several newspaper ads, flyers and rallies to raise public awareness about the company's decision to hire contractor Kellogg, Brown and

Wetzel County's unemployment rate is 10.3 percent which is the highest in the Northern Panhandle.

"The rallies were held because

**'DOMINION DOESN'T NEED TO GO OUTSIDE THE AREA TO FIND QUALIFIED WORKERS TO DO THIS WORK.'**

**TOM GRAY, LABORERS 1149 BUSINESS MANAGER**

Root which imported workers from as far away as Texas, Alabama and Mississippi.

Tom Gray, Laborers Local 1149 Business Agent, said

of our concern that local jobs need to go to local workers," Gray said. "Dominion doesn't need to go outside the area to

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# Conference Looks For Ways To Improve Construction Industry

**The second annual Construction Coalition Conference took another step forward in improving the construction industry.**

The annual event was held Sept. 17-19 at the Parkersburg Holiday Inn.

The conference is a collaborative effort of the West Virginia State Building Trades, contractors who use building trades workers and company owners to focus on mutually important issues.

Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council, said bringing labor, contractors and owners together to resolve issues is beneficial to everyone involved.

Smith said the theme for the conference was cost effective construction which involves issues ranging from work prac-

tices to state regulations.

"Anytime we can have positive discussions with all three groups, we are making steps in the right direction," Smith said.

"I hope this will provide more work for our membership and local contractors as well as cost effective construction for the owners.

"We all stand to benefit from

ics where no agreement can be found."

He said an important part of this year's conference was reporting to the assembly about issues worked on since the last conference.

Those areas targeted from last year's conference included developing continuity of the state's drug testing and safety programs,

as well as supervisor training for the Building Trades membership.

"The Building Trades has

made major strides in accomplishing our goals in these areas," Smith said.

"At the conference, we had the opportunity to talk about our achievements during the past year."

Smith said new topics for next year will be decided later this month.

**'ANY TIME WE CAN HAVE POSITIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL THREE GROUPS, WE ARE MAKING STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.'**

**ROY SMITH, WEST VIRGINIA STATE BUILDING TRADES**

the conference."

He said the conference doesn't focus on the differences between the groups, but rather strives to find common threads.

"We operate under the theory that people can agree on 80 percent of all issues," Smith said.

"We concentrate on that 80 percent and stay away from top-

## Labor Representatives Appointed To State Board

**John Jarrett, of the Carpenter's District Council, Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia Building Trades, and Nancy Law, a state employee, were selected to serve on the West Virginia Workforce Investment Board.**

They will represent labor interests concerning the program

known as the Workforce Investment Act or WIA.

Smith said labor representatives will advise in the development of work force investment initiatives.

"We are there to represent labor interests on that board," Smith said.

"It is a large board with diverse interests, but we will work hard to convey the interests of labor through our appoint-

ments."

The West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council was awarded a \$250,000 grant last month to establish a Labor Liaison office under WIA.

West Virginia is divided into seven regions under WIA. Each region has a Local Workforce Investment Board which has at least two labor representatives.

At least 51 percent of each



Sen. Brooks McCabe, a Charleston area developer, addressed the audience at the Construction Coalition Conference.

local board is comprised of business representatives, as mandated by federal legislation.

WIA, passed by Congress in 1998, became effective July 1. WIA is designed to aid local unions in obtaining funds for apprentices and journeyman workers' training.

Smith said the labor representatives will build on this opportunity to improve training programs for building trades mem-

bers.

"Our goals are to assist our apprenticeship programs as well as new people who choose to become Building Trades members through our involvement on the board," Smith said.

"It is vitally important for the labor representatives to be very active on the Workforce Investment Board because of the federal funds available under the WIA program."

# Election Issue To Focus On Working Families & Voting

## Decision 2000

### ACT's Special Election Issue to Arrive Nov. 1

**The 2000 General Election is just around the corner-- Nov. 7-- and several important races may be won by a slim margin.**

And because these races are so tightly contested, the importance of this year's election to working families cannot be overstated.

Your vote counts!

To help our members make an informed decision, ACT is sending out a Special Election Issue to all members.

In this election issue, you can find out how candidates in important races compare on labor and working family issues.

Special comparison features include a look at the Presidential race between Vice President Al Gore and Gov. George W. Bush, as well as a feature on West Virginia's governor's race between Congressman Bob Wise and Gov. Cecil Underwood.

Also, look for the AFL-CIO

list of endorsed candidates running for office in your area.

How you cast your vote on election day is a personal decision.

But before you go to the polls, take a moment to carefully consider how your choice will affect working families in West Virginia.

Remember, you have power in your vote! Encourage everyone you know to let their voice be heard on Nov. 7.

Look for the Special Election Issue of the ACT Report to arrive by Nov. 1

## DOMINION PROTEST

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

find qualified workers to do this work."

Gray said the company needs to be more responsible and hire local workers.

"Dominion is not being a responsible community company," Gray said.

"They want to profit from the community, but local families

can't make a living off of them."

Mike O'Hara, Operating Engineers Local 132 Organizer, said the rallies helped local work-

ers to gain support from area residents.

"Our rallies definitely raised awareness among residents," O'Hara said.

"There is a lot of work in the future that will come from Dominion.

He said companies like Dominion need to realize the people they don't hire are the customers they depend on to pay the bills.

"Natural Gas prices are rising and how does Dominion and its subsidiary CNG expect local

workers who are their customers to pay the bills if they aren't willing to give them jobs," O'Hara said.

O'Hara said local workers will continue to protest Dominion's use of imported workers.

**'OUR RALLIES DEFINITELY RAISED AWARENESS AMONG RESIDENTS.'**

**MIKE O'HARA, OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 132**

"Residents should understand the importance of keeping money in the local economy instead of sending it to other states."

## Apprenticeship Program Month

**Alexis M. Herman, U.S. Secretary of Labor, has designated October as Registered Apprenticeship Awareness Month (RAAM 2000).**

The purpose of RAAM 2000 is to increase awareness of and support for registered apprenticeship training.

A variety of activities currently are being planned throughout the country during October.

These include presentations about registered apprenticeship to state and local Workforce Investment Boards, mailings to key government officials and media coverage of these events.

Karen Wade, of the West

Virginia Bureau of Apprenticeship Training, said this is a great way to make others aware of opportunities that exist through registered apprenticeship training and to recognize those who have dedicated time and hard work to ensuring that this state has a highly skilled workforce.

"The West Virginia Building and Construction Trades has certainly done its fair share to see that our workers are properly trained," Wade said.

"I would like to encourage any union member who has been involved in a training program to work with any group to make others aware of the wonderful opportunity they have had through apprenticeship training."

## Tomorrow after Dominion steals your Hope...

Tomorrow won't be just another day.

Dominion is stealing your local Little League coach. He can't find work and live here because Dominion isn't hiring local construction workers. It's happening right now at the Hastings plant.

Dominion is stealing your church Sunday school teacher. Dominion didn't hire her, either.

Dominion is stealing your civic volunteers -- people who daily give back to your community. They, too, need the jobs Dominion now gives to workers who live far away.

No, tomorrow won't be just another day. Without local jobs, these workers who shop in your stores, eat in your restaurants, buy homes and cars, bank here, raise families and play important roles in your community, have no Hope here.

Yet without the taxes paid by these local workers, who will help you pay tomorrow for your schools and teachers, your hospitals, your streets, your police, your firefighters, your community?

And then the next day and the next day and the next...

**Local Jobs For Local Workers.  
Your Future Depends On It.**



*A message from the ACT Foundation, a Division of  
The West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO*

ACT ran this advertisement in several newspapers in Northern West Virginia. The Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram was the only paper that refused to run the advertisement.

## COLLEGE CLAIMS MEXICAN WORKERS WERE BETTER CHOICE THAN LOCAL WORKERS

# Bethany Official Admits To Exploitation

**The Ohio Valley Building Trades has been fighting to get local jobs for local workers at Bethany College's student housing project for the past year.**

Now, a year later, with the \$15.5 million building complete, Bethany's Dean of Students John Cunningham admitted the college chose Mexican workers because they could make them work longer days.

In a recent interview with a *Wheeling Intelligencer* reporter, Cunningham said, "First of all, the Mexican bricklayers were hired because they will work 16-hour days and with the construction delays, we needed to get a lot of work done in a short amount of time."

Rich Wilson, of the Bricklayer's District Council, said Cunningham's reason for us-

ing Mexican workers is outrageous.

"Nobody should be expected to work a 16-hour day," Wilson said.

"If overtime was necessary, I'm sure our local workers who applied for jobs at the project would have worked overtime.

"Of course they would have expected to be paid for overtime work in accordance with federal and state laws."

Joe Kochy, Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 83 Business Agent, agrees with Wilson. He said Bethany College is dodging the issue of not using local workers.

"Cunningham is trying to justify their actions at Bethany," Kochy said.

"Bethany College officials made a commitment to use Brooke County workers to get approval for a tax-free bond. Then they used imported labor so they could exploit desperate workers.

"I think this was strictly a cost issue and eventually we will find out the real reason why Mexican workers were chosen."

Kochy said Bethany College's claim that construction delays resulting from bad weather was a factor in choosing Mexican workers who would work 16-hour days is another poor excuse.

"When Bethany chose Mexican workers, they had no idea the weather would cause delays," Kochy said. "This is just another attempt to blame something other than the college."

Wilson said Cunningham's claim that the alien workers had appropriate papers to work in the United States is questionable.

"When the West Virginia Department of Labor came for an inspection, over half of the bricklaying crew left

during the middle of the day and never returned to work," Wilson said.

"We can only assume there was something wrong with their paperwork."

Wilson said more than 20 local workers applied for jobs at the construction site in January but were not hired.

"If they had a lot of work to be done quickly, then why didn't they use local workers," Wilson said.

Wilson said the investigation at Bethany College is not over.

"We still are working to find out whether overtime was appropriately paid," Wilson said.

"The bottom line is that Bethany College excluded local workers from the project in favor of Mexican workers, no matter how they try to spin it."

## COLUMBIA GAS

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Sunland Construction's actions resulted in the filing of unfair labor practice charges against the corporation which are being reviewed by the National Labor Relations Board.

Columbia Gas's decision to use an out-of-state contractor has come under more fire because local police officers found workers who did not have legal identification.

ACT Representative Steve Montoney said local police became suspicious and set up a roadblock after an officer stopped to help a group of Sunland workers whose van was broken down. However, none of the workers had identification.

"During the roadblock, all the licenses of the employees driving along the road were thought to be legitimate," Montoney said.

"But after police ran them through the INS computer system, two iden-

tifications were found to be fake."

Two weeks later, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), working with the Randolph County Sheriff's Department, set up another road block on Glady Road looking for the two alleged illegal Sunland workers.

"After the INS got involved, the police set up another roadblock to catch the two workers carrying fake identification," Montoney said.

"Because they were afraid of being caught, both workers left the job site before the second roadblock was put in place."

Montoney said the INS wasn't allowed to go to the job site to perform a check for illegal workers.

He added that the picket and the reports of illegal workers gained the attention of the media and the local residents.

Officials still haven't caught any illegal workers.

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## WEST VIRGINIA WORKS SHOWTIMES

### FOX 11

Charleston, Huntington, Parkersburg  
Sundays @ 11:30am

### CABLE CHANNEL 10

Wheeling, St. Clairsville & Moundsville  
Saturdays @ noon

### CABLE CHANNEL 16

Steubenville, Follansbee & Wellsburg  
Saturdays @ noon

### FOX 46

Clarksburg & Morgantown  
Saturdays @ 7:30am

### FOX 59

Beckley & Bluefield  
Saturdays @ 12:30pm

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