

Greenbrier Windmill Project Gets Green Light

The West Virginia Public Service Commission has given approval to the \$300 million Beech Ridge Wind Farm project, planned for Greenbrier County.

The action came after a lengthy application process, numerous public hearings, days of testimony and a failed legislative attempt to impose a ban on all wind projects.

A small but vocal group made up primarily of Lewisburg residents opposed the project and still vow to take legal action to stop it.

"It's not been easy but I'm thrilled at the result," said Wayne Rebich, ACT Representative.

The project is being developed by Chicago based Invenergy LLC.

The 186-megawatt, 124-turbine project will be built on about 500 acres of property belonging to the Mead Westvaco Company.

Last February Invenergy signed an agreement with the Charleston Building Trades to ensure local union workers would get the construction jobs the project created.

It will take approximately 200 workers and eight to nine months to build the project.

"Not only will the project provide jobs for our members," said Rebich, "but despite all the opposition and negativity, we have to get into a mindset that we need alternative energy and we need it now."

The project will provide 15 to 20 full-time jobs and will give Greenbrier County \$400,000 in tax revenue to be paid to the county and another \$200,000 to the state.

In another positive move the PSC has agreed to reinstate the permit application for the 50-turbine Liberty Gap project on Jack Mountain in Pendleton County, with four conditions.

Liberty Gap has to pay travel expenses for the Friends of Beautiful Pendleton County's

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MORE THAN \$90 MILLION IN SCHOOL PROJECTS

Trades Endorse Jackson, Marshall Bond Votes

Building Trades organizations covering Jackson and Marshall Counties are supporting school bond measures this November.

County School Boards in both counties have passed resolutions ensuring only responsible construction companies will be awarded the many school projects these bonds will create.

Jackson County needs to pass a \$39 million bond which will enable them to receive \$15.5 million allocated from the State School Building Authority.

The combined sum of \$54.5 million will be used to build three new schools and renovate a number of others.

The Jackson County School Board unanimously passed a resolution clarifying the definition of "Responsible Bidder" at a meeting held on September 7.

Sam Davis, Business Manager of the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades was present at the meeting along with Jeff Clendenen of the Carpenters, B.B. Smith, Boilermakers and Fuzz LaRue of ACT.

"We had met with school administration members and were convinced of the need of these projects," said Davis.

"And we convinced them how important it is to get responsible contractor language in their bid

documents."

The resolution helps define the term "Responsible Contractor" to include a contractors performance record, their participation in health, pension and apprenticeship programs, their ability to

provide a drug-free work force, their use of local workers and their compliance with state laws.

In Marshall County responsible contracting language has been around for years. So it is easy for

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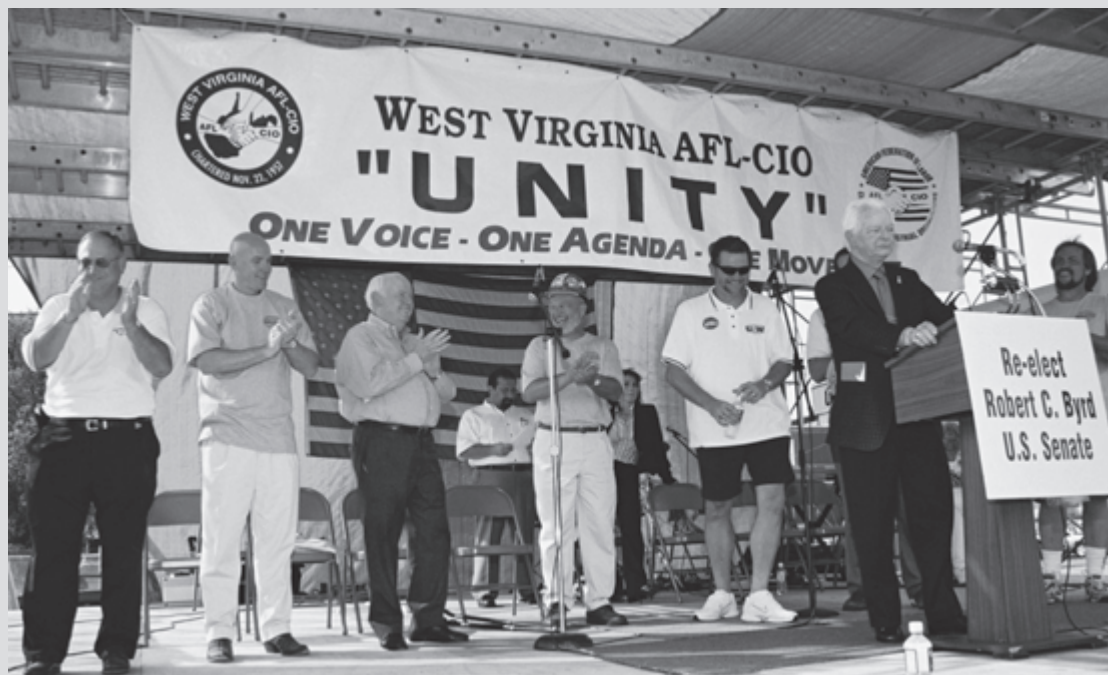
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Byrd Speaks at "Take Back America Rally"



ON STAGE AT the WV AFL-CIO's "Take Back America Rally" held on August 26 in Charleston are (from left) Mike Matthews, Charleston Building Trades; Mike Callaghan, Labor's endorsed democratic candidate for the second congressional district; John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO; Larry Matheney, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV AFL-CIO; Randy Moore, Steelworkers; Senator Robert C. Byrd, keynote speaker; and Jack Carte, Steelworkers.

WV's Underground Economy TV Show Aired

ACT's TV show "West Virginia's Underground Economy" aired around the Labor Day weekend in three television markets.

Plans are underway to rerun the program in more media markets across the state.

The program is getting some attention to the growing problems of low wage imported labor in the construction industry and other key industry in the state.

The ACT Foundation hired video producer Eric Spelsberg to travel across the state and capture a variety of images showing the "Underground Economy" at work.

Examples included a pipeline contractor in Clendenin that had no contractor license, wage bond, Secretary of State registration, WV workers compensation, or other business requirements to perform the pipeline maintenance work they were doing.

Publicly funded projects in Parkersburg, Morgantown and Shinnston were also highlighted.

"Some of the activity was just plain illegal," said Steve White, ACT Director. "And some jobs while legal are still questionable."

White is referring to situations where companies import workers into the state to take jobs local workers need and want.

Some of these companies may be getting state tax credits meant to help create jobs for local workers.

The show documented how companies are using labor brokers to import workers from Mexico.

Workers from Mexico found at two Allegheny Wood Product mills in Preston County were interviewed. They were hired by a company called Spanforce La-

bor, based in Lewisburg, WV.

Spanforce provided transportation, housing, TV, telephones and a job at the mill. The workers made \$6.50 per hour.

When Spelsberg tried to interview Spanforce owner Ray Wiley he was thrown out of Spanforce's office.

But West Virginia Public Broadcasting was able to get an interview with Wiley for their own feature story on imported labor.

Wiley admitted to using a contractor in Mexico who paid off government officials in order to get work visa's for workers wanting to leave the country.

He claimed he only recruited workers to take the jobs West Virginians didn't want.

Yet the story went on to show how workers at a flooring company in Mingo County were facing wage cuts of up to \$3 per hour. At the same time a different labor broker was importing workers at the mill.

The mill owner, Columbia Forest Product from Oregon, is on the most recent list of state job creation tax credit recipients.

In addition the mill was built on public land with a variety of economic development incentives.

In still another set of recent stories a Spanforce worker who was wanted for murder was arrested and also turned out to be an illegal alien. And a four year old from Fayette County was killed in a car wreck caused by an illegal alien who was working in a Boone County coal mine.

Prior to the shows airing, members of the building trades and supporters from other union protested in front of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices in Charleston.

ICE, formerly know as INS, is the federal agency responsible for identifying and apprehending

illegal immigrants and companies who use them.

The protestors had a 16 foot inflatable 'mouse' that was blind-

folded and the event was called the "Blind as ICE Rally."

"Not only are we facing ruthless employers who are import-

ing labor with the help of our tax dollars, government agencies who are to enforce our laws refuse to do so," said White.



WITH A 16 FOOT blind mouse in the background ACT's Steve White talks to members of the trades and other unions in front of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office. The Rally took place in Charleston on August 25.

Bricklayers #15 Help Habitat for Humanity



BRICKLAYERS LOCAL 15 members continued their involvement with Habitat for Humanity in Marion County in a little different way from their usual efforts.

Pictured are (from left) Glen Ratliff, William Law, Craig Zickefoose, Leroy Hunter Sr., Timothy Kuhn, Russell Cerisano and Eldon Fowler.

Instead of pitching in with their masonry skills they participated in the groups golf outing. Eight members played in the outing and according to Local 15 organizer Joe Dalton, everyone enjoyed the event.

"Over the last few years we've volunteered a lot of hours helping Habitat build affordable housing," said Dalton. "We're happy to contribute to a worthy cause in our community."

NCA Meets With Trades Apprentices Forum

Getting competitive union contractors to bid \$180 million of new highway projects coming out for bid over the next few months is a top agenda item for many of the basic trades.

Route 35 in Putnam and Mason Counties will have four contracts let, three estimated at \$30 million each and one at \$90 million, all in the coming months.

The money for the projects had been earmarked by the federal

government to be spent over the next four or five years but the process is being accelerated.

Instead the state will sell bonds to get the \$180 million needed up front, and use the money already pledged for the projects by the Federal Highway Department to make the bond payments.

These projects represent opportunities for local union work-

ers, but getting contractors to bid competitively is not always easy.

That's why the ACT Foundation is working with crafts to help find contractors who are interested, and have the capacity, to bid these large jobs.

"We're doing whatever we can to get out in front on these projects," said Ronnie Burdette,

35 and other highway projects in the state.

The NCA was formerly known as the Heavy and Highway Alliance and is based in Washington DC. It's mission is to help union contractors and union workers be successful getting work.

Steve Roots, Vice-President of the NCA's Heavy and Highway Division, came to Charleston August 18 to meet with the Trades and Darrell Allen from the WV Department of Transportation to find out what was coming up for bid.

A number of union representatives and contractors participated in the meeting.

One thing they learned was the largest project for Route 35 is to be a design-build project. In fact it is one of three allowed by a new state law passed earlier this year.

Traditional projects would see the design already done before the construction contract is let.

A design-build project combines both the design and construction phases into one bid.



STEVE ROOTS of the National Construction Alliance (right) speaks to a group of union and contractor representatives about the upcoming highway work on Route 35.

Business Manager for the Operating Engineers Local 132. "We are serious about getting this work for our members and we're not going to just wait to see how the bids turn out, we're starting now."

One of the actions taken is to invite a representative of the National Construction Alliance to a meeting to discuss the Route

Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades, held a special apprentice event in Charleston on August 17 with local business agents and training coordinators.

The purpose was to reach out to women and minorities. According to Smith, about 40 people attended.

The Rev. Matthew Watts of the Grace Bible Church in Kanawha County volunteered to act as a recruiter. Watts has experience working with young people through his activities as a leader of Hope

Community Center.

The idea to meet arose while Smith and Watts discussed the problems the Trades have in getting good applicants and the problems some minorities have in finding good job opportunities in the trades.

The guests were given an orientation about what it's like to be a construction apprentice. Numerous trades were represented to guide guests through the process of when to sign up for apprenticeship programs, what is required, how to become eligible, and other information.

"I felt it was successful," said Smith. "This is another step we're taking to recruit good candidates."



CARPENTERS TRAINING DIRECTOR Odie Parkins (left) talks with interested candidates about apprenticeship opportunities.

Roofers 242 Looks For New Apprentices

Roofers Local 242's Joint Apprenticeship Committee is looking for applicants to their apprenticeship program.

On Wednesday, October 18 applications will be taken at 118 20th Street, Unit 25, Parkersburg

from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Applications will be taken at the same time and place on the third Wednesday of each month.

To qualify for an interview an applicant must be at least 18 years of age, capable of doing the work of the Roofing trade, and pass a standard aptitude test administered by the WV Em-

ployment Service.

Having a high school diploma or equivalent is not required but recommended.

Applicants must also live in the work area which includes Athens, Meigs, Morgan, Noble and Washington Counties of Ohio and Barbour, Braxton, Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison,

Jackson, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Pendleton, Preston, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Wetzel, Wirt, and Wood in WV.

Starting apprentices earn \$11.25 plus benefits. Classes are taken two nights a week from mid-October to mid-April.

In addition to class room training an apprentice must get between 4200 and 6000 hours of on-the-job training to complete the program.

All applicants will be received without regard to race, religion, color, national origin or sex.

For more information call 304/485-5099.

\$48 MILLION FACILITY BUILT WITH FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS

Senator Byrd Unveils New Science Center

The grand opening for the Robert C. Byrd Biotechnology Science Center was August 25 on the Marshall University campus in Huntington.

The event was packed, according to Steve Burton, Business Manager for the Tri-State Building Trades.

Senator Byrd gave the keynote address.

"The discoveries that will be

made by the scientists, researchers, doctors, and students at Marshall will advance science beyond the power of our imaginations, and create one of the future economic pillars of the Mountain State and our country," Byrd said.

Master of Ceremonies was A. Michael Perry, President of Heritage Farm and formerly of Bank One.

In addition to Senator Byrd, other speakers included Gov. Joe Manchin, and Dr. Stephen Kopp

President of Marshall.

"I was mesmerized by the comments of Robert Byrd," Burton said. "I would challenge anyone to find someone with a better mind and memory and the ability to get the job done."

The state-of-the-art project landed at Marshall only because Sen. Byrd managed to secure \$35.6 million of federal funding for the facility, according to reports.

Additional \$12.5 million in funding came through a state grant fund put in place by the legislature

during the Wise administration.

Mascaro Construction Company of Pittsburgh signed on to build the \$48 million facility in March 2004 and, with sub-contractors, hired at the job's peak about 500 union workers.

According to Burton, business agents of the trades were well represented along with several

workers who were in attendance.

The 144,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility is five stories high and equipped with high-tech classrooms, 40 research labs, six teaching rooms, two auditoriums and a student lounge.

This facility has enabled Marshall to become a serious participant in a billion dollar research industry.



ATTENDING THE GRAND opening of Marshall's new Biotech Center are (from left) Tom Plymale, Operating Engineers 132; Tom Bowen, Laborers 543; Sen. Robert C. Byrd; Steve and Jewell Burton.

Greenbrier

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(FOBPC) consultants to conduct an on-site visit and finalize arrangements for this by a certain date, among other conditions.

That's good news for the North Central WV Building Trades Council according to their executive secretary Natalie Stone. "The council supports Liberty Gap and is glad to see that the PSC has granted them re-consideration," said Stone.

As in Greenbrier County, union members spent many hours attending public hearing in support of the project.

However the PSC threw out the application in late July when they claimed the company tried to prevent access for a consultant, working for FOBPC, who wanted to conduct a site study.

Liberty Gap asked the PSC to reconsider believing the PSC misunderstood its intentions of limiting people to visit the site. The West Virginia State Build-

ing and Construction Trades Council filed a response with the PSC stating the sanction to throw out the permit application was too strong and had nothing to do with the merits of the case.

Liberty Gap has an agreement with the North Central WV Building Trades committing the project contractors to hire local union workers.

Hearings before the PSC are now set for mid-December.

To show that all the planning and permitting is not just for

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Trades

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the Upper Ohio Valley Building Trades to support the bond vote seeking \$28 million towards a \$36 million building plan.

"Marshall County needs to invest in their school infrastructure and we are committed to helping them pass this bond," said Gary Kosky, Secretary-Treasurer of the Upper Ohio

Valley Building Trades.

As in Jackson County the State School Building Authority has pledged to make up the difference between the bond and the total construction costs.

The Marshall projects will include two new facilities and a number of renovations.

Bond approvals will be on the ballot in both counties as part of the November 7 election.

show Shell WindEnergy, which bought a wind project developed by NedPower a few years ago, began construction this month on a 164-turbine wind energy project in Grant County.

All Construction, LLC recently started site preparation, according to Larry Young, ACT representative. The project is broken into two phases with 82 turbines constructed in each phase.

M.A. Mortenson, based in

Minnesota, will be the general contractor. Mortenson built the only existing wind power site in West Virginia known as Backbone Mountain.

"It took a long time to get to this point," said Young. "But 100 percent union makes it a win-win situation for everyone involved."

According to Young the project should last about 15 months and employ approximately 300 union workers.