



A PUBLICATION OF THE AFFILIATED CONSTRUCTION TRADES

A Division of the WV State Building Trades, AFL-CIO | Bill Hutchinson, *President* | Dave Efav, *Secretary-Treasurer* | Steve White, *Director*

# Ethane Cracker Proposed

Developers announced plans to build a multi-billion dollar ethane cracking plant in Wood County last month.

The companies, Braskem and Odebrecht, both owned by Brazilian interests, said they were moving ahead with a land purchase and were working through a check-list to decide if the project would ultimately be built.

Three polyethylene plants, water treatment and energy cogeneration were also mentioned as potential parts of the ethane cracker complex.

The project has been named Ascent – Appalachian Shale Cracker Enterprise.

Industry reports estimate the construction of an ethane cracker to be in the \$3 to \$5 billion range, but company representatives were cautious and would not put a price on their project.

Key to the success of the project is securing a supply of ethane, a by-product of the Marcellus and Utica Shale natural gas that is abundant in the region.

Other key components to the project include financing and quali-

fied skilled labor to build and operate the plant.

“We are ready to do our part in supplying the skilled local construction labor,” said Bill Hutchinson, Business Manager of the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades.

Hutchinson was on hand at the announcement.

Building Trades representatives have been meeting with company representatives and government officials to discuss manpower, the supply each craft can provide in the region, training, and alcohol and drug free programs.

“It may sound simplistic but our members ability to perform their as-

signed tasks each and every day with a high level of competency is a major selling point for our region,” said Hutchinson.

According to Hutchinson a timetable was not given for when a final decision was to be made.

The coming year will certainly bring more detail. ■



Bill Hutchinson (left) of the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades poses with Nick Sprague of Braskem at the November 14 announcement of a new ethane cracking facility in Wood County called Ascent. Braskem and their parent Odebrecht are the developers.

## NLRB Settles CB&I Unfair Labor Practice

The National Labor Relations Board, CB&I, as well as the Carpenters and Boilermakers unions have agreed to settle a long standing unfair labor practice case brought against Texas based CB&I.

As part of the settlement CB&I has agreed to send notices to a long list of former employees spelling out their rights as workers to form or join a union and pledging to uphold those rights.

The case stems from hiring and employment practices at Dominion Resources new Natrium natural gas processing facility in Marshall County.

When Dominion hired CB&I members of the Building Trades tried to work out a deal to get local construction workers hired but CB&I refused.

As the reported \$500 million project was built many local workers

tried to get hired. Most were rejected. A few succeeded.

In 2012 a number of crafts organized application drives including the Carpenters and Boilermakers. It was those application drives that led to the charges that CB&I was discriminating against local union workers.

While the company was telling union workers they could apply and would be treated like everyone else

they were telling their workers on the job a very different story.

In the notice sent to workers CB&I must include the phrases “WE WILL NOT tell you that it is futile for union members of the Mid-Atlantic Council of Carpenters – WV Region or the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Local 667 to apply for work with us because we will not hire applicants who are members of any

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# What is a “Cracker” Plant?

A “Cracker” is oil and gas industry lingo for a processing plant that takes oil or natural gas, which are large hydrocarbon molecules, and “cracks” the molecules breaking them down into smaller molecules.

The smaller molecules which are produced, such as ethylene, are vital ingredients used in the plastics and chemical industry.

Natural gas found in both the Marcellus and Utica Shale formations are rich in “wet” gas which has ethane needed for a cracker. Companies such as MarkWest, Williams Energy and Blue Racer are all building and operating facilities that separate the valuable wet portion of the gas such as ethane, propane, butane and pentanes leaving methane that is your typical natural gas consumed by homes and businesses.

The Brazilian conglomerate Odebrecht is currently investigating the possibility of building an ethane cracker in Wood County.

Ethane crackers produce ethylene which is a basic building block of the chemical industry, a vital compound in the manufacturing of plastic products and is the link between chemical companies and petroleum refiners.

There are several types of cracking: thermal, catalytic and unification.

If a cracker plant is built in Wood County it would likely employ the thermal or steam cracking process.

Steam cracking is a petrochemi-

cal process in which large saturated hydrocarbons are broken down into smaller, often unsaturated, hydrocarbons.

Steam is used to break or “crack” the ethane into ethylene and benzene.

Ethane is the “feedstock” which is cracked through the use of steam in a bank of pyrolysis furnaces. The ethane is diluted with steam and briefly heated in a furnace without the presence of oxygen.

The reaction temperature is typi-

cally very high, around 850 degrees Celsius, and the reaction is only allowed to take place for milliseconds but the resulting gas velocities are faster than the speed of sound.

After the cracking temperature is reached the gas is quickly quenched to stop the reaction in a transfer line heat exchanger or inside a quenching header using quenching oil.

The large molecule has been cracked and it results in the production of ethylene or other lighter al-

kenes.

Building a cracker plant is a highly complex, large scale construction project. Building such a facility would cost billions of dollars and create thousands of jobs for the union construction trades.

In addition because the product of a cracker is only a raw material for another phase of manufacturing, a cracker will mean additional economic activity in the plastics and chemical industries. ■



Brazilian based Braskem want to build a facility in Wood County similar to this \$4.5 billion industrial plant at their Ethylene XXI Complex in Mexico. The Mexico project is being built under the responsibility of Odebrecht Industrial Engineering and is reported to be about 50% complete.

# Anti-Union ABC Attacks Disabled Veterans

The anti-union Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) has filed an injunction to prevent the implementation of a new rule by the U.S. Department of Labor that would encourage the hiring of disabled Americans and military veterans, calling it “wasteful and burdensome.”

The rule, for federal contractors and subcontractors of all industries not just construction, establishes a nationwide seven percent hiring goal for qualified individuals with disabilities.

The disability hiring rule was re-

leased with a companion Final Rule to Improve Job Opportunities for Protected Veterans.

That rule, which updates requirements of the Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRA), requires federal contractors and subcontractors to establish “annual hiring benchmarks for protected veterans,” using one of several methods described in the rule.

Contractors must also document and update annually “several quantitative comparisons for the number of veterans who apply for jobs and the

number of veterans they hire.”

Both rules would take effect March 14.

The goals apply to each job group in a company with more than 100 employees, or to the entire workforce for companies with 100 or fewer employees.

“If ABC contractors don’t want to bid federal contracts they don’t have to,” said Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV AFL-CIO.

“But if these companies want the benefits federal work offers then they have to be willing to help our dis-

abled veterans, it’s pretty simple.”

The ABC represents less than 1% of all construction contractors in the United States but often claims to speak for 80 percent of the industry.

The National Labor College has published a report that details the many non-construction members of the ABC and their radical right-wing agenda.

A copy of the report can be found at the web site of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO [www.bctd.org](http://www.bctd.org) under the Filed Services tab. ■

# Wheeling Trades Help Restore Statue

Building trades members from Wheeling recently helped relocate and restore a historic monument.

The monument, dedicated to business owner and German immigrant Augustus Pollack (1830 – 1906), is the only monument erected by Labor that pays tribute to an employer.

Apparently Pollack was an exceptional man.

In 1871, at the age of 41, Pollack began Crown Stogies.

Fifteen years later, Pollack's company was the largest manufacturer of cigars in West Virginia.

Pollack was known for fair pay and decent working conditions.

Labor was so appreciative of his treatment of workers they erected a monument in his memory.

The monument, made of 60,000 pounds of granite, is now at Wheeling Heritage Port, it had been located on Main Street near the Fort Henry Bridge on-ramp.

The monument was first dedicated in 1916. ■



Helping to relocate and restore the 60,000 pound Augustus Pollack granite monument in Wheeling are (front row from left) Thomas Archbold, Bricklayer Local 1; Frank Ellis, President, Ohio Valley Trades and Labor; Eran Molz, Operating Engineers Local 132; Jim Flannigan Iron Workers Local 549; (back row) Frank Eberhart, Bricklayers Local 1; Mike Major, Mike Major Sculpture LLC. On the statue is John Willhoft, Bricklayers.

# Insulators Local 80 Apprenticeship Open

The Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Local 80 announced applications for apprenticeship will be taken December 16 – 20.

Applicants can go to the Charleston, Huntington or Parkersburg WorkForce offices Monday thru Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, possess a High School Diploma or equivalent, have a current valid driver's license, be physically able to perform the work and pass a drug test.

An aptitude test will be administered by WorkForce.

In addition applicants must reside in one of the following counties for the last 12 months.

In Ohio the counties of Gallia, Meigs, Washington, Jackson, Pike, Lawrence, or Scioto.

In Virginia the counties of Allegheny, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Campbell, Carroll, Char-

lotte, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Halifax, Henry, Highland, Montgomery, Nelson, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Russell, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington or Wythe.

In Kentucky – Bath, Carter, Floyd, Knott, Letcher, Martin, Owsley, Rowan, Boyd, Elliot, Greenup, Lawrence, Lewis, Menifee, Pike, Wolfe, Breathitt, Estill, Johnson, Lee, Magoffin, Morgan or Powell.

And in West Virginia – Boone, Calhoun, Fayette, Jackson, Lincoln, Mason, Monroe, Pleasants, Raleigh, Roane, Webster, Wyoming, Braxton, Clay, Gilmer, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Randolph, Summers, Wirt, Wayne, Cabell, Doddridge, Greenbrier, Lewis, McDowell, Mingo, Pendleton, Putnam, Ritchie, Kanawha, Logan, Mercer, Wood or Upshur.

The four year program teaches a variety of work tasks including the insulation of both industrial and commercial mechanical systems (i.e.

pipng, boilers, duct work, storage tanks) for the purpose of energy savings; burn protection; and to control system heat transfer and condensation.

All applicants will be considered

without regard to race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin or sex.

For more information visit [www.awlu80.com](http://www.awlu80.com) or contact 740-843-1017. ■

# NLRB Settles CB&I

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*union or that we will only hire union applicants who are disenfranchised from their union in some manner.*

*WE WILL NOT tell you that we will more closely watch union supporters."*

A listing of workers' rights and other actions the company will not do is included.

"We knew they needed qualified people, but they refused many local folks, we felt it was because of our union affiliation," said Mike Jenkins, Senior Organizer for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenter.

The project was supposed to take 15 months to complete but ended up taking 21.

Not long after the plant came on line an explosion put it out of commission. A cause of the blast has yet to be reported.

"The first phase of the job is long over and now union workers are building the second phase," said Jim Dingess, Business Manager for Boilermakers Local 667. "We wanted more in the ULP case but the important thing is CB&I is gone, and local workers are now employed." ■

# HVAC/Fire Damper Technician Certification Recommended by Legislative Auditor

West Virginia's Legislative Auditor, responding to an application submitted by the Sheet Metal Workers, has recommended workers who perform HVAC work be certified.

The auditor's office delivered their report to an Interim Legislative meeting of both Senate and House Government Organization Committees held on Tuesday, November 19.

requiring a certain degree of knowledge and proficiency. Although the current law requires state licensing of all contractors performing HVAC work on projects exceeding \$2,500, the Legislative Auditor finds that this regulation may be insufficient. The Legislative Auditor finds that HVAC and fire damper technicians should be regulated by the State...

recommendation but has no binding effect upon legislators.

It will be up to the House and Senate members to see if a bill is introduced and passed.

"HVAC systems and fire dampers need to be installed by qualified people," said Steve Ellis, President of ELCO Mechanical based in Charles-

ton.

"Right now anybody can claim to be an expert but when these systems are not installed correctly customers suffer even to the point where lives may be put at risk."

"This is just the first step but we are pleased that we are off to a solid start," said Ellis. ■



House Government Organization Chairman Jim Morgan (D-Cabell) (standing left) presides over the legislative interim committee in November while ACT's Steve White (at podium) along with Steve Hancock and Jim King of Sheet Metal Workers Local 33 answer questions about the proposed HVAC/Fire Damper Technician certification.

The report is part of a "Sunrise" application process required for any legislative effort aimed at licensure of certification.

Any proposed licensing must first be analyzed by the Auditor's office to better understand how existing law does or does not regulate the proposed area and what risk the public faces with unregulated activity.

Sheet Metal Workers Local 33 together with contractor partners has led the way with the application aimed at requiring workers who install heating ventilation and air conditioning systems as well as fire dampers to have some sort of verification they are competent to do the job.

The report concludes "HVAC and fire damper work is a specialized field

The effort also got support from both the State Fire Marshall's office and the West Virginia Division of Labor.

The auditor's report recommended workers who install fire dampers be regulated by the Fire Marshall and HVAC workers fall under the DOL.

Eleven states and the District of Columbia already regulate the industry. Kentucky and Maryland included.

A number of cities have certification or licensing requirements as well.

"We see this as being very similar to the electrician and plumber licensing already in place," said Jim King, Business Representative for Sheet Metal Workers Local 33.

The legislative auditor's report is a

**Affiliated Construction Trades**  
600 Leon Sullivan Way  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Charleston - (304) 345-7570  
Toll Free - (800) 930-9675  
www.actwv.org



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## Wheelings' Project BEST Holiday Breakfast Held



Governor Earl Ray Tomblin addresses a packed crowd at the Project BEST annual holiday breakfast event held in Wheeling at Oglebay Park on December 4.

The event has become an honored tradition where labor and management in the construction industry showcase their cooperative approach to excellence.