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

School Savings Debunked - Again

Tough Legislative Session

The 2016 legislative session will start on Wednesday, January 13 and is already shaping up to be one of the most challenging for working families in recent history.

Legislative leaders from both the State Senate and House of Delegates have said they plan to repeal the

states prevailing wage law and to pass the controversial 'Right-to-Work' legislation.

If passed, both measures will lead to serious wage and benefit cuts for workers and have a crippling effect on local contractors and communities.

Even though significant changes were made to the state prevailing wage law Republican leaders say they are not satisfied.

In the 2015 legislative session a \$500,000 threshold was created meaning projects valued less than that amount have no prevailing wage

protection.

The task of calculating the prevailing wage was given to WorkForce West Virginia rather than the Division of Labor. WorkForce was called upon to devise a new method for calculating the rates which they did

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First Construction Project Management Class Completed, Plans for Second Class

The first graduates of the new construction project management class celebrated their completion on November 12.

In all, fifteen journeymen started – and completed – the one year, 15 college credit series of courses. Each received a construction management credit certificate from WVU-P and can take the exam required to receive a Certified Associate in Project Management credential.

Based at WVU-Parkersburg the class work included scheduling, safety, communications, and a variety of skill sets needed to bridge the gap between engineering and supervision on many industrial projects.

Parkersburg area industrial owners approached both labor and contractors a few years ago noting the lack of project management skills that had traditionally been on their staff. With ever tightening budgets, plant managers were losing the needed skills to make projects successful.

Working as a team the group enlisted WVU-Parkersburg and WVU's Institute for Labor Studies and Research to help build a curriculum and find instructors.

The curriculum is designed to take experienced construction personnel and provide them with the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to plan, execute, and control large industrial and commercial projects.

In addition, the Community and Technical College System offered funding to assist in not only devel-

oping the curriculum but to fund instructors.

A second round of training is being considered in the Wheeling area with Northern Community & Technical College as a partner. The idea is to create a hybrid – some classroom time as well as some online learning – to cut down on travel time for stu-

dents.

“The program went from an idea to a success and we are all proud of that,” said Bill Hutchinson, Business Manager of the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades Council. “We owe special appreciation to Professor Sam White who helped develop and teach much of the curriculum.” ■



Graduates of the construction project management program along with instructors celebrated completion of the yearlong program at a November 12 event in Parkersburg.

New TV Commercials on Air Two New Web Sites Launched

Two new web sites have been launched to better inform the public about the value of the state prevailing wage law.

The sites are supportwvlocalbusinesses.com and westvirginiaprevails.org. Both are being developed by a coalition of professional contractors and craft employees called Support WV Local Businesses, Ltd.

The new group was established to provide accurate and timely information on the positive effects of the state prevailing wage law including expert studies, contractor and worker testimonials, news articles and other fact

based information.

“We know the great value prevailing wage has brought to the construction industry,” said Jim Cerra of the Kanawha Valley Builders Association. “A level playing field for competition gives customers, including taxpayers, the best price while promoting quality construction and local businesses.”

Cerra points out that the complexities of the construction industry are lost on people who don't work in the industry. Most projects involve multiple contractors and vendors, each independent businesses with

their own set of employees.

Cerra also explains the training of skilled workers, alcohol and drug testing programs and safety are all undertaken by private sector initiatives between contractors and workers.

“Prevailing wage laws create the right environment for a great value to customers without sacrificing quality,” said Cerra.

Studies have consistently shown prevailing wage laws do not increase costs to taxpayers. In fact a study conducted earlier this year showed contractors build schools in West

Virginia at a lower cost than states like Virginia and North Carolina even though wages are much lower in those states.

“Wages are only part of the equation,” said Cerra. “Our contractors have proven they bring the best price when you look at the bottom line.”

In addition to the web sites the group is using radio, TV and digital media to inform the public about the many positive aspects of the prevailing wage law.

For more information visit the sites supportwvlocalbusinesses.com and westvirginiaprevails.org. ■

Trades, Sportsmen Partner for Community

Members of the Charleston Building Trades hold a banner during the ribbon cutting ceremony December 2 for a new fishing pier at Coonskin Park in Charleston.

The volunteer project involved more than 750 hours to build a new 16' x 20' public fishing pier, ramp and walkways.

The Sportsman's Alliance funded the effort with a \$16,000 contribution. In addition, a number of local businesses including Oval Construction, C&L Construction and Trinity Rebar helped with manpower and materials.

For nearly four decades, the Sportsmen's Alliance has fought to protect and advance our outdoor heritage of hunting, fishing, trapping

and shooting in all 50 state legislatures, in the courts, in Congress and at the ballot box.

According to Charleston Building Trades Business Manager Paul Breedlove, a number of crafts sent volunteers including the Cement Masons, Sheet Metal, Plumbers & Pipefitters, Operating Engineers, Laborers, Carpenters, Iron Workers,

Roofers, and Electricians.

“A lot of people volunteered their

time to create a nice addition to our public park,” said Breedlove. ■



Craft members stand on new fishing pier during ribbon cutting event at Coonskin Park in Charleston.

Operating Engineers #132 Apprenticeship

Operating Engineers Local 132 wants qualified candidates for their heavy duty equipment operator apprenticeship program.

The three year program trains in all aspects of operating heavy equipment including bulldozers, backhoes, cranes and excavators.

“We want members to be well versed in all types of equipment,” said Allen Nelson, Training Director. “We

focus on safety and productivity.”

Each year an apprentice spends five weeks at the training center located south of Parkersburg.

Most of the training takes place during the Winter.

Apprentices must get at least 1,000 hours of paid on-the-job training to advance each year.

Applications will be accepted at any WorkForce West Virginia Center

from January 4 through 15 between the hours of 9:00am and 3:00pm, Monday through Friday.

In order to qualify a person must be at least 18 years old, have a high school diploma or equivalent and have been a resident of West Virginia for at least one year.

An aptitude test will be given by the WorkForce Center.

A successful applicant will have a

valid WV driver's license, be physically able to perform the work of the trade and pass a drug test.

The recruitment, selection, employment and training of apprentices shall be without discrimination because of age, race, color, religion, national origin, or sex and will conform to ADA regulations.

For more information call (304) 273-4852. ■

National Experts Say Deskins' Report Flawed 'Right-to-Work is Wrong' and so is Study

A study on so-called Right-to-Work legislation recently released by a WVU professor has been questioned by leading national economists.

John Deskins was hand-picked by Senate President Bill Cole (R-Mercer) and Speaker of the House Tim Armstead (R-Kanawha) to study the economic impact of a proposed Right-to-Work law in West Virginia.

Not too surprisingly Deskins' re-

port predicted a small increase in economic activity if the law passed.

But national experts on the topic say the Deskins report is seriously flawed.

The criticism is technical but two DC based experts, Dr. Lawrence

Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute and Dr. Dean Baker, Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research claim the study used data incorrectly and should have

looked more closely at states that passed the law in recent years.

In addition the Deskins' report does not take into account simple things like the differences in climate and terrain.

Many other facts are overlooked. For example of the 10 states with the highest unemployment rates, 7 are "Right to Work" states.

"People go to Florida for the beach and warm weather not because

it's a RTW state," said Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades.

One area where there is agreement appears to be that RTW lowers wages.

Supporters say more jobs will make up the difference.

"Lower wages is not the way to go, and to brag about a future where people must get two or three jobs to get by is pretty sad," said Efaw. ■

"Lower wages is not the way to go..."

Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer

WV State Building Trades

Tough Session Ahead

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with help from WVU and Marshall Universities.

WorkForce then conducted a survey of contractors and published new wage rates October 1.

For a three month period of time the prevailing wage law was suspended.

Advocates on both sides are now studying data from projects bid during the time without prevailing wage requirements.

At a legislative interim meeting in November a report was given by legislative staff about school projects.

The report claimed great savings for projects without a prevailing wage requirement but even before the presentation was finished numerous questions were raised by committee members.

All agree that different site conditions could effect costs and have nothing to do with wages. When asked if site costs had been removed from the calculations staff said they were. However ACT's Steve White was called to testify and he strongly disagreed.

"The site costs are in the staff report numbers and if you take them out most cost differences between projects, with and without prevailing

wage, go away," said White.

White was familiar with the schools in the report and had documentation to prove his point.

According to White the complexity of the construction industry makes it hard for newcomers to understand the numbers available from bid documents.

Only four projects were looked at, two with prevailing wage and two without.

One projects has serious site problem requiring auger cast piling, grade beams and include water treatment equipment. Another site had the removal of contaminated soil in the bids.

"Facts matter," said White. "When you correctly take out site costs the bids per square foot are almost the same for these projects with the smaller school having the highest cost."

And White noted that one school without the prevailing wage protection showed workers losing \$15 per hour in their wage and benefit package with no savings to taxpayers.

"Prevailing wage is a proven success for our industry and our communities," said White. "Repeal would be terrible." ■



Seminars like this one in Huntington in early December have been educating trades members about how so-called Right-to-Work laws lower wages and hurt workers.

Cement Masons 926 Apprentice Notice

The West Virginia Area Plasters and Cement Masons Local 926 Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee will be accepting applications for apprenticeship training on December 16th through December 30, 2015 at:

OVCEC, 21 Armory Drive, Wheeling, WV 26003, 304-242-0520
CEA-NCWV, 2794 White Hall Blvd., White Hall, WV 26554, 304-367-1290

OP&CMIA Local 926, 3130 7th Ave., Charleston, WV 25387 304-744-8389

OP&CMIA Local 926 Training Center, 720 Staunton Turnpike, Parkersburg, WV 26104, 304-865-8389.

An applicant must be a US citi-

zen, at least 18 years of age and a high school graduate or equivalent.

An applicant must be physically capable of performing the work of the trade, meet the norms of the aptitude test and possess qualities which indicate an interest in the trade. A valid drivers license is required.

Interviews will be scheduled after the application process.

The recruitment, selection, employment and training of apprentices shall be without discrimination because of age, race, color, religion, national origin, or sex and will conform to ADA regulations.

Contact Kevin Parr at 304-865-0529 with any questions. ■

Free Speech at Issue

Radio Company Refuses to Run Labor Ad

The West Virginia AFL-CIO is currently exploring legal options in response to West Virginia Radio Corporation's decision to pull three paid radio advertisements providing facts surrounding the so-called "Right to Work" law being touted by state legislative leadership.

Each of the ads, which can be heard at <http://wvafclcio.org/right-to-work.html>, touch on three different aspects of RTW:

- A 54 percent increase in workplace injury and death in states with "Right to Work" laws
- Lower wages, as much as \$6,000 lower, in states that have adopted "Right to Work" laws
- That such a law is government interference in employer-employee negotiations.

As noted on the West Virginia AFL-CIO website, the statistics de-

tailed in the ads are derived from Bureau of Labor Statistics data and other economic studies. The ads are currently running on stations statewide that are outside the West Virginia Radio Corporation network.

"If the company executives had some question about the content of the ads, they should have contacted us – that's the normal practice in communications advertising," said West Virginia AFL-CIO President Kenny Perdue. "Instead, the company started running the ads, then after about a week of airing them, suddenly 'declined' to run all three of them."

"Absent any response from the company other than a one-sentence email that said the ads are 'inflammatory,' I have to assume the decision was handed down by top management of the West Virginia Radio Corporation, which is headed by

Chairman John Raese, a wealthy Republican politician who has long advocated for a 'Right to Work' law."

Perdue said he is in discussions with the West Virginia AFL-CIO's attorney about the possibility of seeking a legal remedy.

"Out-of-state corporations and interest groups are pouring money into paid advertisements in West Vir-

ginia that promote a 'Right to Work' law by spreading misinformation, and they are contributing thousands to the politicians who will support it," Perdue noted. "We're working to get the truth out there through our own advertisements, exercising our free speech rights, and we're effectively banned from the airwaves in a major portion of the state." ■

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Project BEST Breakfast



More than 400 attended the annual project BEST Breakfast held at Oglebay Park in Wheeling.

The event recognizes achievements throughout the year in construction excellence.

BEST is a successful labor-management group serving the Upper Ohio Valley region.

Its primary purpose is to promote jobs by providing quality and safety conscious craftsmen and on-time completion of projects within budget to its customers. The group also encourages economic development in the region it serves.

Contractor members are affiliated with the Ohio Valley Construction Employers Council and labor members with the Upper Ohio Valley Building and Construction Trades Council.

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