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

# 73.6 Percent Respond For New Prevailing Wage Rate

WorkForce published the new state prevailing wage rates on September 30.

While there were differences from the previous survey most agree WorkForce did an excellent job designing the new survey and getting meaningful results.

A total of 5,200 surveys were sent out to contractors, of which around 200 were duplicates to companies

that had multiple locations.

According to WorkForce 3,722 employers responded which meant a response rate of 73.6 percent.

The responses represented 16,555 workers.

Many of those responding (26%) said they only did residential work. A number (33%) also said they were either sole proprietors or had no employees, did not work in state during

the times requested, did no construction work, were out of business or refused to respond.

Approximately 558 employers (15% of those responding) sent in data relevant to the work funded by taxpayers and therefore used in the calculations.

Republican leaders pounced on the 15% rate to claim the survey was flawed. But for the most part, accord-

ing to ACT Director Steve White, they had already concluded using a survey was not what they wanted and were quick to twist the data to fit their position.

"People are critical of the percentage of responses without even knowing what the numbers should be," said White. "The 558 employers may have represented 100 percent of

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## Statewide Apprenticeship Meeting Held

Approximately 35 representatives from craft apprenticeship programs along with community college leaders met on Friday, September 25.

The event was hosted by Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 565 in Parkersburg.

A number of training initiatives were discussed including an ongoing project scheduling/management class held at nearby WVU-P and coordinated by the WVU Institute for Labor Studies.

The class was created by a three-way, owner-contractor-labor initiative to meet a growing need on industrial projects where engineering services are outsourced leaving a gap in services needed to run successful projects.

A second phase of the class is being considered for the Wheeling area with Northern Community College as the host.

This phase will work to blend classroom time with online training to decrease scheduling problems for students.

Another topic of discussion was making it easier for apprentices to earn college degrees at the same time they serve their apprenticeship. Currently

National Apprenticeship Week  
will take place Nov. 2 – 8

others

anyone who completes an apprenticeship can get credits to use towards an associate's degree. But programs in other parts of the country are trying

to give apprentices all the classwork needed during their term to get the degree and a journeyman certificate at the same time.

The group discussed just such an approach successfully used in Indiana. ■



About 35 apprenticeship and community college representatives from across the state met in Parkersburg in late September to talk about a variety of topics.

## No Savings Without PW

# Politics, Not Data, Driving Attacks on New Prevailing Wage Rates and Methodology

The period of time when the prevailing wage law was suspended is yielding important information.

Instead of 40 percent savings as predicted by some Republican leaders, bids for a number of school projects remained unchanged.

“So far we have looked at four school projects that were bid without prevailing wage and there were absolutely no savings realized to taxpayers on any of these projects,” said Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades.

The projects Efaw referred to are the Suncrest Middle School in Monogalia County, the Potomack Intermediate School in Berkeley County, the Brooke County Middle School in Brooke County and the Ceredo-Kenova Elementary School in Wayne County.

Each project came in close to the established budget, and each budget was figured based on prior costs with

prevailing wage rates being paid.

In addition two of the projects went to contractors who will pay the prevailing wage rate even without it being required by law.

Contractors who lobbied for repeal of the prevailing wage and boasted they could save money bid on some of the projects and did not get any.

The Suncrest project went to a nonunion contractor but the second place bid which came from a union contractor committed to paying the prevailing wage even without the law was very close.

This proves the price difference was routine with no great savings.

The Berkeley County project was touted as proof that great savings were at hand but the numbers used ignored obligations for architect fees,

permits, and other soft costs. “The bid was actually over the estimate and the estimate was based on prevailing wage,” said Efaw.

The Brooke County project was for site preparation at a new middle school.

Union contractor James White construction was low bidder at almost \$1 million less than the projects \$3.2 million estimate.

In Wayne County union contractor Neighborgall Construction came in with the low bid on the Ceredo-Kenova school.

In fact they were lower than Jarret Construction and Swope Construction, important because the owners of both were active in promoting prevailing wage repeal and promised great savings.

Efaw points out that recent stud-

ies show taxpayers had already been getting a great deal with the prevailing wage law in place.

A study commissioned by ACT had compared the per-square foot cost of schools in West Virginia to all surrounding states and even North Carolina.

West Virginia costs were very competitive and lower than the non-prevailing wage states of Virginia and North Carolina.

However while costs to taxpayers are no better in states without prevailing wage laws wages and benefits suffer greatly.

“Some would have you believe that we can’t have decent paid workers and fair prices,” said Efaw.

“I can’t think of anything more un-American or insulting to West Virginia workers and contractors than that line of thinking. It is proven to be untrue yet wage cuts are still being proposed.” ■

Check out this new site  
[supportwvlocalbusinesses.com](http://supportwvlocalbusinesses.com)

## Commission on Oil & Natural Gas Industry Safety Holding a Series of Meetings

In July Governor Earl Ray Tomblin formed the Commission on Oil and Natural Gas Industry Safety.

The group has been meeting in different parts of the state with the most recent meeting held in Charleston on October 1.

The purpose of the committee, which has two members from labor and a number from industry and government, is to look for ways to improve safety for workers and the public.

Members of the Commission are charged with reviewing current federal and state oil and natural gas workplace safety regulations and providing recommendations for improving workplace safety in the oil and natural gas industry in West Vir-

ginia.

The Commission will issue a final report November 16.

Letha Haas with the Parkersburg-Marietta Drug and Education program and Allen Nelson, Training Coordinator for Operating Engineers Local 132 are the labor representatives on the committee.

Both are trying to focus on creating some recognized training standards that meet the needs of industry but are reasonable for workers and contractors.

“We see a dozen different types of training being required in the industry and much of it is repetitive,” said Nelson.

“We would like to see some good standards promoted so workers can

be prepared but don’t have to take the same training over and over.” ■



Letha Haas (right) sits next to Highway Commissioner Paul Mattox and Senator Jack Yost (D-Brooke) during a session of the Commission on Oil and Natural Gas Industry Safety held in Charleston in early October.

[supportlocalworkers.com](http://supportlocalworkers.com)

# Trades Council Launches New Web Site to Support Local Jobs for Local Workers

A new web site is up and running to support the hiring of local construction workers for shale related and other projects.

Supportlocalworkers.com was started by both the Upper Ohio Valley and Parkersburg-Marietta Building and Construction Trades Councils. The site was created with assistance from ACT-Ohio.

The Upper Ohio Valley Building Trades has been leading a series of weekly Thursday street rallies to promote local hiring.

By moving the locations each week the group has been able to get a good crowd participation and has received positive public responses.

"We're getting the word out that we can do better in the region by hiring more local, qualified workers who are drug free, skilled and need the work created by the shale gas extraction," said Walter 'Fuzz' LaRue,

ACT Representative.

According to LaRue the web site has a petition for people to help show

their support for local hiring.

The site also has lots of information about what is going on in the gas

industry and debunks some persistent myths about finding drug free construction workers. ■



Construction workers rally at Bethany WV, north of Wheeling, on October 8 to draw attention to the need for more local construction jobs on local gas related projects. Schwob Energy Services from Texas is building a compressor station with imported workers.

## Prevailing Wage

*Continued from Page 1*

all contractors doing the work; these folks just don't know and frankly don't care."

Another criticism is that prevailing wage projects were included in the survey and somehow perpetuate themselves. According to White the effect would be small.

"Prevailing wage projects represent only a small portion of the work done, perhaps 25 percent," said White. "But more important most of the projects are done by contractors who would pay the prevailing wage rate without the law, so effects of payrolls from contractors who would pay much less is very small."

The strong response however doesn't mean the survey was as accurate as it could have been. A number of crafts saw wage and benefit rates significantly lower than before in certain areas.

White believes the survey process

can be improved to make it more accurately reflect what is going on in the market.

He suggests alcohol and drug testing programs be included as benefit plans. Surveyed job titles were confusing and could be adjusted to be more accurate.

The underlying math to set wage rates used averages rather than a 'majority' rate which results in lower rates.

White believes there is broad agreement that contractors should pay the 'going rate' or prevailing wage rate, on tax funded projects.

"Folks who don't know our industry are making radical changes that hurt our workers, contractors and taxpayers," said White. "There is no advantage to lowering wage rates or eliminating benefits except for low-road contractors who will profit more." ■

## Tri-State Hosts Tailgate



Members, family and friends enjoy a tailgate event at the Marshall - Norfolk State game in Huntington on September 19.

Marshall won 45 - 7.

According to Business Manager Mark Johnson around 350 attended the event.

"We thank the many volunteers from a variety of crafts who make this fun, family oriented event possible," said Johnson.

The event was also a way to remember former Operating Engineer Local 132 Business Manager Tommy Plymale. Members of the Operators were on-hand to continue the tradition with two barbeque grills.

## More Locations and Dates Set

# Meeting Held about Exposing So-Called Right-to-Work Legislation

About 100 trades' members in the Parkersburg area attended a meeting about what so-called Right-to-Work laws really mean.

The name may sound good but the intent and results of Right-to-Work laws are disastrous not only for union families but for all working families.

The discussion included how Right-to-Work got started as an anti-labor effort in the South. It also went over the statistics on wage losses for families in states that already have the law in place.

West Virginia families, both those with union members and without, are expected to lose about \$5,971 each on average.

That's because the law works to

undermine and destroy trade unions which in turn removes protections for all workers.

Also predicted are increases in on-the-job fatalities by 54% and an increase in state poverty by 15%.

The meeting was hosted by IBEW Local 986 in late September and a variety of crafts from the area participated.

State Republic leaders like Senate President Bill Cole (R-Mercer), Majority Leader Mitch Carmichael (R-Jackson) and Speaker of the House Tim Armstead (R-Kanawha) have repeatedly said the proposed law will be a priority on their agenda during next year's legislative session.

During this year's session the House and Senate leaders directed

WVU to do a report on the economic impact of the law. It is unclear when the report will be published.

"This is not about economics it's about politics," said Bill Hutchinson, Business Manager of the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades and also President of the WV State Build-

ing Trades.

Additional meetings are planned in Clarksburg on October 24, Beckley on November 7 and Huntington on December 5. A Morgantown event is also being planned.

For more information contact your local union. ■

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## Topping-Out Ceremony Held at Hospital in Morgantown



Members of the North Central WV Building Trades Council were on hand for the Ruby Memorial Hospital topping out ceremony in Morgantown.

The event was held October 2.

According to Council Executive Director Natalie Stone the general contractor for the \$225 million project is Yates Construction who along with sub-contractors is using local union workers.

The project is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2016.



Around 100 people participated in a Parkersburg meeting about the so-called Right-to-Work law designed to weaken unions and cut working families income.

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