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

Road Funding Bill Signed, Bond Vote to be October 7

Funding is almost in place for as much as \$2.8 billion in road building and repair projects promoted by Governor Jim Justice.

Justice saw the majority of his road building plan passed during the extended legislative session that concluded in June.

Three major components make up the road plan; increased taxes and fees which are now in place, bonds to be paid by the annual federal allotment West Virginia receives and bonds to be paid by tolls from turnpike traffic.

In addition, Governor Justice wants the public's approval to sell bonds which would be paid back by the tax and fees recently approved by the legislature.

No new taxes are being asked for with the bond, just the ability to sell bonds.

A combination of a small increase in the wholesale gasoline tax, an in-

crease in DMV vehicle registration fees, repeal of the sales tax discount on vehicles meaning the regular six

percent sales tax applies, and a shift in some general funds will devote around \$140 million per year to road

projects.

The Governor's plan is to use that

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Representatives from the Trades and others join Governor Jim Justice at a bill signing ceremony to fund road construction. Justice also signed a proclamation setting the Road Bond vote date for October 7.

PSC Hearing for Harrison County Power

A hearing for the siting certificate of the Harrison County Power project near Clarksburg took place on July 11 in Charleston.

The \$660 million project must get the permit from the State Public Service Commission as one of its many requirements prior to construction.

Among many documents presented to the PSC was a Memorandum of Agreement between the plant developers Energy Solutions and the Building Trades which means local construction workers could earn around \$70 million in wages and

benefits if the project is built.

The agreement is part of the PSC testimony and is important to the project because developers must show a positive economic benefit to the state.

A group that had intervened in the project, the Ohio Valley Jobs Alliance, has settled their issues before the commission and dropped out of the proceedings.

"I call them the Ohio Valley Job Killers," said Steve White, ACT Director.

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John Black of Energy Solutions briefs a group of trades representatives prior to the start of the PSC hearings on the Harrison County Power project held in Charleston.

French-Based Veolia in News

200,000 Views of Imported Labor Video

A video showing construction workers from Mexico and Guatemala in Doddridge County is getting a lot of views on social media.

As of early July almost 200,000 people had at least started to watch the video which shows workers at an Antero water treatment facility being built by international giant Veolia.

The reported \$275 million project will treat frack water from gas wells.

“The video is meant to draw attention to the local construction jobs that have been lost because of imported labor in the shale related industries,” said Shane Ferguson, Business Manager for Electricians Local 596 and a native of Doddridge County.

Further research on Veolia and its related companies has turned up news reports both locally and nationally.

Veolia Water Technologies built a water treatment facility for CONSOL in Marion County which was completed around May of 2013.

In January of 2015 Veolia filed suit against CONSOL claiming they were still owed almost \$4.75 million.

Also according to news reports Veolia has been sued by Michigan’s Attorney General for allegedly “botching” a consulting report done for the City of Flint.

Watch the Video on Facebook “WV State Building Trades” on Twitter @WVSBT or from our web site WVSBT.org under the “Watch ACT Commercials” tab.

“In Flint, Veolia and LAN were hired to do a job and failed miserably, basically botched it,” Michigan Attorney

General Bill Schuette said in the June 2016 news report. “They didn’t stop the water in Flint from being poisoned. They made it worse.”

According to the suit Veolia was hired in February 2015 by the city to address drinking water quality and produced at least one report and one public presentation stating the city’s water was safe to drink.

The lawsuit states the company knew its representations were false.

French-based Veolia denied the allegations.

In 2011 a catastrophic failure at a waste water treatment plant in Gatlinburg, TN owned by the local

municipality and operated by Veolia Water dumped at least 1.5 million gallons of storm and sewage water into a nearby river after a sewage holding wall collapsed. Two workers were killed.

A construction flaw was cited in an investigative OSHA report following the accident but Veolia was not cited and a prior contractor’s im-

proper casting of the concrete wall was found to be the cause.

However Veolia’s inspections after taking over the plant did not uncover the flaw.

In 2009 an explosion in West Carrollton, Ohio at a Veolia plant leveled two buildings, damaged more than twenty homes up to a mile away and injured four workers, two seriously. ■



This worker at the Antero site in Doddridge County said he was one of around 20 electricians from Guatemala working at the waste water treatment site in May.

Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Raise \$10,682 for Diabetes Research

The Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council sponsored a charitable golf outing which raised \$10,682 during their annual DAD’s Day event.

The June 16 fundraiser, held at the Sugarwood Golf Club in Wayne County, was part of the ongoing Dollars Against Diabetes (DAD’s) campaign to fund diabetes research. The effort has long been promoted by North America’s Building Trades Unions.

The event also honors former Operating Engineers Local 132 Business Manager Tommy Plymale.

IUOE Local 132 staffed both cooking stations under the direction of Dave Plymale.

More than 100 contractors, labor and owner representatives participated.

The winning team was sponsored by the Malone Funeral Home.

“It was a great event for a worthy cause,” said Mark Johnson, Business Manager of the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council.

“This would not be possible without the participation of owners, contractors and labor as well as our many hard working volunteers.” ■



Brian Buck, Dave Slone, Ron Bush and Terry Marshall display their trophy at the conclusion of a charitable golf outing which raised \$10,682 during the annual Tri-State DAD’s Day event.

Construction Standards Weakened Legislation Passed in 2017 Effective July 1

Much of the legislation passed during the regular legislative session went into effect on July 1.

That means construction wage bond laws are now much weaker.

For many years' construction contractors and mining companies who were new to the state, with less than five years activity, had to post a bond to cover the wages of their workers. Contractors who only do residential

work were excluded. This law was created to stop companies from leaving a project and not paying their workers.

The new law still requires a bond but for very few contractors.

Only companies that have not been in business for a year will be required to post a wage bond.

In addition if a contractor can show they have enough net worth to

equal the bond they are exempt.

The level of the bond is equal to four weeks of pay for the contractors' workforce.

A bill that had passed the Senate eliminated the bond altogether but the House restored the requirement with a one year rather than five year limit.

However the Senate refused to agree and insisted on adding in the language about using assets instead of a bond.

Legislation also went into effect increasing the dollar amount that some governmental agencies can award construction contracts rather than put them out for bid.

Some smaller governmental agen-

cies had a \$10,000 level, now all governmental agencies are at a \$25,000 level.

The initial bill attempted to increase the level to \$50,000 for all types of government agencies but was amended.

State Apprenticeship tax credits can now be given to contractors who pay minimum wage in effect allowing a sub-minimum wage for some employers. Contractors who employ federally registered apprentices are able to take a two dollar per hour credit against their taxes.

Efforts to require contractors to use the E-Verify system making sure workers are legal before the credits are given were rejected. ■

Road Funding

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funding to pay back a bond meaning more projects can be started now and help jump-start the economy.

In addition the legislature approved two major road funding measures.

First is to allow bonds to be sold and paid back with the federal governments annual road funding. These are called GARVEE bonds, short for Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles.

New legislation allows around \$450 million to be borrowed. No voter approval is needed because the funds pledged come from the federal allotment.

Federal funding for roads can vary but about \$425 million per year is expected and about \$50 million of that will be used to pay back the bonds.

Also in the mix is a renewal of the West Virginia Turnpike's authority to charge tolls. Without legislation that authority was set to expire next year.

Tolls are expected to increase but a new low cost \$8 per year annual fee

will be put in place so those who use the turnpike often could actually see a reduction in their cost.

An October 7 vote has been scheduled asking the public to approve up to \$1.6 billion in bonds.

No new taxes are being asked for; the funding is completely in place.

The vote is only needed to allow the state to sell bonds, to lock in low interest rates and get the projects moving faster.

Early voting will take place during the two weeks leading up to the Saturday, October 7 election day.

If approved the first bond to be sold will be \$800 million or less according to the enabling legislation.

Currently DOH lets out about \$750 million each year in contracts.

The funds go for a wide variety of projects such as paving, new bridges and bridge repairs, new roads and road repairs, widening and turn lanes, drainage improvements, access roads, guard rails, lighting, traffic control, box culverts, and more. ■

PSC Hearing

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"Our members' jobs are on the line and they have seriously delayed another project, we are happy to see them drop out."

White believes one of the reasons the group withdrew from the PSC case was because questions have

been raised about the source of their funding. To this day that information has not been disclosed.

According to ACT attorney Vince Trivelli the hearings are very likely to bring a favorable ruling because the proposal is well documented. ■

Safety Focus at MarkWest's Sherwood



Craig Landis, senior safety coordinator for MarkWest Energy Partners at their Sherwood facility in Doddridge County, talks to more than 100 craft workers about safety.

The June 16 meeting was part of an ongoing effort at the site to promote safe work practices. General contractor Graycor along with union representatives from each craft on the job were on hand to participate in the joint effort.

MarkWest, a major natural gas processor in the state, will soon complete an eighth unit at the Sherwood facility. Each unit can process 200 million cubic feet of natural gas from nearby wells. The gas is super-chilled to separate out liquids like propane, butane and ethane.

Unit nine was recently awarded to Chapman Construction and will be under construction later this year.

Apprentice from Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 625 Wins Regional Welding Contest

Ezekiel Smith, a 24 year old fifth year apprentice with UA Local 625 Charleston, recently won a regional welding competition in Cincinnati meaning he will go on to compete for international honors in August.

Smith won at the UA District Two competition in Cincinnati held in June.

The final competition will take place in Ann Arbor, Michigan where contestants from across the country as well as Canada and Australia participate.

"This is the tenth year of the international competition and the first time West Virginia has had a contestant," said Brett Matthews, Training

Coordinator from Local 625.

Also competing in Cincinnati was Sprinklerfitter Local 669 fourth year apprentice John Aldridge, from Yawkey, WV.

Six sprinklerfitter apprentices from Local 669 participated.

Other participants from West Virginia included Chris Stuckey from Local #83 Wheeling in the Plumbing category; Adam Searls from Local #521 Huntington, Pipefitter; and Alonzo Goudy Local #625 in HVAC Technician. ■



Zeke Smith, a fifth year apprentice from Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 625 Charleston, competes in the UA District Two apprenticeship contest at the stick welding portion of the competition. Smith will go on to compete in Ann Arbor Michigan later this year.



Members of the WV Laborers District Council attend a July 11 event at the capitol with Governor Jim Justice to recognize construction skills training that is connecting workers to new family-sustaining careers in the natural gas industry and other infrastructure projects.

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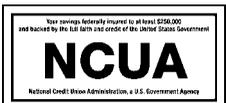
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