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

Apprenticeship Featured on Barnwood Builders

The popular and West Virginia based Barnwood Builders, a TV show on the DIY Network, recently filmed a show with a special focus on apprenticeship.

The upcoming program will feature two apprentices in the Carpenters program who help the Barnwood crew on a project at Jackson Mill's in Lewis County.

Jessica Rader, a third-year apprentice from Putnam County and Brian Alvarez a first-year apprentice from Monongalia County both helped on the project.

According to the show website "Barnwood Builders follows five fun-loving West Virginians who salvage antique log cabins and barns.

"The show celebrates the American pioneer spirit, and pays tribute to the hard work and craftsmanship that built our nation."

The new structure is part of Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp Historic District, also known as West Virginia University Jackson's Mill.

The episode was filmed on November 9-11 and Jeremy Jeffers, Director for the WV Carpenter Ap-

prenticeship & Training program, participated.

"We were contacted by WVU because the Barnwood folks had heard about our recent agreement with WVU about earning an associate's degree while completing apprentice-

ship," said Jeffers.

Show host Mark Bowe also toured the Carpenters Training facility in Bridgeport to learn more about the apprenticeship process.

"We are excited about the recognition apprenticeship in general is

getting through the show," said Jeffers. "And it's our partnership with WVU to help apprentices earn an associate's degree which helped create this opportunity."

According to Jeffers the show will air in March or April. ■



Jessica Rader (right), a third-year apprentice from Putnam County and Brian Alvarez (third from right) a first-year apprentice from Monongalia County help the crew of Barnwood Builders construct a 16' x 20' timber frame "Artisan Cabin" at Jackson's Mill. A recent agreement between the Carpenters apprenticeship program and WVU caught the attention of the show.

Legislative Session to Start this February

When a new governor is elected every four years the 60-day legislative session is postponed a month.

The state constitution says the legislative session will start on the second Wednesday of January, except every fourth year. That's when a new Governor is elected and the session starts on the second Wednesday of

February.

Therefore in 2021 the legislative session starts February 10.

How the legislative session will be handled during the pandemic has not yet been made clear.

"We have heard there may be a limited regular session followed by a Special Session, we have heard leg-

islators will be spread out into the galleries and the public will only have video access, but all this is yet to be confirmed," said Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades.

In addition to logistical problems posed by the pandemic ACT and the WV State Building Trades are pre-

paring for a difficult session because of new super majorities gained by the Republican Party in both the House of Delegates and the State Senate.

"We have faced attacks on craft licensing and contractors licensing in the last few years and expect the same," said Efaw. "In both areas we

Cont. on p. 2>>

Trades Majority in Ohio

Tri-States' Mark Johnson Elected in Ohio

Mark Johnson, Business Manager for the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council, was elected in November as State Representative for Ohio's 92nd District.

Johnson (R-Chillicothe) was endorsed by numerous Building and Construction Trades Councils in Ohio and will be the lone member of the building trades serving as a state representative in Ohio.

The 92nd District includes Ross, Pickaway and Fayette counties. Johnson won by a big margin, 67 to

33 percent and credits his victory to hard work and a positive message.

"You have to work hard to get the rural vote," said Johnson. "This is not a strong building trades market and I was fortunate to gain support from a diverse group of organizations in addition to the Trades like the NRA, the Fraternal Order of Police and Ohio Right to Life."

Since 2009 Johnson has been Business Manager of the Tri-State Building Trades Council based in Ashland, Kentucky with jurisdiction in parts

of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. He serves on the WV State Building Trades Executive Board.

According to ACT-Ohio there is still a Building Trades majority in the Ohio House and Senate.

"We count those who support the Trades rather than D's and R's," said Matt Szollosi, Executive Director of ACT-Ohio. "And because we have support on both sides of the aisle, we feel Building Trades members will get fair consideration by our state legislature." ■



Mark Johnson, Business Manager of the Tri-State Building Trades, will also serve as a State Representative in the Ohio Legislature.

Legislative Session

Continued from Page 1

expect attempts to weaken these licenses and make them less protective for the public and harder to enforce are unfortunately likely to pass."

While the Trades maintain decent relationships with members of both political parties the number of labor friendly legislators is below the 50 percent needed in each chamber to stop bad bills from passage.

What makes things so difficult is the power leadership has when there is a super majority in both the House and Senate.

Super majorities mean constitutional protections like requiring a bill to be read on three separate days can be eliminated.

Another law likely to be attacked is the WV Jobs Act.

The law requires 75 percent of the construction workers employed on a tax funded project to be from the local area.

To enforce the law a payroll document is required. The payroll has come under attack numerous times.

"Without a payroll we won't really know who is working at these projects and if the law has been followed," said Efaw.

For example, some companies have been caught offering jobs to West Virginians at very low wages only to import workers at a much higher wage.

Sharing documentation with legislators about the abuses caught with payrolls have helped keep the law intact.

But there are many legislators who would prefer imported cheap labor and the votes have been very close in the past.

Legislation eliminating any County or City construction contractor quality standards is another area that has come close to passage in prior years and is likely to resurface.

That means asking about a contractors' track record, litigation history or participation in apprenticeship training could be outlawed.

Expanding abuse of independent contractor status and making wage theft easier are another two areas expected to see action.

"We have been able to stop these bad bills in the past because of our bi-partisan efforts but we had always had a very slim margin, it doesn't look good for the next session but we

will try," said Efaw.

"We also expect a continued assault on union members in both the public and private sectors," said Efaw.

A bill making it harder for unions to collect union dues by adding layers of paperwork with criminal penalties for employers has been talked about.

Similar legislation was introduced in recent years and lacked enough support for passage, but the super majorities and leadership make-up mean the bill will be back. ■



Having building trades members come to the capitol, like this group from Plumbers & Steamfitters Union Local 565, Parkersburg in 2018, is critical to getting the attention of legislators. What will be possible during the 2021 Legislative session with current covid-19 restrictions is not known. There are three labor friendly Delegates in this picture, only Dave Pethtel (D-Wetzel) will be coming back for the 2021 session.

Public Safety at Risk

All Occupational Licenses Under Attack

Occupational licenses of all types have been increasingly under political attack in West Virginia and elsewhere.

This includes licensing important to the Trades such as contractor licensing, electricians, plumbers, HVAC and more.

But it also includes a wide range of occupational licensing from chiropractors to engineers to real estate agents.

The fundamental question is – are these licenses needed and helpful to the public or are they simply barriers to employment?

One right leaning group based in Charleston called the Cardinal Institute of West Virginia put it this way “should a private citizen be forced to obtain the government’s consent before he is allowed to work?”

But according to ACT Director Steve White posing the question as a restriction of personal freedom ignores the reality of public safety.

“Our state law requires any new license to go through an application process and show there is a need for the license which is directly related to public safety,” said White.

“Unbridled personal freedom under certain circumstances puts others at risk,” said White.

For example, several years ago West Virginia passed a crane operator certification law because there were a series of fatalities in the construction industry where the lack of crane operator proficiency could not be ruled out.

As a result, safety improved and fatalities decreased.

“Promoting workplace safety may

be seen as an unfair restriction of personal freedom to some but I can guarantee you the families of those killed would not agree,” said White.

White points to Chapter 30 of the West Virginia Code which states “The Legislature finds that regulation should be imposed on an occupation or profession only when necessary for the protection of public health and safety.”

The law lays out a series of questions about the need, support and available training for any proposed new license or license expansion.

The application is then reviewed by a legislative agency called The Performance Evaluation and Research Division (PERD) which has been in operation since 1994.

PERD will then present a recommendation to the legislature on its findings.

While proposing a license takes much work and documentation

eliminating or weakening one apparently takes little effort.

“Saying we are going to employ lots of people by eliminating an electrician license for example implies

there are no unemployed electricians which I wish was true but is not,” said White.

In the 2020 legislative session a series of bills to weaken the electrician and plumbers license almost passed. And the Sprinklerfitters license did see a reduction in hours it takes to be fully qualified.

In 2018 and 2019 there were a number of bills which also proposed making all licenses, from chiropractors, to engineers, to optometrist optional.

While they failed to get traction, they are likely to be brought before the legislature again.

“Unfortunately, we expect more bills to put the public and workers at risk this upcoming session,” said White. ■

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Steve White

*Director
Affiliated Construction Trades*

WV Laborers Want New Apprentices

The West Virginia Construction Craft Laborers’ Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee is accepting applications year round.

Those interested can apply at any WorkForce WV Office between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Friday (call first).

Applicants must be at least 18 years old; have a high school diploma (or equivalent) or pass a test administered by WorkForce; have a valid driver’s license; and be physically able to perform the work of the trade.

A substance abuse test, including random tests, will be required at some point in the process.

Documents such as a copy of a birth certificate, a valid driver’s license, transcripts of grades and proof of a high school degree will be requested but at a later date.

The apprenticeship program consists of hands-on classroom training and paid on-the-job training.

The WV Laborers’ Training Center in Mineral Wells provides 400 hours of classroom and hands-on training free of charge including meals and lodging.

Apprentices will also learn on the job in their home areas while earning a paycheck, for a total of 4000 hours, approximately two years.

Upon completion of the program apprentices will earn Journeyman status and receive a certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor.

The areas of training provide a wide variety of skills to ensure highly productive workers will have successful careers.

Topics include pipelaying, mason tending, instrument reading, environmental remediation and more.

For more information visit their web site www.wvcl.org or to receive a free brochure send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: West Virginia Laborers’ Training Center, P.O. Box 6, Mineral Wells, WV 26150. ■

Free Class - Start Your Own Business

Do you want to start your own business? Advantage Valley is sponsoring a free eight-week online class, two hours once per week in the evening, for the construction industry.

To learn more, sign up for the free one-hour webinar that will go over the course agenda.

Just search for ‘fasterwv’ to find the sign-up page at Advantage Valley’s website advantagevalley.com

The free webinar is an overview and will also explain how to sign up for the full free eight-week online class.

Advantage Valley is a nonprofit organization serving Boone, Braxton, Cabell, Clay, Kanawha, Lincoln, Putnam and Wayne Counties.

If you are not from one of those counties and have an interest in this type of class let us know at wvbuildingtrades@wvsbt.org

Parker, Efaw Reelected

WV State Building Trades Holds a Virtual Constitutional Convention and Election

The West Virginia State Building Trades held a virtual Constitutional Convention on November 18.

Chuck Parker of Operating Engineers Local 132 was reelected as President, Dave Efaw of IBEW Local 466 was reelected as Secretary-Treasurer.

The term is four years.

The structure of the building trades provides for an unpaid President and a full time Secretary-Treasurer. In addition, there is one Vice-President per craft plus an alternate, selected by the craft. A chartered

craft within an International Union may have a seat with voice.

Furthermore, the full time representative or president of each local building trades council is also a Vice-

Also during the convention the organizational bylaws were reviewed and updated.

“We clarified some credential and voting issues to make our bylaws



Chuck Parker is sworn in for a four-year term as President of the WV State Building Trades Council during the groups virtual Constitutional Convention held in November. Dave Efaw was reelected as Secretary-Treasurer.

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President.

The Executive Board of the WV State Building Trades meets monthly and is made up of 13 craft Vice-Presidents and five local Building Trades Vice-Presidents.

consistent with modern practices,” said Parker.

All bylaws must be reviewed and approved or modified by North America’s Building Trades Union (NABTU) in Washington, DC. ■

\$131 Million New Wellsburg Bridge Project

Operating Engineers Local 132 Business Agent Eran Molz points to the arch assembly for the \$131 million Wellsburg Bridge project in Brooke County. The arch is 150 feet tall, 830 feet long and weighs 4,000 tons.

The arch has been built along the shoreline of the Ohio River and will be barged and lifted 80 feet by jacks, not cranes, this February. River traffic will be shut down for 72 hours.

Flatiron Constructors from Colorado is the General Contractor, Triton Construction, Richard Goettle Inc., and Brayman Construction have also worked on the approaches to the project. ■

