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

National Apprenticeship Week was November 8-14

The week of November 8 – 14 was National Apprenticeship Week (NAW).

Established by the U.S. Department of Labor, NAW is a nationwide celebration that brings together business leaders, career seekers, labor, educational institutions and other critical partners to demonstrate their support for apprenticeship.

NAW also provides apprenticeship sponsors with the opportunity to showcase their programs, facilities, and apprentices in their community.

The week-long celebration highlights the benefits of apprenticeship in preparing a highly skilled workforce to meet the needs of employers across diverse industries.

In West Virginia there were a variety of efforts made to promote apprenticeship in the trades.

In the Parkersburg area some crafts tried a new Virtual Job Fair initiative sponsored by the local Region 4 WorkForce Investment Board.

Those interested in apprenticeship could go to a website with information on each of the participating crafts: Electrician, Ironworker, Carpenter, and Laborer.

A person can learn about the pro-

gram, post a question and upload a resume.

“With the pandemic its hard to have face to face events so we had some live online events,” said Ross McPherson, Administrator for the Laborers Program.

McPherson said many crafts, like his, were also using social media. “We are running interviews of apprentices, showing our recent graduates, and showing videos sent by our international on our Facebook page.”

In the Charleston area a pre-ap-

prenticeship program called Capitol YouthBuild held an event at a residential site they are working on.

Capitol YouthBuild helps young people learn about career options by trying their hand at basic construction tasks. ■



Shannon Robinson (left) of Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF) talks to a group of pre-apprentices and community leaders about National Apprenticeship Week and the role HRDF's Capitol YouthBuild plays as a pre-apprenticeship program.

The event took place on Monday, November 9 at a Dunbar renovation project that will become a Women's Substance Abuse Disorder Treatment Facility.

Reverend James Patterson (second from left) leads the Partnership of African American Churches, the group who is developing and will operate the facility. “We value the partnership [with YouthBuild] which helps young people find a career and will help our community deal with pressing needs,” said Patterson. “We need more programs like this.”

Labor Smashed in 2020 General Election

The 2020 General Election was another hard hit to Labor backed candidates.

With 9 defeated labor backed candidates in the Senate there will be a huge majority of Senators who oppose important legislation like the

West Virginia Jobs Act and licensing.

The same is true in the House of Delegates. The numbers there are even worse.

According to Dave Efaw, Secretary Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades the prospects for future

legislative sessions look dim.

“We are not talking about D's and R's, we are talking about those who support workers and those who don't,” said Efaw.

“When we count our friends in both the Republican and Democratic

party it looks like we will be unable to defeat any bad bill, and you can forget about passing anything of benefit to working families.”

Efaw recalled several close votes to stop the weakening or elimination

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2016 Flood Replacements

Kanawha School Construction Bids Erratic, Industry Collapses for General Contractors

Long awaited school replacement projects from the 2016 floods in Kanawha County were finally bid.

The results were mixed for local workers, but the lack of bids and huge differences in bid numbers signal the collapse of the local school industry according to some.

Replacements for both the Hoover High and Clendenin Elementary Schools were awarded to nonunion General Contractors with most subcontractors being local union contractors.

Both projects were 90 percent funded by Federal FEMA funds. However, Davis-Bacon wage rates, the federal prevailing wage law, does not apply to the FEMA funds. And the WV Jobs Act did not apply either because of the federal funds.

There were only two bidders for each of the major school contracts and according to Paul Breedlove, Business Manager of the Charleston Building Trades. According to Breedlove only having two bids for these major projects is alarming and could

signal the collapse of the local school building industry.

Hoover was awarded to Swope Construction from Bluefield at \$40,523,000.

Paramount Construction from St. Albans bid \$54,935,000.

Clendenin Elementary was awarded to Ohio based Wolf Creek Construction at \$30,454,046. Hayslett Construction Company from Hurricane was the only other bidder at \$39,469,000.

“The repeal of prevailing wage has destroyed lo-

cal contractors to the point they are not even able to bid projects,” said Breedlove. “We should have had three or four bidders for each project from the local area and there was

only one, the out of town nonunion general contractors are getting all the work.”

Labor costs on a school project are estimated to be around 25 percent. And each of the projects had a significant amount of union subcontractors so the 30 percent price difference cannot be explained by wage differences.

Some theorize the huge bid ranges are the result of poorly detailed designs, others say with only two bids you really can't explain the results.

Site preparation for the Hoover location had been bid earlier and saw more bidders but a big range of bids.

Both the low and high bidders

were nonunion with low bid Doss Enterprises at \$19,700,000 and the high bid of S & E Clearing & Hydro Seeding LLC at \$30,815,441. Trumbull, the only union bidder, came in second at \$26,319,443.

“We will be watching for imported labor, project delays, change orders, and quality issues, similar to what we have seen since the prevailing wage law was repealed,” said Breedlove.

“We know a portion of both projects will be built with local union labor, but there will be a significant part that won't be local and will likely be low wage imported labor.”

Breedlove also questions why there were only two bidders at a time when commercial contractors are looking for work.

“The repeal of prevailing wage is crushing local contractors. We are losing qualified local bidders as a result,” said Breedlove. “Add to that apparent problems with the prints and having to deal with FEMA and we get mixed results that are a big disappointment.” ■

“The repeal of prevailing wage has destroyed local contractors to the point they are not even able to bid projects”

Paul Breedlove

*Business Manager
Charleston Building Trades*

Building Trades Councils Win Safety Awards

The 20th annual Zero Injury Safety Awards recognized each of the five Building Trades Councils in West Virginia.

Established in 2000 by the National Maintenance Agreements Policy Committee, Inc. (NMAPC), the Zero Injury Safety Awards is an annual recognition program celebrating union contractors, labor organizations and owner-clients who work together to create injury-free job sites.

The Zero Injury Safety Award was created to recognize world-class safety and the importance of the role owners, contractors and labor share. 2020 awards for zero-injury projects in West Virginia, ranked by hours worked without an injury, are as follows:

- Enerfab Power & Industrial, Inc., the Upper Ohio Valley Building Trades Council and American Electric Power for 1,390,868 work hours at the Mitchell Power Plant, Moundsville, WV.
- Enerfab, the Charleston Building Trades and AEP for 637,561 work hours at the John Amos Power Plant, Saint Albans, WV.
- StructSure Scaffold Solutions, LLC, Charleston Building Trades and AEP for 533,343 work hours at John Amos, Saint Albans, WV.
- Minnotte Contracting Corporation, North Central West Virginia Building Trades and
- FirstEnergy Corporation for 525,251 work hours at the Harrison Power Station, Haywood, WV.
- Chapman Corporation, North Central WV Building Trades and FirstEnergy for 406,855 work hours at Harrison Power, Haywood, WV.
- Day & Zimmermann NPS, Inc., Tri-State Building Trades and AEP for 382,195 work hours at the Mountaineer Power Plant, New Haven, WV.
- Chapman Corporation, Upper Ohio Valley Building Trades and Covestro, LLC for 249,483 work hours at the New Martinsville Plant, New Martinsville, WV.
- Burnham Industrial Contractors, North Central WV Building Trades and FirstEnergy for 237,499 work hours at Fort Martin Power Station, Madsville, WV.

In addition, Councils won awards at project locations in bordering states and numerous Certificates of Merit for projects under 200,000 hours.

The NMAPC negotiates and administers the National Maintenance Agreements, a series of collective bargaining agreements utilized by more than 2,000 industrial contractors who employ members of fourteen building trades international unions. ■

November 2020 General Election Results

<u>1st Congressional District</u>	14th	David Childers (D) ✓	21st	Mark Dean (R) ✓		Cody Thompson (D) ✓
David McKinley (R) ✓	16th	Pete Dougherty (D)	22nd	Joe Jeffries (R) ✓	44th	Robin Cutlip (D)
<u>Governor</u>	17th	Andrew Robinson (D)		Zack Maynard (R) ✓	46th	Bob Stultz (D)
Ben Salango (D)			23rd	Rodney Miller (D)	47th	Ed Larry (D)
<u>State Treasurer</u>		House of Delegates	24th	Susan Perry (D)	48th	Ryan Deems (D)
John Perdue (D)	1st	Pat McGeehan (R) ✓		Timothy Tomblin (D)		Robert Garcia (D)
<u>Attorney General</u>	2nd	Jack Wood (D)	25th	Tony Paynter (R) ✓		Richard Jaquinta (D)
Sam Peterson (D)	3rd	Phillip Diserio (D) ✓	26th	Ed Evans (D) ✓		Josh Maxwell (D)
<u>Secretary of State</u>	3rd	Shawn Fluharty (D) ✓	27th	Fina Russell (D)	49th	Mike Mannypenny (D)
Natalie Tennant (D)	4th	Erikka Storch (R) ✓	28th	Ryne Nahodi (D)	50th	Michael Angelucci (D)
<u>State Auditor</u>	4th	Christian Turak (D)	30th	Mick Bates (D) ✓		Joey Garcia (D) ✓
Mary Ann Clayton (D)	5th	Lisa Zukoff (D) ✓	31st	Chris Toney (R) ✓		No Action between Ron
<u>Agriculture Commissioner</u>	5th	Dave Pethel (D) ✓	32nd	Mark Hurt (D)		Straight (D), Guy Ward (R) ✓
Bob Beach (D)	8th	Andrew Alvarez (D)		Margaret Staggers (D)	51st	Barbara Fleischauer (D) ✓
	10th	Vernon Criss (R) ✓	34th	Brent Boggs (D) ✓		Evan Hansen (D) ✓
		Trish Pritchard (D)	35th	Kathy Ferguson (D)		Rodney Pyles (D)
		Luke Winters (D)		Doug Skaff Jr. (D) ✓		Danielle Walker (D) ✓
State Senate	11th	Mark Pauley (D)		Rusty Williams (D)		John Williams (D) ✓
1st Randy Swartzmiller (D)	13th	Scott Brewer (D)		Kayla Young (D) ✓	52nd	Junior "JR" Wolfe (D)
2nd Josh Gary (D)	14th	Chris Yeager (D)	36th	Jim Barach (D) ✓	53rd	Cory Chase (D)
3rd Robin Wilson (D)	15th	Fess Jackson (D)		Amanda Estep-Burton (D)	55th	Jarod Shockey (D)
4th No Action	16th	Mark Bates (R)		Larry Rowe (D) ✓	58th	George Miller (R) ✓
5th Bob Plymale (D) ✓		Sean Hornbuckle (D) ✓	37th	Mike Pushkin (D) ✓	60th	Brad Nolt (D)
7th No Action	17th	Chad Lovejoy (D) ✓	38th	Nikki Ardman (D)	61st	Jason Barrett (D) ✓
8th Glenn Jeffries (D) ✓		Matthew Rohrbach (R) ✓	39th	No Action	62nd	Debi Carroll (D)
9th David 'Bugs' Stover (R) ✓	18th	No Action	41st	Duane Bragg (D)	63rd	Daniel Bennett (D)
10th Bill Laird (D)	19th	Ric Griffith (D) ✓	42nd	Cindy Lavender-Bowe (D)	65th	Sammi Brown (D)
11th Denise Campbell (D)		David Thompson (D)		Jeff Campbell (D)	66th	Storme Frame (D)
12th Doug Facemire (D)	20th	Nathan Brown (D) ✓	43rd	Bill Hartman (D)	67th	John Doyle (D) ✓
13th Mike Caputo (D) ✓						

2020 Election

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of the West Virginia Jobs Act in prior sessions.

"Destroying the Jobs Act is another step to ruining the construction industry," said Efaw. "It is one of our best defenses against imported illegal labor and low wage con artists and we expect it to be an early target of this new super majority."

Licensing is again expected to be a hot topic at the legislature. Most efforts at prior legislative sessions where aimed at either eliminating licensing or removing competency requirements to show ability at an occupation.

"We saw many bills to eliminate or weaken all sorts of licenses last session. The Sprinklerfitters fought off a total gutting but still saw their license weakened," said Efaw.

The Plumbers and Electricians were able to stop numerous attempts

to weaken their licenses but had to fight up until the very last night of the session.

"We were down to one last vote on some of these bad bills and somehow managed to stop them," said Efaw.

In addition to the bad legislation expected on the WV Jobs Act and licensing there are several other issues that will negatively affect working families which are expected to pass.

"Most of the tax cuts you hear about are really tax shifts," said ACT's Steve White. "Business taxes will be cut, like the Business Inventory tax, but then we expect a tax increase like property tax or sales tax will be imposed on working families to make up the difference."

Similarly, White mentions a new Intermediate Court which has been a priority for the State Chamber of Commerce. "We expect they will im-

pose the Intermediate Court which will cost millions and make it harder

for the common person to get legal relief," said White. ■



Labor volunteers meet in mid-October to go door-to-door for Senator Glenn Jeffries (D-Putnam) who won his reelection to the State Senate's 8th District. Jeffries is a member of the Carpenters Union and owner of Cornerstone Interiors, a union interior systems company.

\$350 Million Methanol Plant Proposed for Pleasants County

A \$350 million Methanol plant has been proposed for Pleasants County.

West Virginia Methanol is based in Cincinnati, Ohio and according to Secretary of State corporate records is comprised of people connected to a well-established Ohio company called AluChem, Inc.

News reports say West Virginia Methanol is currently working on permitting and design for the site. They plan to make a final investment decision in the first half of 2021 with operations expected to commence as early as mid-2023.

The plant will produce 900 metric tons per day of high-quality methanol using 35,000 million BTU of natural gas, approximately 35 million cubic feet of gas, per day.

An engineering company from Denmark called Haldor Topsoe, together with a company called Modular Plant Solutions from Texas, will oversee construction of the project.

Representatives from the Trades have reached out to West Virginia Methanol and had an initial conversation but no commitment to use local workers to build the project has been reached.

“Often companies think securing construction manpower comes last in the development process,” said Buddy Malone, Business Manager for the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades. “We are trying to move up the ladder a bit and would be interested in a partnership to not only build the project but help get it through the development phases and even consider financing.”

West Virginia Methanol is a very different project than U.S. Methanol,

a project that has been under construction for more than three years at Institute in Kanawha County.

“These are totally different people and a different business plan,” said Malone.

U.S. Methanol has a business model to buy facilities in various parts of the world, disassemble them, ship them to the U.S. and reassemble them.

The company’s website lists KKCG from the Czech Republic as their major investor. According to the site KKCG was founded by Czech businessman Karel Komárek in 1995.

The Institute project, called Liberty 1, is a plant from Brazil that was

disassembled and shipped to WV. The website mentions a second plant that would come from Slovakia.

Liberty 1 was supposed to be complete mid-2018 but still has much work to do. They have hired many contractors, but the largest contracts have gone to out-of-state nonunion companies.

The anti-union Billfinger-Westcon was hired as the GC back in 2017 but is no longer at the site.

The piping and electrical contractors, APTIM and MMR, are major nonunion companies based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The project has seen several lawsuits including one from a financial advisory group filed against U.S. Methanol claiming fraud in late 2018. The case was settled earlier this year.

In early 2019 U.S. Methanol filed a complaint in Kanawha Circuit Court against CDI Corp. claiming CDI was responsible for botched concrete work at the site.

A federal judge dismissed a ma-

majority of the suit according to an October 2019 news report.

In September, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 625 led a protest about the lack of local hiring at the project.

“They have bid the piping three times at this project,” said Craig Mo-

steller, Business Representative for Local 625. “We had contractors bid who would hire locally, and they were told their price was good, but the owner apparently insists it be done nonunion so local workers have mostly been shut out.” ■

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*Business Manager
Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades*

Darwin Snyder Event



Members and family of the North Central WV Building Trades head out to the shooting range during the Darwin L. Snyder Memorial Shoot, held Sunday, November 1 at Stonewall Sporting Clay. Snyder was former Business Manager of IBEW Local 596, Clarksburg and President of the North Central WV Building Trades Council. According to Natalie Stone, Snyder’s daughter and North Central WV Building Trades Council’s Executive Secretary, the day of remembrance is also a time for friends and families to get together and over 50 trades workers and family members attended.