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

Brooke Signing Ceremony Showcases Apprenticeship

A signing ceremony was held on May 14 at Brooke High School where

“We wanted to recognize the top students who will be entering the Carpenters apprenticeship program just like how top athletes get recognition for scholarships,”

Jody Bonfini

*Representative
Eastern Atlantic States Regional
Council of Carpenters*

four new apprentices entered the Carpenters program.

“We wanted to recognize the top students who will be entering the

Carpenters apprenticeship program just like how top athletes get recognition for scholarships,” said Jody Bonfini, a representative of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters.

On hand were teachers, parents,

and Dr. Samuel White with the WVU Institute for Labor Studies.

WVU and the Carpenters entered into an agreement last year which will mean those who complete apprenticeship also will get an associates degree in applied science from

the university.

Other crafts are looking to do the same.

“Having the degree program with WVU helps recruit top candidates, especially when talking to some parents,” said Bonfini. ■



(Front row, from left) Brad Anderson, Tyler Apesos, Andrew Stewart, and Alexis Lucas were recognized for being accepted into the Carpenters apprenticeship program at a May 14 event at Brooke High School. (Back row, from left) Sam White, from WVU; Jody Bonfini and Nate Beha from the Carpenters; and Brooke County instructor Jack Minger are also pictured.

Fate of Mitchell Power Plant Uncertain

The fate of Mitchell Power apparently is in the hands of the state Public Service Commission (PSC) and ACT is asking them to consider construction jobs in their deliberations.

To meet new federal regulations American Electric Power put two rate increase plans before the PSC. The regulations change how coal ash

is disposed of and establish new limits for ash and mercury in wastewater.

Both plans would fully update the John Amos and Mountaineer plants, with one version including Mitchell. However the second option would exclude Mitchell from the wastewater upgrades meaning it could not

operate beyond 2028.

AEP asked the PSC to decide which option is best for the state.

ACT and the WV State Building Trades filed a report showing the craft hours worked at all three locations for the years 2015 to 2020 to show more than electric rates should be considered in the debate.

“At Mitchell our trades members worked a total of 1,533,496 hours during the six-year period,” said Chuck Parker, President of the WV State Building Trades and Business Manager for Operating Engineers Local 132.

“At John Amos members worked

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Parkersburg City Council Approves Deal for \$50 Million Memorial Bridge Project

On May 25th, Parkersburg City Council approved an ordinance to sell the Parkersburg Memorial Bridge to a private company, paving the way for hundreds of local union jobs to restore and renovate the bridge.

Because of the high cost of replacing or repairing the Memorial Bridge, the city of Parkersburg

“This project is much needed, as it will create many good jobs...”

Buddy Malone

*Business Manager
Parkersburg-Marietta Building and
Construction Trades Council*

looked for private sector companies to take on the much-needed repairs.

United Bridge Partners (UBP) submitted the winning proposal, pledging to carry out a \$50 million rehabilitation project.

UBP has partnered with Kokosing Construction Company on the initiative, which will take 21 months

to complete and create an estimated 285 jobs.

“This project is much needed, as it will create many good jobs and address a public safety issue for everyone in the Parkersburg area,” said Buddy Malone, Business Manager for the Parkersburg-Marietta Building and Construction Trades Council.

Malone was on hand at the City

Council meeting and along with Rob Richards, a representative of the Laborers District Council, made comments to the Council in support of the deal.

Representatives from UBP say that design planning and pre-construction work will begin immediately, and the public can expect work to commence in the spring of 2022. ■

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 through WorkForce WV two ways. By making an appointment for an in-person visit to any WorkForce office by going online at <https://apps.wv.gov/Appt/Workforce/> or by asking for an application at workforce-jobs@wv.gov.

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 Cen-

ter 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, for 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.

The recruitment, selection, employment and training of apprentices shall be without discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin or sex.

For more information visit their web site www.wvccl.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. ■



Representatives from United Bridge Partners Ryan Dolan, VP of Business Development (center) and Doug Witt, CEO (center right) explain to local craft representatives the next steps in the timeline for renovation of the Memorial Bridge project, after its approval at Parkersburg City Hall.

Fate of Mitchell Plant

Continued from Page 1

2,257,993 hours and at Mountain-er 974,115 so in total we worked 4,785,544 hours at these three locations in six years. That’s a lot of paychecks for local workers.”

Parker shares concerns about lost mining and plant operations jobs but points to the ACT filing to show the potential negative economic impact to the community. If the plant is shut down, construction jobs will be lost as well.

“The PSC needs to balance rate increases with the losses to our communities in jobs and tax revenues, so it is not simply a question of rates,”

said Parker.

The evidentiary hearing before the PSC was held in early June and a decision is expected later this summer.

Regulatory approval for any work at Mitchell will also have to come from Kentucky because Mitchell is 50 percent owned by Kentucky Power. And Kentucky Power is for sale making the future of Mitchell even more uncertain.

Mitchell, located in Marshall County, is a 1,560-megawatt, coal-fueled power plant which began operating in 1971. ■

New Laws to Weaken, Eliminate Construction Licensing Take Effect in June

Earlier this year legislative leaders took aim at licensing laws and lowered the experience necessary to hold many craft licenses; and, in some cases, eliminated them entirely.

HB 2006 goes into effect on June 15 and changes the requirements for who must have a contractor license.

Previously, anyone carrying out projects above \$2,500 were required to hold the license.

Now, contractors are exempt from holding a license for residential projects below \$5,000 and commercial projects below \$25,000.

In addition, the bill eliminates the requirement for all painting and landscape contractors to hold a license.

“Most contractor complaints come from small dollar residential

work. This will hurt homeowners who will be taken advantage of because of the weaker law,” said Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades.

In addition Efaw points out eliminating a contractor license means more under-the-table and illegal work goes unnoticed.

HB 2008 went into effect on June 16 and affects electricians, HVAC technicians, plumbers, sprinkler fitters, and crane operators.

“We are now back to where we were 20 years ago, having to rely on weak OSHA laws and weaker enforcement,” said Chuck Parker, Business Manager for Operating Engineers Local 132.

“It’s only a matter of time before someone gets hurt or killed.”

For electricians, individuals can take the Journeyman and Master’s license test after one and two years’ experience, respectively.

The Electrician Apprentice license was eliminated entirely and anyone assisting an electrician needs no license at all.

Finally, the bill requires WV to grant a license to anyone who has a license from another state, regardless of any differences in licensing requirements.

For HVAC technicians, only 2,000 hours of experience are needed to undertake commercial work, and no experience is needed for residential work.

Instead, individuals must only pass an exam to be qualified for residential work.

In addition, the fire damper installation license was eliminated entirely.

For plumbers, hands-on experience is no longer required to obtain a Journeyman license.

Rather, an individual must only pass an exam with a score of 70% or better to obtain a Journeyman license, and he or she must only hold that license for one year to obtain a Master’s license.

For a sprinkler fitters license, individuals must only pass an exam or show that they have completed 2,000 of hands-on experience without an exam.

For more info on licensing log on to LicensesWorkWV.com and sign the petition to oppose any further reductions to licensing standards. ■

Independent Contractor Bill Now Law

This month a law to make it easier for employers to call workers independent contractors went into effect.

SB 272, passed by the Legislature during the 2021 legislative session, will undo years of state law defining who is an employee by looking at what they do and what control they have.

Now employers can simply make workers sign employment contracts classifying them as independent contractors.

That means workers are responsible to pay their own taxes.

It also means they give up unemployment, wage payment protections, discrimination protections, and state workers compensation coverage.

Across the country more evidence is being found showing the practice of misclassifying workers as independent contractors or just paying cash not only hurts workers but also costs taxpayers.

A study released this month from the University of California-Berkeley

entitled “The Public Cost of Low-Wage Jobs in California’s Construction Industry” examined the impacts from construction misclassification.

They found almost half of families of construction workers in California are enrolled in a safety net program at an annual cost of over \$3 billion.

Misclassification and cash payments are rampant in the residential construction sector leading to low wages, few benefits and poor safety conditions.

According to the report when employers misclassify their workers or pay them under the table, they are defunding government programs, including workers’ compensation, Social Security, and Medicare. Misclassification costs state and federal coffers at least \$3,000 annually for every worker that is misclassified.

“Low wage strategies not only hurt workers and their families, they cost taxpayers,” said Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades. ■

Hotlines in place to Help Members



Painters DC 53 representative Jerry Scarbro (standing) talks to members of the Charleston Building Trades Council at a May meeting about new hotlines to help members with suicide prevention and substance use disorders.

According to Scarbro the toll-free numbers are available to all.

For suicide prevention the number is 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

For substance use disorders the number is 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

“We tend to think these problems are not ours to deal with, but if we can help someone we should and these hotlines give us that tool,” said Scarbro.

For more information go to IUPATHelpinghand.com

Kanawha Valley Trades and Contractors Raise \$8,500 for HospiceCare

The 27th annual Kanawha Valley Construction Labor-Management Golf Scramble raised \$8,500 for HospiceCare, a non-profit organization that provides end of life services to patients in need.

“We believe it’s important to give back, especially to such a great cause,” said Paul Breedlove, Business Manager of the Charleston Building and Construction Trades Council.

“By working together as labor and management, we double our efforts to support this charity and build a stronger relationship together in the process.”

Paul Breedlove

*Business Manager
Charleston Building and
Construction Trades Council*

This year’s event is part of a long-standing partnership between the Kanawha Valley Builders Association

and the Charleston Building Trades.

Representatives from HospiceC-

are estimate nearly \$90 thousand has been raised since 2002 to support their work through these annual events.

HospiceCare provides end of life care for patients in 16 counties of West Virginia with services includ-

ing 24/7 skilled nurses, pain management, and Certified Nursing Assistants that provide a full spectrum of personal care assistance for patients.

For more about HospiceCare visit their website at www.HospiceCare-WV.org. ■

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Paul Breedlove (left), Business Manager of the Charleston Building Trades, and Luther Lasure (right), Executive Director of the Kanawha Valley Builders Association present an \$8,500 contribution to Chris Rawlings, CEO of HospiceCare at their Charleston office.



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177 29th Street, Wheeling, WV (304) 232-0181

Legislature Moves \$150 Million to Road Maintenance Projects in Special Session

The WV legislature convened for its first special session of 2021 on June 7 and allocated state money for road maintenance projects.

The Legislature directed \$150 million from the state’s 2021 budget surplus to be spent on road construction and maintenance primarily on

secondary roads.

According to news reports the money would benefit all 55 counties, funding 750 miles of road pavement as well as repair projects on bridges and slips across the state.

Transportation Secretary Byrd White said the funds will not be for

filling potholes.

According to the DOH, 83% of West Virginia’s reported potholes were fixed prior to Memorial Day weekend, but any paving efforts from these new funds could include resurfacing roads with previously patched potholes.

The allocation of the road funds from the budget surplus were created in part because of federal funds recently sent to the state. The funds are expected to come at the end of the state’s fiscal year on June 30th, and projects could begin as early as next month. ■