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The ACT Foundation is a division of The West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council. Steve Burton, President; Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer; Steve White, Director.

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INSIDE

Unity Housing	Pg. 2
Electricians	Pg. 2
Local 80 Toys	Pg. 3
Carpenters Join	Pg. 3
Trades Help	Pg. 4
Bicycles	Pg. 4

WEST VIRGINIA'S 2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BEGINS

January 10 marked the beginning of the 60 day legislative session for 2008.

Leading the agenda for the Affiliated Construction Trades will be passage of a bill to require contractors bidding public projects to prove their workers have health insurance.

The bill has failed in the last two sessions because of opposition from the Contractors Association of West Virginia, representing a mixture of union and nonunion contractors.

H.B. 2438 would have made sure funds already included in state contracts for health benefits actually go to health care.

State law requires community wages and benefits be paid on public projects.

"Rising health costs hurt us all," said Scott Brewer, Service Representative for Carpenters Local 1207.

"We need to make sure

money meant for health care goes to health care."

Also on the Trades agenda will be a new bill to require qualified drug testing programs on public works projects.

"The state needs to recognize

that drug use on the job is a serious problem," said Delegate Dan Poling, (D-Wood). Poling is also a representative for Painters District Council 53.

"On tax funded projects we can, and should, say we want a

drug free work force."

The bill, still in the drafting stage, will be similar to laws already passed in Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New York and Ohio.

Contractors bidding on pub-

Continued on p. 3



ACT'S STEVE WHITE (left) along with State Building Trades Secretary-Treasurer Roy Smith (right) talk with House Majority Leader Joe DeLong (D-Hancock) about legislation of interest to the Trades. DeLong is a candidate for Secretary of State and has the endorsement of the WV AFL-CIO.

BEECH RIDGE ENERGY CASE HEARD BY WV SUPREME COURT

Whether or not a permit was properly issued to allow the construction of 124 windmills in Greenbrier County was the subject of an argument before the West Virginia Supreme Court.

Opponents and supporters presented their case on January 9 and centered on actions taken, or not taken, by the WV Public Service Commission (PSC).

Those opposed to the Beech Ridge Energy LLC project ar-

gued the PSC did not do a thorough job in reviewing the \$300 million project. They claimed the PSC should have hired more experts and required additional information for their evaluation.

But the PSC, along with the project developer Invenergy, and the Affiliated Construction Trades argued just the opposite.

"We believe the PSC did a thorough and complete job allowing everyone who had an interest a chance to participate," said ACT Lawyer Vince Trivelli.

Developers started work on the project in 2005 and reached an agreement with the Charles-

ton Building Trades to use all local union construction workers in early 2006.

After numerous public hearings and a week long proceeding before the PSC the project was approved in August of 2006. But opponents appealed and the Court agreed to hear the case in April of last year.

In addition, changes to the state tax code were made to increase the taxes paid by wind developers.

"The courts have been used to delay this project, and the costs have gone up. But the developer has hung in there and we

are committed to supporting them," said Wayne Rebich, ACT Representative. "This is a great project and I hope the court does the right thing."

During the PSC proceedings ACT hired an economist to evaluate the project and show how the 215 anticipated construction jobs would also fuel the local economy.

The project will generate 186 megawatts of electricity and include 13.5 miles of transmission lines. The majority of the project will be on land owned by the forest product company MeadWestvaco.

WV AFL-CIO UNITY HOUSING PROGRAM

Many don't know it, but the West Virginia AFL-CIO owns and operates 19 housing complexes across the state making up more than 800 apartment units.

A division of the West Virginia AFL-CIO – Human Resource Development and Employment – acquires government grants and other funding to operate over 800 units of what it's director terms as “decent, safe and affordable housing” for people in need.

Don Savage, Director of Housing for HRDE, said the Unity Housing Program has helped many retired union members find exactly the kind of housing they need in their senior years.

“We provide housing for anyone who qualifies for the service,” said Savage.

“But I've noticed that our income-based rents often are a good match for the union retirees,” said Savage in a phone interview from his Morgantown office.

Rents for the federally-approved one and two bedroom apartments equal thirty percent

of the tenants income with some utilities included.

All housing is secure and provides resident staff and other professionals to assist tenants in emergencies or special circumstances.

“In a time when utilities and rents are climbing ever higher, having an option such as the one we provide is more and more important,” noted Savage.

HRDE has developed apartment complexes throughout the state.

Sometimes the developments are new buildings. While in other areas, existing structures are adapted for the housing program.

Some units are developed to serve a specific tenant such as elderly, disabled or low income populations.

One of the guiding hands for HRDE is board member Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades.

Smith serves with other Building Trades leaders Ronnie Burdette for the Operating Engineers, Dan Poling of the Painters and Gary Tillis of the Laborers, as well as Kenny Perdue, President of the WV AFL-CIO and a former representative of the Sheet Metal Workers.

Smith points with pride to each property's complete handicapped accessibility that meets special needs of each tenant, senior or otherwise.

“We love to tell the Unity Housing story,” said Smith. “Each building is a monument to the contribution that union members make to their communities every day.”

The manager at the Wellsburg complex is Jim Sherman. Sherman feels that HRDE housing has a “high-end feel” be-

cause of its cleanliness and level of security.

Each HRDE landscaped building must meet federal housing standards, be well-maintained and have locking doors with limited access to non-tenants.

“Our residents enjoy the same level of security and quality enjoyed by people who live in much more expensive apartments in larger towns,” said Sherman.

HRDE is the sister program

of HRDF, Human Resource Development Foundation, Inc. which was incorporated in 1967, as a social arm of the WV AFL-CIO, for the purpose of providing economically disadvantaged West Virginians opportunities for self-sufficiency and improved living conditions.

For more information on HRDE's Unity Housing Program, eligibility requirements and locations, people may use the Internet at www.hrdfwv.org or call Savage at 304-296-8223.



MORGANTOWN UNITY MANOR is a 122-unit Section 202 high-rise complex for the elderly and disabled, which was built in 1981 at a cost of 4.5 million dollars. It is one of 19 housing complexes owned and operated by HRDE.

ELECTRICIANS LOCAL 466 HAS APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Charleston Joint Electrical Apprenticeship Committee takes applications year round, but only on the third Thursday of each month.

Those interested should go to the training site at 810 Indiana Ave. in Charleston between the hours of 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.

The five year program teaches all aspect of the electrical trade including general wiring for receptacles, switches, and breaker boxes, working with conduit, motor controls and fire alarms, and complete understanding of all aspects of the trade.

Apprentices learn on the job under the direct supervision of journeymen and attend classes on Saturdays.

Applicants must be at least 17 years old and have a high school degree or GED and show they have passed a full year of high school algebra, unless they have worked more than 4000 hours specifically in the electrical construction trade.

Transcripts or GED records will be required or acceptable documentation of electrical work experience.

Credit for military experience may be available if a DD-214 form is filed.

A drivers license is mandatory as well as a \$20 application fee.

In addition applicants must reside in Boone, Braxton, Calhoun, Clay, Fayette, Gilmer, Kanawha, Nicholas, Putnam, Raleigh, Roane, Summers, Webster, or Wyoming County.

Applicants who meet the ba-

sic requirements will be scheduled for an interview by the committee.

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

For more information call Becky Combs, Administrator, at 304/345-5166.

WHEELING CARPENTERS JOIN ACT

Members of Carpenters Local 3 in Wheeling have voted to join the Affiliated Construction Trades and West Virginia State Building Trades.

The decision was made last August and became effective December, 2007.

According to Local 3 Business Representative, Orphy Klempa, the vote to join with other trades members statewide was the result of long-term observation and careful consideration.

"We felt the time was right,"

said Klempa.

"For years, our members have been aware of the good work the Trades do. They watched the *West Virginia Works* TV show and they see the ACT ads on television. Those efforts deserve our support."

Klempa is also a member of the West Virginia House of Delegates representing Ohio County as a Democrat. He said his experience with ACT in the Legislature reinforced the Carpenters' decision to join.

"Decisions made in Charleston impact our members on the local level," explained Klempa.

"I have had the opportunity to

work with Steve White and Roy Smith to develop important pro-worker legislation. They are well-respected by the Legislators and very effective in promoting the interests of working families."

Carpenters Local 3 has 350 members in a service area that includes Hancock, Brooke, Ohio and parts of Marshall County in West Virginia.

Local 3 is part of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters headquartered in Baltimore.

The bulk of the work done by the Local 3 members is on commercial projects, including hos-

pitals, churches, and schools.

Traditionally, the largest single user of Local 3 services has been the AEP Mitchell and Kammer power plants.

Local 3 President David Cook has his eyes on a future working with ACT and the State Building Trades.

LEGISLATIVE

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

lic projects must show they have quality drug policies in place.

In a recent national survey the construction industry ranked second in illegal on-the-job drug usage.

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration has data on the amount of drug use and alcohol abuse in each state and in the nation's workplaces.

Data from 2005 showed approximately 7.7 percent of those over age 12 in West Virginia used illicit drugs. That number placed West Virginia near the national average.

Additional data shows there as many as 120,000 people in West Virginia using illegal drugs, many doing so on-the-job.

The food service industry scored the highest, followed by construction.

"Construction is dangerous without adding illegal drugs," said Poling. "We can make it safer."

Investing in work force training has been a topic discussed by the legislature.

"We want to see the state support some of our efforts to help members turn their apprenticeship certificates into Associate Degrees," said Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of the State Building Trades.

Smith is working on legislation to fund a 'pilot program' aimed

"One of the best reasons to work with the ACT group is the promise of even better things for our Local," said Cook. "The Carpenters have already benefited from ACT."

We're counting on that to continue down the road as we work together."

at finding innovative ways to bring college level training to construction job sites.

"We need a 'Promise Scholarship' for construction workers," said Smith.

Following up on successes of last years legislation will also be on the Trades agenda.

Rules to implement the new Plumber and Sprinkler Fitter licensing must be approved.

The rules set license fees, testing requirements and grandfather procedures. Licenses will be required starting January

Other issues of interest:

1. Legislation to strengthen a bill passed last year to crack down on employers who hire unauthorized workers is under consideration.

2. Tracking economic development efforts so tax payers know how much money we are spending, where the money goes, and what we get.

3. 'Clean Elections' Bill to reform political campaign financing laws.

4. Worker Freedom Bill to prohibit mandatory company meetings about religion, politics or unions.

5. Infrastructure funding for important schools, roads, water and sewer projects are a focus area.

"We've seen significant tax cuts for businesses in past sessions, now is the time to invest in our state infrastructure if we want real economic growth," said Smith.

Local 80 Toys for Tots Effort



ASBESTOS WORKERS LOCAL 80 delivered more than 300 presents to the Toys for Tots effort this Christmas. Members and their families collected the presents as part of Local 80's annual holiday dinner dance. "Our members really enjoy this effort and I am proud of the contributions they make," said Steve Pigg, Business Manager of Local 80. The Toys for Tots effort was started by the US Marine Reserves in 1947.

UNION TRADES HELP WITH “EXTREME MAKEOVER: HOME EDITION” PROJECT

More than 80 members of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters (MARCC) volunteered on ABC TV's “Extreme Makeover Home Edition” project in Fairmont.

The MARCC members were among 1,000 people, including many from other union building trades locals in the area, who vol-

unteered to help build a new 2800 square foot home for the Turner family of seven.

“Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” is an Emmy Award winning television show that features a race against time project which ordinarily takes at least four months to achieve but must be done in just seven days.

The weeklong project took place in early December and involved replacing the Turner's 600 square foot home.

The Turners, who work with mentally challenged adults, are also active community members as local coaches to a variety of teenagers.

Working with MARCC members were two union contractors, J & J Drywall and 3-D Construction, who also took active roles.

According to Mike Jenkins, Senior Organizer for the Council, it took only two hours and 45 minutes for his members to

hang more than 250 sheets of drywall.

After the drywall was up a crew worked all evening on the trim package of the project.

Retired members and staff from the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Program, led by Training Director Odie Parkins,

worked in an off-site specialty tent on numerous projects throughout the week.

Jenkins noted Carpenters from five different locals in the state chipped in.

The interior of the home will not be revealed until the program airs this March.



MIKE BRUFFEY, A member of Carpenters Local 476, Clarksburg, installs trim at the Extreme Makeover home in Fairmont. Bruffey, a second generation carpenter from Weston, joined with other volunteers to make the week long project a success.

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UNION TRADES SUPPORT 100 BICYCLE GIFTS

Members of the Charleston Building Trades working at the John Amos Plant in Putnam County reached deep into their pockets to help children in need this Christmas.

Terry Albright and Toni Givens, both members of the Laborers Union, led the effort with the support of on-site contractor Babcock & Wilcox and plant owner American Electric Power.

A collection was taken on the job and from union construction workers and others at the AEP

site raising \$4,300.

That was just \$600 short of their goal to buy bicycles, pads and helmets for 100 children.

So the Charleston Building Trades Council made a \$600 contribution to reach the goal.

“We saw the effort as true Christmas giving aimed at kids who could use some help,” said Mike Matthews, Business Manager for the Council. “We were happy to play a part, but the real credit goes to the folks on the job who made this happen.”

Working with local charitable organizations Albright and Givens helped see the bikes and equipment were distributed in WV and southeastern Ohio.

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