



A PUBLICATION OF THE AFFILIATED CONSTRUCTION TRADES

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

Full Repeal Stopped, but Partial PW Repeal Passes

A bill that started out as full repeal of the state's prevailing wage law ended up only going part way.

SB 361 passed the legislature and was signed into law on the final week of the legislative session.

It limits prevailing wage requirements to public projects valued at more than \$500,000.

Private projects that get public grants will require prevailing wages only if the amount of the grant is more than \$500,000 regardless of the size of the project.

In addition, the bill moves the authority for determining wages rates from the Division of Labor to WorkForce.

WorkForce is charged with creating a new methodology by June 1, 2015 for determining what wage rates prevail and, in doing so, they are to coordinate with both WVU and Marshall University.

New rates must be out by September 30 of this year.

"While we took a hit we still have a prevailing wage law for many proj-

ects," said Steve White, ACT Direc-

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Members of the Trades filled the galleries of the House Chamber on February 28 while debate takes place on the floor over passage of SB 361, just like they did for meetings and hearings throughout the legislative session.

2015 a Bad Session for Working Families

Construction workers, public employees, mine workers, and just about every other worker took a hit during this year's legislative session.

Mine workers faced a roll back of safety regulations that had been in place for years.

Public employees now have a two-tier benefit system with new employees benefits cut significantly.

Teachers narrowly averted pas-

sage of Charter School legislation they predicted would drain school resources.

Building Trades members suffered not only with partial loss of prevailing wage but a ban on Project Labor Agreements.

Under the heading of 'tort reform' workers who have asbestosis will find it more difficult to win a claim as well

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Glenn Jeffries of Cornerstone Interiors testifies at a February 19 public hearing in the House of Delegates chamber in support of the prevailing wage law. Jeffries was among dozens of contractors that showed up in support of the law.

Full Repeal Stopped

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tor.

“And we avoided full repeal only because of the involvement of members and contractors.”

White pointed out that thousands of contacts with legislators were made through direct visits, emails, phone calls and letters.

During critical meetings the committee rooms were always full of members with crowds forming in the hallways as well.

Those attending a rally called by Senate Minority Leader Jeff Kessler (D-Marshall) on Presidents Day were mostly from the Trades and numbered in the thousands.

That stunned many political ob-

servers because the weather was one of the worst days of the winter.

Hundreds showed up during the public hearing held in the House Chamber where more than a dozen contractors testified against the repeal bill and in support of prevailing wage.

Again, during a House Government Organization Committee meeting and during the floor debate on a Saturday in the House, members packed the chamber.

ACT also ran TV and newspaper ads to support the prevailing wage law.

In addition, a study was commissioned that showed how schools built

in West Virginia under the prevailing wage law were more cost effective than those built in states without prevailing wage like North Carolina and Virginia.

The report estimated the state would lose between \$55 million and \$84 million per year from lost wages and taxes if the prevailing wage law was repealed.

The huge effort to stop repeal was effective but not enough to prevent the serious and harmful changes made by the legislature.

“We won’t know the full extent of the damage until we see the new methodology.

But it is clear there will be cuts in many parts of the state because of the high thresh-

“We avoided full repeal only because of the involvement of members and contractors.”

Steve White

Director,
Affiliated Construction Trades

old,” said White. ■

Infrastructure Investment Would Pay Big Dividends

West Virginia could give its economy a tremendous boost statewide and help one of the sectors hardest hit by the Great Recession by increasing its annual spending on highways and bridges by \$500 million, according to a report conducted by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) in Washington, D.C.

The report found increased construction activity would boost the entire state economy while the improvements to West Virginia’s transportation network would provide long-term benefits including increased safety, lower operating costs for businesses, reduced congestion and an increase in mobility and efficiency.

According to the report, such a sustained increase in the state’s investment in its infrastructure would generate nearly \$1 billion in additional economic output, boost state and local tax revenues by nearly \$50 million, support or create an additional 9,630 jobs and increase market access for West Virginia businesses.

The state’s infrastructure needs the investment, desperately. Twenty-eight percent of West Virginia’s

10,433 miles of roadway need major repairs or replacement. More than one-third of the state’s bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, West Virginia bridges need \$2.6 billion in repair work.

The investment would also help the workers most hurt by the Great Recession. Construction employment took a huge hit with that recession, and has not fully recovered more than five years after its official end.

In November 2014, construction employment in the state was down 23 percent compared to pre-recession levels. West Virginia has many qualified construction workers ready to get back to work.

But this investment wouldn’t just get construction workers back on the job.

According to the report, industries from retail to manufacturing to health care and more would see significant boosts in employment as a result of this investment.

A full copy of the study can be found at <http://www.cawv.org> ■

Tell Your Legislators...

SENATE BILL 361 IS BROKEN, BUT WE CAN FIX IT!

Hundreds of West Virginia contractors employ thousands of local workers across our state. Now these job creators and their workers face an uncertain future.

In its current form, Senate Bill 361 would put hundreds of West Virginia contractors out of business and kill thousands of jobs - local jobs that generate millions of dollars in tax revenue and support West Virginia businesses.

Senate Bill 361 is broken, but we can fix it! Tell your legislators to work together to save West Virginia jobs. FIX SENATE BILL 361.



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CONSTRUCTION, INC.
40 Years in WV

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W.R. DRAKE COMPANY, LLC
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45 Years in WV

E. P. Leach & Sons, Inc.
CONTRACTORS AND BUILDERS
30 Years in WV

CORNERSTONE
ELECTRIC
9 Years in WV

ATLAS
SCAFFOLD & SUPPLY INC.
33 Years in WV

A few of the many
West Virginia
Contractors that will be
hurt by Senate Bill 361

YAHN
ELECTRIC
COMPANY
50 Years in WV

ALL
CRANE RENTAL
19 Years in WV

QW
VEXC
OHIO-WEST VIRGINIA EXCAVATING Co.
30 Years in WV

JD&E
Contractors & Engineers
90 Years in WV

MURPHY
CONSOLIDATED
INDUSTRIES, INC.
75 Years in WV

UNITED
Electric
22 Years in WV

G&G
BUILDERS INC.
38 Years in WV

Cornerstone Interiors Inc.
17 Years in WV

HAYSLETT
CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.
44 Years in WV

FLINT CONSTRUCTION
COMPANY, INC.
20 Years in WV

Paid for by The West Virginia Construction Council & The Affiliated Construction Trades

This ad ran in the Charleston papers during the legislative session.

Brooke and Harrison Counties

New Gas Fired Power Plants Proposed

The developers of the Moundsville Power project are looking at additional sites in West Virginia for more gas-fired power plants.

Both Brooke and Harrison County Commissions have entered into preliminary agreements for projects in their counties.

However the projects are still in a very early stage of development, the decision to go forward or not is still months away.

“Both sites have strong fundamentals,” said Jon Williams, one of the partners in Energy Solutions Consortium. “If there are one hundred steps to take, we have taken the first.”

Energy Solutions Consortium is made up of Williams, John Black and members of the Dorn family, the same principals behind Moundsville Power LLC.

The Brooke County site could hold two separate power plants side-by-side. Located at the former Wheeling Corrugating Plant in Beech Bottom

the site is adjacent to two interconnects with the grid – at 345 KV and 138 KV.

So the project – if built – could be much bigger than the Moundsville plant which is slated to have a 549 megawatt capacity.

“At this stage we don’t know the capacity that would work because we have to communicate with those who regulate the grid and see what kind of power is needed,” said Williams.

The grid operators, known as PJM, look at power needs every six months and will next go through proposals received through the end of April.

PJM Interconnection is a regional transmission organization that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in all or parts of Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Acting as a neutral, independent

party, PJM operates a competitive wholesale electricity market and manages the high-voltage electricity grid to ensure reliability for more than 61 million people.

“We don’t want to raise expectations at this point but we are working hard and should know more in the next 100 days or so,” said Williams.

In Harrison County the proposed location would be near Clarksburg where abundant dry-gas from Marcellus Shale wells can be found.

According to Williams the Harrison project would be very similar to the Moundsville project in size.

Williams is careful to emphasize both projects are in a very early stage of development and there are many

reasons that they may never be built.

Working with PJM is just one of many steps needed to get a project developed.

Getting environmental permits, approval from the state Public Service Commission, doing wildlife and archeological studies, getting interconnect arrangements with transmission companies, and finding financiers are among a long list of tasks.

Ultimately the project will need to find buyers of the power since it will be a wholesale seller rather than a commercial seller.

According to Williams the Moundsville Power project is on schedule and should begin by the end of this year. ■

Bad Session

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as workers who are hurt on the job through ‘deliberate intent’

Fortunately a bill to impose the so-called Right-to-Work law which forbids unions and companies to include dues requirements in contracts failed to advance.

However leaders of the House and Senate have asked for an economic impact study from WVU in an apparent attempt to promote Right-to-Work for next year’s legislative ses-

sion.

A bill to increase campaign contribution limits to \$50,000 per candidate, per election also failed to pass.

“This was not a good session for working families,” said Kenny Perdue, President of the WV AFL-CIO.

“During the election we heard a lot about jobs but during the session all we got was wage cuts, safety cuts, benefit cuts and legal protection cuts.” ■

Apprentice Painters Learn Labor History



Apprentice painter and glazier members of Painters District Council 53 attend a Labor History class taught by WVU Institute for Labor Studies and Research Professor Sam White.

The class took place at the Painters training center in Weston in early March.



Trades members crowd the hall and meeting room of the House Government Organizations Committee while the prevailing wage repeal bill SB 361 was being discussed on February 25.

Trumka, Roberts, Hall Among Speakers Rally Brings Thousands to Charleston

Between 6,000 and 7,000 people attended the “Mountaineer Workers Rising” labor rally on Saturday, March 7 at the state capitol.

The rally was called by the West

Virginia AFL-CIO to protest legislative measures harmful to working families that had passed, were pending or were being promoted during the 2015 legislative session.

Speakers included AFL-CIO

“The crowd was bigger than expected and legislators know if thousands show up even more are back home with the same concerns,”

Dave Efaw

*Secretary-Treasurer,
WV State Building Trades*

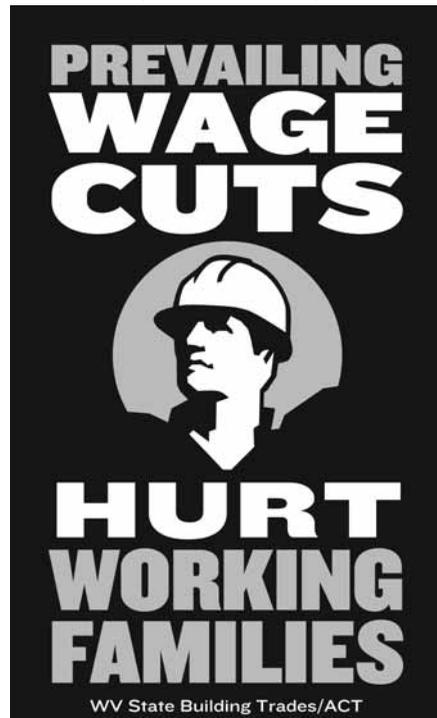
President Rich Trumka, United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts and Ken Hall, Secretary-Treasurer of the Teamsters and President of Local 175 Charleston.

Speakers protested a long list of damaging legislation including the attack on prevailing wages, attempts to pass the so-called Right-to-Work law, Charter School legislation, roll-back of mine safety laws, passage of

legal restrictions to lawsuits over work related injuries, and more.

Legislators supporting labor were lined up behind the speakers to show support.

“The crowd was bigger than expected and legislators know if thousands show up even more are back home with the same concerns,” said Dave Efaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the WV State Building Trades. ■



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According to WV State Police an estimated 7,000 people attended a labor rally in Charleston on March 7 to protest the direction taken during the legislative session under the new Republican majority.
Photo by: David T. Stephenson