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

No Savings from Kentucky Prevailing Wage Repeal

A recent study found that five years after Kentucky lawmakers repealed prevailing wage, there has been no benefit in terms of cost savings to the state.

The study, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Public Works Management & Policy*, used data on 2,155 Kentucky Transportation Cabinet highway projects between 2014 and 2020 and found no statistically significant impact of the 2017 repeal of prevailing wage on bid costs and bid competition.

According to the authors of the study, the repeal of prevailing wage laws across the country was aimed at decreasing public construction costs to the state. However, years later these efforts have not had the desired effect.

“The wave of repeals of prevailing wage laws in six states between 2015 and 2018 was largely motivated by desires to reduce public construction costs,” said Frank Manzo, Executive Director for the Illinois Economic Policy Institute.

“This study finds that repeal of prevailing wages in Kentucky did not alter relative bid costs or bid compe-

tion between state and federal highway pavement projects.”

The study, titled “Prevailing Wage Repeal, Highway Construction Costs, and Bid Competition in Kentucky: A Difference-in-Differences and Fixed Effects Analysis,” goes even further saying if lawmakers want to reduce

construction costs, they should focus their efforts on industry competition instead.

In conclusion, the authors wrote: “Competition on pavement projects in Kentucky is very low compared to other states. Consequently, the impact of increased competition on bid

costs is very high.

Policies increasing competition in Kentucky would be more effective in reducing costs than prevailing wage repeal.

For more information and to read the entire study, log on to www.journals.sagepub.com. ■



The construction of the Nitro-St. Albans bridge on I-64 west of Charleston, West Virginia. Projects like this one were analyzed throughout Kentucky for the recent study on prevailing wage, which determined there had been no cost savings to the state since the repeal of the law.

Weaker Craft Licensing Law Passed by the West Virginia Legislature Takes Effect

On June 9, a law weakening licensing standards for plumbing, HVAC, electrical, and sprinkler fitting work will go into effect for West Virginia

license holders.

Earlier this year, the West Virginia legislature passed HB 4634, the “Review and Credential Acknowledge-

ment Procedures Act” (RECAP).

RECAP is the newest version of what are called universal licensing laws, which weaken standards put in

place for out-of-state license holders to obtain a West Virginia license when they come into the state.

Cont. on p. 2>>

Many Close Races in '22 Primary Election

The 2022 primary election in West Virginia was filled with close races in the House of Delegates, some of which were decided by a single vote.

On election night, three Republican primary elections for House of Delegates were at a one-vote difference.

These races included the 28th district in Wayne County, the 36th district in McDowell County, and the 88th district in Grant and Mineral counties.

However, the vote count in each district would later change after all provisional ballots, which are used when there is a question about a vot-

er's eligibility, were counted during a process called a canvass.

The canvass process is held after every election in each county, by the county commissioners, and is an of-

ficial tally of all eligible votes.

The purpose of a canvass is to account for every ballot cast, including eligible provisional ballots, and ensure that every valid vote cast is included in the

election totals.

This generally happens the week after election day at each county courthouse.

Situations when a provisional ballot would be used include when a

voter's name does not appear on the electoral roll for a given precinct due to being registered elsewhere, the voter's registration contains inaccurate or outdated information, or the voter requested an absentee ballot but showed up to vote at the polls.

In the case of the 28th district, even though the race had a margin of one vote on election night, it increased to a nine-vote difference following the canvass and the counting of all provisional ballots, with Mark Ross claiming victory.

However, there are other factors which can change the outcome of an election as well such as a recount, which happened in the 88th district.

A recount can be requested by a candidate if the outcome of a race is extremely close to determine the accuracy of an original vote count.

On election night, the race between Rick Hillenbrand and Keith

Funkhouser was at a one-vote difference.

After the canvass, Hillenbrand's lead increased to a four-vote difference, following the addition of the provisional ballots.

Funkhouser requested a formal recount of the votes cast at the precincts in Mineral County, but this effort ultimately did not change the vote count in the race.

"Every single vote is important," said George Capel, Government Relations Director for the WV State Building and Construction Trades.

In total, among Republicans and Democrats, there were seven races that were decided by 11 votes or less.

"This number of races being decided in double digits is absolutely unprecedented," said Capel.

"This goes to show that one vote truly can decide the outcome of an election." ■

"Every single vote is important,"

George Capel

*Government Relations Director
WV State Building and Construction Trades*

IUOE 132 Holds Equipment Rodeo



Operating Engineers Local 132 recently held their ninth annual Equipment Rodeo at their apprenticeship training center in Medina, south of Parkersburg, on Sunday, June 12 (Photo from last years event).

According to Local 132 Business Manager Chuck Parker, the event had over 300 attendees, including union members, their families, and friends. "It's our members who make this Local great, and the equipment rodeo is a way to let them show off their skills and thank everyone for their hard work throughout the year," said Parker. "We also appreciate the contractors in their support for the event."

IUOE 132 members took turns in five different competitions, using a dozer, rubber tire backhoe, cherry picker, excavator, and a mini excavator. In addition to the member competitions there was a cook-out, a fishing competition for kids, games and prizes.

Craft Licensing Law

Continued from Page 1

The RECAP Act provides a pathway for out-of-state license holders to forego any kind of proficiency testing, normally required for first time in-state applicants.

Instead, out-of-state license holders are only required to prove that they have had a license in good standing in another state for at least one year.

If they can prove this status, they will be granted a West Virginia license, even if the qualifications and requirements in the other state are lower.

However, the bill goes further for states who do not have licenses in these occupations.

For example, if an applicant's state of origin does not have a license for a certain type of work, the applicant must only prove they have been working in their field of choice for at least two years.

If they are able to do this, they will be granted a license in West Virginia, with no proficiency test required.

"Universal licensing laws are bad for business and create a public safety

issue in our state," said John Epperly, Secretary-Treasurer for the West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades. "We will have no idea if applicants are qualified to be doing the work when they come to our state. This is going to put people at risk."

The RECAP Act is a newer version of a bill that ran during the 2021 legislative session.

HB 2007 (2021) originally included many different occupations including some from the medical and finance fields, among many others.

However, the RECAP Act was aimed directly at the trades.

"While we had some success during the last legislative session, the RECAP Act was a loss for the trades," said Epperly. "We are making progress at the Capitol, but we still have a long way to go."

ACT representatives offered multiple amendments to the bill including stricter residency requirements, E-verify, and drug testing requirements. However, all of these amendments ultimately failed. ■

Full House Vote Pending

Ohio Legislative Committee Advances Bill to Increase Safety Regs at Oil Refineries

Earlier this month, the Ohio House of Representatives Commerce and Labor Committee advanced a bill that would increase safety standards for oil refinery construction projects.

If passed, the High-Hazard Training Certification Act (HB 235) would create a safer work environment for construction crews at refineries by requiring apprenticeship training and OSHA-recognized safety certifications to be in place for workers

at the Cenovus Lima Refinery, the Toledo Refining Company Refinery, and the BP-Husky Refinery.

Mark Johnson, Business Manager of the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades and Member of the Ohio House of Delegates, has been a proponent of the bill and says it will create a better environment throughout the entire industry.

“... This is a pro-apprenticeship bill,”

Mark Johnson

Business Manager

Tri-State Building and Construction Trades

“This isn’t a union or a non-union bill. This is

a pro-apprenticeship bill,” said Johnson. “The bill is crafted to affect three

specific refineries, but I believe it will place a greater emphasis on apprenticeship programs in general, which is good for the industry.”

Opponents of the bill claim that by imposing these new standards, it will place undue limitations on the hiring of new workers, saying the bill would require 80 percent of workers hired to be enrolled in or a graduate of an apprenticeship program.

However, Mike Knisely, Executive Secretary for the Ohio Building and

Construction Trades Council, said he does not believe the regulations are excessive.

“We’ve had a long history of good owners, and I don’t think it’s too much to ask them to protect the community,” said Knisely, referring to the Cenovus Lima Refinery.

HB 235 was passed out of the House Commerce and Labor Committee on a 10-1 vote and now heads to the floor for a full vote of the Ohio House of Representatives. ■

Laborers Accepting New Applications

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.

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 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, 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 website www.wvcccl.org or call 304-489-9665.

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. ■

Painters Restore Cannons at Fort Boreman Park



Members of Painters DC 53 work on the restoration of a 150-year-old Civil War-era cannon, which now sits atop Fort Boreman Park in Parkersburg, West Virginia.

Last year, the Painters transported two cannons from Fort Boreman Park to their training facility in Weston, WV to be taken apart and refurbished. The larger of the two cannons (pictured above) is about 18 feet long and weighs over 10,000 pounds. The smaller cannon is about half that size. The work on both cannons was recently finished, and they were returned to Fort Boreman Park to be put on historical display for the public.

Fort Boreman was the location of a Union fortress, used to strategically guard the confluence of the Little Kanawha and Ohio Rivers during the Civil War.

The Painters were approached by representatives from the Wood County Commission last year, and they volunteered their time and efforts on the cannon renovation project to give back to the community.

Time Sensitive: June 20

Millwrights Local #443 Accepting New Apprenticeship Program Applications

Millwrights Local 443 is now accepting applications for their apprenticeship program, with a June 20 deadline to apply.

Interested applicants should immediately log on to www.eastern-millwrights.com and fill out the application form.

Upon completion, information will be provided about attending an interview on June 22-23 with the Local.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and submit the required documents of proof at the interview

for the apprenticeship program. Applicants must have a high school diploma (or equivalent), have a valid driver's license, and submit a DD214 if they have performed military service.

Applicants must also provide three non-family references with name, address, occupation, and contact information at the interview.

Failure to provide the apprenticeship committee with the required documentation will result in the applicant being deemed ineligible.

A substance abuse test, includ-

ing random tests, will be required at some point in the process.

Millwrights are skilled construction mechanics who study and interpret blueprints, and then use their

precise limits or standards of accuracy, working under conditions of inclement weather, working under conditions involving great heights, lifting heavy materials or objects over 50



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New Housing for McDowell County Teachers Unveiled



Members of labor, public officials, and representatives from the McDowell County school district attend a ribbon-cutting event for Renaissance Village, an affordable housing facility for McDowell County school teachers built with Building Trades labor.

Reconnecting McDowell, a public-private partnership organization, partnered with the AFL-CIO and used Building Trades labor to build the facility, addressing the need for housing in McDowell County.

With many McDowell County teachers living outside the school district, due to a lack of living options, Renaissance Village will now provide an affordable option for them to live closer to their place of work.

Construction on the facility began in 2019 and the ribbon-cutting was held on June 10th.

knowledge and expertise to drill, weld, and bolt pieces of equipment to make sure machinery is running smoothly.

They often take apart and reassemble equipment.

Because of this, applicants to the Millwrights apprenticeship program must be able to perform the physically demanding aspects of the trade.

This includes, but is not limited to, work on scaffoldings and in confined spaces, working within pre-

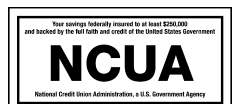
pounds, and standing or stooping for prolonged periods of time.

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

Apprentices earn while they learn, have the opportunity to graduate debt-free, and collect benefits even during the program.

For more information, call 304-422-1593 and log on to www.eastern-millwrights.com. ■

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